

CHAPTER NINE

STUDYING THE BIBLE BY THE BIBLE

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- C Write the Key Verse from memory.
- C Identify symbols of the Word of God used in the Bible.
- C Study God's Word by using the Bible.
- C Identify the source of the Word.
- C Distinguish between the milk and meat of the Word.

KEY VERSE:

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.
(Psalm 119:18)

INTRODUCTION

One of the best ways to begin Bible study is to learn what the Bible says about itself. That is the subject of this chapter. In this lesson you will learn about the symbols of God's Word and specific facts about God's Word revealed in the Bible itself.

In most Institute courses when we refer to Scriptures we write them out within the context of the lesson. This is done to save you time. But we have not written out the verses in this lesson for a special reason. One of the purposes of this lesson is to familiarize you with using your Bible, so we have listed only the references. As you study the lesson, look up each reference in your Bible.

If you are not familiar with the location of the books, look in the front of your Bible. Most Bibles have a "Table Of Contents" which lists the page number where the book begins. When you find the page number listed for a book, you will be at chapter one of that book. Then look up the correct chapter and verse number:

Psalm	119:	89
Ⲯ	Ⲯ	Ⲯ
Book Name	Chapter Number	Verse Number

THE SOURCE OF THE WORD

The source of the Bible is God Himself. Read Psalm 68:11. This confirms that God is the source of the Word. I Thessalonians 2:13 explains that the Bible is God's Word and that its source is not man. When Jesus spoke during His earthly ministry, He made it clear that the source of His words was God. See John 14:10 and 24; 17:8 and 14; and 3:34.

THE HISTORY OF THE WORD

The Bible reveals much about its own history, answering questions such as "How long has the Word existed?" and "Who first wrote down the words of God?" Read Hebrews 11:3. This verse reveals that the world in which we live was framed (created) by the Word of God. Read Genesis chapter 1 in your Bible which tells the story of creation and you will find this to be true. God literally spoke the world into existence. You can read more about this in II Peter 3:5-7. Hebrews 1:3 says that He continues to uphold the world and all things by the Word of His power. Psalm 33:6 says that the heavens were made by the Word of God.

God is eternal. He has no beginning and end. Since God is inseparable from His Word (He is the Word), then the Word has no beginning and no end. Like God, His Word has always existed. Read Exodus 20:1-17 in your Bible. This is the first record of God inspiring a man (Moses) to write down His Words.

Read John chapter 1 in your Bible. Note closely verses 1-5 and 14. This passage refers to Jesus as the Word. It reveals that the Word (Jesus) was with God and was God in the beginning. It confirms how God and His Word created the world.

Jesus has always existed with the Father, but in verse 14 it tells how the Word (Jesus) became flesh and came to live on earth in human form. Verses 11-12 record how He was rejected by His own people but how those who receive Him can become children of God.

BOOKS, SCROLLS, AND STONES

God's Word was written in many forms throughout the years. It was written on stones by Moses (Exodus 20:1-17) and on great stones when Israel entered the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 27:1-8).

God's Word was written in a book (Deuteronomy 31:24-26) and on scrolls (Jeremiah 36:2). A scroll is a long piece of paper with wooden spools (rollers) in each end. When you read or write on a scroll you start at one end and unroll the paper as you progress.

God even inspired songs in His Word. See Deuteronomy 31:19-22. David wrote God's Word in poetic form which was often sung. The book of Psalms is the worship and hymn book of the Bible.

INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

One of the most important things the Bible reveals about itself is that it is a book inspired by God. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God spoke to holy men to write His message.

Look up II Timothy 3:16-17 in your Bible. These verses confirm that God's Word is inspired. They also reveal that it is profitable in four major areas of Christian life:

- For doctrine
- For reproof
- For correction
- For instruction in righteousness

These verses are the main objectives of God's Word. These result in the man of God being perfect (mature) and thoroughly furnished (equipped) for all good works.

THE ETERNAL WORD

In the natural world many books are valid only for a short period of time. For example, a book on medical procedures may be valid for a few years. When better medicines or better methods of treatment are developed the book is no longer applicable.

God's Word is eternal and applicable in all times. It was relevant in the past, it is relevant in the present, and it will be relevant in the future (see Psalm 119:89).

Read I Peter 1:23. This verse reveals that God's Word not only abides forever, it also lives forever. God is and always has been. We serve a living God. God is inseparable from His Word. Because God lives, His Word lives and is relevant for all time.

Read Isaiah 40:8. This verse confirms that God's Word will stand (exist) forever. It will not perish like the things you see around you in the natural world.

TWO BASIC DIVISIONS

The Bible speaks of two basic divisions of God's Word. There is the milk of the Word and the meat of the Word. The milk of the Word is basic truth easily understood. The meat of the Word is the deeper teachings of God's Word which bring spiritual maturity. You can read about these in Hebrews 5:13-14 and I Peter 2:2.

PURPOSES OF THE WORD

God gave His Word to accomplish specific purposes. A purpose is a goal or objective. According to the Bible, some of these purposes are as follows:

- The Word produces faith in the Gospel: Acts 4:4
- It cleanses: John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26
- If you hear and believe, it brings eternal life: John 5:24
- It is the basis for eternal judgment: John 12:48
- Unclean spirits are cast out by the Word: Matthew 8:16; Luke 4:36
- Miraculous signs follow preaching of the Word convincing of the truth of the Gospel: Mark 16:20
- It gives assurance of salvation: I John 1:2-6
- You are born again by the Word: I Peter 1:23; Psalm 119:41
- The Word bears record of the truth of the Gospel: I John 5:7
- You are sanctified by the Word: I Timothy 4:5
- There is hope in His Word: Psalm 130:5; 119:49, 81
- There is healing in His Word: Psalm 107:20
- It keeps you from the path of the destroyer: Psalm 17:4
- It is spirit and life: John 6:63
- It brings joy and rejoicing: Jeremiah 15:16
- Faith is increased by the Word: Romans 10:17
- It brings comfort: I Thessalonians 4:18; Psalm 119:50, 52
- It brings spiritual nourishment: I Timothy 4:6
- It brings answered prayer: John 15:7
- It is the key to success: Joshua 1:8
- If you hear and keep it you are blessed: Luke 11:28
- It is profitable for spiritual growth: II Timothy 3:16-17
- It brings blessings when it is kept and cursings when it is not kept: Deuteronomy 28
- It is a weapon in the time of temptation: Matthew 4
- It converts the soul: Psalm 19:7
- It makes wise the simple: Psalm 19:7
- It enlightens: Psalm 19:8

- It warns: Psalm 19:11
- Keeping the Word brings great reward: Psalm 19:11
- It permits access to Heaven: Revelation 22:14
- It brings the blessing of walking in righteousness: Psalm 119:1-3
- It makes you wiser than your enemies, teachers, and the ancients: Psalm 119:98-104
- It quickens: Psalm 119:25
- It strengthens: Psalm 119:28
- It is the basis of God's mercy towards you: Psalm 119:58
- It brings delight: Psalm 119:92
- It gives the simple understanding: Psalm 119:130, 169; 104
- It brings deliverance: Psalm 119:170

THE WORD IS NOT VOID

As we have seen, there are many purposes for God's Word. The Bible teaches that the Word will accomplish the purposes for which it exists. Read Isaiah 55:11. Here God says that His Word will not return void which means that God does not make empty promises. What He says will happen. Every word of the Bible was written for a purpose and that purpose will be accomplished.

SYMBOLS OF THE WORD

The Bible uses many different symbols to describe the Word of God. A symbol is something that represents something else. For example, each star in the flag of the United States of America represents one of the 50 states which make up that nation. The star is a symbol of a state. The following are symbols used in the Bible to describe God's Word. Look up each verse and read it in your Bible:

A Mirror: James 1:23-27

When you look into a mirror in the natural world, it reflects your physical image. When you look into God's Word, just like a mirror, the Bible reflects your true spiritual condition.

A Laver: Ephesians 5:26-27

A laver is the Biblical term for a basin which holds water used for cleansing. The water of the Word of God cleanses you spiritually.

A Lamp: Psalm 119:105

A Light: Psalm 119:105,130; Proverbs 6:23

Both a lamp and light give guidance. They enable you to see in the dark. The Word of

God provides spiritual guidance and helps you find your way out of the darkness of sin.

Rain: Isaiah 55:10-11

Water: Ephesians 5:26

Both rain and water are refreshing. The Word of God is compared to rain and water because it refreshes you spiritually.

Food: Jeremiah 15:16; I Peter 2:1-2; I Corinthians 3:1-2; Hebrews 5:12-14

A Diet: Hebrews 5:12

The Bible is compared to food which quenches natural hunger because it quenches spiritual hunger. Just as food permits natural growth, the Bible permits spiritual growth. Some parts of the Bible are called the milk of the Word because they are easily understood. Other portions are called the meat of the Word because the passages are more difficult to understand. God wants you to progress from the milk to the meat of His Word. Learning how to study the Bible will help you accomplish this objective.

A Fire: Jeremiah 23:29; 20:9

In the natural world a fire is used to refine precious metals. The fire burns out all the impurities. God's Word acts as a fire in your spiritual life to burn out impure thoughts, words, and deeds.

A Hammer: Jeremiah 23:29

A hammer can break rock in pieces. The Word of God can take sin-hardened hearts, break them, and make them pliable in the hands of God.

A Scalpel: Hebrews 4:12

A scalpel is a sharp knife used by doctors for surgery to cure illness. God's Word performs spiritual surgery. It corrects spiritual sickness. It removes spiritual growths and infections from your life.

A Sword: Ephesians 6:17

A sword in the natural world is a weapon. The Word of God is your spiritual sword. It is a weapon to use against your spiritual enemy, Satan.

Medicine: Psalm 119:25

Just as medicine in the natural world cures physical illness, God's Word works as a

medicine to cure spiritual sickness.

Seed: Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15; I Peter 1:23; James 1:18

God's Word is like seed. When it is planted in your heart--if it finds receptive ground--it will grow and produce spiritual fruit in your life.

Honey: Psalm 19:10

Honey is a very sweet substance in the natural world. God's Word is compared to honey because it is sweet spiritually. Studying God's Word brings spiritual sweetness in your life.

Gold: Psalm 19:9-10

In the natural world, gold is one of the most precious metals. The Bible is compared to gold because of its spiritual value.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORD

In addition to these symbols, the Bible provides other descriptions of God's Word. It is:

- The Spirit of Life: John 6:63
- The words of eternal life: John 6:68
- Precious: I Samuel 3:1
- Pure: Proverbs 30:5; Psalm 12:6; 19:7; 119:140
- Truth and soberness: Acts 26:25
- Truth: John 17:17; Colossians 1:5; Psalm 119:142
- True from the beginning: Psalm 119:160
- Tried: Psalm 18:3
- Right: Psalm 33:4; 19:8; 119:75
- The Word of life: I John 1:1; Philippians 2:6
- The Word of salvation: Acts 13:26
- The Word of faith: Romans 10:8
- Perfect: Psalm 19:7
- Counselor: Psalm 119:24
- Faithful: Psalm 119:86
- Settled: Psalm 119:89
- Heritage: Psalm 119:111
- Word of righteousness: Psalm 119:123
- Righteous and very faithful: Psalm 119:138
- Upright: Psalm 119:137
- Delight: Psalm 119:143

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

It is not enough to hear, read, or study God's Word. The Bible teaches that you must respond to God's Word. You are to:

- Let it fall upon good ground in your heart: Mark 4, Luke 8, Matthew 13
- Hear it and do it to be wise: John 12:47
- Keep the Word: John 14:23
- Believe on Jesus in order for God's Word to abide in you: John 5:38
- Continue in His Word: John 8:31
- Not live only on physical food, but also for the Word: Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3
- Praise His Word: Psalm 56:4, 10
- Give thanks for it: Psalm 119:62
- Magnify His Word even above His name: Psalm 138:2
- Engraft His Word in your heart: James 1:21
- Be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only: James 1:22-23
- Ask forgiveness for sin so His Word can abide in you: I John 1:10
- Desire the milk of His Word: I Peter 2:2
- Let the Word of God dwell in you richly: Colossians 3:16
- Rightly divide the Word of God: II Timothy 2:5
- Search the Scriptures: John 5:39; Acts 17:11
- Declare His Word: Psalm 119:26-27
- Choose His Word: Psalm 119:30
- Stick to His Word: Psalm 119:31
- Run the way of His Word: Psalm 119:32
- Keep it: Psalm 119:33
- Observe it: Psalm 119:34
- Delight in it: Psalm 119:35; 70; 77; 143; 174
- Incline your heart unto it: Psalm 119:36
- Desire to have it established in your life: Psalm 119:38
- Long after it: Psalm 119:40
- Use it to answer others: Psalm 119:42
- Hope in it: Psalm 119:43, 47
- Keep it forever: Psalm 119:44
- Seek His precepts: Psalm 119:45
- Be willing to speak it before leaders: Psalm 119:46
- Meditate on it: Psalm 119:48; 78; 148
- Not decline from it: Psalm 119:52
- Walk according to its teachings: Psalm 119:59
- Not delay to keep His Word: Psalm 119:60
- Not forget it: Psalm 119:61, 83, 93, 153, 176
- Choose companions who also fear the Word and keep it: Psalm 119:63

- Believe it: Psalm 119:66; 128
- Keep it with your whole heart: Psalm 119:69
- Value it more than gold and silver: Psalm 119:72
- Desire to learn it: Psalm 119:73
- Hope in the Word: Psalm 119:74; 81
- Find comfort in it: Psalm 119:76;82
- Desire for it to change your heart: Psalm 119:80
- Not forsake it: Psalm 119:87
- Seek after it: Psalm 119:94
- Consider it: Psalm 119:95
- Long for God's Word: Psalm 119:131
- Order your steps in the Word: Psalm 119:133
- Be grieved when God's Word is not honored: Psalm 119:136; 158
- Stand in awe of God's Word: Psalm 119:161
- Love it: Psalm 119:163, 165, 167
- Speak His Word: Psalm 119:172

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WORD

In addition to making the proper response to God's Word, you have a responsibility for the Word of God. The early Church assumed this responsibility as they went everywhere preaching the Word of God (Acts 8:4; 13:49; 12:24). They asked God for boldness to speak the Word (Acts 4:29 and 31) and the Word of God increased throughout the world because of their efforts (Acts 6:7; 19:20)

Here is what the Bible reveals about YOUR responsibility for the Word of God:

- You are to preach His Word throughout the world: Matthew 16:15; Luke 24:47; Mark 16:15.
- If you are taught in God's Word then you have a responsibility to teach others: Galatians 6:6.
- You are to preach the Word: II Timothy 4:2
- You are to speak His Word without fear: Philippians 1:4.
- God puts His Word in you so you can speak it to others: Deuteronomy 18:18-19; Isaiah 51:16; Jeremiah 1:9; 3:12; 5:14; 26:12; Ezekiel 2:6-7.
- You should not speak your own words but you should speak His words: Isaiah 58:13
- You are not to be ashamed of the Word: Mark 8:38
- You are to teach it to your children: Deuteronomy 6:6-9

WARNINGS IN THE WORD

Here are some warnings God gives concerning His Word:

- Persecution comes because the Word of God is preached: Mark 4:7
- Some people will even be killed because of their witness for the Word: Revelation 6:9; 20:4.
- The Word can be ineffective in your life because of traditions of man: Mark 7:13.
- You can pervert the Word of the Lord: Jeremiah 23:36.
- You can corrupt the Word of the Lord: II Corinthians 2:17
- You can use the Word deceitfully: II Corinthians 4:2

The Bible says not to listen to every word you hear: Proverbs 14:15. (This means that every one who claims to speak God's Word is not really doing so.) There are false teachers who do not teach the true Word of God (Jude 1). You are to withdraw yourself from these people (I Timothy 6:3-5. False teachers do not speak the true Word of God. They speak their own words. They also speak:

Lying words:	Jeremiah 29:23
Vain words:	Ephesians 5:6
Enticing words:	Colossians 2:4
Flattering words:	I Thessalonians 2:5
Vain babblings:	I Timothy 6:21
Feigned words:	II Peter 2:3
Swelling words:	II Peter 2:18; Jude 16
Malicious words:	III John 10

In conclusion, the Bible gives a final warning regarding the Word in Revelation 22:18-19:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.

And if any man shall take away from the words the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city and from the things which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:18-19)

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Of all the chapters in the Bible, Psalm 119 speaks most frequently about the Word of God. It is also the longest chapter in the Bible.

There are several different words used to refer to God's Word in this chapter. Each time they are used they add to our knowledge of His Word. Read Psalm 119 and underline the following words each time they occur:

- word
- words
- judgments
- statutes
- precepts
- law
- commandments
- thy way
- thy testimonies

After you underline each use of these words in Psalm 119, read the chapter once again and create a chart to summarize your study. Follow the pattern below. List each verse number that contains one or more of these words and then summarize what the verse teaches about God's Word.

Continue this pattern:

Verse Number	Summary
1	We are blessed if we walk in His law.