

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE



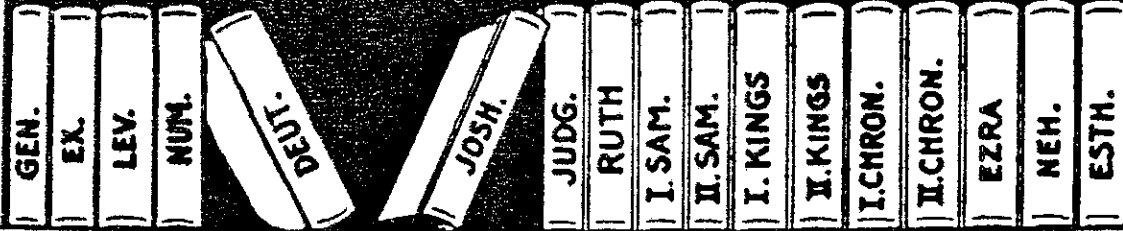
Lessons By Rob Harbison

BIBLE LIBRARY

Old Testament

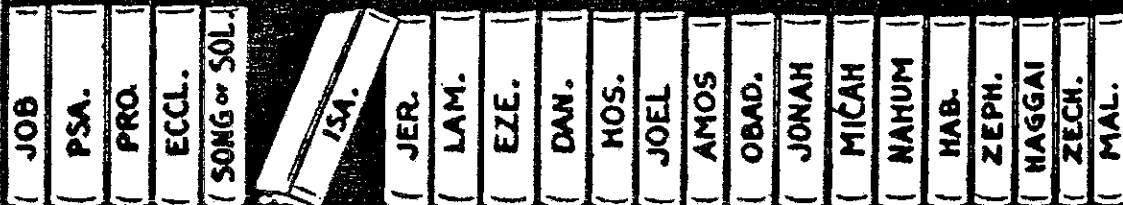
LAW 5 BOOKS

HISTORY 12 BOOKS



POETRY 5 BOOKS

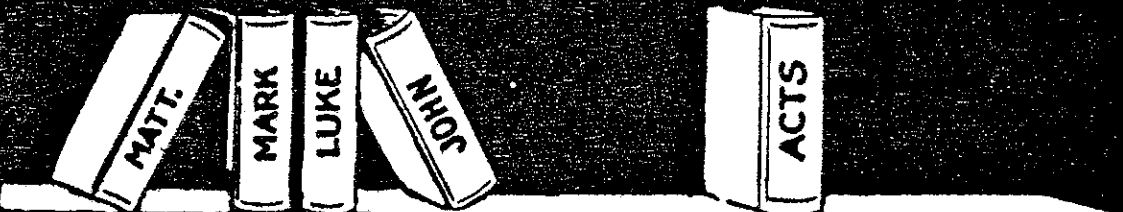
PROPHECY 17 BOOKS



New Testament

GOSPELS 4 BOOKS

ACTS OF APOSTLES 1 BOOK



LETTERS TO CHRISTIANS 21 BOOKS

PROPHECY 1 BOOK

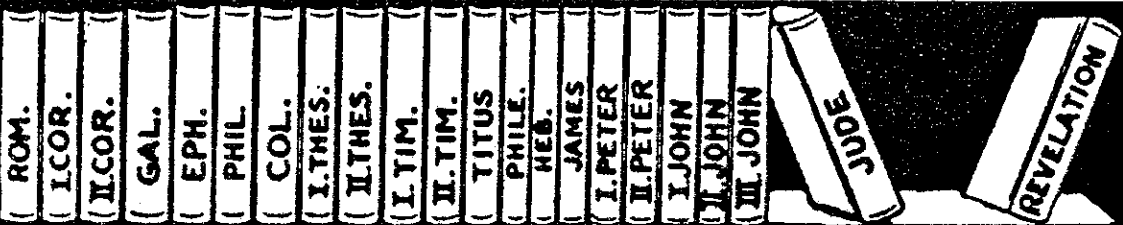


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WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Along with the food necessary for the survival and growth of the body is that nourishment necessary for the growth of the spirit (1 Peter 2:1-2; Matthew 5:6).

I. THE BIBLE IS A LIBRARY

- A. The Bible Is A Collection Of 66 Books Written By About 40 Different Authors Over A Period Of 1500 Years. Even though it is written by men it still contains the "oracles of God" (Romans 3:1-2).
1. How can the Bible be written by many writers yet have only one author?
 2. In contrast with all the diversity in this collection of books, what is true about the Bible as a whole?

II. THE BIBLE IS GOD'S REVELATION TO MAN

- A. The Bible Makes Known Something We Could Not Otherwise Know (1 Corinthians 2:6-13; Isaiah 55:8-9).
1. Can any man know what God thinks (2:9)? How does Paul illustrate the answer to that question (2:11)?
 2. Why is God's wisdom too great for us to know (55:8-9)?
 3. How is it possible to know God's will for us then (2:10,12-14)?
 4. How did God insure that the Bible writers would write His word accurately (2 Timothy 3:16-17)? Define "inspiration".

III. THE BIBLE IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION

- A. The Bible Makes Salvation Possible By Making It Known To Man (Romans 1:16-17; John 8:31-32).
1. Without the Bible, how could the sinner, cut off from God and ignorant of His plan, possibly be saved (Romans 10:13-17; 1 Corinthians 1:18,21-24)?
 2. The Bible does many things for us.
 - a. It Is A Helper. How is it a helper in times of affliction (Psalm 119:50)? In times of indecision (Psalm 119:105)? In times of temptation (Matthew 4:3-11)?
 - b. It Is A Motivator (Ecclesiastes 12:11). What is the "goad" or "prod"? How does the Bible do that for us?
 - c. It Is A Transformer (2 Corinthians 3:4-18; esp. v.18). How can the Bible transform and change our lives?

IV. THE BIBLE IS INDESTRUCTIBLE

- A. The Bible Has Withstood The Attempts Made To Destroy It (Isaiah 40:6-8; Matthew 24:35).
1. In what ways have men attempted to destroy the Bible?
 2. How can we have confidence that we will always have the word God intended for us to have (1 Peter 1:22-25)?

CONCLUSION: Read Psalm 119 for the greatest tribute in the Bible to the Bible. Why is Bible study so important (2 Timothy 2:15)?

WHY SHOULD WE STUDY THE BIBLE?

"For this reason we also... ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will" (Colossians 1:9). What does this knowledge help us do (Colossians 1:10-11)? There are many motivations we should have for studying the Bible.

I. WE SHOULD STUDY THE BIBLE TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD

- A. We Are Commanded To Know The Will Of God (Ephesians 5:17). But we cannot know His will unless He discloses it to us (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).
1. Where can we find His will revealed (Ephesians 3:3-5)?
 2. Why does God hold us responsible for knowing His word (John 12:48; Revelation 20:12)?
 3. How can a lack of knowledge of God's word hurt us (Hosea 4:6)?

II. WE SHOULD STUDY THE BIBLE TO COME TO CHRIST

- A. We Are Drawn To Christ By Learning Of God's Word (John 6:44-45).
1. How can anyone realistically come to God without first knowing what the Bible says to do about it (Romans 10:13-17)?
 2. What is one of the things we must do to find rest for our souls (Matthew 11:29; cf. 11:28-30)?
 3. What is one way we are going to win God's approval after coming to Him (2 Timothy 2:15)?

III. WE SHOULD STUDY THE BIBLE TO GROW TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

- A. Growth Is Essential To Spiritual Health And Liveliness (1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-14). It is not enough to remain unskilled in God's word.
1. What happens if we do not continue to grow? How does continued growth in God's word stabilize us (Ephesians 4:13-14)?
 2. What are we susceptible to if we do not continue to grow and mature spiritually (2 Peter 1:5-11; 3:17-18)?
 3. How soon can this learning begin (2 Timothy 3:14-15)?

IV. WE SHOULD STUDY THE BIBLE TO APPLY IT

- A. Any Knowledge We Obtain Which Does Not Change Our Lives Is Useless (James 1:21-25). What is that situation compared to here?
1. What is the point of Jesus' parable of the two builders (Matthew 7:24-27)? In the application, what makes the wise man wise?
 2. What does God's grace teach us (Titus 2:11-12)?
 3. How empty is knowledge without obedience (James 4:17)? Can one really know the meaning of love if he is not loving? Of liberality if he is not liberal? Of forgiveness if he is unforgiving?

V. WE SHOULD STUDY THE BIBLE TO TEACH IT

- A. God Intends For Us To Do Something With The Word When We Learn It (2 Timothy 2:2).
1. Who is to benefit from our Bible knowledge (1 Timothy 4:13,16)?
 2. How strong should our motivation to teach be (Jeremiah 20:9)?

CONCLUSION: Isn't it obvious why Bible study is a "noble" activity (Acts 17:11)?

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

If the Bible is not God's complete and accurate word, we are wasting our time studying it. The worth of this book depends on its author. We must determine if every word is the word of God, and if not, how we can know which part is?

I. WHAT IS INSPIRATION?

- A. All Scripture Is Given By The Inspiration Of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). What is "inspiration"? The original Greek word (theopneustos) literally means "God-breathed". Illustrate what that means.
1. What is the Holy Spirit's part in inspiration (1 Corinthians 2:10-13)?
 2. Trace the process or method of inspiration, from beginning to end (2 Peter 1:20-21).
 3. How detailed is the inspiration of the written word (Matthew 5:18)? What is a jot? A tittle?
 4. Why can the scripture not be broken (John 10:35)?

II. DEGREE OF INSPIRATION

- A. Just How Inspired Is The Bible? Even among those who believe the Bible is inspired, there are different views about degrees of inspiration.
1. Partial Inspiration. In this view the Bible is inspired in its great principles, but has mistakes because it was written by men.
 - a. What impression does this view leave about God?
 - b. What impression does this view leave about the integrity of the Bible message?
 - c. Why did God choose weak men to write the Bible (1 Cor 2:3-5)?
 2. Verbal Inspiration. In this view even the words of the apostles and prophets were the words sanctioned by God.
 - a. Old Testament writers spoke accurately, even though unsure of what they were saying. Therefore, were they writing their own words or God's (1 Peter 1:10-12)?
 - b. Who was intended to benefit from their words (1 Peter 1:12)?
 - c. If these words were to last forever (Matthew 24:35), would God partially or verbally inspire them?
 - d. Were the apostles taught words or concepts by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13-14)?
 - e. What authority do these words carry (1 Corinthians 14:37)?

III. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN INSPIRATION

- A. The Holy Spirit Was Instrumental In The Inspiration Process (1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; Ephesians 3:1-5).
1. What would the Holy Spirit do for God's inspired witnesses?
 - a. Luke 12:11-12?
 - b. John 14:26?
 - c. John 16:13?
 - d. 1 Corinthians 2:13-14?
 2. Has any truth remained concealed until now (John 16:13; Jude 3)?

CONCLUSION: Should we worry about the accuracy of the book we have (Isaiah 40:6-8; 1 Peter 1:23-25)? What should we do with it (1 Thessalonians 2:13)?

LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

People commonly complain of reading the Bible but not getting anything out of it. The real difficulty is that we don't know how to learn effectively. Reading is not learning... reading alone can never make you learn something.

Is the Bible as hard to understand as people think (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17)? In order to learn we must train our minds to do certain things (Luke 8:18).

I. LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

- A. Motivation. Learning starts with motivation, because motivation takes place from within you (Psalm 1:1-2; Ezra 7:10)! Can anyone learn without motivation?
1. What are some motivations for learning the Bible (John 7:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 3:15)?
 2. What wrong motivation would cause someone not to learn the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)?
- B. Reaction. Learning requires action. Hearing requires only one ear, but learning requires effort and reactions to what it hears. How can our minds be "active" when we are listening?
1. Why did Jesus teach in parables (Matthew 13:9-17)?
 2. Why were some not learning (Matthew 13:14-15)?
 3. Explain Jesus' statement "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15; 13:43; Mark 4:23; 7:16).
- C. Concentration. Focusing the mind and tuning out distractions is essential. How does this aid the learning process?
1. In what ways does Paul encourage Timothy to concentrate his efforts and studies (1 Timothy 4:13,15)?
 2. What is the result of such an effort (1 Timothy 4:16)?
- D. Organization. Mixed pieces of a jigsaw puzzle make no sense, but once the pieces are organized you can understand the picture.
1. Why was Luke intent on setting forth an orderly, organized account of Jesus' life (Luke 1:1-4)?
 2. Why do we study from printed material and outlines like these? Can we study the Bible for years without learning it because our knowledge is not organized to make sense (Hebrews 5:12-14)?
- E. Comprehension. This happens when you "get the idea" of what you have read, heard or studied. What can that perception do (Proverbs 3:13)?
1. How can others help you comprehend the Bible (cf. Nehemiah 8:4-8)?
 2. How can each of the following exercises tell you whether or not you have comprehended something? Putting it into your own words? Putting it into writing? Asking yourself questions?
- F. Repetition. Children and adults learn by repetition. Yet many adults think it is wasted time. Why? Why is repetition really important?
1. Why did Peter repeat what he already taught (2 Peter 1:12-15)?
 2. Why did Jesus use repetition to teach His disciples (John 2:19-22; 3:14-15; 8:28; 12:32-33; Matthew 12:40; 16:21; etc.)?

CONCLUSION: Is learning active or passive? Why have we not learned more yet?

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE BIBLE

The Bible is a unit not just a collection of stories. It is a library of 66 different books, but like each chapter of a novel, each book contributes something to the whole. Like an orchestra whose different instruments blend together in beautiful harmony, all parts of the Bible complement and complete the others.

I. BASIC FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- A. Basic Facts. It was written by about 40 different authors over 1500+ years. Primarily written in two languages... the Old Testament in Hebrew [with a little Aramaic] and New Testament in Greek [Koine].
- B. Order Of Books. Books are not grouped chronologically like we might expect, but rather are assembled according to subject matter.
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Old Testament (39 books) | | New Testament (27 books) |
| Law (5) Genesis-Deuteronomy | | Gospels (4) Matthew-John |
| History (12) Joshua-Esther | | History (1) Acts |
| Poetry (5) Psalms-Song of Sol. | | Epistles (21) Romans-Jude |
| Major Prophets (5) Isa.-Dan. | | Prophecy (1) Revelation |
| Minor Prophets (12) Hos.-Mal. | | |
- C. Two Divisions. The Bible is divided into two great sections.
1. The Old Testament. God's covenant given through Moses to the nation of Israel.
 - a. Was anyone else subject to this covenant (Deuteronomy 5:1-5)?
 - b. When was it done away with (Colossians 2:14-17)?
 - c. Why was it done away with (Romans 7:1-4; Hebrews 8:6-13)?
 2. The New Testament. God's covenant given through Jesus Christ to all men who submit to Him.
 - a. How universal is it (Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 2:11-22)?
 - b. How does it compare with the first (2 Corinthians 3:4-11)?
 - c. When did this covenant begin (Hebrews 9:15-17)?

II. THE THEME OF THE BIBLE

- A. Common Theme. The Bible reveals God's plan for redeeming man from his sins (Ephesians 3:1-11). The Old Testament shows the slow unfolding of God's plan of redemption which is fully revealed in the New Testament in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:14-18; 1 Peter 1:10-12).
1. Redemption was required because of sin (Genesis [cf. 3:1-15]).
 2. Redemption was prepared for (Genesis through Esther [Genesis 12:1-3; Deuteronomy 7:6-8; 2 Samuel 7:11-16]).
 3. Redemption was foretold by prophets and poetry (Psalms through Malachi [cf. Acts 3:24-26; Luke 24:44-46; 1 Peter 1:10-12]).
 4. Redemption became reality (Matthew through John [Luke 19:10]).
 5. Redemption was proclaimed by early church (Acts [cf. Luke 24:47]).
 6. Redemption was explained in the epistles (Romans through Jude [cf. Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-21]).
 7. Redemption was ultimately realized and promised (Revelation [Revelation 21-22]).

CONCLUSION: Jesus Christ is the golden thread that runs through all 66 books of the Bible. Why is He the key character (Ephesians 3:10-11; 1 Peter 1:18-21)?

BASIC QUESTIONS NEEDING ANSWERS WHEN STUDYING

There are certain fundamentals necessary for learning. Identifying the 5 W's -- who, what, when, where, and why -- is essential to understanding God's word. They are like building blocks of understanding and comprehension and we are expected to understand what we read and study (Ephesians 5:17).

I. BASIC QUESTIONS NEEDING ANSWERS

A. Who?

1. Who Wrote It? Knowing about the author can enhance his words.
 - a. Knowing David (Acts 13:22), what can that tell us about his poetry and psalms?
 - b. Knowing Solomon (1 Kings 3:4-12), what can that tell us about his books of wisdom, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes?
2. Who Is Speaking? The Bible is from God, but records speeches of evil and uninspired people too. Who is speaking in these verses?
 - a. Genesis 3:4; Matthew 4:3,6,9? Should we listen?
 - b. Job 4-5, 8-11? Are they right?
3. Who Is Being Spoken To? Sometimes things are said specifically to one person or group that are not intended for others.
 - a. Deuteronomy 5:1-21. Who is spoken to? Why does it matter?
 - b. John 13-16. Who is spoken to? Why does it matter?

B. What?

1. What Did The Writer Mean? People have twisted some statements to say something a writer did not mean (2 Peter 3:15-16).
 - a. "I thank God that I baptized none of you..." (1 Corinthians 1:14-17; compare 1:10-13)? What did he mean?
 - b. "A brother or sister is not under bondage..." (1 Corinthians 7:15-24; compare 7:1,26)? What did he mean?
2. What Has He Been Talking About? That is the context. Taking a passage out of its context can make it teach something false.
 - a. Matthew 24. Does this passage describe the end of the world? What does it say that it describes (24:1-3,15,34)?
 - b. Revelation. Does this book describe the end of the world? What does it say of those events (Revelation 1:1-3; 22:6-10)?

C. When?

1. When Was It Written? It is helpful to know the historical context and setting of a book, and to know the time of its writing thus adding more weight to the prophecies contained within it. It is also essential to know in what age the writer was speaking.
 - a. Why does it make a difference (Romans 7:4; Galatians 5:1-4)?
 - b. Whose word are we to follow today (Hebrews 1:1-2)?

D. Why?

1. Why Did He Write? Every book and every passage has a reason for being in the Bible. Those things written serve a purpose.
 - a. Why were the Old Testament books written (Romans 15:4)?
 - b. Why were various New Testament books written (Luke 1:1-4; John 20:30-31; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 4:14; 2 Corinthians 2:1f)?

CONCLUSION: A good Bible student will answer these before he can go very far!

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE?

Whenever studying or discussing religion with people, we often hear statements that we only have a difference of opinion, or that we just interpret things differently, or that we cannot be expected to agree on everything.

Is the Bible too hard to understand (Ephesians 3:4; 5:17)? Did God author a book that is too confusing (1 Corinthians 14:33)? It is possible for us to misunderstand the Bible differently, but we cannot understand it differently (1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:5; Jude 3)!!

I. THINGS NECESSARY FOR UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

- A. **Standard Of Authority.** To be consistent we must have some standard by which to measure our opinions, beliefs, and practices.
1. What is the standard which must govern our lives (John 12:48; Psalm 119:105)?
 2. What is the consequence of using man's opinions as our standard of belief and practice (Matthew 15:8-9)? Why are they so inaccurate (1 Corinthians 2:9-11)?
- B. **Ability To Understand.** It requires no special ability. Common people heard Jesus gladly (Mark 12:37) because He spoke simply. What two reasons did Jesus speak to them in parables (Matthew 13:10-17)?
1. Are some things really difficult to understand (2 Peter 3:15-17)?
 2. Does that mean God's word cannot be understood (Ephesians 3:3-4)?
 3. Why do some people with the ability to understand, still misunderstand the Bible (Matthew 23:37; 2 Corinthians 3:14-16; 4:3-4)?
- C. **Desire To Understand.** Many people don't care enough to know what the Bible says. And when they read it they don't care enough to put much thought into it in order to understand.
1. What will happen if we desire to know the truth (John 7:17)?
 2. What will happen if we desire to obey the truth (John 8:31-32)?
 3. What will God do to us if we do not desire to know or have a love for the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)? Is that fair to us? Why or why not?
- D. **Open Mind.** If our minds are already made up about something, there is no benefit in studying the Bible. Prejudice blinds us and will not allow us to accept the truth (Acts 28:25-28).
1. Why did some people not even listen to Jesus' teaching (Matthew 13:53-58)?
 2. What were two reasons the authorities indicated that had closed their minds about even the possibility that Jesus could be a prophet (John 7:45-52)?
- E. **Noble Heart.** God does not force His word on anyone. In Jesus' parable seed lands on many kinds of hearts but cannot take root (Luke 8:4-15).
1. What was this seed? What was wrong with the other hearts?
 2. What kind of heart was necessary for the seed to grow (Luke 8:15)?

CONCLUSION: Can we all understand the Bible alike? Would God hold us accountable to believe and obey something that we could not understand (John 12:48; Revelation 20:12)?

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

Man deals in time... days, months, weeks, years. All of our plans are limited and regulated by it. But God is not limited by time (Isaiah 57:15; 2 Peter 3:8)! Therefore the whole Bible is the working out of God's plan in His own time!!

I. THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

- A. The Fall Of Man (Genesis 3). When God created man He gave him one command to test his love for God (Genesis 2:16-17).
1. What did man do (Genesis 3:1-7)? What was the consequence (Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22)? What promise did God make to begin our redemption (Genesis 3:15)?
- B. The Promises To Abraham (Genesis 12). Abraham showed extraordinary faith toward God. Therefore, God made him some promises.
1. What did God promise Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18-21; 22:15-18)?
 2. How does the rest of the written record trace the fulfillment of these three promises? When is each promise ultimately fulfilled?
 - a. Nation promise (Exodus 12:37).
 - b. Land promise (Joshua 21:43; 23:14).
 - c. Spiritual promise (Galatians 3:16).
 3. Why does the Old Testament leave off the history of the Gentiles?
- C. The Law Of Moses (Exodus 20). At Mt. Sinai, God gave the law to His people as part of the covenant they entered with Him (Exodus 19:3-13).
1. Why was the law given (Galatians 3:19,23-24)?
 2. What was it pointing them to (Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 10:1)?
 3. What would be their consequence for disobeying the law after entering the promised land (Deuteronomy 28-30)?
- D. Promise To David (2 Samuel 7). After the kingdom of Israel was established God made a promise to David. What was it (2 Samuel 7:11-16)? What happened to the kingdom as they began disobeying God?
1. Division (1 Kings 12). What did Jeroboam do?
 2. Captivities (Israel [Assyria - 2 Kings 17], Judah [Babylon - Jeremiah 25:11]). Why did each suffer defeat and captivity?
 3. Restoration (Ezra, Nehemiah). For what did the remnant wait (Malachi 3:1; 4:4-6) Who was he (Matthew 11:13-14; 17:11-13)?
- E. Message Of The Prophets (Acts 3:22-26). They pointed to a ray of hope all along by foretelling the days of Jesus, the Savior and King.
- F. Life Of Jesus Christ (Luke 19:10). He came in response to all those promises God made His people through the centuries (1 Peter 1:18-21).
- G. Spread Of The Kingdom (Acts 1:8). What message did they begin to preach (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)? What are the two responses of those who have been redeemed (Titus 2:11-13)? The epistles help us succeed at doing both of those things!

CONCLUSION: "The 'Paradise Lost' of Genesis becomes the 'Paradise Regained' of Revelation. Where the gate to the tree of life is closed in Genesis it is opened forevermore in Revelation" (Geiser & Nix, A General Introduction To The Bible).

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH #1

The Bible is a united book, but has to be divided to be understood (2 Timothy 2:15). Genesis through Revelation is the complete story of God's work in redeeming man, but we must understand the difference between periods of God's various dealings and covenants with men. This does not mean that God keeps changing His mind, but that each are part of His brilliant plan in motion and working!

I. PROPER DIVISIONS OF THE BIBLE

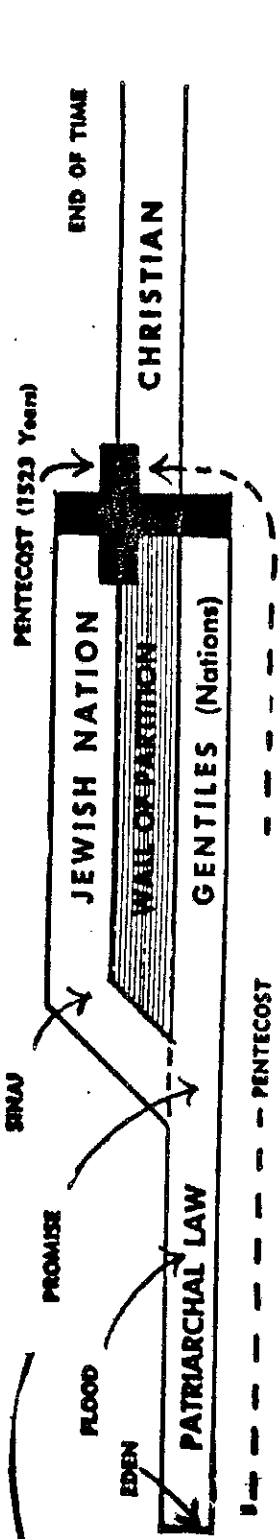
- A. Old Testament (2 Corinthians 3:14; Romans 3:2). Its 39 books, translated from Hebrew contain the record of man's early existence and God's first covenants and promises to all mankind, especially to Israel.
- B. New Testament (2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:6-13). Its 27 books translated from Greek are a record of God's covenant with man today. What is the point of the contrast between the "new" and "old" testaments?

II. THREE DISPENSATIONS OF TIME

- A. Patriarchal (father-rule). The emphasis of this period was the spiritual rule of the heads of houses.
 - 1. There was no written law revealed by God during this period. How did God reveal His will (Genesis 18:19; 9:1-7; Hebrews 1:1-2)?
 - 2. This period began with creation. As far as the nation of Israel was concerned, when did it end (Exodus 19:3-8)? What changed it?
 - 3. Although replaced by a new era for the Israelite nation, did God continue to have relationships with the Gentile people?
 - a. Were they governed by the Law of Moses too (Romans 2:12-16)? Did God forget them completely? Which prophets did He send?
- B. Mosaical (national). It was based on a national covenant between God and the Israelites. They agreed to the covenant (Exodus 19:3-8; 24:1-8), then received the Law of Moses as part of it (Deuteronomy 4:9-14).
 - 1. When did it begin to vanish away (Exodus 34:27-35; 2 Corinthians 3:7,11-16)?
 - 2. Why did it need to be replaced (Hebrews 8:6-13)? When was it replaced (Hebrews 9:15-17)?
 - 3. In what ways was it incomplete (Galatians 3:19-25; Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 10:1-4)?
- C. Christian (international). It is the consummation of these previous dispensations of history. It completed what both periods were lacking.
 - 1. It was ushered in by a period of preparation and transition. What was John the Baptist's work (Matthew 3:1-6; John 1:29-34)?
 - 2. Which dispensation did Jesus live under (Galatians 4:4-5; Matthew 5:17-19)?
 - 3. When did this Christian age actually begin (Hebrews 9:15-17)?
 - 4. What happened to the old covenant and the Law of Moses when it began (Colossians 2:14-17)?
 - 5. What happened to the Jew and Gentile who had been separated by that covenant (Ephesians 2:11-17; 3:1-9; Galatians 3:28)?

CONCLUSION: Why is it essential to understand these various divisions?

THE THREE RELIGIOUS DISPENSATIONS



PATRIARCHAL AGE
A FAMILY SYSTEM
 Eden to the Cross

GENESIS 1 - EXODUS 20

FAMILY RELIGION
 GOD SPOKE TO FATHERS
 Gen. 18:18
 FAMILY ALTAR
 ANIMAL SACRIFICE

JEWISH AGE
A NATIONAL SYSTEM
 Sinai to the Cross

EXODUS 20 - ACTS 1

NATIONAL RELIGION
 LAW CAME BY MOSES
 John 1:17
 JEWS
 PASSOVER FEAST
 TEMPLE
 SABBATH

CHRISTIAN AGE
A UNIVERSAL SYSTEM
 Pentecost to End of Time

ACTS 2 - REVELATION

UNIVERSAL RELIGION
 GRACE & TRUTH BY CHRIST
 Hebrews 1:1-2
 CHRISTIANS
 LORD'S SUPPER
 CHURCH
 LORD'S DAY

The Patriarchal Dispensation

CREATION

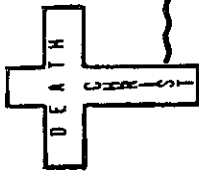
GENESIS 1 - EXODUS 20

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SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

CREATION	FALL OF MAN	WICKEDNESS BEFORE FLOOD	FLOOD 1650 YEARS AFTER CREATION	CONFUSION OF TONGUES	CALL OF ABRAHAM	EGYPTIAN BONDAGE	GIVING OF TEN COMMANDMENTS
? B.C.	? B.C.	? B.C.	? B.C.	? B.C.	1992 B.C.	1777 B.C.	1562 B.C.
PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS & SCRIPTURES							
ADAM	EVE	ENOCH	NOAH	SEM	ABRAHAM	JOSEPH	MOSES
	SETH ENOS CAINAN MAHALALEEL JARED	METHUSELAH LAMECH	SEM HAM JAPHETH	TERAH ABRAHAM	ISAAC JACOB JOSEPH	12 PATRIARCHS Sons of Jacob	ARON
GENESIS 1 - 2	GENESIS 3 - 5	GENESIS 6	GENESIS 7 - 10	GENESIS 11 JOB	GENESIS 12 - 30	GENESIS 38 - 50 EXODUS 1 - 13	EXODUS 14 - 20

The Christian Dispensation



SECOND
COMING
OF
CHRIST

ACTS 2 - REVELATION

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

ESTABLISHMENT OF CHURCH ON PENTECOST	CHURCH SCATTERED THROUGH PERSECUTION	CONVERSION OF SAUL	CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS	PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR	PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR	PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY TOUR	PAUL IMPRISONED	PERSECUTION DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM by TITUS	DEATH OF JOHN
30 A.D.	31-36 A.D.	37 A.D.	40 A.D.	45-49 A.D.	50-53 A.D.	54-58 A.D.	58-67 A.D.	62-70 A.D.	97 A.D.
APOSTLES & APPROXIMATE DATES OF N T BOOKS									
ACTS 1-6	ACTS 7-8	ACTS 9	ACTS 10	ACTS 13-15	ACTS 15-18	ACTS 18-20	ACTS 20-28		
1 2 APOSTLES PETER ANDREW JAMES JOHN PHILIP BARTHOLOMEW	THOMAS MATTHEW JAMES SIMON THADDEUS JUDAS				1 THESSALONIANS 2 THESSALONIANS	MATTHEW MARK 1 CORINTHIANS 2 CORINTHIANS GALATIANS ROMANS	LUKE JAMES ACTS EPHESIANS PHILIPPIANS COLOSSIANS PHILEMON HEBREWS 1 TIMOTHY TITUS 2 TIMOTHY	1 PETER 2 PETER JUDE JOHN	1 JOHN 2 JOHN 3 JOHN REVELATION

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH #2

Careful Bible students try very hard to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Sometimes we emphasize the "divide" portion of that passage and take pride in knowing there are divisions... but perhaps we should be more careful to emphasize the "rightly" portion of that verse!

I. COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- A. Mixing The Old And New Testaments Together. Great confusion exists when we pick and choose what we want to believe and practice from both.
1. What happened to Moses' law (Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:15)?
 2. Why are the laws of Moses and Christ incompatible (Romans 7:1-7)?
 3. What are some of the consequences of obeying the law of Moses to be justified (Acts 15:10; Galatians 3:8-14; 5:1-4)?
- B. Thinking The Old Testament Is Useless. One can never adequately understand the New Testament without knowing the Old (2 Timothy 3:16-17). What prepared Timothy for his service to God (2 Timothy 3:14-15)?
1. Who was the Old Testament record written for (Romans 15:4; 1 Peter 1:10-12; Romans 4:19-24)?
 2. What are we supposed to learn from it (1 Corinthians 10:1-11)?
 3. How should the Christian feel who does not "rightly divide the word" (2 Timothy 2:15)?
- C. Making General Divisions Too Rigid. We previously emphasized the divisions between the New and Old Testaments and the Three Dispensations. But we must take care not to make these divisions too precise or rigid.
1. Between The Two Testaments.
 - a. Who inserted the page between Malachi and Matthew? Should this page be in there at all? If so, is it even in the right place (cf. Hebrews 9:15-17)?
 - b. How precise is the separation between Old and New Testaments? Did they change at a certain moment in time? Or do the covenants overlap at all (cf. Hebrews 8:13; 2 Corinthians 3:11)?
 - c. Was God's covenant with Israel only a religious covenant? Although the law and its ordinances were taken away in Christ (Romans 7:1-4; Colossians 2:14), remnants of the covenant lingered until the destruction of the nation. How does that help explain the following passages?
 - 1) Acts 18:18 (cf. Number 6)?
 - 2) Acts 18:21 (cf. Romans 14:4-6)?
 - 3) Acts 21:17-26 (cf. 21:21,28)?
 - 4) Acts 24:17-18?
 2. Between The Three Dispensations.
 - a. Was the patriarchal system totally dissolved worldwide at Mt. Sinai... or only changed for the Israelites (Romans 2:12-16)?
 - b. Did God forget the Gentile nations? What nationality was Balaam? To whom did Obadiah prophesy? Jonah? Nahum?
 - c. Why do we read so little about the Gentile world in the Old Testament? What was their general attitude toward God (cf. Romans 1:20-32)?

CONCLUSION: Bible study can be rewarding if we "rightly" divide the word!!

WHY SHOULD WE STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT?

Christians neglect studying the Old Testament for various reasons. Can you name some? New Testament Christians, deficient in their knowledge of the Old Testament, are handicapped in their Christian development (2 Timothy 3:16-17)!

Christ has lifted the veil of ignorance so we can understand the Old Testament through the things we have learned about Him (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:12-18; Luke 24:25-27,44-47). What are some of the benefits of studying the Old Testament?

I. IT ESTABLISHES AND STRENGTHENS FAITH IN JESUS AS THE CHRIST

- A. Jesus Is The Central Figure In The Old Testament (John 5:39-47). He is the golden thread running through and binding together every book.
1. Which portions of the Old Testament writings referred to Jesus (Luke 24:44-47)?
 2. How many of the prophets referred to the coming Christ or the Messianic age (Acts 3:22-26; 1 Peter 1:10-12)? Every writing prophet (except perhaps Nahum) makes such a reference.

II. IT PRESENTS SPIRITUAL TRUTHS WITH PHYSICAL TYPES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

- A. The Old Testament Was A Shadow Of The Substance In The New Testament (Colossians 2:14-17). How can the shadow of physical types prepare the mind to accept the spiritual substance?
1. What did animal sacrifices teach us about Jesus (Hebrews 10:1-4,10-14,18-22)?
 2. What did the tabernacle teach us about heaven (Hebrews 8:5; 9:1-12,23-24)?
 3. What did the high priesthood teach us about what Jesus would do for us (Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6; 7:20-28; 8:1-6)?
- "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed".

III. IT SHOWS US GOD'S NATURE

- A. God's Nature Has Never Changed (James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8). He cannot change who He is (Malachi 3:6). His commands and provisions have changed some through history as He worked His plan of redemption (Ephesians 3:10-11).
1. God's dealings in the Old Testament give us an insight into His dealings with nations and people today. On what principles does God rule among the nations (Psalm 89:14; 97:2; Jeremiah 18:7-10)?
 2. Who did He pass that rule on to (Psalm 2; Ephesians 1:22-23)?
 3. What has God's attitude toward sin and unbelief always been (Romans 11:22; 1 Corinthians 10:1-11)?

IV. IT GIVES US HOPE

- A. God Always Keeps His Promises (Romans 15:4; Hebrews 6:13-20). We can look back on the history of God's promise-making, see the fulfillment later, and be assured that He will fulfil all His promises to us.
1. Who is mentioned for our example (Romans 4:16-24; esp. vv.23-24)?

CONCLUSION: What is your attitude toward studying the Old Testament now?

HOW TO STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is not as intimidating and frightening as it appears if you know a few helpful rules for studying it first.

I. LEARN BASIC OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY FIRST

- A. An Unbroken History Can Be Found In Only 12 Books. These cover God's dealings with mankind chronologically from creation to repairing the walls of Jerusalem about 430 BC (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah).
1. Calculate what percentage those books are of the entire Old Testament. Doesn't that already begin to simplify matters?
 2. Can you summarize the contents of each of those 12 books?
 3. Once you get in mind the historical setting of the Old Testament period, you are ready to understand how the other books fit in.

II. CONSIDER ALL OTHER BOOKS IN THE CONTEXT OF THAT HISTORY

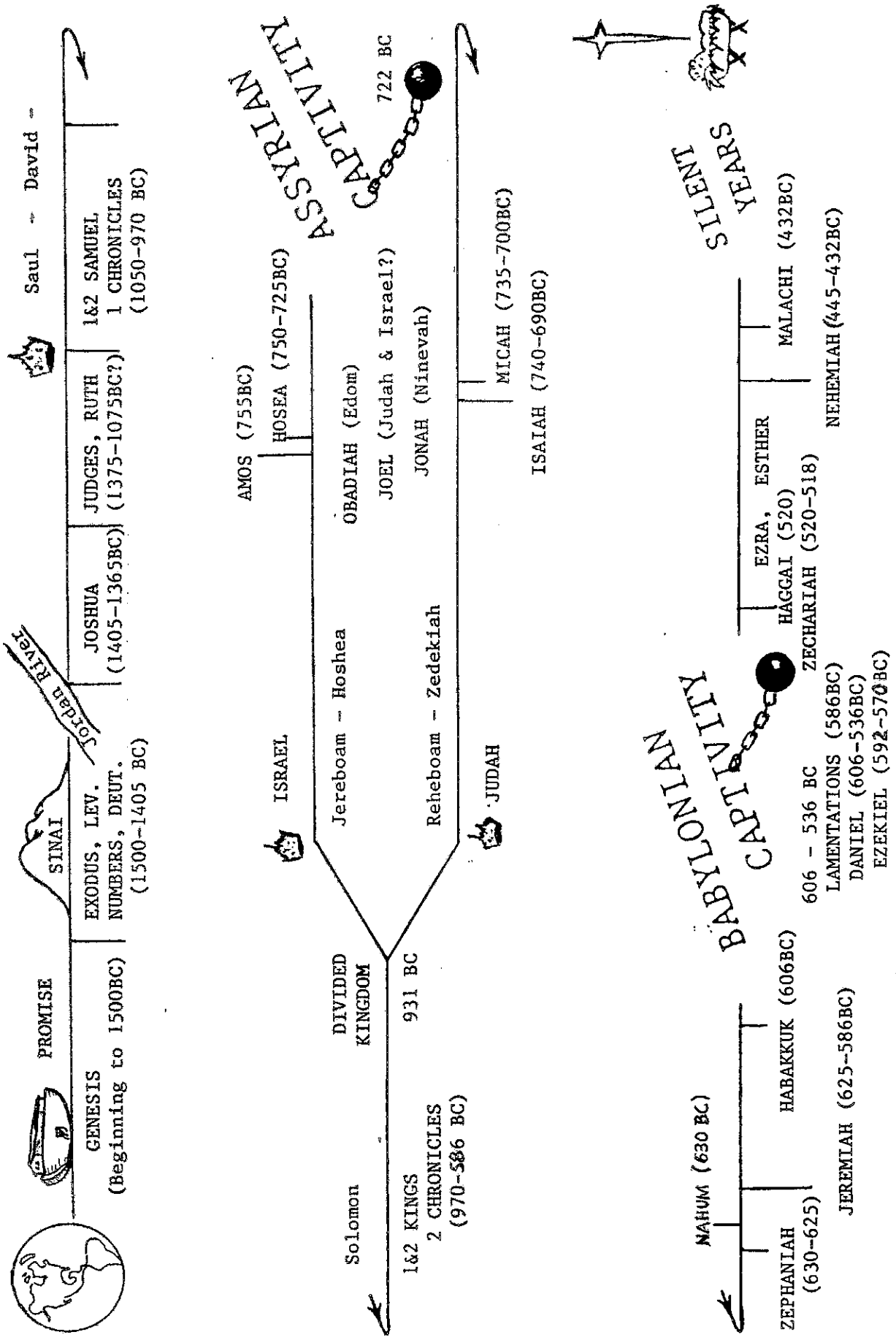
- A. Study Them In Connection With The Events To Which They Relate. Group the books together according to historical time periods and then study each book of that time period for a richer and fuller understanding of the times and messages of each book.
1. Remaining Books Of History And Law.
 - a. Which period of history in the above 12 books do each of these other books of history and law parallel? Leviticus? Ruth? 1 & 2 Chronicles? Lamentations? Esther?
 2. Books Of Prophecy. The prophetic books are often regarded as especially difficult and not worth the time to study.
 - a. What help would it be to know the history of the times during which a man was prophesying?
 - b. Did any of the prophets ever give new laws? Can you summarize the general message of all the prophets in one word?
 - c. As a "forth-teller" more than just a "fore-teller" was the prophet's message important because it predicted the future or because it was God revealing His will (Jeremiah 1:17; 15:19; Amos 3:7-8)?
 - d. Why are some of the prophets called "major prophets" and some called "minor prophets"? List them in each category.
 - e. Would studying the prophets in historical order make them easier to understand and remember?
 - f. How does the Old Testament end (Malachi 3:1; 4:4-6)? When are the prophecies fulfilled (Luke 1:13-17; Matthew 11:10-15)?

III. RECOGNIZE THE GODLY WISDOM AND INSIGHT INTO HUMANITY IN WISDOM LITERATURE

- A. Human Nature Never Changes. The messages and lessons from the lives of these Old Testament characters are still relative to human life today.
1. In one sentence, what is the subject of each of these books of wisdom? Job? Psalms? Proverbs? Ecclesiastes? Song of Solomon?
 2. How can these books help us in daily living (2 Timothy 3:16-17)?

CONCLUSION: The Old Testament doesn't have to be as complicated as we make it!

PROMISED LAND



A CHRONOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

<i>Biblical Events</i>		<i>World History</i>
Call of Abraham	2100 B.C.	Hyksos come to power in Egypt
Birth of Joseph	1915 B.C.	
Jacob's family moves to Egypt	1876 B.C.	
Death of Joseph	1805 B.C.	
	1580 B.C.	Hyksos expelled from Egypt
Birth of Moses	1530 B.C.	
	1504 B.C.	Thutmose III (Pharaoh of Oppression)
	1450 B.C.	Amenhotep II (Pharaoh of the Exodus)
The exodus; Ten Commandments	1447 B.C.	
Moses' death; entry of Canaan under Joshua	1407 B.C.	
Death of Joshua; period of the judges begins	1385 B.C.	
	1361 B.C.	Tutankhamen ("King Tut") becomes Pharaoh
		(Cycles of apostasy, oppression and de- liverance during time of Israel's judges)
Saul becomes king	1050 B.C.	
Saul's death; David becomes king of Israel	1010 B.C.	
David's death; Solomon comes to the throne	970 B.C.	
Solomon begins the temple	967 B.C.	
Solomon's death; division of the kingdom	930 B.C.	
Northern Kingdom falls to Assyria	721 B.C.	
	701 B.C.	Sennacherib's invasion of Judah
	612 B.C.	Destruction of Nineveh
First deportation of captives from Judah	606 B.C.	
Second deportation	597 B.C.	
Third deportation; Solomon's temple destroyed	586 B.C.	
Jehoiachin freed in Babylon	562 B.C.	
	539 B.C.	Babylon falls; Persian period begins
Cyrus allows first captives to leave under Zerubbabel	536 B.C.	
Work begins on second temple	535 B.C.	
Temple completed	515 B.C.	
	486 B.C.	Ahasuerus becomes King of Persia
Esther becomes Ahasuerus' queen	480 B.C.	
	465 B.C.	Artaxerxes I becomes King
Ezra leads captives home	458 B.C.	
Nehemiah leads captives home	445 B.C.	
Nehemiah visits Artaxerxes	433 B.C.	

UNDERSTANDING OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

Many Bible students are afraid to delve into studies of the Old Testament prophets because they are difficult to understand. But a few basic insights will help you be more enlightened when you read (2 Peter 1:19-21). If prophecy first came from God, can we expect it to be understandable?

I. WHAT IS A PROPHET?

- A. A Prophet Was A Spokesman Or Mouthpiece For God. Note the inspired definition of a "prophet" (Exodus 4:14-16; 7:1-2). How did God illustrate this to Moses?
1. How did the prophet's words bear God's authority (Jeremiah 15:19)?
 2. How did the prophets serve as God's spokesmen (Jeremiah 1:7,17; Ezekiel 3:4; Amos 3:8; Hebrews 1:1)?
 3. How long had God sent His people prophets (Jeremiah 7:25-27)?
 4. Although their ability to "foretell" the future is what we often think of, their primary work was to "forth-tell" God's message.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE SUBJECT OF A PROPHECY

- A. Remember Three Things. To make sense of events and the messages spoken by the prophets remembering these things will consistently help you understand the subject of the prophecies.
1. Understand the political, moral, social and religious conditions at the time. What insight will that give you into their message?
 2. Understand what the prophets consider God's relation is to the heathen nations. God directed their destiny too (Daniel 2:20-23, 28; 4:17,25,34-37). To whom would some prophecies be spoken then?
 3. Understand the prophets often left a ray of hope in the midst of the gloom. This often pointed to a future kingdom and king who was the true hope of Israel. Who did this ultimately point to (Acts 2:36; Ephesians 1:19-22)?

III. INTERPRETTING PROPHECY

- A. Simple Rules For Interpreting Prophecy. These will not force an interpretation, but allow the prophecies to speak for themselves.
1. Since the prophecy was spoken directly to ancient men it is important to know all the circumstances. Who did it speak to first?
 2. Predictions and messages were usually concerned with three events.
 - a. Israel's punishment for sin (by Assyria and Babylon).
 - b. Return of the Jews to Palestine (under Ezra and Nehemiah).
 - c. Coming of the Messiah and His kingdom (Daniel 2:44-45; Isaiah 9:6-7). He is a big part of prophecy (Acts 3:19-26; Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-47).
 3. Begin with the simple and clear then move to complex and obscure.
 4. Like all literature, prophecy contains figures of speech, but often the meaning is clear (Jeremiah 25:15f). What does it mean?
 5. There is some dualism in prophecy (e.g. Ezekiel 37).



Table Of Contents

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HOW TO STUDY THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament we have God's mystery revealed (Ephesians 3:3-5), the grace of God made known (Titus 2:11-14), and the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Through that precious word we can be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:3-4) and become completely equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). How important therefore, is it to know how to study it?

I. KEYS TO PROFITABLE BIBLE STUDY

- A. Unprofitable Methods Of Bible Study. There is somewhat of a right way and wrong way to study the Bible.
1. Fall Open At Random. Why is this an easy method of study? Why is it an ineffective method?
 2. Book By Book. Why would simply reading Matthew through Revelation, cover to cover, be an ineffective method of study? Are the books of the New Testament always arranged chronologically? In what ways could that hinder study?
- B. Keys To Profitable Bible Study. We must first recognize certain truths about the New Testament.
1. View The New Testament As The Fulfillment And Interpreter Of The Old Testament (Colossians 2:13-17; Hebrews 10:1-4). Would you agree that "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed"?
 - a. Why would quotations and symbols taken from the Old Testament be found naturally in the New (Galatians 3:24; John 5:39:46)?
 - b. How long had God's plan been in the making (1 Peter 1:18-20)?
 - c. How long had God been revealing bits and pieces of His plan (1 Peter 1:10-12)?
 2. Survey The Entire New Testament Before Analyzing Its Parts. Why is it important to see the whole picture before concentrating on the individual parts (books, chapters and verses)?
 - a. See future lesson "How To Survey A Book Of The Bible".
 3. Recognize Key Truths Of The New Testament. Why is it important to recognize recurring themes throughout the New Testament? These are a few of the more important ones...
 - a. Redemption of man (Ephesians 3:10-11).
 - b. Sin is man's basic desperate problem (Romans 3:23-26; 6:23).
 - c. Without God's grace we have no hope (Ephesians 2:8-9,12).
 - d. Gospel is a universal message (Romans 1:16; Mark 16:15-16).
 - e. Faith and works is man's necessary response to God's working (Ephesians 2:8-10; James 2:14-26).
 - f. The destiny of the whole world is moving toward eternity (Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Peter 3:10-14).
 - g. What other key truths come to your mind?
 4. Accept The New Testament As God's Final Instructions For Living. Even in this century.
 - a. How can the New Testament be vital and relevant for us even though written long ago (1 Peter 1:23-25; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)?
 - b. Is there more revelation needed for modern life (Jude 3)?

CONCLUSION: Is effective Bible study more than just reading select passages? Why is it so important to study the New Testament effectively (John 12:48)?

UNDERSTANDING THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament is profound, yet simple and understandable (Ephesians 3:3-5). It was quite a feat to include all we need to know to serve God in these few books (2 Peter 1:3-4). Each book has a character and place all its own.

I. HISTORICAL BOOKS

- A. The Gospels (Matthew--John). What is the main purpose of these books (Luke 1:1-3; John 20:30-31)? There are many effective methods of studying these books.
1. Study Them Collectively. How could harmonizing all of the different writer's accounts into one be an effective method of study?
 2. Study Them By The Periods Of Jesus' Life (Preparation, Obscurity, Popularity, Opposition, Persecution, Passion Week, Resurrection).
 3. Study Them Separately. Emphasize the unique purpose and style of each book. Why was each writer so selective in the events he recorded (John 21:25)?
 - a. Matthew emphasized Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy (5:17-18).
 - b. Mark emphasized Jesus' power and service (10:45).
 - c. Luke emphasized Jesus' compassion and humanity (19:10).
 - d. John emphasized Jesus' Deity and proofs of it (20:30-31).
 - e. How is each account important to the whole picture of Jesus?
- B. Acts Of The Apostles. It is a selected history of the works of Jesus' followers after His death. What important command of His did they carry out in this book (Matthew 28:18-20)?
1. Outline Of Acts (1:8). This one verse summarizes the rest of the book! Where did they begin evangelizing (Acts 1-7)? Where did they continue evangelizing later (Acts 8-12)? What sparked that work (8:1-4)? Then how far did they take the word (Acts 13-28)?

II. EPISTLES

- A. The Epistles (Romans--Jude). The subject of all these books is Jesus. They compress more teaching into fewer words than any other Scripture.
1. Paul's Epistles (Romans--Philemon).
 - a. A good study would be to summarize the message of each book.
 - b. Another good study would be studying each epistle in connection with Paul's missionary journeys in Acts.
 2. General Epistles (Hebrews--Jude).
 - a. These are fairly general in content and addressed to Christians and churches in general.

III. BOOK OF PROPHECY

- A. Revelation. Is a message to believers (1:1) and warning to enemies of God's people (6:12-17). A few basics are helpful in studying the book.
1. Written in symbols (1:1).
 2. Discusses events shortly to take place (1:1,3; 22:6,10).
 3. Written to people of John's day (1:4; cf. 2:7,11,17,27-28; etc).
 4. Teaches that Jesus is reigning now (1:5,9; 17:14; 19:11-16; etc).
 5. Depicts the avenging of the saints (6:9-11; 7:13-14; 16:5-7; etc).
 6. Depicts the spiritual realm in its visions (1:10; 21:5).

CHART 17

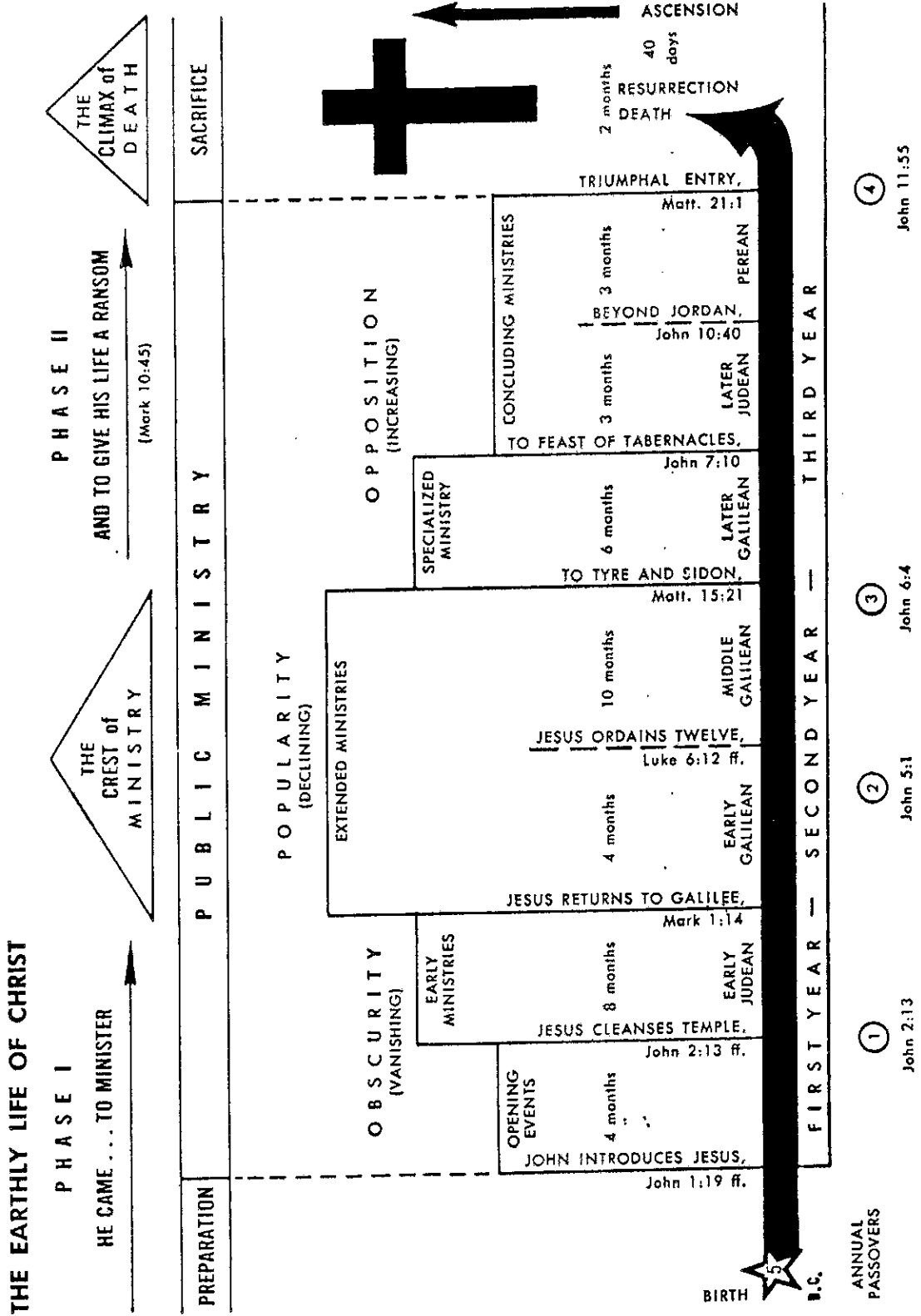


CHART 18

COMPARISONS OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
PORTRAITS OF JESUS	The Prophesied King	The Obedient Servant	The Perfect Man	The Divine Son
PROMINENT WORDS	"fulfilled"	"straightway"	"Son of man"	"believe"
CULTURES OF THE ORIGINAL READERS	Jews (Jesus, Son of Abraham)	Romans (Action: no genealogy)	Greeks (Jesus, Son of Adam)	Church (Jesus, Son of God)
OUTLOOK AND STYLE OF THE WRITERS	Teacher	Preacher	Litterateur	Theologian
OUTSTANDING SECTIONS	Sermons	Miracles	Parables	Doctrines
PROMINENT IDEAS	Law	Power	Grace	Glory
BROAD DIVISION	<p>"SYNOPTIC GOSPELS" —stressing the humanity of Christ, from the outward, earthly side</p>			<p>"FOURTH GOSPEL" —stressing the deity of Christ</p>

CHART 1

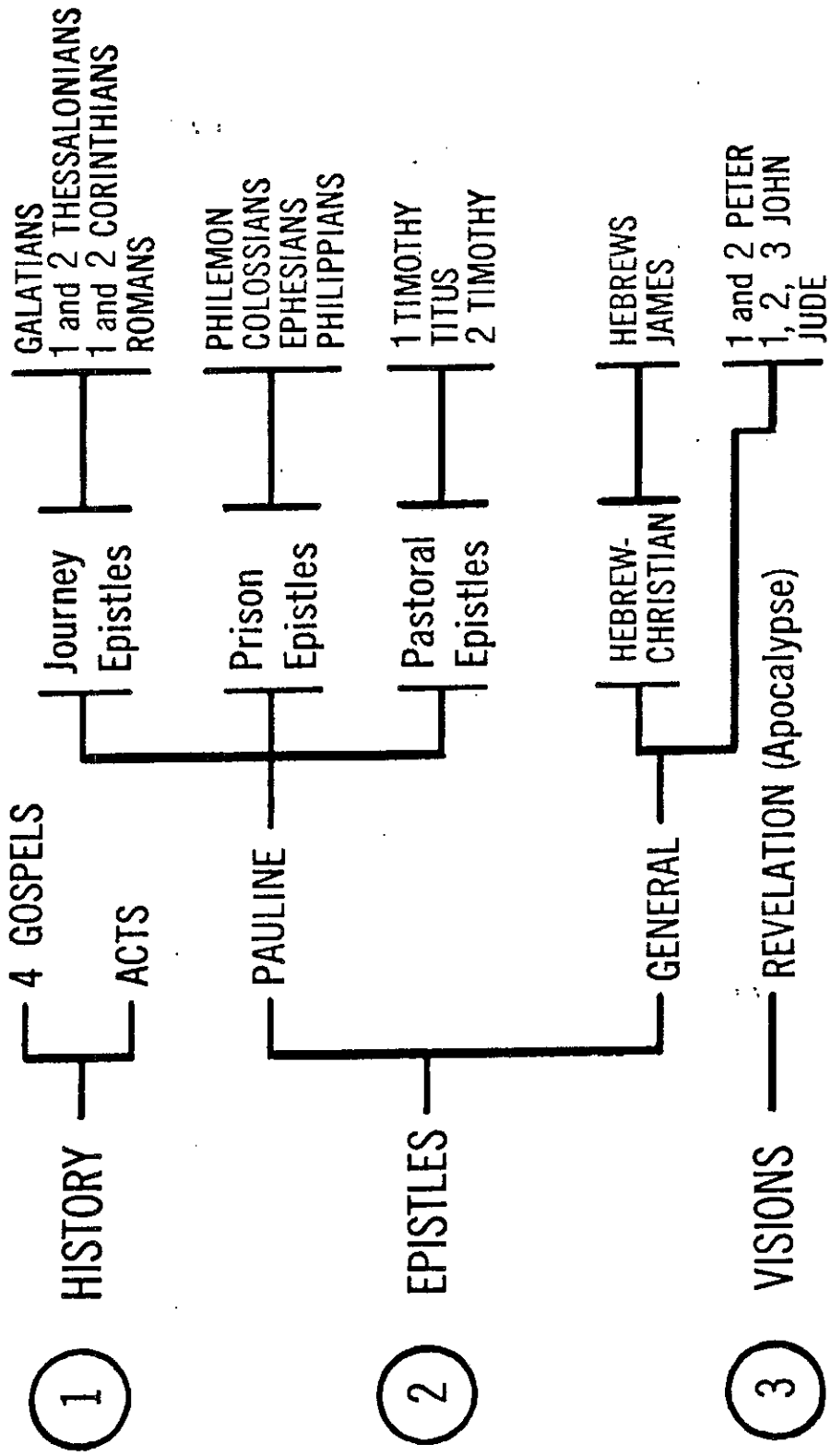
**A CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF
THE WRITING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS**

BOOK	AUTHOR		PLACE WRITTEN	DATE A.D.	PERIODS			
					PERSONNEL	APOSTOLIC LITERATURE	CHURCHES	
JAMES	James		Jerusalem	45		BEGINNINGS	FOUNDING	
GALATIANS	Paul	JOURNEY EPISTLES	} Corinth	48	FIRST PAULINE PERIOD			
MARK?				52				
1 THESS				55				
2 THESS				56				
1 COR								
2 COR		Ephesus						
ROMANS		Macedonia						
		Corinth						
MATTHEW	Matthew		Jerusalem?	58	FIRST HISTORICAL RECORDS	CENTRAL	ESTABLISHING	
LUKE	Luke		Rome	61				
ACTS	"							
COLOSSIANS	Paul	PRISON EPISTLES	Rome	61	CENTRAL PAULINE PERIOD			
EPHESIANS								
PHILEMON								
PHILIPPIANS								
1 TIMOTHY	Paul	PASTORAL EPISTLES	Macedonia	62	PAUL'S LEGACY			
TITUS			Corinth?	—				
2 TIMOTHY			Rome	67				
HEBREWS	?							
JUDE	Jude							
1 PETER	Peter			68?	PETER'S LEGACY			
2 PETER								
MARK	Mark							
JOHN	John		Ephesus?	85	JOHN'S LEGACY	CLOSING	CONTINUING	
1 JOHN								
2 JOHN								
3 JOHN								
REVELATION			Patmos	96				

There are various opinions as to the order of writing. For example, some place Galatians later and Mark earlier.

CHART 60

GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



**PROGRESSIVE ADDITIONS OF PAUL'S EPISTLES
TO THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

CHART 61

GROUP	SETTING	EPISTLE	DATE A.D.	MAIN SUBJECTS	GENERAL PURPOSES	
I TRAVEL EPISTLES	between first and second journeys	GALATIANS	48	SALVATION at Present and in the Future	EVANGELIZING	TO CHURCHES
	second journey	1 and 2 THESSALONIANS	52			
	third journey	1 and 2 CORINTHIANS	55			
		ROMANS	56			
II PRISON EPISTLES	first Roman imprisonment	COLOSSIANS	61	CHRIST and the Christian Life	EDIFYING	TO CHURCHES
		EPHESIANS				
		PHILEMON				
		PHILIPPIANS				
III PASTORAL EPISTLES	release	1 TIMOTHY	62	CHURCH and its Workers	ESTABLISHING	TO INDIVIDUALS
		TITUS	62			
	second Roman imprisonment	2 TIMOTHY	67		personal farewell	

HOW TO SURVEY A BOOK OF THE BIBLE

It is helpful to have Bible study tools, aids, and outlines, but how do you begin studying a book from scratch? Although each book is different in content and style, the same method of study can be used to analyze all of them. Surveying an entire book and then analyzing its contents opens up its messages for us.

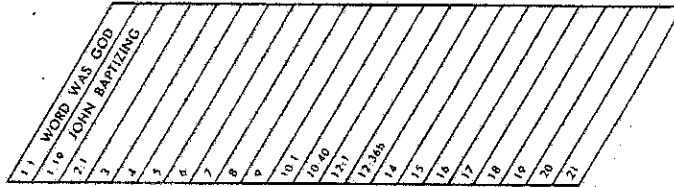
I. HOW TO SURVEY A BOOK OF THE BIBLE

- A. Surveying A Book. A survey is an overall view of the book made from different perspectives. What are the benefits of such a "bird's eye" view? After identifying the whole picture, what can then be done with the smaller parts?

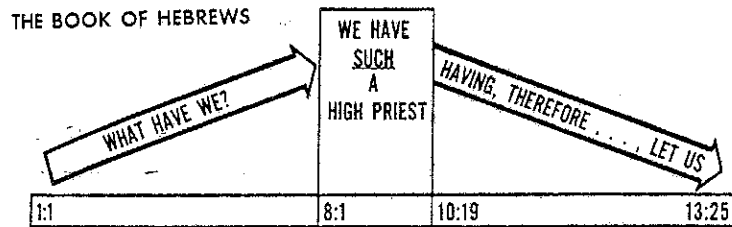
- B. Purposes And Aims Of Survey Study.
 1. Observing The Total Structure Of The Book. The books of the Bible are not just collections of spiritual truths and facts. The words are meaningful because they are organized around themes in such a way as to express an intended truth.
 2. Seeing Each Part In Its Intended Emphasis. Surveying and identifying the highlights of a book before analyzing the details guards against the extremes of overemphasizing or minimizing any one part of Scripture.
 3. Seeing Each Part In Its Relation To The Other Parts. A single verse studied in isolation from its context could be obscure, difficult, or subject to a wrong interpretation. For example:
 - a. Matthew 4:5-7. What was Satan making this quotation say? Now read Psalm 91:11-12. What did these verses mean in their context?
 - b. The survey method of study keeps you aware of the context, both near and far. What danger are we exposed to if we don't know the context of a verse (2 Peter 3:15-17)?

- C. Procedures And Methods Of Personal Bible Study (Acts 17:11)... The "How To's" of personal study. Three main stages are involved progressing from first impressions to repeated impressions to lasting impressions.
 1. Stage One: Get Acquainted With The Book.
 - a. Scan it in one sitting if you can. What benefits will that bring?
 - b. Write down first impressions. They may not be lasting but what good can they be?
 - c. Look for key words and phrases or recurring themes. What direction will these generally lead you?
 2. Stage Two: Work With Individual Segments.
 - a. Divide the book into segments or verses which represent a unit of thought. How will that help your study?
 - b. Assign a segment title to each unit and record it on paper. What will be the advantage of doing this?
 - c. It is important to use your own ingenuity and originality when studying. You really can understand it (Ephesians 3:3-4; John 7:17).
 - d. Assign topics (preferably a phrase from the section) to each section of the Gospel of John as it is divided on the chart on the back page.

SEGMENT TITLES OF JOHN



3. Stage Three: See How The Book Holds Together. See how all the parts blend together into a pattern.
 - a. Compare the beginning and end of the book. What can that tell you?
 - b. Look for groups or clusters of similar material (like Matthew 5-7; Daniel 7-12; etc.)
 - c. Look for a key turning point (like in Book of Hebrews).



- d. Read your list of segment titles a few times and see if you can detect any movement in the action of the book (For instance, what kind of movement do you detect in your segment topics for the Book of John above).
- e. Try to state the book's theme in your own words. Or look for one or two verses which summarize the whole book. If you are able to do that, then what does that show about your understanding of the book?

CONCLUSION: Full Bible study, both surveying and then analyzing, is a thrilling challenge to all believers. It calls for concentration, reflection and meditation. Each of these things demands time (Psalm 119:97; Acts 17:11).

** This lesson is adapted from the survey method of studying "Jensen's Survey Of The Old Testament", pp.52-60 and "Jensen's Survey Of The New Testament", pp.85-94 by Irving Jensen.

DOES THE BIBLE NEED INTERPRETATION ?

How can we understand a book as profound as the Bible? Actually, the same way we understand human language generally. It is not as difficult as it seems (Ephesians 3:4), but we must be fair and consistently interpret the Bible as we would any other words (Deuteronomy 30:11-14).

I. WHAT IS INTERPRETATION?

- A. What Is Interpretation? The mental effort put forth to understand... not an opinion of what the passage means. How could that opinion be misleading?
- B. What Is Hermeneutics? This is the science of interpretation. Hermeneutics and its rules of interpretation are guidelines to explanation and understanding... not man's clever rules for manipulating and twisting the Bible to say what he wants it to say (cf. 2 Peter 3:15-16). All language is understood this way.

II. DOES THE BIBLE NEED INTERPRETATION?

- A. Does The Bible Need Interpretation? At first glance we might say 'no' because people often say "the Bible has many interpretations" or "everyone has a right to their own interpretation". It does not need that but does the Bible need to be explained and have its meaning extracted?
1. Do we need an inspired person to interpret it for us? Why would God give His revelation to man in the Bible if we still needed inspired men to interpret it (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17)?
 2. Why did God's word need to be interpreted in the following examples? What was involved in "interpreting" each message?
 - a. Nehemiah 8:8? Why did they need interpretation?
 - b. Acts 8:30-39? Why did he need interpretation? What didn't he know that would have helped him understand on his own?
 - c. 2 Timothy 2:15? What is necessary to "rightly divide" or "handle aright" (ASV) the word of truth?

III. IS THE BIBLE UNDERSTANDABLE?

- A. Is The Bible Capable Of Being Understood? Jesus often spoke with men as He traveled the countryside.
1. Were people able to understand His plain, direct words (Matthew 27:63)? Could they even understand His parables and figures (Matthew 21:45)?
 2. Why did Jesus chide His apostles for misunderstanding His words (Mark 8:14-21)? Why did Jesus' foes reject His words? Were those words too hard to understand or was there another reason (John 12:34-43)?
- B. Is The Bible Capable Of Being Misunderstood? Is that because of fault on the part of the word or man (Matthew 13:10-15)?

CONCLUSION: What some people claim to be their "interpretation" of a passage is merely their "opinion". The Bible does not need "opinions" about it, but it does need to be interpreted to make sense of it.

COMMON SENSE BIBLE INTERPRETATION

The Bible was not written to stump or baffle man (1 Corinthians 14:33). Thus, we should not assume it is difficult. Its rules of interpretation are not complicated, neither are they man-made methods of manipulation. Actually, we have used these rules since childhood, unaware of their existence and use them literally every day without thinking.

I. RULES FOR INTERPRETATION

- A. Common Sense. Did God give His word for the common man or the wise of the world (1 Corinthians 1:18-28)? Should we expect to find it in plain language or difficult, technical language (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)? Why were the common people attracted to Jesus' words (Mark 12:37)?
- B. Let The Bible Be Its Own Interpreter. We must be content to let the Bible speak for itself (2 John 9; Revelation 22:18-19).
 1. Let The Bible Give Its Own Explanation Of A Passage.
 - a. Revelation. Many explanations are given for this book, but what does it clearly tell you about itself and the style used in its writing (1:1)? When were the events to take place (1:1-3; 22:6-10)? Is Jesus' reign present or future (1:5)?
 - b. Ezekiel 37. Mormons use this passage and Ezekiel's two sticks to prove the Bible and Book of Mormon go together (37:15-17). But what was Ezekiel's explanation (37:18-28)?
 2. Do Not Read Something Into The Passage That Is Not There. Be content with what it says. Don't claim it teaches something which it says nothing about.
 - a. John 3:16. Does this teach we are saved by faith only?
 - b. John 15:1-8. Does this refer to different religious denominations? How do you know?
 - c. Acts 16:33-34. Does this prove that infant baptism is scriptural? What does one have to assume to get that?
 3. The Bible Does Not Contradict Itself. Any explanation of a text which conflicts with the teaching of the rest of that passage or others is wrong. God does not "double-talk" (1 Corinthians 14:33)
 - a. Faith And Works. Does the teaching of Romans on faith and of James on works contradict? How do they complement each other showing the two are inseparable (James 2:14-26)?
 - b. Baptism. Does the Bible teach in one passage that baptism is essential and then in another that it is not (1 Peter 3:21)?
 4. Take The Sum Of All The Bible Says About A Subject. How can we know the fulness of God's will on a matter (Psalm 119:160)?
 - a. All the facts must be reported and assembled into an explanation that is consistent with the rest of Scripture. How was this done with the question of circumcision (Acts 15:1-21)?
 5. Understand A Passage In Relation To Its Context. What is "context"? What is the danger of lifting a passage out of context (2 Peter 3:15-17; Jude 3-4)? Who is the master of taking passages out of context (Matthew 4:5-7)?

CONCLUSION: The objective in Bible study should be to learn what God has said... not to impose our own preconceptions on God's word. Manipulating His word is nothing short of blasphemy!

FIGURATIVE OR LITERAL LANGUAGE

In speech we often use figurative expressions which spice up our language (the phrase "spice up" is just such a figure). We do it all the time without thinking, yet the thought of distinguishing between literal and figurative language in the Bible frightens people.

I. DETERMINING FIGURATIVE AND LITERAL LANGUAGE

- A. How Can We Determine What Type Of Language Is Used? Why should we always consider the literal meaning first? Was the writer's purpose to cover up his message in obscure language when he spoke figuratively? How could such symbols and figures actually make the meaning clearer?
1. Do not regard anything as figurative unless the context demands it (John 16:25-30).
 2. Accept its claim to be figurative speech (John 2:18-22; 7:37-39).
 3. Ask what "common sense" tells you. Are these examples figurative or literal (John 4:10-16; 1 Corinthians 3:2)? How do you know?
 4. Would a literal interpretation involve an absurdity or impossibility (cf. Jeremiah 1:18; Matthew 8:22)?
 5. Would a literal rendition cause one text to contradict another?
 6. Does a literal definition demand wrong actions or forbid those that are good? Then it is figurative (Matthew 18:8-9).
- If we interpret figurative language literally or literal language figuratively we will certainly miss the meaning!

- B. Rules For Interpreting Figurative Language. These are not man-made, neither are they complicated.
1. Accept The Author's Own Interpretation If Given. Who knows better than the author what he meant (1 Corinthians 2:11)?
 - a. Ezekiel 37:1-14. What did he say he was talking about?
 - b. Luke 8:4-15. What was Jesus' explanation of this parable?
 2. Recognize The Resemblance Of The Things Compared. One thing is compared to another figuratively because of certain similarities.
 - a. Psalm 1. How is a righteous man like a tree that is planted by water? How is the ungodly like chaff?
 3. Let The Facts Of History Assist In Interpreting Figurative Language. This way you see the figure unfolding in history.
 - a. Daniel 2:31-45. Daniel started our interpretation in the right direction (2:37-38). How does history help us understand the rest of this dream?
 4. Any Inspired Interpretation Decides The Meaning Of The Figure. The New Testament writers were inspired in their application and interpretation of Old Testament figures.
 - a. Joel 2:28-32. What was Peter's inspired interpretation of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:16-21; cf. 2:1-39)?
 5. Look For Other Uses Of Similar Figures Elsewhere In Scripture. How could this possibly help your interpretation?
 - a. Do not assume though, a figure will always be used in the same way. Who is described as a lion in each of these passages (Revelation 5:5; 1 Peter 5:8)?

CONCLUSION: Is understanding figurative and literal expressions as complicated as many people think (Ephesians 5:17)?

UNDERSTANDING FIGURES OF SPEECH

A "figure of speech" is a word or expression extended beyond its normal use, for the sake of force or beauty. We should understand the Bible's figures in the same manner as we do our own. They are not clever methods of making the Bible say what we want it to... actually, if we do not recognize them, it will allow people to make the Bible say what they want it to!

I. **UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING FIGURES OF SPEECH** (After studying these types of expressions in the Bible, give a modern example of each figure of speech)

- A. **Metaphor.** This figure of speech applies the name of one thing to another because of some resemblance between them. The likeness is implied or suggested rather than being stated explicitly.
1. Matthew 5:13-16. What is the metaphor? What does it mean?
 2. Matthew 26:26-28. What is the metaphor? What are some false notions people have who do not recognize this figure of speech?
- B. **Simile.** This figure of speech indicates resemblance between two things using such terms as "like" and "as". The likeness between the two is stated explicitly.
1. Matthew 23:27. What is the simile? How are the two things alike?
 2. Acts 2:1-3. List two similes in this passage.
- C. **Allegory.** This figure of speech is also based on resemblance and indirectly suggests one thing through the representation of another. Parables and fables are also allegories.
1. Ecclesiastes 12:1-6. What do all of these expressions allude to?
 2. Galatians 4:21-31. Describe the relationship of these two women. In what ways do they resemble the two covenants?
- D. **Metonymy.** This figure of speech exchanges the name of one thing for that of another because of some relationship between the two of them.
1. Luke 16:29. Were Moses and the prophets still alive? Or was the cause (the writers) put for the effect (their writings)?
 2. 1 Corinthians 11:26. Was the actual cup important (some 'holy grail')? Or did he name the container to denote the contents?
- E. **Synecdoche.** This is a figure of speech by which anything less or anything more is put for the precise object that is meant.
1. Mark 16:15. Was every creature that was created to be preached unto? Or does He use the whole in place of the part?
 2. Genesis 21:7. Did Sarah have children (plural)? Or was the plural form of the word used to refer to a single child?
- F. **Paradox.** This is a figure of speech in which opposites seem to be affirmed to be true of the same subject or statement.
1. Matthew 10:39. What is the paradox? What does it mean?
 2. 2 Corinthians 12:10. What is the paradox? How does it give the writer's point more force?
- G. **Anthropomorphism.** This figure of speech ascribes human features and elements of the human form to God (cf. John 4:24; Luke 24:39).
1. 1 Peter 3:12. What human forms are attributed to God? Why?
 2. Revelation 3:16. If in heaven, Jesus does not really have a human form, what feeling toward man does this expression relate?

CONCLUSION: It is not so important to remember the names of each kind of speech as it is to recognize that the Bible uses them freely, just like we do. Understanding the use of these figures, we can gain much from their rich expressions!

UNDERSTANDING BIBLE TYPES

The Old Testament furnishes us with some vivid pictures of Christ and God's plan for redeeming man through the various "types" employed. What insight does that fact give us into Jesus' claim (Matthew 5:17)? Bible types and their antitypes bring the Old and New Testaments together into a unified body of truth.

I. WHAT IS A TYPE?

- A. What Is A Type? Three other words express the same general idea -- 'shadow' (Hebrews 10:1), 'figure' (Hebrews 9:9), and 'copy [pattern]' (Hebrews 9:23). What do these words tell us about a "type"?
1. Types Are Persons, Things Or Events Which Foreshadow Another Which Is To Come. They resemble one another, and by that resemblance the latter thing is explained and pictured by the former thing.
 2. Types Are Pictures Or Object Lessons. How did the types of Moses' system train men to understand God's plans (Hebrews 8:5; 9:9,23)?
 3. Types Pictorially Express Spiritual Truths. How can deeper spiritual truths in the New Testament be explained and understood by more simple truths of the Old Testament (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:46)?
 4. Types Are Divinely Appointed. Since centuries lie between the type and its accomplishment in the antitype, only God can assign and then fulfil them (cf. 1 Peter 3:20-21). What is the type and antitype in that passage? How long between them?
 5. The Antitype Is Always Superior To The Type. What is the logical reason for that being true (cf. Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 8:4-13; 9:11-15; 10:1-4)?

II. WHAT ARE SOME BIBLE TYPES?

- A. Typical Persons. These were people whose lives and experiences illustrated some principle or foreshadowed someone who was coming.
1. Adam (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22,45,49). How did he represent Christ by presenting just the opposite of what Christ was?
 2. Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Acts 3:22-23). In what ways were Christ and Moses similar (Numbers 12:6-8; James 4:12)?
 3. Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:1-3,17). In what ways were Melchizedek and Christ similar? How were their priesthoods different from Aaron's (7:1-28)?
 4. Elijah (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6; Matthew 11:7-15; 17:9-13; Luke 1:17). Of whom was Elijah a type? In what ways?
- B. Typical Rituals. These were part of God's old covenant and law. They prepared the people's minds for spiritual realities that would follow.
1. How did each of these things represent some spiritual fulfillment which came later?
 - a. Passover (Exodus 12; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8)?
 - b. Priesthood (Hebrews 7:11-8:6)?
 - c. Tabernacle And Furniture (Hebrews 9:1-15,23-25)?
 - d. Blood Sacrifices (Hebrews 9:22-10:4)?

CONCLUSION: When these types were given they may not have made much sense (1 Peter 1:10-12), but on this side of the cross, after their fulfillment and clarification, we can see the beautiful picture they paint of God's plan in Christ!

UNDERSTANDING PARABLES

Jesus, the master teacher, knew the benefit of parables in His teaching. They comprise more than one-third of His recorded discourses (Matthew 13:34-35). By using these pictures and stories, Jesus put men to thinking, helping them remember His lessons through visualizing His story. Why are parables so effective?

I. WHAT IS A PARABLE?

- A. Parable. It is a comparison between a familiar fact and a spiritual truth... a simple story, illustrating a moral truth.
1. Captures Our Attention. How can it do that and hold our interest?
 2. Helps Us Picture Spiritual Truths In Our Minds. Why do we need help understanding spiritual truths (Isaiah 55:8-9)?
 3. Hard To Contradict. Why is its lesson hard to contradict?

II. HOW TO INTERPRET PARABLES

- A. Rules For Interpreting Parables. It is impossible to lay down strict rules because the amount of comparison varies from parable to parable. But here are some general rules:
1. Look For The Teacher's Own Explanation (Matthew 13:3-9,18-23). How will that help you understand those which are not explained?
 2. Find The Central Truth Of The Parable. Generally there is one main lesson in the parable. How can you know what it is?
 3. Understand The Parable In Light Of The Situation. Its context and the events/teachings that prompted it are indicators of its meaning. What is the lesson of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8)?
 4. Do Not Try To Make All The Details Mean Something. Why would that be a mistake? Many of the details are nothing more than what?

III. WHY DID JESUS USE PARABLES?

- A. Why Did Jesus Use Parables? What did He want to accomplish with them? What made them so effective in presenting the truth (Matthew 13:10-17)?
1. Reveal The Truth (Matthew 13:11,16-17). How could honest hearers discern these lessons taught? What kind of people can understand God's message (Psalm 25:14; John 7:17; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16)?
 2. Conceal The Truth (Matthew 13:11-15). How did parables test the character of the hearers (13:10,12)? Does God force the truth on anyone who does not love or desire it (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)? Why do some people not need to know the truth (Matthew 7:6)?
 3. Embalm The Truth. They preserve truth so it cannot be easily forgotten. Why do parables make impressions that stick with you?
 4. Get The Consent Of The Mind Before The Truth Is Presented (2 Samuel 12:1-6; Luke 7:36-50; Matthew 21:33-45). How does this reinforce a truth or something a person must do?
 5. Teach Powerful Truth Subtly (Luke 18:9-14). How could such teaching stimulate one's thinking (Matthew 13:3-9; esp. v.9)?
 6. Clever Response To Foolish Questions (Luke 10:25-37; 12:13-21). Sometimes they were the last word in silencing the opposition.

CONCLUSION: Will men find truth if they diligently seek it (Matthew 7:7-8)? Can you think of a more effective way to illustrate truth and etch it in the memory?

ESTABLISHING BIBLE AUTHORITY #1

Divine authority is a real issue at the base of most religious differences in doctrine and practice. It is important because where there is no Scripture there can be no divine authority (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 John 9).

I. USING THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

- A. Build According To The Pattern (Hebrews 8:5). What heavenly thing is the tabernacle patterned after (Exodus 25:1-9; esp. 25:8; Ephesians 2:19-22)? How important is it for us to follow God's pattern?
- B. All Scripture Is Profitable. But not all is binding today. Who is God's lawgiver today (Hebrews 1:1-2)? What happened to the old covenant and its law (Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 8:6-13)? Of what consequence is using the Old Testament as authority today (Galatians 5:1-4)?

II. ESTABLISHING BIBLE AUTHORITY

- A. Methods For Establishing Authority. These are ways God has revealed His will so we can understand (1 Corinthians 2:6-13; Ephesians 5:17).
 - 1. Expressed Statement. This is God speaking plainly and telling people what He does or doesn't want (John 15:14). It may be a direct command or obvious precept from a positive statement. What is the direct command or statement in each of these passages?
 - a. 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 b. Romans 6:3-4
 - 2. Approved Example. These things were done in the church with the apostles' supervision and approval proving them acceptable to God. Are we to follow examples (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 4:9)? What truths do we learn from each of these examples?
 - a. Acts 6:1-6 b. Acts 11:26 c. Acts 20:7
 - 3. Necessary Inference. That which authorizes is that which is necessarily implied... not just something that could possibly be implied by a passage. It must be an inescapable conclusion!
 - a. Jesus endorsed inference as a means of establishing truth by using it Himself (Matthew 22:31-32). What was His necessary inference from God's statement (Exodus 3:6,15)?
 - b. Hebrew writer inferred things from a statement in the Old Testament (Psalm 110:4). Can you name three things which are inescapable conclusions (cf. Hebrews 7:11-14)?
- B. Examples Of The Use Of These Methods To Establish Authority.
 - 1. Jesus Used Them (Matthew 4:1-11). To withstand Satan's temptations Jesus determined God's will by each of these methods.
 - a. Expressed Statement (4:8-10). What direct statement of God's did He use to answer Satan's temptation (Deuteronomy 6:13)?
 - b. Approved Example (4:3-4). From whose example did He learn man needs more than bread (Deuteronomy 8:3)?
 - c. Necessary Inference (4:5-7). How did Jesus correctly infer He should not jump from the temple (Deuteronomy 6:16)?
 - 2. We Use Them. Give an example of how you can understand the will of your boss by each of these three methods.

CONCLUSION: How do these three methods reveal God's will and set limits on it?

ESTABLISHING BIBLE AUTHORITY #2

Worship expressed to God pleases Him when it is consistent with His commands. Otherwise it is an abomination to Him (cf. 1 Samuel 15:17-23). Worship and service that goes beyond what is written or falls short of it cannot please God (2 John 9).

I. KINDS OF AUTHORITY

- A. General And Specific Authority. General authority includes and specific authority excludes! General authority gives us choices about executing an action. Specific authority directs us to the choice God has already made.
1. Examples Of General Authority.
 - a. "Go" (Mark 16:15). How can this be done? Which methods are authorized by this command?
 - b. "Teach" (Matthew 28:19-20). Are any methods specified which exclude others or are we free to use many effective methods?
 - c. "Assemble" (Hebrews 10:25). Is there any particular place specified to assemble or does that command include any place?
 2. Examples Of Specific Authority.
 - a. Singing (Ephesians 5:19). If God has specified one of the two types of music --vocal or instrumental-- then does it make a difference if we add instruments to our singing?
 - b. The Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:25). The emblems and day of its observance are specified. Does that exclude or allow other days and emblems?
 - c. Rule Of Elders (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28). The extent of their rule is specified. Does that exclude them from overseeing a brotherhood project or allow an extension of rule?

II. THE SILENCE OF SCRIPTURE

- A. Does God's Silence Allow Any Practice That Is Not Specifically Forbidden? Is His silence a license to do something or an indication that He does not want it done (Deuteronomy 29:29)?
1. Are we allowed to modify God's instructions (2 John 9; Revelation 22:18-19)?
 2. What happens to our worship when we add our own traditions (Matthew 15:8-9)?
 3. Where must our claim to divine approval come from (1 Peter 4:11)? Are we doing that if we insist "But God didn't say we couldn't"?
- B. Does God's Silence Prohibit Any Practice That Is Not Specifically Forbidden? Can man know God's will through His revelation or His silence (1 Corinthians 2:6-13)? God's silence has always been as binding as His speech!
1. Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2). Did God's silence prohibit the use of "strange fire"?
 2. Priesthood (Numbers 3:5-13,41-45). How exclusive was His silence? Who could not even presume to act on it (Hebrews 7:14; 8:4)?
 3. God's curse (Galatians 1:6-9). Who can presume on God's silence?

CONCLUSION: What advice would you give about all of our religious practices after studying these last two lessons?

MISHANDLING THE BIBLE

God is pleased with those who "handle aright the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15), but it is possible to mishandle the Bible and bring condemnation upon ourselves (2 Peter 3:15-17). One does not have to be a scholar or specially enlightened... God's word is for every man (1 Corinthians 1:18-21; Matthew 11:25).

I. ATTITUDE IS IMPORTANT

- A. Attitude Is The Key. It is not all that matters but it is important. It is the difference between understanding and misunderstanding.
1. Without The Right Attitude One Cannot Understand It (2 Thessalonians 2:10). According to this passage, what is the problem with some people's attitude?
 2. With The Right Attitude One Will Not Misunderstand It (Matthew 5:6; John 7:17). Why can we really have that confidence?
- B. Attitude Is Important To Accurate Interpretation.
1. Must Believe All The Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Why would a person who does not accept all that the Bible teaches have a hard time interpreting it correctly?
 2. Expect To Understand It (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17). How can a person understand who does not expect to understand it?

II. MISHANDLING THE BIBLE

- A. Ways People Mishandle The Bible. These are detrimental to their soul and others who are influenced by them. Some ways of twisting Scripture are malicious, others are done innocently, yet both have equal effect.
1. Reading Without System. What kind of knowledge does a haphazard reading of the Bible produce (2 Timothy 3:7)?
 2. Reading Only Favorite Scriptures. How can that stunt one's spiritual growth (Hebrews 5:12-6:3; 2 Peter 3:18)? Why is a full study of Scripture so important to know the truth (Psalm 119:160)?
 3. Reading To Win Arguments. Some people do not read the Bible to listen to what God says but to make it say what they want (Matthew 19:7; 22:23-28). What attitude problems do such people exhibit?
 4. Reading With A Desire To Justify Ourselves. Some people try to justify breaking God's commandment in one verse by keeping it in another verse.
 - a. A man might justify a failure to contribute liberally (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). How might he justify that action with this verse... 1 Timothy 5:8?
 - b. A man might fail to assemble and worship publicly (Hebrews 10:25). How might he justify that action with this verse... Matthew 6:6?
 5. Reading To Proof-Text. Some people misapply divine truth to conform to their desires. The Bible is twisted and forced into endorsing a practice or doctrine that it really does not (2 Peter 3:15-16). Can some people manipulate the Bible to sound like what they want it to say (2 Corinthians 4:2)?

CONCLUSION: Attitude is the dominant quality for properly understanding and handling the Bible. How are you handling it?

WHY PEOPLE FAIL TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Honestly answer this question... Does your Bible even move from the spot where it was placed when you got home, from one church service to the next? How many hours do you personally study the Bible each week? One of the great needs today is for people to study and learn God's word.

I. WHY PEOPLE FAIL TO STUDY THE BIBLE

A. People Offer Many Excuses For Not Studying The Bible. Can you think of a legitimate reason for not studying the Bible?

1. "I Don't Know How". What has been the purpose of this study? How much effort will a man put forth to learn how, if he 'hungers and thirsts' after anything (cf. Matthew 5:6)?
2. "I Don't Feel The Need To Study". Is there really a legitimate need to study and learn (John 12:48)? Will God be happy with the person who does not study (2 Timothy 2:15)?
Why can't a person be saved if he does not study and learn God's will for himself (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6)?
3. "I Have Never Liked To Read Or Study". God went to the trouble of revealing to us what we could never know any other way (1 Corinthians 2:6-13). Is it right to complain about God's method of revelation?
Listen to it... How does that excuse betray our own selfishness? How can we cultivate the desire to study (Psalm 19:7-10; 119:31)?
4. "I Leave The Study To Others". What was so noble about the Bereans (Acts 17:11)? If our soul is really our most valuable possession why would we trust its fate to others (Matthew 16:26)?
In what should our faith not stand (1 Corinthians 2:5)?
Who will be responsible for our soul if we are taught wrong (2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Peter 2:1-2)?
5. "It's Too Hard". Study is hard work (Ecclesiastes 12:12). What is necessary to accomplish it? Does difficulty mean we should not try (Ecclesiastes 9:9)?
6. "I'm Too Busy". What must have the highest priority in our lives (Matthew 6:33)? Why is it so important to make good use of our time (Ephesians 5:16; John 9:4)?
Where does Bible study need to be on your list of priorities? List some ways you can make more time to study.
7. Can You Think Of Any Other Excuses?

CONCLUSION: Why is Bible study so important (Matthew 4:4)? Which part of our nature needs to be fed the most (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)? In what ways has this study filled you?