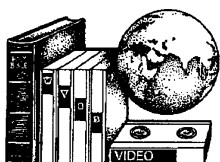


World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



HERMENEUTICS

This set of notes is designed to be used by non-credit students of World Video Bible School® and correspondent students enrolled in the Video Bible Institute (VBI). VBI students should pay particular attention to the syllabus. Students not taking the course for credit may bypass the syllabus and use the notes as they see fit for their spiritual enrichment.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Syllabus.	Page 1
Notes.	5
Articles	
Being Silent Where The Bible Is Silent (Dan Holland).	83
Changing Cultures (Roy H. Lanier, Sr.).	87
Considering Other Passages (Raymond C. Kelcy).	91
Does Every Man Create His Own Bible? (Thomas B. Warren).	95
Examples And Pattern Authority (Thomas B. Warren)..	99
Fallacies Regarding The Bible (Raymond C. Kelcy).	111
Figurative Language In The Bible - 1 (Raymond C. Kelcy).	115
Figurative Language In The Bible - 1a (Raymond C. Kelcy).	119
Figurative Language In The Bible - 2 (Raymond C. Kelcy).	123
How To Mark A Book (Mortimer J. Adler)..	127
Instructions - General And Specific (Lloyd E. Ellis).	131
The Interpretation Of Old Testament Prophecy (F. Furman Kearley).	133
Know What The Bible Says! (Raymond C. Kelcy).	145
The Languages Of The Bible (Wayne Jackson).	149
Observe To Whom Spoken (Raymond C. Kelcy)..	153
Pretexting - 1 (Jack P. Lewis)..	157
Pretexting - 2 (Jack P. Lewis)..	159
Principles Of Bible Prophecy (Wayne Jackson)..	161
The Seat Of Authority In Language (Stephen Loyd and Don Ruhl)..	169

The Study Of Biblical Words (Wayne Jackson).....	173
Study The Context (Raymond C. Kelcy).	179
Take Time To Meditate (Raymond C. Kelcy).....	181
Who Was The Speaker (Raymond C. Kelcy).....	185
Survey Worksheet.	189

Hermeneutics

Syllabus

I. GENERAL INFORMATION.

- A. Instructor: Steven M. Lloyd.
- B. This course consists of 18 lessons on 6 DVDs.
- C. Each class is approximately 38 minutes long.

II. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE.

- A. This is an in-depth study of Biblical Hermeneutics (principles of Bible interpretation).
- B. Much attention will be given to the practical application of the rules and methods involved.
- C. The student will gain a working knowledge of hermeneutical tools and study detailed information contained in a proper Biblical hermeneutic.
- D. The student will understand the relationship between faith and proper interpretation.
- E. The student will understand the requirements of in-depth Bible study.
- F. The student will understand the pitfalls and results of faulty interpretation.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

- A. Required:
 - 1. Bible (ASV, KJV or NKJV).
 - 2. 18 video lessons.
 - 3. Course Notes.

B. Recommended:

Deaver, Roy C. *Ascertaining Bible Authority*. Firm Foundation Publishing House. Pensacola, Florida. 1987.

Dungan, D. R. *Hermeneutics*. Gospel Light Publishing Company. Delight, Arkansas. (No date).

Hightower, Terry M. (editor). *Rightly Dividing The Word I—General Hermeneutics: Fourth Annual Shenandoah Lectures*. Firm Foundation Publishing House. Pensacola, Florida. 1990.

Hightower, Terry M. (editor). *Rightly Dividing The Word II—Special Hermeneutics: Fifth Annual Shenandoah Lectures*. Firm Foundation Publishing House. Pensacola, Florida. 1991.

Warren, Thomas B. *Logic And The Bible*. National Christian Press. Moore, Oklahoma. 1982.

Warren, Thomas B. *When Is An "Example" Binding?* National Christian Press. Moore, Oklahoma. 1975.

IV. REQUIREMENTS.

- A. View each video lesson in its entirety.
- B. Read the course notes in their entirety (it is good to go through the notes at the same time you view the lessons, adding your own notes as needed).
- C. Complete all memory work (explained below).
- D. Submit a term paper (explained below).
- E. Take one comprehensive written test.
- F. Have a combined grade average of at least 70.

V. MEMORY WORK.

- A. Memory verses must be written (or typed) from memory, then mailed to VBI for grading. Verses must come from the ASV, KJV or NKJV, according to what you indicated on your original VBI application.

- B. All verses must be written out or typed at one sitting. You may study more and start over if you make a mistake, but you must still start again from the beginning and write all the verses at one sitting.
- C. For *Hermeneutics*, the following verses must be memorized:

Psalm 1:1-3	Ephesians 4:14,15	2 Timothy 3:16,17
Psalm 12:6	1 Thessalonians 5:21	2 Peter 1:20,21
Proverbs 30:5,6	2 Timothy 2:15	1 John 4:1
- D. Memory work is due when you mail VBI your written test.
- E. Hint: A good method of memorizing is to write the verses on flash cards that can be easily reviewed throughout the course.

VI. TESTS.

- A. There is one comprehensive test at the end of the course.
- B. After you view the last lesson (or shortly before), you may contact VBI and request that the test be mailed to you.
- C. When you receive the test, you have permission to look at it and study it.
- D. However, when you take the test, you must do so completely from memory, with no help from notes, Bible, etc.

VII. TERM PAPER.

- A. On page six is a list of ten scriptural principles that serve as the foundation for the *Hermeneutics* course. Write a paper on five of these principles, explaining the importance of each. Give specific Bible examples showing how each principle is applied.
- B. The paper should be a minimum of six pages, typed and double spaced. If handwritten, the paper should be a minimum of eight pages, single spaced.
- C. The paper is due when you mail VBI your test and memory work.

VIII. GRADING.

- A. Memory work, term paper and test will be graded separately.

- B. Final grade is based on an average of all assigned work, with the written test counting twice.
- C. You may request that a grade be explained or reconsidered, but in any case VBI will have the final say.

IX. CREDIT.

- A. Credit will be issued, including a certificate, only after all work has been successfully completed, tapes have been returned (if rented) and all fees for this particular course have been paid in full.
- B. May God richly bless your study of this significant material!

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

We are indebted to Troy M. Cummings for permitting us to use his unpublished notes on Hermeneutics as used at the Southern California School of Evangelism. Additional materials have been added and his notes have been rearranged slightly to accommodate this course and the composing of these notes.

I. HERMENEUTICS IS THE SCIENCE OF INTERPRETATION.

A. Another word closely related to our course is “exegesis.”

1. Exegesis is, as used in this course, exercising or using the principles of hermeneutics.

a. In hermeneutics we are identifying principles.

(1) 2 Tim. 3:16,17.

b. In exegesis, we are putting those principles to use.

2. The purpose of exegesis is to bring out the intended thought or meaning the writer had as he wrote.

B. The importance of this course cannot be overestimated. A proper hermeneutic is essential in that it ensures us of a right view of the following:

1. Final things,

2. Counseling,

3. Philosophy of life,

4. God,

5. Man,

6. Sin and

7. Salvation.

II. INTRODUCTION OF TEN SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES ESSENTIAL FOR UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE.

These principles are the foundation of this course and will be studied in greater detail in the remainder of the course.

- A. One must have true faith in the supreme authority of the divine inspiration of Scripture as the infallible word of God, thus the final authority for my life.
- B. One must remember that the original Bible as God gave it came in the Hebrew language in the Old Testament and in Greek in the New Testament.
- C. One must accept the scriptural fact that God gave the Bible to us to be understood, believed and obeyed, and God holds us responsible for knowing it.
- D. One must realize that Scripture is understood by spiritual receptivity as much as by intellectual effort and scholarship.
- E. One must meditate on the word of God day and night.
- F. One must remember that it is necessary to get the whole counsel of God on any subject in order to have God's complete and whole will; part of the truth is not enough.
- G. One must make proper use of the context of any statement of Scripture.
- H. One must recognize that there are some temporary aspects in the Bible as well as permanent aspects which are binding on all of every generation.
- I. One must draw only such conclusions as are warranted by the evidence (the Law of Rationality).
- J. One must acknowledge that there are some things hard to be understood.

III. DETAILED STUDY OF THESE TEN SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES.

- A. One must have true faith in the supreme authority of the divine inspiration of Scripture as the infallible word of God, thus the final authority for my life.
 - 1. Without this all other rules of hermeneutics and exegesis fail.
 - 2. Discussion of Thomas Warren's argument for Christianity is appropriate here. That argument is as follows:

- a. If men can know:
 - (1) That God is,
 - (2) That the Bible is the word of God and
 - (3) That the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that, to be saved from their sins, men must believe in, love and obey Him, then men can know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that to be saved from their sins men must believe in, love and obey Him.
 - b. Men can know:
 - (1) That God is,
 - (2) That the Bible is the word of God and
 - (3) That the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that to be saved from their sins men must believe in, love and obey Him.
 - c. Therefore, men can know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that to be saved from their sins men must believe in, love and obey Him.
3. The implications of the Bible not being inspired, authoritative and infallible are far reaching.
- a. If we hold the view that it contains the word of God and the word of men then we must establish some criteria for determining what is the word of God and what is the word of men.
 - b. If it is not the word of God then there is no absolute and objective standard for living (thus no final authority). We are then ruled by our feelings of what is right and wrong and we must somehow account for such things as its:
 - (1) Prophecy and fulfillment,
 - (2) Unity,
 - (3) Historical accuracy and
 - (4) Scientific accuracy.

4. Brief discussion of whether the Bible is the word of God.
 - a. If the Bible contains characteristics which would not be present if mere men were its author, then the Bible is the word of God.
 - b. The Bible does contain characteristics which would not be present if mere men were the author.
 - c. Therefore, the Bible is the word of God.
 - d. Notice some of the unique characteristics of God's word:
 - (1) It claims inspiration,
 - (2) Prophecy/fulfillment,
 - (3) Unity,
 - (4) Indestructibility,
 - (5) Historical accuracy and
 - (6) Scientific accuracy.
 - e. The Bible is infallible as determined in three truths as follows:
 - (1) God cannot lie.
 - (a) Titus 1:2.
 - (b) Heb. 6:18.
 - (2) Jesus confirmed it.
 - (a) To determine whether the characters and events of the Old Testament are actual or fictional all we need to do is see how Jesus, who is the Son of God, referred to them.
 1. He referred to Noah, Jonah and Adam as actual people.
 2. He referred to the various events in the Old Testament as actual events.
 - (3) The Holy Spirit directed it.

(a) 2 Pet. 1:20,21.

f. Assignment: Read the article "Fallacies Regarding the Bible" by Raymond Kelcy (attached to these notes).

B. One must remember that the original Bible as God gave it came in the Hebrew language in the Old Testament and in the Greek in the New Testament.

1. The original writings are the ultimate authority, not the various translations.
2. "The Greek New Testament is the New Testament. All else is translation." A. T. Robertson.
3. God inspired the original writers, but not manuscript copiers nor translators. Yet we today have the message God gave us preserved accurately for all practical purposes.
4. Serious Bible students need either to know the original Bible languages or to make full and accurate use of the best translations with the help of those who do know the original language of Scripture.
5. One must know something of how to evaluate the many modern translations in order to make good use of their good points and to avoid being misled by their errors.
6. Reading assignment: Wayne Jackson's article "Languages of the Bible."

C. One must accept the Scriptural fact that God gave the Bible to us to be understood, believed and obeyed, and God holds him responsible for knowing it.

1. Isaiah 1:18.
2. Ephesians 5:17.
3. John 8:31,32.
4. John 20:30,31.
5. Matthew 4:4.
6. 2 Timothy 2:15.
7. 2 Timothy 3:14-17.
8. Luke 1:1-4.

9. Romans 15:4.
 10. Colossians 3:16.
 11. Colossians 4:12,16.
 12. 1 Thessalonians 5:27.
 13. 2 Thessalonians 3:14.
 14. 1 Corinthians 14:37.
 15. Revelation 1:1-3.
 16. 1 Thessalonians 5:21.
 17. John 12:47-50.
 18. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.
 19. 1 John 4:1.
 20. 1 Timothy 4:13.
 21. Ephesians 4:14,15.
 22. Acts 17:11,12.
 23. Acts 13:44-46.
 24. Luke 8:15.
 25. Ephesians 4:1-6.
 26. John 17:20-23.
 27. Philippians 1:27.
 28. Psalm 1:1-3.
 29. Reading assignment: Thomas Warren's article "Does Every Man Create His own Bible?"
- D. One must realize that Scripture is understood by spiritual receptivity as much as by intellectual effort and scholarship.

1. Proverbs 1:7.
2. We must be “noble” enough spiritually to “receive the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things” are so (Acts 17:11,12).
3. We must humble ourselves as “children” as we hear and study God’s Word; if not, God will “hide” his truth from us (Matthew 11:25,26; 13:10ff; 18:1-4).
4. We must take heed “how” we hear the Word and have an “honest and good heart” into which the spiritual seed may be sown (Luke 8:9-18).
5. In God’s sight we must be “of the truth” dominated by “the Spirit of truth” (John 18:37; 1 John 4:5,6; John 8:46,47).
6. We must “hunger and thirst” after God’s Word, and “will (determine) to do His will” in order to know God’s truth to the saving of our souls (Matthew 5:6; John 7:17. See Greek, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV of John 7:17).
7. We must “give diligence” to “handle aright” or “rightly divide” (Greek “cutting straight”) the Word, that we may please Him (2 Timothy 2:15. KJV; ASV; etc.).
8. We must have such absolute faith in God’s Word that we will “let God be found true, but every man a liar” (Romans 3:4).
9. We must remember that in God’s Word “some things are hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16,17).
10. We must remember that the “curse” (“anathema”) of God is upon those who pervert the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6-10).
11. We must beware of “corrupting the word of God” or of “handling the word of God deceitfully” (2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:2-4).
12. We must have a strong “love of the truth” of God lest God send us “strong delusion” (“working of error”) and we believe a lie (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12; 1 Kings 22:8-23).
13. We must not approach God’s Word with “idols” in our heart or any “stumblingblock of iniquity” before our face lest we be “deceived” (Ezekiel 14:1-11; 33:30-33).

14. We must avoid “itching ears” spiritually in order to endure sound doctrine and to keep away from “fables” (2 Timothy 4:1-4).
15. We must remember that the Word of God is a sharp spiritual instrument that pierces to the depths of our souls, “to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12,13).

E. One must meditate on the Word of God day and night.

1. Introduction.

- a. Some never discover the hidden treasures to be found in the Bible because they have not learned to look past the cover; and in order to obtain these precious gems a person must approach the Scriptures with the proper spiritual attitude and the fervency with which they would search for hidden treasures.

(1) Job 23:12.

(2) Matthew 4:4.

- b. Why do people miss discovering these hidden treasures?

(1) Spiritual Blindness:

(a) Jeremiah 10:23.

(b) Proverbs 16:25.

(c) Matthew 6:19-23.

(2) A False Balance:

(a) Some do not recognize the genuine value of the hidden treasures of Scripture because they are using a “natural” balance to weigh “spiritual” blessings.

(b) If we were to weigh these treasures on God’s scale or measure them by His standard, we would find them worthy more than silver or rubies or gold and precious jewels.

1. Proverbs 16:16.

2. Proverbs 3:15.

3. Proverbs 20:15.

- (c) Some, like the man who tore down his barns to build bigger barns, do not seem to be able to fairly assess the value of material things over the worth of their own soul (Luke 12:13-21).

1. Jesus said "Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (12:13).

2. Then He cautions us against laying up for ourselves treasures on earth, rather than being rich toward God (12:21).

a. "For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?" (Mark 8:37).

(3) Denominationalism:

- (a) I am convinced that at least one reason people do not search the Scriptures is because they are confident that they cannot be understood.
- (b) After all, we have over 3,000 denominations in the United States alone which "proves" the point that Christianity does not work (so some reason).
- (c) With such a divisive spirit among religious people in the world today, some believe the Bible simply cannot be understood, thus they do not even try to understand it.

1. Ephesians 5:17.

2. 1 Corinthians 1:10.

(4) Lack of Fervency:

- (a) If you were convinced that a map you possessed contained the directions to some hidden treasure of priceless value, what would you do?

1. Would you let it lie in a drawer?

2. Would you dismiss it as incomprehensible?

3. Or would you do everything within your power to understand it in order to obtain the treasure?

(b) People lack the fervency necessary for finding these precious jewels.

2. Why are they hidden?

a. These treasures are hidden for a purpose.

(1) The Lord is looking for people who spiritually hunger and thirst (Matthew 5:6); and being creatures of choice, He wants us to choose to zealously and lovingly follow Him.

(2) It is hidden so that unholy and indiscriminate men will not trample it under foot or turn and treat it as common.

(a) Matthew 11:25.

(b) 2 Corinthians 4:3,4.

(3) When the disciples asked the Lord "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" Jesus explained:

(a) Matthew 13:10-17.

(b) Matthew 13:44.

3. Discovering hidden treasures.

a. Discovering these hidden treasures is what this course is all about.

(1) An older preacher once told me that after preaching a sermon, a woman came to him and said, "I'd give half my life to know what you know."

(2) The preacher replied, "That's just about what it cost me."

(3) In a society of instant breakfast, instant cash, instant cameras, etc. many of us "instantly" grow weary if we cannot obtain instant knowledge and wisdom.

(4) But discovering the hidden treasures of the Bible is a lifetime pursuit that takes a great deal of work and energy.

b. Here is the key:

(1) Psalm 1:1-3.

(2) Psalm 119:97-104.

(a) Becomes wiser than his enemies.

(b) Has more understanding than all his teachers.

(c) Understands more than the aged.

(d) Refrains his feet from every evil way.

(e) Learns to hate every false way.

(3) Joshua 1:8.

(4) Romans 12:1,2.

(5) Colossians 2:3.

(6) Colossians 3:2.

(7) 1 Timothy 4:15.

(8) 2 Timothy 2:7.

(9) Philippians 4:8.

(10) Isaiah 26:3.

(11) 2 Chronicles 26:5. As long as Zechariah sought Jehovah, "God made him to prosper."

c. When a person sets his heart on treasuring up for himself treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20) his eye is single ("healthy") and the whole body is full of light (6:22).

(1) What this means is that you have 20/20 spiritual perception.

(2) But if you are seeking after the temporal treasures of this earth your eye is evil and your whole body is full of darkness - you are blind (6:23).

- (3) So another benefit derived from searching for the hidden treasures of the Bible is spiritual sight.
4. One needs to know that 2 Peter 1:20,21 does not truly teach that the individual cannot understand or interpret Scripture for himself. (Compare Section No. III). This text is widely misunderstood, misused by the Roman Catholic church and is not correctly translated in most English versions.
 - (1) Of the six most important English translations (KJV, ASV, NASV, RSV, NIV, NKJV), only the NIV adequately translates this important passage: "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."
 - (2) These two verses do not deal with the understanding (interpretation) of Scripture, but rather its origin. This is a vital difference. Close study of the two verses even in the KJV, ASV, NASV, RSV and NKJV shows this truth. Verse 21 must not be separated from verse 20. Noted Greek professor A. T. Robertson points out the truth of this text in his Word Pictures. The Greek epilusews of vs. 20 can be translated "release; disclosure" as well as "interpretation."
 - (3) The text is perverted when it is used to try to prove the idea that no individual can of himself "interpret" or understand Scripture. This would contradict all of the texts used in Section III, as well as the true meaning of the Greek of the passage itself. (Catholics teach that the Church itself, through its clergy, must officially "interpret" Scripture for the mass of the people.)
 - (4) No matter how many flaws or errors the New International Version may have, or whether or not its translators were conservatives or modernists, the fact stands that in 2 Peter 1:20,21 the NIV is much better than the others, KJV, ASV, NASV, RSV and NKJV. It is not a question of which version you and I may "like" best; but rather, what is the truth? What are the facts of the Greek?
 - (5) Only prejudice rejects truth because it is not found in one's "favorite" version of Scripture.
 - (6) In addition to the writer, some of the others in the church who have discovered the truth of 2 Peter 1:20,21 are Dr. James Bales (F. F., 4-21-70), Dr. Neil Lightfoot (ACC Lectures, 1960), and Guy N. Woods (Commentary).

(7) Reading assignment: Raymond Kelcy's article "Take Time to Meditate."

- F. One must remember that it is necessary to get the whole counsel of God on any subject in order to learn God's complete and whole will; part of the truth is not enough.
1. Paul was pure from the blood of all men because he shrank not from declaring unto them "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:26,27).
 2. Paul knew that many times people are willing to receive part of the truth but are not willing to accept it all, because some of it convicts them of sin or error.
 3. The same principle is set forth in the record of Jesus' temptation by the devil, Matthew 4:1-11. After Jesus referred to Scripture "It is written," Satan did the same thing; but Jesus replied to Satan: "Again it is written" and cited another passage which showed that Satan was misusing, perverting the passage he referred to, making an extreme application which God never intended and which contradicted Scripture elsewhere. Thus Jesus showed that it took the "whole" counsel of God on the subject in order to interpret correctly the passage which Satan offered.
 4. It is not one Scripture against another, but one Scripture in the light of another or others.
 5. Generations of the best legal minds in our country have determined that testimony in courts of law should be presented on the basis of "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."
 6. Not simply "truth," but the "whole truth," and "nothing but the truth." This is the only way to make it airtight for the whole truth only.
 7. If men had been as careful in handling Scripture as they were in setting the standard in court procedure, the religious world would have been spared a vast amount of error and false doctrine.
 8. A large percentage of popular religious errors today are nothing more than taking some few favorite verses in Scripture, ignoring many other vital passages on the subject, and pressing them to an extreme position which conflicts with other points of truth (exactly what Satan did against Jesus in Matthew 4).
 9. For example, Matthew 7:1 is endlessly quoted by many today ("Judge not, that ye be not judged."), and misapplied to mean that one must never criticize, condemn, or expose any sin or error, or "judge" in any sense

whatever. But they do not know of or never refer to John 7:24 where Jesus said: "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." Again, in 1 Corinthians 5th chapter and chapter 6:1-4, the apostle commanded the Corinthian church to "judge" (put away) the fornicator. It is sinful perversion of God's word to abuse it in the manner above, yet it is practiced widely even by some in the church.

10. Three key elements in Biblical interpretation: Thomas B. Warren points out that the three key elements in the total situation involved in Biblical interpretation are the total evidence, handling the evidence and the conclusions drawn.

a. The total evidence is that which purports to be supportive of the conclusions drawn and/or asserted.

(1) It involves all that the Bible has to say on a particular subject.

(2) This obviously requires a great deal of diligence by virtue of the fact that you must have a workable knowledge of the whole Bible.

(a) For example, the general theme of the Bible ought to be known.

1. The Bible:

b. 66 books total.

(1) 39 Old Testament (Law, Psalms, Prophets).

(2) 27 New Testament (Gospel, History, Epistles, Prophecy).

2. Roy Deaver summarized the theme of the Bible as: "The glory of God, and the salvation of man, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (S.S. Lectureship, Living Messages of the Books of the Old Testament, p. 3).

3. Wayne Jackson: "No detailed, analytical study of the Scriptures will be profitable unless the student at least has a general impression of the foregoing thrust of the divine Book. The Bible is principally a book of SALVATION. Its history, geography, biography, theology, etc. must be viewed in this light" (A Study Guide to Greater Bible Knowledge," p. 18, Apologetics Press).

(b) Periods of Bible History:

1. Each book of Scripture ought to be understood in light of the period to which it pertains.
2. One of the reasons many people find the Bible so difficult to read and understand is that they do not have a firm grasp on the fifteen periods of Bible history.
 - a. With a workable outline, one can identify an event in history to a particular period of time.
 - b. Without some understanding of the chronological structure of Bible history, names and events become obscure and significant correlations are missed.
3. The following survey of Bible history should be helpful in your study of the Scriptures.
 - a. **Antediluvian:** from creation to the flood. Possible dates, 4173 to 2517 B.C. Principal characters: Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Enoch, Noah (Genesis 1-6).
 - b. **Postdiluvian:** from the flood to the call of Abraham. Possible dates, 2517 to 2092 B.C. Principal characters: Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth, Nahor, Terah, Lot, Abram (Abraham) (Genesis 6-11).
 - c. **Patriarchal:** from call of Abraham to the descent into Egypt. Possible dates, 2092 to 1877 B.C. Principal characters: Abram (Abraham), Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Rachel, Leah, Laban (Genesis 12-45).
 - d. **Egyptian Bondage:** from descent into Egypt to the Exodus. Approximate dates, 1877 to 1447 B.C. Principal characters: Joseph, Moses, Pharaoh (Genesis 42 - Exodus 11).
 - e. **Wanderings:** from the Exodus to the crossing of the Jordan. Approx. dates, 1447 to 1407 B.C. Principal characters: Moses, Aaron, Miriam (Exodus 12 - Deuteronomy 34).

- f. **Conquest:** from crossing of the Jordan to the appointment of Judges. 1407 to 1350 B.C. Principal character: Joshua (Joshua 1-24).
- g. **Judges:** from appointment of Judges to the establishment of the Kingdom. 1350 to 1051 B.C. Principal characters: Samson, Ruth, Naomi, Samuel (Judges 1 to 1 Samuel 8).
- h. **Kingdom:** from establishment of the kingdom to division of kingdom. 1051 to 931 B.C. Principal characters: Samuel, Saul, David, Jonathan, Solomon (1 Samuel 9 to 1 Kings 11 and 1 Chronicles 10 to 2 Chronicles 9).
- i. **Divided Kingdom:** from division of the kingdom to the fall of Samaria. 931 to 722 B.C. Principal characters: Elijah, Ahab, Jezebel, Jeroboam, Elisha, Jehu (1 Kings 12 to 2 Kings 20 and 2 Chronicles 10-32).
- j. **Judah Alone:** from fall of Samaria to the fall of Jerusalem. 722 to 586 B.C. Principal characters: Isaiah, Hezekiah, Josiah (2 Kings 21-24 and 2 Chronicles 33-36).
- k. **Babylonian Exile:** from fall of Jerusalem to the fall of Babylon. 586 to 536 B.C. Principal characters: Ezekiel, Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:8-21 and Daniel 1-8).
- l. **Restoration:** from fall of Babylon to the close of the Old Testament Canon. 536 to 500 B.C. Principal characters: Zerubbabel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah. The books in the Bible covering this period of time are Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, Daniel.
- m. **Intertestamental Period:** the time between the Testaments. Period of prophetic silence.
- n. **The Life of Christ:** from the birth of Christ to His ascension. Principal character: Jesus (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John).

o. **The Church:** from the ascension of Jesus to the close of the New Testament. 33 A.D. to present (Acts to Revelation).

b. Handling that evidence:

(1) Draw only such conclusions as are warranted by the evidence.

(a) Do not say more than is warranted.

(b) Do not say less than what is warranted.

c. Conclusions:

(1) If the basic principles dealt with in this course are followed, the conclusions drawn should be precisely the conclusions God would have us to draw - no more and no less.

G. One must make proper use of the context of any statement in Scripture.

1. "Context" is defined: "1. the parts of a sentence, paragraph, discourse, etc. that occur just before and after a specified word or passage, and determine its exact meaning...2. the whole situation, background or environment relevant to some happening or personality."
2. Studying or understanding any statement in its immediate context is a principle widely understood even in the world. Common sense of man causes him to consider what he hears or reads in the context of the particular subject, conversation and circumstances.
3. At the same time, many have not learned to study and understand Scripture in its context and circumstances; or who pull the text out of its context and proceed to make it a mere pretext for almost any idea which they wish to believe or teach. This is violation of common sense and a sinful perversion of God's word, yet it is widely practiced by religious people.
4. One of the most serious flaws in the King James Version (and other versions) of the Bible is the making of a separate paragraph (structurally) for every verse of Scripture. This breaks up the unity and the context and the completeness of subjects, conversation and events, and has caused many to miss the unified connections of verses.
5. There is the immediate context of a statement, the words in the same sentence or paragraph or conversation or record of the event. Obviously, this is the first thing to study carefully.

6. Then there is the wider context of the whole narrative of an extended event (like John 13,14,15,16 and 17th chapters), or a whole book of Scripture (like Ecclesiastes in its peculiar qualities); books like Galatians and Romans – in fact, most Bible books have some important background, occasion or purpose which are important to know and remember as one ponders the meaning of individual statements in the book. For example, it is agreed that the Gnostic heresy was the particular reason for some of the statements in the books of Colossians and the epistles of John.
7. Then there is the context of the whole Bible itself, the unity of all Scripture, its harmony that must be remembered in interpreting any passage or narrative or book in Scripture. No exposition of any passage can properly be done which conflicts with plain teaching of Scripture somewhere else, even though it is far removed from the immediate context.
8. But sometimes the context of a Scripture passage is misused and excessively shortened or excessively extended in its application. Each context must be carefully studied to distinguish the temporary and the permanent items, the incidentals and the essentials, and the human customs or culture-items involved, if any, differentiated from the permanent laws or commands of God. This is not always easy, and constitutes one of the most difficult areas of hermeneutics and exegesis.
9. For example, in 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 Paul said, “let the women keep silence in the churches,” etc. The immediate context is the exercising of miraculous spiritual gifts, prophecy, tongue-speaking, etc. Some have concluded that Paul’s prohibition of women speaking in the churches has no application to us today, since such spiritual gifts are not now being used. It is true that the tongue-speaking was temporary and it is not being done now, but does this also mean that the prohibition against women speaking in the churches is likewise not binding now? To this writer, this conclusion does not follow. Why? Because there are very similar prohibitions against women speaking in the church and teaching over men in **other** passages in the New Testament which are binding on us today (1 Timothy 2:8-15, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Genesis 3:16; Ephesians 5:22-33). 1 Corinthians 14: 33-35 clearly belongs to the same category of the other passages cited, permanently binding even though it was applied in the immediate context of the temporary acts of tongue-speaking and prophesying.
10. Likewise, this writer believes that there are both temporary and permanent aspects in the context of such a statement as Romans 16:16: “Salute one another with a holy kiss.” I do not believe that Paul is here originating the practice of kissing in greeting one another, nor is he hereby making that particular form of greeting a rigid law for all generations; rather, he is regulating an already existing custom of greeting to make it Christian, that is,

“holy.” Today when we shake hands in “holy” Christian fellowship we are practicing the permanent aspect of the “kiss” of Romans 16;16, without binding the particular cultural expression of the kissing which is optional for us now. So we need to understand the context of the statement in Scripture, study it in the light of the immediate, the wider, and the total context of Scripture, and distinguish between the temporary and the permanent.

11. The following additional points are helpful in studying about context:

a. Four levels of reading:

- (1) Elementary.
- (2) Inspectional.
- (3) Analytical.
- (4) Syntopical.

b. Seven rules for analytical reading*:

- (1) Classify the book according to the kind and subject matter.
- (2) State what the whole book is about with the utmost brevity.
- (3) Enumerate its major parts in order and relationship, and outline these parts as you have outlined the whole.
- (4) Define the problem or problems the author has tried to solve.
- (5) Come to terms with the author by interpreting his key words.
- (6) Grasp the author’s leading propositions by dealing with his most important sentences.
- (7) Know the author’s arguments by finding them in or constructing them out of sequences of sentences.

* Taken from How To Read a Book by Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren.

12. Detailed discussion of these seven rules for analytical reading:

a. Analytical rule #1 - Classify the book according to kind and subject matter.

(1) Narrative:

(a) The Bible contains more narrative than any other type of literature.

1. Over 40% of the Old Testament is narrative.
2. These books are predominantly narrative: Genesis, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Haggai, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts.

(b) Narratives are true stories.

1. Their purpose is predominantly didactic; that is, they were written to teach us great spiritual truths.
2. For this reason, the Old Testament should still be carefully studied by Christians today.
 - a. Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11.
 - b. Without studying the Old Testament, the Bible student will be helpless in understanding much of what the New Testament teaches.
3. While it is not binding in specific detail, it is binding in principle (See Thomas Warren's book "When Is An 'Example' Binding?").

(c) What narratives are not:

1. Old Testament narratives are not just stories about people who lived in Old Testament times.
 - a. They are first and foremost stories about what God did to and through those people.
2. Old Testament narratives are not allegories or stories filled with hidden meanings.
 - a. They do not answer all our questions about a given issue and we are not free to speculate wildly about its intended meaning.

(1) Such as...

(a) ...seeing U.F.O.'s in the Bible.

(b) ...seeing time machines from centuries future from ours.

(2) God is the hero, but we are not always told the hows and whys of a thing.

(a) Caution: a lust for knowing something that has not been revealed can result in explanations so wild and incompatible with the Bible narratives that they are in fact no explanations at all.

(2) Law:

(a) The Old Testament contains over 600 commandments which the Israelites were expected to keep as evidence of their loyalty to God.

1. Only 4 books of the Old Testament (Exodus - Deuteronomy) contain those laws (even though Genesis is traditionally called a book of the law).

2. Sometimes New Testament writers referred to the entire Old Testament as the "law" when much of it is written to illustrate and apply to the Law found in the Pentateuch (Matthew 5:17, 18; Luke 16:17; Titus 3:9).

(b) We will discuss the Christian's relationship to the Law at a later time.

(3) The Prophets:

(a) More books of the bible come under this heading than under any other.

1. Four major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel).

2. 12 minor prophets (the last 12 books of the Old Testament).

a. They are called "minor" because they are relatively short in length.

- 26-

- c. They did not invent the blessings/ cursings, they pronounced them.

(1) They were reproducing God's Word by inspiration.

- d. When we read the prophets, we are reading the Law of Moses being applied to the particular historical setting in which the prophet found himself.

(d) The task of the present day reader is to reconstruct, as best as possible, the historical circumstance which surrounds the prophet being studied.

1. Where does this prophet fit in chronologically?
2. Who was the prophet?
3. To whom did he write?
4. What was the point of his message? What circumstance(s) prompted him to write?

(e) ASSIGNMENT: Read "The Interpretation of Old Testament Prophecy" by F. Furman Kearly and Wayne Jackson's article, Principles of Bible Prophecy, Reason & Revelation).

(4) Parable:

(a) The word "parable" translates the Greek word parabole, which means to cast (bole) beside (para).

1. Thus, a parable is a placing beside.
2. In them the Lord sets a spiritual truth next to something commonly understood by all in order to help His listeners understand what He seeks to introduce to them.
3. Dungan: "...a story by which something real in life is used as a means of presenting a moral thought. The actors in a parable are real - human beings are the actors, and they do nothing which they could not do...." (p. 227).

(b) Wayne Jackson lists four reasons for parables:

1. To make spiritual truths clear to those who were sincerely seeking the will of heaven.
2. To conceal truth from the dishonest (Matthew 13:13-15).
3. To cause men to assent to the truth before they realized its application to them personally.
4. To help men easily remember great truths (e.g., “The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son”).
5. Wayne Jackson’s book “The Parables In Profile” provides an excellent introduction and treatment of the parables of our Lord.

(5) Epistle:

- (a) Generally speaking, the epistles of the New Testament followed a particular form.

1. Name of writer.
2. Name of recipients.
3. Greeting.
4. Prayer; thanksgiving.
5. Body.
6. Final greetings and farewell.
7. Variations.
 - a. No prayer in Galatians, 1 Timothy, Titus.
 - b. Thanksgiving is a doxology in 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Peter, Revelation.
 - c. Hebrews does not contain the first three elements.
 - d. James and 2 Peter do not contain familiar greetings and farewells.

(b) The epistles of the New Testament were written to meet a particular need.

1. Romans was designed to convince the Jew that the Gospel is, in fact, the culmination of what the Law and the Prophets had foretold would take place and to demonstrate man's need for and means of redemption.
2. 1 Corinthians is designed to correct the factious spirit in Corinth and to answer questions sent to Paul.
3. 2 Corinthians devotes a great deal of time defending Paul's apostleship.
4. Galatians is designed to correct the brethren concerning false doctrine taught by the Judaizers seeking to bind circumcision on the saints.
5. The Ephesians letter focuses on the church of Christ.
6. Philippians is a tender letter written by Paul to a church that helped him in his work.
7. Colossians focuses on the Christ of the church and His preeminence in it.
8. 1 Thessalonians clears up some of the misunderstandings brethren were having concerning the second coming of Christ.
9. 2 Thessalonians is corrective in nature also in that Paul admonishes his brethren from engaging in wild and unfounded speculation.
10. 1 Timothy is designed to exhort Timothy to fight the good fight (6:12).
11. 2 Timothy is designed to encourage Timothy not to be ashamed. 2 Timothy 4:5 summarizes the letter: "But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry."
12. Titus is Paul's letter to Titus reminding him that he should set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city as he was earlier charged (1:5).

13. Philemon is a tenderhearted plea from Paul to Philemon to receive his runaway slave, Onesimus, back.
14. Hebrews is a letter of exhortation (13:22) designed to reason with those who were tempted to leave the superior (Christ and Christianity) and to return to the inferior (Judaism and the Old Covenant).
15. James is a letter of practical Christian living. It defines what pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is.
16. 1 Peter is a manual for enduring manifold fiery trials.
17. 2 Peter focuses on the precious and exceeding great promises of God and contrasts them with the vain and empty promises of false teachers.
18. 1 John addresses the problem of antichrist doctrine.
19. 2 John is a personal letter written to a lady (unnamed) and her children exhorting them to continue walking in the truth.
29. 3 John deals with a contentious brother who sought preeminence in the church. With him it was rule or ruin.
21. Jude parallels what the apostle Peter writes in 2 Peter 2, in that it focuses on false teachers and warns the brethren concerning their motives.

(6) Apocalyptic Literature:

(a) Defined:

1. Walter Bauer translates the word apokalupsis, "revelation, disclosure; an unveiling."
2. "A possible definition of apocalyptic literature is that it is a highly symbolic portrayal of coming destruction on the wicked world, which also promises triumph for the righteous. Within this general definition there are several specific characteristics" (Clyde Miller, p. 213, types of Old Testament Literature," ed., John T. Willis "The World and Literature of the Old Testament," p. 213-216).

3. The purpose of the writer was not to cover up his message but to make it clear. It was written in such a manner so as to conceal its meaning from the enemy and to reveal its meaning to the elect.

(b) Types of:

1. Canonical and non-canonical.
2. Old Testament and New Testament.

a. Old Testament:

(1) Ezekiel.

(2) Daniel.

(3) Joel 1,2.

(4) Zechariah.

b. New Testament:

(1) Matthew 24,25; Mark 13; Luke 21.

(2) Acts 2:17-21.

(3) Revelation.

(c) Characteristics of canonical apocalyptic literature:

1. Always possesses historical significance.

a. Some critical historical situation is connected with the writing of the book.

b. "History is viewed as the unfolding of God's plan, and the outcome is therefore inevitable...this does not deny individual free will" (Gaumer, p. 53).

c. It involves eschatology (study of last things).

d. Thus, a knowledge of the historical situation behind the book would be of tremendous benefit in correctly exeging the book.

- e. Epochal.
2. The message is chiefly conveyed through visions.
 - a. It is the most distinctive feature of this kind of literature.
 - (1) Revelation 1:11, "What thou seest, write in a book..."
 - (2) Revelation 4:1, "After these things I saw..."
 3. There is a predictive element:
 - a. Daniel 2,7,8.
 4. Another characteristic of apocalyptic literature is the use of symbols.
 - a. Numbers.
 - b. Imagery.
 - c. "One needs to understand that proper interpretation of these symbols often requires that the details be understood as serving no other purpose than to heighten the dramatic setting in which they are cast" (Miller, p. 214, 215).
 - d. Cosmic symbolism:
 - (1) Revelation 6:12,13; 8:12.
 - (2) Isaiah 13:6-10.
 - (3) Isaiah 34:4,5.
 - (4) Ezekiel 32:7,8.
 - (5) Matthew 24:29-31.
 - (6) Joel 2:1,2,10.
 - (7) Amos 8:9.
 - (8) Haggai 2:6,7,21,22.

(9) Isaiah 19:1.

5. Comfort.

6. Mysterious: "The secrets of God's intervention into human history are revealed, but usually in a general way."

(d) **Recommended reading:**

1. Summers, Ray, Worthy is the Lamb, Nashville, Tenn., Broadman Press, 1951, pp. 3-26.

2. Willis, John T. (ed.), The Living Word Commentary, Vol.1, "The World and Literature of the Old Testament," Chap. 6, "Types of Old Testament Literature," Clyde M. Miller, pp. 213-216.

3. McClish, Dub, (ed.), Studies in the Revelation, Denton, TX. Valid Publications, 1984, "The Book of Revelation - Keys to Interpretation," Tom Gaumer, pp. 51-62.

(7) Poetic Literature:

(a) Cataloging the Psalms (taken from "Daily Walk" pg. 26).

1. LAMENT PSALMS. These are petitions addressed directly to God by the individual or community in the context of distress. They usually include a description of the problem, a confession of trust and a vow of praise to God, uttered with the confidence that God can and will deliver His people (Examples: Psalms 3-7, 22, 42).

2. THANK PSALMS. These psalms, offered publicly by one or more worshipers, acknowledge God's faithful actions on behalf of His people in the past, or express confidence in His promise to act in the future (Examples: Psalms 18, 27, 62).

3. PRAISE PSALMS. These hymns are based on the word "praise" or "hallelujah." They are joyful expressions of adoration for God's greatness, acknowledging Him as Creator, Sustainer and Lover of His people (Examples: Psalms 113, 117, 146-150).

4. ROYAL PSALMS. Hymns describing the King, both earthly and heavenly, reigning over His Kingdom (Examples: Psalms 2,95,96).
 5. WOE PSALMS. Poems expressing the psalmist's righteous indignation at God's enemies and calling for God's swift retribution (Examples: Psalms 49,109,137). Also called "Imprecatory Psalms."
 6. ACROSTIC PSALMS. Highly stylized poems in which each new section, verse or line begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet (Examples: Psalms 9,10,25, 35, 119).
 7. PILGRIM PSALMS. Songs sung by worshipers on the way up to Jerusalem for the yearly feasts (Examples: Psalms 120-134). Also called "Songs of Ascent."
 8. MESSIANIC PSALMS. Prophetic songs describing the coming Messiah as King (Psalms 2,24,110), Servant (Psalms 22,23, 40, 69) and Son of God (Psalm 118).
- (b) Parallelism. Much of the poetry we read rhymes in words (hat-fat, moon-croon). The Hebrews had some word rhymes which cannot be enjoyed in English translations, but they also rhymed ideas which we can enjoy. The Psalms are filled with two-liners which "rhyme" in thought. In fact, you will find five different kinds of Hebrew rhyme which are called Hebrew Parallelisms.
1. Synonymous: The thought of the first line is restated in the second line.
 - a. Psalm 19:1.
 - b. The truth the poet wishes to express is repeated for emphasis.
 2. Antithetic: The thought expressed in the first line is contrasted with the thought of the second line.
 - a. Psalm 1:6.
 3. Synthetic: The first and second line bear the relationship of cause and effect.... proposition and conclusion. It comprises a syllogism.

a. Psalm 23:1.

4. Climactic: The thought of the second line expands and reinforces the idea of the first line.

a. Psalm 29:1.

5. Emblematic: The first line uses a word picture to illustrate the thought stated in the second line.

a. Psalm 42:1.

(c) Word Pictures. In addition to parallelism, the Psalms are filled with figures of speech designed to draw pictures in our mind by way of providing contrasts, emphasis or clarification.

1. Simile: A stated comparison between two things that resemble one another.

a. Psalm 1:3.

b. Also see 1:4; 5:12; 17:8.

2. Metaphor: A comparison in which one thing is declared to be another.

a. Psalm 84:11.

b. Also see 23:1; 91:4.

3. Hyperbole: The use of exaggeration to emphasize a point.

a. Psalm 6:6.

b. Also see 78:27; 107:26.

4. Anthropomorphism: The assigning of an appropriate part of a man's body to God's person to convey a truth about God.

a. Psalm 31:2.

b. Also see 11:4; 18:15; 32:8.

5. Personification: The assigning of the characteristics of a human being to lifeless objects.
 - a. Psalm 35:10.
 - b. Also see 77:16; 96:11; 104:19.
- b. Analytical rule #2 - State what the whole book is about with the utmost brevity.
- (1) We have already done this to a certain degree under our discussion on the epistle.
 - (a) Obviously, each rule of analytical reading ought to be kept in mind when reading any book or article, but the book must be read completely in order to comply with each rule.
 - (b) Wayne Jackson in his book A Study Guide to Greater Bible Knowledge has, in chapter 5, a brief statement concerning the theme of each book of the Bible.
 1. My recommendation is that you read each book for yourself and then in as concise a form as possible, state the theme or purpose of the book.
 2. Then check your conclusion with other books. By having read the book, letter, etc. first, you will be better equipped to determine whether you agree with someone else's assessment of it.
 - a. If you agree, you will know why.
 - b. If you disagree, you will know why also.
 - c. At least you will not walk away saying you agree or disagree with someone's conclusion without having thought through what they have said.
 - (2) Examples:
 - (a) Genesis is a book of beginnings; the beginning of the universe, life, man, sin, redemption, family, etc.
 - (b) Exodus, by its very title, means "departure" and is a book recording the departure of the children of Israel out of Egyptian

bondage. Also of importance is that the Law given to Moses on Mt. Sinai is found in chapters 20ff.

(c) Also see Wayne Jackson's book A Study Guide to Greater Bible Knowledge, pp. 44,55 (This book can be ordered through Apologetics Press, 230 Landmark Dr. Montgomery, AL 36117 or Wayne Jackson, P.O. Box 55265, Stockton, CA 95205).

(3) Providing yourself with a working summary of the book you are studying will also help you to place appropriate limits on what any text in that book may mean.

(a) You should ask yourself how the text you are studying helps promote that general theme.

c. Analytical rule #3 - Enumerate its major parts in order and relation, and outline these parts as you have outlined the whole.

(1) Some books can be divided two or more ways, each of which are legitimate.

(2) For example, Genesis can be divided three ways:

(a) It can be divided into the main characters addressed in the book.

Abraham	Chapters 1-25 (predominantly)
Isaac	Chapters 21-35 (predominantly)
Jacob	Chapters 25-50 (predominantly)
Joseph	Chapters 37-50 (predominantly)

(b) Or, it can be divided in two:

Introduction	Chapters 1-11
The Patriarchs	Chapters 12-50

(c) Or, it can be divided into the sections that begin with the phrase "These are the generations of..."

"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth..." (2:4).

"This is the book of the generations of Adam" (5:1).

"These are the generations of Noah" (6:9).

“Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah”
(10:1).

“These are the generations of Shem” (11:10).

“Now these are the generations of Terah” (11:27).

“And these are the generations of Isaac” (25:19).

“Now these are the generations of Esau” (36:1).

“These are the generations of Jacob” (37:2).

(3) A brief outline of 1 Corinthians is as follows:

- I. Paul’s Concern..... Chapters 1-6
 - A. Division Described..... Chapter 1
 - B. Division Diagnosed. Chapters 2-4
 - C. Discipline Prescribed..... Chapters 5,6
- II. The Church at Corinth’s Concerns..... Chapters 7-16
 - A. Marriage. Chapter 7
 - B. Idols..... Chapters 8-10
 - C. Misconduct. Chapter 11
 - D. Spiritual Gifts..... Chapters 12-14
 - E. The Resurrection..... Chapter 15
 - F. Collection for the Saints..... Chapter 16

d. Analytical rule #4 - Define the problem or problems the author has solved.

(1) As has already been noted, many books of the Bible were designed to cope with some particular problem. After having identified the problem of the particular book you are studying, note how the author handles it.

(2) For example:

(a) The author of Hebrews was handling the problem of brethren turning their backs on Christ and returning to the Law of Moses to avoid persecution.

1. He admonishes them by reminding them first of all that Christ is superior to many personalities associated with the Old Law.

a. He is superior to the angels (chapter 1).

b. He is superior to Moses (chapter 3).

c. He is superior to Joshua (chapter 4).

d. He is superior to Aaron (chapter 5).

2. He also shows them by numerous contrasts (introduced by the word “better”) that the New is superior to the Old. The New provides...

a. Better hope (7:20).

b. Better covenant (7:22).

c. A ministry the more excellent (8:6).

d. Better promises (8:6).

e. Better sacrifices (9:23).

f. Better possession and an abiding one (10:34).

g. Better country (11:16).

h. Better resurrection (11:35).

3. This letter being predominantly one designed to exhort (13:22), we should also expect to find numerous exhortations. These are introduced by the phrase (“let us...”). For example,

a. 4:1.

- b. 4:11.
 - c. 4:14.
 - d. 4:16.
 - e. Also study these passages introduced by the phrase "let us...": 6:1; 10:22-24; 12:1ff; 12:28f; 13:13; 13:15.
4. The saints of the first century were, characteristically, an embattled people. Persecution was not a foreign notion to them. Their very faith was tested by it.
- a. Hebrew 10:32-36.
5. So, in essence, he argues that it would be irrational to return to that which is inferior and that which is becoming old and waxeth aged and is nigh unto vanishing away (8:13).

(3) Now let us apply rule number four to a book of the Old Testament.

- (a) Remember, the prophets were not predominantly foretellers so much as they were forthtellers.
- (b) Their job was not to make new laws for the people, but simply to call them back to the Law that had been delivered to Moses.
 - 1. The Assyrian empire was gaining in momentum, eventually becoming a monstrous war machine.
 - 2. The handwriting was on the wall concerning Israel.
 - a. She played the harlot, joining herself to the gods of Canaan (chapter 4).
 - b. She willfully rejected knowledge, choosing not to know Jehovah (4:6; 5:4) and, having a heart exalted with pride, she forgot Jehovah (13:6).
 - c. She had sown the wind and would reap the whirlwind (8:7).
 - d. They consecrated themselves to shameful idols and became abominable like that which they loved (9:10).

- e. God sent His prophets imploring them to repent but they were bent on backsliding (11:7) continually multiplying their lies and desolation (12:1).
 - f. Their idols were so numerous that their altars looked like “heaps in the furrows of the field” (12:11).
 - 3. Hosea 1:1,2.
 - 4. Hosea and Amos were the only two minor prophets to write concerning their work with the northern tribes of Israel.
 - a. And based on the above, Hosea’s task was to exhort them to repent of their idolatry.
 - b. In a nutshell, this is the problem Hosea grapples with in the book that bears his name.
- e. Analytical rule #5 - Come to terms with the author by interpreting his key words.

(1) How to find the meaning of words.

- (a) “....you have to discover the meaning of a word you do not understand by using the meanings of all the other words in the context that you do understand” (Adler, p. 107).

- 1. The surrounding words are the context for the words to be defined.

(b) Complications:

- 1. Some words have several distinct meanings and can be used in a single sense or in a combination of senses.
 - a. Example: death, dead, James 2:26; Isaiah 59:2; Romans 6:7.
- 2. There is the problem of synonyms, where different words are used with the same meaning.
- 3. There is the matter of phrases.
 - a. Two phrases may express the same meaning, and one phrase may express several terms.

b. Example: “Dead to sin” and “dead” (in Romans 6).

(2) On the benefit of studying words:

- (a) Richard Chenevix Trench, in his book On the Study of Words wrote, “It will indeed repay you far better than you can easily believe. I am sure, at least, that for many a young man his first discovery of the fact that words are living power, are the vesture, yea, even the body, which thoughts weave for themselves, has been like the dropping of scales from his eyes, like the acquiring of another sense, or the introduction into a new world; he is never able to cease wondering at the moral marvels that surround him on every side, and ever reveal themselves more and more to his gaze” (pp. 9,10).
- (b) He continued, “There are cases in which more knowledge of more value may be conveyed by the history of a word than by the history of a campaign” (Ibid., p. 12).
- (c) Michael Green, in his book Evangelism in the Early Church, cautions us that, “it is all too easy to be beguiled by particular words into building a theological superstructure upon them which they were never designed to bear” (p. 48).

(3) A helpful tool to use is the survey worksheet shown below:

SURVEY WORKSHEET

(BOOK)

PURPOSE STATEMENT: _____

AUTHOR: _____ DATE: _____

RECIPIENTS: _____ KEY VERSES: _____

KEY WORDS / PHRASES:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

OUTLINE:

KEY THEMES:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

- (4) Assignment: Read “The Seat of Authority in Language” by Don Ruhl and Steven M. Lloyd, “The Study of Biblical Words” by Wayne Jackson and “Know What the Bible Says” by Raymond Kelcy.
- f. Analytical rule #6 - Grasp the author’s leading proposition by dealing with his most important sentences.
- (1) Rules 5, 6 and 7 go together.
- (a) Rule No. 5, find the most important words and come to terms.
 - (b) Rule No. 6, find the most important sentences and discover the propositions they contain.
 - (c) Rule No. 7, find and construct the basic arguments in the books by finding them in the connection of sentences.
- (2) How do we find the key sentences in a book?
- (a) “....the heart of his communication lies in the major affirmations and denials he is making and the reasons he gives for so doing” (Mortimer Adler, p. 121)
 - (b) “Another clue to the important sentences is found in the words that compose them.”
 - 1. Once you have identified the most important words, they should lead you to the key sentences.
 - (c) Key sentences will also be part of the main argument of the book.
 - 1. They must be either premises or conclusions.
 - 2. This requires that you recognize an argument when you see one.
 - a. Argument: “An argument is comprised of a number of propositions, some of which function as premises (that is, they serve as evidence) and one (or more) function as the conclusion (that is, the claim is made that the conclusion logically follows from the premises....” (Thom. B. Warren, Logic and the Bible, p. 10).

- (3) It is also important that understanding accompanies the identification of leading propositions.
 - (a) A good way to test whether you understand what is being affirmed or denied in any affirmation or denial is to put it in your own words.
 - 1. If you cannot do this, it is probably a good indicator that you do not understand what is being said.
 - (b) It is also important to be able to translate these key sentences into your own words because these statements may occur in other books of the Bible saying the same thing in different words.
 - 1. For example, Paul stated the principle, “For whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).
 - a. Solomon said the same thing in different words when he wrote, “He that soweth iniquity shall reap iniquity” (Proverbs 22:8).
 - b. And Jesus when He said, “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matthew 7:18).
 - 2. Though each used different words, they were identifying the same principle.
 - (c) Another way of evaluating your understanding of the proposition is the ability to point to some experience you have had that the proposition describes.
 - 1. Not all propositions are equally susceptible to this test.
 - 2. “If you cannot do anything at all to exemplify or illustrate the proposition, either imaginatively or by reference to actual experience, you should suspect that you do not know what is being said” (Adler, p. 127).
- g. Analytical rule #7 - Know the author’s arguments by finding them in, or constructing them out of, sequences of sentences.

- (1) Important point: There are many paragraphs in the Bible that do not express an argument at all, especially in the narrative type of literature.
 - (a) Much of what we read in the narrative literature of the Bible is designed to detail evidence.
 - (2) If arguments are not restricted to a paragraph, then it is your task to construct them by taking a sentence from this paragraph, and one from that, until you have gathered together the sequence of sentences that state the propositions that make up the argument (Adler, p. 129,130).
 - (3) Reading Assignments:
 - (a) A very useful article for you to read is entitled How to Mark a Book written by Moritmer Adler. After having read this article, you may want to try it on a smaller book in the Bible like 1 Peter or 2 Peter. It is my opinion that you ought to have at least one Bible you are willing to mark in. Or use the survey sheet I devised for such a purpose.
 - (b) Jack P. Lewis' article "Pretexting."
 - (c) Raymond Kelcy's articles "Study the Context" and "Consider Other Passages."
- H. One must recognize that there are some temporary aspects in the Bible as well as permanent aspects which are binding on all of every generation.
1. Bible scholars agree that the determination of what is temporary and what is permanent is sometimes difficult.
 2. Certainly temporary was the patriarchal kind of relationship which God maintained in the early generations of man. Also, the Mosaic law, while lasting for about fourteen hundred years, and binding on the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, is not binding today on anyone, Jew or Gentile.
 3. Many agree that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit manifested by the apostles and others in the first century were temporary, because they were used for a temporary but very important purpose, the confirmation of the Word of God as being truly divine in all of its testimony (Mark 16:15-20; Hebrews 2:1-4).

4. Many believe that the “kiss” of Romans 16:16, as discussed in Section 8, is a temporary or optional thing.
5. Many believe that the foot-washing in John 13, as Jesus did on that occasion, was temporary or cultural in that particular place and circumstances, because of the actual “need” (John 13:10) physically speaking; but that the spiritual principle taught by such an act, humble service can be practiced in different ways, and is not confined to foot-washing. Jesus did not here originate foot-washing, of course, but specified it as one of the ways in which the disciples could practice the spiritual truth. And an important point is, nowhere in the New Testament did the apostolic church ever practice foot-washing in the church assembly as a part of the worship. It is listed in the category of private, daily good deeds, 1 Timothy 5:10.
6. One of the most difficult exegetical problems in the New Testament is whether or not there is some temporary aspect to Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, about the woman having her head covered (or veiled) while “praying or prophesying.” But neither man nor woman today can “prophesy,” which means to speak by divine inspiration and is one of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit of the first century (1 Corinthians 12:4-11 etc.). This fact vitally affects Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. Yet it is clear that permanent principles are appealed to in this very passage, the headship of man over woman, etc. Also, in the same letter, before Paul is finished, he makes it plain in chapter 14:33-35 that women cannot speak (take the lead in teaching, praying, preaching or prophesying) in the general church assembly. But right here in our discussion the question is, was the head covering or veil temporary or cultural in that time and place as the means by which the woman expressed her subjection to the man? Or, was (is) this head covering as permanent as the principles Paul taught here? If so, does that mean that women in church assemblies today must wear a head covering, perhaps a full veil, while worshipping? Paul did not say, “while worshipping,” but “praying or prophesying.” Why specify just these two acts? Since the prophesying part is not binding today, why would the head covering be? Is there some other acceptable means by which women expressed her subjection to man in the assembly besides the head covering (perhaps veil)? Of necessity, prophesying required taking the lead (teaching by divine inspiration). Is it not implied that the “praying” (joined to the “prophesying”) would refer to taking the lead in prayer? But before Paul finishes this Corinthian letter (14:33-35) he clearly forbids the woman to take the lead in the church assembly in teaching, praying or “speaking” (where men are present). Hence, their “praying or prophesying” (leading) would have to be out of the assembly when men are not present.
7. The following information on “knowing the difference” is helpful in discussing this principle:

a. Introduction:

(1) It is important, when studying any book of the Bible to be able to distinguish the difference between:

- (a) Permanent and Temporary.
- (b) Cultural and Principle.
- (c) Essential and Incidental.
- (d) General and Specific.
- (e) Old and New Covenants.
- (f) Difference and Contradiction.
- (g) Explicit and Implicit.

b. Permanent and Temporary:

(1) Thomas B. Warren, in a lecture he gave (recorded in Abilene Christian College Lectures, pp. 392-408) titled "Examples and Pattern Authority" wrote, "The question to be considered might well be worded as follows: 'When is an action described in the New Testament to be regarded as an example for men today?'"

Note: He has also written a book titled When Is An Example Binding? which I highly recommend on answering this very question.

(a) He then categorizes the various actions in the New Testament into five helpful groupings.

- 1. Action which was sinful for New Testament characters and sinful for men living today;
- 2. Action which was optional and temporary (that is, that action was optional for New Testament characters but is not optional for men today);
- 3. Action which was optional and permanent (that is, the action was optional for New Testament characters and is also optional for men today);

4. Obligatory and temporary (that is, the action was obligatory for New Testament characters but is not obligatory for men today);
5. Obligatory and permanent (that is, the action was obligatory for New Testament characters and is also obligatory for men today).

(2) Read and study carefully Thomas Warren's article "Examples and Pattern Authority."

c. Cultural and Principle:

- (1) As Troy Cummings pointed out, "Bible Scholars agree that determination of what is temporary and what is permanent is sometimes difficult."
 - (a) And Thomas Warren's observation still applies, "The question to be considered might well be worded as follows: 'When is an action described in the New Testament to be regarded as an example for men today?'"
 - (b) R. C. Sproul, in his book Knowing Scripture, suggests that the issue of how culture fits into the writing of Scripture is: 'To what extent is the Bible's relevance and authority limited by changing human structures and perspectives in the biblical text?' (p. 103).
 - (c) Wayne Jackson, "Unless one believes that the Bible fell directly from heaven in its present form (which it did not), he must deal with the presence of certain cultural elements in the divine record" (p. 25).
 - (d) On the subject of custom, Troy Cumming's notes should be reviewed (Section VIII).
- (2) Let us now deal with principles. In my estimation, identifying principles in the text will go a long way to help us focus in on the heart of the message.
 - (a) Let us look at the Bible as a textbook in application of what we will call permanent principles.
 1. A permanent principle is a basic truth that has wide-range application, not being restricted by dispensations of time.

- a. They are unchanging and universal.
 - b. For example,
 - (1) “The righteous shall live by faith.”
 - (2) “A servant is not greater than his Lord, neither one sent greater than he that sent him.”
- (3) How can we identify a principle when we cross one?
 - (a) First of all, a principle is a general statement.
 - 1. For example:
 - a. The righteous shall live by faith.
 - b. A servant is not greater than his Lord.
 - c. There is no power but of God.
 - d. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.
 - 2. It is general as opposed to specific.
 - a. The righteous shall live by faith - general.
 - (1) Roman 4:3 specific, Abraham.
 - (2) Abraham, though, lived under a different set of conditions than men living today, and is used by Paul as an example of the principle he states in Roman 1:17.
 - (a) You and I do not have to sacrifice our firstborn on an altar to God in order to be pleasing to Him.
 - (b) But, the common denominator is in the principle.
 - (c) God has always required an obedient faith from those who want to please Him.

- b. Once you have found a principle, collect as many passages as you can that teach the same thing (but perhaps in different words).
 - (1) Romans 3:28.
 - (2) Hebrews 11:6 etc.
 - c. And as you study the various biographies in Scripture specify how their lives demonstrated the principle or fell short of it.
- (b) Secondly, principles are declarative usually indicating something is the case (as opposed to a command, interrogative, exclamation, etc.).
 - 1. Consider the principles given above.
- (c) Some principles may be used with a variety of applications.
 - 1. For example, the Bible teaches that we reap what we sow.
 - a. Paul uses this principle in finances.
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 9:6.
 - b. Hosea 8:7.
 - c. Proverbs 22:8.
 - d. Jesus used even the harvest as a way of referring to the souls of men waiting to be taught and respond to the Gospel.
- (d) Principles do not seem to be restricted to any one covenant.
 - 1. Romans 1:17.
 - 2. Reaping and sowing.
 - a. Hosea 8:7.
 - b. Galatians 6:9.
- (e) Principles are not only unchanging, they are unchangeable.

1. There are certain constants in the realm of nature.
 - a. Gravity, the movement of the celestial bodies, etc. and based upon these constants, science trusts.
 - (1) A man who jumps out of a five story building hoping to fall up will fall prey to the realities of how constant that law is.
 - (2) The permanent principles we have been discussing seem to be constant also.
- (4) Of the examples given of customs by Troy Cummings, let us see if we can determine what principles are to be learned.
 - (a) The principle taught in Romans 16:16 concerning the “holy kiss” is that our greeting of one another is to be sanctified, holy.
 1. In the first century, the common manner of one man greeting another was that of a kiss on the cheek.
 - (b) In John 13, at the washing of the disciples’ feet by our Lord, the principle is stated in 13:16:
 1. Jesus’ disciples were to learn from His actions that they were to engage in humble acts of service to one another. If the Lord served them in this humble act, they, not being greater than He, should do the same.
 2. John 13:17.
 - (c) Even though 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 has been heralded as one of the most difficult exegetical problems in the New Testament, there is still a very important principle that is easy to spot and to understand.
 1. 1 Corinthians 11:3.
 2. Whatever Paul meant by the discussion that followed, it was designed to illustrate the truth of the principle stated in 11:3.
- (5) One of the surer ways of establishing some account of action or teaching as binding on men today as opposed to mere custom is to

see if it is anchored in what some have called “creation ordinances.”

- (a) For example, the headship of man to woman (1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 1 Timothy 2:8-15) has been excused by some as culturally relative, thus not binding on 20th century Christians.
 - 1. But Paul anchors his teachings not in social customs of the time but rather in teachings as old as time.
 - 2. In 1 Timothy 2:8-15, he informs us that his teachings concerning the structure of authority between men and women has its roots in...
 - a. The order of the creation (man then woman).
 - b. The order of the fall (Eve was beguiled, not the man).
- (b) Another illustration of this point can be found in the debate that took place between the Pharisees and Jesus over divorce and remarriage.
 - 1. They wanted to know if a man could put away his wife for every cause.
 - 2. Jesus appealed to the teachings of God that are as old as time in Genesis 2.

d. Essentials and Incidentals:

- (1) Closely related to the following section (general and specific commands) is a knowledge of the difference between essentials and incidentals.
 - (a) We must learn that even binding examples and direct commands from God always involve some incidentals or non-essential elements, in this manner:
 - 1. In Acts 10:48 we read: “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” Here is a direct command from God by the authority of Christ through Peter. Question: Were there any incidentals or non-essential elements involved in carrying out this command? There were – in this sense:

- a. In verses 47, 48 we see that “water” baptism was commanded; this was essential.
 - b. But, did Peter specify the kind or temperature or the location of the water? (As to hot or cold; running or still; river or pond; outside a building or inside a building.)
 - c. Peter did not specify these things, and to try to bind those incidental or optional and to make a rigid, pattern of any one of them to the exclusion of the others would be sinful – making a law where God did not.
 - d. This is proof that incidentals are involved in carrying out God’s essentials.
2. God commands (teaches) Christians to sing spiritual songs and to make melody in our hearts (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
- a. The essential of the command is to sing as God specified.
 - b. Question: Are there any incidentals or non-essentials involved in carrying out the command? There are.
 - c. God commands us to sing (essential), but where did he specify that we sing...
 - (1) With a songbook in our hands;
 - (2) Without a songbook in our hands;
 - (3) In four-part harmony;
 - (4) In unison;
 - (5) Soprano, alto, tenor or bass;
 - (6) With someone standing before the assembly, or someone sitting down in the assembly;
 - (7) Songs that only the elders or the preacher have written;

(8) How many songs to sing at any given assembly;

(9) In what order (before or after the prayer, etc.).

d. The command to sing does not include any one of these specific incidentals to the exclusion of the others.

e. To try to bind any one or more of these incidentals and fasten it to the commandment to sing would be adding to God's command, making a law where He did not.

e. General and Specific (Commands):

(1) This material is also taken from Troy M. Cummings' class notes at Southern California School of Evangelism.

(a) We must learn to distinguish between God's general (generic) commands and his specific commands.

(b) To try to make a general command specific is to pervert God's Word.

(c) To try to make a specific command general is to pervert God's Word.

(d) Many commands have both general and specific requirements; we must let the general remain general, and the specific remain specific.

(e) We can easily enough identify general requirements and specific requirements, when we study closely exactly what God has said in His Word; we must not add or subtract to what is stated.

(f) Example: The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15ff; Luke 24:44-49).

1. Some things in this are general; some are specific.

2. "Go ye therefore" is general as to the methods or means involved in the transportation or travel.

3. To try to change this general "Go" into some specific "go by ship," "go by auto," "go by walking," etc., and to try to bind

any one of these methods as an essential rather than as an optional method, is to tamper with God's teaching.

4. "Make disciples of" or "teach" or "preach the gospel" describes the subject matter or content of the thing taught or preached; this is specified and cannot be made general as to mean just any kind of message.
 5. "Baptizing them" is from the Greek word "baptizo" which certainly means "immerse," "dip," "plunge;" it does not mean "sprinkle" or "pour." (Greek for "sprinkle" is rantizo; for "pour" is cheo or "pour out" ekcheo.)
 6. "Baptize" is specifically "immerse"; the word "immerse" cannot mean in either Greek or English "sprinkle" or "pour." God's specific command to submit to "immersion" must not be changed into a general command to submit to any one of the three: immersion, sprinkling or pouring.
 7. "Baptizo" in Greek means "immerse," but it does not specify the element into which the immersion takes place; however, in other Scriptures (Acts 8:35-39; 10:47,48) approved Biblical examples reveal to us that the immersion is to be done in water. So God gives the command to be immersed; and then by apostolic example He teaches us the element of the immersion. In this case God uses both direct command and apostolic example in teaching us.
 8. While "baptize" is specific in meaning immersion, and apostolic example shows water as the element, nowhere in Scripture is the kind or temperature or location of the water made specific. Therefore, let no one try to bind any of these as necessary specific where God has not bound them.
- (g) Example of one of God's specific commands; to "sing" or "sing praise" or "make melody with your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:18,19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13).
- (h) Singing is one kind of music; it is vocal music (see dictionary).
- (i) Another kind of music (co-ordinate and parallel to vocal music) is instrumental music; music or melody made on some artificial instrument rather than with the human voice.

- (j) In the New Testament, for the use of the church in its worship, God did not give a general command to “make music”; instead He gave the specific command for only one kind of music, vocal singing with the human voice, accompanied with the inward and spiritual quality of melody in the heart. This is easily understood. God wants the inward and spiritual quality of heart in His worship, not merely the outward and physical sound of the vibration of the vocal cords. It is possible for us, as Jesus warned, to attempt to honor Him with our “lips,” while the “heart” is far from Him, Matthew 15: 8,9.
- (k) To try to change God’s command, specific to sing into the general command to “make music,” is to be guilty of tampering with God’s Word.
- (l) We must not add another kind of music to the one kind specified (vocal), with the plea, “But God did not say not to use the instrument.” This is presuming on the silence of God, and actually changing His teaching, and “adding” to it. To add is as wrong as to take away from God’s Word.
- (m) God did not say; “Thou shalt not have coffee and cake on the Lord’s table”; are we free therefore to add these different kinds of food and drink from the kinds which God specified – fruit of the vine and bread? No!
- (n) Did God have to make a long list of food and drink which we must not use in observing the Lord’s supper? No. Why not? Because He gave the specific kind of drink (fruit of the vine, the grape vine) and the specific kind of food, bread, which He desired; and in so specifying He automatically eliminated all other kinds of food or drink.
- (o) When God gave the specific kind of music which He wanted, vocal or singing, He automatically eliminated another kind of music (instrumental); it was not necessary that He give a long list of instruments and say, “do not use the piano, the flute, the violin, etc.”
- (p) In Genesis 6:14 God commanded Noah to make the ark of a certain kind of wood – gopher. Thus God specified the basic construction material of the ark, wood. If Noah had tried to change the kind of material specified, from wood to metal would this have been acceptable with God? No.

- (q) Wood is a specific kind of material in contrast to metal another kind of material. Yet, in another sense, wood is general since there are many kinds of wood. But God then eliminated all kinds of wood except one kind – gopher. Did God need to say, “Do not use oak, pine, spruce, cedar, elm, poplar, etc.?” No. The specific kind of wood commanded automatically eliminated all other kinds of wood. We all know this.
- (r) When God commands a certain kind of action (like singing, vocal music), or a certain kind of material (like gopher wood), then any attempt to add another kind of action or material is to tamper directly with the specifications God gave, and therefore is wrong. The same is true if one tries to subtract the particular kind specified. Also, the same is true if one tries to substitute a different kind of action or material.
- (s) Suppose Noah had said: “I will use gopher wood to build the ark; but I will add to that some oak wood, because oak is strong and will “aid” me in carrying out the building of the ark.” We all should know that God would not have accepted such an “aid” or addition; that kind of so-called “aid” would have been adding another kind of wood to what God specified.
- (t) As discussed elsewhere in these notes: There are certain lawful aids or incidentals or optional connected with carrying out any of God’s commands, and any of these proper and lawful aids may be used provided they do not add to, nor take away from the requirements of God’s specifications, as to the kind of action or material in the commandment.
- (u) Examples: When God commanded gopher wood, He nowhere specified the size of the trees which Noah would have to cut down and use in building the ark. Noah was free to use whatever size of gopher tree that he wished, the sizes which would “aid” him most in constructing the ark – just so long as he used the specified wood – gopher. This kind of “aid” is an example of an optional or permissible “aid” in carrying out what was commanded. The size of tree would not add to, nor take away from, nor alter in any way, the specifications of God’s command. Since God did not specify a certain size tree, then no man was free to make a law as to that size.
- (v) In carrying out God’s teaching to “sing” (certain kind of music, vocal), we are not free to add another kind of music – instrumental – under the plea that such added kind of music will “aid”

the singing. Such is not a lawful “aid,” because it invades the realm of the specified kind of action God commanded; it alters the command itself; adds to it.

- (w) Now there are certain lawful and optional “aids” to the singing, which do not add to the kind of action God commanded. (See discussion elsewhere.) We may use a songbook before us as we sing, or not use it, as we please; we can do what “aids” us, as to this point. Why? To use or not use a songbook does not change the command in any matter. It is merely one of the optional and permissible aids which we may use – because God did not specify any particular incidental or aid; did not bind the use or non-use of a songbook. A songbook is not co-ordinate or parallel to the kind of music specified. A songbook is a subordinate aid or incidental that does not enter into the realm of the kind of music – the thing that is specified in the command.
 - (x) We cannot use so-called “aids” that alter the essence of the command itself; all aids must be incidentals and subordinates that do not intrude into the realm of the specified terms of the command.
 - (y) Is someone who especially likes coffee and cake free to add these different kinds of food and drink to the particular kind of food and drink (fruit of the vine, bread) which God specified in the Lord’s Supper? Can he rightfully plead, “But these aid me in eating the Lord’s Supper?” No.
- f. Old Covenant and New Covenant: What then is the law (Galatians 3: 19)? It is described in many ways:
- (1) Let us recognize first and foremost that the Law of Moses was good.
 - (a) Romans 7:16.
 - 1. (NIV) “And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.”
 - (b) Romans 7:12.
 - (c) Romans 7:14.
 - (2) It is also described under the figure of a tutor (ASV) - other translations use the word “schoolmaster” (KJV) or “supervisor” (NIV).

- (a) But the real thought behind the word used in Galatians 3:23 is that of a person who was put in charge of taking a child to school.
 - 1. On “paidagogos,” A. T. Robertson comments, “The paidagogue watched the behavior at home and attended him when he went away from home as to school.”
 - 2. Liddell-Scott: “the slave who went with the boy from home to school and back again.”
 - 3. This was the ultimate purpose of the law.
- (b) Galatians 3:24.
- (3) In somewhat a different view, the Law of Moses is also referred to as that which was written against man.
 - (a) Galatians 5:1.
 - 1. Matthew 11:27-30.
 - 2. Jesus is speaking to those under the yoke of the law.
 - (b) Galatians 3:13.
 - 1. Colossians 2:14.
- (4) How is it, then, that the Law could be called good, righteous, holy and spiritual and function in the important role of the “paidagogos,” and yet be considered a curse and an ordinance written against us?
 - (a) The law was good, righteous, holy and spiritual; so there was no problem with the Law.
 - (b) Romans 8:3.
 - (c) Man just did not keep the Law because he was weak.
 - (d) “The law was not weak in itself; it was weak because in man’s folly the urgings of the flesh are stronger than man’s regard for the law” R. L. Whiteside, Commentary on Romans).

(5) What relationship does the Christian sustain with the Law of Moses?

(a) First, we need to determine to whom the Law was given.

1. Exodus 19:1-5.
2. Deuteronomy 5:3.
3. Galatians 3:11-25.
4. So, the law was given to Israel, not with their fathers, to last till the seed should come.

(b) What, then, happened to the law of Moses?

1. Hebrews 8:13.
2. Hebrews 7:12.
3. Hebrews 7:18.
4. Hebrews 10:9.
5. Colossians 2:14.
6. No longer under PAIDAGOGOS, thus no longer under the law (Galatians 3:24,25).
7. Romans 10:4.
8. Romans 7:1-5.

(c) Having been taken out of the way, man today is not obligated to keep that law in specific detail, but the principles involved are binding (Thomas Warren has an excellent discussion on this point in his book When is an "Example" Binding?).

1. Romans 15:4.
 - a. Even though the Old Law had been nailed to the cross, Paul says "learn from the things that were written aforetime."
2. 1 Corinthians 10:6,11.

a. 10:6.

(1) From Israel's history, we can learn that we are not to desire things with which we have no business associating.

b. 10:11.

3. 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

a. Though this passage states a general principle concerning all Scripture (Old Testament and New Testament) it was most likely written with reference to the Old Testament.

(1) They were able to make one wise unto salvation because:

(a) They pictured sin as "exceeding sinful" (Romans 7:13).

(b) They gave to the Jews "a knowledge of sin."

(c) They served as a road map to Christ (Galatians 3:25).

((1)) They led the Jews to Jesus.

(d) Consider the number of times that writers of the New Testament use incidents recorded in the Old Testament to exhort, and/or warn men and women living under the New without arguing that all the Old Testament is binding upon men today in specific detail.

1. Hebrew 11:1-12:1.

a. The Jewish Christians to whom the author of Hebrews wrote were shrinking back due to the persecution they were experiencing at the hands of the Jews.

b. To encourage them, the author cites numerous Old Testament characters of faith as examples - each designed to exhort brethren to keep the faith.

- c. Such Old Testament characters as Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Rahab were cited.

(1) 11:32.

- d. And even though we are not bound by the laws under which these lived, we still look to them by way of example to learn, in principle.

2. 2 Peter 2:4-11.

- a. Warning saints of the first century about false prophets who secretly bring in destructive heresies, Peter turns to the Old Testament for his examples.

(1) God did not spare the wicked people of Noah's day; nor will He spare the wicked of any generation.

(2) He reminds them of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah that were turned into ashes.

(a) And He did so, "having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly" (2 Peter 2:6).

(b) The principle taught is this, "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment" (2 Peter 2:9).

(3) While instructing His disciples concerning the suddenness of the destruction of the Temple, Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife."

- b. Examples:

(1) What can we learn from the account of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God?

(a) Contextually, the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not given to us. (We do not even have access to it.)

(b) But Adam and Eve were warned against eating of it on the penalty of death.

((1)) God warned them that they would die if they did so.

(c) In violation of His will they ate, and God cast them out of the garden - away from the tree of life.

(d) LESSON: We must obey God's instructions.

(2) Consider the lessons to be learned from Abraham and the conception of Isaac.

(a) LESSON: (READ Romans 4:19-21 - application is drawn for us).

(3) Nadab and Abihu - Leviticus 10:1,2.

(a) They offered to God "strange fire" (unauthorized fire).

(b) PRINCIPLE: Men today are to do only that which God has authorized.

(e) Practical application of these principles:

1. God commanded Noah to build an ark, but He never gave that command to anyone else in all the world's history.
2. God gave the Mosaic law or covenant on Mt. Sinai to the descendants of Abraham, about fourteen centuries before the birth of Christ, but that law or covenant is not now binding on anyone, Jew or Gentile. (See Galatians 3; Romans 7:1-7; Colossians 2:14-17; entire book of Hebrews, etc.)
3. To quote from the Mosaic law and try to bind such laws on Christians today is gross perversion of God's will.
4. Some say: "God never changes, and He never changes His law; Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

5. This is serious misunderstanding of Scripture. God's character, reliability, etc. never change, but God has changed some of His laws at times. Hebrews 7:12 says: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." See also Hebrews 8:6-12; etc.
6. The New Covenant or Testament of Christ could not go into force until after His death, Hebrews 9:15-17. Examples of how Christ saved people during His personal ministry are not exact examples for us today; His last will and testament was not in force.
7. The last and Great Commission of Christ to His apostles and His disciples (found in Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:46-49), which certainly is the Gospel of Christ for all nations, did not go into force, was not preached, until the first Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of Christ back to heaven – recorded in Acts 1 and 2.
8. The true church of the Lord, in its establishment and spread, is described in the book of Acts of apostles. This is the true, the original, the oldest church – the one Christ built through the agency of His inspired apostles. It was, and is, neither Catholic nor Protestant; it is non-sectarian, non-denominational. It is the **one** body, the one faith, of Ephesians 4:1-6.
9. One cannot understand and apply Scripture properly to himself or others if he ignores the different covenants, laws and testaments of Scripture.

(f) Summation and Conclusion:

1. "No Old Testament statement...can be binding in specific detail on men living today - BUT - such can be binding in principle on men living today" (Thomas Warren).
2. There are principles that can be learned from these various accounts of action.
 - a. For example (taken from Warren's book When Is an Example Binding?):
 - (1) To be pleasing to God men must act "by faith."

(2) To act “by faith” means that one functions by taking God at His Word.

(a) Heed His warnings.

(b) Do not add to nor take away from God’s Word.

(c) One must not pervert His Word.

(3) Faith without works is dead.

(4) To do, in religion, that for which there is no divine authority is to be guilty of sin.

(5) One may act in all sincerity (feeling that he is obeying God) and yet be in disobedience.

g. Difference and Contradiction:

(1) General principles:

(a) The Bible is the product of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1: 20f).

(b) It is impossible for God to lie.

1. Titus 1:2.

2. Numbers 23:19.

3. 1 Samuel 15:29.

4. Hebrews 6:18.

(c) One of the basic laws of thought is called “the law of contradiction.”

1. In essence, “nothing can both be and not be.”

2. Aristotle: “That the same thing should at the same time both be and not be for the same person and in the same respect is impossible.”

3. The example Thomas Warren gives in his book Logic and the Bible is, “...nothing can be black all over and not-black all over at one and the same time” (p. 23).

4. Looking at the chart here are the possibilities with reference to contradictory statements.
 - a. Both cannot be true.
 - b. Both cannot be false.
 - c. The truth of one proposition involves the falsity of the other and its falsity involves the truth of the other.
5. Contradictories differ both in quantity and quality.
 - a. Quantity = universal or particular.
 - b. Quality = affirms or negates.
6. Contraries:
 - a. Both can be true.
 - b. Both can be false.
 - c. Contraries do not exhaust all possible alternatives, where contradictories do.

(2) Wayne Jackson, in his manuscript Principles for Understanding Alleged Bible Contradictions, makes several useful observations on the topic.

- (a) "A mere difference does not a contradiction make!"
- (b) He suggests that when confronted with an alleged contradiction that we ought to ask ourselves three questions:
 1. Is the same thing or person under consideration?
 - a. 2 arks.
 - b. 2 kinds of works.
 2. Is the same time reference in view?
 - a. Genesis 1:31.
 - b. Genesis 6:6.

- c. Some would suggest that God was both satisfied and dissatisfied at His initial creative work at the same time.
- 3. Is the language being employed in the same sense?
 - a. At Saul's conversion, the men who journeyed with him were said to have heard the voice that spake to him (Acts 9:7).
 - b. But Acts 22:9 states that they did not hear the voice.
 - c. The alleged contradiction is cleared up in this fashion.
 - (1) In Acts 9:7 Luke was simply saying that a sound was heard.
 - (2) And in Acts 22:9 that they did not understand the meaning of the sound they heard.
- (c) In his conclusion he adds, "The Biblical apologist need only show the possibility of harmonization between passages that appear to conflict in order to negate the force of the charge that a Bible contradiction exists" (p. 8).
- (3) In the preface of Gleason Archer's book, Bible Difficulties, he lists several valuable points to consider when facing one of these alleged discrepancies. (These points are taken either in whole or in part for the purposes of this course. The essence of each point has been recorded. I encourage the student to obtain a copy of the book as a reference book to be studied carefully.)
 - (a) "Be fully persuaded in your own mind that an adequate explanation exists, even though you have not yet found it..."
 - (b) "...the Bible is either the inerrant Word of God or else it is an imperfect record by fallible men. Once we have come into agreement with Jesus that the Scripture is completely trustworthy and authoritative, then it is out of the question for us to shift over to the opposite assumption, that the Bible is only the errant record of fallible men as they wrote about God...."
 - (c) "Carefully study the context and framework of the verses in which the problem arises until you gain some idea of what the verse is intended to mean within its own setting. It may be necessary to study the entire book in which the verse occurs,

carefully noting how each key term is used in other passages. Compare Scripture with Scripture, especially all those passages in other parts of the Bible that deal with the same subject or doctrine.”

- (d) “Remember, no interpretation of Scripture is valid that is not based on careful exegesis, that is, on wholehearted commitment to determining what the ancient author meant by the words he used.”
- (e) “In the case of parallel passages, the only method that can be justified is harmonization, that is to say, all the testimonies of the various witnesses are to be taken as trustworthy reports of what was said and done in their presence, even though they may have viewed the transaction from a slightly different perspective. When we sort them out, line them up and put them together, we gain a fuller understanding of the event than we would obtain from any one testimony taken individually. But as with any properly conducted inquiry in a court of law, the judge and jury are expected to receive each witness’ testimony as true when viewed from his own perspective - unless, of course, he is exposed as an untrustworthy liar. Only injustice would be served by any other assumption - as, for example, that each witness is assumed to be untruthful unless his testimony is corroborated from outside sources.

“(This, of course, is the assumption made by opponents of the inerrancy of Scripture, and it leads them to totally false results.)”

- (f) Consult carefully written reference books i.e. Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, etc. (This point has been adapted for my purposes.)
- (g) “Whenever historical accounts of the Bible are called in question on the basis of alleged disagreement with the findings of archaeology or the testimony of ancient non-Hebrew documents, always remember that the Bible is itself an archaeological document of the highest caliber....”

h. Explicit and Implicit:

- (1) I cannot overestimate the value of Thomas Warren’s book When is and “Example” Binding? on this very point.

(a) All that the Bible teaches, it teaches explicitly and implicitly.

1. The explicit statements are the “given” statements of Scripture (Genesis 1:1 thru Revelation 22:21).

2. The implicit statements are those that we deduce from the given statements.

3. Warren: “To say that two Biblical statements (say, proposition A and proposition B) imply a third statement (say, proposition C) is to say that it is impossible for both proposition A and proposition B to be true and proposition C not to be true” (p. 87,88).

a. Illustrate with geometry.

(1) We have a square.

(2) One side of the square is 7 inches long.

(3) From these two given statements, what is implied?

i. Summary of the section:

(1) It is important for any serious and honest student of the Bible to know the difference between:

(a) Permanent and temporary.

(b) Cultural and principle.

(c) Essential and incidental.

(d) General and specific commands.

(e) Old and New Covenants.

(f) Difference and contradiction.

(g) Explicit and implicit.

I. One must draw only such conclusions as are warranted by the evidence (The Law of Rationality).

1. As obvious as this is, some even in the church are denying that human reasoning can have any part in the binding “pattern” of God’s revelation.
 - a. It is not human reasoning, logical thinking **against** or **in place of** God’s Word.
 - b. Rather: can God’s Word, the supreme authority, be understood and obeyed by each person without his using his God-given reasoning power to draw correct conclusions? Certainly not.
 - c. Yet some will raise a false issue, build a straw man and accuse someone of trying to exalt human reasoning above the authority of God’s Word, when all that he is doing is insisting that God’s Word cannot be understood nor obeyed without logical thinking to correct conclusions.
 - d. Thus human reasoning in logical manner is essential to understand Scripture not only concerning various “examples” or accounts of action, and necessary inference, but also concerning direct statements (“commands” etc.) of God’s requirements.
 - e. So if human reasoning nullifies the binding nature of approved examples or accounts of action, and necessary inferences, it also destroys the binding nature of God’s direct requirements [whether expressed as command, exhortation, question, declarative sentence or conditional (subjective) statement.
 - f. Practical examples of these points:
 - (1) In the Connally-Hicks debate, Olan Hicks asked Andrew Connally:

“If, through your system of logic, you arrived at a conclusion contradictory to a plain Bible statement, which would you accept as truth, the Bible statement or the conclusion of logic?”
 - (2) Connally correctly answered:

“Correct reasoning, based upon correct information, will not (cannot) lead to a conclusion which contradicts the Bible” (p. 93f).
2. Like all truths, the ability and the right to study and to understand Scripture for oneself (instead of the “church” officially doing the interpreting for you) can be abused.
 - a. This does not mean that each person is as well qualified as any other person to study and understand Scripture.

- b. Certainly some people have more native intelligence, better education and general capability to study and to understand the deep things of Scripture than others have. Scripture shows that individuals have varying abilities (Matthew 25:14-30, “to each according to his several ability”).
 - c. No individual has the “freedom” to draw any conclusion he pleases from Scripture, and to try to bind that conclusion on others in or out of the church.
 - d. No person has the moral right to become a law to himself.
 - e. Proper humility will cause one to compare his thinking with other Bible students, be willing to learn from others and to be cautious before pushing radical conclusions and actions.
- J. One must acknowledge that there are some things hard to be understood.
- 1. We all agree that many things in Scripture are plain and simple and easy to understand.
 - 2. At the same time God made “some things hard to be understood, 2 Peter 3:16. He has His own purpose in doing this, perhaps to cause us to study hard for our own spiritual blessing.
 - 3. There are in fact quite a number of passages and subjects in Scripture where there is some difficulty or obscurity in our understanding them, or their meaning for us today.
 - 4. Some people are not aware of these difficulties or do not think they exist, for the simple reason that they have not studied Scripture deeply enough to see them.
 - 5. Some have quickly jumped to conclusions on various passages or issues and “see no problem” because they are too shallow in their Bible study.
 - 6. Certainly all those who seek earnestly enough can understand Scripture sufficiently to be saved. Let us all determine to keep on growing as Peter said: “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 3:18.
- K. Practical Application : A Study of Matthew 24.

1. The disciples came to Jesus privately saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3).
 - a. In the antecedent chapter, Matthew 23, Jesus had hurled 8 woeful denunciations at the Scribes and Pharisees of His day.
 - (1) He chastised them for their superficial lives, their hypocrisy, their lack of proper motivation and a misplaced emphasis.
 - (2) In delivering the final woe, He said, "Fill ye up the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell? Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU ALL THESE THINGS SHALL COME UPON THIS GENERATION" (Matthew 23:32-36).
 - (3) And in His lament over the lack of right response from Jerusalem, He said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (23:38).
 - b. In chapter 24 Jesus is seen leaving the temple.
 - (1) "...and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple" (24:1).
 - (2) But while they were admiring the beauty of the structure itself Jesus said, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (24:2).
 - (3) When He had removed Himself to the Mount of Olives the disciples came to Him privately seeking more information concerning His statement about the temple.
 - c. In a parallel study of Matthew 24 with Mark 13 and Luke 21, it becomes apparent that only two questions are asked, each with two parts. We could summarize:
 - (1) When shall the destruction of the temple take place?
 - (a) And what shall be the signs when these things are all about to be accomplished? (Luke 21:7; Mark 13:4).

(2) When shall you come again?

(a) And what shall be the signs preceding your coming?

- d. Apparently the disciples thought that the destruction of the temple and His second coming were related time-wise.

(1) But it does not follow that their assumptions were correct.

2. Before we begin dissecting our text I want you to notice a point or two.

- a. There are two questions asked, two comings discussed and two ends revealed.

(1) His coming in judgment upon Jerusalem marked the end of Judaism and the Jewish nation.

(2) His coming in final judgment marks the end of the world.

- b. Secondly, I want you to note that the full answer to the disciples' questions extends through Matthew 24 and 25.

3. Outline of our discussion:

- a. With regard to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation:

(1) We will note when it was to take place.

(2) And we will identify the signs of its coming.

- b. With regard to the end of the world:

(1) We will note when it is to take place.

(2) And we will identify the signs of its coming.

- c. In this fashion we will survey the answers Jesus gave concerning the two questions His disciples asked Him on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24:3).

4. The destruction of Jerusalem:

- a. The temple itself has a long and varied history.

- (1) It was first built by Solomon (967-960 BC) and had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.
 - (2) When the Jews in exile had returned by decree of the Persian ruler, Cyrus, the second temple was built. (This is where Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah fit in.)
 - (3) The reconstruction of the second temple was begun in 20 BC by Herod the Great and was still going on during the earthly ministry of Jesus (this is sometimes called the “third” temple).
 - (a) John 2:20 informs us that it took 46 years to build.
 - (b) Reconstruction did not conclude until AD 64.
 - (c) This temple was ultimately destroyed by the Roman armies in 70 AD.
- b. When Jesus said the temple would be destroyed and that there would not be left one stone upon the other, the disciples wanted to know when it would all take place.
- (1) Vss 4-35 contain the answer to their first question.
 - (a) In vs 34 He said, “Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished.”
 - (b) All of what things? All of what was previously spoken.
- c. Let us survey these verses:
- (1) First of all, Jesus gave them a host of signs to watch for that would mark the coming destruction of Jerusalem.
 - (a) False Christs would come and lead many astray (v 5).
 - (b) There would be wars and rumors of wars (v 6).
 - (c) Nation would rise up against nation, kingdom against kingdom (v 7).
 - (d) There would be natural disturbances like famines and earthquakes (v 7).
 - (e) Great persecution would arise against the church (v 9).

- (f) False prophets would arise leading men astray (v 11).
 - (g) The Gospel would be "...preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations" (v 4).
 - (h) The abomination of desolation would appear (v 15).
- (2) In vs 6 He said, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that ye be not troubled: for these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet."
- (a) The end of what? In our context, the end of Jerusalem.
- (3) Note vs 8, "But all these things are the beginning of travail."
- (4) And vs 14 - once the gospel has been preached to all the nations, "then shall the end come" (end of Jerusalem).
- d. Verse 15 seems to be a turning point for our attention: "When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel, the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand)."
- (1) What are they to do when they see the abomination of desolation?
- (a) "Let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains."
 - (b) "Let him that is on the housetop not go down to take out the things that are in his house."
 - (c) "Let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak."
 - (d) They were to pray that their flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath.
 - (e) "For then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be."
- NOTE: If this had been said with reference to the second coming of Christ, what good would it have done for Him to advise them to flee unto the mountains, etc.?
- (2) What was the "abomination of desolation?"

- (a) It was to be the key sign that would warn the Christians of that day to get out of Jerusalem very quickly due to the intense persecution that was about to come.
 - (b) Our parallel accounts will identify this key sign for us:
 - 1. Luke wrote, “But when ye see Jerusalem compassed about with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand” (21: 20).
 - 2. All previous signs were compared to birth pangs, but the abomination of desolation marked the beginning of the end and of intense persecution upon the Jews that has never been paralleled in history.
 - (c) The abomination of desolation means the presence of the Roman armies.
 - (d) Josephus, a Jewish historian, wrote that the holy place itself was destroyed by fire along with all the buildings around it.
 - 1. They brought their ensigns to the Temple and offered sacrifices to them.
- (3) Consider these statistics from Josephus:
- (a) Preceding the destruction of Jerusalem:
 - 1. 4 Roman emperors came to a violent death.
 - 2. 50,000 Jews were slain in Seleucia.
 - 3. 20,000 Jews were slain in Caesarea.
 - 4. Remember wars and rumors of wars and earthquakes and famine were merely remote signs.
 - (b) But at the destruction of Jerusalem itself:
 - 1. 79,000 were carried off as captives.
 - 2. 1,100,000 perished in the whole siege.
 - 3. Women boiled their children to sustain their lives.

- (c) Brother Roy Deaver comments: "It is a fact of history that in the siege of Jerusalem NOT A CHRISTIAN PERISHED. The Lord had given them a sign. They knew the sign, and when they saw the sign they fled as He had instructed them" (p. 110, "Premillennialism: True or False" The First Annual Fort Worth Lectures).
- e. Jesus also warns them concerning false signs.
 - (1) Some would say "Lo, here is the Christ, or Here:"
 - (2) Jesus said, "Believe it not."
 - (a) And in vs 27 He described His final coming; "For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of Man."
 - (b) In other words, it would not be an isolated event but a world-wide spectacle.
- f. I mentioned earlier that there were two comings mentioned in Matthew 24, 25.
 - (1) The mere reference to the Lord's coming does not prove that it is made with reference to His final coming.
 - (a) In vss 29-31 we have described a coming of the Lord in Judgment (READ).
 - 1. Note vs 30, "and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man..."
 - a. "...they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."
 - 2. Admittedly this sounds like His second coming, apart from sin (Hebrew 9:27) and in the clouds as was predicted by the angels in Acts 1.
 - 3. But note the language surrounding this verse.
 - a. Vs 29, "But immediately after the tribulation of those days..."

- 79-

- (e) TRANSITION: "But of THAT day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only."

- 1. The day in which the heavens and the earth pass away.

5. Jesus' teaching with regard to the final coming:

- a. With reference to the question "When?" He said no one but the Father knows.
- b. And with reference to "signs" proceeding His coming, there shall be none.

- (1) "And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man" (24:37).

- (2) Before the flood they ate and drank and were marrying and given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came and took them away.

- (a) "So shall be the coming of the Son of Man."

- (3) And Jesus admonished, "Therefore, be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

- (a) 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

- (b) 2 Peter 3:10.

- (4) A great contrast is to be recognized between His coming in the destruction of Jerusalem and His final coming.

- (a) There were signs given warning the saints about the destruction to come upon Jerusalem.

- (b) But no sign is given concerning His second coming.

- 1. The days proceeding His final coming glory will be characterized by normal activities and conduct.

- c. And since there are no signs, Jesus said it would be necessary for all concerned to "watch" and "be ready."

- (1) Chapter 25 contains three major points.

- (a) The parable of the Ten Virgins vss 1-13, a lesson on preparedness.
- (b) The parable of the talents vss 14-30, a lesson on proper use of time and talents.
- (c) The final coming of Christ is depicted as a separation of sheep and goats (vv 31-46).
 - 1. To the righteous He shall say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...." (25:34).
 - 2. But to the unrighteous He shall say, "depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the Devil and his angels" (25:4).
 - 3. "All these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (25:46).

6. Summary.

- a. With regard to the Lord's coming in judgment against Jerusalem and the Jewish nation:
 - (1) So far as the time is concerned, it would be within that generation.
 - (2) So far as signs were concerned there would be:
 - (a) Possible misleading signs.
 - (b) Signs which would tell the righteous to flee.
- b. With regard to the Lord's final coming in judgment to mark the end of the world:
 - (1) So far as time is concerned - only the Father knows.
 - (2) So far as signs are concerned - there will be NONE!

Being Silent Where the Bible is Silent

DAN HOLLAND

A claim within the Restoration Movement has been: “We speak where the Bible speaks and we are silent where the Bible is silent.” In other words, religious authority comes from heaven and not from earth. Men are to seek God’s laws through inspired scripture and not through “church decree.”

The Jews set up a “tradition of the elders” (see Matt. 15:2; Mark 7:3,5), and it is possible for men today to set up traditions and bind them on men as laws of God. These traditions of the Jews did not come by inspired revelation but the Jews used them to judge others and to make themselves appear righteous. For (sic) example, they devised a custom of often washing themselves as well as “many other things” such as cups and pots. There is nothing wrong with washing, of course, but they came to equate the custom with a law of God and heartily pounced on those who did not follow it. (The Pharisees were great intimidators and very righteous in their own eyes.) When Jesus did not fall in line and have his disciples wash their hands as they were expected to do, they questioned him about it. He replied: “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the commandments of men” (Mark 7:6,7).

The Pharisees loved authority (Matt. 23:4), praise and exaltation (Matt. 23:5-12), and money (Luke 16:14,15). Their traditions helped them to hold to all this. By enforcing traditions as God’s law they gave importance to their professional status, proclaimed themselves as having the very authority of God, and claimed praise as the righteous ones of God. Holding to their exalted status, they enhanced their material gains. Jesus said to them: “Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knoweth your hearts” (Luke 16:5). Bragging before men does not impress God any more than broad phylacteries. God knew that they very selfishly used human laws to make others feel guilty and low in comparison to themselves.

In every generation it is possible that there exist among Christians those who make laws (nowhere found in the New Testament) and bind them on people as laws of God which bring sin and God’s wrath if disobeyed. If asked whether they had such lawmaking rights, people in the time of the Pharisees would have said: “No, we cannot make laws for God but our religious leaders can.” Catholic laity would give the same answer. But Jesus said: “Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ” (Matt. 23:10).

Tradition (as commandment) can come easily. Let one or more men decide that a midnight service each Monday night would show the brethren’s dedication and their desire to praise the Lord. Others agree to it (perhaps not willing to seem less dedicated). The error comes later when the midnight service becomes a test of faithfulness to

Jesus Christ. Guilt then comes to those who do not follow the tradition and, considered unfaithful, they may fall away from what the Bible does teach. Further error occurs when the midnight meeting is taught as that to which a person must commit himself before becoming a Christian.

There is surely a need for Christians to encourage one another to work together in things begun as matters of opinion (where the Bible is silent). Fervent appeals in such matters do much good (even as Paul appealed to the Corinthians to help the poor Judeans), but there is a difference between exhorting others to join in a work or practice and in making non-participation in that particular work disobedience to a command of God. Even Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning their giving help to the Judeans: "I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love" (2 Cor. 8:8). And he wrote: "Herein I give my judgment: for this is expedient for you" (2 Cor. 8:10). No pronouncements of sin are written but Paul exhorts to the motive of love. He praises the Macedonians who gave of their own accord, first giving themselves to the Lord as they purposed in their own hearts toward that particular work. Paul was interested in the proof of their love, and helping the Judeans was given as a way to express their love. Paul besought earnestly for this work but carefully refrained from calling it a commandment of God.

An expedient practice may become traditional (or customary) but must not be accepted as a doctrine (as a teaching from God) or else worship becomes vain as God's authority is usurped, by man. A zeal without knowledge is not subject to God's righteousness but seeks to establish a righteousness of man (See Romans 10:1-4.).

Paul wrote Timothy that the inspired scriptures are profitable "for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." The scriptures reveal what is righteous, and reproof and correction are not to come apart from revealed teaching of scripture. This is made very clear as Paul continues writing about scripture, stating that by them the child of God "may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16). James writes: "One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor" (James 4:12)? God needs doers of the law, not lawmakers. It is well, therefore, for all to consider the thought that when God left something out of the Bible, he did it for a reason. The silence of the scriptures proclaims the wisdom of God as do the heaven-sent words. One look at the slow, creeping paralysis of spirit engulfing the Roman Church over a period of centuries and it is clearly seen that man (whatever the intention of his finite mind) does not know what he is doing as he lays down human standards of faithfulness to the Lord.

So many today seem to be rejecting "the church" rather than Christ, and we need to remove human judgments as we act and teach only in behalf of Christ. The world needs to repent toward the law of Christ, not our laws. They need to seek the forgiveness of God, not the forgiveness of sinners saved by grace. We need to require all that the Bible requires but only what the Bible requires for a person to become a Christian

and to live as a Christian. As the church works to save souls, it must be (and be seen as) the church Jesus desired as revealed in the New Testament. It must be those people on earth who glorify Christ and Christ only as the end of the law and as the eternal Savior.

Changing Cultures

ROY H. LANIER, SR.

We are being told by liberal church leaders among us that we must change our doctrine and practice in order to keep up with changing times. We are told that we do not live in the first century, so we should not be bound by first-century customs and culture. We are being taught that God is pleased for women to enjoy equality with men in work, worship, and oversight of the church, but the apostles and prophets of the first century were bound by the culture of their time to deny women these privileges. Since the culture of the 20th century allows women such equality, churches of Christ should keep up with the times and allow women to lead prayer and preach in mixed adult audiences and share with men the responsibility of overseeing churches.

Men seek to prove such liberal teaching by the fact that many social customs of the first century are no longer practiced among us today. Paul taught brethren to salute one another with a holy kiss (Rom. 16:16). That social custom is still practiced in some parts of the eastern world. And teachers among us say that if we can change that custom to the handshake, we can change the law that it is a shame for woman to speak in the church (1 Cor. 14:35).

Again, it was a social custom for the host to kiss his guests and wash their feet (Luke 7:44-46). Jesus criticized his host for not doing so, but he does not command us to do so today. In the culture of that day it was the proper and hospitable thing to do; to fail to do so was to insult your guests. But we must remember that these were social customs; they were a part of the culture of the first century; they were customs for individuals, not for churches to practice.

Now let us consider these changing social customs with the items of worship which were determined, not by the fancy, or passing notions of people, but by the Lord through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. First, Jesus condemned the Jews for changing, and adding to, the items of worship authorized by the Lord through Moses. There is no doubt that many social customs of the wilderness wandering tribes were changed by the prosperous social leaders of the days of David and Solomon. Nor were the social customs of the days of Solomon able to satisfy the sophisticated desires of elite society matrons of the days of the apostles who had been influenced by Greece and Rome. But you never read where the Lord, nor his apostles, condemned them for changing their social customs to keep up with the times, unless they involved some immorality, or worldliness which hindered their spiritual growth. Why would Jesus and his apostles condemn them for changing the authorized items of worship, but did not condemn them for changing social customs?

God has never allowed men to change, or invent, items of worship. Cain did not offer his sacrifice by faith, which comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17); he changed his offering from a bloody sacrifice to that of grain, and the Holy Spirit called it

an evil work (1 John 3:12). The Jews added an item of worship to that which had been authorized when they washed their hands as an item of worship, and Jesus condemned them for it (Mark 7:5-9). If God condemned the change of an item of worship in the very beginning; if Jesus condemned an item of worship which had been added to that which was authorized by the Lord, will he not do the same if we dare to change or add to his authorized worship?

Jesus lived 1,500 years after the law of Moses was given. Had not social customs changed during that time? Did not Jesus live under a different culture from that which was enjoyed by the Jews at Sinai? If Jesus demanded that they do only that which was authorized 1,500 years before his time, does he not expect us to do only that which was authorized 1,900 years ago? Changing cultures did not justify those Jews in their disobedience to the scriptural laws under which they lived, so why should anyone today think changing cultures justify us in making changes of items of worship, or any other disobedience to scriptural laws under which we live?

Jesus said true worshipers must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23,24). To worship in spirit means that we shall put our heart into our worship. To worship in truth means that we shall be guided in our items of worship by what the truth of God teaches. We walk by faith in our worship, and faith comes by hearing Christ (Rom. 10:17). Christ is heard in the writings of apostles and prophets, the New Testament (Eph. 3:4, 5). Paul said we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God (Phil. 3:3). By this he mean that we worship according to the direction of God through the Holy Spirit as he guided apostles and prophets to reveal God's will to us.

But liberal teachers today are saying we have changed in many ways. First, they say people in the first century sung in unison, but we sing four parts. But, we all sing; we do what the Lord says for us to do. This is not changing, or adding, an item of worship. Next, we are told that we have changed the communion, for many years ago only one cup was used to serve the congregation, but now we have individual cups. Again, we are still doing what the Lord said do; we are taking the fruit of the vine. When I began to preach, nearly sixty years ago, we made our contribution by going to the front and laying our money on the table. Now we put it in a plate, or basket, which is passed by us. Again, we are still doing what the Lord authorized us to do. The manner of doing it has been changed, but the item of worship is still the same.

And we are told that the changing culture justifies women in leading prayer, in mixed adult audiences, preaching from the pulpit, and serving with men in the oversight of churches. The culture of the first century would not allow it, but the culture of this century will allow it, so we should allow it in churches of Christ. Paul did not base his teaching on the culture of his day, but on the will of God and the order of creation of man and woman (1 Tim. 2:12-14), and on the relation of woman to man and man to Christ (1 Cor. 11:3). Culture did not enter into Paul's thinking, much less the mind of the Holy Spirit as he revealed the will of God.

Culture allows a lot of things today that are not pleasing to the Lord. Culture allows easy divorce and easier remarriage without the scriptural reason, but God does not allow it. Culture allows sexual promiscuity in many ways which it did not allow one hundred years ago, but God's rule for sexual relations has not changed since the new covenant was ratified by the blood of Jesus and proclaimed by his apostle. If we allow changing cultures to determine the work, worship, and organization of churches of Christ, we will be conformed to the world and will become just another "big, sick denomination," no more pleasing to God than any other religious body made and maintained by the authority of men. But that is what some brethren want, and will have in spite of all the Lord has taught on the subject.

FIRM FOUNDATION
Date unknown

Considering Other Passages

RAYMOND C. KELCY

Observing what is said, observing to whom spoken, observing who speaks, considering the context, all are important practices to observe if one is to study the Bible intelligently. These have been discussed in previous articles. Another important practice in Bible study is that of studying other passages on the same subject. This practice is sometimes referred to as “analogy of scripture.”

Regarding Paul’s Conduct

A number of explanations have been offered as to why Paul acted as he did in Jerusalem when he participated in rites of purification in the temple in connection with which certain offerings were made (Acts 21:20). Some have said that Paul did these things in ignorance, not fully understanding the things he had written in Galatians and Romans about the abrogation of the law. Others have said that the only conclusion to reach is that Paul acted contrary to his own teaching and committed sin in so doing.

There is no indication in the record that either of these proposed solutions is correct. There is no rebuke of any kind nor any expression of disapproval as we would expect had Paul sinned either ignorantly or intentionally. A comparison with other passages is helpful. Paul elsewhere declares, “To the Jews I became as a Jew . . . I am become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:20-22).

Of course, Paul did not, in such conduct, act in a way that would sacrifice a principle. Germane to this point is the fact that Paul circumcised Timothy “because of the Jews” (Acts 16:3). This was Paul’s concession to Jewish feelings. He did not feel that he was sacrificing a principle in practicing a rite that was distinctively Jewish. However, Paul refused to yield to circumcision for Titus who was a Greek. He knew that such would be a repudiation of the “truth of the gospel,” that it would be giving countenance to Judaizers who were seeking to bind the Law upon Gentiles (Gal. 2:3-6).

It seems satisfactory to regard Paul’s conduct in the temple as coming under the same category as his practicing circumcision (sic) for Timothy. There were certain Jewish vows and connected with them were certain ceremonial cleansings which involved a type of offering. Paul considered these as Jewish practices in which he could involve himself and thus have better relations with Jews without sacrificing [sic] a principle. It is difficult to think that Paul would have participated in animal sin offerings on the Day of Atonement. This would have been something entirely different from vows and ceremonial rites connected with them.

Regarding Marriage

Paul has some statements in 1 Corinthians 7 which are often misunderstood. He says, "But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord" (v. 10). Again, "But to the rest say I, not the Lord" (v. 12). These statements are often taken to mean that Paul, in this chapter, is at times speaking by inspiration and at times not by inspiration. However, in another passage from the same book Paul says, "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord" (14:37).

So, all that Paul writes to the Corinthians is by inspiration. When he attributes something to the Lord and not to himself he is stating a truth which Jesus had personally taught during his earthly ministry. When he, Paul, gives instruction which the Lord had not given during his earthly ministry and which Paul now gives in addition to what Jesus had said, he says, "I say, not the Lord." Paul is not by such statement disclaiming inspiration. In fact, in the very chapter under consideration Paul says, "Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord: but I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy" (1 Cor. 7:26). This is, in reality, a claim for inspiration.

Regarding Non-Resistance

Another problem passage involves the ethics of Jesus which he set forth in the sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 6:38-42 Jesus sets forth an ethic of acquiescence and non-resistance. The non-resistance of the passage involves both verbal and physical retaliation. The disciple of Christ is not to resist an evildoer; he is to turn the other cheek to one who strikes him; he is to give his coat to one who seeks to possess it; in addition, he is to give his cloak; he is to go the second mile; he is to give to one who asks, and is not to refuse a loan.

There is a place in the life of the Christian for the ethic of non-resistance. There is a place in the life of the Christian for the granting of a loan. However, to take the ethical teachings of the passage cited above and attempt to apply them in every relationship of life results not only in an abuse of the principles but also in a neglect of other important passages. Non-resistance is not to be practiced in our confrontations with the devil for we are urged to "resist the devil," and we are promised that if we do so he will flee (James 4:7). A parent is not to sit passively and take abuse from his child, nor is he to give his child everything for which he asks. He is to discipline, chastise, and nurture his children (Eph. 6:4; Heb. 12:9, 10).

Christians are not to sit and watch heretics make havoc of the church. They are to mark those who cause trouble, withdraw from disorderly ones, have no company with them, refuse to eat with certain ones (Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; 1 Cor. 6:11). Elders are to convict the gainsayers (Titus 1:9). There are those "whose mouths must be stopped" (Titus 1:11). Heretics are to be rejected after proper admonition (Titus

3:10). It can be clearly seen from a study of other passages that non-resistance is not to be practiced everywhere and to all. But Jesus did not say anything about that. Again, the necessity of studying other passages is seen.

Further, concerning the ethic of non-resistance, we can see from a study of other passages that it is not to be applied by the Christian in dealing with criminals. Paul appealed for police protection when his life was in jeopardy (Acts 23:17ff). Nor is the police force to apply the ethic when dealing with criminals for they are God's ministers to take vengeance and they bear "not the sword in vain" (Rom. 13:4). The value of studying other passages is again evident.

FIRM FOUNDATION
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Does Every Man Create His Own Bible?

Thomas B. Warren

For many years one of the statements which has been made most often by denominational people, while they were engaged in a study of the Bible with members of the Lord's church, has been, "That's just your interpretation, and my interpretation is just as good as yours."

By this they meant that every individual has his own interpretation of what the Bible teaches, that he has a right to that interpretation (and still be pleasing to God), and that any and every person's interpretation of the Bible is just as good as any other's. By this they mean that the learning of truth (and obeying it) is not the important thing, but having an interpretation is the truly important thing.

Thus, I was very surprised when I recently saw the following statement made by a denominational theologian while he was speaking at a seminar on abuses in biblical interpretation: "When people say, 'That's just your interpretation,' they really mean, 'The Bible has no binding authority – everyone's interpretation is right'." R. C. Sproul, *Update*, Spring, 1982.)

I think that Sproul is right in making this statement. In reflecting on the many conversations in which I have been engaged in which that statement has been made, I have concluded that that is just what at least many—if indeed not all—people do mean when they make that statement. Their actions in connections with making the statement seem to make that clear. It is evident that they mean that the Bible (that is, the actual truth which it teaches) really has no binding power on anyone. They mean that every one's interpretation is right—no matter what the interpretation is, no matter that it contradicts the interpretations of other people (which they also regard as right), and no matter that it contradicts plain teaching of the Bible itself.

This all comes down to this: people who use the expression mean, in effect, that every man "creates" his own Bible, which will serve him well as it takes the place of the Bible which God has given to men by the simple device of coming to an interpretation as to what the Bible teaches. In doing this, they tacitly deny that the Bible has any binding authority whatever. They thus implicitly declare that doctrines which are merely invented by human beings are actually authoritative for the persons who invent those doctrines. By this implication they implicitly deny that there is any way any person could be wrong about the will of God. This is the case because, given this view of Biblical interpretation, there is no way that any person could be wrong as to what the Bible teaches (at least not so long as he held to an interpretation which he had sincerely drawn).

But, of course, the view of biblical interpretation set out above is wrong—"dead wrong." It is truth which makes men free. It is *the* truth which makes men free. When our blessed Lord addressed himself to this problem, he did not say, "Now it does not matter which interpretation you may make of a passage from the word of God. What does matter is that you have an interpretation—any interpretation, just as long as it is your interpretation. Even if your interpretation contradicts what my word teaches, it is still acceptable if you have drawn your own interpretation." No, Jesus did not make such statements. What he did say is this: ". . .and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8: 32.) It is *the* faith for which men are to earnestly contend. (Jude 3.) It is *the* gospel which is to be preached to every person in the world. (Mark 16:15,16.) It is *the* word which is to be preached. (2 Timothy 4:1-5.) All of these terms (and a number of others) refer to one and the same body of doctrine (the law of Christ, the New Covenant, the word of God, et al). Men are not allowed by God to tamper with that truth. God has never allowed men to tamper with his word. (See Deuteronomy 4:1, 2; 12:32.) God does not allow men (1) to add to his truth (Revelation 22:18), (2) to take from his truth (Revelation 22:19), or (3) to pervert that truth (Galatians 1:6-9).

God's truth is absolute. This means that it is not changed by the notions which men have of it. This means that God's word is not changed by the conclusions which men draw as to what it teaches. The Bible taught what it now teaches centuries before any people now living were even born. What the Bible teaches has not been changed by the fact that millions of people who now live on the earth have drawn contradictory interpretations as to what it teaches. The Bible still teaches what it has always taught - without regard to what any of us now living on earth think or have thought about it. The one and only way any person can be right about the will of God is to accurately interpret the Bible. And no one can accurately interpret the Bible without carefully gathering the relevant evidence as to what the Bible teaches on any given subject and then correctly handling that evidence (that is, reasoning about it in a valid way so that, having true premises, one's conclusions will be guaranteed to be true).

It is refreshing, therefore, to see a denominational theologian make such a statement as that quoted from Sproul above. Perhaps this constitutes ground for hoping that, as time goes on, more and more denominational people will learn the truth and obey it. (At any rate, let us pray to that end and do all we can to carry the truth to them.) It must be noted and remembered that no man—no matter how sincere and religious he is—has been saved from his past sins unless he has been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:38; cf. John 3:3-5.) How great is the need for faithful preachers of the gospel to proclaim the true gospel and to defend the true gospel against the false—and highly deceptive doctrines which are taught daily by so many denominational preachers on television and radio. Where are the faithful preachers of the gospel who should be doing this defending? (Jude 3.)

Yet, it is sad, in the face of the fact that it is refreshing to read Sproul's statement, to see many in the Lord's church today accepting the unscriptural "one (eop) interpreta-

tion is as good as another” stance which even some denominational people are now rejecting. By this I mean that it is a most discouraging thing to see and hear members of the Lord’s church (including even preachers and elders) say, in effect, “That’s just your interpretation,” and mean that the Bible has no binding authority on any one and that any and every interpretation is acceptable to God.

We are now living in a time when some members of the church are saying, in effect, that Jones can choose doctrine X and Smith can choose doctrine not-X and both of them be right (and, thus, both be acceptable to God). This constitutes a radical abandonment of the proper role of reason. (1 Thessalonians 5:21; Acts 2:14-41; et al.) It is a rejection of the very concept of truth itself. Note the following. If two propositions are contradictory of one another, it is simply impossible for both of them to be true or for both of them to be false. One of the two propositions must be true, and the other must be false. It comes down to this: if Jones says, “The Bible teaches that no alien sinner is saved before and without being baptized in the name of Christ,” and Smith says, “The Bible teaches that some alien sinners are saved before and without being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ,” then it is simply impossible for both Jones and Smith to be right. The propositions which Jones and Smith affirmed are contradictory of one another. One of them must be right, and the other one must be wrong.

Sadly, however, it seems to be the case that many (some of whom are even in the Lord’s church) are willing to say something like this, “Oh, well, what difference does it make? One view is as good as another. I’m sure that God is not going to quibble—so far as the salvation of men is concerned—with such trifling details. Let us be united— that’s the only thing that is truly important—and forget about the rest of it. God will accept both viewpoints.”

To accept such a position is to imply that every human being has both the right and the power to “create” his own Bible. It is also to imply that the Bible which God has given to men is not really a Bible at all. It is to imply that no man has the obligation to learn and obey the truth which the Bible actually teaches.

In direct contradiction to such a view, Jesus plainly taught that men are saved by the truth. (John 8:32; 1 Peter 1:22-25; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Matthew 7:13,14; 21-23, et al.) God’s truth is absolute and attainable. It can be learned by men (John 6:46), and it can be obeyed by men (1 Peter 1:22). But, Jesus Christ is the savior of those who obey him. He will not save those who do not obey him. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.)

So, learn God’s truth and obey it.

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EXAMPLES AND PATTERN AUTHORITY

By Thomas B. Warren

I. *Introduction*

1. *Statement of problem.* The instructions which accompanied the assignment of this topic to me indicated that effort was to be made to ascertain when and how an action, the account of which is in the New Testament, is to be considered obligatory upon men today. The question to be considered might well be worded as follows: "When is an action described in the New Testament to be regarded as an example for men today?" In this question, the word "example" has been used in the sense of "an obligatory action performed by New Testament characters and which is also obligatory upon men today." According to this definition or sense of the word "example," there could be no such thing as an "optional" example, and it would be entirely superfluous to speak of a "binding" example, for, according to this definition, in order for an action to be an example it must be binding.
2. *Definition not an arbitrary one.* The definition of "example" given in the preceding paragraph is not merely an arbitrary one. It is upheld by the New Testament itself. The study of the word "example" in our English versions of the Bible is a very interesting and profitable one. The following figures are based on the King James Version of the Bible. The word "example" appears eight times (Matthew 1:19 ; John 13: 16 ; I Timothy 4:12 ; Hebrews 4:11; James 6:10; I Peter 2:21; Jude 7). The plural form (examples) appears in I Corinthians 10:6. The word "ensample" appears three times (Philippians 3:17; II Thessalonians 3:9 ; II Peter 2:6). The plural form (ensamples) also appears three times (I Corinthians 10:11; I Thessalonians 1:7; I Peter 6: 3). Some of these passages involve examples in a negative sense; that is, something which must not be done. A study of these passages reveals the fact that in these passages the word "example" is used in the sense of that which is obligatory. Our problem, then, is simply this: how to decide when and how an action by a Biblical character is binding upon men today?

II. *Classification of Actions Recorded In the New Testament*

There may be ways of classifying the various actions recorded in the New Testament other than the ways now to be presented. From the investigation which I have made of the matter, I have arrived at the following five classes of action: (1) action which was sinful for New Testament characters and sinful for men living today; (2) action which was optional and temporary (that is, the action was optional for New Testament characters but is not optional for men today); (3) action which was optional and permanent (that is, the action was optional for New Testament characters and is also optional for men today); (4) obligatory and temporary (that is, the action was obligatory for New Testament characters but is not obligatory for men today); (5) obligatory and

permanent (that is, the action was obligatory for New Testament characters and is also obligatory for men today).

III. *Specific Instances of the Various Classes of Actions Recorded in the New Testament*

1. *Action which was sinful* - that is, action which was sinful for New Testament characters and is sinful for men today.
 - (1) *Matthew 26:47-49*. Judas with a kiss betrayed Jesus into the hands of sinners. This was a sinful action upon the part of Judas. Any action by men today which, in principle, is the same sort of act (that is, involves the betrayal of Christ) is sinful. We know this because Acts 1:18 says, "Now this man obtained a field with the reward of his *iniquity*."
 - (2) *Matthew 26:67-69*. Peter denied Christ before men. This was a sinful action. Any man who denies Jesus today also commits sin. We know that such action was sinful because of the statement of Jesus in Matthew 10:32, 33: "Whoso therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."
 - (3) *Galatians 2:11-14*. Peter was guilty of hypocrisy and bowing to human law-makers in drawing back from the Gentiles and refusing to eat with them. We know this action is sinful because Paul plainly declared that Peter stood condemned because of his action (verse 11).
2. *Action which was optional and temporary*. This classification refers to action which was optional for New Testament characters but which is not optional for men living today – such action was only temporarily optional and would be sinful today.
 - (1) *Acts, chapters 2-9*. The apostles and other early Christians preached the gospel only to the Jews; they did not preach to the Gentiles before Peter preached to Cornelius. This action, in spite of Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:39, was not sinful, because God had not yet given the great demonstration of baptism in the Holy Spirit of the household of Cornelius. Since Cornelius and his house were baptized in the Holy Spirit, it would not be acceptable for Christians to purposely preach only to Jews because they felt the Gentiles were not to have the gospel preached to them.
 - (2) *Acts 21:17-26*. In this chapter we find that Paul took certain men, "and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfillment of the days of the purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them." Paul was at charges for these men and purified himself with them.

He himself had been under a vow (Acts 18:18). At this point, I would like to quote from Brother J. W. McGarvey's comments on this action of Paul:

That which renders this proceeding a more striking exhibition of Paul's present attitude toward the law is the fact that in it he participated in the offering of sacrifices, which seems to be inconsistent with his repeated declaration of the all-sufficiency of the blood of Christ as an atonement for sin. I think it must be admitted that subsequent to the writing of the epistle to the Ephesians, and more especially that to the Hebrews, he could not consistently have done this, for in those epistles it is clearly taught, that in the death of Christ God has broken down and abolished 'the law of commandments contained in ordinances, which he styles 'the middle wall of partition' (Ephesians 2:13-15); that the Aaronic priesthood had been abolished (Hebrews 7,8); and that the sacrifices of Christ had completely superseded that of dumb animals (Hebrews 9,10). But in Paul's earlier epistles, though some things had been written which, carried to their logical consequences, involved all this, these points had not yet been clearly revealed to his mind, and much less to the minds of the other disciples; for it pleased God to make Paul the chief instrument for the revelation of this part of his will. His mind, and those of all the brethren were as yet in much the same condition on this question that those of the early disciples had been in before the conversion of Cornelius in reference to the salvation of the Gentiles. If Peter, by the revelation made to him in connection with Cornelius, was made to understand better his own words uttered on Pentecost (Acts 2:39), it should cause no surprise that Paul in his early writings uttered sentiments the full import of which he did not apprehend until later revelations made them plain. That it was so, is but another illustration of the fact that the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all the truth, not at one bound, but step by step. In the wisdom of God the epistle to the Hebrews, the special value of which lies in its clear revelations on the distinction between the sacrifices and priesthood under Moses and those under Christ, was written but a few years previous to the destruction of the Jewish temple, and the compulsory abrogation of all the sacrifices of the law; and that thus any Jewish Christian, whose natural reverence for ancestral and divinely appointed customs may have prevented him from seeing the truth on this subject, might have his eyes opened in spite of himself. (Commentary on Acts, pp. 208,209) .

I would like to say that while I do not agree one hundred per cent with every statement in the quotation, generally speaking, I consider it to be a fine treatment of the matter. I believe these matters had been clearly revealed before Paul went into the temple, just as the fact that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles had been revealed before Peter went to the house of Cornelius. The clear revelation just wasn't understood at first.

3. *Action which was optional and permanent.* This particular classification refers to action which was optional for New Testament characters and which is also optional for men living today; that is, such action is permanently optional.
 - (1) Acts 13:4. We find that Paul and Barnabas, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, departed from Selucia and from thence they hailed to Cypress. It was purely optional upon their part that they should use the means of transportation which they chose. In the same way it is optional for men today as to the type of transportation which they choose to use in obedience to the commands to go and preach the gospel.
 - (2) Acts 20:7,8. The disciples gathered together to take the Lord's Supper in an upper chamber. Meeting in an upper room was purely an optional matter. It was optional for them then; it is optional for us today also. There is nothing either in the context of the passage at hand or in any other passage of the Bible which indicates that meeting in the upper room was binding upon New Testament characters or upon men today.
4. *Action which was obligatory and temporary.* This refers to action which was obligatory for New Testament characters but which is not obligatory for men today—such action was only temporarily obligatory. In Acts 8:4-8 we find that Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed unto them Christ and that while he was there “the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did.” In order for the word which Philip preached to be effective, he had to prove, with signs, that he was preaching the message of God. From Mark 16:20 we learn that the purpose of such signs was to confirm the word. We know that word has been confirmed and thus stands confirmed forever. The spiritual gifts by which the word was confirmed were temporary; they were to serve a purpose, fulfill that purpose, and then be done away (I Corinthians 13). It is clear that the confirmation of the word with signs was obligatory during this particular period of New Testament history, but is not obligatory upon us today. In fact, no one today could confirm the word with such signs.
5. *Action which was obligatory and permanent.* This classification of action refers to action which was obligatory upon New Testament characters and which is also obligatory, upon men today – such action is permanently obligatory. We find in

Acts 8:26-40 that the evangelist Philip preached “Jesus” to an Ethiopian. The Ethiopian asked, “What doth hinder me to be baptized?”

- (1) After the Ethiopian had confessed his faith, both Philip and the Ethiopian got out of the chariot and went down into the water. Philip then baptized, or buried, the Ethiopian in water (compare Acts 10:47,48). This action was obligatory for Philip. It is also obligatory for us today to bury penitent believers beneath the water. This we know to be true because of the meaning of the Greek words which we have translated in our English versions as “baptize” and baptism” and because of such passages as Romans 6:3 and Colossians 2:12. Each of these passages shows that baptism involves a burial. Since baptism is obligatory today (Acts 22:16) and since baptism is an immersion, or burial, it is obligatory for us to bury penitent believers under water today.
- (2) Acts 2:36-38. In this passage we find that Peter had presented the evidence that Jesus was the Christ. He then urged the people to “know assuredly” that “God hath made him both Lord and Christ.” When the people heard the evidence they were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” It was obligatory that Peter tell these believers, “Repent ye and be baptized . . . for the remission of your sins. . . .” This action was obligatory upon the part of Peter. It is also obligatory upon men today to tell inquiring believers, “Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you . . . for the remission of sin. . . .” (Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16)

IV. How to Decide the Way to Classify Any Given Action

From a study of the foregoing passages it should be clear that there is little likelihood that any rule – other than a very general one – could be given which would cover all cases of action in the New Testament. And I am happy at this time to give what I conceive to be a general rule which will cover the problem of deciding when or deciding just how to classify any given action in the New Testament.

Here is that rule: In order to accurately classify action described in the New Testament under one of the five aforementioned classifications, it is necessary to apply to the description of that action the rules of sound hermeneutics and the principles of logic in connection with the totality of Bible teaching upon the matter in question. I think it can be seen that just because a matter was optional with men in the New Testament does not mean that is optional with men today. Or, just because an action was not sinful with them, does not mean that it would not be sinful for us today. Or, just because an action was obligatory upon them, does not necessarily mean that it would be obligatory upon us today. There is no way to decide other than the application of sound principles of logic and hermeneutics in the light of the totality of Bible teaching upon any given action.

Actually, this rule, or principle, was employed by Jesus in meeting the efforts of Satan to lead Him into sin (Matthew 4). There, you will recall, Satan himself quoted a passage of Scripture (Matthew 4:6). He quoted from Psalms 91:11,12, and used the passage in the sense that in any and every situation God would bear Him up and protect Him. In reply, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:16 to show that Satan had made too broad an application of Psalms 91:11. The principle involved in Jesus' statement, "Again it is written," must ever be kept in mind in order to accurately classify any given action in the New Testament.

Accurate interpretations are many times dependent upon the understanding of a custom or a temporary circumstance. For that reason, I maintain that there is no rule which can be given other than the very general rule which I have given. And it is well beyond the scope of this brief address to attempt a full explanation of Biblical hermeneutics and logic – even if I were qualified to do so.

V. Application To Present Day Brotherhood Problems

The instructions which accompanied this assignment also emphasized that some attention should be given to the application of these matters to "present day brotherhood problems." I have taken this instruction to mean that I am to give some attention to the application of these matters to the problem of church cooperation. I would like to emphasize that I do not believe that in order for an action to be authorized by the Scriptures one must find a New Testament account of some person actually engaged in that particular action. Some people are always clamoring for an "example." The Scriptures authorize in ways other than by having New Testament characters actually engaged in a given action. The Scriptures also authorize by direct statement and by necessary implication.

But right here I should like to look at a few of the errors which I feel are made in connection with accounts of action in the New Testament.

1. Some make the error of making arbitrary and false "rules" to govern New Testament action. I will not have the time to take up these various rules. I wish that I did have for some of them are very foolish indeed. Yet, men who have exhibited wisdom in other matters have been misled by these "rules." I refer, of course, to the so-called rules of "uniformity," "universal application," etc. These rules will not stand the test, and those who make them cannot impartially use them and hold on to many of their own practices.
2. Some make the error of calling things "examples" which are not even accounts of action. For instance, some men have long talked about the "example" in II Corinthians 8:13,14. The passage does not even contain the account of an action; it contains instruction. That instruction involves that statement of a general principal which allows one church to help another church in any action which is authorized for a New Testament church. They ignore the fact that II Corinthians 8:1-5 *does*

contain the account of an action. But, while I am on II Corinthians 8:18,14, I want you to note a number of assumptions under which some men labor in connection with this passage:

- (1) They assume this is an “example,” but it isn’t. It is simply instruction.
 - (2) They assume that the passage contains a specific, inalterable, binding pattern. Actually, it contains general authority for church cooperation.
 - (3) They assume that “equality” means “mutual freedom from want of physical necessities.”
 - (4) They assume that there can be one and only one scriptural design of one church’s giving of assistance to another church.
 - (5) They assume that the passage plainly teaches that the assistance was received into the treasury of the Jerusalem *church* and then given to the poor among the saints. But the Bible doesn’t give the details – we do not know exactly how it was done. It is certain that one has no grounds for building a “pattern” on his mere assumption.
3. Some make the two errors of, *assuming* details which are not even given in the New Testament account of an action and of making those assumed details vital elements in a so-called “pattern.” According to some, in order for church cooperation to be scriptural, the following must be true: (1) the receiving church must not be “as well off” as the sending church – the receiving church must be an “object of charity,” unable to supply the physical wants of its own members, and (2) the purpose of the assistance must be to bring about freedom from want of physical necessities in the receiving church – from *church* to *church* when the needs to be met are the physical necessities of indignant saints. When the needs to be met are “evangelistic” – to use *their* terminology – then the cooperation is between a church and a preacher. According to some, assistance which is to be used in “evangelism” cannot be sent from one church to another *church*; it must be sent to a *preacher*. They have formulated this “pattern,” in the main, from a number of assumptions which they have made in connection with the New Testament accounts of some two or three actions. Let us take a look at some of those instances.
- (1) *Acts 11:27-30*. “. . . And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.” On this passage, some men labor under a number of assumptions:

- a. They assume that the *church* – not just *individual disciples* – did the sending; that is, they assume that the assistance which was sent down to Jerusalem came out of the treasury of the church at Antioch. To prove a “pattern” – such as they have set forth – they must prove that the assistance came from the *church* in Antioch and could have been no other way. But the passage doesn’t say that the *church* did the sending – it says “the disciples . . . did. . . .” If they were to be consistent and use the line of reasoning which they use in Galatians 6:10 and James 1:27, they would maintain that Acts 11:27-30 authorizes only individual Christians to send assistance to “elders” of another church.
 - b. They assume that the relief from Antioch went directly to the elders of a number of churches scattered throughout Judea without going to the elders at Jerusalem. But they can only *assume* this; they cannot *prove* it. Of course, even to prove that it happened that way in this instance would not prove a pattern. General authority for church co-operation is established by II Corinthians 8:13,14.
 - c. They assume that all of the churches of Judea had elders.
 - d. They assume that all of the churches of Judea had elders at this particular time.
 - e. They assume that the expression “the elders” refers to elders of all the churches throughout Judea. They can only assume this – they cannot prove it.
 - f. Logically, then, they would have to assume that if a church did not have elders, it could not have received assistance.
- (2) *II Corinthians 11:8*. “I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.” As concerns this passage, some labor under the following assumptions:
- a. They assume that the wages went directly to Paul without going through the *church*, in Corinth. This *may* have been the case – but it also may *not* have been the case. In proving a “pattern” the various points must be proved conclusively – that the passage demands that a thing be done one way and only one way in sharp contrast to their argument on II Corinthians 8:1-5 and Romans 15:26 (with passages they maintain teach that the *church* – not individual saints – did the receiving), they insist that this passage demands that wages went directly to the individual and *not* to the church.
 - b. They assume that, if the wages did go directly to Paul, the passage thereby sets forth an inalterable pattern. But they overlook the fact that other pass-

ages teach that one church may assist another church in spiritual matters. Among such passages are Acts 15:22-32 and II Corinthians 8:13,14.

- c. They assume that there is a different pattern for “evangelism” and for “benevolence.” This is based upon a misconception. The mission of the church is to save souls by evangelism, or “making known the good message.” One may make known the “good message” in two ways: by word (Acts 8:4), and by deed (Matthew 5:16; I Peter 3:1; Acts 20:35).
4. Another error which some make in connection with the New Testament action is to ignore or give attention to some of the New Testament accounts of action which involve the matter of church cooperation.
- (1) One such passage is II Corinthians 8:1-5. This passage contains an account of an action which occurred in New Testament days. But most of the “pattern-makers” seem to ignore this passage. In this account, the *sending* churches were in “deep poverty” while in the receiving church only some of the saints were “poor.” Paul refers to the “poor among the saints” (Romans 15:26). The Bible nowhere says the Jerusalem *church* was poor.
 - (2) Those who uphold the so-called pattern which I have previously described hold to the view that a *church* may scripturally send to a *church* only in connection with supplying the physical needs of indigent saints in the receiving church. They further maintain that if and when a church desires to give assistance in a spiritual matter (or in “evangelism,” as they style it), the assistance must be sent *directly* to the preacher. There are a number of passages which show this is false. Acts 15:1-32 is one such passage. Among other points, the passage plainly states the following:
 - a. The apostles and elders with the whole church in Jerusalem, chose men to be sent to Antioch, verse 22.
 - b. The Jerusalem church prepared an epistle to be sent to the brethren of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, verse 23.
 - c. The brethren sent by Jerusalem (Judah and Silas) were to tell the brethren of Antioch the same things as those contained in the epistle, verse 27.
 - d. Judas and Silas, along with Paul and Barnabas, went to Antioch, gathered the multitude (the church) together, and delivered the epistle, verse 30.
 - e. Judas and Silas exhorted the brethren of Antioch, verse 32.
 - (3) Now let us note the significance of the facts just noted.

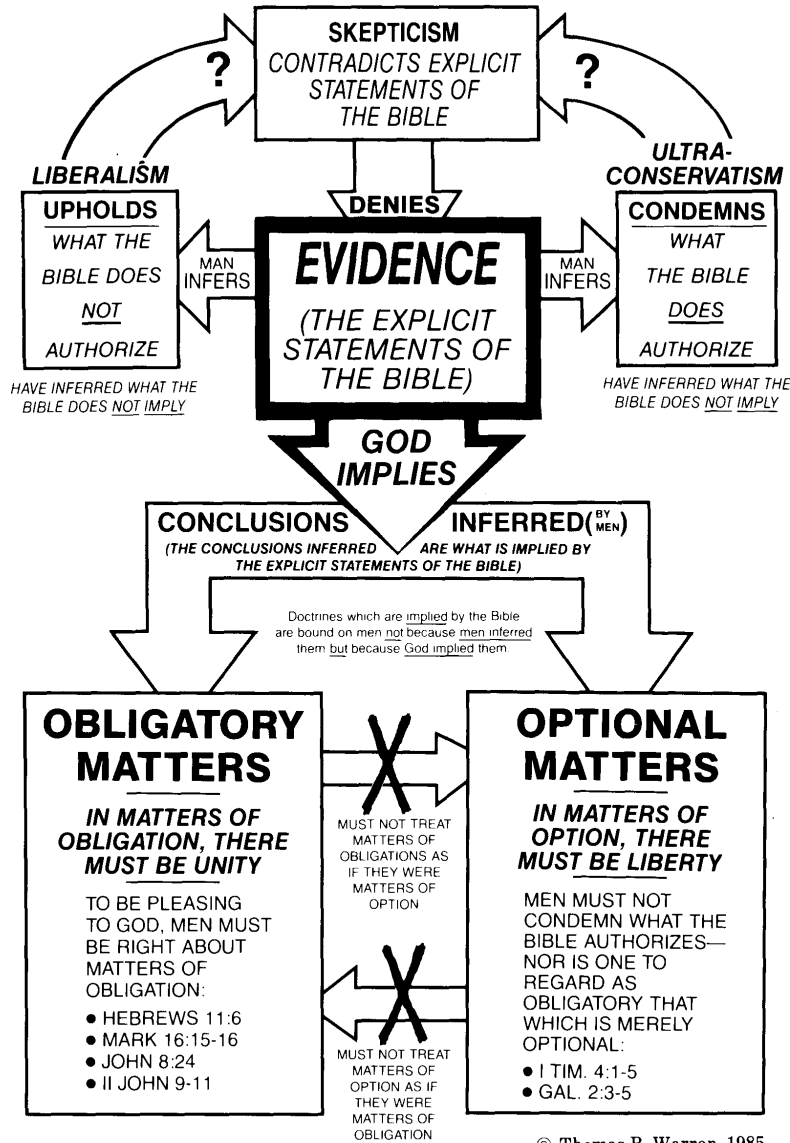
- a. It is in harmony with the Scriptures for one church to send some of its own men to give assistance to another church.
- b. It is in harmony with the Scriptures for one church to send a written message (compare a tract) to another church.
- c. This written message may pertain to spiritual matters.
- d. It is thus seen that one church may give assistance to another church, both by sending men or by sending a written message. Since assistance can be given in at least two ways, then the giving of assistance is general – not specific or a single “binding pattern.” Further, since the principle involved applies to all church resources, not just to money, then if a church can send a written message to another church, it can send money for a written message or tract. And if a church can send money for a tract to another church, then it can also send money for a radio program. In passing, I think the point has been established that one church can give assistance to another church in spiritual matters, but the thing I want to emphasize as a conclusion to the facts presented is this: the efforts of the “pattern-makers” on these passages *do not* establish an inalterable pattern.

Conclusion

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity of being on this Lectureship and for the challenge to make the study involved in this particular topic. I realize the treatment has of necessity been brief, and I can only hope that you will have gained some benefit from these thoughts and that you will be encouraged to pursue the topic further in your own study. The topic under consideration is a basic, fundamental study and is worthy, therefore, of your most serious and prayerful consideration.

ABILENE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE LECTURES

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Fallacies Regarding the Bible

RAYMOND C. KELCY

One can repeat a thing so often that he can actually get to believing it whether it is true or not. Many hear a statement made and then repeat it as if they knew it to be a fact, and thus rumors are begun that have no factual foundation. At times large sections of the country have erroneous impressions about some law or policy because they have listened to rumor without investigation. At times we hear something about a religious group which causes us to regard that group with less favor. We need to make thorough examination before accepting things we hear. In our present study we wish to notice some ideas that have been repeated so often that many have come to accept them as truth. Others regard them as plausible, even though they have not fully accepted them.

Lost Books

One rumor that has been going around is that the Bible is not complete due to the fact that some books have been lost, and we cannot be certain that we have the complete word of God. Personally, I believe we have God's complete will revealed to us on the pages of the Bible. Further, I believe the providence of God has seen to it that his word has survived through the centuries. But the charge is often made that certain books have been lost which should have been in the Bible. Of course, such teaching as this is not designed to produce greater faith in the Bible; it is designed to destroy faith in the Bible as God's complete revelation. And I am inclined to look upon any effort to minimize faith in the Bible as the work of Satan. Certainly, there is no one who would derive more pleasure from weakening our truth in the Bible than Satan. That is just what we would expect from him.

Those who contend that certain books have been lost usually base their contention upon the fact that some books are quoted from in the Old Testament which are not in the Old Testament. For instance, reference is made to "The Book of the Wars of the Lord," to "The Book of Jasher," "The Book of Nathan" (Num. 21 :19; Joshua 70:13; 1 Chron. 29:19). It is true that the writers do refer to these books; it is also true that we do not have these books in the Bible. But it is quite natural that books other than the canonical books should record in detail the events in Israel's history which were limited and local in nature. It is also natural that the writers should at times refer the readers to some of these other sources in order that they might make a more detailed study of certain matters, matters upon which the inspired writers touch only lightly. When the writer of Chronicles says that some things he did not record are found in the book of Nathan we may regard his reference as a way of calling attention to fuller accounts in these other writings. But this is no argument that merely because a book is referred to it ought to be in the Bible. Paul quoted from a heathen poet (Acts 17:28). Are we to conclude that the writings of this heathen ought to be in the Bible because Paul quoted

from him? Again, Paul quotes a Cretan prophet (Titus 1:12). We surely are not ready to conclude that the writings of this prophet should be a part of the canon.

A look at Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament is apropos here. When he was on earth he quoted from OT books many times. So did the inspired NT writers. There are two hundred thirty-three quotations from and about three hundred seventy allusions to OT passages. We know they had the same OT scriptures that we now have. Christ and the apostles were satisfied with the Old Testament. Jesus often rebuked the Jews for various errors in life and teaching. But he found no fault with their scriptures. He never rebuked them for losing or omitting a book. When we see advertisements of a book purporting to contain the "Lost Books of the Bible," let us remember that Jesus was satisfied with the Old Testament as we have it.

Concerning Translations

Another error has been stated thusly: "Our Bible is a translation of a translation of a translation, and no book can go through so many translations without losing something important." Those making this assertion are greatly mistaken. Our Bible is not a translation of a translation of a translation. The English New Testament is translated directly from the Greek in which the autograph copies were written. Both Hebrew and Greek manuscripts are available for Old Testament translation. Our Bible has not passed through a series of translations in the process of getting to us. Scholars have access to the manuscripts, and there are hundreds of such in the principal libraries of the world. For years the best scholars have studied them most critically. If they ever suspect that there was corruption or change in any particular copy, they have many other copies within that same "family" with which they can make comparison; they have also other "families" of manuscripts with which they can make comparison. The result is that we have the text as it existed in the first century.

"You Can Prove Anything by the Bible"

Another erroneous statement is to the effect that anything can be proved by the Bible. This is not true. Many who say this would realize it if they think seriously for a moment. Certainly, those who believe the Bible to be the word of God would not make this statement if they had thought carefully. Paul says God is not a God of confusion (1 Cor. 19:33). But if we think of God as giving a book by which anything can be proved, then we must conceive of him as a God of confusion and not of peace.

It is granted that one can *apparently* prove various doctrines by a *mishandling* and a *misuse* of the scriptures, but this is not proving them by the scriptures. He has *seemingly* proved them by a *misuse* of the Bible. The Bible should not be made to bear the blame for the multitude of doctrines in the world today. When one says "you can prove anything by the Bible," he is, in effect, accusing the Bible of gross inconsistency. Such a statement will not produce greater faith in the Bible; rather, it will have the opposite effect.

When an honest inquirer goes to various religious meetings and hears preachers proclaim various and contradictory doctrines, his faith is not thereby made stronger. All these preachers claim to get their doctrine from the Bible. Some will blame God and the Bible rather than the men who are doing the preaching. It is easy to say, "Those preachers all get their doctrines from the Bible." You and I know they do not. However, the earnest inquirer may never take the time and effort to pursue the real cause of the inconsistencies. Instead, he may conclude that the Bible is a book of confusion. When we say that anything can be proved by the Bible, we are lending support and encouragement to such an attitude.

When two men appear to prove contradictory doctrines by the Bible, either the Bible is inconsistent or at least one of the men is mishandling it. It is possible that both men are. I prefer the alternative which indicts the men, not the Bible! You cannot prove just anything by the Bible! This is doubtless one reason that there are so many admonitions within the Bible admonitions to study, handle aright, search the scriptures, etc. This is a responsibility that each of us has, and we should make it one of the major concerns of our life. We should constantly be seeking to know the Bible better. By doing so we shall increase our faith in it and in the God whom it reveals. We shall find it spiritual food whereby we grow unto salvation; we shall increasingly become better acquainted with the principal character of its pages, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Firm Foundation
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Figurative Language In The Bible

Raymond C. Kelcy

The Bible, like most literature, abounds in the use of figures of speech. Jesus himself used many figures of speech in his teaching. The parable is the best known of the many figures used by him. Jesus was not the first to use the parable. A parable is occasionally found embedded in the history of the Old Testament. But it was Jesus who made extensive use of the parable and who gave it widespread fame. Mark says that “without a parable spake he not unto them” (Mark 4:34). This statement is to be taken regarding that particular time of his ministry. It does not mean that Jesus always employed the parable in his teaching.

The word “parable” is derived from two Greek words and means throwing or casting alongside of. The idea is that of placing one thing by the side of another for the purpose of comparison. A noticeable feature of the parable is the use of only that which is real. It always contains a narrative which is true to the facts and experience of life. The fable will make use of talking animals, of intelligent trees, etc. The parable never does this. Its narrative is always true to life. Fishermen casting nets, a man seeking treasure, a sower sowing seed, a mustard seed becoming a plant, a woman puttin (sic) yeast in dough, these are all common occurrences in the experiences of life. By his use of the parable Jesus put great spiritual truths alongside of experiences which were real in the lives of his hearers. He was making use of something with which they were familiar.

Parables Reveal

When the disciples asked Jesus why he spoke in parables, he answered: “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (Matthew 13:10-13).

Those who listened to Jesus with a desire to learn had something to which more would be given. Greater understanding is given to those who have such a seeking and inquiring mind. Without doubt, one of the main reasons Jesus spoke in parables was that his disciples might learn more. There was something enigmatic about the figure which made them think and thinking is essential to learning. Long after the parable had been spoken the disciples would continue to meditate on it. If Jesus had said the kingdom starts small and becomes large the disciple would not have been provoked to prolonged thought as they were when he said the kingdom is like a mustard seed. A man purchasing a field in which buried treasure lay was something that would inspire more meditation than a simple statement regarding the great value of the kingdom of heaven. Provoking thought was something most surely stimulated by the parables.

Speaking in parables produced meditation and thought in the mind of the disciples. It also produced interchange of thought among themselves. In addition, it brought them back to Jesus with additional questions. Probing, seeking, asking, they continued to learn from him.

Parables brought light and clarification. A teacher will often wish to make a truth clear and will find himself unable to do so until he can come upon a suitable illustration. A sermon can have too many illustrations, but it can also have too few. The wise preacher is constantly on the watch for good illustrations. He finds them in life situations, in the Bible, in nature, in newspapers, in history, in literature. There seems to be general agreement that the highest type of preaching is that which is called expository. Expository preaching may be on a verse, a paragraph, a chapter, several chapters, or even an entire book. Many of us who preach need to restudy expository preaching and determine to do more of it. The best definition of such preaching I have found is this: "Explaining, illustrating, and applying the scriptures." My reason for this brief discussion of expository preaching in this particular place is to point out the importance of illustration in teaching and to call attention to the fact that it was a favorite method with Jesus. Illustrations clarify and let the light shine through.

To Conceal

To return to the statement of Jesus cited above, another purpose of the parable was to conceal truth from a certain type of hearer. There were matters Jesus wished to conceal from the obstinate fault-finder. There was a type of listener with whom Jesus did not wish to share the intimate mysteries of the kingdom. He who is unwilling to learn, to use his power of discernment in discovering new truth, will lose what capacity to learn he may already have.

To Gain Consent

Another advantage of the parable is that it enables the teacher to gain the consent of the listener before the real meaning of the parable is discovered. A good illustration of this is the use of the parable by Nathan when he wished to bring conviction to the heart of David. Nathan wanted David to see the gravity of taking the wife of another man. So, he told him the story of the rich man who had many flocks and herds and of the poor man who had only one little lamb. When a guest came to the home of the rich man, he did not prepare one of his own flock for the meal but instead took the lamb of the poor man. David's anger was kindled when he heard the parable and he said, "The man that hath done this is worthy to die." Nathan then said, "Thou art the man" (2 Samuel 12:1-7). Nathan did exactly as he wished. He presented the parable, obtained the consent of David as to the guilt of the man portrayed in it, and then proceeded to make the application.

Easily Remembered

Another advantage of the parable is that it tends to make truth more easily remembered. Producing thoughtful meditation, causing discussion, eliciting questions, it entrenches the truth forever in the minds of the one who hears and learns.

Those of us who preach have found that a sermon preached a second time to the same audience within a five year period will not usually be remembered except for the illustrations. Once again, the power of an illustration is seen. People learn from a good illustration and they will remember it long after they have forgotten everything else (sic) that was said.

Suggestions

Bible school teachers will find a course on the parable to be especially interesting, challenging, and fruitful. Preachers will find in the parables sermon material on almost every aspect of Christian life. Numerous books are helpful. *The Expositors Bible* and *MacClaren's Exposition of Holy Scripture* have an abundance of good material. Neil Lightfoot has a good book on the parables. Trench's book is another helpful tool. A number of Clovis Chappell's sermons on the parables are in print and are quite good. One of the most helpful books I have found is *In Quest Of A Kingdom* by Leslie Weatherhead. I do not advocate memorizing another's sermon and preaching it as if it were original; however, I do strongly advocate much reading and searching in order that preaching may be interesting, instructive, challenging, and productive.

FIRM FOUNDATION
February 6, 1979

Figurative Language in the Bible

RAYMOND C. KELCY

A vital requisite in Bible study is familiarity with figurative language. In fact, this is a necessity in the study of almost anything. Literature abounds in figures of speech. Even the editorials of our daily newspapers contain many figures.

Figurative language affords an interesting pursuit. Many young people have studied the various figures in the lower grades and are at once on familiar ground when they are introduced to the importance of figures in Bible study. The teacher of most age groups will find here a fruitful field. For example, when the class becomes familiar with metaphor they will enjoy a search on their own in an effort to locate as many metaphors as possible. In a previous lesson we studied the use of the parable, the most popular of the biblical figures of speech. We now proceed to observe other figures.

Simile

When a comparison is made between two objects in a way that impresses the reader with some resemblance or likeness, the figure is called a simile. Jeremiah employs the simile when he says the word is like a fire and a hammer (Jer. 23:29). In a similar vein Isaiah says the going forth of the word is as the rain and the snow coming down from the heavens (Isa. 55:10,11). At times, similes are crowded together in a single sentence. The daughter of Zion is said to be "left as a booth in a vineyard; as a night lodge in a field of cucumbers; as a city besieged" (Isa. 1:8).

Many similes are to be found in the New Testament. At the Transfiguration, Jesus' appearance was such that "his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as light" (Matt. 19:2). It is said of the angel who rolled the stone from the tomb that "his appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow" (Matt. 28:3). When Paul taught that as there are many members in the body, so we have many members in the church, he was using simile (1 Cor. 12:12).

There is a certain kinship between the parable and the simile. In fact, parables are extended similes. The simile is more brief than a parable. It is usually introduced by a word such as "like" or "as." It might be said that all parables are similes, but all similes are not parables.

Metaphor

The metaphor is an implied comparison. It is a figure in which the sense of one word is transferred to another word. Rather than saying that one thing is "as" or "like" another, the metaphor says one thing *is* another. The point of likeness is left to the deduction of the reader.

The Old Testament abounds in metaphors. God calls himself “a fountain of living waters” (Jer. 2:13). Naphtali is a hind (Gen. 49:21). Benjamin is a wolf (Gen. 49:27).

So also, there are many metaphors in the New Testament. The disciples of Christ are salt (Matt. 5:13). Christ is the door (John 10:7). He is the vine (John 15:1). He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). He is the good shepherd (John 10:14). The task of the student is to determine the implied likeness. In most cases, the point is at once obvious.

Metonymy

Metonymy is the figure of speech in which one word is put for another and yet there is a connection between the word and that for which it is used. A cause may be put for the effect or the effect may be put for the cause. If we speak of lands belonging to the “crown,” we are employing metonymy by using the word “crown” for a kingdom.

The Old Testament employs metonymy often. When God says that testimony shall be established “at the mouth” of witnesses, he is using the word “mouth,” for words (Deut. 17:6). When Moses spoke of killing the passover, he had reference to the lamb which was to be slain for the feast (Ex. 12: 21). When Hosea speaks of the “land” committing fornication, he is putting “land” for the people (Hoses 1:2). When Job spoke of his “arrow” being incurable, he was putting the cause for the effect—meaning the wound caused by an arrow (Job 34:6).

The New Testament employs metonymy. When Abraham said, “They have Moses and the prophets,” he was putting the authors for their books (Luke 16:29). “Cup” is put for the contents of the cup (Matt. 26:26-28). When Luke says that “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness,” he was evidently employing metonymy (Acts 4:31). This helps in solving what at first appears to be a problem. Since the apostles were filled with the Spirit at Pentecost, how can it be said that they were filled with the Spirit at a later time? Did the Spirit depart from them in the interim and were they then again filled with the Spirit? Metonymy helps in the difficulty. The Spirit is put for the effects.

Synecdoche

The figure of speech in which the part is put for the whole or the whole is put for the part is called “synecdoche.” The word comes from the Greek *sun* which means “with” and the word *ekdechomai* which means to receive from. Hence the idea of associating one thing along with another. Jephthah is said to have been buried “in the cities of Gilead” (Jud. 12:7). The whole is put for the part. He was buried in one of the cities of Gilead. The problem concerning how long Jesus was in the grave is solved by the figure of speech under consideration. He was in the grave a short part of Friday, all of Saturday, and a part of Sunday. However, Jesus said that the Son of man would be in the heart of the earth “three days and three nights” (Matt. 12:40). Students have

labored long, and proposed various explanations in an attempt to work out a way in which Jesus could have been in the tomb for a 72-hour period. There is no way to do this. The understanding of Synecdoche will help greatly in solving this problem. Jesus was in the grave a part of three days. The whole is put for the part.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is the figure in which exaggeration is used to gain attention or to impress a truth. Of the Midianites and the Amalekites, it was said that “they lay along the valley like locusts for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand which is on the seashore for multitude” (Jud. 7:12). Exaggeration is used for effect. David says that Saul and Jonathan were swifter than eagles and stronger than lions (2 Sam. 1:23). Again, we see exaggeration for effect. The psalmist says, “Every night I make my bed to swim; I water my couch with tears” (Psa. 6:6). A bed swimming in tears is a meaningful way of describing emotions, but it is a statement in which exaggeration is employed. John employs this figure when he says that he supposes that the world would not contain the books if all that Jesus did were to be written (John 21:25). Jesus was using hyperbole when he declared that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom (Mark 10:25).

FIRM FOUNDATION
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Figurative Language in the Bible (2)

Raymond C. Kelcy

In the previous article we have dealt with the parable, the metaphor, the simile, metonymy, and synecdoche. We now wish to deal with some other figures. Remember, understanding how to deal with figurative language is one of the “musts” in understanding the Scriptures.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is the figure in which exaggeration is used to impress a truth. Describing the Midianites and the Amalekites, the Old Testament writer says “they lay along the valley like locusts for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand which is upon the seashore for multitude” (Judges 7:12). It is obvious at once that there is an element of exaggeration in this statement. No one thinks of the statement as being erroneous. Hyperbole is a well-recognized form of conveying thought.

Other examples of hyperbole in the Bible can easily be found. David says that Saul and Jonathan were swifter than eagles and stronger than lions” (2 Samuel 1:23). The description is both poetic and hyperbolic. No one thinks of accusing David of error. Hyperbole is commonly accepted as a legitimate means of impressing a thought. Again, the psalmist says, “Every night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with tears” (Psalm 6:6). It is highly unlikely that the psalmist’s bed literally swam. The statement is hyperbole. John employs hyperbole when he says that he supposes that the world would not contain the books if all that Jesus did were recorded (John 21:25).

Personification

Let us introduce our next figure of speech with some quotations: “The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up” (Numbers 16:32). “The sea saw it and fled . . . the mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like lambs” (Psalms 114:3,4). “The mountains saw thee and were afraid . . . the deep uttered its voice, and lifted up its hands on high” (Hab. 3:10). “Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together” (Psalm 38:8). “The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing; and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands” (Isaiah 55:12). “The morrow shall be anxious for itself” (Matt. 6:34).

In what way are we to understand the statements of the foregoing paragraph? How can the earth open its mouth? How can the ocean see objects? How can the mountains skip about? How can mountains be afraid? How can the sea lift up hands? How can waters clap their hands? How can hills sing? How can the morrow, a day, experience anxiety?

Of course, we know that these things cannot be done literally. How then shall we explain these statements? A figure known as “personification” is employed. Human characteristics are attributed to inanimate things and by such device these things are spoken of as having human feelings and as being capable of activities similar to those of man. It is a highly dramatic way of emphasizing great truths. No one thinks of attributing error to the Biblical writers. Personification has been widely used by writers (sic) in many fields.

Anthropomorphism

Another device employed in the Scriptures is known as “anthropomorphism.” This is a figure in which God is described as possessing human parts, experiencing human emotions, and performing human acts. The word is derived from two Greek words which mean “man” and “form.” Anthropomorphism is the description of God in human terms. Since finite man cannot grasp the infinite, God employs this form of speech in order to convey something of himself to man.

Examples of anthropomorphism can easily be found. God is described as “walking in the garden” (Genesis 3:8). It is said that “Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower” (Genesis 11:5). We know that God is not localized, that he does not literally walk about in a place as man does. We know that he does not need to move from one place to another to see what man is doing. These are anthropomorphic ways of describing actions of God. Man is accustomed to thinking in these terms. It is God’s way of communicating himself to his creature.

Bodily parts are ascribed to God and human sensations are ascribed to him. He is said to have arms, ears, eyes, hands, etc. The psalmist calls the heavens the work of God’s “fingers” (Psalm 8:3). The Genesis account of creation says that God spoke and the heavens came into existence. When the psalmist says they were made by God’s fingers, he is employing anthropomorphism. The Bible also speaks of God having “smelled the sweet savor” (Gen. 8:21). God is not to be thought of as actually possessing these human parts, characteristics, etc. These are ways of describing God so that man, knowing something that is analogous in his own experience, can get some valuable insights into the character of God.

Apocalyptic Imagery

“Apocalyptic” is a word derived from the Greek word “apocalypse,” and means an unveiling, a revelation. Apocalyptic language is language that is revelatory, but its nature must be understood if the lessons of many passages are to be learned. Apocalyptic writings arose primarily out of difficult times. The Old Testament books of Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Joel have much of this type of imagery. The last book of the New Testament is highly apocalyptic. Many statements of Jesus regarding the fall of Jerusalem are of this nature (Matthew 24:1-34).

Several characteristics are seen in apocalyptic writings. Usually, there is a predictive element. At times, a vision is closely connected. There is great use of symbol and at times various details are exaggerated for effect. At times there is a symbolism of numbers, of metals, of colors, etc. Various truths are set forth under the symbolism of beasts, horns, keys, chains, etc. Cataclysmic upheavals in the affairs of men are depicted under the symbolism of earthquake, of darkened sun, of falling stars, of a moon turned to blood.

The reader of apocalyptic writings should seek the general truth of the passage. He should attempt to see the picture which is often filled with exaggerated details and is accompanied by sound effects of various types. No attempt should be made to press all the details. Many of the details are used to enhance the vividness of the picture. Help should be sought from the context and from other passages as the significance of the symbolism is being sought. The historical background should be sought and the passage should be understood in the light of that background.

Further, in interpreting apocalyptic symbolism, the reader must remember that the symbolic is to be interpreted in the light of plain passages. One must never assign to the symbolic a meaning which conflicts with plain passages found elsewhere. It should be remembered that, as a rule, apocalyptic writings were produced in dangerous times and that, evidently, one purpose of such style was to hide certain truths from antagonistic readers while revealing them to those who were familiar with the symbolism.

FIRM FOUNDATION
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HOW TO MARK A BOOK

By: Mortimer J. Adler

You know you have to read “between the lines” to get the most out of anything. I want to persuade you to do something equally important in the course of your reading. I want to persuade you to “write between the lines.” Unless you do, you are not likely to do the most efficient kind of reading.

I contend, quite bluntly, that marking up a book is not an act of mutilation but of love. You shouldn’t mark up a book which isn’t yours. Librarians (or your friends) who lend you books expect you to keep them clean, and you should. If you decide that I am right about the usefulness of marking books, you will have to buy them. Most of the world’s great books are available today, in reprint editions, at less than a dollar.

There are two ways in which one can own a book. The first is the property right you establish by paying for it, just as you pay for clothes and furniture. But this act of purchase is only the prelude to possession. Full ownership comes only when you have made it a part of yourself, and the best way to make yourself a part of it is by writing in it. An illustration may make the point clear. You buy a beefsteak and transfer it from the butcher’s icebox to your own. But you do not own the beefsteak in the most important sense until you consume it and get it into your bloodstream. I am arguing that books, too, must be absorbed in your bloodstream to do you any good.

Confusion about what it means to own a book leads people to a false reverence for paper, binding, and type - a respect for the physical thing - the craft of the printer rather than the genius of the author. They forget that it is possible for a man to acquire the idea, to possess the beauty, without staking his claim by pasting his bookplate inside the cover. Having a fine library doesn’t prove that its owner has a mind enriched by books; it proves nothing more than that he, his father, or his wife, was rich enough to buy them.

There are three kinds of book owners. The first has all the standard sets and best sellers - unread, untouched. (This deluded individual owns wood-pulp and ink, not books.) The second has a great many books - a few of them read through, most of them dipped into, but all of them as clean and shiny as the day they were bought. (This person would probably like to make books of his own, but is restrained by a false respect for their physical appearance.) The third has a few books, or many - every one of them dogeared and dilapidated, shaken and loosened by continual use, marked and scribbled in from front to back. (This man owns books.)

Is it false respect, you may ask, to preserve intact and unblemished a beautifully printed book, an elegantly bound edition? Of course not. I’d no more scribble all over a first edition of “Paradise Lost” than I’d give my baby a set of crayons and an original Rembrandt! I wouldn’t mark up a painting or a statue. Its soul, so to speak, is insepa-

rable from its body. And the beauty of a rare edition or of a richly manufactured volume is like that of a painting or a statue.

But the soul of a book can be separated from its body. A book is more like the score of a piece of music than it is like a painting. No great musician confuses a symphony with the printed sheets of music. Arturo Toscanini reveres Brahms, but Toscanini's score of the C-minor Symphony is so thoroughly marked up that no one but the maestro himself can read it. The reason why a great conductor makes notations on his musical score - marks them up again and again each time he returns to study them is the reason why you should mark your books. If your respect for magnificent binding or typography gets in the way, buy yourself a cheap edition and pay your respects to the author.

Why is marking up a book indispensable to reading? First, it keeps you awake. (And I don't mean merely conscious. I mean wide awake.) In the second place, reading, if it is active is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The marked book is usually the thought-through book. Finally, writing helps you remember the thoughts you had, or the thought the author expressed. Let me develop these three points.

If reading is to accomplish anything more than passing time, it must be active. You can't let your eyes glide across the lines of a book and come up with an understanding of what you have read. Now an ordinary place of light fiction, like say, "Gone with the Wind," doesn't require the most active kind of reading. The books you read for pleasure can be read in a state of relaxation, and nothing is lost. But in a great book, rich in ideas and beauty, a book that raises and tries to answer great fundamental questions, demands the most active reading of which you are capable. You don't absorb the ideas of John Dewey the way you absorb the crooning of Mr. Vallee. You have to reach for them. That you cannot do while you're asleep.

If, when you have finished reading a book, the pages are filled with your notes, you know that you read actively. The most famous active reader of great books I know is President Hutchins, of the University of Chicago. He also has the hardest schedule of business activities of any man I know. He invariably reads with a pencil, and sometimes when he picks up a book and pencil in the evening, he finds himself, instead of making intelligent notes, drawing what he calls "oavian factories" on the margins. When that happens, he puts the book down. He knows he's too tired to read, and he's just wasting time.

But, you may ask, why is writing necessary? Well, the physical act of writing, with your own hand, brings words and sentences more sharply before your mind and preserves them better in your memory. To set down your reaction to important words and sentences you have to read, and the questions they have raised in your mind, is to preserve those reactions and sharpen those questions.

Even if you wrote on a scratch pad and threw the paper away when you had finished writing, your grasp of the book would be surer. But you don't have to throw the paper away. The margins (top and bottom, as well as side), the end papers, the very space between the lines, are all available. They aren't sacred. And, best of all, your marks and notes become an integral part of the book and stay there forever. You can pick up the book the following week or year, and there are all your points of agreement, disagreement, doubt, and inquiry. It's like resuming an interrupted conversation with the advantage of being able to pick up where you left off.

And that is exactly what reading a book should be; a conversation between you and the author. Presumably he knows more about the subject than you do, naturally, you'll have the proper humility as you approach him. But don't let anybody tell you that a reader is supposed to be solely on the receiving end. Understanding is a two way operation; learning doesn't consist in being an empty receptacle. The learner has to question himself, and question the teacher. He even has to argue with the teacher, once he understands what the teacher is saying. And marking a book is literally an expression of your differences, or agreements of opinion, with the author.

There are all kinds of devices for marking a book intelligently and fruitfully. Here's the way I do it:

1. Underlining: of major points, of important or forceful statements.
2. Vertical lines at the margin: to emphasize a statement already underlined.
3. Star, asterisk, or other doodad at the margin: to be used sparingly, to emphasize the ten or twenty most important statements in the book. (You may want to fold the bottom corner of each page on which you use such marks. It won't hurt the sturdy paper on which most modern books are printed, and you will be able to take the book off the shelf at any time and, by opening it at the folded-corner page, refresh your recollection of the book.)
4. Numbers in the margin: to indicate the sequence of points the author makes in developing a single argument.
5. Numbers of other pages in the margin: to indicate where else in the book the author made points relevant to the point marked; to tie up the ideas of the book, which, though they may be separated by many pages, belong together.
6. Circling of key words or phrases.
7. Writing in the margin, or at the top or bottom of the page, for the sake of: recording questions (and perhaps answers) which a passage raised in your mind; reducing a complicated discussion to a simple statement; recording the sequence of major points running through the book. I use the end papers at the

back of the book to make a personal index of the author's points in the order of their appearance.

The front-end papers, to me, are the most important. Some people reserve them for a fancy bookplate. I reserve them for fancy thinking. After I have finished reading the book and making my personal index on the back end papers, I turn to the front and try to outline the book, not page by page, or point by point (I've already done that at the back), but as an integrate structure, with a basic unity and an order of parts. This outline is, to me, the measure of my understanding of the work.

If you're a diehard anti-book-marker, you may object that the margins, the space between the lines, and the end papers don't give you room enough. All right. How about using a scratch pad slightly smaller than the page-size of the book - so that the edges of the sheets won't protrude. Make your index, outlines, and even your notes on the pad, and then insert these permanently inside the front and back covers of the book.

Or, you may say that this business of marking books is going to slow up your reading. It probably will. That's one of the reasons for doing it. Most of us have been taken in by the notion that speed of reading is a measure of our intelligence. There is no such thing as the right speed for intelligent reading. Some things should be read quickly and effortlessly, and some should be read slowly and even laboriously. The sign of intelligence in reading is the ability to read different things differently according to their worth. In the case of good books, the point is not to see how many of them you can get through, but rather how many can get through you - how many you can make your own. A few friends are better than a thousand acquaintances. If this is your aim, as it should be, you will not be impatient if it takes more time and effort to read a great book than it does a newspaper.

You may have one final objection to marking books. You can't lend them to your friends because nobody else can read them without being distracted by your notes. Furthermore, you won't want to lend them because a marked copy is a kind of intellectual diary, and lending it is almost like giving your mind away.

If your friend wants to read your "Plutarch's Lives," "Shakespeare" or "The Federalist Papers," tell them gently but firmly, to buy a copy. You will lend him your car or your coat - but your books are as much a part of you as your head or heart."

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Instructions – General And Specific

Lloyd E. Ellis

Should we offer thanks before taking up the contribution?

Quite often one will say that something which is done or said, is not according to Scripture because the exact words are not found in the Bible.

A case in point is that of giving thanks when the contribution, or offering, is about to be taken. Objection has been offered because there is no specific example of such prayer, or of thanks being offered in the Bible.

The *time* of “laying by in store” is stated - the first day of the week. (1 Corinthians 16:2.)

The *amount* is as one has been prospered; as he plans, or purposes, and emphasis given to sow bountifully.

The *attitude* is that of willing and cheerful minds. (See 2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:6,7.)

Many years ago a well-known preacher objected to offering thanks before the contribution saying, “Who would offer thanks for giving away his money?” Of course the thought is in error because it is not a “giving away,” but using part of what God has given in a more direct way in the work of the kingdom.

The manner of “laying by in store” is not indicated in the Scriptures. I recall that when I was young the members in a small congregation were asked to march down the aisle (sic) and lay their contributions on the table. Sometimes an older person would send a child with the quarter or dollar to do this. One sister read about Jesus and disciples singing a song and then “going out,” so she said that meant there should (sic) be no “closing prayer,” and so for a while that little group just sang a song and then “went out.”

From time to time one serving at the Lord’s table will pick up the contribution basket and say “separate and apart” from the communion we have the offering. In the first place the phrase sounds somewhat an apology for having the contribution, and in the second place it is no more separate from the worship than the sermon, a baptism, the singing, or the prayers. “And they continued steadfastly (sic) in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42.)

Some have expressed the thought that having “fellowship” refers to the contribution, or is thus included. In fact, Christians have fellowship together in Bible study, class or sermon, in the prayers, in the singing, in the breaking of bread (the Lord’s

Supper), and in the contribution. These are all part of the worship. Let's quit saying "separate and apart."

The "Lord's Table" is not the piece of furniture, or the vessels upon the "table," but consists of the communion of the saints with Christ, in using the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine. This is a memorial, or engaged in, in memory of Christ and indicates on the part of Christians a belief in him and his return. The bread represents his body and the fruit of the vine his blood which was poured out or shed (not spilled) on the cross.

The Bible does not call the Lord's Supper the *Eucharist* (men do that. This is a transliteration of the Greek word which means *thanks*). It is the word Paul used when he wrote concerning the Lord's Supper, that Christ took the bread and gave "thanks" before telling the disciples to eat of it.

It is the same word Paul used in Ephesians 5:20, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," in Colossians 3:15, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts . . . and be ye thankful," and in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "in everything give thanks."

So we are not unscriptural, or just aping somebody else, when we join in thanking God for prosperity; for having been blessed with material things (as well as spiritual), and for the opportunity of meeting together and participating in the work of the Lord, in which work the offering is to be used.

When we find specific directions in the Bible we must follow them in order to praise God acceptably, but when we are not told exactly how to do something required, we follow general principles indicated to us, and be thankful in all things.

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THE INTERPRETATION OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

F. Furman Kearley

THE PROBLEM OF DIVISION AND CONFUSION IN THE INTERPRETATION OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

The subject of prophecy is receiving wide popular attention, in at least some circles. Many books on the subject are being published and pushed in the bookstores, in the catalogues, and through the mail. Also, one hears many sermons and discussions of it by means of radio preaching and television.

Unfortunately, at the same time the subject of prophecy is also being extensively abused. These many books and sermons concerning it present all kind of conflicting and confusing interpretations. Some contend the world is just about to come to an end; others deny this vigorously. Some of the radio preaching, especially from Herbert W. Armstrong, interpreted the prophecies and applied them in one way during World War II and now interpret them differently and apply the same prophecies to different nations and situations today.

This is not, however, a new problem. It is a problem that has been with the Christian church throughout most of its two thousand years of history. When Christ came, the Jewish people as a whole looked for a very literal fulfillment of the prophetic expectations in a militaristic Messiah who would defeat and punish Rome. They rejected Christ because he did not meet their understanding (sic) of a literal fulfillment. In the second and third centuries, Christians attempted to use the argument from prophecy extensively. However, they went far beyond the use of the Old Testament manifested in the New Testament. While the Jews pushed for literal fulfillment, many early church fathers found spiritual fulfillment of many Old Testament passages not cited in the New. Others used the allegorical method of interpretation and pressed it far beyond the use made by Paul in Galatians 4. Justin Martyr in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Cyprian in his *Testimonies Against the Jews*, and Chrysostom in his work *The Obscurities of the Prophets* all pressed the argument from prophecy and, in many cases, abused the argument excessively by resorting to their own imagination. Through the influence of Augustine, the principle of spiritualization and spiritual fulfillment of prophecy became dominant in the Middle Ages. At the time of the reformation, the reformers rejected the allegorical method as a hermeneutical principle and raised again the problem of prophecy and fulfillment. Since then, many other conflicting approaches have been taken to prophecy.

All of this has resulted in creating great confusion and division in Christendom concerning prophecy. It has also resulted in largely discrediting the argument from prophecy in the mind of many in the secular world. All they need to do to discredit the argument is to point to the fact that no Christian group can agree, itself, on how to interpret prophecy and what the real argument from prophecy is. (1)

A specific result of this confusion and division has been to cause a neglect of prophecy. Many have said that since the scholars and the preachers were so divided over what prophecy meant, that no one can understand the prophetic material in the Bible. Therefore, many have avoided reading and studying the prophetic books.

The Rejection of Predictive Prophecy

Another tragic and serious result has been to give grounds for the rejection of predictive prophecy. Kemper Fullerton in his work entitled, *Prophecy and Authority*, has surveyed the history of the interpretation of prophecy in the church and seriously challenges the argument from prophecy and denies the existence of predictive prophecy. (2) A.B. Davidson denies predictive prophecy by his definition of the prophet:

“The prophet is always a man of his own time, and it is always to the people of his own time that he speaks, not to a generation long after nor to us. And the things of which he speaks will always be things of importance to the people of his own day, whether they be things belonging to their internal life and conduct, or things affecting their external fortunes as a people among other peoples.” (3)

A so-called Christian Apologist denies predictive prophecy in this statement:

“This kind of argument from prophecy can no longer be used in the service of the Lord of truth. It is clear that we cannot nowadays look for exact fulfilments (sic) of particular verses in the Old Testament and regard them as “proofs from prophecy” of the truth of the Christian revelation, even though this kind of argument goes back to the New Testament itself.” (4)

Dr. Jack P. Lewis gives several reasons why many modern scholars and people reject the argument from prophecy and predictive prophecy. Some of these in summary are: (5)

1. “There is a violent, sustained reaction to the overstatement of the case for prophetic foresight made by earlier apologists which resulted in some elements of absurdity. Such an absurdity is to be seen when Barnabas found in the 318 servants of Abraham a prediction of the cross of Christ (*Epistle of Barnabas* [sic] 9:8).”
2. “The interpretation of prophecy has lost face because of repeated disillusionment experienced in both Jewish and Christian circles over the speculations of those who make identifications, set dates, and create hopes - all of which prove in time to be fallacious.”
3. “There is a widespread acceptance of a world view which objects to the philosophical presuppositions upon which the concept of predictive prophecy is premised.”

This world view as expressed by David Hume and others is to deny the possibility of miracles. Of course, prophecy is a specific kind of miracle, and if one rejects the miraculous, he must reject the prophecy.

4. "There has been a neglect caused in part from reaction to the excesses of the past and in part from yielding ground to or attempting to come to terms with the critical movement."

5. "The force of the argument from prophecy has been further reduced by the continuous, widespread assertion that there are examples of predictions of the prophets which did not come to pass."

On this point Childs states:

"The developing critical school nourished by rationalism was not reluctant in pointing out the inconsistencies between the prophecies and the alleged fulfillment. The criticism of the orthodox position begun by Semler and Eichhorn found its full expression in the work of Kuenen, who devoted three long chapters in relentlessly tracking down "unfulfilled prophecies." (6)

6. The critical attack upon how the New Testament uses the Old Testament has roused many to discredit the argument from prophecy used in the New Testament and in the Christian church. Many following the historical-grammatical approach to exegesis have maintained that it is not a valid method of exegesis to read the New Testament back into the Old Testament, and a considerable number of conservative scholars have been moved to accept this view. Rudolph Bultmann states this argument as accepted by many: "To talk of this kind of prophecy and fulfillment has become impossible in an age in which the Old Testament is conceived as a historical document and interpreted according to the method of historical science." (7)

How Predictive Prophecy is Rejected

The critics use several means to reject predictive prophecy. First, they often reject the Biblical situation. According to them, Daniel was not written by the sixth century prophet before the events prophesied but by someone in the second century after the events took place. The critics also must have a second Isaiah who lived in the late sixth century after the restoration from captivity took place, rather than the historical Isaiah who lived in the eighth century, two centuries before the restoration.

Secondly, the critics often allege that the language of the prophets is vague and general and could be made to fit many different kinds of situations.

Thirdly, they often insist that interpolations have been inserted into the text by later writers.

Fourthly, the critics contend that the prophets' hopes for the future, though often expressed, exceeded reality and were never fulfilled. (8)

While the critics' objection to predictive prophecy can be dealt with and adequately refuted, the problem of the argument from prophecy is still greatly weakened by the division and confusion produced by the various schools of interpretation of Biblical prophecy. The identification of these major schools of interpretation will be helpful in order to get an over-all understanding of the problem.

The Major Schools of Interpretation of Old Testament Prophecy

The assigning of labels to various schools of thought is always precarious and fraught with danger of oversimplification and misrepresentation. The following categories are meant to be general with the realization that various individuals might partake of some aspects of several schools.

The first school of interpretation may be identified as the secular or skeptical school of thought. These begin with the presupposition that the Bible is not an inspired document but a document of human origin. They reject miracles and, therefore, they reject prophecy which is miracle in spoken or written form. This school of thought would characterize many of the prophecies, especially those concerning the literal restoration of Jerusalem and the Jewish kingdom in great glory and power as high hopes of the Hebrew prophets which were never realized. They would contend that there are many unfulfilled prophecies in the Bible. The few that might be said to be fulfilled were of a general nature and could be said to be coincident.

The second school of interpretation of Old Testament prophecy would be the Jewish. However, this school falls readily into three different categories: the liberal, the Zionistic, and the orthodox. The liberals would occupy close to the same position as the secular unbeliever. The Zionists tend to interpret the Old Testament prophecies very literally and look for the complete restoration of a powerful physical Hebrew nation. The Zionists believe that active human participation is necessary to bring about the fulfillment of these prophecies. The orthodox, on the other hand, while tending to hold to the expectation of a literal fulfillment believe that all should be left in the hands of God who will achieve the fulfillment in his own time. The liberal Jews do differ from the secular unbelievers in that they believe God is operating in history, and they expect God and man working together to bring in an ideal Messianic age of peace and harmony between all men.

The third school of interpretation of Old Testament prophecy is the Catholic. While there is now considerable variation among Catholic scholars, in general, it may be said that the Catholic church traditionally has accepted the principle of spiritualization, that is, they believe the prophets' predictions concerning the kingdom of God have found their fulfillment in the visible Catholic church.(9)

The fourth school of thought is the Protestant which contains four major approaches to the interpretation of prophecy. These four are: the liberal, the amillennial, the premillennial, and the postmillennial. The approach of the Protestant liberal is very close to that of the Jewish liberal, though some Protestant liberals seem very close to the secular unbeliever. With some danger of oversimplification, perhaps these various schools of thought may be best contrasted by their view of the prophecies concerning the kingdom of God and the restoration of Israel.

1. The liberal school contends that these prophecies express the high hopes of the prophets but were never fulfilled and never will be.
2. The amillennial and premillennial view these prophecies as figurative in nature and achieving spiritual fulfillment in the church.
3. The premillennialists interpret the Old Testament prophecies as literal, and they expect a literal fulfillment of them still in the future at the return of Christ when he will set up a literal kingdom and reign from Jerusalem.(10)

With such a large number of major schools of interpretation and a myriad of individual differences within each of these schools of thought, is it any wonder that some Christians have despaired of understanding prophecy and therefore have rejected its importance and have turned away from the study of it? Is it any wonder that unbelievers point to this division as proof that there never was any real predictive prophecy? Obviously, the solution that is badly needed is a unified approach in exegesis and in hermeneutics.

TOWARD A SOLUTION THROUGH A UNIFIED APPROACH IN THE INTERPRETATION OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

Fortunately, all schools of interpretation are already agreed in general upon a number of basic principles of interpretation. Using these as a foundation, perhaps it is not too much to hope that by careful, prayerful study unity can be achieved in some of the areas of disagreement. Any efforts that would result in a more uniform interpretation of prophecy would be productive of much good.

General Principles of Agreement

While there may be some noted exceptions of disagreement, in general it seems that most serious Bible students can agree to the following basic principles of interpretation of Old Testament prophecy:

1. *Exegete Syntactically* - This principle traditionally includes two steps. First, one must establish the text. Therefore, the process of textual criticism is essential in order to establish what the exact, accurate, and reliable text is. Second, one must

analyze all the grammatical and syntactical forms so as to understand the relation of each part to the other.

2. *Exegete Lexically* - In this process one must study all the words very carefully so as to understand their precise meaning in the original language at the time that the writer used the word. While there may be some special figurative or typical sense in which the word is used, one must always begin by understanding the general and normal use of the word.

3. *Exegete Historically* - One must study and determine the historical background in which the statement was made. This is always the basic beginning point. Even if the message has application to some future event, one must always begin by understanding the situation out of which the message arose. The extensive controversy that has surrounded Isaiah 7:14 could have been avoided if various interpreters would have exegeted the passage in the light of the historical background in which it was set. This author does not believe that any objective reader can deny that Isaiah primarily referred to a child who was born before the utter destruction of Pekah and Rezon. If the passage has a later multiple fulfillment, its specific meaning can only be known by inspired revelation and interpretation such as is given in Matthew 1:23. No human interpreter from Isaiah 7 alone living at the time of Isaiah and without the benefit of the inspiration of Matthew would ever have looked for a fulfillment beyond the time of Ahaz and the defeat of Pekah and Rezon.

4. *Exegete Contextually* - The serious and careful student must study each passage in the light of its larger context and also of its immediate context. What was said above concerning Isaiah 7:14 applies equally as well to studying it in its context. The author has before him two abusive uses of prophecy because the preachers who used them failed to note the context and the historical situation. One asked, "Did you know that thousands of years ago the Bible predicted automobiles, labor unions, atomic bombs, airplanes, submarines, skyscrapers, radio, and telegraph?" The "round tires" of Isaiah 3:18 were taken out of their context by some preachers to predict the tire rationing during World War II. The "chariots raging in the streets" from Nahum 2:4 have been used to say the Bible predicted modern traffic jams. Such abuses are unworthy of anyone claiming to wear the name of Christ. They only help the enemies of Christ discredit true prophecy.

5. *Exegete Harmoniously* - While liberals in general reject this principle, anyone who believes the Bible recognizes the absolute importance that no interpretation be placed on one passage that contradicts plain teaching in another passage. Since the Bible is inspired, infallible truth, then the interpretation of one part of it must always be in agreement with all other parts.

The above are standard principles of exegesis used in the study of the entire Bible and all kinds of literature. Some additional principles must be considered that have special application with respect to prophetic literature.(11)

1. Recognize that prophetic literature is a unique type of material and must receive special consideration.
2. Determine, if possible, the specific purpose intended to be accomplished by the prophetic passage. MacRae lists six different purposes for prophetic messages: (1) rebuke, (2) encouragement, (3) revelation of facts about God and his creation, (4) instructions for specific actions to be taken, (5) to authenticate a divinely appointed leader or prophet, (6) to lay a foundation for the climax of all the divine activities in the work of the future Messiah.
3. Recognize that the prophetic material is not exclusively of a predictive nature but also contains (sic) extensive didactic material for teaching and exhortation.
4. Note the ways in which Christ and the New Testament writers interpret Old Testament prophecy and develop principles from these. Some important observations on how the New Testament interprets Old Testament prophecy are: (1) literally, as in the virgin birth, (2) typologically, as John the Baptist for Elijah or the passover lamb for Christ, (3) allegorically, as Hagar and Sarah for the two covenants, (4) spiritually, as the seed of Abraham physically becoming by faith the spiritual community, the church, (5) indirectly, as in the case with passages that describe a situation that could arise many times, (6) in the multiple sense, as with passages that have more than one fulfillment, such as Rachel weeping for her children. Other fine points of New Testament usage need to be noted and carefully studied.
5. Recognize that the finality of God's revelation in Christ as revealed in the New Testament overrides in the interpretation of all earlier revelation.
6. Begin with clear, simple, understandable passages and base the interpretation of the more complex and difficult passages on the clear, simple ones.
7. Determine if the same theme or concept is also treated elsewhere and locate all parallel passages.
8. Harmonize all the prophetic passages with plain teaching of scripture and with the interpretation of each individual prophetic passage.
9. Determine the full meaning and significance of all proper names, events, geographical references, references to customs or material culture, and references to flora and fauna.

10. Recognize that the prophet was limited to conveying his message in the language and in the forms of his own time and people. As Ochler says, "The prophet spoke of future glory in terms of his own society and experience." (12) Von Orelli observes, "The prophets were compelled to speak so that their hearers could understand them. Only gradually these limitations and forms became spiritualized, e.g. the kingdom of God is still pictured by the prophets as established around the local center of Zion." (13) Orr affirms, "in the prediction of distant events to which existing conditions no longer apply, there is no alternative but that these should be presented in the forms of the present." (14)

11. Distinguish as to when the language is to be understood literally and when it is to be understood figuratively. D. R. Dungan presents several excellent rules by which figurative language may be detected. (15) (1) Does the context demand or lend itself to figurative language? (2) A word or sentence is figurative when the literal meaning involves an impossibility as when God told Jeremiah he would make him "a fortified city," "an iron pillar," and "brazen walls against the whole land." (3) The language may be figurative if the literal interpretation will cause one passage to contradict another or to contradict common sense and logic. An example is 1 Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (4) The language is likely figurative if a literal interpretation would demand actions that are wrong and forbidden to the righteous as Matthew 18:8,9 or Jeremiah 25:27,28. (5) Sometimes the figurative language is specifically identified by the Biblical author as when John interpreted Jesus' reference to raising the temple as meaning his body. (6) The language may be figurative when the definite is put for the indefinite. For example, the word "day" is often used for an indefinite period of time as in Job 20:28 and Hebrews 3:8. (7) The language may be figurative when said in mockery as when Elijah said, "Cry aloud: for he is a god." 1 Kings 18:27.

12. Realize the principle of progressive revelation. As MacRae says,

"Sometimes an idea is lightly touched upon, then suggested more clearly, then expressed more fully, then misunderstandings are corrected, and finally the idea is reiterated. Thus an idea can be traced through Scripture and the understanding of it can be gradually increased and clarified." (16)

13. Recognize the timeless and successive nature of some prophecy. Often the prophets do not set their future predictions in a time framework. The prophecy may be centuries in unfolding. It may be successive in its process. One aspect may be completed at one time and another; still later. Orr, Von Orelli, Ochler, and others forcefully state this principle.

14. Recognize the conditional element in prophecy and that nearly all prophecies are based on conditions whether they are explicitly stated or not. Jeremiah 18:1-12 clearly sets forth this principle.

15. Recognize the possibility of a multiple fulfillment of prophecy. The prophecy of Deuteronomy 28:57 concerning a mother eating her children in the siege of a Hebrew city has had at least two historical fulfillments (sic) that are known and perhaps, many others that are not. Such could be the case with other prophecies.

16. If the passage is predictive, determine if the prophecy has been fulfilled (a) elsewhere in the Old Testament history, (b) in secular history, (c) in the New Testament.

17. If no evidence of a fulfillment of the prophecy can be found, then one must examine one of the three following possibilities: (a) Were conditions not met by people involved in the prophecy so as to cause the Lord to “repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them” or “repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them” (Jeremiah 18:7,10). (b) Is this a genuine case of unfulfilled prophecy? (c) Or is the prophecy yet to be fulfilled at some point in the future?

While the above principles may generally be accepted by all, there still remain many problems and difficulties in applying these in the same manner and with the same result to specific prophecies. Among the most difficult problems in the interpretation of prophecy are the following three:

1. When is a prophecy to be regarded as conditional and recognition made that the conditions have not been met and thus the prophecy will not be fulfilled?
2. Exactly when is a passage to be taken literally and when figuratively and if it is figurative, how is the figurative language to be interpreted?
3. When and to what degree is spiritual fulfillment to be recognized? The above problems are the basic ones dividing amillennialists and premillennialists in their interpretation of prophecy. It is to be hoped that these aspects can be studied honestly, openly, and in depth in order that unity may be achieved.

In conclusion, this author would like to stress two personal convictions. First, the differences between various groups of Christians on the interpretation of future prophecy should not constitute a test of fellowship unless an interpretation violates and nullifies essential Christian doctrine and aspects of essential Christian practice, such as denying the purposeful atonement of Christ on the cross or forbidding the Lord’s Supper in the church on earth and reserving it only for the future kingdom. In general I would agree with the position stated by Grayson Harter Ensign,

“It needs to be emphasized that for the most part, given the difficulties of interpreting prophecies, the position that one occupies relative to prophecies yet to be fulfilled must be one of caution, humility, and openmindedness. God has not made an exact and correct knowledge of the fulfillment of prophecy in the future a condition of salvation. Therefore, no one should make it a test of fellowship. It may well be

that in the fulfillment which God will surely bring about that no one will have had all of the details correct and all of the parts of the prophecies worked out exactly right. Christians need to agree upon all they can in prophecy but not allow opinions about it to become divisive and matters of conflict.”(17)

Secondly, I believe the conditional nature of prophecy needs to be considered much more extensively than it has in the past by those who have studied and written about prophecy. While most of the books mention the conditional nature as a factor to be considered in prophecy, in fact, hardly any of them actually note cases where prophecies were made but did not come to pass because the conditions were not met. From the author’s personal study, it appears that this explanation best answers many of the alleged cases of unfulfilled prophecy presented by Kuenen and others.

Clearly such prophecies as Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 involve situations in which both conditions could not at the same time be true. In the history of the nation of Israel, they did obey God at times and were blessed by him. At other times, they did disobey God and were punished by him and ultimately carried into captivity.

All clearly recognize that God’s promises to Saul were conditional and when he disobeyed God, God could withdraw the kingdom from him. The same is true with respect to God’s promises to Jeroboam and others. God first threatened the end of Ahab’s dynasty because of the sin of Naboth. When Ahab humbled himself, the Lord said to Elijah, “Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son’s days I will bring the evil upon his house,” (1 Kings 21:19-29). When Jonah pronounced to Nineveh, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” A condition was not stated, but that it was clearly meant was indicated by Jonah’s understanding and fears and by the subsequent events.

Specifically, it is this author’s conviction that many of the promises made to the Hebrew people concerning the restoration from Babylonian captivity and the glorious state of Jerusalem were intended to be literally fulfilled. However, when the people returned from captivity, they did not live up to the expectations of God and therefore, many of these promises were not fulfilled because God repented of the good with which he said he would benefit them.

The books of Haggai, Malachi, Ezra, and Nehemiah give abundant evidence that the Jews who returned from captivity continued to practice many sins and to displease God in a number of ways. The priests offered polluted bread upon God’s altar and married foreign women, the people robbed him of tithes and offerings and for this he said, “You are cursed with the curse: for you robbed me, even this whole nation;” (Malachi 3:9). During the Intertestamental (sic) Period we read of other sins and departures of the people and the priests. The ultimate sin of these people was in rejecting Christ and failing to see the figurative and spiritual nature of God’s prophecies concerning the Messiah. For this, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, and the Jews scattered more extensively in the subsequent years.

Surely the conditional element of prophecy deserves a very careful consideration as a key principle of interpretation of many of the prophecies concerning the Hebrew nation which have not yet been fulfilled.

FOOTNOTES

(1) Brevard S. Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment" in *Interpretation* Vol. X11, No. 3 (July, 1958), pp. 259-263. See also Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: W.A. Wilde Co., 1950), pp. 167-173. Jack P. Lewis, "The Word of Prophecy Made Sure" in *Pillars of the Faith* edited by Herman O. Wilson and Morris M. Womack, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), pp. 160,161.

(2) Kemper Fullerton, *Prophecy and Authority* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1919), pp. 188, 189.

(3) A. B. Davidson, "Prophecy and the Prophets," *A Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919),IV,118.

(4) Alan Richardson, *Christian Apologetics*, (New York: Harper and Bros., 1947), pp. 178, 179.

(5) Jack P. Lewis, *op. cit.* pp. 162, 163.

(6) Childs, *op. cit.* p. 260. See also Abraham Kuenen, *The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel* (London: Longman, Green, and Co., 1877), pp. 98ff.

(7) Rudolf Bultmann, "Prophecy and Fulfillment," *Essays on Old Testament Interpretation*, edited by Claus Westermann, English translation edited by James Luther Mays, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1963), p. 52.

(8) F. Furman Kearley, *Fulfilled Prophecies Concerning Gentile Nations as an Evidence of Inspiration*, an unpublished Thesis written at Harding Graduate School of Religion, Memphis, Tennessee, 1956.

(9) Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1950), pp. 167, 170,

(10) Ernest Frederick Kevan, "Millennium" in *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Everett F. Harrison. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960), pp. 351-355.

(11) For general principles of interpretation of prophecy see Ramm, *op. cit.* pp. 162-173; A. A. MacRae "Prophets and Prophecy" in *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, edited by Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), IV, 894-902; A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 280-305.

(12) Ramm, *ibid*, p. 157.

(13) C. Von Orelli, "Prophecy, Prophets," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, edited by James Orr, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), IV, 2465.

(14) James Orr, *The Problem of the Old Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 461.

(15) D. R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics* (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., n.d.) pp. 195-203.

(16) MacRae, *op, cit.*, p. 895.

(17) Grayson Harter Ensign, *You Can Understand the Bible*, (Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1978), p. 424.

Know What the Bible Says!

RAYMOND C. KELCY

All of us who preach or teach have had people tell us that they would like to know how to study the Bible. They say they read the Bible daily but feel that they do not learn it. They constantly seek helps to Bible study and would like to know more about how to study. In this and articles to follow I wish to suggest some helps to more intelligent Bible study.

We Must Know What it Says

When we read a passage, we must know what it is saying if we would understand its meaning. This means that we must know what each word in the passage means. Too many times Bible readers skip over words they do not recognize or words which they cannot pronounce. This often causes a failure to understand the passage. When we come to a word whose meaning we do not know we will find that an English dictionary will be of help. Or if it is a word that has to do with Biblical places, weights, measures, money, persons, etc., then we can find the needed help by going to a Bible dictionary.

To illustrate what we are saying, let us look at a passage in the letter to the Galatians. We are told that the other Jews “dissembled” with Peter and that even Barnabas was carried away with their “dissimulation” (2:13). The word “dissemble” is a verb and the word “dissimulation” is the cognate noun. This is the translation of the King James Version. Now, what does it mean to dissemble? What did Peter and these other Jews really do? Try asking your friends this question. You will find that most of them will not be able to answer. Perhaps they will tell you that it means the opposite of “assemble.”

Let us go to the dictionary regarding the word “dissemble.” The dictionary’s definition is: “to hide under a false appearance,” “to put on the appearance of.” So, Peter and these other Jews were acting the hypocrite. Now, let us go to some other versions. The Revised Standard has “acted insincerely.” The New International says, “the other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy.” The New American Standard has, “the rest of the Jews joined him in his hypocrisy.”

For the word “dissimulation” the dictionary informs us that it is the noun form of the verb “dissemble.” The Revised Standard has “insincerity.” The New English Bible has “played false.” The New American Standard has “hypocrisy.”

The passage becomes quite clear when we understand these words. At Antioch Peter withdrew from certain Gentiles, though he had been associating with them before the arrival of men from Jerusalem who were “of the circumcision.” He acted as he did, he dissembled, because he feared these men of the circumcision. He thus acted insincerely, played the hypocrite, and other Jews acted hypocritically with him. Even

Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. Paul delivered a strong rebuke to Peter for this insincere conduct.

With this understanding of the word “dissimulation” another oft-quoted passage becomes clear. “Let love be without dissimulation” (Rom. 12:9). Instead of dissimulation the Revised Standard has “Let love be genuine.” “Love in all sincerity” says the New English Bible. The New American Standard has “Let love be without hypocrisy.” If we did not understand the passage when we first read it with the word “dissimulation,” we can be assured that we now have an understanding of it.

Another instance of the need to know what the Bible is saying can be seen in passages in which the word “privily” is used. For instance, “Herod privily called the wise men” (Matt. 2: 7). The dictionary gives “secretly” as the meaning of this word. The Revised Standard Version has “secretly.” The New English Bible has “in private.” The New American Standard has “secretly.”

The word “dispensation” provides another example of the need to search in order to see what the Bible is saying. What is the meaning of this word? The dictionary says it means a system or an arrangement. When reference is made to a certain dispensation a plan, system, or arrangement is meant. In Ephesians 1:10, a passage in which Paul speaks of “the dispensation of the fulness of times,” the RSV has “plan.” It can be seen that the word does not denote a period of time as is sometimes thought.

Still another word which reminds us that we must determine what the passage is saying is the word “earnest.” The Holy Spirit is the “earnest of our inheritance” (Eph. 1: 14). The dictionary defines “earnest” as a pledge or as something which is given by a buyer to a seller to bind a bargain. The Holy Spirit, then, is God’s pledge, his down payment, which is given to the Christian to assure him that he will come through with the fulfilment of his promise. The New American Standard in this passage has “pledge”; the RSV has “guarantee.”

Many other examples could be given. The Old Testament is replete with such. The Bible student will find the necessity of determining what the Bible is saying by an appeal to dictionaries or to other versions as he reads in many places of the Old Testament. The Proverbs are especially good to illustrate the point. The next time you are reading Proverbs, try the type of research we are suggesting when you come to a saying that does not seem clear to you. Try this sort of research with this statement: “Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him” (Prov. 27:22). What is the meaning of this? Try the type of investigation as suggested above and see if you can arrive at an understanding of it. Try this with Proverbs 26:19; 16:28.

Using a Bible Dictionary

You will need a Bible dictionary for some of the biblical terms. For instance, by looking up the Sea of Galilee you will find a description of that body of water which played such a great part in our Lord's earthly ministry. You will find that it is also called Tiberias, Chinneroth, and Gennesaret. The Bible dictionary will provide informative material on other places such as rivers, countries, cities, provinces, etc. You may wish to determine which of the Herods is spoken of in a certain passage. A Bible dictionary will be of help to you. The same is true of many others who wore the same name as Mary, John, Simon, Judas, and others. Try looking up what a Bible dictionary says about such terms as Golgotha, bushel, shekel, centurion, tetrarch, Theophilus.

Try putting this into practice. Do not read the Bible hurriedly. Do not skip over words whose meaning you do not know. Always determine what the Bible is saying.

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THE LANGUAGES OF THE BIBLE

The original languages of the Bible are three: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. If one wishes to be a careful student of the Scriptures, he will want to do some research concerning the biblical languages, always keeping in mind that Jehovah chose words as the medium of his special revelation to mankind.

Hebrew - The Hebrew of the OT is a Semitic language (so called by modern scholars after the name of Shem, Noah's oldest son). Both Hebrew and Aramaic are a part of the north-western group of these tongues and were employed mainly in Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. It is believed that Hebrew came from the Canaanite language. The OT refers to its language in two ways. It is called the "language of Canaan" (Isa. 19:18), and the "Jews' language" (cf. II Kgs. 18:26,28; Neh. 13:24; Isa. 36:11). It is not referred to as "Hebrew" until around 130 B.C. (prologue to the apocryphal Ecclesiasticus). In the NT it is called "Hebrew" in John 5:2; 19:13; Acts 21:40.

The Hebrew language was written in a script composed of 22 consonants (from right to left), and it extends back to at least 1500 B.C. Most Hebrew nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs consisted of only three consonants. Before the middle of the first millennium A.D., the OT text was written without vowels or diacritical marks. Eventually, though, vowels were added because the ancients were fearful of losing the ability to pronounce the words as the language became more classical and the texts were no longer those of a living spoken tongue. Some good examples of early Hebrew writing are to be found on the Moabite Stone, the Gezer Calendar, etc.

Due to the fact that the original Hebrew was strictly consonantal, some words are difficult to define with certainty. For example, the Genesis record says: "Now Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors" (Gen. 37:3). The sentence contains the expression *Ketoneth passiyim*. The first word is clearly "coat," but the second term is very rare. Scholars have suggested that it may mean "with long sleeves," "with much embroidery," "of a choice wool," or the traditional, "of many colors." But no one knows for sure.

The imagery of the Hebrew language is largely drawn from the activities and things of everyday life. It abounds with a variety of common figures of speech – parables, similes, metaphors, etc. As with other Semitic languages, Hebrew contains frequent anthropomorphic expressions, e.g., the "eyes of the Lord." Any attempt to literalize these figures (as Mormon writers do when they suggest that God is a "man") is the reflection of woeful ignorance.

Aramaic - Aramaic is a close cognate language (actually a group of Semitic dialects) of Hebrew. The oldest extra-biblical example may be the Melqart stele (9th

century B.C.) which mentions the warfare between Ben-hadad of Syria and Israel. Though Hebrew remained the “sacred” tongue of the Jews, they, like others in the Middle East, began using vernacular Aramaic for everyday conversation and writing sometime after the 6th century B.C. In the 1st century A.D. , Aramaic, in one dialect or another, was the common daily tongue of the Palestinian Jews, though it is probable that many Jews also spoke Hebrew and Greek.

In the NT a number of Aramaic expressions are transliterated into Greek, e.g. , *Talitha qumi*, “Maiden, arise!” and *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (cf. Mk. 5:41; 15:34). In the NT epistles there are several Aramaic words such as *Abba* (Gal. 4:6) and *Maranatha* (1 Cor. 16:22).

Some minor portions of the OT were penned in Aramaic (Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Jer. 10:11; Dan. 2:46-7:28; and two words in Gen. 31:47). Liberal scholars have contended that the Aramaic of the Bible is of late date, hence, those works of the OT containing this dialect (mainly Daniel and Ezra) were thus composed much later than the periods traditionally assigned to them. However, Aramaic papyri, very similar to these works, have been discovered at Elephantine, Egypt, which date to the 5th century B.C. The critical charges are thus shown to be valueless.

In passing we might note that there are also some “loan words,” within certain appropriate historical contexts, which appear to have been borrowed from other languages. The term “magicians” (*hartummim*) in Genesis 41:8 seems to be an Egyptian term. It probably refers to certain priests who had learned sacred writings and rituals at the temple schools. The word *tirshatha* (Ezra 2:63; Neh. 8:9) is of Persian origin, somewhat equivalent to “His Excellency;” it denoted one whose principal function was to assess and collect taxes (cf. Neh. 7:70; Ezra 1:8).

Greek - The Greek language has passed through several major periods of change. The New Testament was composed during that era known as the *Koine* age. This was a period of universal or common Greek. The Greek language was freely spoken throughout the antique world in that span from about 330 B.C. to 330 A.D. Koine was the normal street language in Rome, Alexandria, Athens, and Jerusalem. When the Romans finally conquered the Greeks, it was Greek influence that flowed throughout the empire. Augustus, the emperor of Rome, inscribed his seal in Greek. Paul, writing to the saints in Rome, the capital city of the empire, sent his message in Greek, not Latin!

G. L. Archer has noted that “Greek was the most ideally adapted linguistic medium for the world-wide communication of the Gospel in the entire region of the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt and the Near East. Accurate in expression, beautiful in sound, and capable of great rhetorical force, it furnished an ideal vehicle for the proclamation of God’s message to man, transcending Semitic barriers and reaching out to all the Gentile races. It is highly significant that the ‘fulness of times,’ the first advent of Christ, was deferred until such time as Greek opened up channels of communication to all the

Gentile nations east of Italy and Libya on a level not previously possible under the multilingual situation that previously prevailed" (*Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, III, p. 870).

In the 17th century some authorities contended that the language of the New Testament was on a par with the Greek of the classical period. Later, some scholars argued that NT Greek was of a special variety, a "language of the Holy Ghost," so to speak. Others contended that this was not the case. Adolf Deissmann argued that the NT was framed in "colloquial Greek," i.e., the language of the common people. Scholars like A. T. Robertson supported this view. In recent years, however, a more balanced concept has arisen. It is now recognized that a variety of sources paved the way for the coming of the language of the New Testament.

The literature of the classical period made a contribution. The Hebrew Old Testament played a part. The Septuagint (Greek version of the OT) left a strong influence upon the New Testament (cf. Arndt & Gingrich, *Greek/English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. xviii). Moreover, there is much to be learned from the ordinary records of the first century - the papyri (writings on papyrus), the ostraca (notations on pottery fragments), and other inscriptions (coins, etc.). These shed much light on the New Testament.

Finally, though, it must be recognized that the inspired writers of the NT took words which were common to their age, and employed them in a far loftier sense than any to which the world had ever put them before. To use the description of Nigel Turner, many New Testament words "acquire a deeper sense and a new consecration with the Christian vocabulary" (*Christian Words*, p. x). Take, for instance, the word *charis*, "grace." It is an old Greek term derived from the verb *chairō*, "to rejoice." The Greeks used it for beauty, the "grace" of the physical form, favor, gratitude, etc. Anyone familiar with the New Testament, however, is certainly aware that the divine writers have taken this term and endowed it with a special flavor. It, among other things, denotes God's great love as revealed in his redemptive plan, and that in spite of man's unworthiness. Any who so wills to, can reach out (through obedience to the divine plan) and accept Heaven's grace (cf. Eph. 2: 8,9; 11 Cor. 6:1; Tit. 2:11,12).

In conclusion, we may note that there were providentially directed historical influences, and also divinely inspired guidance, in the formation of the books of the sacred Scriptures. Those who expend the time and energy (and expense in study tools) inquiring into these matters will be greatly rewarded for their diligence.

Wayne Jackson
Christian Courier
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Observe to Whom Spoken

RAYMOND C. KELCY

“God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son . . .” (Heb. 1:1,2).

The passage cited above teaches that God has spoken to others and that he has spoken to us. This being the case, we must in studying any given passage, determine whether it was spoken to us or to others. Not every passage in the Bible was spoken to us.

Passages to Illustrate

God told Noah to build an ark. We do not need to labor the point to show that this command does not apply to us. I have never talked with anyone who thought God wants us to build an ark. God told Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice. Joshua and the Israelites were bidden to march around the city of Jericho thirteen times over a seven day period preparatory to taking the city. The Israelites were given instructions as to when and how much manna they were to pick from the ground. Many instructions are given regarding the various sacrifices (sic) and offerings of the Jewish religion. Illustrations could be multiplied. It is not difficult to get everyone to see that we today are not to offer a son for a burnt offering. All can see that we are not to march around a city as a military tactic. It is quite easy to get everyone to see that we are not to kill animals and offer them to God. These commands were given to others, not to us. When we read these passages and make this application, we are observing to whom the command was spoken.

The Sabbath Command

It is not so easy to get everyone to see that the command to keep the sabbath was not spoken to us of the Christian age. This command is nowhere to be found in the New Testament. God had Moses command the Israelites to keep the sabbath. God declared the sabbath to be a sign between him and the people of Israel (Exodus 31: 12ff.). Furthermore, God told Moses to remind the Israelites that they had been in bondage in Egypt but had been delivered by the Lord, and “therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day” (Deut. 5:12-15). Since the sabbath was a sign between Israel and God, since it was given in view of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and since the command to keep the sabbath is nowhere to be found in the New Testament, we conclude that this is a command not spoken to us.

But someone asks if it isn't true that God changed the sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week. No, God did not make such a change. The law of the sabbath was abrogated along with the rest of the old covenant. God did not give

another day of rest. The first day of the week is a day of worship. There remains a sabbath rest for the people of God but the rest is heaven (Heb. 4:9).

The Holy Spirit Promised

Jesus promised the apostles that after his ascension he would send the Holy Spirit to them. The Spirit, said Jesus, would teach the apostles all things and bring to their remembrance all that he had said to them (John 14:26). Further, the Spirit would show them things to come and would guide them into all truth (John 16:13). The apostles would receive power with the coming of the Spirit to them (Acts 1:8).

The verses quoted above applied only to the apostles. One of the greatest errors in the religious world is the practice of taking these promises to the apostles and applying them indiscriminately to all Christians. We hear men talking about reading the Bible and letting the Holy Spirit interpret its meaning, and they usually refer to one of the above passages. True, the Holy Spirit is promised to all Christians. He abides in the child of God today. But he does not do for the Christian today what Jesus promised the apostles he would do for them. Observing to whom spoken would be a great help in study of these passages.

The Thief on the Cross

Likely all of us have heard someone point out how Jesus saved the thief on the cross. They point out the promise, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise," alleging that the thief was saved without baptism, and then go on to say that we, too, can be saved without being baptized.

It would be difficult to prove whether the thief on the cross was among those baptized by John or by the disciples of Jesus. He may have been; he may not have been. If he had been, it seems that he had reverted to his old ways since baptism. But for all practical purposes, we do not have to settle the question of whether he was baptized or not. Jesus' promise to him was somewhat unique, not a promise at all. The thief lived and died before the Great Commission began, before the New Testament was in effect, before the church was set up, and before the gospel was proclaimed in its fulness. We live in the days of the New Testament, in the time of the kingdom, in a day when the gospel is being proclaimed, when the Great Commission is in force. We are saved by the New Testament, by the gospel, and in the church. The promise made by Jesus to the thief can in no way apply to us. Observe to whom spoken.

Two Answers

On the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, Peter told thousands of believers what to do to be saved. He said, "Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Later in Samaria the same preacher, the apostle

Peter, told one man what to do in order to be forgiven. To Simon he said, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22).

To thousands of sinners the command was to repent and be baptized. To one sinner the command was to repent and pray. The preacher was the same man in both cases, but the instructions given are different. What is the reason for the difference? May some become Christians by repentance and baptism and others by repentance and prayer?

The difficulty is removed when we turn to the second chapter of Acts and observe that the command to repent and be baptized was given to alien sinners, people who had not previously been Christians; then we turn to the eighth chapter of Acts and we see that the command to repent and pray was given to one who had already been baptized. He was being told how to be forgiven as an erring child of God. Alien sinners are not commanded to pray for salvation. Christians are not commanded to be baptized. Yes, God has two laws of pardon one for the alien and one for the erring child. Observing to whom spoken is a very valuable practice in this case.

FIRM FOUNDATION
October 10, 1978

PRETEXTING

by Jack P. Lewis

The old saying that “a prooftext is often a pretext” may be used as a starting point to ask those of us who preach and teach whether we are expounding to our audiences the revelation of God or whether we are hanging our own ideas on convenient Scripture passages. The temptation to pretext is ever present in a community which feels that there must be a Biblical base for all that is done in work and worship. We are not always clear about what falls in the necessary inference category for which no explicit Scripture statement is needed. The result is that we are tempted to try to find proof where none exists.

The exegetical methods of the rabbis were systematized with stateable rules, but in general can be called “hanging mountains by strings.” To give only one example, later codifiers, out of a saying like “You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk” (Ex. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 21:24), arrived at the prohibition of eating milk and meat at the same meal.

The Qumran community found the prophets describing conditions that community had to face. Their exegetical method to some extent reminds one of that of modern interpreters who find cars, airplanes, tire rationing, and Middle Eastern political problems in Scripture. The more resourceful the exegete, the more clever combinations he can come up with to impress his audience. None of it is what the Biblical writers had in mind when God spoke through them.

The early Church Fathers had the Messianic interpretation as the magical key with which to unlock all Old Testament passages. Amos’s statement “in that day the sun will go down at noon” was a prediction of the darkness at the crucifixion [Irenaeus, *Haeresies* 4.33.12 (ANF I. 310)]. “The lord hath spoken in Zion” predicted Jesus’ appearance in Judea [Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.33.11 (ANF I. 500)]. In that and every age since, the allegorical interpretation of Scripture has been a means by which men claimed a Scripture base for ideas they had otherwise accepted. Augustine expounded the parable of the Samaritan as giving a picture of human history. According to him, mankind started down the road of life but fell into sin which beat him and left him helpless in the ditch. The Law of Moses came and also passed him by. Finally the good Samaritan, Jesus, bound up his wounds and brought him into the inn of safety – the church. While the basic outline of Augustine’s case is true, the parable of the Samaritan does not teach it when legitimately exegeted. Augustine hung his ideas on the parable, he did not derive them from it.

A speaker, shortly back, urging the need of congregations to follow the leadership of the elders, came up with the clever turn on Judg. 5:1: “When the elders lead and the people follow, we will praise the Lord.” The situation he described is to be desired; but I wanted to ask him if he meant to leave the impression that he was giving a legitimate

exegesis of his proof passage or if he meant it as an example of his cleverness? If one has to twist a passage to support the truth he is expounding, would it not be better to omit the passage and just to expound the idea on its own merits?

An informed speaker, wishing to expound the idea that there is something mysterious about the appeal that wickedness has in the lives of a modern people, took as his proof text 2 Thess. 2:6 – “the mystery of iniquity.” Anyone can see that there are aspects of wrong doing that are not to be explained. One may have the truth and then not do it; one may know the consequences of the life of sin but live it anyway. Who can explain it? A doctor spoke to us on the dangers of drug abuse; but doctors who know what drugs will do are often offenders in the abuse. Knowing the right and the wrong does not give one the will to choose the right and to reject the wrong. It is a puzzle to all of us – but that is an entirely different ball game from what Paul was expounding in 2 Thess. 2. If one has a valid idea, is a pretext necessary?

A speaker, wanting to expound his concept of the providence of God, insisted that God put base men in governmental positions and then out of their wickedness accomplished his purpose. He insisted that Hitler was a base man whom God put over the Germans. Stalin was a base man put over the Russians. The speaker failed to observe that he had misunderstood his Bible and had fallen into the trap laid by the change in meaning of English words. “Base” in 1611 meant “humble” or “lowly;” and Dan. 4:17, 25, 32; 5:21 say that God puts “lowly men” on the throne – not “base men” in the sense meant by the epithet “Mean Joe Green.” The text chosen had become only a pretext.

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PRETEXTING II

by Jack P Lewis

Almost two thousand years of Christian history and of the various ways the minds of men have turned in those years attest the complexity of the task of understanding the Word of God. As a general rule of thumb one can say that when one asks a passage a question that the writer was not intending to answer, he is likely to persuade himself that the passage teaches what he has already accepted before he came to it. One man comes to Matthew 10 and asks how Jesus sent out his disciples. He gets the answer that they went out in poverty two by two. Another man asks that passage how the church should be organized for its mission work and concludes that going out in poverty two by two is the divine plan. In my opinion, one of these men was asking the question the writer was answering; the other was not.

One man asks Romans 13 what the role of the government in God's system is and finds that it is a servant of God for good. Another man asks the passage what his role in the government should be – a question Paul was not discussing. Is it any wonder that the two cannot reach a meeting of minds?

Another rule of thumb worth noting is that an interpretation that can only be supported by a turn of phrase peculiar to one English translation has a good chance of being a mere pretext. This is all the more true when it rests on italicized words like "*unknown tongue*" (1 Cor. 14), "*unto him*" (Jn. 3:36), and "*spiritual words*" (1 Cor. 2:13).

Clever turns have a certain appeal to men's minds. We respond to them, "I never saw that in that passage before." One of the reasons we have not seen it there may be that it was never there to start with. It is a much more laborous task to fascinate men with sound exposition of God's Word; but perhaps the challenge the Lord gave Jeremiah should be contemplated seriously by us all:

"If you utter what is precious and not what is worthless, you shall be as my mouth." (Jer. 15:19)

Bulletin
Harding Graduate School of Religion

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE PROPHECY

by Wayne Jackson

INTRODUCTION

The study of prophecy is one of the truly challenging, yet rewarding, areas of biblical investigation. It is also a theme that is grossly abused. In this article, we propose to examine some of the principles governing Bible prophecy which will enable the devout student of the Scriptures to have a better grasp of this important topic.

An examination of the lexical literature reveals that scholars are undecided as to the etymology of the term "prophet." Some think that the noun is from an Arabic term meaning "spokesman" (G.A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Harper, New York, 1928, p 10), whereas others have contended that the root is a Hebrew form which signifies a "bubbling up," as when water issues from a hidden fountain (Robert Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, n.d., p 239). This would suggest the idea of the inspiration behind the prophet. It is now more commonly believed, however, that the word may be of Akkadian origin and that it may denote "to be called" (Unger & White, *Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee, 1980, p 310).

Perhaps the best way to determine the meaning of the term is to examine the manner in which the Bible employs it. The classic passage which sets forth the role of the prophet is Exodus 7:1,2. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, See, I have made thee as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh..." A prophet was simply a spokesman for God. The prophet was also called a "seer." Note how the terms "prophet" and "seer" are interchanged in 1 Samuel 9:9: "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, Come, and let us go to the seer, for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer." Some scholars suggest that the term "prophet" stressed the objective or active work of God's spokesman, whereas "seer" underscored the subjective method of receiving divine revelation, i.e., by "seeing" (Hobart Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*, Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1968, p 40).

A prophet was also designated as a "man of God" (II Kings 4:9), a "servant of the Lord" (Ezekiel 38:17), and a "messenger of Jehovah" (Malachi 3:1).

There are a number of truths which need to be appreciated if one is to understand the function of prophecy in biblical literature. Let us consider the following points.

THE PANORAMA OF PROPHECY

In discussing prophecy, one needs to make a clear distinction between “foretelling” and “forthtelling.” Many assume, and erroneously so, that all prophecy is foretelling, i.e., predictive in its nature. However, prophecy also concerns the revelation of events which occurred in the past; it may deal with present circumstances (i.e., contemporary with the prophet), or it can look forward to the future.

For example, Moses was a prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15), yet when he recorded the creation activity of Genesis 1, he was giving a divinely inspired account of what transpired during the first week of earth’s history. Certainly he was not present to witness those events. His prophetic testimony thus looked into the past. On the other hand, when the prophet addressed certain situations during Israel’s forty-year sojourn in the wilderness, he was dealing with current conditions in the lives of his fellow-Hebrews. Amos was a prophet who wrote many things that “he saw concerning Israel” (Amos 1:1).

Finally, the prophet’s vision was sometimes directed into the future where he foretold details regarding certain people and events. In passing, we might simply mention several categories relating to predictive prophecy. For instance, there are prophecies that relate to individuals. The mission of Josiah was foretold more than three centuries before his birth (cf. I Kings 13; II Kings 23). The role of the Persian king, Cyrus, in releasing the Hebrews from Babylonian captivity, was described more than a century and a half before his reign (cf. Isaiah 44:28; 45:1ff). The fate of cities and nations is prophetically announced in various scriptures. Daniel’s descriptions of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman empires are nothing short of miraculous (cf. Daniel, chapters 2,7,8). Too, there is the matter of Messianic prophecy. Of the more than 800 prophecies in the old Testament, at least 300 (plus) center on the coming Christ. [For a discussion of some of these, see the author’s book, *Fortify Your Faith*, Apologetics Press, Montgomery, Alabama, 1974, pp 66-69.]

The design of predictive prophecy was to establish the credibility of God and, ultimately, the authenticity of His sacred Scriptures. In this article, we will be dealing principally with the predictive nature of biblical prophecy.

GENUINE PREDICTIVE PROPHECY - THE TEST

Predictive prophecy may be defined as “a miracle of knowledge, a declaration, or description, or representation of something future, beyond the power of human sagacity to discern or to calculate, and it is the highest evidence that can be given of supernatural communion with Deity, and of the truth of a revelation from God” (T. H. Home, *Critical Introduction*, Whetham & Son, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1841, Vol. 1, p 119).

There are a number of criteria for determining the genuineness of prophecy – as opposed to speculative prediction. Prophecy must involve: (1) Proper timing, i.e., the

oracle must significantly precede the person or event described. It must be beyond the realm of reasonable calculation so as to preclude the possibility of an “educated guess.”

When one “prophesies” that it will rain tomorrow – with a weather front moving in – it hardly evidences divine intervention. (2) The prophecy must deal in specific details, not vague generalities which are capable of being manipulated to fit various circumstances. To predict that “someone” will do “something” at “sometime” is not terribly impressive. (3) Exact fulfillment, not merely a high degree of probability, must characterize the prediction. A prophet who is 80% accurate is no prophet at all!

In this connection we may observe that the prophets of the Bible, when uttering their declarations, spoke with absolute verbal form known as the perfect state, which suggests completed action. One scholar calls it the “perfect of confidence” (J. W. Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, Broadman, Nashville, Tennessee, 1951, p 17). It speaks of the event as if it had already occurred (though still in the future), thus stressing the certainty of its fulfillment. Isaiah could therefore say, “For unto us a child is born...” (9:6), even though the incarnation of Christ was still several centuries away. Prophecy was never couched with an uncertain “maybe,” or an ambiguous “perhaps.”

The divine standard for a true prophet is stated by Moses, “When a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken...” (Deuteronomy 18:22). In Isaiah 41:23, a challenge is issued to the false gods of paganism: “Declare the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods” Clearly, predictive prophecy is a very important element of the sacred Scriptures, and stands in bold relief to the counterfeit prophecies of today’s world.

PROPHECY - CONDITIONAL OR ABSOLUTE?

While we have noted that the prophets spoke with confidence, it is also important to observe that some prophecies were obviously conditional. This is especially true with reference to predictions that contained warnings of impending judgment upon wicked peoples. The doom prophetically announced was dependent upon whether or not that nation would turn from its evil. For example, when Jonah went to the city of Nineveh, he announced: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (3:4). However, that warning was obviously conditional as evidenced by the fact that when the people of Nineveh repented, and “God saw their works that they turned from their evil way, he withdrew the judgment and destroyed them not” (cf. 3:10). Similarly, when God promised the Israelites that the land of Canaan would be their inheritance, that pledge was contingent upon their fidelity to Jehovah. Note the testimony of Joshua 23:16. “When ye transgress the covenant of Jehovah your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow down yourselves to them; then will the anger of Jehovah be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.” The Hebrew nation did apostatize and lost its special privileges with God (cf. Matthew 21:43). Those religionists and politicians today who

argue for Israel's intrinsic right to Palestinian territory overlook this very critical element of Bible prophecy.

On the other hand, some prophecies were absolute. Predictions concerning the coming Messiah were not predicated upon human response; they were fulfilled with amazing accuracy. The Messiah was to be: the seed of woman (Genesis 3:15), the offspring of Abraham (Genesis 22:18), from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10), born to a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), in the town of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), etc. There was nothing conditional about these statements.

THE LANGUAGE (sic) OF PROPHECY

If one is to accurately interpret Bible prophecy, he must surely recognize that language of predictive literature can be either literal or figurative. But how does one determine the nature of prophetic terminology? In some instances common sense will dictate the character of the prophecy. If a literal view implies an impossibility or an absurdity, it is obviously figurative. The context will frequently shed light on the situation. In many instances, the issue will be settled by how the New Testament writers (who quote or cite the prophecies) viewed the matter. When Old Testament writers declared that Christ would be the offspring of Abraham (Genesis 22:18), or that He would be raised from the dead (Psalm 16:10), they made straightforward predictions that were fulfilled literally.

However, when Isaiah announced that John the Baptizer would "make level in the desert a highway for our God" (40:3), he was not suggesting that John would engineer a freeway project in the Palestinian wilderness; rather, the language was a symbolic description of John's preparatory work preliminary to the ministry of Jesus (cf. Matthew 3:1 ff). When the prophet foretold that "the lion shall eat straw like an ox" (Isaiah 11:7), he was not suggesting that Jehovah intended to redesign the dental/digestive processes of the animal kingdom in the alleged "millennial" age. He was figuratively suggesting the peaceful atmosphere that would be characteristic of the church of Christ as the various nations flowed into it (cf. Isaiah 11:10; Romans 15:12). Thus, it is vital that the nature of the language in biblical prophecy be correctly identified.

THE PROPHET AND HIS GENERATION

Liberal critics of the Bible deny the reality of predictive prophecy (as well as other miraculous elements in the Scriptures). Frequently they ask: "What relevance would the prophecy have had to an antique generation which would never see it fulfilled?" It is for this reason that they desperately seek some application which would be contemporary with the prophet himself (as, for example, postulating a young maiden of Isaiah's day who would conform to his virgin-birth prophecy – 7:14). The fact is, some prophecies had no immediate relevance to their contemporary generation. Those ancients would not fully understand the predictions – except dimly through the eye of faith. Abraham, through prophecy, was promised that his seed would receive Canaan for an

inheritance, though he himself never saw the fulfillment (cf. Genesis 15:12ff; Hebrews 11:8-16).

Not even the prophets understood the meaning of many of their inspired utterances. Peter discusses this very matter in I Peter 1:10-12. God's redemptive plan, as previewed by the Old Testament messengers, was a "mystery," which can now be perceived only by means of New Testament revelation (Ephesians 3:1-13).

PARTIAL AND COMPLETE FULFILLMENT

Those with loose theological leanings are sometimes prone to say that certain prophecies of the Old Testament had a rather immediate fulfillment, but that the New Testament writers sometimes lift these passages from their original contexts and give them meanings foreign to their original design. One writer, for example, has asserted" (sic) "Paul paraphrased passages without regard to their original context, or meaning It is as though the words of scripture convey a convincing power within themselves apart from their original context" (Richard Batey, *Letter of Paul to the Romans*, Sweet Publishing Co., Austin, Texas, 1969, p 134. Unfortunately, Coffman agrees with such a statement; cf. Burton Coffman, *The Minor Prophets*, Firm Foundation, Austin, Texas, 1983, Vol. IV, p 143).

There is an old saying: "A text out of context is a mere pretext." Why charge the apostles with that which we do not tolerate in contemporary preachers?

In the first place, whenever possible, one should attempt to ascertain precisely how the New Testament writer is appealing to the Old Testament passage. But that is not always easy. Is the New Testament writer merely borrowing language from an Old Testament text? Is he employing an ancient scripture illustratively? Or does he mean to affirm that a New Testament incident is actually a "fulfillment" of prophecy? We must remember that ancient writers did not use the same literary devices employed today. Quotation marks, colons, ellipsis marks, brackets, etc., were unknown to them. In view of this, we may not always know just how they were utilizing the language of the former scriptures. Since we are largely ignorant of their procedures, criticism of them is scarcely appropriate (cf Rene Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Scriptures*, Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1969, Chapter 10).

Second, is it not possible that the omniscient Holy Spirit, who guided both the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament inspired writers, could have directed certain prophecies to ancient Israel, but also could have known that a future event would ultimately fulfill the meaning of his words? What is wrong with such a view? Absolutely nothing. It surely is possible and preserves the integrity of the New Testament writers. Let me suggest an example to illustrate this point.

David declared: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm 41:9). During the last supper, Christ

quoted from this passage as follows: "He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me" (John 13:18), applying it to the treachery of Judas, and declaring that such fulfilled the statement in David's psalm. The Lord, however, altered the quotation. He omitted, "whom I trusted," from the original source, the reason being, He never trusted Judas! Jesus knew from the beginning who would betray Him (John 6:64). It is clear, therefore, that Psalm 41:9 had an immediate application to one of David's enemies, but the remote and complete "fulfillment" came in Judas' betrayal of the Son of God. I personally do not believe that it is acceptable to suggest that prophecies have a "double fulfillment." That is a meaningless expression. If a prophecy is filled full once, it can hardly be filled "fuller" later! It would be far better to speak of some texts which have an "immediate application" or "partial fulfillment," and then a more "remote fulfillment."

Still again, we may note that, consistent with His own purposes, the Holy Spirit may give a prophecy multiple applications. Consider the case of Psalm 2:7, where Jehovah said: "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." In the New Testament, this statement is applied to Christ in several different senses. First, it is employed to demonstrate that Christ is superior to the angels, for the Father never addressed any angelic being, saying, "You are my son, this day have I begotten thee" (cf. Hebrews 1:5). [This is a truth which the "Jehovah's Witnesses" (who claim that Christ was a created angel) would do well to learn.] Second, Psalm 2:7 is applied by Paul to Christ's resurrection from the dead. The apostle argues that "God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my son..." (Acts 13:33). It was, of course, by His resurrection that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power (Romans 1:4). Thus, it was appropriate that the psalm be applied to the Lord's resurrection. Third, the writer of Hebrews uses the psalm to prove that Christ glorified not Himself to be made our high priest; rather, such a role was due to His relationship as the Son of God (Hebrews 5:5). Again, we absolutely must stress that the Holy Spirit, who inspired the original psalm, surely had all of these various thoughts in mind as is evidenced by His guidance of the New Testament writers as they employed His language.

TYPOLOGICAL PROPHECY

The Old Testament contains numerous examples of a device called a "type." A type may be defined as "[a] figure or ensample of something future and more or less prophetic, called the 'Antitype'" (E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech used in the Bible*, Baker, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1968, p 768). A simpler description of a type might be "a pictorial prophecy." For example, Melchizedek, who was both king of Salem and a priest of God, prophetically symbolized the Son of God who rules as our King and serves as our high priest (cf. Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:5-10; 6:20; 7:1-17). Jonah's three-day confinement in the belly of the great fish was a pictorial prediction of Christ's three-day entombment (cf. Matthew 12:40), and His resurrection from the dead. Typology is an important form of prophecy.

The foregoing principles by no means exhaust the topic of Bible prophecy. They are, however, illustrative of the kinds of factors that need to be considered in pursuing this sort of study. Again, let us remind ourselves that prophecy is one of the crucial proofs for establishing the credibility of the Holy Scriptures. Let us therefore study this area of biblical information carefully and employ it properly in our defense of the faith.

Reason & Revelation, July, 1988, pp.27-30

The Seat of Authority in Language

Steven M. Loyd & Don Ruhl

In the August 21, 1980 issue of the *Gospel Advocate*, brother Hugo McCord made this observation: "Greek grammar (sic) is valuable, but this writer is suspicious of any doctrine dependent wholly upon Greek grammar. Such leaves most of the human race in an impossible situation." Many in our brotherhood and in the denominational world have done this very thing: built doctrinal houses "dependent wholly upon Greek grammar."

Examples of Doctrinal Houses Built Wholly Upon Greek Grammar

In the current divorce and remarriage controversy some are seeking diligently for a "punctiliar present" (meaning point action rather than a continuing process) for "committeth adultery" (Matt. 19-9). "Committeth adultery" is translated from a Greek word that is in the present tense. (And whether there is such a thing as a "punctiliar present" or not is highly questionable.) Thus, when a person divorces and remarries unscripturally, he is committing adultery and continues to do so as long as he remains in that union. But some, in order to avoid the necessity of dissolving unscriptural marriages, seek after additional meaning in the Greek tense which is just not there. They are searching after a meaning that would allow them to define *adultery* as the legal procedure which involves putting one spouse away and marrying another, instead of the relationship that is formed.

The "Jehovah's Witnesses" commonly apply a single definition of a word to every occurrence of that word, paying no attention to context. For example, the Greek word *pneuma* can be defined as "the wind, or the air in motion."¹ Such is the meaning in John 3:8, "The wind (to *pneuma*) bloweth where it will..." But then those in the Watchtower Society assume that every occurrence of *pneuma* ought to be understood as wind or active force.² Such use of the Greek is an abuse and a violation of common sense. With few exceptions, all words have multiple meanings, whether it be Greek or English. Check your dictionary on the word "of." And how should "bank" be understood in the following sentence: "Yesterday I sat on a bank and fished"? Would the same meaning for "bank" be used in describing an airplane going into a bank? Obviously, a Greek lexicon can be helpful, but it is not the final authority, the *context* is.

Generally, false teachers and denominationalists pitch their doctrinal tents on a faulty use of Greek. Some search day and night hoping to discover that *eis* in Acts 2:38 means "because of" rather than "unto." Others hope that the original language will tell them that Peter (whose name means a rock or pebble) is the rock upon which Jesus promised to build his church (Matt. 16:18). There are those who are willing to change the day of worship from the Lord's day to the Sabbath because they believe they have discovered some previously undiscovered truth in the Greek of Acts 20:7. And some,

on the basis of Hebrew verbs, are questioning the creation of the universe from nothing. Does the *ex nihilo* creation of the universe depend on the inherent meaning of the Hebrew words for “make” and “create”? Such would demand more from these words than was orientally (sic) intended. Many more examples could be given of doctrinal tents being pitched solely on Greek grammar or lexicons. And how is a non-Greek student supposed to investigate these matters?

How Word Definitions Are Determined

God expects us to use our common sense (Isa. 1:18). When there is more than one definition of a word, proper reasoning indicates that the *context* determines which should be used. Arguing on similar matters, brother Wayne Jackson notes:

Sound scholarship does not contend that *ex nihilo* creation is inherent in these Hebrew verbs. What we do contend is this: *contextual* considerations In Genesis One and in other biblical references, argue for an *ex nihilo* creation!³

In a similar vein the writer asks: “Is there any rule of Greek grammar which would mandate that the baptism of Acts 2:38 is to be in ‘water’? No.”⁴ No doubt a Greek grammar could be quoted wherein the author gives Acts 2:38 as an *example* of water baptism. Then the one using the quotation would proudly claim that Doctor so-and-so says Acts 2:38 is water baptism. Of course, he would be correct, not because the grammar said so, but because context would demand such.

The Use of Greek Lexicons and Grammars

Greek lexicons and grammars are simply the works of men reflecting their analysis of the actual use of a language by the natives who spoke it. These books are not the final authority, a fact which they themselves recognize.

Consider the following quotations from men who are recognized as “authorities” on the Greek of the New Testament:

William Chamberlain: “The student must remember at all times that the function of a grammar is not to determine the laws of language, but explain them. That is, language first developed as a means of expressing the thoughts of mankind, and then grammars were written to explain the laws and principles of language as it functions to express ideas. In one’s native tongue, one senses the meaning of these constructions almost subconsciously, but in a strange tongue one must, by diligent toil, acquire the viewpoint of the language and follow its idioms closely to get its meaning.”⁵

H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey: “The idea that syntax is a formation of rules for correct speech is an erroneous notion. Syntax is the process of analyzing and classifying the modes of expression presented by a language. It does not govern language; it deals with the facts of language as they are found. Hence we are not to study the

history of and aspects of linguistic phenomena as they appear in the Greek text of the New Testament. The scientific grammar is at bottom a grammatical history, and not a linguistic law-book. The seat of authority in language is therefore not in the books about language, but the people who use the language.' (R.31) "⁶

A. T. Robertson: "The office of the grammarian is therefore to register and to interpret facts, not to manufacture or warp the facts to a theory. The novice in the study of syntax has difficulty in ridding his mind of the idea that grammars and dictionaries regulate a language. They merely interpret a language more or less correctly as the case may be. The seat of authority in language is not the books about language, but the people who speak and write it. The usage of the best educated writers determines the literary style of a language, while the whole people determine the vernacular. Change in language cannot be stopped save by death of the language."⁷

Troy Cummings: "*Final* authority in determining the exact meaning of the language is *not* found in some Greek grammar book, but rather in thorough inductive study of how the *natives* actually used the language, as seen in multiplied examples where the context of dozens or hundreds of statements clearly reveal the exact shades of meaningsNo grammar book can overthrow how the native Greek-speaking people used their own language....Yet quite a few brethren today are building their doctrinal houses regarding marriage-divorce-remarriage on the shifting sands of a few alleged exceptions to the overwhelming main-stream thrust of the present tense throughout Greek literature!"⁸

John Broadus made this insightful statement about grammars: "The great works of Greek poetry and history were written before any treatises on grammar existed."⁹ Indeed languages of all kinds had been in use long before someone sat down and started to analyze what they were speaking. All the generations of history previous to the advent of grammars have learned their native language even as young children do today: by hearing their parents speak and repeating it after them. This principle is also recognized in other languages besides New Testament Greek. "...the rules may be reformulated but not changed (unless the usage changes) because the rules must reflect the usage of the society rather than the predilections of the grammarians."¹⁰

Were doctors the ones to create the human body and determine how it should operate? Or do they merely analyze the body and inform us as to how it operates based upon their observations? How many meteorologists ("weathermen") had a hand in forming the weather patterns of the world? Or do they merely analyze it for us and predict the weather to the best of their ability? Did Matthew carry a copy of Davis' *Beginner's Grammar of the Greek New Testament*? Was Luke aware of the Blass-Debrunner work, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*? Remember, even as the chicken came before the egg (Gen. 1:21, 22), so languages came before grammars and lexicons (Gen 11:1-9).

Are grammars and lexicons and other tools of the original language worthless? Do we find physicians useless because God did not consult them when he created man? No. Similarly a study of the original languages of the Bible can be very useful. Such a study adds more flavor and color to the teachings of the Scriptures. Moreover, it enables one to do the serious work of translating. And if the non-Greek and non-Hebrew student will diligently apply himself to the study of a reliable English translation, he will gain substantial knowledge of God's will for man.

Brother McCord concluded his aforementioned article with these words, "Those gospel preachers are presumptive and daring who risk the souls of their hearers on such a tenuous interpretation allegedly hidden in the Greek." Amen!

Endnotes

¹George R. Berry, *Berry's Greek-English New Testament Lexicon with Synonyms* (Baker, 1980), p. 81.

²*You Can Live Forever In Paradise on Earth* (Watchtower, 1982), p. 37.

³Wayne Jackson, "That 'Loaded' Questionnaire," (sic) *Reason and Revelation* (February, 1984), p. 9.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵William Chamberlain, *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Baker, 1979), p. 3.

⁶H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (MacMillan, 1955), pp. 59,60.

⁷A. T. Robertson, *A Short Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Doubleday, 1929), p. 4.

⁸Troy Cummings, *The Meaning of the Greek Aorist Tense* (privately published, 1979), pp. 1,3,9.

⁹John Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (George H. Doran, 1926), pp. 348,349.

¹⁰Martin Walsh and Anne Walsh, *Plain English Handbook* (McCormick-Mathers, 1972), p. 186.

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THE STUDY OF BIBLICAL WORDS

The Bible is a book of words. It is said that there are 8,674 words in the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament and 5,624 Greek words in the New Testament. Since the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God (II Tim. 3:16), and by its words spiritual life is obtained (Mt. 4: 4; Jas. 1: 21) , it is obvious that no person who is really interested in the eternal welfare of his soul can afford to neglect a careful study of the words of sacred Scripture.

A study of Bible words can, and should, be approached from several angles. In this article, we will consider three important concepts: (1) word etymology; (2) grammatical form; and, (3) context.

Etymology - Etymology is that branch of “word science” that has to do with the origin and development of words. The investigation of a word’s root form can be very helpful in obtaining a full and rich meaning of certain passages.

The Hebrew words *kopher*, *keppurim*, and *kapporeth*, which are rendered by the English terms “ransom,” “redemptions” or “atonements,” and “Mercy-seat,” are all derived from the root *kaphar*, which means “to cover.” The words thus suggest that redemption or atonement is accomplished by a “covering” of sin. The meaning is this: when one, through obedient faith, responds to the will of God, his sins are covered by the blood of Christ. In the O. T., of course, the blood of animal sacrifices typified the redemptive death of the Lord.

In the N. T., numerous Greek words have great etymological significance. The word for “church” (*ekklesia*) derives from the roots *ek*, a preposition meaning “out of,” and *klesis*, “a calling,” hence, a calling out of. It thus denotes a spiritual body of people who have been called by the gospel (cf. II Thes. 2:14) out of the world (cf. John 15:19; Col. 1:13) into a holy relationship with Jehovah (II Cor. 6: 17,18). Or consider the word translated “bishop” in our English Bibles. It is from the Greek term *episkopos*; the root forms are *epi* (upon) and *skopeo* (to look or watch; cf. our word “scope”). The New Testament term thus denotes a certain class of men (also called “elders” - cf. Acts 20:17, 28) , possessing biblical qualifications (I Tim. 3: 1ff; Tit. 1: 5ff) , who are appointed to oversee or supervise the business of local churches of Christ. For the average church member, a good book like W. E. Vine’s *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, can be a valuable tool in determining the original significance of N. T. words.

It must be recognized, however, that frequently words, as they travel across several generations of time, can lose their etymological meaning and take on a new emphasis. The careful Bible student must therefore ask: does this word retain its etymological meaning, or has it adopted a “derivative” sense? In other words, what did the word

actually mean at the time it was employed by the biblical writer? A failure to recognize this fact has led to some rather serious doctrinal errors.

Originally, the word *kolazo* meant to “prune” or to “cut off,” but by the time of the N.T. age, the term conveyed the idea of “punish” (cf. Acts 4:21; II Pet. 2: 9) . It is, therefore, a serious blunder to forsake this New Testament *derivative* meaning and revert to an earlier usage. This is precisely what the Watchtower Witnesses have done in the case of Matthew 25:46. There, the Lord speaks of wicked people entering eternal “punishment” (*kolasis*), whereas the Watchtower translation of the Bible, in attempting to avoid the idea of punishment (which implies consciousness), renders the term everlasting “cutting-off,” thus hinting at the total extinction of the unrighteous.

Similarly, even though the word *psallo* denoted “plucking” in ancient times, such as the plucking of the strings of a harp, in the New Testament era the word had simply come to mean “sing” (cf. Eph. 5:19) . Note the testimony of W. E. Vine, a denominational scholar, in this respect: “The word *psallo* originally meant to play a stringed instrument with the fingers, or to sing with the accompaniment of a harp. Later, however, and in the New Testament, it came to signify simply to praise without the accompaniment of an instrument” (*1 Corinthians - Local Church Problems*, Zondervan, 1951, p. 191).

Grammatical Mode - A second factor that must be considered in the study of words is that of syntax. In studying syntax, one is dealing with the grammatical principles of the language in which the document was originally written. In this connection, it is important to remember that the function of grammar is not to determine the laws of language; rather, it merely explains how that language was employed by the people who originally used it.

In the study of syntax (the relationship of words to one another), one will ask, for instance: is the term with which I am dealing a *noun* or is it a *verb*? If it is a noun, is it singular or plural? Of what gender is it? In what case is it found? If one is analyzing a verb, he will want to know: what is the voice of this verb? The tense? The mood? All of these factors contribute to the understanding of a term in the sentence in which it is found. Let us note some examples.

In John 1:12, 13, the apostle affirms that as many as received Christ, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them who continue to believe on his name. Then, describing these children of God negatively, he declares: “who were born, not of blood...” The word “blood” here is actually a plural term (cf. ASVfn), and the thought suggested is this: whereas one was constituted a child of God under the Mosaic covenant by virtue of his Hebrew parentage (cf. Paul’s phrase “a Hebrew of Hebrews” - Phil. 3:5), it was not to be so under the new system. Under the Christian regime that family relationship is to be accomplished by means of a new birth (John 3:3-5) .

Due to their misunderstanding of Ephesians 2:8, some have contended that one need not exercise personal faith in God in order to be saved; rather, faith, it is claimed, is a “gift” that one passively receives. It is helpful to note, however, that “faith” in this passage is a *feminine* gender form, whereas, “gift” is a *neuter* form. The “gift” referred to in the verse, therefore, is not faith. The gift is salvation, implied in the context by the verbal form “saved.”

Or consider the fact that some argue, on the basis of Galatians 3:26, that salvation is solely a matter of faith in Christ, and that without baptism. The claim is carelessly made: “Paul says that we are children of God by faith in Christ, and that settles it.” The truth is, though, the apostle is not discussing “faith in Christ,” as though “Christ” were the object of one’s faith. Had such been the case, the name “Christ” would have been in the *accusative* case, but it is not. An examination of the Greek text reveals that “Christ” is in the *dative* case, the case of location here. The apostle is thus discussing the realm or sphere where-in salvation takes place; it is “in Christ.” He then proceeds to inform us as to how one enters that relationship. “For [an explanatory term] as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put Christ on” (vs. 27) .

Or consider some of the grammatical truths connected with verbs. In New Testament Greek, as in English, verbs have tense, but the tense has more to do with the type of action under consideration than with time (time being secondary). Has the action in view been completed? Is it ongoing, etc.? An understanding of these matters can add much richness to one’s study of the sacred text.

When Peter spoke of his impending death (II Pet. 1:14), he alluded to the fact that the Lord had “signified” such unto him. The aorist tense form lets us know that the apostle is specifically thinking of that event in John 21:18,19, wherein Christ had signified by what manner of death Peter should glorify God. When Matthew informs us that Herod “inquired” of the chief priests and scribes as to where Christ would be born (Mt. 2: 4) , the imperfect tense form of the verb reveals that the king had *repeatedly* made such inquiries in his frantic efforts to locate baby Jesus! Paul expressed surprise that his Galatian brethren were so soon “removed” (KJV) from their holy calling (Gal. 1:6); actually, though, the Greek verb is in the present tense, indicating their apostasy was currently *in progress*! The present tense form “committeth adultery” in Matthew 19:9 clearly shows that the unscripturally divorced and remarried person is living a life of adulterous intercourse. A consideration of these tense forms is vitally important in sound biblical exegesis.

Verbs also have *voice*, which indicates how the action is related to the subject of the sentence. The active voice represents the subject as acting, the passive voice represents the subject as being acted upon, and the middle voice suggests the subject is acting in some way in reference to itself. Note some examples.

The King James Version describes Christ as “separate from sinners” in Hebrews 7:26. The Greek verb is actually a *passive* form (cf. ASV), and thus, in this context

does not stress the purity of Jesus; rather, it is an allusion to his ascension, at which point he was “made higher than the heavens.” When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, (Acts 18:5) Luke says that Paul, “was pressed in spirit” (KJV) and so testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. The better Greek text indicates, however, that the apostle “held himself to the word” (middle voice), that is, on this occasion he refrained from his usual trade of tent-making and confined himself solely to preaching the gospel.

It is quite important to give careful attention to the grammatical details of the Bible.

Context - The context of a biblical passage is the most important aspect of all, for the *special use* of a word, in a given context, can overrule both etymology and grammar.

For example, in Matthew 3:10 Jesus declared that “every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit *is cut down* [present tense], and cast into the fire.” Though the present tense form is used, the context shows that the Judgment Day is in view, and the present is figuratively employed to stress the *certainty* of that future event. Similarly, Jesus told his disciples, “The Son of man *is delivered* [present tense, though affirming a future event] into the hands of men...” (Mk. 9:31). And so, context (special emphasis, symbolism, etc.) can modify grammar on certain occasions.

Too, the same word can have widely different meanings in different contexts. The Greek word *presbuteros* is translated “elder.” The term is sometimes used merely of those advanced in age (Acts 2: 17). It is employed of Israel’s ancestors (Heb. 11:2); of members of the Jewish Sanhedrin (Mt. 16:21); of heavenly beings around the throne of God (Rev. 4: 4) ; or, of leaders in the church (I Tim. 5:17). Clearly context must determine the usage of this term in these respective passages.

We have spoken of the word *ekklesia*, usually rendered “church” in our common versions. Most often it denotes that body of the Lord’s “called out” people whether in an assembled (I Cor. 14:34), local (I Cor. 1:2), geographical (Acts 9:31), or universal (Mt. 16:18) sense. It can, however, be used of the congregation of Israel in the wilderness (Acts 7:38), or an unruly mob (Acts 19:32), or of a town council (Acts 19:39).

Consider the term *peirazo*, which can mean either “to tempt” or “to try, or test.” James states that God “tempts no man” (1:13). How does one harmonize this statement with the biblical affirmation elsewhere that the Lord “tried” [from *peirazo*] Abraham (cf. Heb. 11:17; Gen. 22:1)? The harmonization is obviously made on the basis of contextual difference. James uses the term “tempt” in the sense of soliciting to do evil, attempting to ensnare, while the writer of Hebrews employs the same term, but with a different meaning. Jehovah was simply “proving” or “testing” the father of the Hebrew nation. There is no conflict when the context is respected. The point about this is, the truth does not turn merely upon the original word itself. There is more to correct interpretation than that.

The study of Bible words is a truly thrilling endeavor, but it requires skill, some good language tools, common sense, patience, and a desire to be accurate with God's sacred Word.

Wayne Jackson
CHRISTIAN COURIER
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STUDY THE CONTEXT

Raymond C. Kelcy

Another rule of Bible study that is widely recognized as a necessity is that which says a passage must be understood in the light of its context. Context has reference to the setting. The context may be only a few verses or it may be an entire chapter, several chapters, or even an entire book.

Eating Jesus' Flesh

A statement of Jesus that has often been misunderstood is this: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves" (John 6:53). In the verse following Jesus says: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (verse 54). In the immediate context Jesus speaks of himself as "the bread which came down out of heaven," and says, "he that eateth this bread shall live for ever" (John 6:58; cf. vss. 48, 50). It can be seen that to eat of the bread from heaven is tantamount to believing in Jesus when it is observed that Jesus declares in verse 47 that "he that believeth hath eternal life." Jesus thus thinks of scriptural life as resulting from a continual appropriation of him as spiritual food. An obedient faith is the means by which we appropriate Christ for our souls. He thus becomes the food and the drink which satisfies the hunger and thirst of the soul of man. The passage has no reference to a literal eating of literal flesh or a drinking of literal blood as has often been alleged. In fact, the passage has no immediate application to the Lord's Supper, even in a spiritual sense. A study of the context yields a very satisfactory meaning to this passage.

Women to Keep Silent

Paul's admonition for the women to "keep silence in the churches" and his affirmation that "it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church" are clarified by giving attention to the context (1 Cor. 14:34). Paul does not use the word "church" in the universal sense; nor does he use it in a geographical sense. He uses it in the sense of the assembly as other verses in the chapter clearly indicate (verses 19, 23, 28). The silence enjoined by Paul can thus be seen to apply to the general assembly and not to classes and other such meetings.

Salvation by Faith

The doctrine of justification by faith only comes from a failure to understand the comprehensive use of the word "faith." Paul told the Philippian jailer that if he would believe he would be saved (Acts 16:31). A few verses later we are told that the jailer "rejoiced, having believed in God" (vs. 34). Between the verse in which he is told to believe and the verse which says he rejoiced "having believed" we can find what it

means to believe in the true sense. By a study of the context it can be seen that the faith of the jailer was an obedient faith, a faith which included baptism. In another passage Paul affirmed that "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." The very next verse begins with the word "for" and proceeds to tell how this can be true: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26, 27). The word "faith" is thus seen to be a "package" word, a comprehensive term. This is brought out by giving careful attention to the context.

Sin Unto Death

John's reference to "sin unto death" and "sin not unto death" introduces a problem which is solved by a study of the context. In this particular instance the context is the entire Book of 1 John. The apostle speaks of a brother sinning "not unto death" and says that the Christian in such case may pray for the brother. However, the Christian is not to pray for the one whom he sees sinning unto death (1 John 6:16). In one case God will grant forgiveness; in the other he will not. In an earlier passage in the epistle John has said that all Christians sin (1 John 1:8). John has also given the assurance that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). Further, he has said that "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2: 1). Therefore, any brother who indicates penitence by confessing his sins and who shows a real desire to turn from these sins may be forgiven. For this brother other Christians should pray for his forgiveness. His sin is not unto spiritual death. But the brother who shows no inclination to repentance, who will not confess his sins, who continues in his sins – for his forgiveness other Christians are not to pray. He is sinning unto death. This is the most satisfactory explanation of this problem I have heard and I am indebted to brother Guy N. Woods for it. Of course, there is a sense in which we can pray for his forgiveness and the passage in 1 John makes it quite clear that this is what the writer has in mind. It should be said that this is the way we practice it and we would do so even if we did not understand John's meaning regarding sin unto death. We do not pray for the forgiveness of one who persists in a life of sin. But the minute he shows penitence and wants our prayers, at that moment we are on our knees in his behalf.

Let us try putting the rule of studying the context to the test. The next time you are perplexed by a certain passage, try looking carefully at the context. In many instances you will find this to be most rewarding.

Firm Foundation
October 31, 1978

Take Time to Meditate

RAYMOND C. KELCY

In the first Psalm the writer gives a contrast of the godly and the ungodly man. There are a number of differences given. However, the one which is pre-eminent and which is the root of all the others is the fact that the godly man delights in the word of God and meditates upon it day and night. In his hours of busy activity he brings up from the storehouse of Bible knowledge choice bits of truth and his soul delights in meditation upon them. In his hours of rest he studies God's word and delights in thinking about its sacred truths.

A Look At Jesus

Jesus was extremely busy. He was constantly going about doing good. But he carefully chose seasons of solitude and prayer. At times he went into a desert place. At other times he would climb a mountain. In these secluded places he replenished his strength; he quenched his thirst at the ever-flowing fountain of prayer and meditation. The great truth should immediately be impressed upon our minds that if Jesus felt the need of such times, then how much more should we! If Jesus felt the need of drawing apart from the multitudes, even from his relatives and friends, in order to be, with God alone, surely you and I should feel such a need!

Don't Fear Solitude

Do you fear to be alone? Ours is a generation that longs for the fever and the bustle of excitement. We long for the crowds. There are still millions of lonely people in the world, but never a time when so few were alone. We all need periods of voluntary exile. The high purpose of soul-rebuilding requires such periods. They furnish the opportunity for meditation, introspection, and prayer. Yet, we should realize that when we are alone, we in reality, are not alone. Jesus could say, "I am not alone, for the Father is with me" (John 8:16). If we could always realize this – that we are not alone, then we would never fear solitude. In fact, this realization would cause us to seek periods of solitude in order to be alone with God. We would then not fear to make this a daily experience. Moreover, we can develop to the point that we can joyfully anticipate such periods spent with the Father.

Importance of Thinking

"As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). There is no denying the fact that character is shaped by one's thinking; and if one's speech is to be purified, then the source must be purified. He whose meditations are on that which is vile and unlovely will betray his true character in slips of speech, in facial expressions, or in some other way.

But he who thinks on that which is good, that which is true, that which is of good report, will likewise show by his words and actions what type of person he is. It is true that only God knows what a person is thinking – that is, God and the one who is doing the thinking. But the fruits of wrong thinking will come out in a person's life. It is possible to hide selfish and lascivious-thinking from one's fellowmen, but it is not possible to hide the dwarfed and misshaped personality that eventually is formed by a lifetime of such thinking.

This matter of concentrated meditation on truth and goodness is deserving of more of our attention and our teaching, sometimes a house falls – that is, a life goes down in shame. It is then revealed that the foundation was sand. The character that many thought to be steadfast and unmovable turned out to be vacillating and unsteady. Many a sudden crash was not so sudden. It was merely the logical and inevitable outcome of a mind that had spent many precious hours of precious time in meditation upon that which is destructive of character.

A Battle With The World

To spend periods of solitude alone with God often requires a battle with the forces of the world. Our world of today does not give much opportunity to be alone. We have to put up a fight to enjoy this great privilege. We have to say “no” to many a request and turn a deaf ear to many a voice. It is a matter of being men, not mice. It is a matter of choosing what is important. It is a matter of whether or not we shall major in minors. We are, one of these days, going to stand in judgment before the great God of the universe and give an account of the way we spent our time. We are stewards of time. Yes, we are going to turn in a time card. If someone wants to insert at this point the fact that a life of idleness is sinful, there is no argument to be had on this point. But surely no one will regret at the judgment that he spent many hours in meditation and prayer – hours in which only he and God were present.

This world is ever with us in one form or another. When we arise in the morning we hear its voice – unless we shut our ears to it and, like Jesus, seek an occasion to be alone with God. The world's music is ever deafening our ears; its advertisements are constantly making their appeal; the “news” is always seeking an ear. We are living in a constant hurry. We are usually a part of a group. In the midst of it all, God stands and pleads for us to “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

Take Time

It has truthfully been said that the only way to have time is to make time. Make time to be alone. And while you are alone with God, talk to him. Meditate upon his word and let him talk to you. How wonderful to hold such sweet communion with our God! You will find this joyful experience enriching to your life. It will strengthen your purposes and your resolutions. It will help to drive away those periods of spiritual

depression. Yes, if you wish to be more like Christ, checker your life with solitude.
Take time to be alone with God.

FIRM FOUNDATION, JUNE 10, 1980

Who Was the Speaker

RAYMOND C. KELCY

When we read a passage in the Bible we must determine who the speaker was. Not every statement in the Bible is an inspired statement. We can recognize this fact and still maintain that all of the Bible is inspired of God. This is to say that the writers were inspired to record the various books. When they wrote they were writing by inspiration, but they recorded by inspiration many things that were spoken by men who were not inspired. When Matthew or some other writer tells us what Satan said, we can accept all that the writer tells us without accepting the fact that what Satan said was true.

The Bible records the sayings of many. It records the words of Satan, of evil spirits, of good men, of evil men. With this in mind, we can see at once how important it is to ascertain who is speaking in each passage.

The Rule Illustrated

“Thou shalt surely die” says Genesis 2:17; “Ye shall not surely die” says Genesis 3:4. Contradiction? Yes, The devil contradicted God. In the first instance God was the speaker; the devil was the speaker in the second instance. “Renounce God, and die” was advice given to Job (Job 2:9). But it was not wise counsel. This was not advice given to Job by God, but rather by Job’s wife.

I have heard people speak as if they thought every word and statement in the Bible were from God or Christ. I remember a student asking why Jesus told the Corinthians to get their money together so that there would be no gatherings when he comes. This student thought this was Jesus in person talking to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 16: 1,2 and that he had reference to his second coming. Of course the difficulty was solved for the student when it was pointed out to him that Paul was speaking and that he had reference to his coming to Corinth at some time in the future.

Ecclesiastes

“The Preacher, the son of David” says: “I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life” (Eccles. 2:3). This verse may be viewed as a key to the Book of Ecclesiastes. The writer is telling about his quest for that which was good for man. He relates his various experiences with wisdom, with wealth, with power, with pleasure. He relates what he resolved to do. As the book progresses, the writer tells what was in his mind as he experienced these various things. “I said in mine heart” is an expression found often (e.g., 1:16; 2:1,15; 3:17,18). This expression, “I said in mine heart;” reveals what the Preacher thought at the time he was seeking the *summum bonum*.

Here is a project for you. Read through the book of Ecclesiastes and note passages which seem to state something with which you do not agree. Study these passages to see whether or not they teach a truth; inquire as to whether an error is stated. For instance, note this statement: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man has no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity" (3:19). Note the verse following: "All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." But someone may remind us that the writer said this is so. No, he merely told us what he thought in his heart at some previous time in his life, the time when in his various experiences he was seeking the great good.

Perhaps you have heard Jehovah's Witnesses use certain passages from Ecclesiastes. Especially are they fond of those passages which seem to them to teach with certainty that man does not have an immortal soul. They quote these passages as if they were the plain declarations of God. We must apply the rule we have been discussing: "Who is speaking." Are all these statements of the writer to be taken as conclusions stated by inspiration? Or must they be viewed as "thoughts of his heart" which he experienced at some previous time? He often tells of soliloquies of bygone days.

Again, let us be reminded that this rule of Bible study does not at all question the inspiration of the writer. He was inspired as he recorded the contents of his former thoughts. He had those thoughts. Of that we have no doubt. We do doubt that all he thought in his heart is to be taken as God's declarations.

As suggested before, here is a project you will find interesting. Read Ecclesiastes and note statements which do not seem to coincide with God's revelation recorded elsewhere. Test the statements. It may be that you will conclude that they were a part of the reasonings of the writer - thoughts he had in former days.

The Book of Job

The book of Job is an interesting and fascinating book. Through the ages men have been strengthened by "the patience of Job." This compelling narrative has a prologue at the beginning, an epilogue at the end, and several rounds of speeches between the prologue and epilogue. We find speeches of those friends who came to comfort Job, of Job, of God, of Elihu. For instance, chapter 4 contains the first speech of Eliphaz the Temanite; chapter 8 contains the first speech of Bildad. Chapter 11 has the first speech of Zophar. These men propose various and sundry solutions to the question of why Job is suffering. Job's reply will be found after each speech.

Were Bildad, Eliphaz, and Zophar speaking by inspiration? I know of no one who has so thought. Then everything that they said is not necessarily true. Without doubt, they said some things that were true. But since they were not speaking by inspiration, then we cannot regard their statements as the word of God.

Once more, let me remind the reader that the one who recorded these speeches was an inspired writer. He writes by inspiration and tells us what these men said. But what they said is not inspired. "Observe who speaks" is an important rule.

Another helpful project would be to study the book of Job and test the statements of various speakers. If you find something that is not true, this does not mean that the word of God is in error. It only means that the speaker was in error.

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SURVEY WORKSHEET

(BOOK)

PURPOSE STATEMENT: _____

AUTHOR: _____

DATE: _____

RECIPIENTS: _____

KEY VERSES: _____

KEY WORDS / PHRASES: _____

KEY THEMES:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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