

# EVERYDAY WITH GOD

(Reading Through The Bible In A Year)

[All passages NKJV unless noted.]

As we look forward to reading through the word of God next year, we need to consider how to prepare ourselves for this wonderful and most important study. It is essential that we make this study as profitable as possible, yet without sacrificing the pleasure that we should gain from reading and studying God's glorious word. If we read through the Bible only to say that we have done so we have missed something significant. Reading with the desire to both understand and obey is paramount.

As we begin this study let's have the attitude of Ezra as depicted in Ezra 7:10.

“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.” Ezra 7:10, NKJV.

Every day that we read our Bibles in this effort, we should keep our hearts and minds on this verse. Let us (1) do our best to *seek* the law of the Lord. Hebrews 11:6 quite plainly teaches that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Jesus, in the sermon on the mount, said “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.” Matthew 5:6. Keep in mind that we want to find out what the law of the Lord teaches as we read and study.

(2) Knowing the law of the Lord is primary but second to that (i.e. subsequent to it chronologically, but not second in importance) we need to *do* the things commanded by God's word. Luke said in Acts 1:1 “The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,” Paul wrote to Timothy and spoke of those who were “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Timothy 3:7) The apostle John said in his first epistle “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.” (1 John 1:6) Try to apply the Bible truths to your life as you learn them. The best way to remember what the Bible teaches is to *practice* what it teaches in every thing we do.

(3) Finally, as we progress in our study, it is imperative that we begin to *teach* the principles we have learned to others. Everyone who claims to be a Christian *should* be a teacher. Paul taught the principle of *teaching to teach others to teach* in 2 Timothy 2:2. [“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” 2 Timothy 2:2] In that verse we see the principle that lay behind the growth of the church in the New Testament. When the church began to be persecuted Christians began to disperse [in accordance with prophetic statements predicting its spread (Acts 8:1ff)]. As these early Christians went out from Jerusalem they taught the gospel everywhere they went (Acts 8:1, 4; cf. 11:19). By the time that Paul wrote his letter to the church at Colossae, the truth had permeated the world. (Col. 1:6, 23). The writer of the book of Hebrews cautioned us (implicitly) not to become like those to whom he was writing. Read through Hebrews 5:12—6:2. If we keep these three points in mind as we study, we will be glorifying God, growing in grace and knowledge, and preparing ourselves to teach others.

During the next few weeks we will be studying introductory material to the Bible. These studies will be important. They will help us to profit more from our Bible reading. The lessons will deal with two main areas of study: (1) The Inspiration and Authority of The Bible and (2) Hermeneutics or How To Study The Bible. Each of these areas will be subdivided into two sections. Our study of inspiration and authority will include: (a) How We Got The Bible and (b) The Bible is God's Word, and our study of hermeneutics will include: (a) How To Interpret The Bible and (b) How To Study The Bible. The study will thus follow this outline:

## I. The Inspiration and authority of the Bible

- A. How We Got The Bible
- B. The Bible Is God's Word

## II. Hermeneutics

- A. How To Interpret The Bible
- B. How To Study The Bible

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## I. The Inspiration and Authority of The Bible

The books that constitute the Bible are not just the ordinary books that men write — they are different. The sixty-six books in the Old and New Testaments have a singular, all-encompassing theme: the glorification of God and the salvation of mankind through Jesus the Christ.

All 66 of these books belong to a larger book that we call the Bible. It will be our purpose in this study (1) to examine some of the characteristics and attributes which the Bible possesses, (2) learn how those identification marks separate the Bible from all other books, and (3) understand how both of these matters point to the divine origin of this unique book. To do this, we will begin with a brief overview of how we got the Bible, and the inspiration of the Bible.

Please note that this study is only intended to be an introductory one, and therefore not an exhaustive defense of God's word. Should you desire to study this subject further, you may want to read the following:

1. What Shall We Do With The Bible? by Rubel Shelly
2. How We Got The Bible by Neil Lightfoot
3. Why I Believe The Bible by George Dehoff
4. Simple Studies In Christian Evidences by Rubel Shelly
5. 1971 Harding Graduate School Lectures edited by Thomas B. Warren
6. The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible by B.B. Warfield
7. The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture by Rene Pache
8. The N.T. Documents: Are They Reliable? by F.F. Bruce
9. The Books and the Parchments by F.F. Bruce
10. Reason and Revelation by Robert Milligan
11. Evidences of Christianity by John William McGarvey<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Note: Reference books cited throughout may be dated. No endorsement intended of errors held by authors, publishers, editors, etc.

## A. How We Got The Bible

The subject of the Bible's transmission from ancient times down to the present is indeed a marvelous one. It may not seem to be extremely important to many, but if we fully understood the actual process and how it reflects the character and providence of God, we would have one more way to convert the unbelieving to Christ. That may seem to be quite an extravagant claim, but nevertheless, it is true. The Bible and how we got it, constitutes proof plain and simple, that it is the word of God. Far too many people believe that the Bible is merely a collection of ancient myths that has been passed down through the years by word of mouth. Concomitant with that is the view that the Bible is full of error. If we can demonstrate that the Bible came to us only through what can be described as divine/supernatural involvement, then we can prove that the Bible is more than an amalgamation of myths and legends. (Please remember that this is an extremely limited introduction. Most of this material is based on the book *How We Got The Bible* by Lightfoot.)

1. The Making of Ancient Books
2. The Birth of the Bible
3. The Transmission of the New Testament Text
4. The Transmission of the Old Testament Text
5. The Canon of the Bible
6. The Different Versions of the Bible

**Assignment:** Learn all of the books of the Bible and the four major divisions in each testament. (O.T.—Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy; N.T.- Biography, History, Epistles, Prophecy) Over the next few weeks try to learn the main theme of as many of the books of the Bible that you can.

Note: The transmission of the Old and New Testament texts from the original autographs (i.e., the original writings of the inspired writers) is adequate demonstration that the Bible is indeed of divine origin. For example, the Dead Sea Scrolls which were found in Palestine in 1947 contained portions of the book of Isaiah that were approximately 1000 years older than any manuscript then extant, yet when compared to then currently known manuscripts of Isaiah, the Dead Sea Scrolls were identical except for slight changes in spelling, word order, and the like. One would most naturally assume that the process of copying by hand the Old Testament over a period of 1000 years would surely result in some gross error, but that is not the case. Note the following:

“While the Dead Sea Scrolls can neither prove nor disprove inspiration, they clearly indicate that a community of Jews more than nineteen centuries ago possessed a library of sacred writings which, in all essential details, is the same as the Bible which we have regarded as authoritative.” (Charles F. Pfeiffer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls And The Bible*, p. 111)

Studies in the different texts show that the Bible is not merely a collection of legends that was passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. If this were the case, then there would be abundant differences in these texts which were separated by hundreds of years, but this is not what we find. The claim that the transmission of the Bible was a

haphazard process is therefore refuted, and a door is thereby opened into the study of the inspiration of the Bible. 4

### *B. The Bible Is God's Word*

The subject of the inspiration of the Bible is one of the key topics in Christianity (the others being the existence of God and the deity of Jesus, et. al.). Several different religious denominations have been (and still are) in constant turmoil over this subject. If we could know that the Bible is indeed the word of God, then our faith is based upon knowledge and not on guesswork (cf. Heb. 11:1). Note the following analysis of I Corinthians 2:9ff and Ephesians 3:1-5 as demonstration of the means by which man wrote/recorded God's word by inspiration.

#### *1 Corinthians 2:9-13*

1. God (vs. 10)
2. Revealed (by the Holy Spirit, vs.10)
3. "Things" (vs.9—13)
4. Unto Us (those to whom the revelation came (vs 10)
5. Speak (vs.13)
6. Words (vs. 13)
7. Know (vs.12, 16 - "...we have the mind of Christ.")

#### *Ephesians 3:1-5*

1. God (vs. 2)
2. Revealed (vs.3, 5 - by Holy Spirit.)
3. "Mystery" (vs.3)
4. Unto Me (Paul) (vs.3)
5. Wrote (vs.3)
6. Words (vs.3)
7. Understand (vs. 4)

These verses explain (in a nutshell) how the process of inspiration worked. The following pages explain what the word inspiration is not and what it is.

**Assignment:** Continue working your way through the Bible and learning the main theme of as many of the books that you can. Also continue to review the names of all of the books in the Bible and the divisions of the O.T. and the N.T.

In addition to that, begin to learn how the Bible is divided into the following periods:

1. antediluvian (from creation to the flood)
2. postdiluvian (from the flood to the call of Abram)
3. Patriarchal (from the call of to the descent into Egypt)
4. Egyptian (from the descent into Egypt to the crossing of the Red Sea)
5. Wanderings (from the crossing of the Red Sea to the crossing of the Jordan)
6. Conquest (from the crossing of the Jordan to the appointment of the first judge)
7. Judges (from the appointment of the first judge to the establishment of the first king)
8. United Kingdom (from the establishment of the first king to the division of Judah and Israel)

9. Divided Kingdom (the division of Judah and Israel to the fall of Samaria)
10. Judah Alone (from the fall of Samaria to the fall of Jerusalem)
11. Captivity (from the fall of Jerusalem to the decree of Cyrus)
12. Restoration (from the decree of Cyrus to the end of Nehemiah's work)
13. Intertestamental Period (from the end of Nehemiah's work to the beginning of John the baptizer's work)
14. Christ (the beginning of John the baptizer's work to the day of Pentecost in Acts 2)
15. Church (the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 to judgment)<sup>2</sup>

## Inspiration of the Bible

This particular topic is perhaps the most important theological subject that affects religion today. If the Bible truly is the inspired Word of God as it claims, then it should be followed as such, but if there exists the possibility that the Bible is not really from God, then why should we as Christians follow it ... more importantly, how could we convince any one else to do so. It is therefore of the utmost importance to understand more about the Biblical claim of inspiration and some of the views that are held in regard to it. The amount of material that is available on this subject can not be covered within the time frame of one or two class periods. Should anyone be willing to study it further, the following works will prove helpful:

Finality of the Faith by James D. Bales  
 Sufficiency of the Scriptures by James D. Bales  
 Why We Believe the Bible by George W. Dehoff  
 Reasons for Faith by John H. Gerstner  
 Internal Evidences of Christianity by Homer Hailey  
 Revelation and the Bible by Carl F. H. Henry  
 Evidences of Christianity by John William McGarvey  
 Reason and Revelation by Robert Milligan  
 I Believe in Revelation by Leon Morris  
 Revelation and Inspiration by James Orr  
 The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture by Rene Pache  
 Fundamentalism and the Word of God by J. I. Packer  
 God Speaks to Man by C. H. Pinnock  
 Biblical Revelation by C. H. Pinnock  
 Simple Studies in Christian Evidences by Rubel Shelly  
 What Shall We Do With the Bible? by Rubel Shelly  
 The Living Word of Revelation by M.C. Tenney  
 Inspiration and Authority of the Bible by B.B. Warfield  
 Thy Word is Truth by E. J. Young<sup>3</sup>

A. The starting point in any Biblical topic is the Bible and its claims, such is true with the subject of the inspiration of the scriptures.

B. Definitions of the word:

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<sup>2</sup>See Bible period chart for more details.

1. meaning literally “God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3: 16), and referring to the process by which God superintended the writing of the Sacred scriptures so that, without destroying the individual styles of the writers, He nevertheless produced an errorless and authoritative book (From Geisler & Nix: A General Introduction to the Bible page 452)

2. Inspiration is not a feeling. Inspiration is a fact, not an emotion. (From Charles Pledge: Getting Acquainted with The Old Testament—Volume I, page 46) The process of God through the Holy Spirit speaking through men to men and causing that which was revealed to be spoken and recorded accurately (Pledge: pg. 306)

3. Inspiration is therefore usually defined as supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness. (B.B. Warfield: The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, page 131)

(in referring to the term “inspiration”) The Biblical writers do not conceive of the Scriptures as a human product breathed into by the Divine Spirit, and thus heightened in its qualities or endowed with new qualities; but as a Divine product produced through the instrumentality of men. They do not conceive of these men, by whose instrumentality Scripture is produced, as working upon their own initiative, though energized by God to greater effort and higher achievement, but as moved by the Divine initiative and borne by the irresistible power of the Spirit of God along ways of His choosing to ends of His appointment. (BBW, p. 153)

Inspiration is that extraordinary, supernatural influence (or, passively, the result of it,) exerted by the Holy Ghost on the writers of our Sacred Books, by which their words were rendered also the words of God, and therefore, perfectly infallible. (BBW, p. 420)

... every word indited (to express or describe in prose or in verse) under the analogous influence of inspiration was at one and the same time the consciously self-chosen word of the writer and the divinely-inspired word of the Spirit. (BBW, p. 422)

4. Inspiration is the determining influence exercised by the Holy Spirit on the writers of the Old and New Testaments in order that they might proclaim and set down in an exact and authentic way the message as received from God. This influence guided them even to the extent of their use of words, that they might be kept from all error and omission. (René Pache, The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture, p.45)

### C. Theories of Inspiration

Because of the amount of material that could possibly be discussed, we shall limit the discussion to the following three categories: liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, conservatism

1. Liberalism: the Bible contains the word of God (two views)

illumination

intuition (discovery)

Discussion: Liberalism (also modernism) is a term that is not used in a “generous” sense<sup>7</sup> (i.e, as a liberal giver). The term “liberal” in a theological sense means more than what the average Christian considers. We often label those whom we disagree with as liberals.

The term means much more than this philosophically. It involves the denial of inspiration and authority of scripture as a guide for human life. It denies the miracles of the Bible. Theologically, liberalism has a basic set of doctrines and therefore should not be used in haste because of its specific considerations. Basically and briefly the liberal view states that the Bible *contains* the word of God, along with varied admixtures of the words of men. In other words, within the Bible one may find the word of God by rational and moral reflection, but he is not to equate the words of the Bible with the word of God. Accordingly, the Bible is not completely the word of God, nor is the word of God complete in the Bible. There are revelations of God elsewhere than the Bible for faith and practice, and all that the Bible teaches is not a worthy standard for faith and practice. (G & N, p.37) There are two different views within the liberal camp as illustrated.

a. The Right Wing: The Illumination View

This camp holds the view that revelation is to be found from place to place within the Bible, wherein God granted pious men of old a deep religious insight into His truth, with varied degrees of understanding. This they recorded in their religious lore. Thus God’s words are contained within the Bible in the sense that these men were *illuminated* by God to understand His will in a manner much akin to the insights into the pious life and divine truth that Christians today receive from God. Saintly men of all ages have shared in this common process of “inspiration,” which was varied only in degree and depth.

b. The Left Wing: The Intuition View

This view holds that the writers were inspired only in the sense that from time to time their natural religious insight and genius were deepened and heightened to discover “divine truths” for their own day. The Bible itself, however, is only a kind of religious scratch pad of the scribes. Emphasis in this view is laid upon man’s discovery of the games of godly genius, and not upon God’s disclosure of divine doctrine. It is human intuition rather than divine revelation.

c. Objections to the Liberal Views: (1) it is philosophically naturalistic — it assumes man is the most important part of the equation; (2) it is rationalistic — it is based on pure human reason; (3) it is subjective — man can choose what he wants; and (4) it is profoundly unbiblical.

2. Neo-Orthodoxy: Bible becomes the word of God (two views)

existentialism

Bultmannian Demythologizing

This view developed out of the obvious need to correct the liberal view. According to the liberal view, God really did not do anything, it was all imagined.

a. The Right Wing: The Existential View

It is also divided into two extremes. It (neo-orthodoxy) was part of the work of Karl Barth. To him there were many human imperfections in the Biblical record, as the liberals would demand, even in the original copy (the autographs). How then could the Bible be God's perfect Word when it was really, in many places, a record of man's erring words? The answer was simple: the Bible *becomes* the Word of God when He chooses to use this imperfect channel to confront man with His perfect Word. To Barth the Bible and the Bible alone uniquely reveals God to man, not in propositions about God, but as a means of a *personal encounter* [hence the existential appellation] by God with man in an act of revelation. In this existential experience, the meaningless ink blots on the pages leap from the Bible to speak to man concretely and meaningfully. At this "moment of meaning," the Bible *becomes* the Word of God to the individual.

#### b. The Left Wing: The Demythologizing View

This faction of the neo-orthodox view was supported by men like Rudolf Bultmann and others who claimed that in order to understand the Bible, it must be stripped of culture in order to get at the core of the truth. It must be divested of the religious myth in order to get at the real message of God's self-giving love in Christ. One must look through and beyond the historical record with all its myth and error to the superhistorical. In this view events such as the fall, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ are "real" and "true," but not necessarily the objects of verifiable and factual history.

#### c. Objections to the Neo-Orthodox Views:

(1) it accepts the premises and conclusions of liberalism but despairs over the way in which liberalism tends to lead, (2) it tries to avoid rationalism by looking for some reality, (3) it is profoundly subjective, (4) it is naturalistic like liberalism, (5) this view is developed under the guise of "salvation by faith" which is content-less if you endeavor to put some "content" into it ... it therefore becomes "salvation by ignorance" because if you attempt to put something (i.e. factual and objective) into it ... you lose "salvation by faith" and gain "salvation by ignorance" (Note: to some, the more "absurd" faith is, the greater it is.)

### 3. Conservatism: the Bible *is* Word of God (three views)

Mechanical Dictation

Plenary Verbal

Inspired Concept

#### a. The Right Wing: The mechanical (verbal) dictation view

According to this view (sometimes called "thunderbolt inspiration") every word of the Bible was given to the prophet who served as secretary for the dictation of God, much as Moses may have done on Mt. Sinai. (Ex. 24:4) This basically maintains that the Lord dictated the exact words, and the writers were nothing more than robots. This view developed out of the need for Biblical authority and thus eliminates human action totally.

Objections to this view: (1) how do you account for the differences of styles in the writers, (2) how then does one account for the apparent emotion that is expressed by different writers in different places, (3) if mechanical dictation is adequate there needs to be an explanation of the different styles, different vocabularies, different involvements, and

different emotions, and (4) how can Luke's reference to research be accounted for in Luke 1:1-4? 9

b. The Left Wing: The Inspired Concept View

This view maintains that God inspired the writers through their thoughts and then left them to state matters in their own words. This still leaves an opening for subjectivity of the authors. It is through this view that many have tried to explain the obvious personality and literary differences in scripture. This perspective simultaneously maintains that the Bible is the word of God because the real meaning, or the message came from God.

c. The Truth: Verbal Plenary Inspiration View

The third alternative, and the one that is Biblical, is that all the words which are written are God-breathed. God gave full (plenary) inspiration and expression to His thought in the words of the biblical record. He guided the very choice of words used within the personality and the cultural complex of the writers so that, in some inscrutable manner, the Bible is the word of God while being the words of men. Perhaps this view is best explained by looking at another topic.

Christ is considered to be: 100% Divine and 100% Human , therefore 100% God-man

The Bible is considered to be: 100% Divine and 100% Human, therefore 100% God-man book

It is hoped that this lengthy discussion will benefit the reader. It can be quite easily seen that this topic has been treated only in a general manner and is not intended to be an exhaustive study. For more information it is suggested that some of the works mentioned earlier be studied. When one comes to the conclusion on the basis of what the Bible claims, teaches, and indeed is ... the inspired Word of God, it then becomes easier to understand what we as Christians are to do.

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## **Biblical Claims For Inspiration:**

### *General Claims*

1. 2 Tim. 3:16
2. 1 Cor. 2:13
3. Luke 24:27, 44; Jn. 5:39; Heb. 10:7
4. Matt.21:42; Rom.15:4; 2 Pet.3:16
5. Matt. 5:18
6. Rom.3:2; Heb.5:12
7. Jer.26:2 (ASV); Rev.22:18-19

Note: The above references claim several different things for the Bible as a whole. Some, for example #3, refer to statements that Jesus made in reference to old testament claims about himself. Then there are others that simply refer to general claims. An valuable thing for each individual to do would be to note in any concordance the number of times the following phrases are used: (1) it is written, (2) thus/so saith/says the Lord, (3) God said, (4) the Lord

spoke by the prophet ..., (5) God says/saith, et. al. Each of these phrases and others like them<sup>10</sup> makes an implicit claim to be inspired. If God said it, and if it is recorded by holy men of God as moved by the Holy Spirit, then it must be inspired.

### *Specific Claims*

1. Genesis 12, 26,46
2. Exodus 20:1
3. Leviticus 1:1; 4:1; 5:14; 6:1, 8
4. Numbers 1: 1; 2: 1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 8:1
5. Deuteronomy 4:2; 18:22
6. Joshua 1:1—3:7, 24:26
7. Judges 1:2, 6:25; ch. 2, 5, 6, 13
8. Ruth ch. 1, 12; 4:21\* (see Geisler and Nix)
9. 1 & 2 Samuel 3:11; 4:1
10. 1 & 2 Kings (attributed to Jer.)
11. 1 & 2 Chronicles \*
12. Ezra-Neh. \*
13. Esther \*
14. Job ch.1-2; 38:1
15. Psalms (cf. 2 Sam.23:1-2) \*
16. Proverbs 22:20-21 (cf. 1 Kings 3:9); also see 2 Chron 9:29
17. Ecclesiastes 11:19; 12:1, 12, 13
18. Song of Solomon \*
19. the prophets - Is 1:1-2; Jer-Lam 1:1-2; Ezek 1:3; Dan 7:1; 9:21; Hosea through Malachi were all incorporated into one book in the Hebrew Bible, but each one has an explicit claim, as Amos 1:3 and the opening verse in each of the following books indicate: Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

\* Note: An explanation for those books which do not claim inspiration in an explicit sense: The vast majority of the books of the Old Testament (about 26 of the 39) have an explicit claim that they are God's words to men, but some do not have such clear statements as to their origin. Several reasons may be offered for such. (1) Each book is a part of a given section in the Hebrew Bible in which there is a distinct and indisputable claim for inspiration, a fact which thereby speaks for every book within that section [This is not to deny Biblical inspiration in any sense, but rather to understand how the general claim for inspiration in one "class of writing" is frequently attributed to all components in that class. The same thing is often done regarding authorship, e.g. Jeremiah's authorship of statement in Mt 27:9]. Therefore each and every book does not need to state its own case independently. (2) Due to the nature of some of the books (historic & poetic) there is no direct claim for inspiration. These are books that are addressed from man to God and not the reverse, and therefore do not include claims as the others do. (3) Many are considered authoritative (i.e., divinely inspired) due to the authorship. [See G & N for #1]

There are supporting claims for the inspiration of the old testament by the new testament. Note: Mt. 21:42; 22:29; 26:54, 56; Luke 24:27, 32, 44; John 2:22; 5:39; 7:38, 42; 10:35; 19:36; 20:9; Acts 17:2, 11 (ASV); 18:28; Romans 1:2; 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; 16:26 (ASV)

It is not enough to know that the Bible is from God, though we must readily admit that such is indeed true. It is also just as important to know what the Bible means. It would do us no good at all if we could all know that the Bible was from God, but that some how or another we could not know what the Bible meant. Note the following brief article:

“Many well-meaning people refuse to study the Bible because they claim they cannot understand it. Still others think that the Bible can only be understood by men and women who devote a lifetime to its study, and even then they cannot be sure of what the Bible says and means because there are so many different views about it. Stop and think for a moment ... *would God give us a book that only a few people can understand?* This sort of thinking is contrary to what the Bible itself teaches.” (Livingston Enterprise, 1/17/80, by JLA)

The subject of hermeneutics therefore, is one of great importance. Hermeneutics is the study of methods and principles by which we interpret the Bible. If we can understand how to interpret the Bible, then we can know what the Bible says ... and more importantly ... what the Bible means. Note the following passage of scripture in which Jesus applied hermeneutical principles to a quotation from the Psalms (ch 52) by Satan.

“Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”” Matthew 4:5-7, NKJV.

Note that the devil quoted a passage from the Bible. We might assume that because a person can quote from the Bible, he is right in what he says. This is not true. Simply because a person knows what the Bible says is no indication that the same person knows what the Bible means. (Ps 51, Acts 17:30, et. al.) Jesus corrected the devil's misapplication of the passage in Psalms by showing that a passage in Deuteronomy modified it. This brief example constitutes proof plain and simple that it is important that we know how to interpret the Bible, and not just know what it says.

### A. How To Interpret The Bible

We have already noted the importance of hermeneutics, the methods and principles of interpreting the Bible. Now let us examine some of these principles. (Note: For your further study, I suggest the following books: *Ascertaining Bible Authority* by Roy Deaver; *When Is An Example Binding?* by Thomas B. Warren and *Hermeneutics*, by D.R. Dungan)

1. General Guidelines: (from TBW, *When Is An Example Binding?* p.21)

*a. The specific statement itself.*

There are a number of different kinds of statements used in the Bible. Each one of these can be used to show that a thing is essential (or prohibited) for men living today.

*b. The immediate context.*

This refers to the material immediately before and immediately after the specific statement.

c. *The remote context.*

This refers to all the material relevant to the specific statement itself.

d. *The total context.*

This refers to a.,b.,and c. above.

Note: In studying a passage from the Greek or Hebrew language, it would also be important to study the lexical (definition) and syntactical (grammar) context. This would involve both word studies and grammar of the original language.

2. Specific Guidelines: (from Roy Deaver's *Ascertaining Bible Authority*)

"In 'handling aright the word of truth'— in striving to understand the matter of establishing (i.e. ascertaining) Bible authority — there are certain significant distinctions which must be understood and respected." (p.5)

a. *old/new*

"We must clearly understand the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament." (cf. Mt. 26:28; Heb.9:15; Heb.10:9; Heb.8:8) Note: We must also recognize three separate systems of religion: patriarchal, Judaic, and Christian.

b. *faith/opinion*

"It is necessary that we distinguish clearly between faith and opinion, between faith and human judgment." (e.g. Nicodemus in Jn.3, the case of John Mark)

c. *temporary/permanent*

"We must be able to distinguish between the temporary and the permanent." (e.g. role/work of the apostles, miraculous manifestations of the Spirit, etc.)

d. *circumstance/condition*

"In striving to learn about our duties, responsibilities, obligations and attitudes we must distinguish clearly between circumstances and conditions. ... Circumstances vary; conditions do not." (e.g. Missionary Baptist Preacher on the radio confused these two and thought that they were the same)

e. *incidental/essential*

"Likewise, we must be able to distinguish between the incidental and the essential. We recognize that in this area of consideration there is an overlapping with the matter of circumstance and condition. In some cases, the incidental will be involved in the circumstance, but in some cases the essential will not be a condition." (e.g. Acts 16:10 and the Macedonian call, The essential thing was GO. Traveling by ship was incidental. cf. Acts 20:7-9)

f. *means/principle*

"We must distinguish clearly between means and principle. Sometimes we become so involved in consideration of the *means* by which a principle is taught that we obscure or fail to see the principle. (e.g. the subject of spiritual gifts in I Cor.12—14 and the meeting of 1 Cor. 14. "The *principles* set forth are just as binding as they ever were; the *means* (the

circumstances, the situation) by which Paul set forth these principles do not exist in the world<sup>3</sup> today.”)

*g. custom/law*

“Also, we must be careful to distinguish between human custom and divine law.” (e.g. , 1 Cor. 11)

## **B. How To Study The Bible**

Thus far we have noted the following things in our study: 1. How We Got The Bible, 2. The Bible Is God's Word (i.e. the inspiration and the authority of the Bible), and 3. How To Interpret The Bible. All of these subjects are important, but the things that we have learned while studying them will do us no good unless we apply them to our Bible studies. It is therefore important to know how to study.

Far too many people pick up the Bible, flip it open to some passage, read it for a couple of minutes, and then put it down content that they have studied the Bible. That type of study will not provide us with the rewards that could be ours by studying the Bible in a more intense and systematic fashion. The following information is given in order that we might develop good Bible study habits and therefore more Bible knowledge that we can apply to our lives. For your further reading I suggest Roy Deaver's book, *How To Study The Bible*. (Note: the general guidelines below are taken from this work.)

1. General Guidelines — We should study the Bible:

*a. With a respectful and appreciative attitude.*

Knowing that the Bible is of divine origin and that all of it is inspired by God, we should therefore study the Bible with respect.

*b. With proper regard for its purpose.*

God did not just give us the Bible so that we might know that it is of divine origin (though we can know that from the Bible). God had a purpose in giving us such a divine book. Jeremiah said “O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.” (Jeremiah 10:23) God's purpose in giving us the Bible is that we might know: *the glory of God, and the salvation of man, through Jesus Christ the Lord.*

*c. With proper regard for seeing the whole.*

One should study the Bible as he would study a beautiful painting: he should consider the whole, and then consider the parts. (Note: See section “general guidelines” from When Is An Example Binding in previous discussion)

*d. Realizing that the Bible deals with three distinct systems of religion, and that we live in the time of the third system. (Patriarchal, Judaic, Christian)*

*e. Realizing the Bible makes a clear distinction between the Old Covenant and the New. (See earlier discussion.)*

*f. Realizing that the Bible divides itself most naturally into fifteen different periods.*  
(See earlier discussion)

*g. By topic.*

We quite often need to study a particular Bible topic such as faith, grace, or salvation. Such can be done by consulting a concordance and gathering information about where such words are used throughout the Bible. (Note: the thoughts should be studied in conjunction with the word ... e.g.. when studying faith we should also study all that faith includes/involves ... belief, walking by faith, obedience of faith, etc.)

*h. By character.*

The Bible is full accounts of great characters and personalities. If we studied and knew the life stories of many of these people, we would know more about the Bible and its purpose and theme.

*i. By passage.*

One who is concerned about becoming a good student of the Bible must work toward becoming a good Bible analyst. Breaking a passage down into its various parts is a fascinating and most rewarding study.

*j. By word.*

The Bible teaches that the original words were words that were selected by the Holy Spirit. (cf. 1 Cor.2:9-13, 2 Peter 1:20-21) The words, therefore, are of great importance as we study the Bible.

*k. By book.*

The Bible is composed of 66 different books, each of which contributes it's own theme to the overall picture of the Bible. It is important for us to study and to know about each of the books in the Bible.

*l. By chapter.*

Studying the Bible by chapter is a convenient way to study ... remember, however, that the Bible was not originally divided this way, and that the thoughts and subject matter of one chapter are often continued in the next.

*m. By thought analysis (paragraph).*

Study the separate units of thought as you go through the Bible. One thought may involve only a few words or it may involve several verses and even several chapters. Try to get the whole thought.

*n. By the rules of interpretation. (see earlier discussion)*

2. Specific Guidelines (cf. Royal Bible, pg. 1090)
  - a. Begin studying the Bible with a word of prayer. (Ps. 119:18)
  - b. Take notes on what you read,
  - c. Do not just read ... *study*. (Heb.11:6 says "diligently seek")

d. Ask yourself these questions as you study:

1. What is the main subject of this passage?
2. Who are the main characters of this passage?
3. Who is speaking?
4. Who is writing?
5. Who is being spoken to?
6. What is the key verse or thought in this passage? (There may be more than one.)
7. What principles do I learn from this passage?
8. How can I apply them to my life?
9. Are there any sins discussed in this passage that I am guilty of? If so, what do I need to do to correct the situation?
10. Are there any commands or obligations that this passage places upon me?
11. Are there any promises that I should hope for?
12. Are there any things for which I should pray?
13. Are there any things that I need to practice in my life?
14. Are there any things in this passage that I need to teach to others?

There are many more questions that might be considered. You ask them ... and then you answer them. Nobody studies physics or engineering by opening up a book and reading from some obscure passage for a minute and then expects to know all there is about physics or engineering. If we really want to know what God wants us to do so that we can do it, we will work diligently to develop habits and skills that will cause us to study in the right way.

*“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.” Ezra 7:10*