

STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD

“For actively alive is the Word of God, and energetic, and sharper than any two-edged sword, going through even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and is a sifter and analyzer of the reflections and conceptions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12, Wuest translation)

While this is not a study on WHAT the Bible is, let the reader understand that we believe the Bible to be the unique and inspired (God-breathed) Word of the living God. It is our feeling that there is no other book like this in the world. It bears unique marks of inspiration like no other book. Here are some evidences of the inspiration of the Bible:

1. Its **UNIFICATION**. Though the Bible was written by over 40 authors over a time span of 1500+ years; though its authors came from all segments of society—poets, kings, tentmakers, shepherders, fishermen, doctors, etc... the Bible is a completely unified whole. It begins before creation, travels down through the corridors of time until we reach the new heavens and the new earth. Properly understood and interpreted, the Bible is without contradiction. It is a perfectly unified whole.

2. Its **INSPIRATION**; evidences thereof. INTERNALLY, the Bible declares itself to be the inspired Word of God. Over and over, the scriptures say “Thus saith the Lord!” EXTERNALLY, the Bible proves itself to be the Word of God through hundreds of prophecies (demanding 100% fulfillment) which were given several hundred years in advance and fulfilled EXACTLY as prophesied!

NOT TOO LONG AGO, SOME HONEST SEARCHERS TOOK HUNDREDS OF THE PROPHECIES REGARDING CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND ASKED THE COMPUTERS THIS QUESTION: “WHAT IS THE RATIO OF CHANCE IN SUPPOSING THAT ALL OF THESE PROPHECIES COULD HAVE JUST HAPPENED TO BE FULFILLED BY JESUS OF NAZARETH?”

(1)

THE COMPUTER SAID THAT THE RATIO OF POSSIBILITY WAS ONE TO A NUMBER WITH MORE ZEROES AFTER IT THAN THE TOTAL OF ALL THE LETTERS IN THE WEBSTER’S UNABRIDGED DICTIONARY!

3. Its **PRESERVATION**: There have been more attempts to obliterate the Bible than all of the other books of the world combined! Yet, today, here it is, printed more than ever before!

STEPS IN THE BIBLE STUDY:

1. Observation.

What does the text say? Do I understand what it says? It would be good to read from two or three TRANSLATIONS, perhaps a paraphrase, although, you must remember, a paraphrase is one man’s opinion of what he thinks the Bible says.

2. Interpretation.

What does it mean? Some helpful questions:

- Who said it?
- When was it said, OT or NT, etc...? (eye for an eye?)
- To whom was it said (written)?
- Why was it said? (To correct false ideas, tempt us, etc...)
- Is the statement true? (She is my sister. I have no husband, etc...)
- What point was being made?

3. Correlation.

How does this correspond to the teaching of the whole Bible or whole NT?

4. Application.

How does this apply to me today?

(2)

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION:

1. The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth AS WE SUBMIT to Him. (Read Matthew 13:9, 15; 1 Corinthians 2:14; John 11:45-47.)
2. The Bible interprets itself better than any commentary. Use the cross-references, concordance and topical Bible to search out the truth.
3. Personal “experiences” have nothing to do with interpreting scripture. The scripture should be used to interpret your experiences!
4. Biblical “examples” are authoritative only when supported by a command.
ex: What do you mean you want to be like Jesus? What IS being like Jesus?
____ wear a robe and sandals
____ ride a donkey
____ never travel over 200 miles from your home
____ never marry
____ love one another as He loved us
5. The PRIMARY purpose of the Bible is to change our lives, not just increase our knowledge!
 - a. those who just read to prove their point
 - b. orthodoxy without Christ likeness
6. The church does not determine what the Bible teaches, the Bible determines what the church teaches!
 - a. The same is true of Christians, teachers, etc...
 - b. Sad truth: you can tell what church many people belong to by what verses they have underlined in their Bible.
7. The promises of the Bible are not there to be admired; they are to be claimed!
 - a. Is this for our time?
 - b. Is this for ME?
8. Scripture has only one meaning and is to be taken literally.

The cults today take a statement like “I **CROSSED THE OCEAN FROM THE U.S. TO EUROPE...**” and by the time they get done with it, they have the person saying: “I **PASSED THROUGH THE DIFFICULT SEAS OF THE TURBULENT ‘NOW’ TO A NEW HAVEN OF CONCIOUSNESS!**”

God tells it like it is to be interpreted like it is!

9. The words must be interpreted in harmony with their meaning when it was written.
10. Relate the words being studied to the context. Example: define faith in the following three verses:
 - a. Gal 1:23 _____
 - b. Rom14:23 _____
 - c. 1 Tim 5:11-12 _____
11. Interpret the words and passage in harmony with its context.
 - a. How do the words or passage relate to the material surrounding it?
 - b. How do they relate to the Bible as a whole?
 - c. How did they relate to the cultural practices of that day?
12. Learn the Bible usage of symbolism.
Define and give an example from the Bible of the following:
 - a. Metaphor _____
 - b. Parable _____
 - c. Allegory _____
 - d. Hyperbole _____
13. Though God’s revelation in the scripture is progressive, both the OT/NT are essential parts of this revelation and form a unit.
 - a. In the OT, people looked FORWARD TO the coming of God’s anointed Messiah.
 - b. In the NT we have the record that He came, died for our sins, rose again, etc...
14. You must understand what the Bible SAYS before you can interpret what it means; grammatical understanding precedes theological interpretation.

John 1:1, 14:1-6 etc..., 10:27-29.

15. A doctrine cannot be considered Biblical unless it sums up ALL that the scripture says about that subject.

16. HERESY is truth blown all out of proportion. Ex: The human nature of Jesus;, the unity of God as opposed to the Trinity, etc...

NOTES: