

Dedicated

To those who love the Word of God,
desire to know it as thoroughly as possible
for the glory of God, their own edification
and the spiritual good of others

How to Study the Bible

An Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures

W. R. Downing

Originally given as a series of Afternoon Studies
to the congregation of
Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
on the Lord's Day

Published as a Study Manual for learning
the prerequisites and reasons for Bible study,
the basic principles of interpretation,
and the various basic methods of
Bible Study

ἐραυνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς
John 5:39



P.I.R.S. Publications
271 West Edmundson Avenue
Morgan Hill, CA
www.sgbcsv.org

© 2002 by W. R. Downing. Version 2.0 2017

All rights reserved No part of this publication may be reproduced without the permission of the publisher

P.I.R.S. Publications is a ministry of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Silicon Valley, 271 West Edmundson Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA 95037.

The ministries of Sovereign Grace Baptist Church include:

The Pacific Institute for Religious Studies
Sovereign Grace Baptist Theological Seminary
P.I.R.S. Publications

The PIRSperspective, a theological quarterly publication which addresses doctrinal, historical, denominational and practical issues. This publication may be downloaded from the website:

www.sgbcsv.org

Other books by the author:

Survey of the English Bible: Old Testament Vols. I & II
A Syllabus for an Introductory Study in Biblical Hebrew
Historiography and Early Church History to 325 AD
A Catechism on Bible Doctrine with Commentary
Introductory Lessons in New Testament Greek
The Bible and the Problem of Knowledge
Exegetical Handbook for Biblical Studies
A Biblical and Ecclesiastical Chronology
Lectures on Calvinism and Arminianism
Lectures on Revivals of Religion
A Church Membership Manual
The New Testament Church
A Theological Propaedeutic
Selected Shorter Writings
How to Study the Bible
Biblical Hermeneutics

Preface

Every Believer should strive to become a skillful student of the Bible. The Scriptures are our one objective standard for both our faith and our practice. Everything else is subjective and prone to change. Religious tradition, ritualism, ceremonialism, habit and neglect are all harmful to the Christian. Further, the influence of worldliness, doctrinal departures among professed Christians, and the ignorant dogmatism of some all have their baneful effect.

The Apostle Paul called the Word of God the “Sword of the Spirit.” This refers in the immediate context to the inscripturated Word of God spoken in prayer (Eph. 6:17–20), not to the written Word [ῥῆμα θεοῦ, “utterance”].

Unless we have a firm grasp of the meaning of the Scriptures, the written Word, and are able to quote it, utter it, declare it with authority, or reflect it in prayer (Acts 4:24–26), temptation (Matt. 4:1–11), evangelism (1 Pet. 1:25) and in defense of the faith (1 Pet. 3:15), we will lack direction, discernment and ability to pray aright—and we seem to have few true “prayer warriors” in our day! We also need to evangelize and defend the faith. Declaring the Scriptures is wielding the “Sword of the Spirit!”

May this volume on how to study the Bible prove to be enlightening, challenging and helpful in becoming a true, exact and proficient student of the Word of God. This more than anything else will determine one’s Christian experience and usefulness in the Kingdom of God.

—W. R. Downing

Table of Contents

Common Linguistic Terminology	5
Introduction	9
The Nature of Bible Study	9
There is only One Way to Study the Bible.....	10
The Wrong Direction	11
The Right Direction.....	13
Balanced Bible Study	14
The End of all Bible Study.....	15
Seeking to Understand All of God’s Word	17
The Format of this Book.....	17
Part I: Why Study The Bible?.....	23
Introduction.....	23
Bible Study is to be a High Priority for Every Christian	23
What Place is Bible Study to have in the Life of the Christian?.....	25
God Has given us only One Objective Standard of Truth—The Bible.....	25
God has given us Two Types of Divine Revelation: General and Special.....	26
The Scriptures are to Form The Very Context of Our Lives.....	27
What is the Difference between Bible Reading and Bible Study? ...	27
Bible Reading and Bible Study	27
The Place of Bible Study in God’s Purpose	31
What are the Right Purposes for Bible Study?	33
To Glorify God	33
To Commune with Christ in The Scriptures.....	34
To Know the Will of God	35
To be Obedient to God	35
To Grow toward Spiritual Maturity	35
To Further Our Sanctification	40
To Prepare for The Ministry of The Word	40
To Understand the Purpose and Retain the Purity of the Church	41
To Edify Others	42

To Evangelize the Unconverted	42
To Intelligently Defend The Faith	43
Part II: Essentials and Principles for Bible Study.....	45
I. What are the Essentials for Bible Study?.....	45
The Bible	45
Spiritual Illumination	46
A Right Attitude	48
Orthodox Presuppositions.....	49
Consistent Hermeneutical Principles	50
Helps and Tools	51
II. What are the Practical Principles of Biblical Interpretation?.....	53
Historico-Grammatical Interpretation.....	54
General Principles of Biblical Interpretation	55
1. The Principle of a Reverent Approach	55
2. The Principle of The Primacy of the Original Languages	56
3. The Principle of the Perspicuity of Scripture or the Analogy of Faith.....	67
4. The Principle of Progressive Revelation	68
5. The Principle of a Covenantal Distinction	69
6. The Principle of Lexical and Syntactical Distinction	71
7. The Principle of Context.....	73
8. The Principle of the <i>Usus Loquendi</i>	75
9. The Principle of Figurative Language.....	75
10. The Principle of Theological Proposition	76
11. The Principle of Interpretive and Applicatory Distinction ..	79
12. The Principle of Practical Exegesis	80
Special Principles of Biblical Interpretation	80
1. The Interpretation of Figures of Speech	81
2. The Interpretation of Poetry	87
3. The Interpretation of Types and Symbols	90
4. The Interpretation of Prophecy.....	93
Part III: Methods of Bible Study	97
Introduction.....	97
Three General Approaches to Bible Study	98

The Synthetic Approach	99
The Analytical Approach	100
The Topical Approach.....	100
The Survey Method.....	103
A General Survey of the Bible	104
A Survey of The Book of Genesis	107
The Book of Exodus.....	113
The Epistle to The Romans.....	116
The Inductive Method	119
The Epistle to the Romans	120
The Epistle to the Hebrews	123
The Analytical Method.....	128
Romans 1:16-17	129
Romans 6:1-23	133
Acts 17:1-34.....	145
The Epistle to the Hebrews	163
The Epistle to the Romans	173
The Theological Method	183
Five Theological Illustrations	186
The Baptism of The Holy Spirit.....	187
Spiritual Adoption.....	190
Is The Moral Law Relevant Today?	194
An Expository-Doctrinal Study of Justification by Faith:	
Romans 3:21-5:21	202
A Doctrinal-Theological-Historical Study of Justification	209
The Historical Method.....	241
A Bible Chronology	241
A Harmony of The Gospels and A Chronology of	
The Life of Christ.....	261
The Biographical Method	278
The Book of Acts.....	280
The Life, Ministry and Significance of Elijah	281
The Life of Joseph	286

Appendix I: Why Study The Original Languages of Scripture?	323
Appendix II: Opening the Text.....	375
Appendix III: A Basic Library for the Bible Student.....	381
The Importance of Reading.....	381
Reference Works	383
Bible Handbooks	383
Bible Atlases.....	383
Dictionaries and Encyclopedias	384
Bible Customs	384
Basic Linguistic Works	385
Biblical Introductions and Surveys	386
Bible Commentaries	388
Hermeneutics	391
Doctrinal and Theological Works	391
Apologetics	395
Historical works.....	396
A Concluding, Personal Comment.....	397
Glossary of Biblical Figures of Speech.....	399

Common Linguistic Terminology

Some parts of this book use linguistic terms which are common to both Hebrew and Greek. In addition there are some abbreviations which may need clarification.

Act.	Active voice. The subject is doing the action.
Anarth.	Anarthrous. Without the def. article, this stresses quality or character. The Gk. has no indefinite art, thus the rules of Eng. grammar do <i>not</i> apply. See “Arth.”
Aor.	Gk. aorist tense. Punctiliar action, often past. The action is viewed as a whole, without reference to its progress.
Apoc.	Apocopated. A shortened form of a word in Heb.
Arth.	<i>Arthrous</i> . With the definite article, pointing to a given entity. “The presence of the article identifies, the absence of the article qualifies.”
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . The standard published Hebrew Bible with Masoretic Text.
Cond.	Conditional sentence. Four conditional sentences in Gk. (1) Assuming the truth or reality of a given statement. (2) Assuming that the statement is untrue. (3) contingency or probability. (4) Assuming a possibility.
Conj.	Conjunction. A connecting word such as “and.”
Crit.	Critical Text. The latest eclectic Gk. text.
E.g., e.g.,	<i>Exempli gratia</i> . “For the sake of example.”
Emph.	Emphatic. Either an emphatic form of a word or the emphatic position in the word–order of a sentence or phrase.
Emph. pos.	Emphatic position of a term or phrase by word–order in an inflected language.
Fem.	Feminine gender.
Fig.	Figurative.
Fut.	Future tense.

Gen.	Genitive form, possession, source.
Gk.	Greek.
Heb.	Hebrew.
Hiph.	Hiphpa'el. Causative active.
Hith.	Hithpa'el. Intensive reflexive.
Hoph.	Hoph'al. Causative passive.
Imp.	Imperative. A command or entreaty.
Imperf.	Heb. incomplete action; Gk. continuous action in time past.
Indef.	Anarthrous, without the definite article. See "anarth," "arth."
Inf.	Infinitive.
Intens.	Intensive.
Juss.	Jussive. Heb. 3 pers. of command.
LXX	Septuagint. Gk. version of Heb. Old Testament, c. 246 BC.
Masc.	Masculine gender. Most languages have grammatical gender which aids in grammatical and syntactical exactness.
Mid.	Middle voice, the subject acts with reference to himself. Eng. has no mid. voice.
Ms.	Manuscript, hand-written copy of Scripture
Mss.	Plural of manuscript. Hand-written copies before the advent of printing in the 14 th century.
MT	Masoretic Text. Pointed Heb. text, i.e., with vowels or diacritical marks.
Neg.	Negative. Both Gk. and Heb. have two negatives. Gk. has the double negative for emph.
Neut.	Neuter gender.
n. d.	No date of publication.
Niph.	Niphal. Heb. simple passive or reflexive.
NT	New Testament.
Dir. obj.	Direct object.
OT	Old Testament.

Part.	Particle, a connecting word.
Pass.	Passive voice. The subject receives the action of the vb.
Perf.	Perfect tense. Heb. completed action; Gk. a past tense with either cumulative or present implications. Eng. has no perf. tense.
Pi'el	Pi'el. Heb. intensive active stem.
Pluperf.	Pluperfect. Past tense from point to another in the past.
Pres.	Present tense. Gk: present, continual action.
Pron.	Pronoun. Replaces a noun.
Ptc.	Participle.
Pu'al	Pu'al. Heb. intensive passive stem.
K, Q, Qal.	Heb simple active stem. The basic form of the Heb. vb. is Qal. Masc.
Pl.	Plural number.
STE	<i>Stephanus Text</i> of the Gk. NT. 1550 AD.
TR	<i>Textus Receptus</i> . An eclectic text based on the <i>Stephanus Text</i> with additions from other mss. Called TR in 1633.
Transl.	Translated or translator.
vb.	Verb.
v. d.	Varying date of publication.
Ver.	Version.
WH	Westcott and Hort. The older Critical Gk. Text.

Introduction

The Nature of Bible Study
 There Is only One Way to Study The Bible
 The Wrong Direction
 The Right Direction
 Balanced Bible Study
 The End of All Bible Study
 Seeking to Understand All of God's Word
 The Format of This Book
 Transliterations and Abbreviations
 Encouragements from History

Many are saved out of a life of sin and a complete ignorance of things of God; others are converted, having been reared in a Christian home where the Bible was honored; still others have come to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ out of cults and all manner of false teaching. To all of these, the Scriptures are to become their one objective source and standard for truth, and their sole rule of faith and practice. From the Bible they are to find both direction for and discernment in every area of life and experience. To have such an objective standard, direction and discernment, these—regardless of their background—need to become thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures.¹

The Nature of Bible Study

Bible study is to be the life-long pursuit of every Christian.² Not only so, it is to be considered as a joyful task, a high and holy privilege, a spiritual pleasure!

¹ “Knowledge of the Bible...is the one knowledge that is needful. A man may get to heaven without money, learning, health or friends—but without Bible knowledge he will never get there at all. A man may have the mightiest of minds, and a memory stored with all that mighty mind can grasp—and yet, if he does not know the things of the Bible he will make shipwreck of his soul forever. Woe! woe! woe to the man who dies in ignorance of the Bible!” J. C. Ryle, *How Readest Thou?*, p. 5.

“Neglect of the Bible is like disease of the body. It shows itself in the face of a man's conduct. It tells its own tale. It cannot be hid.” Ryle. Ryle, *Op. cit.*, p. 34.

² 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16–17.

Note: Job 23:12; Psa. 1:1–3; 2 Tim. 3:4. In this last passage, professing Christians in an age of worldliness are described as “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” “Lovers of God” is φιλόθεοι (*philotheoi*), i.e., those who find pleasure in or a passion for God—what a description of those who love God in and through his truth!

It ought to become a sanctified adventure into the pages and truth of God’s Word, a holy pilgrimage that takes one both into the past of redemptive history and into the future of prophetic anticipation. It is a journey into the deep, rich mines of Divine doctrine; to the wide expanses of God’s love;³ to the banquet table filled with the delights of Divine promises; and into the heights of our glorious hope⁴—and, yes, onto the present battlefield for truth, faithfulness and godly living.⁵

But the traveler—the spiritual pilgrim—needs direction and guidance to find these truths and blessings, fully understand their significance, and appropriate them. There is a great danger of being misled; of being deceived by self, by others, or by Satan,⁶ of wandering into areas of danger; and of failing to find the reality for which he searches. There is ever a need for suitable helps on how to study the Bible,⁷ and this work is an attempt toward meeting this need.

There is only One Way to Study the Bible

The Bible may be studied in many ways. Some, many, or even most of these may be wrong. The cults with their heresies, and even well-meaning Christians with their ignorance and errors, testify to this. Some of the most sincere Bible students have become some of the worst heretics. *There is only one way the Bible should and must be studied, and that is in a way*

³ Eph. 3:14–19.

⁴ Psa. 119:18.

⁵ Eph. 6:10–18.

⁶ Gal. 1:6–9; Eph. 4:14; 6:11; Heb. 5:11–14; 1 Pet. 5:6–9; 2 Pet. 3:15–17.

⁷ Acts 8:30–31.

consonant with the very nature of the Bible itself. Its truth is largely reserved for spiritual persons. The unconverted lack the God-given faith (Eph. 2:4–5, 8–10) and spiritual illumination (1 Cor. 2:9–16; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27) to truly comprehend it. Further, the English Bible, despite its relative faithfulness, is yet a version of a translation. To truly, consistently and thoroughly study the Bible as God intended, one must be prepared to enter into those areas which are necessary in order to fully open and comprehend the truth. This necessitates at least an elementary introduction into the areas of the original languages,⁸ the history and culture of those societies to which the Word of God originally came, and attaining a grasp of the doctrinal teaching of Scripture.

The Wrong Direction

Most books on Bible Study, we believe, tend to go in the wrong direction. They purposely limit themselves to the English Bible and its peculiarities, as though the English language, grammar and even the format of the English Bible were the determining factors.

Note: This mentality, which we may refer to as “the infallibility of ignorance,” is based on emotions and prejudice, not rational, historical or linguistic arguments—or an orthodox view of Divine inspiration. Although this trend is relatively recent—beginning in the late 1800s and early 1900s—it has become pervasive among Fundamentalists and many Evangelicals. Why? There are at least four reasons:

- The shift from Classical to modern, “progressive” education produced not only an anti-Christian bias, but also a disdain for the ancient, so-called “dead” languages, especially Greek. Until the mid- to late- nineteenth century, the Greek language was considered a necessary part of a student’s

⁸ When our Lord asked the lawyer [a scribe who spent his life making copies of the Hebrew Scriptures and their interpretation], “What is written in the law? How readest thou?” (Lk. 10:26), he implied a critical and careful exegesis of the Hebrew text, which was no longer understood by the common people. The common “Bible” of our Lord’s day was the *Septuagint* or translation of the Old Testament into *Koinē* Greek, the common language of the people.

basic education by the eighth grade. Latin and Greek prepared the student to study ancient history, the classical writings of Western Civilization, and read not only the ancient classics, but also the Greek New Testament. Such studies helped form an essential part of the student's world-and-life view.

- Before the mid-nineteenth century, every minister, if possible, labored to have at least a foundation, and if possible, a proficiency in the original languages as a matter of necessity. The influence of Charles G. Finney and the revivalist movement played down traditional ministerial education in the 1800's. Modern Fundamentalism and the "Bible School Movement" was an early twentieth century reaction to rationalistic biblical criticism and Modernism in the traditional seminaries. Scholarship in general and study of the original languages in particular became suspect. A study of the English Bible, it was thought, was sufficient. This bias became and often remains entrenched in either an inherent and prideful ignorance or an open, humorous disdain—and in the modern shift from expository to mostly topical preaching.
- The *King James Version* (KJV) remained the most read English Version of the Bible for three centuries. British and American scholarship issued the *Revised Version* (RV, 1881) and *American Standard Version* (ASV, 1901), largely based on discoveries of older biblical manuscripts. These were the beginnings of the plethora of modern versions either based on a newer "critical text" or loose versions and paraphrases based on no text at all. This resulted in even a greater elevation of the KJV in the thinking of many, and a great aversion to any other version.
- The shift from scholarship and Bible study to "soul-winning" as the great emphasis and priority for the church and individual Christian. This has gone hand-in-hand with the modern trend away from catechism studies to "Sunday School literature," and toward programs and activities rather than sound expository preaching from the pulpit. "Success" methodology and psychology tend to replace the priorities of Bible study, memorization and sound, doctrinal teaching. Success has largely replaced faithfulness; pragmatism has overshadowed truth; programs and activities have set aside the rigors of Bible study.

These peculiarities may move one further from the fullness of the truth contained in the languages in which the Scriptures were originally given by God. Not only so, they tend to chain the student to a “Chapter–and–Verse” mentality, which we think is necessarily detrimental. One must follow the thought–process of the Divine and human authors with the understanding that the chapter and verse divisions were intended for ease of reference and never for interpretation.⁹

The Right Direction

Because we are seeking to encourage the study of the Scriptures in the right direction, we do not apologize for referring to and even quoting from the original languages when such references are necessary. No serious study, investigation, research or science can remain consistent or achieve its goals without consulting original sources. In the realm of Bible study, these sources are the original languages. Spiritual illumination, alleged spiritual insight, doctrinal persuasion, or an irrational, superstitious dedication to a version of a translation cannot compensate for a small degree of workable knowledge in the original languages.

An elementary knowledge, especially of the Greek New Testament, if it is correct and consistent, will prove greatly beneficial—and will hopefully provide the necessary impetus for further linguistic study. While we do not seek to promote a pseudo–scholarship, which would give truth to the adage that “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing,” we do seek to promote the most consistent study of the very text of Scripture.

Can any Christian afford the sinful luxury of remaining in ignorance of the Word of God? Is there not a Divine imperative to give the utmost diligence and determination to show ourselves

⁹ The chapter and verse divisions of our English Bible, however, *do* have a great bearing on interpretation—often detrimental. Several doctrinal errors espoused by modern Fundamental and Evangelical Christianity owe much of their existence and influence to chapter divisions in the English Bible!

approved unto God, as laborers who have absolutely no cause for shame because we are skillfully interpreting the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15)? Is it not true that “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4)? Is not God’s Word to be “a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path” (Psa. 119:105. Cf. also Psa. 19:7–14.)? Are we not to hide God’s Word in our hearts that we might not sin against him (Psa. 119:11)?

Balanced Bible Study

Some might object to an “intellectual Christianity,” preferring a more simplistic or “devotional” approach, not realizing that the devotional—if legitimate at all—must derive from the doctrinal, and the doctrinal from the exegetical. Many seem to want a “heart” and not a “head” religion, which often becomes a misplaced zeal without adequate knowledge.¹⁰ Irrationality is not spirituality, nor is feeling the proper basis for faith or practice.¹¹ We must understand that ignorance of Divine truth, religious irrationalism, and an aversion to doctrine, serious study and learning, (1 Tim. 4:13, 16; 2 Tim. 1:13) are neither Christian virtues nor characteristics to be emulated. The words of J. Gresham Machen deserve careful consideration:

What mars the simplicity of the childlike faith which Jesus commends is not an admixture of knowledge, but an admixture of selftrust. The childlike simplicity of faith is marred

¹⁰ Prov. 19:2; Rom. 10:2. The Jews had a fanatical zeal for righteousness, but failed to correctly and fully comprehend (οὐ κατ’ ἐπίγνωσιν [*ou kat’ epignōsin*] i.e., “not according to full, adequate, correct knowledge”—a knowledge revealed in their own Scriptures!) God’s righteousness, so were steeped in their own ignorant, culpable self-righteousness.

¹¹ As John Flavel, the great Puritan preacher of Dartmouth, wrote almost four centuries ago:

Feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving,
Our warrant is the Word of God,
Naught else is worth believing.

sometimes by ignorance, but never by knowledge; it will never be marred—and never has been marred in the lives of the great theologians—by the blessed knowledge of God and of the Saviour Jesus Christ which is contained in the Word of God. Without that knowledge we might be tempted to trust partly in ourselves; but with it we trust wholly in God. The more we know of God, the more unreservedly we trust Him; the greater will be our progress in theology, the simpler and more childlike will be our faith.¹²

As God made man with both a heart and a brain, and made him upright with his brain above his heart, we prefer a necessary balance as reflecting the Divine design. Emotions are to be responsive to Divine truth, never causative. Did not the Apostle Paul write to one of his most beloved churches, “And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all discernment, in order that ye may approve on examination things that which differ...” (Phil. 1:9. A free rendering from the Greek)? And to another assembly:

I...Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us—ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*...(Eph. 1:15–20).

And did not the Apostle Peter close his last epistle with the words, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...” (2 Pet. 3:18)?

The End of all Bible Study

The end of all Bible study is doctrinal truth (2 Tim. 3:15–16). One simply does not know the Scriptures until he

¹² J. Gresham Machen, quoted by W. J. Grier, *The Best Books*, p. 62.

consistently arrives at their doctrinal teaching, and conversely, no one knows Christian Doctrine as he should, unless he understands it biblically. It is the doctrinal teaching of Scripture that is to govern our thinking and guide our lives. We need a consistent theology for a consistent Christian experience. Tracing the sojourn of Israel in the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan is simply an exercise in history and geography; as is tracking the Apostle Paul through his three missionary journeys and his voyage to Rome. The Psalms and Proverbs may be studied as poetry. The Gospel records are historical, depicting the life and teachings of our Lord. The New Testament Epistles are letters written to churches concerning various difficulties Christians experienced in the mid-first century AD.

Why and in what way are these portions of Scripture edifying to us, removed from them by over twenty centuries as we are? They edify because they teach by precept, principle and example—because they convey doctrinal truth that has an immediate impact upon our lives and speaks to our experience. Apart from such doctrinal truth, the Scriptures degenerate into mere moralistic teaching which neither evangelizes, edifies, nor sanctifies.¹³

¹³ “There are thousands of professing Christians...who know literally nothing about the gospel. They could not give you the slightest account of its distinctive doctrines. They have no more idea of the meaning of conversion, grace, faith, justification and sanctification than so many words and names in Arabic....And can I suppose that such persons read [and study] the Scriptures? I cannot suppose it. I do not believe they do.” J. C. Ryle, *Loc. cit.*

“The victories of Christianity, wherever they have been won, have been won by distinct doctrinal theology; by telling men roundly of Christ’s vicarious death and sacrifice; by teaching them justification by faith and bidding them believe on a crucified Saviour; by preaching ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Spirit.” J. C. Ryle, quoted by W. J. Grier, *Op. cit.*, p. 62.

Seeking to Understand All of God's Word

Some might yet object to the rigors of Bible study, assuming that the Scriptures are, after all, simple enough that in them even a child can find the way of salvation. Perhaps this is true, but it is likewise true that even an inspired Apostle had great difficulty in understanding one of his own brethren, and had to write, "...even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood..." (2 Pet. 3:15–16). Bible study does not limit itself to the truths perhaps easily discerned by a child, but seeks to consistently understand all of God's Word—even those things which are "hard to be understood."

The Format of this Book

This book is arranged in three parts. Part I deals with the subject of why the Bible must be studied and not merely read. It explains the reasons why God intends for every Christian to be a serious student of the Scriptures. It also gives the main reasons why Bible study is absolutely necessary for the spiritual good of the individual Christian, for the church, and for the cause of Christ in this world.

Part II surveys the essentials for Bible study and the basic principles of biblical interpretation. This discussion of the essentials is spiritual, academic and practical. A list of basic helps is given and evaluated for the student who desires an intelligent, practical approach to Bible study. The section on the principles of interpretation covers both general issues and the more specialized rules for understanding figures of speech, poetry and prophecy.¹⁴

¹⁴ This section is greatly expanded, together with an inclusive section on lessons from the history of interpretation in the author's work, *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Morgan Hill, CA: PIRS Publications, 2002. 256 pp.

In Part III, the student is introduced to various methods of Bible study, seeking to give necessary direction, discipline and organization to the study of the Scriptures. The three major methodologies—synthetic, analytical and topical—are discussed and illustrated in their various aspects.

Transliterations and Abbreviations

All words and passages in Hebrew or Greek [except the appendices] have been transliterated into English to accommodate the beginner in order to introduce him to the elementary pursuit of biblical knowledge.¹⁵ We have also included a list of abbreviations, some of which we have used in the text notes and footnotes. These will introduce the student to abbreviations that are often used in more advanced works.

Encouragements from History

Lest some despair, or think that the serious study of the Scriptures is reserved for the very few, or that they have neither time nor the mental equipment to advance themselves, we close with some historical illustrations which will hopefully stir many in this generation to become faithful and consistent students of the Word:

John Brown of Haddington (1722–1787) grew up as a relatively unlearned young man, a rustic shepherd boy in Scotland, and was only able to spend one semester in a grammar school. With a scant knowledge of the rudiments of Latin, and *without a Greek grammar or teacher, he taught himself to read Greek* by comparing biblical names with the Greek alphabet and seeking the meaning through the English Bible. He developed his own rules from Latin and English grammars he had borrowed.

Having thus established the basis for reading the Greek, he desired a Greek Testament. Having saved what money he could,

¹⁵ Transliteration of the original language of Scripture is an accommodation, an unnatural crutch, that the student should shun as soon as possible for an ability to work in the respective alphabets of the Greek or Hebrew.

he left his flock in the hills with a friend and walked all night to St. Andrews University.

...one evening, in the year 1738, at the age of sixteen, he set out on the twenty-four miles of unknown road that lay between him and St. Andrews. He arrived early in the morning, footsore and weary. He found the bookseller's shop in South Street, near the University Library, then owned by Alexander McCulloch. Going in, he startled the shopman by asking for a Greek New Testament. He was a very raw-looking lad at the time, his clothes were rough, home-spun, and ragged, and his feet were bare.

'What would you do wi' that book? you'll no can read it,' said the bookseller. 'I'll try to read it,' was the humble answer of the would-be purchaser. Meanwhile some of the professors had come into the shop, and, hearing the talk and surveying the youth, questioned him closely as to what he was, where he came from, and who taught him.

Then one of them, not unlikely Francis Pringle, then Professor of Greek, asked the bookseller to bring a Greek New Testament and, throwing it down on the counter, said, 'Boy, if you can read that book, you shall have it for nothing.' He took it up eagerly, read a passage to the astonishment of those in the shop, and marched out with his gift, so worthily won, in triumph. By the afternoon, he was back at duty on the hills of Abernathy, studying his New Testament the while, in the midst of his flock.¹⁶

John Brown of Haddington, *largely self-taught, also mastered Latin, Hebrew, Geography, Mathematics, and Theology*. He later became known as a universal scholar and author, and wrote a Bible dictionary, a self-interpreting Bible, and several volumes on History and Theology. In later life, he was the primary teacher of the preachers of the Secession Church of Scotland. His two sons were both ministers of great repute, and his grandson was the eminent Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, the biblical commentator of the nineteenth century.

John Gill (1697–1771) was taken from the local grammar school by his parents at age eleven because of religious

¹⁶ Robert Mackenzie, *John Brown of Haddington*, pp. 34–35.

convictions—the local schoolmaster insisted that the Baptist students accompany him to the Anglican Church for the weekly hours of prayer. Largely self-taught, *John Gill had, by the age of twelve, fairly mastered Greek, Hebrew, and Latin.* He later became the most prominent Calvinistic Baptist minister in Britain, and the author of a commentary on the entire Bible, a *Body of Divinity*, and several other classic works, including perhaps the best defense of the Doctrines of Grace ever written, *The Cause of God and Truth.*

He personally wrote and edited over ten thousand pages of commentary and theology. He became a great force for orthodoxy in a time when many were led astray by the false notions of Arianism and Arminianism. He was granted the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the Marischal College and University at Aberdeen for his knowledge of the Scriptures, the Oriental languages and Jewish antiquities. When his deacons congratulated him on this token of respect, he pleasantly replied, “I neither thought it, nor bought it, nor sought it.” Augustus Toplady, a close personal and younger friend, said of him that, “If any one man can be supposed to have trod the whole circle of human learning, it was Dr. Gill.”¹⁷

Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813–1875) as a boy, while earning his livelihood at an ironworks, managed to devote his spare time to the study of Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic and Welsh. He became a great British biblical scholar, and, despite poverty, ill health and opposition from other scholars, devoted a life-time of meticulous labors upon the text of the New Testament *as an act of worship.* The fruit of his studies has blessed subsequent generations, and “he, being dead, yet speaketh” through his prodigious editorial labors and many published works.

Sinclair Thomson (1784–1864), known as “The Shetland Apostle,” was relatively unschooled and earned his living as a

¹⁷ The information and quotations taken from the brief memoir of Dr. Gill’s life and writings from volume one of his *Commentary*, pp. ix–xxxvi.

tenant farmer and fisherman. Upon his conversion and subsequent call to the ministry, *he arose from two to three o'clock each morning to study for at least two hours before commencing his ordinary labors to earn a living for himself and his family.* He was a fervent Christian, a convinced Baptist, an exceptional preacher, and became an astute theologian. His ministry brought a revival of truth to the Shetland Islands.

In his later life, he traveled south to Scotland and England at times to collect money for the chapels he built throughout the Islands. He often preached to assemblies of common people, and also to ministers and theologians. On one occasion, he was invited to address a gathering of eminent ministers. Present at this meeting were his traveling companion, Mr. Sowerby, who was a neighboring minister–friend, and a minister from the Church of Scotland. When the Scottish minister remarked about Mr. Thomson’s knowledge and unusual preaching gifts and abilities, Mr. Sowerby said to him that he would be still more astonished if he knew his personal history. The Scottish minister asked him to proceed. Mr. Sowerby said that Sinclair Thomson ‘has never yet, in all his life, spent fully one–quarter of a year in school; all besides, is purely self–culture.’ The minister held up his hands in astonishment, exclaiming, ‘Mr. Sowerby, he puts us both to shame!’¹⁸

Meager time, modest abilities and lack of academic achievement do not necessarily preclude one from becoming an astute student of the Scriptures. Sanctified dedication, discipline and organization are the keys which will enable anyone of average ability to achieve a proficiency in this great, noble and glorious task. Remember, there is but one objective source and standard of truth, only one rule of both faith and practice, only one body of special, direct, Divine revelation—the inscripturated Word of God. Becoming what God intended—a diligent student

¹⁸ This sketch taken from biographical information in J. A. Smith, *Sinclair Thomson The Shetland Apostle.*

of his Holy Word—is simply a matter of having the right priorities.

A final thought. What other book can guide you through life, speak with absolute authority to every sphere of human activity and experience, satisfy your deepest longings, bring the comfort of heaven down to earth—down deep into your heart and soul—draw out your most profound thoughts, demand your reverent obedience and prepare you for death? It is not only folly, yea, irrationality to neglect the study of the Scriptures—it is sin.

How to Study the Bible

Texts

Psalm 119:1–7. Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed *are* they that keep his testimonies, *and that* seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded *us* to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.

2 Timothy 2:15. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 3:16–17. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Part I

Why Study The Bible?

Bible Study is to be a High Priority for Every Christian
 What Place is Bible Study to have in the Life of the Christian?
 What is the Difference between Bible Reading and Bible Study?
 God intends for every Christian to be a Bible Student
 What are the Right Purposes for Bible Study?

Introduction

Why study the Bible? Is such study optional? Is it not sufficient simply to read the Scriptures? Does such study need to be intelligent, comprehensive and consistent? What is Bible study supposed to do? What is its purpose? How does one go about it? This study seeks to answer these and other questions. It further seeks to impress upon every believer the need to become a serious student of the Word of God.

The study of the Scriptures must be and remain one of the greatest priorities in the life of every Christian. The Bible is our one objective, immutable source of truth. Everything else is subjective and therefore mutable. Consider the following:

Bible Study is to be a High Priority
for Every Christian

That every Christian ought to read the Scriptures is without controversy. A “prayerless” or “Bibleless” Christian would be a contradiction in terms. That every Christian must be a Bible student, however, putting the study of the Word of God as one of the greatest priorities of his life, constantly endeavoring to rightly understand, interpret and consistently apply the Scriptures, is not only controversial, it is often seen in our modern day as unnecessary! In this modern era, even with an abundance of translations, versions, “Study Bibles,” and a variety of printed, electronic and computerized “helps,” there are relatively few who make a consistent attempt to truly become students of the Word of God. Most professing Christians in this generation are woefully ignorant of basic biblical truth.

Further, the study of the Bible is not a simple, natural, unassuming undertaking. It is a reverent act—an act of worship.

It is a sacred science, and as such, it necessitates a certain mind-set or attitude of approach, established principles, a consistent process and conclusions that are to be demonstrated in the life. It is meant to be a reverent, life-long pursuit!

Finally, God did not give us his Word in a systematic arrangement, but in the form of progressive, redemptive history. The Word must be thoroughly studied and arranged in a comprehensive and systematic [non-contradictory] way to adequately come to terms with its doctrinal teaching. God created man to work, and Bible study is no exception to this principle!

How few Bible students we have in our day! This is evident by the relative ignorance of many, the seeming indifference shown to the Bible, the modern reluctance to memorize Scripture, and the modern rejection of doctrinal truth. I grew up in an age when every Christian was to be a Bible student, and I recall my father rising early each morning, long before daylight, to spend two hours in Bible study and prayer before leaving for a long, hard day's work. He wore out several Bibles, could quote chapter after chapter by heart, could consistently evangelize, reason from the Scriptures, and was conversant in biblical doctrine. He was not yet a preacher, only a Christian, a church member and teacher—but he and others understood that Bible study was one of the great priorities for the believer.¹⁹

Although we may spend long hours in commute traffic or work late, very few experience the exhausting physical labor of those in previous generations. Yet they took the time to seriously study the Bible. For them and for us the issue is the same—a matter of priorities.

¹⁹ My father, Howard Downing (1917–1982), was a serious Bible student from the time of his conversion, as were many others of his generation. Only years later did he attend Bible school for a semester, and was not ordained as a gospel minister until the age of fifty-seven, after which he finally completed a degree in Bible and lived to see a time of revival under his ministry.

What great blessings are missed because Christians do not take the Word of God seriously enough to study it, seek to understand it, and consistently apply it to their lives!

This study deals with the essentials of Bible study, and seeks to promote the consistent, practical understanding, interpretation and application of the Word of God to the life and experience.

What Place is Bible Study to have
in the Life of the Christian?

The study of the Scriptures must be and remain one of the greatest priorities in the life of every Christian. Together with private prayer, Bible study remains the chief means of grace and the foundation for Christian growth, maturity and usefulness. Consider the following:

God Has given us only One
Objective Standard of Truth—The Bible

The Christian life is comprised of two aspects, objective and subjective, or the objective truth of Scripture and subjective experience. Apart from Scripture, we would be left entirely with the subjective aspect. All would necessarily become relativistic (no final, authoritative word, except the strength of individual experience), empirical (all judgment would be based on experience alone), existential (completely subjective and tending toward irrationalism or emotionalism) and pragmatic (whatever seemed to work would be right). Thus, the most emotional or mystical would be the most spiritual, and the strongest personalities would determine the direction of Christianity.

Without the objective safeguard of Scripture, Christianity always tends toward ignorance, inconsistency, contradiction and irrationalism. This is the witness of both church history²⁰ and our own day, with its amazing ignorance of Scripture, distaste for authoritative preaching and doctrinal truth, the tendency toward

²⁰ The study of Church History should never be denigrated, as it is an indicator of how the truth of God, or lack of it, has been expressed in the life of professing Christianity.

irrationalism, the Charismatic Movement, the “Toronto Blessing” type of experience,²¹ and the increasing influence of the cults.

God has given us Two Types of Divine Revelation:
General and Special

General revelation is concerned with our knowledge of God through his creation. This is sometimes called “Natural Theology.” Special revelation is that direct revelation in and through the Word of God, both spoken and written. Why must we be concerned with these?

- *Man misunderstands even general revelation.* As a fallen being, man suffers from the noetic effects of sin (i.e., the fall has adversely affected his perception and thought-process (Rom. 1:18–20). As great as the testimony of creation is, man misinterprets it, both knowingly and unknowingly.
- *Man is utterly adverse to the truth of God through either general or special revelation.* He possesses an aversion to all Divine truth and is either unwilling to submit to it, or perverts it to his liking (Rom. 1:18²²; 8:7–8; Matt. 15:1–9; 5:21–22, 27–29²³).
- *Special revelation is a necessity.* Both unfallen and fallen man find general revelation insufficient and need special, distinct direct revelation from God (Gen. 2:16–17; Matt. 4:4).

²¹ Increasingly irrational, the contemporary experience has gone from “holy laughter,” to “animal noises,” to “holy vomiting”!

²² “hold,” κατεχόντων (*katechontōn*), pres. ptc., “constantly suppressing.”

²³ Rabbinic tradition taught that only the overt form of sin was actually sin. Our Lord began with the root and source of all sin—the human heart and thought-process.

The Scriptures are to Form The Very Context of Our Lives

Man, as created in the image and likeness of God, is an intelligent, rational, morally–responsible being fully accountable to God both now and in final judgment. No one can afford not to live by the inspired inscripturated Word of God. This is especially true of everyone who names the name of Christ. The Bible is to be our authoritative and very practical textbook for both faith [what we are to believe] and practice [how we are to live] (Matt. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:16–17).

What is the Difference between Bible Reading and Bible Study?

Bible Reading and Bible Study

Bible reading is simply what it implies—reading the Bible, which is relatively simple in that there are but two requirements: first, possessing the Scriptures in one’s own language and second, the ability and desire to read. However, one may read and not understand—and not even understand that he does not understand!

Although Bible reading is necessary, Bible study is altogether different. The reader reads; the true student of the Scriptures, however, also seeks out the meaning of words, phrases, clauses, sentences; the theological, historical, cultural and psychological context; the significance of figurative language; he studies the customs of that day, researches parallel passages, and seeks to put all derived or resultant teaching in alignment to the “analogy of faith,” or the consistent, inclusive teaching of Scripture.

Note: The terminology “analogy of faith” was originally based on a misunderstanding of Rom. 12:6, “. . . according to the proportion of faith” (κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως (*kata tēn analogian tēs pisteōs*), i.e., the measure of personal faith—not going beyond what God has given by way of personal gifts of ministry and faith personally or individually received.

The term “faith” was taken by the Church Fathers in an objective sense as the doctrinal teaching of Scripture rather

than a subjective sense of personal, experimental faith, belief or trust. They spoke of the *Analogia* or *Regula Fidei* as pertaining to the general principles of the Christian faith. Thus, the term entered into Christian theology. Thus, the “analogy [ἀναλογία, *analogian*] of faith” came to have its present meaning. It has become an acceptable theological term, although it was originally misappropriated from Rom. 12:6.

In short, he seeks to arrive at an understanding of the doctrinal truth contained in the Scriptures, and then seeks to consistently apply this truth to his life. For the serious Christian, nothing less than Bible study is adequate.

The Issues of an Unregenerate Mind-Set

What can be said of those who read the Bible with an agenda (with a view to correcting or challenging another person, or to set aside truth that might convict or challenge their own lives), but not for their own learning and edification?

Note: An agenda might in itself seem to be God-honoring and a search for the truth, but it always tends to twist the Scripture, as witnessed throughout the history of Christianity. When one “seizes the first weapon available to defend himself,” he tends to make great mistakes. He may grab the wrong thing, or he may have the right object, but grasp in it the wrong way (e.g., taking a knife by the blade rather than the handle).

Sadly, the history of biblical interpretation is largely the history of mishandling the Scriptures for this very reason and in this very way. The early writers [Church Fathers] appropriated the allegorical approach (They “spiritualized” the Scripture and divorced it from its intended literal meaning), which they inherited from Alexandrian Judaism, which in turn had appropriated it from Greek paganism through such men as Aristobolus and Philo the Jew.

This gross mishandling of Scripture would prepare the way for Romish ecclesiasticism, sacerdotalism, the Dark Ages, Medieval Scholasticism and a host of other evils. Later misinterpretation has led to religious relativism, antinomianism, and religious irrationalism, i.e., the priority of subjective experience over objective truth.

What of those who read only “devotionally,” to gain a subjective “peace” or to derive an irrational [existential]

“comfort” by the act of reading? What of some who study with inconsistent principles of interpretation and so grossly misunderstand the Scriptures, and thus excuse sin in their lives or remain unaffected by Divine truth?

Note: Some limit the Moral Law to the Decalogue, and limit the Decalogue to national Israel in the Old Testament, and so become doctrinal and practical antinomians. E.g., those who misunderstand Rom. 6:1–23; 7:13–25 and 1 Cor. 3:1–4 and espouse the “Carnal Christian” heresy. E.g., in modern “Metropolitan Churches,” which are peopled with [sic] “homosexual Christians,” it is alleged that the sin of Sodom was inhospitality! Among the so-called “Modernists,” only what Jesus personally said or taught is authoritative, thus what Moses or Paul wrote concerning immorality or homosexuality is insignificant!

And what of those who read and then refuse to come to terms with the truth revealed? The conclusions are ultimately only two: (1) either such people are unregenerate and unconverted, and so blind to Divine truth and its implications (1 Cor. 2:14), or (2) they are Christians acting out of character, in rebellion against God’s Word and therefore necessarily and inevitably subject to Divine chastening (Heb. 12:4–8). These do not need “counseling,” these need to repent—and in some cases, need to be converted!

Note: The Christian is usually referred to in Scripture as a “Believer” (Gk. ὁ πιστευων [*ho pisteuōn*], relat. pres. ptc.), i.e., one who constantly exercises faith, or is characterized by belief. The very basis, ground and context of this belief, faith or trust is the Scripture, opened to the understanding through the illuminating ministry of the Spirit of God. Unbelief is not neutral; unbelief is wicked disobedience.

The Necessary End of all Bible Study

We do not really understand the Bible unless we understand it doctrinally, and we do not truly understand our doctrine, unless we understand it biblically. There is a direct correspondence between spiritual growth and a knowledge of doctrinal truth. Mark the words of Maurice Roberts, Editor of “The Banner of Truth Magazine”:

Growth in Christian grace is closely related to our growth in theological knowledge. If our progress in doctrine is poor, either because we hear poor preaching or do not care to read books on Christian doctrine, we shall hardly advance in a true knowledge of God and of his thoughts. Doctrine, after all, is just a word for God and for his works and ways as these are divinely revealed to us in holy Scripture. And ignorance of God is, of all forms of ignorance, the most serious and the most common. Conversion brings to us a true and saving knowledge of God, but it does not remove all our ignorance at a stroke. Conversion is the first knowledge of God. It is real light, but it is as yet only the peep of day. Vast increase of light and knowledge are possible to the converted man. Such increase is to be achieved as a rule only by deep and prayerful study of the Bible and the great books such as Calvin's *Institutes* or the writings of the Puritans.²⁴

The end result of Bible study is doctrinal truth consistently applied to the life. This is the necessary end of all true Bible study, and any Bible study is seriously defective and even false that does not culminate in the application of doctrinal truth to the life!

All and every blessedness pertaining to the Christian life flows to us through the Scriptures by the Spirit of God. And it all comes to us through the blessedness of humble obedience to Divine truth. If we truly love God, we will love and study his Word, and if we love God and his Word, we will lovingly obey his Word. What blessings we miss, what chastening we invite and experience, and what needless suffering we experience because we will not study, understand, apply and experience in our lives the fruit of humble submission and obedience to the Word of a loving and gracious God!

²⁴ Maurice Roberts, Editor of *The Banner of Truth Magazine*, *The Christian's High Calling*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2000, p. 32.

God intends for Every Christian to be
a Bible Student

What is God Doing?

What is God doing in the life of every single believer? What is his purpose? How can we account for or explain the great variety of Christian experience, with its trials, opposition, inconsistencies and sin, disappointments, unanswered prayer, spiritual warfare, and Divine chastening? The answer is, that God is in the process of conforming each one of us to the image of his Son, and so has foreordained us to “good works” (Rom. 8:28–30; Eph. 1:3–14; 2:8–10).

This process commences at regeneration and will only be concluded in our glorification (Rom. 8:17–23). It is in this preordained context that we must view the Christian life and experience! Whatever we think, do or say either brings us closer to this goal or necessarily puts us in the way of Divine correction and discipline (Heb. 12:4–8).

How much time has been lost, energy expended, and trials endured needlessly simply because some have ignorantly thought that salvation was conversion—simply an event, an experience, the work of a moment—or that God would overlook sin in the lives of his own, or that the Christian life was one of options!

Coming to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith and turning from a life of sin in repentance are only the beginning, the very first steps in a pilgrimage that cannot end until we stand glorified and completely redeemed—body, soul and spirit—in the very presence of God. Such truth should transform our lives, govern our thinking, sanctify our motives, mitigate our suffering, determine every human relationship, and quicken our feeble efforts to live as Christians—those who are being conformed to the image of Christ.

The Place of Bible Study in God’s Purpose

Because of this high and glorious goal of being conformed to the image of Christ, and so being foreordained unto good works, there are certain necessary issues:

- We must be a holy or sanctified people (Eph. 1:3–5; 1 Thess. 4:3; Titus 2:11–15; 1 Pet. 2:9).
- We must grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18; Phil. 1:9–11; 3:10–15).
- We must mortify sin (Psa. 119:11; Rom. 8:11–13; Col. 3:5).
- We must have a proper understanding of the Scriptures in order to interpret and apply them correctly (2 Tim. 2:15).

Note: The word translated “study” in our English Bible, which makes this the primary text for Bible study, does not necessarily convey the full significance of the Gk. The term σπούδασον (*spoudason*), aor. imp., denotes “give the utmost diligence with a sense of urgency and determination.”

The wording of the Gk. is that our primary diligence and obligation are God-ward, that we are to be skilled craftsmen (ἐργάτην, *ergatēn*, either skilled craftsman or laborer) who have absolutely no need to be ashamed (ἀνεπαίσχυντον, *anepaischunton*, an intens. term with the α privitive and the intensive ἐπί), correctly handling (ὀρθοτομοῦντα) [lit: *orthotounta*, cutting straight], and so correctly interpreting the Word of truth. Paul was a skilled craftsman in *cilicium*, the dark goat’s hair fabric of the Roman Cilician Province. He knew the utter necessity of making a straight or correct cut. The utmost determination and skill are required in the careful and consistent interpretation and application of Scripture.

- We must have an inclusive, and very practical grasp of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

Note: The first issue is that the Scriptures are the very Word of God, and therefore have absolute authority (πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος [*pasa graphē theopneustos*], “every Scripture is God-breathed”).

The second issue is that every major area of life is covered in a very practical sense: doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness.

The third issue is that through this inclusive, authoritative ministry of the Scriptures, the individual becomes symmetrically developed (ὡς ἄρτιος ἦ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ

ἄνθρωπος [*hina artios ē ho tou theou anthrōpos*] , “in order that fully–limbed [symmetrically–developed] might be the man of God” (πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος [*pros pan ergon agathon exērtismenos*]), and to every good work completely out–fitted.”

- We must apply the Scripture to our own experience in a very practical and consistent manner (2 Tim. 3:16–17; Phil. 2:12–16).

Note: “Work out” (κατεργάζεσθε, pres. imp., *katergazesthe*), “constantly seek to bring to its logical conclusion,” i.e., Christ–likeness in the life, as connoted by the context of v. 5–16 and directly taught in Rom. 8:29.

The God–ordained means of grace for all these is the inscripturated Word of God. This means that every Christian must seek to become a very serious, thorough and consistent student of the Bible!

What are the Right Purposes for Bible Study?

Why study the Bible? Is such study optional? Must it necessarily be intelligent and consistent? What is Bible study supposed to do? What is its purpose? The following are the main correct reasons:

To Glorify God

The first purpose for Bible study is that this is one of the primary means by which we are to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31). An understanding of and an alignment to the Scriptures is at the very heart of true Christianity. We cannot glorify God in any other aspect of our lives if we are defective at the point of understanding and being faithful to the Scriptures. Apart from the Bible, we would neither rightly know God nor have any idea how to live to and for the glory of God.

Private, personal Bible study and prayer are the primary means of grace for the Christian. If we truly love God, we will love his Word, we will pray, and we will grow in both grace and knowledge. Those who do not love God or his Word, who do not learn his commandment to obey them are simply unconverted

persons (Acts 20:32; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:15–17; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:3–5, 15–17, 20, 27; 4:19; 5:2–3, 10–13).

To Commune with Christ in The Scriptures

There is a very definite place for an academic approach to the Scriptures. To truly and properly understand the Bible, we must gain knowledge through other sources and develop certain necessary skills. But there is also a sanctified and proper devotional aspect that ought to be aimed for. The academic should undergird this, but not supplant it. Through the Scriptures, coupled with meditation of Divine truth and prayer, we are to commune with the Lord Jesus Christ and be refreshed in mind and spirit. It is not enough to have the mind filled if the heart and spirit are never touched with Divine truth and its implications. The end of the study of Scripture is doctrinal truth—and that truth experientially brought home to the heart and applied to the life.

The things of God are all great and mighty things, and they should exert a great and mighty influence upon us in every way. The Bible is not a quarry for scholars to research in and nothing more. It is not a textbook for religious education only. It is not simply a fountain of proof-texts. It is a God-given account of how he himself has taken steps to redeem us from death and hell, to translate us from darkness unto light, to lift us from sin to grace and from grace to glory at last. All of this stupendous divine plan is concentrated on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, our beloved Savior. He is its Alpha and its Omega. He is its Yea and its Amen. Surely we cannot, dare not, must not allow ourselves to read the Bible, which speaks of him, and not also make it our regular rule and practice to *feel* some of his love to us as we read it....

One of the reasons why men read the Bible and feel nothing as they read it is that they do not approach it in the right way and with the right understanding. We should see Christ in the Bible everywhere....To read the Bible with academic, critical or other interests to the forefront of our minds is to miss the mark and to lose the blessing. We are above all to read the Bible so as to 'meet' Christ in it. It is because we are too often 'fools and slow of heart' to believe

that the Scriptures all point to Jesus that we put them down without our hearts having been stirred within us.²⁵

To Know the Will of God

The Bible reveals the general will of God and often his specific will to all men, especially the believer (Ex: 20:1–17; Eccl. 12:13–14; Matt. 22:36–39). The spiritual nature of Bible study is presupposed in knowing God’s will through the study of his Word. The end result is conformity to God’s will through the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures know nothing of a mere abstract or theoretical knowledge but only a concrete or experiential knowledge of God’s will, i.e., the will of God is only truly known and enjoyed as we submit and conform to it (Psa. 119:11; Rom. 12:1–2)!²⁶

To be Obedient to God

A right understanding of the Scriptures is essential for intelligently knowing the revealed will of God, which, in turn, is necessary to our complete, willful and loving obedience (Rom. 2:17–20; Eph. 5:15–17; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:18; 1 Jn. 2:3–6). Apart from the Scriptures we would be left to our own ideas, prejudices and feelings. True Bible study is meant to bring us into faithful obedience to the Word of God.²⁷

To Grow toward Spiritual Maturity

True spirituality is primarily intellectual and then practical—not mystical, emotional or irrational. It is primarily intellectual

²⁵ Maurice Roberts, *Op. cit.*, pp. 147–148.

²⁶ Rom. 12:1–2 is based upon the foregoing doctrinal content of Romans chapters 1–11. The Apostle’s reasoning is that we must spiritually prepare and conform to God’s will in order to see how blessed it is in and for our lives.

²⁷ “...read the Bible in a spirit of obedience and self-application. Sit down to the study of it with a daily determination that you will live by its rules, rest on its statements, and act on its commands. Consider... ‘How does this affect my...course of conduct?’That Bible is read best, which is practiced most.” J. C. Ryle, *How Readest Thou?*, p. 55.

because we must intelligently grasp the Scriptures through which the Holy Spirit ministers grace and brings us to spiritual maturity (Acts 8:30²⁸; Eph. 4:11–16²⁹; Phil. 1:9–11; Col. 1:28–29; 2 Pet. 3:18). It becomes practical as the grace of the Holy Spirit works through the Word to conform us to the image of Christ. There is a very necessary and proper place for the feelings or emotions, but this is in the context of Divine truth; conversely Divine truth has no place in the context of the emotions, i.e., we must not have to become emotional to receive or reject Divine truth. The emotions are meant to be responsive, not determinative. This balance must be emphasized in our present age of religious irrationality!

The following discussion of true spirituality, although lengthy, is to the point and stated in the simplest terms with reference to its character and results in the experience:

It is hard to say what Christian spirituality is. It is not equivalent to giftedness because there are eloquent and talented people who are full of themselves. It is not the same as theological exactness because those who are less correct in their understanding of the truth are sometimes strong in grace and love to Christ.

Spirituality is not something which can be measured by studying one aspect of a person's life, but by taking account of all aspects. It is roughly equivalent to what we mean by 'Christian character'. It is the measure of our spiritual renewal after the image of Christ himself.

Our assessment of our own and others' progress in spirituality must begin with the realization that there is a basic distinction to be made between what a man has by nature and what he has by grace. One man has a naturally clear intellect, another a naturally accurate memory, a third has a naturally charming temperament. These are all valuable assets but their possession does not prove spirituality, still less spirituality of a

²⁸ Philip did not ask the Ethiopian eunuch, "How do you feel about the Bible?" But rather, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

²⁹ Note that spiritual maturity is not nebulous, but primarily intellectual, as it centers here not only on love, unity and spiritual growth, but also on doctrinal knowledge and maturity.

high order. It proves natural charm and natural talent and nothing more. Such talent is to be found also in the unconverted.

Spirituality, however, is proved by the presence in the soul of those graces which are not natural. These are such characteristics as humility, fear of offending God, delight in communion with Christ, love of souls, ambition to glorify God and to enjoy him, love towards other believers as one's brethren, repentance for all known sin, frequent confession to God and longing for the eternal state of glory. Such things as these cannot arise out of natural inclination or temperament because they require the supernatural energies of the Holy Spirit to produce and promote them.

There is, of course, an infinite distance between what is natural and what is supernatural...The least Christian is in a different category from the most devout non-Christian. The work of God in the most charming and respectable unbeliever is not qualitatively as excellent as the work of God in the weakest of his own true children. The lowest spark of grace in any man places him in a spiritual class far above all natural excellence. 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit' (John 3:6).

It seems to human wisdom to be offensive to say that a man cannot cultivate himself so as to be pleasing to God. After all, man *can* pray and preach, read the Bible and take the Lord's Supper, go to church services and even become an authority on some aspects of religious study. But all of this falls short of spirituality because it is not the outcome of that act of the Holy Spirit which we call the new birth and which alters a man radically in his whole nature.

To be religious and not spiritual is to be in the most dangerous state of soul possible to man in this life. Christ has the sternest warnings for such persons. He denounces their religious condition to be that of whited sepulchres (Matt. 23:27), persecutors (Luke 11:47-51), hinderers of men from salvation (Luke 11:52), hypocrites (Matt. 23:13), 'serpents' and a 'generation of vipers', who cannot 'escape the damnation of hell' (Matt. 23:33).

Such language is a reminder to us that a purely nominal religion is worse than useless. It is a fearful snare to the soul and leads away from God under the pretext of serving him. It causes 'the light in us to be darkness' (Matt. 6:23). It leaves us

children of the devil while we imagine ourselves the children of God (John 8:41,44). It will at last shut the door of heaven forever against us even though we have convinced ourselves that we are safe (Matt. 7:2 1; 25:10–12).

Let a man become a church member without the new birth and the probability is he will be secure in his church membership till he wakes up in a lost world. Let a man become a preacher, a divinity professor, a missionary, a church historian, a moderator, an assembly clerk, a printer of Bibles—all without the new birth—and such persons are only twofold more the heirs of hell than they would otherwise have been (Matt. 23:15). However hard it is for us to take in this doctrine, there cannot be the least doubt that it is the plain and obvious teaching of Christ in many places of the Gospels.

Spirituality therefore comes first and must be put at the top of all our priorities. The preaching of our blessed Saviour is remarkable for the emphasis it places always on the need for man to be spiritual. The beatitudes, for instance, are a word picture of the spiritual man. Then, too, the judgments Christ passes on men's behavior and men's attitudes show that his all-seeing eye searches after one thing in man—spirituality. When a person came to him with spirituality of soul he received commendation and blessing. When any came without it they departed much as they had come.

A lack of spirituality is the hidden cause of so many of the evils which vex the church of Christ. It accounts for a great deal of the theological and spiritual confusion to be seen on every hand. It explains how leading churchmen can deny the virgin birth and scoff at the physical resurrection of Christ. It accounts for the way in which churches subscribe to orthodox articles of faith and then ignore them in practice. It is the reason why office bearers take vows at the time of ordination and then conveniently forget them. It explains how those who are high in church office can on occasion be low in personal integrity. It accounts for the way men may hold the mystery of the faith with an uneasy conscience and with a bad reputation. It accounts for all the compromise and all the moral fudging we see in church and state. Unspirituality is a taproot of every sort of hypocrisy and duplicity. There is little hope that society will 'get back to basics' till it is faced up to and dealt with biblically.

There are degrees of spirituality among those who are spiritual. The new birth makes all those who are the subjects

of it into spiritual men. But spiritual men differ in their measure of spirituality. The difference in this case is that of the measure of their progress....

If spirituality is first in importance, it follows that it should be that which we seek first for our own souls. It involves the active and deliberate co-operation of the Christian with those processes of grace within him by which he becomes ever increasingly renewed into the likeness of Jesus Christ. In particular, it may be viewed as a bending of every part of the soul towards the one aim of living unto God in this life.

Spirituality comes to us with difficulty and it involves us in costly self-discipline. It is a discipline, however, which yields precious fruit and well repays the effort. Each faculty of the soul needs to be daily schooled to behave in a particular way. The intellect (or mind) has to be daily trained to absorb the truths of holy Scripture till the habit of our thoughts is to judge all we hear and see by Scripture light. We cannot trust the judgment of the press or the media too far. The Christian must constantly unscramble the maze of facts which he hears, and attempt to pass all that he knows through his mind in the light of Holy Scripture.

The feelings and emotions also of a self-disciplined Christian must be trained to react appropriately. Our emotions ought to vary as we hear and read God's Word. The promises of God are to evoke comfort, gladness and hope; the threatenings of Scripture should lead us to tremble and respect the justice of God; the laws of God should make us strict and dutiful, and they ought to fashion our conscience till it habitually loves obedience and protests at lawlessness. The will-power of the Christian requires to be daily urged to perform each duty till it is done as well as strength and time will allow. Of course, when all is done we shall still need to remind ourselves that we have done nothing yet as we ought to do and that we are, at best, but 'unprofitable servants' (Lk. 17:10).

No small part of spirituality consists in our attitude to ourselves. Here is where the difference between Christian and Christian betrays itself. It is painful but essential in our progress towards true spirituality that we should mortify our natural excess of self-love. This begins with the way we think of ourselves and ends with the way we speak of ourselves. The pattern we must follow is that of the Apostle Paul who admits to a constant warfare in his soul against his own

corruptions (Rom. 7:14) and whose self-judgment is that he is 'less than the least of all saints' (Eph. 3:8), 'the chief of sinners' (1 Tim. 1:15) and 'the least of the apostles' (1 Cor. 15:9). Such language is genuine evangelical humility. It is not the false modesty of religious formality but the realization, which we should all heartily share, that apart from God's grace we are nothing.³⁰

To Further Our Sanctification

Sanctification, or holiness in the life and experience, is absolutely essential to salvation (Rom. 6:14; Heb. 12:14). It is by the grace of the Holy Spirit through or in connection with Divine truth (Psa. 119:11; Jn. 17:17; Acts 20:32; Eph. 5:25–27). Apart from Scripture, our views on holiness will inevitably be traditional, false or misleading. There is hardly any faction or sect within Christendom which does not embrace a given amount of error or heresy in its view of holiness or sanctification. This demonstrates, that, even when in possession of the Scriptures, there is a great need for consistent principles of interpretation.

To Prepare for The Ministry of The Word

Bible study prepares us to sit under the preaching ministry of the church. All preaching, except the very basic evangelistic, missionary outreach to the heathen, assumes some basic knowledge of God and his Word. There could be no possible progress in the pulpit ministry whatsoever if the hearers were in complete ignorance of the Bible. Preparation for the preaching or teaching ministry of the church must be two-fold for the hearer: (1) biblical, and (2) spiritual (Psa. 119:18; Acts 10:33).

Note: Cornelius had gathered a congregation in his spiritual concern, had them assembled on time, and they were all present for the purpose of hearing the Word—all the Word—that God had commanded Peter to preach. What a blessed congregation and meeting! (νῦν οὖν πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πάρεσμεν ἀκοῦσαι πάντα τὰ προστεταγμένα σοι ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου [*nun oun pantes hēmeis enōpion tou theou paresmen akousai patna ta prostetagmena soi upo tou kuriou*]). Lit: "And now we are all before God present for the

³⁰ Maurice Roberts, *Op. cit.*, pp. 38–43.

purpose of hearing all the things commanded to you by the Lord!” Cornelius was a career military officer, and uses the terminology of assembled troops at attention, ready to receive their marching orders.

What must every believer do to be prepared for the preaching ministry and for such a ministry to be profitable?

- He must be prepared to worship, implying a God-consciousness that derives from Bible study and prayer.
- He must be prepared to listen, implying the attitude of heart and attention of mind.
- He must be prepared to come to terms with the Divine truth that is presented in the preaching. Preaching must be experienced as well as heard.
- He must be prepared to learn, implying an earnestness and sanctified eagerness with respect to Divine truth.
- He must be prepared to apply the truth to his own life, implying a willingness to submit to God’s Word. Without such preparation of mind and heart, one will either tend toward a passive, disinterested attitude or toward a negative, critical spirit.

It is not only possible, but sadly common for many modern evangelical churches to maintain the church by the use of programs and entertainment rather than the ministry of the Word of God (a complete contradiction of Eph. 4:11–16), thereby disguising the lack of a true, scriptural ministry with mere human excitement and activity—but the end result must necessarily be spiritually disastrous.

To Understand the Purpose and Retain the Purity of the Church

The local church stands before God and the community as “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:14–15). If the pastor were the only true, serious Bible student in the assembly, or even one of the very few, and the congregation largely depended upon his studies for their knowledge of biblical truth and doctrine, the following deficiencies would exist: (1) his

ministry would largely be a failure, as he is to preach the gospel, equip the saints, edify the church, and strive to bring every member to a given degree of spiritual maturity (Mk. 16:15; Eph. 4:11–16; Col. 1:28–29³¹), (2) The members would remain in disobedience to the Divine mandate to learn to individually interpret God’s Word and be able to give an intelligent answer to anyone and everyone who might ask (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:15), and (3) the purity of the church would be in jeopardy, as God holds each member individually and corporately responsible for the truth (2 Tim. 3:16–17; 4:3–4).

To Edify Others

How do we edify other believers? Not necessarily through our experience, not through mere musical or instrumental skill, not through various artistic expressions—unless these in some consistent and reverent way communicate Divine truth (Eph. 5:18–21; Col. 3:12–16). This is the acid test in the question of whether we have church worship or entertainment, testimony meetings, special music, the public reading and explanation of the Scriptures as part of public worship, and are having true fellowship or simply mundane conversation. It is the truth of Scripture, taken and used by the Holy Spirit, which edifies the people of God. True Bible study ought to enable us to edify or minister to others in a godly, consistent manner.

To Evangelize the Unconverted

To evangelize³² means to declare, teach or explain the truth of the gospel (Matt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:15). Sinners are converted through the truth of the gospel, not through personal experience, not through one’s religious ideas, not through religious philosophy, and not through existential [irrational, emotional] religious experiences. The message of the gospel must first be

³¹ “...labor, striving...” (κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος [*kopiō agōnizomenos*]) denotes extreme toil, laboring to the point of exhaustion, agonizing...”

³² “Evangelize” (εὐαγγελίζω, *euaggelizo*), “to proclaim the good news or evangel or εὐαγγέλιον (*euaggleion*).

intelligently presented, then intelligently received through the thought–process to reach the conscience to produce a Holy Spirit–engendered conviction of sin. Then, by the grace of God, saving faith and repentance evidence the saving reception of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

The serious Bible student ought to be able to present the truth of salvation by grace, through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, clearly, concisely and thoroughly—and, if need be, as simply as possible. This is necessarily a situation which normally calls for prayer, study, the memorization of Scripture, and an inclusive grasp of the doctrinal issues involved. One must deal from the Scriptures with such truths as regeneration, faith, repentance, justification, propitiation, reconciliation and the atonement. Study such passages as Rom. 1:16–17; 3:21–31; Acts 17:18, 22–31 or Acts 24:25–26 to examine the careful and precise language used by an inspired apostle in carefully explaining the sinfulness of man, the truth of the gospel and the utter necessity of faith and repentance!

To Intelligently Defend The Faith

Every believer without exception is called upon to be able at any given time to give a defense of his faith (1 Pet. 3:15). This is not the same as “giving one’s testimony,” “sharing one’s faith,” or “sharing how we feel about Jesus and what he’s done for us.” Defending the faith includes both an explanation and defense of biblical doctrinal truth,³³ and also the ability, by the grace of God, to dismantle the reasoned arguments of our opponents.³⁴

³³ Jude 3. We are called upon to “earnestly contend [intensely agonize] for the once–for–all–delivered–unto–the–saints faith” (ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις πίστει [*epagōnizesthai tē hapax paradotheisē tois hagiois pistei*]), i.e., to explain and defend biblical doctrine. The position of the def. art. τῇ... πίστει (*tē...pistei*) identifies faith as preeminently doctrinal, and makes the entire clause emphatic.

³⁴ 2 Cor. 10:3–5. “casting down imaginations” (λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες [*logismous kathairountes*]), is lit: “logical arguments dismantling.”

How can anyone possibly attempt this without being an experienced, skilled Bible student—and a serious student of related subjects as well?

In order to accomplish these necessary things to any given degree, we must become serious students of Scripture. The Scriptures must, then, not only be constantly read, but seriously, comprehensively and intensely studied, and the strategic passages ought to be committed to memory.

Part II: Essentials and Principles for Bible Study

What are the Essentials for Bible Study?

What are the practical principles of biblical interpretation?

I

What are the Essentials for Bible Study?⁹

The Bible

It is necessary to talk about the right Bible for Bible study. A study Bible should have large or even giant print, and thus be very easy to read. It should not be cluttered with various editorial or interpretive notes. These notes ought to be in other works, not the Bible.³⁵ Unless one uses a notebook, one ought to have a study Bible he is not afraid to mark.

As one gathers experience and skill, other Bibles, at the very least interlinears that deal with the original languages, ought to be utilized.³⁶ The issues are understanding, being faithful to God's Word, and seeking to consistently apply it to the life. The English Bible is, at best, a version of a translation.

Note: Rome has held the Latin Vulgate to be the very inspired Word of God. The Vulgate was originally revised from the Old Latin by Jerome c. 405 AD, with some reference to the Greek and Hebrew. Thus, the linguistic differences and peculiarities, doctrinal and transcriptional errors and faults were all considered within the sacrosanct sphere of Divine inspiration.

³⁵ The eye "pictures" the page much like a camera, and editorial notes may be confused with Scripture in our memory. The author recalls a friendly debate with his father in which the latter called him to task on a given point that the former alleged to be scriptural, but was found to be in an interpretive footnote in a certain Study Bible! Notes that divide the text under chapter or paragraph headings or footnotes that comment on the text all contain a certain amount of doctrinal and interpretive bias. Popular, modern "Study Bibles" fall into this category.

³⁶ It is only in the last century that grammar schools ceased to teach Latin and Greek. The serious Bible student will gain what experience and skill he can in the original languages.

Some today give the King James Version the same status, not understanding, that for all the devotion of its translators and revisers, and its influence, it still remains the version of a translation. The KJV was largely based on Tyndale's, New Testament (1526), Coverdale's Bible (1535), Matthew's Bible, (1537), The Great Bible (1539), and The Bishop's Bible (1568), Luther's German Version and others, compared with the original languages.

The Puritans and Pilgrims refused to use it, as to them it reflected the Anglicanism of the day, and instead used the Geneva Bible (1560). However great, faithful and influential an English version might be, it can never be more than the version of a translation, with all the necessary peculiarities and insufficiencies.

While the English Bible is the Word of God expressed in our language, it is not the Word of God expressed in its fullest with all the necessary constructions, emphases and nuances of the original languages—and these are often vital to our understanding.

Spiritual Illumination

Academic attainment is no substitute for spiritual discernment, as witnessed by those critical biblical commentaries, some of which have been written by unregenerate, rationalistic scholars. They may have mastered the linguistics, history and culture of biblical times, but remain strangers to the heart and message of Scripture, and therefore misrepresent or undermine them (1 Cor. 2:9–14). The Holy Spirit is the Divine Author of the Bible and unless he opens our understanding, it must largely remain a closed book. The evangelical, pastoral Bishop, J. C. Ryle, put it succinctly:

...read the Bible with earnest prayer for the teaching and help of the Holy Spirit. Here is the rock on which many make shipwreck at the very outset. They do not ask for wisdom and instruction, and so they find the Bible dark, and carry nothing away from it. You should pray for the Spirit to guide you into all truth. You should beg the Lord Jesus Christ to 'open your understanding,' as he did that of his disciples (Lk. 24:45).³⁷

³⁷ J. C. Ryle, *How Readest Thou?*, p. 54.

Every true believer possesses to a given degree the illumination of the Holy Spirit, enabling him to understand and feed upon the riches of the Divine Word (Psa. 119:18, 98–100; 1 Cor. 2:9–13; Col. 3:16; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27).³⁸

Those without such spiritual insight are simply unconverted individuals, mere “professors of religion,” bereft of spiritual life. Sadly, there are multitudes of mere, “professing Christians” in churches in our day to whom the Scriptures remain a closed book because they are unregenerate, have no interest in truly spiritual matters, and cannot abide by biblical truth in their beliefs, lives, desires or experience.

This spiritual illumination is not static, but increases in connection with sanctified study, experience and skill (Eph. 1:15–20; 2 Pet. 3:18), or may decrease if there is unconfessed, continual sin or a turning away from revealed truth (Heb. 5:11–14).³⁹

“Light obeyed increaseth light,
Light rejected bringeth night.”

Neither is this illumination an infallible inspiration, as inspiration, infallibility and revelatory gifts passed away with the Apostolic Era.⁴⁰ What stifles the illuminating ministry of the

³⁸ This spiritual perception is a mark of grace, or witness that we are truly converted people. Many professing Christians find the Bible to be a closed book, and this is an indication of their true spiritual state. Often, the spiritual state of a person is not evidenced so much by overt sinfulness as by the lack of spiritual graces.

³⁹ These Jewish Christians had turned back to Judaism to avoid persecution for their faith, and so lost the ability to discern truth from error. Note v. 11–12, “...are...become...” (γεγόνατε...γεγόνατε... [*gegonate...gegonate*]), perf., the verb and tense both show a process of spiritual degeneration.

⁴⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 13:8–13. Such supernatural revelatory gifts were given for the infancy or minority of Christianity, as implied by the context. “...that which is perfect” (τὸ τέλειον [*to teleion*]) signifies “mature.” When Christianity was firmly established, the need for such revelatory gifts began to disappear.

Holy Spirit in the believer's life is not a lack of a general or even a biblical education, but unbelief, a lack of prayer, the pursuit of a personal agenda, pride, self-trust, rebellion against the Word, and outright sin. To come to terms with Divine truth and then reject or turn from it, is to lose to that extent the ability to discern truth from error. Again, those without any spiritual perception are necessarily unregenerate.

A Right Attitude

A right attitude of approach is absolutely essential for true Bible study. We are seeking to open, understand and apply the very inscripturated Word of God to our minds, hearts and lives. We must do so with reverence, with a sanctified intellect, and with a disposition to believe and obey God's truth (Psa. 119:1–11). Nothing less will suffice for the true student of God's Word. Bishop Ryle again gives godly advice:

...read the Bible with deep reverence. Say to your soul, whenever you open the Bible, 'O my soul, thou art going to read a message from God.'Enter...into the spirit of the words spoken to Moses...'Put thy shoes from off thy feet; the place whereon thou standest is holy ground' (Ex. 3:5)....read the Bible with childlike faith and humility. Open your heart as you open your book, and say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth' (1 Sam. 3:9–10)."⁴¹

Resolve to believe implicitly whatever you find there, however much it may run counter to your own prejudices. Resolve to receive heartily every statement of truth, whether you like it or not....some...receive some doctrines because they like them...They reject others because they are condemning to themselves...at this rate, the Bible is useless.

There are three characteristics or attributes that are essential for the student of Scripture: discipline, organization and perseverance. Without discipline, organization would become futile; without organization, discipline would be wasted. A disciplined and organized student of Scripture can accomplish much for the glory of God, for his own good, the good of his

⁴¹ J. C. Ryle, *Op. cit.*, pp. 54–55.

family, his church and the kingdom of God—if he perseveres in his studies.

Orthodox Presuppositions

We must have the right or orthodox presuppositions before we attempt to study the Scriptures.

- We presuppose that God has directly and intelligently spoken to men, and that this Divine Word has been inscripturated [written down] (Heb. 11:1–2). We thus have God’s very Word in written form.
- We presuppose by faith that the Bible is the very Word of God inscripturated, and thus it is inspired, infallible, self–attesting [self–authenticating], inerrant and authoritative.
- We presuppose that God has preserved his Word, so that what we possess at this time is the very Word of God, unadulterated by the words and thoughts of men. This inscripturated Word stands with undiminishing authority—as though it were now personally thundering from heaven to us!⁴²
- We presuppose that, because God is intelligent and orderly, that his Word is also intelligent and orderly. God has given his Word to be understood. Thus, his Word can be understood in an intelligent and consistent fashion in plain human language. We therefore approach the Scripture in a historico–grammatical sense [the *usus loquendi*, or common usage],⁴³ and not in an esoteric or allegorical sense, seeking some mysterious meaning beyond or behind the literal meaning.

⁴² The oft–repeated words [71 times] in the New Testament, referring to the Old Testament, “It is written,” are but one in the Gk: γέγραπται (*gegraptai*), perf. pass, “It stands written [with undiminishing authority]!”

⁴³ The *usus loquendi* (lit: “the use of speaking”) is Latin for the common, usual meaning and use of words in a given era, society or culture.

- We presuppose that, because God is self-consistent, his Word is likewise self-consistent and thus non-contradictory. Seeming contradictions in Scripture are not to become topics for debate, but must be considered the result of human misunderstanding, to be solved by the “analogy of faith.”
- We presuppose that the Scriptures speak with Divine or absolute authority to any and all issues pertaining to God, salvation, the world and life, by precept, example or in principle. Therefore, there is no area of doctrine, life or experience to which the Bible does not speak with Divine authority. It must be our one aim to bring our belief, thinking and life under its totalitarian claims.

Consistent Hermeneutical Principles

Hermeneutics is the science and art of interpretation.⁴⁴ Sacred Hermeneutics pertains to the interpretation of the Scriptures. There are certain necessary principles of biblical interpretation that are self-consistent with the Scriptures as the very Word of God. Every Bible student must both learn and remain mindful of these principles when reading and studying the Scriptures. It is at the critical point of interpretation that every serious departure from Scripture occurs, thus Hermeneutics

⁴⁴ “Hermeneutics” is from ἑρμηνεύτικός (*hermēneutikos*), which derives from ἑρμηνεύειν (*hermēneuein*), “to explain, expound or interpret,” and τέχνη (*technē*), “art,” the source of our Eng. “technique” and “technology.” Hermeneutics is thus the science and art of interpretation.

As a *science*, Hermeneutics proceeds along certain established principles and methods, to ascertain the mind of the Spirit and thus the meaning of a given author from his language.

As an *art*, Hermeneutics necessitates an acquaintance with various disciplines and the development of certain skills in the application of its principles to convey the meaning of grammatical constructions, idioms, figurative language, etc. Hermeneutics ought to become almost instinctive to the serious Bible student through the development of a given amount of skill and experience.

becomes the vital science for the student of Scripture. These principles are discussed in the next section.

Helps and Tools

No one person has all the truth of Scripture, due to a variety of issues.⁴⁵ Anyone, however, can gain access to the helps and tools that will help him arrive at a given degree of biblical truth.⁴⁶ Combined with experience and a developed skill, these will greatly aid in understanding and opening the Scriptures.

Note: Some object to the use of any books—Concordances, Lexicons, Dictionaries, Grammars, and Commentaries, etc. These think that all one needs is a Bible. But what of understanding the nuances of the languages, the history and customs of biblical times, geographical locations, all possible references to a given subject, and a host of other information vital to understanding the Scriptures?

A comparison might be drawn from the work of a mechanic. His ability is exhibited in his use of a variety of tools. He does not have to make his tools to be a good mechanic; he simply has to be able to use tools which have been manufactured by others. So it is with the student of Scripture. The skill and profitableness lay in a discerning use of various tools, not necessarily in their manufacture. Further, as a mechanic is hindered by the lack of a variety of tools; so is the student of Scripture. And even the best mechanic, if bereft of all his tools, is relatively useless for actual work—so is the student of Scripture!

Remember, the issue is to seek to *understand* the Bible. Helps are just that—helps—not substitutes for one's own personal study. Some basic helps and tools include:

- *Bibles*. A large print English Bible (and Bibles in other secondary languages if the student has sufficient skill in

⁴⁵ Some of these issues are: the noetic effects of sin, which plague even believers, and cause bias or prejudice to some aspects of Divine truth; faulty Hermeneutics, traditional misunderstandings of Scripture, denominational prejudice, doctrinal inconsistencies and a lack of linguistic, historical or cultural information and skill.

⁴⁶ Appendix III contains a bibliography of suggested works.

such languages), a Greek Interlinear, and if possible another in Hebrew.⁴⁷

- *General Reference works.* A Dictionary of the English Language, a Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia,⁴⁸ a Concordance to the English Bible, Greek and Hebrew Grammars and Lexicons,⁴⁹ and Word Studies.⁵⁰
- *Biblical Background works.* A detailed Bible Atlas, a Bible Handbook,⁵¹ a Bible Survey.⁵²
- *Doctrinal or Theological works.* Standard works in Biblical, Historical and Systematic Theology enable us to

⁴⁷ We would recommend Jay Green, Ed., A Hebrew–Greek Interlinear in four volumes (3 vols. in Heb., 1 vol. in Greek), Associated Publishers and Authors, Lafayette, IN., 1979. There are several Greek–English Interlinears available, giving either the Critical Text, the majority text, or the *Textus Receptus* (TR). Most have a critical apparatus at the bottom of each page or in the margin.

For the most serious student, intent on achieving a working knowledge of the original languages, there are Hebrew Old Testaments, Greek New Testaments and lexicons and Concordances that work from the Hebrew or Greek to the English.

⁴⁸ We would recommend James Orr, Gen. Ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1939. 5 Vols. (recently reprinted in 4 vols.). We prefer this over the newer edition edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley.

⁴⁹ We would recommend William Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1978. 566 pp.; W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1962. 3 Vols.–in–One.

⁵⁰ We would recommend A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930. 7 Vols.; Marvin Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965. 4 Vols.

⁵¹ We would recommend Henry H. Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965. 860 pp.

⁵² We would recommend W. Graham Scroggie, *Know Your Bible*. London: Pickering & Inglis, 1965. 380 pp., as a basic and useful survey.

gain a comprehensive grasp of the doctrinal truth contained in Scripture.⁵³

- *Interpretive works*. At least one standard work on Hermeneutics.⁵⁴
- *Exegetical and Expository works*. Exegetical [Critical]⁵⁵ or expository commentaries. Devotional commentaries are usually of little value for interpretation, and may often prove misleading.
- *A notebook*. Keeping a good notebook greatly enhances Bible study and retains a great amount of references or information that might otherwise be lost or forgotten. By using, editing and revising a personal notebook, the student will eventually possess a wealth of biblical information.

II

What are the Practical Principles of Biblical Interpretation?

To study the Bible is a holy adventure into the blessedness of Divine, life-changing truth! To achieve a true, proper and adequate understanding of the Scriptures, one's approach must be reverent, intelligent, organized, disciplined and persevering. Necessary to this life-long, holy task of understanding the

⁵³ See the importance of a comprehensive grasp of doctrine under "General Principles of Biblical Interpretation," and the tenth point, "The Principle of Theological Proposition."

⁵⁴ We would recommend as most suitable and usable, either Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969. 274 pp.; or Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964. 382 pp. The latter work is older but much more comprehensive.

⁵⁵ A critical commentary deals with the text in the original language rather than with a translation or version in a secondary language.

Scriptures are certain principles which must be consistently applied.

Historico-Grammatical Interpretation

The methodology applied to the interpretation of the Scriptures must agree with the Scriptures themselves as the Word of Divine revelation from an intelligent, self-consistent God—a Word given in an understandable form. To interpret in such a manner as to deny, ignore or misrepresent their teaching is to be both in grievous error and also to dishonor God. One must take care not to improperly “spiritualize” the Scriptures, i.e., find some secondary “deeper” or “spiritual” meaning beneath the “literal” or *usus loquendi*—and thus twist their intended meaning. The witness of history sadly testifies to such perversion, even by many well-meaning interpreters because their principles were erroneous.

Note: Rabbinic, Alexandrian, Patristic and Medieval interpreters all took the principle of allegorizing or “spiritualizing” Scripture from the pagan Greeks who used such an arbitrary approach to their own ancient poets to make their writings acceptable to the later Greek philosophical mind. Hardly any other single issue has caused as much trouble and tragedy in the history of Christianity because it removed the Scriptures from their proper meaning and understanding. This arbitrary, allegorical approach helped produce the Romish church, the “Dark Ages,” dominated kingdoms, stifled intellectual progress and science, and largely held Western Civilization in the grip of Rome until the Sixteenth Century Reformation.

The only intelligent, consistent hermeneutic is the *historico-grammatical* method. It is such an interpretation that is necessitated by and in accordance with the rules of grammar and the facts of history. It is therefore a “common-sense” interpretation that seeks no spiritual or hidden meaning unless necessary in the normal figurative, symbolic, idiomatic or typical expression of the given language, culture, or historical context of

a given passage. It presupposes that God has given his revelation in an intelligent and understandable form.

General Principles of Biblical Interpretation

Within the proper, consistent, grammatical and historical approach, there are several general principles of interpretation:

1. The Principle of a Reverent Approach

Necessary Presuppositions

The Bible is the very Word of God inscripturated. It must be approached—not merely academically, nor yet superstitiously, mystically, irrationally or rationalistically—but reverently. One’s view of Divine inspiration, infallibility and authority [presuppositions] determines his approach to the text. One cannot properly interpret the truth of Scripture merely intellectually or academically, or merely devotionally or irrationally [emotionally]. Scripture must be approached, intelligently studied, interpreted, and practically applied with a regenerate mind (Jn. 3:3; Rom. 1:18–22; 3:11; 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:3–4; Eph. 4:17–24; Col. 3:9–10) illuminated by the Spirit of God (1 John 2:20, 27) and predisposed to obedience (Matt. 4:4). Thus, the study of the text is not only an intellectual and academic procedure; it is preeminently a spiritual exercise—an act of worship.

Obedience or Disobedience

There is a direct relation between a study of the Word of God and obedience to that Word. In approaching the Scripture properly and adequately, we must think in terms of what the Scripture says, what it means, and what it demands from us. Any approach that does not think in terms of obedience or disobedience to the inscripturated Word of God is inherently defective and inadequate.

2. The Principle of the Primacy of the Original Languages⁵⁶

God had a purpose in giving his Word in the languages he did—Hebrew, Aramaic⁵⁷ and Greek. The Κοινή⁵⁸ Greek of the New Testament was the common language of the people. It was the richest, most expressive language ever developed. English by comparison is relatively barren and inexpressive. Thus, when translating from an inflected language, rich in expressive qualities, much is necessarily lost. We have the truth of God, but the nuances often and necessarily remain untranslated—a variety of tenses peculiar to the original languages, synonyms, emphatic constructions, idiomatic expressions, etc. These are often determinative in properly understanding the text.

Note: Both the Hebrew and Greek concept of “tense” differs from the English, therefore a certain amount of discontinuity necessarily occurs. The Hebrew has the basic concept of an action either being complete (perfect) or incomplete (imperfect); the Greek views an action as either linear or punctiliar. The Greek has six tenses: present, imperfect, future, aorist, perfect and pluperfect. For four of these tenses, there is no adequate Eng. equivalent. It also has periphrastic constructions to emphasize time and action, e.g., Acts 2:42, ἦσαν... προσκαρτεροῦντες (*ēsan proskarterountes*), an imperf. equitive [“to be”] verb joined with a pres. ptc. to emph. a continuous, uninterrupted action, i.e., “they were continuing obstinately or steadfastly, without any absence or slacking.” The English has to leave most of such distinctions

⁵⁶ See Appendix I for a discussion of the various issues concerning the original languages and the necessity of their study.

⁵⁷ Although the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, some small sections were written in Aramaic, reflecting the language changes of the Babylonian exile. E.g., Dan. 2:4b–7:28; Ezra 4:8–6:18; 7:12–26.

⁵⁸ God in his providence gave the world the finality of his Divine revelation in the richest of languages. The Κοινή (*Koinē*) Greek was the common language of the people and the marketplace. It flourished from 300 BC to 300 AD, and was more colloquial than the older, Classical Greek of the Homeric era. This was the language of both the LXX and the Greek New Testament.

untranslated. The aor. inf. of result has been misconstrued in some statements, leading to great doctrinal misunderstanding. E.g., Eph. 4:22–24, where the commands in English to “put off” the old man and “put on” the new actually state the *result* of an action already completed, not a command or entreaty. Cf. Col. 3:9–10, which gives a more correct rendering.

Misunderstanding the Original Languages

“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.” This adage is certainly true with regard to the original languages of Scripture. Those with little or no accurate knowledge of the original languages may misrepresent the significance of their etymology, tenses, grammatical constructions and idiomatic expressions. Word studies, the etymology of words and some grammatical constructions may prove dangerous, erroneous, heretical or nonsensical.

Note: E.g., note the prevalent teaching concerning the “church” (ἐκκλησία, *ekklesia*) as “those who are called out of the world” (from ἐκ [ek], “out,” and καλέω [kaleō], “call”) in a mystical sense, i.e., the theory of a “universal, invisible church”, the mystical body of Christ, etc. The ἐκκλησία was simply an assembly of Greek citizens, and this meaning was transferred to the church as an assembly of Christians, and is used locally, generically or institutionally, or eschatologically in the New Testament. The idea that it refers to those called out of the world in a spiritual sense is a form of theological eisegesis and the intrusion of neo-Platonic philosophy.

E.g., note the objective genitive in Rom. 3:22, “which is by faith of Jesus Christ” (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [*dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou*]), which is to be translated: “by faith *in* Jesus Christ.” An erroneous theology, usually left unexplained, has developed that we are “saved by the faith of Christ.”

E.g., the word for “foundation” is καταβολή (*katabolē*), lit: that which is thrown down, i.e., that which is laid down. Some have sought to side step the issue of eternal election in Eph. 1:4 by misconstruing the etymology of “foundations” to mean thrown down or fallen, i.e., that man was actually “fallen” when God elected, i.e., election came *after* the fall of man! Word Studies can be very dangerous when used in ignorance or pursued with an agenda.

Exegesis and Exposition

A consistent exegesis⁵⁹ is necessarily limited to the original languages of Scripture with their distinct grammatical, syntactical, idiomatic and figurative constructions and expressions. Attempts at exegesis in any secondary language necessarily results in a given amount of misinterpretation and therefore misunderstanding and error. Although one may legitimately attempt an exposition⁶⁰ of the text in a secondary language, one cannot attempt an exegesis, as the grammar and syntax of any translation or version are not inspired.

Note: E.g., from Acts 2:38. The Eng. [KJV] grammatically makes “Repent” and “be baptized” compound verbs and thus equal—the classic argument of the Campbellites, but the Greek reads Μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν (*Metanoēsate kai baptisthētō hekastos humōn*) “Repent” is aor. imp. act. 2 pers. pl., “be baptized” is aor. pass imp. 2 pers. sing., which has much less force—that of permission: “All of you with a sense of urgency and with all determination, Repent!...and [then] let each one of you be baptized.” The former receives the emphasis and the latter is much less a command. This is entirely absent in the Eng.

Italicized Words or Phrases

In many places the English Bible contains italicized words or phrases that are necessary to complete the sense where the nature of the original language was more abrupt or words were omitted by *ellipsis* because of style or for emphasis.

⁵⁹ “Exegesis” (Gk. ἐξεγήσις, *exegēsis*, from ἐκ [ἐξ], “out of,” and ἡγεομαι [*hēgeōmai*], “to lead.” Hence, to technically bring out the meaning of the original. While one may give an exposition in any language, exegesis is reserved only for the original, as it deals with inspired grammar and syntax (συντάξις [*suntaxis*], or the relation of words, phrases and clauses to one another). Note that the opposite of exegesis is “eisegesis” (εἰσεγήσις, *eisegēsis*), or reading another meaning into the text.

⁶⁰ By “exposition” we mean either an analysis of the text into its constituent parts or an analysis of its doctrinal teaching, which would be fairly evident in both the original and a secondary language.

Note: *ellipsis* (Gk. ἔλλειψις, “a leaving in,” from λείπειν [*leipein*], “to leave”). A gap or space is left in a statement, and thus a word or words are left out or omitted. An ellipsis may be used for emph., as when the equitive vb. is omitted, e.g., Rom. 8:31, “If God for us, who against us?!” Phil. 1:21, “For to me to live—Christ, and to die—gain!” In Eph. 1:16–20 the language is compressed by omitting some connecting words.

Mark the following comments, statements and examples:

- Rightly understood, italics aid in understanding the meaning of a statement and balance the reading in the English.
- Some in ignorance erroneously believe that italics are used for emphasis! This manifests an unforgivable ignorance of the Bible. The reading “*unknown* tongues,” in which the word “unknown” is italicized, implies foreign languages, not ecstatic utterances. An entire theology has been based on misunderstanding an italicized word!
- Unavoidably, the insertion or omission of italicized words affects the interpretation of Scripture. E.g., study the italicized term “even” in Rom. 9:10.
- At times, due to chapter or verse divisions, italics have in reality obscured the flow of the argument, e.g., Eph. 2:1, where a sentence fragment has to be completed by supplying both the subject and the verb. The thought is actually a continuation of 1:23.
- The failure to italicize some words may lead to textual or doctrinal confusion. E.g., Heb. 2:9, and the phrase, “should taste death for every man.”⁶¹ The word “man” does not occur in the text, and ought to be italicized. The words are actually “every one” (ὑπὲρ παντός, *hyper pantos*), and are properly defined by the context, as in the

⁶¹ The Greek text reads, ...ὑπὲρ παντός γεύσεται θανάτου (*hyper pantos geusētai thanatou*), i.e., “on behalf of every one should taste death.”

case with all pronouns (Cf. v. 10, “many sons,” v. 11, “they who are sanctified...brethren,” v. 12, “my brethren,” v. 13 “the children which God hath given me,” v. 14, “the children,” v. 16, “the seed of Abraham,” v. 17, “his brethren,” etc.). Yet this textual misunderstanding and mistranslation has become a proof text for those espousing universal atonement.

Key Words, Phrases or Constructions

Care must be taken not to depend too much on various “key-words,” phrases and other constructions in a secondary language, as these might not truly reflect the argument or development of thought in the original language. They may only be significant in the secondary language.⁶² Indeed, such “key-words” may only exist in the secondary language, and not the original, or be mere accommodations of several diverse terms in the original.

The four types of conditional statements in Greek may also be misconstrued when brought into English. The following note is given to illustrate the form and use of the conditional sentences. The Greek has four types of conditional sentences, each with a *protasis* (the “if” cl.) and an *apodosis* (the conclusion):

- The **first class** conditional sentence (εἰ + indicative mood) assumes the condition to be true. Cf. Matt. 4:3, “Since you are the Son of God...” The temptation was not for our Lord to prove to Satan that he was the Son of God, but rather, *because* he was, to use his prerogative and power independently to fulfill a legitimate appetite, and not live by the Word of God alone.

⁶² E.g., the two “therefores” in Rom. 8:1 and 12:1 as giving the basic divisions of the epistle. The section concerning the Law and the Believer extends from 6:15 through at least 8:8. Should 8:1 be seen as beginning a new and distinct section, then the whole of Rom. 7:14–25 would be misunderstood and the doctrine of sanctification would become perverted—and this has been the case!

- The **second class** condition (εἰ in the protasis with past indicative, and ἄν in the apodosis) assumes the condition to be false. Cf. "...if [εἰ] the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched [ἄν]..." The goodman did not know, therefore he did not watch.
- The **third class** conditional sentence (εἰ + subjunctive mood) is based on contingency or probability. Cf. Rom. 7:2, "but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband."
- The **fourth class** conditional sentence (εἰ with optative mood in the protasis) is that of less probability. Cf. 1 Pet. 3:14, "But even if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are* ye..." Acts 17:27, "If haply they might seek after him..." emphasizes the noetic effects of sin upon man's ability to seek God.

At times the *protasis* of an incomplete conditional sentence is used in a rhetorical sense (e.g., Rom. 9:22–24).

Further, the English may translate a verb as a participle and a participle as a verb, thus shifting the whole force of a given statement, or fail to properly carry the relationship between a participle and a verb.⁶³ This reversal is likewise true of adjectives and nouns.⁶⁴

Emphases in Hebrew and Greek

Both Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek possess a variety of ways in which to express emphasis, which we do not possess in English prose. These subtleties are lost in the English language, and therefore in the English Bible. Yet these emphases have a great bearing on a proper and adequate interpretation.

Note: Both the Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek have peculiarities which are used for emphasis: the word-order of the sentence (Heb. is usually Verb–Subject–

⁶³ See Appendix I for examples.

⁶⁴ E.g., Eph. 4:24, "true holiness" (ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας [*hosiotēti tēs alētheias*]), lit: "holiness of the truth," i.e., the rightness [unpolluted nature] and holiness of the truth. Rom. 8:21, εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ (*eis tēn eleutherian tēs doxēs tōn teknōn tou theou*), "into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

Object, thus any word or words before the verb are emph. Gk. order is Subject–Verb–Object, as in Eng., but words and phrases may occur in any sequence for emph.), various constructions, conjunctions, exclamations, interjections, prepositions, emphatic particles, uses of the definite article, the repetition of words or phrases, idiomatic expressions, etc. Most of these are not and many cannot be conveyed into the English language and Bible. Thus, most of the nuances and the force of many passages are lost.

Synonyms

The Greek of the New Testament abounds in a rich variety of synonyms. Note the following examples:

- There are two different terms for “repent.”

Note: The two terms for “repent” and “repentance” are: (1) μεταμέλομαι (*metamelomai*), “to care for, regret and so repent one’s self.” Although there is the emotion of regret, there is no change of mind or reversal toward sin and turning toward God. (2) μετανοέω (*metaneō*), “to think back, and so change one’s mind.” The former word is used of Judas (Matt. 27:3); the latter always of evangelical repentance (Mk. 1:15; Acts 17:31).⁶⁵

- There are three different terms for “know” and “knowledge.”

Note: The three terms for “know” or “knowledge” are: (1) γινώσκω, γνώσις (*ginōskō, gnōsis*), a knowledge that implies a relationship between the one who knows and the object of such knowledge. This may at times be expressed as an experiential knowledge, e.g., Jn. 17:3. The compound form, ἐπίγνωσις (*epignōsis*, compounded with the intens. use of ἐπί) connotes a full or adequate knowledge, e.g.,

⁶⁵ Judas was filled with regret or remorse, but he had no saving change of mind that brought him to Christ. It may be objected that in Heb. 12:15–17, Esau is said to have “found no place of repentance [μετανοίας, *metanoias*], though he sought it bitterly with tears.” This has erroneously been used to teach that someone may “cross the line” of God’s grace and not be able to be saved, no matter how much he tries. Such teaching is absolutely false (Jn. 6:37). In this context, it simply states that Esau sought to change his father’s [Isaac’s] mind, but could not although he cried out and wept bitterly (Gen. 27:31–38).

Matt. 11:27 (occ. twice); Rom. 3:20. (2) οἶδα (*oida*), which denotes perception, and may even imply the perception of faith that extends beyond experience, e.g., Rom. 8:28. (3) ἐπίσταμαι, ἐπίστημι (*epistamai, epistēmi*), which denotes critical, scientific or certain knowledge, e.g., Acts 10:28; 18:25; 19:15; 26:26; Heb. 11:8. This term is the source of the Eng. “epistemology,” the science or theory of knowledge.

- There are five basic words for “power.”

Note: The five terms for “power” in New Testament Gk. are: (1) δύναμις (*dunamis*, hence, the Eng. “dynamic, dynamo, dynamite”), “might, ability, power.” This always emph. the source of power, e.g., Rom. 1:16. (2) ἐξουσία (*exousia*), “right, prerogative, authority,” e.g., Matt. 28:18; Jn. 1:12–13. (3) ἰσχύς (*ischus*), “ability, force, might, strength” e.g., Eph. 6:10, “might.” (4) κράτος (*kratos*), “power, dominion, strength,” e.g., Eph. 6:10. (5) ἀρχή (*archē*), “a beginning, a rule or governing power,” e.g., Eph. 6:12, “principalities.”

- There are seven different terms for “servant.”

Note: The seven terms for “servant” are:

(1) δοῦλος (*doulos*), “[literal or spiritual] willing bondsman,” e.g., Rom. 1:1; 6:17–18.

(2) διάκονος (*diakonos*), “servant, minister, deacon,” from the vb. διώκω (*diōkō*), to pursue, emph. perseverance in work. Used more of ministers [preachers] than deacons in New Testament!

(3) παῖς (*pais*), “minor child, servant, attendant, subordinate,” e.g., Acts 4:27, 30, where “child” ought to read “servant,” referring to the condescension of our Lord and his subordination to the Father in his incarnation as the God-Man and “Servant of Jehovah.”

(4) οἰκέτης (*oiketēs*), from οἶκος (*oikos*), “house,” a “household servant,” e.g., Acts 10:7.

(5) ὑπηρέτης (*hupēretēs*), Lit: “an under rower,” hence a minister or subordinate servant, attendant, e.g., Acts 13:5.

(6) θεράπων (*therapōn*), “one who serves, attends to or heals” (hence the Eng., “therapy, therapeutic, therapist”), e.g., Heb. 3:5. Cf. the vb. in Acts 17:25, “worshipped,” as denoting religious service which is needful to the “gods.” Does your “god” need therapy?

- There are two words for “love.”

Note: The Κοινή (*Koinē*), “common,” the language of the marketplace) Gk. had three words, but ἔρος (*eros*), “Love,” [sexual] desire, (Hence, the Eng. “erotic”) is *not* used in the New Testament.

(1) φίλη, φιλέω (*philē, phileō*), a love or affection that derives from the emotional [irrational] nature. It is a spontaneous, tender affection, a taking pleasure in, a passion for someone or thing, which can be very strong.

Cf. the conversation between our Lord and Peter in Jn. 21:15–17, “Lovest me more than these?” Our Lord used ἀγαπάω (*agapaō*) the first two times, and Peter responded with φιλέω (*phileō*). The final time our Lord used φιλέω (*phileō*), acquiescing to Peter’s strong and spontaneous affection, but he desired a more substantial and intelligent love. This is the love (ἀγαπάω) necessary for feeding the sheep and lambs of God! Note that: first, Peter’s spontaneous love for our Lord was without question (Cf. his actions in the Garden as he singly faced over 480 armed men), but the love he needed to faithfully serve Christ must be consistent, purposeful and intelligent. Second, Peter had denied our Lord three times. His devotion and passion (φιλέω) had failed in the hour of crisis. Third, There was to be a different relationship, now that our Lord was resurrected from the dead and had assumed his sovereign Lordship (2 Cor. 5:14–17). Peter knew him “after the flesh,” but that relationship was now changed.

From this word was derived such terms as φίλημα (*philēma*), “kiss,” and several terms connoting affection for the brethren (φιλανθρωπία [*philanthrōpia*], φιλαδελφία [*philadelphia*]), for close kin (φιλόστοργος, *philostorgos*, i.e., mutual love for parents, children, spouses), for children in particular (φιλοτέκνος, *philoteknos*), for husbands in particular (φίλανδρος, *philandros*), for money (φιλαργυρία, *philarguria*, Lit: “love of silver”), for pleasures (φιλήδονος, *philēdonos*), for self (φίλαυτος, *philautos*), for hospitality (φιλοξενία, *philoxenia*, lit: “love of strangers”), for wisdom (φιλοσοφία, *philosophia*), for strife (φιλόνηκος, *philoneikos*), for preeminence (φιλοπροτεύω, *philoproteuō*, lit: “love of being first”), and even love for God (Cf. 2 Tim. 3:4, φιλόθεος, *philotheos*).

(2) ἀγάπη, ἀγαπάω (*agapē, agapaō*), a love that derives from the rational nature. It possesses a moral quality or character, can be commanded, and is capable of intelligent purpose and fulfillment.⁶⁶ Significantly, this term has no compounds in the New Testament. It is this final term that is used of God's commands to men to love him, and of God in his love for his own. Christianity ennobled this word.

The various terms translated "receive" in the Greek New Testament number at least seven, and several have their compound distinctives with the addition of various prepositions, numbering more than eighteen in all. There are seven different terms translated as "master," at least three translated "evil," and another three translated by the one English term "lust."

Note: Some terms from the Gk. are limited in our Eng. thinking. E.g., ἐπιθυμία (*epithumia*) is a common word for "lust," yet our Lord used this very term of himself when he said that "With desire [ἐπιθυμία] I have desired [ἐπεθύμησα] to eat this Passover with you..." (Lk. 22:15). The word itself simply means a strong desire. The significance or moral tone is determined by the context. E.g., the prep. ἀντί (*anti*) when brought into the Eng. is limited as "anti- or against." Its basic meaning, however, is "instead of, face-to-face," as well as "against." The "antichrists" (ἀντίχριστοι) may be both those against Christ or those instead of Christ, i.e., "false Christs" (ψευδόχριστοι).

Care must be taken to make the proper distinctions when the English uses only one term and the Greek uses one of several possible terms, each with its distinctive nuances.

English Ambiguity

Some terms in English versions have caused a misunderstanding of the text, and so have influenced both faith and practice. Take, for example, the following:

- "Perfect" (τέλειος [*teleios*], "perfect, complete, mature," Col. 1:28; ἄρτιος [*artios*], "fully-limbed, symmetrical," 2 Tim. 3:17), "Peculiar" in 1 Pet. 2:9 (περιποίησις

⁶⁶ Cf. Phil. 1:9–11, where this word is used in such a context for Christian love.

[*peripoiēsis*], “an acquisition, a prized possession,” the term “peculiar” derives from the Latin *pecus*, “cow,” as in ancient societies, things were at times valued in terms of the number of cows that could be traded).⁶⁷

- “Conversation,” which has the general connotation of “lifestyle” or the behavior suitable to citizenship (ἀναστροφή [*anastrophē*], “behavior,” Eph. 2:3; τρόπος [*tropos*], “turning,” Heb. 13:5; περιπατέω [*peripateō*], “to walk about,” Eph. 5:15; and πολίτευμα [*politeuma*], “citizenship, behavior of a citizen,” Phil. 1:27).

Chapter and Verse Divisions

It must be carefully noted that the chapter and verse divisions are neither inspired nor part of the original languages. The Scriptures were originally written as books and these were later divided into paragraphs. Chapter and verse divisions are artificial, and though sometimes correct, often interrupt the argument or reasoning of the writer. Remember that they were inserted for ease of reference, not for interpretive purposes.

Note: *Chapter divisions* (Gk. κεφάλαια [*kephalia*], chief [points, summaries], heads; Lat. *capitulum*, chapter). The Greek New Testament was originally written in paragraphs. The earliest “chapter divisions” occur in the *Codex Vaticanus* of the fourth century. Such early divisions were often arbitrary and occurred in far greater number than the present divisions. The modern chapter divisions are products of the Middle Ages, and were probably made either by Stephen Langdon (Archbishop of Canterbury, d.1228) or Cardinal Hugo (d. 1263).

Note: *Verse divisions* (Lat: *versus*, a line or row). These divisions were first made by Robert Etienne [Stephanus], a Paris printer (1550) and included in his Greek New Testament. The first English Bible to have the modern chapter and verse divisions was the Geneva Bible (1560).

Examples of the influence of chapter divisions: e.g., Eph. 2:1, which is a continuation of the thought from chapter 1. The

⁶⁷ Some, influenced by the Eng. sense and religious peculiarities, have actually interpreted the idea of “peculiar” to mean “odd”—an interesting and often humorous *eisegesis*.

italicized words in 2:1 necessarily include both the subject and verb to compensate for the chapter division. E.g., mark the development of the believer's relation to the law in Rom. 6:15–8:7. The chapter and verse divisions in this extended passage have obliterated the full argument and have created much theological controversy.

It has become traditional to speak of the two "Therefore's" in Romans (8:1 and 12:1) as the major divisions of the epistle, which absolutely obscures the Apostle's argument. The "Higher Life" teaching of "getting out of Romans Seven into Romans Eight," i.e., from a life of spiritual conflict and defeat to one of continuous victory (a non-Pentecostal second work of grace) is based on the artificial chapter division and a misunderstanding of conversion that begins in Romans 6 with the believer's union with Christ.

A "Chapter-and-Verse" for every truth may well be an obscuration of truth! E.g., Jn. 1:12–13. The complete statement extends through both verses, with v. 13 giving the explanation of the priority of regeneration to the reception of faith (Cf. Jn. 3:3; Eph. 2:4–5, 8–10). Yet some Evangelicals and Fundamentalists irrationally and with prejudice deny the priority of regeneration to faith. The verse divisions, as well as chapter divisions, have exercised a great and determining influence on interpretation and theology.

For an extended study of the necessity of studying the original languages, see Appendix I at the conclusion of this book.

3. The Principle of the Perspicuity of Scripture or the Analogy of Faith

Scripture interprets Scripture. The more obscure passages are understood by clearer passages,⁶⁸ presupposing that the Scriptures, as the very Word of God, are not contradictory, but self-consistent and complementary—and given by God to be understood. Parallel passages or thoughts often open what would

⁶⁸ "Perspicuity," from the Lat. *perspicere*, "to see through," the quality of being transparent or easy to understand.

otherwise remain obscure or misunderstood.⁶⁹ The “analogy of faith” refers to the total or inclusive, non-contradictory teaching of Scripture as it bears upon any one given point or issue. Note the alleged contradiction between Paul in Rom. 4:1–5 and James in Jas. 2:14–26. Does Paul teach justification by faith alone and James by works when they both refer to Abraham for their example of justification? No. What James emphasizes is that true faith does not stand alone without being evidenced by works.⁷⁰

4. The Principle of Progressive Revelation

The New Testament is not a mere continuation of the Old, but rather the finality of the progressive self-revelation of God to man. The Old Testament is a preparation for the New; the New sheds light upon the Old, as the reality explains the “dim outline,” sketch, or the “shadow.”

Note: Cf. Heb. 10:1, Σκιάν [“shadow, dim outline,” emph. pos.]. Σκιάν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν... (*Skian gar echōn ho nomos tōn mellontōn agathōn*). Too much importance cannot be given to progressive revelation [the historical context].

(1) The inscripturated Word of God has been given to us in a historical format. It is Divine revelation in the context of redemptive history.

(2) The Old Testament is generally preparatory in nature (e.g., types, the history of Israel as an elect nation to whom God revealed himself in preparation for the Gospel, etc.); the New is characterized by realization or finality (the antitypes: the rituals, ceremonies, Tabernacle in the wilderness, Levitical

⁶⁹ E.g., There are nineteen instances in which Matthew uses the term “kingdom of heaven.” In each case the other Gospel Records use the term “kingdom of God,” making the terms synonymous.

⁷⁰ Paul uses Abraham’s faith in Rom. 4:1–5ff (a reference to Gen. 15:6) to illustrate a completely free justification, i.e., a justification without works whatsoever (although the remainder of chapter four illustrates the works that flowed from his faith), whereas James emphasizes the faith of Abraham evidenced by his works some forty years later in the offering up of Isaac (a reference to Gen. 22). A forty-year old faith produced corresponding works or evidence.

priesthood and sacrifices, etc., all finding fulfillment in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the fullness of the Gospel, etc.). Cf. the pervading reality of Heb. 1:1–2, and the major const. (a ptc. and then a vb.), “God...having spoken...spoke...” (...ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας...ἐλάλησεν... [*ho theos lalēsas...elalēsen...*]).

The types of the Old Testament find their fulfillment in the antitypes of the New. Many of the prophecies, including those concerning the Messiah, find their fulfillment in the Person and work of Christ. The New or Gospel Covenant is the realization of what was anticipated in the Old Covenant. The Old Testament institutions of the Levitical priesthood, the sacrificial system, and the offices of Prophet, Priest and King all find their fulfillment in our Lord. Mark this reality in the following rhyme:

“The New is in the Old contained,
The Old is by the New explained.”

5. The Principle of a Covenantal Distinction

This is closely related to the foregoing principle of progressive revelation, but should be noted separately because of its importance. The terms “Covenant” and “Testament” are neither synonymous nor co-extensive.

Note: The Old Covenant was progressively revealed, beginning with Adam and the *protevangelium* (Gen. 3:15). It was further revealed and expanded to Noah (Gen. 6–9), Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:1–6; 17:1–5), Moses (Ex.–Dt.), David (2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17) and through the prophets (e.g., Jer. 31:31–34; Ezk. 36:25–27). This covenant was centralized in and epitomized by the Mosaic institutions—the Tabernacle (and later Solomon’s temple), Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system—and the later offices of Prophet and King. This entire system was an elementary, anticipatory and typical preparation for the New or Gospel Covenant that centered in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note: The “Old” and “New” “Covenants” should not be confused with the Old and New Testaments. Although often used interchangeably, these are neither identical nor coextensive. The Old Testament is the first major division of the Scriptures and contains that part of the “Covenant of

Grace” that was preparatory for the Messiah or the “Old Covenant,” i.e., the Mosaic institutions. The New Testament is the second major division of the Scriptures and contains the fulfillment or finality of the “Covenant of Grace” in the Gospel economy, i.e., the “New Covenant” as it centers in the person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A necessary distinction must be made between the Old Testament and Old Covenant and the New Testament and New Covenant to avoid the “Old Testament mentality” of Reformed tradition. Also, the necessary interrelation of the two Testaments and Covenants must be maintained to avoid what we consider to be the extreme dichotomy of modern Dispensationalism.

Note: Dispensationalism teaches that God deals with men in several time–periods or “dispensations.” In each dispensation God reveals a particular purpose to be accomplished to which men respond in either faith or unbelief. These dispensations are seen as the successive stages of progressive revelation.

Although the number of ages varies from five to many dispensations [ultra–Dispensationalism], the common seven dispensations are: (1) “Innocency,” the era of unfallen Adam, (2) “Conscience” and “Human Government.” from Adam’s fall to Noah, (3) “Promise,” from Abraham to Moses), (4) “Law,” from Moses to Christ, (5) “Grace,” from Pentecost to the Rapture, (6) “Millennium” [1,000 year reign of Christ on Earth], and (7) The New Heavens and Earth.

Thus, Dispensationalism is not merely eschatological, it is a hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures which is inclusive in its view of the relationship of the New Testament to the Old, its view of Israel and the Church, and its peculiar view of salvation and the Christian life. From such a Hermeneutics has derived the idea that God’s dealings with “The Church” is but a parenthesis between his dealings with national Israel; an antinomian bias, as the Moral Law pertained only to national Israel (Believers are not under the law, but under grace.); “easy–believism,” a denial of “Lordship salvation,” and the “Carnal Christian” heresy.

Note: (1) The principle of covenantal distinction must ever be taken into account. Any denial or modification of this principle results in an “Old Testament” mentality that views the New Testament as a mere continuation of the Old. This is so fundamental that it largely determines one’s presuppositions

and approach to the given text. (2) The fundamental unity of the Scriptures must be maintained within the principle of progressive revelation and covenantal distinction, or artificial divisions may be made which govern one's whole approach to the interpretation of Scripture. This is true of modern Dispensationalism, with its arbitrary divisions of the Bible and inherent antinomianism (in confining the Moral Law of God to the Jews and a given "Dispensation"); and modern Arminianism and Pelagianism, with their presuppositions (unmitigated by the revelation of the nature of God and His salvation in the Old Testament) concerning free will, "easy-believism," and universalism, etc.

6. The Principle of Lexical and Syntactical Distinction

Within any given passage, the words must be studied both lexically (as to their basic and subsequently-derived "dictionary" meanings) and syntactically (i.e., as they occur in a given context, as words are not necessarily static in meaning). Failure to make such distinction has resulted in great misunderstanding and subsequent misinterpretation.⁷¹ Take, for instance, the English word "fast." It may denote rapid movement, no movement at all ("stand fast," "hold fast"), or to abstain from food, depending on the given context.

A biblical example may be taken from the term "Law," which is used in a variety of ways in Scripture, depending on the given context. It may refer to:

- The entire Old Testament, which was the only "Scripture" until the New Testament canon was written (Psa. 19:7–14; Heb. 10:1).
- The 5 books of Moses ("The Law, Prophets and Writings"—the three-fold division of the Heb. Old Testament). E.g., Rom. 3:19–21.

⁷¹ This is one of the major objections to such works as *The Amplified Bible*, which usually gives only a static, lexical meaning.

- The whole Mosaic legislation (“Moral,” “Ceremonial” and “Civil” law). This use of the term “law” is usually contrasted with grace or faith in a redemptive context. This designation of the law is sometimes called “Moses” by *metonymy*⁷² (Acts 21:17–22).
- The Decalogue or 10 Commandments—This is the epitome of the “Moral Law” in its mostly negative form (Ex. 20:1–17).
- The entirety of the Word of God—for all of God’s Word is “command” or “law” (1 Jn. 2:3–4; 3:4).
- Human law or custom (E.g., Rom. 7:1–2).
- Various principles or powers (E.g., Rom. 3:27–28; 7: 21–23; 8:1–4).
- The law (as a mere outward principle of obedience) as contrasted with grace (as an internal dynamic). E.g., Rom. 6:14.

Note: Cf. Rom. 6:14 (...οὐ γάρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν [*ou gar este hypo nomon alla hypo charin*]). Both “law” and “grace” are anarth., emph. character or quality. Here, of a principle of operation. The believer is not under a principle of mere, outward obedience to commands (the failure of the Old Covenant and Law, which could command, but had no power to enable one to comply), but an inward principle of grace, a Divine dynamic which enables the believer to comply in principle to the Word of God.

- The Moral Law as it expresses the moral self-consistency of God, i.e., his absolute righteous character. It is in this context alone that sin is revealed in its true character and significance. Cf. Ex. 20:1–17; Matt. 22:36–38; Rom. 3:19–20; 5:20; 7:7–13; 1 Tim. 1:5–11; 1 Jn. 3:4.

⁷² *Metonymy* (fr. Gk. μετὰ [*meta*], other, and ὄνομα [*onoma*], name) is a figure of speech which substitutes one thing with another by association, e.g., The executive branch is termed “the White House,” the local civil authorities might be referred to as “City Hall,” etc.

This is the great danger in “word studies” of biblical terms. Such studies are legitimate—but only if and when a proper study of the lexical meaning, syntactical relationship and historico–theological development have been carefully considered.⁷³ Again, words are to be taken in their literal or common sense usage [*usus loquendi*] unless they bear some figurative or idiomatic significance necessary to the context.

7. The Principle of Context

The context of any statement in Scripture is not limited to the immediate textual context, but necessarily includes the historical, theological, cultural and psychological context as well.⁷⁴ All these must be considered for an accurate interpretation of any given passage.

The basic rules of context can be put in question form for the sake of convenience. Such questions ought to become an integral part of one’s hermeneutic skill:

- *Who is speaking?* It makes a great difference whether God or the devil is speaking. A given scriptural reference may be the inspired record of the words of an unregenerate individual speaking from a humanistic point-of-reference. Simply because something occurs in

⁷³ Word studies must be utilized with caution. God has not spoken in isolated or unconnected words, but in words arranged in a given syntax and context, expressing his Word intelligently, consistently and authoritatively. Each term must be considered, lexically (the basic or dictionary sense), syntactically (as it is used in a given syntax or context), according to its historico–theological development, and finally as to its significance in the ultimate, comprehensive analogy of faith.

⁷⁴ The psychological context may be missed in a translation or version which does not convey the full use of the imperatives, exclamations, word–order and other idioms of the original language. E.g., Jn. 8:31–47, where a violent exchange takes place between the Jews and our Lord. Mark, for instance, the following: v. 33, “Seed of Abraham’ are we...!” (Σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἐσμεν [*Sperma Abraam’ esmen!*]), and our Lord’s retort in v. 37, “I know, ‘Seed of Abraham’ are ye...!” (σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἐστε [*Sperma Abraam’ este!*]).

Scripture does not make it scriptural. In the case of Job and his “comforters,” it makes a difference whether he, one of them or God is speaking, i.e., the speaker’s point-of-view.

- *Who is being spoken to?* It also makes a great difference whether our Lord or an inspired human author is speaking to believers, unbelievers or to mere professing believers.⁷⁵
- *What is being spoken about?* It is likewise essential to know whether a given author is writing about the objective or subjective aspect of salvation, about justification or sanctification, etc., or even stating something contrary to truth for the sake of argument.
- *Why is this being spoken?* The reason for the statement may be greatly significant.
- *When is this spoken?* The circumstances reveal much concerning the significance of a given statement.
- *In what context is this spoken?* Remember the old cliché that “one can take a text out of context and make it a pretext.” This is the inherent danger of a “proof-text” method.⁷⁶ Often such an approach assumes that the Bible is “flat,” i.e., it fails to take into account the progression

⁷⁵ Some would take references to the unregenerate and make them refer to so-called “carnal Christians,” e.g., Rom. 8:5–8; Phil. 3:17–19. Cf. the autobiographical section of Rom. 7:14–25. Was Paul speaking of his pre-conversion life, his awakened state, or his experience as a mature believer? Undoubtedly, he speaks of his experience as a mature Christian who possesses a high degree of awareness of indwelling sin and corruption. The key is that this section (6:15–8:8) describes the believer’s relation to the Law, and does not end at 7:25, but in chapter 8, at least at v. 8. It is only in 8:1ff that he takes up the truth he has previously introduced in 5:5, 10 and 6:4–5—the presence and dynamic of the Holy Spirit.

⁷⁶ E.g., 1 Cor. 2:9 has commonly been taken as a text about the unknown glories of heaven, when in reality it refers to spiritual truth already revealed to believers in contrast to unbelievers. Cf. the immediate context of v. 6–16.

of Divine revelation and takes statements from the Old and New Testaments at random and out of context, fitting them together in an arbitrary fashion.

8. The Principle of the *Usus Loquendi*

This principle is inherently part of the historico–grammatical approach to interpretation. It is the “common sense” interpretation that seeks the meaning in the usual or common use of words, terminology, idioms and figures of speech, and does not seek any deeper meaning or significance beyond this.

9. The Principle of Figurative Language

“When a word is employed in another than its primary meaning, or applied to some object different from that to which it is appropriated in common usage, it is called a trope.”⁷⁷ The tropical sense is the figurative sense.⁷⁸ There are three categories of figures of speech which should become obvious:⁷⁹ short figures, such as similes and metaphors; opaque [difficult to understand] figures, such as riddles, fables and enigmatic sayings; and extended figures, such as similitudes, parables and allegories.

The use of figurative language—types, symbols, figures of speech, idiomatic, poetic, parabolic, and prophetic references—gain an entry into the mind through the emotions and experience.

⁷⁷ From the Gk. τρόπος (*tropos*), “to turn or change.” Quotation from Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 243.

⁷⁸ E.g., Gal. 2:19. James, Peter and John are referred to as “pillars” of the Jerusalem church. Our Lord is called “The Lamb of God.” Our Lord referred to Herod as “that fox.” These are examples of metaphors, or figures based on representation. Figures based on resemblance contained the terms “as” or “like” and are called similes—“All we *like* sheep have gone astray.”

⁷⁹ A fourth category, figures of speech that derive from the grammar of the original languages or are rhetorical in nature are not so obvious and usually more complicated. These are beyond the scope of this study—with the exception of Heb. parallelism in poetic literature.

These have a power and force that the straightforward articulation of the facts often lack.

Note: Included in Scriptural symbolism is “Biblical Numerology.” Although some numbers in Scripture do have a distinct significance, most do not. So-called “numerology” derives from Medieval Jewish Cabbalism and allegorical or mystical interpretation, and should be avoided unless clearly demanded by the text and context. E.g., Ex. 16:1, which deals with the Divine provision of manna. The words “the fifteenth day of the second month” have been taken to mean (2 as the number of witness, $15 = 3 \times 5$, 3 being the number of manifestation, and 5 the number of grace)—that on this day Israel was to witness a manifestation of Divine grace in the giving of the manna! This is an example of “Christianized Cabbalism.”

Figures of speech and other expressions must be considered in the immediate context and in the larger context of the given book, and the whole of Scripture, culture and history. Figurative language is just that—figures of speech common to a given language and culture as a vehicle to illustrate Divine truth.⁸⁰ These must never be grossly literalized, nor should literal truth be spiritualized to find some “deeper, hidden meaning” unless necessitated by context and the analogy of faith. This subject is dealt with in detail under “Special Principles of Biblical Interpretation.”

10. The Principle of Theological Proposition

Doctrinal Truth the End of Biblical Interpretation

The Scriptures are the very Word of God set in a historical format [redemptive history]. The content and end of Scripture is the revelation of Divine truth—doctrinal or theological truth that can be reduced to the form of theological propositions and thus

⁸⁰ Figurative speech is used to emphasize or illustrate a truth, and so has some point of correspondence with that truth and does not in itself form the basis of that truth. For the most exhaustive treatment of figurative language as used in Scripture, see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968. 1104 pp.

implemented in the life. Thus, to properly comprehend and interpret the Scriptures, one must arrive at distinct doctrinal truth;⁸¹ conversely, to properly comprehend and interpret doctrinal truth, one must be thoroughly and consistently biblical.

Biblical and Theological Language

There is a necessary distinction between biblical and theological language. Theological terminology is necessarily more precise, as its terminology must contain the inclusive, unmistakable, accepted meaning, whereas any one given statement or passage of Scripture may not.⁸² If Scripture were at every point precise and unmistakable, there would be no doctrinal differences, no error or heresy, and thus no need for creeds or confessions. However, the total teaching of Scripture must be studied to arrive at a consistent and non-contradictory teaching [analogy of faith].

Theology and Grammar

There is at certain points a discontinuity between the grammar and theology of Scripture due to literary form, and so we must take care in our interpretation as to which deserves the precedence—grammar or theology. Usually grammar takes precedence over theology and forms the basis for theology, but at times theology must take precedence over grammar. This is not to say that there is a defect in the grammar of inspired Scripture, but only that due to the literary form or the inadequacy of human

⁸¹ To merely give an exposition of Scripture, or analyze a passage, yet stop short of doctrinal exposition, is to fail in the hermeneutical task. Further, to analyze or give an exposition of a passage of Scripture without evangelistic or pastoral application is to stop short of preaching.

⁸² E.g., the alleged contradiction between Paul and James on the subject of justification by faith (Rom. 4:1–5:11; Jas. 2:14–26). Paul emphasizes a free justification, i.e., that justification is by faith alone. James emphasizes that true faith evidences itself in corresponding works. The alleged difference is solved both by the context (Paul refers to Gen. 15:6 and James to Gen. 22) and the analogy of faith.

language to convey Divine truth, one must depend on theology rather than grammar or, at times, the reverse.

Note: Examples of the tension between grammar and theology and some of the issues:

- E.g., Heb. 11:7, “which” (ἥς, *hēs*) is feminine, and refers to “faith,” the remote antecedent, not “ark,” the nearer antecedent. It was his faith that condemned the world (keeping with the context and the fig. *anaphora*, “by faith...by faith...by faith...”), not his building the ark. The building of the ark was, of course, the subsequent expression of his faith.
- E.g., Contrary to the first example, the remote antecedent may be used to buttress the argument for a questionable theory when a closer antecedent would weaken the same theory. Cf. Jude 6–7. The word “these” in the Gk. text (τούτοις, *toutois*) in v. 7 (“...in like manner [these] giving themselves over...”) has been made to refer to the angels that fell in v. 6. The idea is that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha gave themselves over to “strange flesh” and “fornication” exactly as did the fallen angels. This has been used to buttress the “Angel Theory” of Gen. 6—that the fallen angels cohabited with women, thus producing a race of giants (Gen. 6:1–5),⁸³ corrupting the human race, and bringing the judgment of the Flood. However, a closer and more suitable antecedent is found in the words “Sodom and Gomorrha,” as the form τούτοις can be either masc. or neut.
- E.g., Acts 20:28, τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἣν περιποιήσατο διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου [*tēn ekklēsiaian tou theou hēn peripoiēsato dia tou hasimatos tou idiou*]), “the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood,” gave rise to the “blood of God” controversy, yet God, who is spirit, has no blood. But in Paul’s mind the Lord Jesus Christ is Divine, i.e., very God, Deity, and

⁸³ The *Codex Alexandrinus* ms. of the LXX (c. 450 AD) reads “angels of God” rather than “sons of God,” giving an old impetus to the “Angel Theory.” Many believe that this ms. reflects the allegorizing tendencies of Alexandrian Judaism.

purchased the church with his own blood. The statement is therefore elliptical.

- E.g., Grammar may give way to theology in the use of the term “Spirit” when referring to the Holy Spirit. “Spirit” is neuter and therefore is expressed by neuter pronouns, e.g., “the Spirit itself” (Rom. 8:16). Yet the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person of the triune Godhead, and ought to be referred to as “he.” Our Lord does exactly this as he teaches the disciples in Jn. 15:26; 16:7–8, 13–15. In these verses, he uses the masculine gender to emphasize the personality of the Holy Spirit, e.g., “he,” “that one [masc.],” etc. (ὁ παράκλητος ὄν... ἐκεῖνος... ὁ παράκλητος... αὐτὸν... ἐκεῖνος... ἐκεῖνος... ἐκεῖνος... [*ho paraklētos hon... ekeinos... ho paraklētos... auton ...ekeinos... eikeinos... ekeinos...*])

11. The Principle of Interpretive and Applicatory Distinction

As God is wise, intelligent and consistent or non-contradictory; so is his inspired, infallible, inerrant Word. Thus, there can only be one legitimate, consistent, intelligent interpretation. Should more than one legitimate interpretation be possible, then all meaning and finality would be necessarily lost and all would result in utter irrationality.⁸⁴ Although there is but one interpretation, there may be several possible and legitimate applications—but great care should be exercised to make the necessary distinction between the interpretation (what the passage means) and the application (how the truth of the passage might be applied to present persons or circumstances).

⁸⁴ God created the universe as an ordered reality. The laws of logic [consistent thought and reasoning] derive from him and imply an ordered reality. Mark the necessary and universal law of contradiction (also termed the law of non-contradiction) in reasoning, “A cannot be non-A,” i.e., a tree cannot be a rock, an animal cannot be an angel, a human cannot be plant, etc., without destroying all meaning and possibility of communication of rational thought.

12. The Principle of Practical Exegesis

There is a difference between hermeneutics and exegesis, though these are inherently related.⁸⁵ Hermeneutics denotes the theory of and contains the presuppositions for exegesis; exegesis is the practice or implementation of the hermeneutical or interpretive process. It would be proper to state that exegesis exists and proceeds in the context of hermeneutics.

The three key-terms that extend from the exegetical to the practical are: exposition, interpretation and application. The text must first be opened, then the meaning ascertained and given, and, finally, application made from the Scripture to the present circumstances in personal application or public preaching and teaching. By application (*not* interpretation), Proverbs 24:32 gives the essence of this process: “Then I saw, *and* considered it well: I looked upon it, *and* received instruction.”

OBSERVATION— “Then I saw...” (Exposition)

MEDITATION— “and considered it well...I looked upon it...” (Interpretation)

APPLICATION— “...and received instruction.” (Application)

Everything in the Christian life and experience has a direct relation to one’s reverent study and consistent application of the Word of God. Guidance, direction, spiritual strength and discernment, godliness and spiritual maturity—all are bound up in these two issues!

Special Principles of Biblical Interpretation

The general principles of interpretation are not sufficient to deal with every interpretive issue. The Scriptures were originally written in the context of an Oriental culture which abounded in figurative language and figures of speech. These must be

⁸⁵ ἑρμηνεία (*hermeneia*) and ἐξήγησις (*exegesis*) are synonyms. The ancient Greek ἐξηγητής [exegete] was both the expounder and interpreter of dreams and the oracles of the “gods.” These terms were imported into Christianity, the science of theology and biblical studies.

properly understood. One third of Scripture is poetry, which necessitates a distinct understanding and approach. The phenomenon of prophecy, which exists largely in symbols, also necessitates specialized study. Thus, there is a need to consider special principles of interpretation.

1. The Interpretation of Figures of Speech

The Significance of Figurative Language

Whether something is meant literally or figuratively often carries great consequences for the student of Scripture. Consider the words of our Lord:

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (Jn. 6:51–56).

Certainly, such language is figurative for appropriating Christ by faith, yet the Romish mass with its transubstantiation and Lutheranism with its consubstantiation are largely founded upon a misunderstanding of this passage and a confusion of the literal with the figurative. And what of the statement, “This is my body”? Was this figurative or literal?

Consider the great controversy and split in the Sixteenth Century Reformation between the Lutherans and Reformed over these words! Luther, opposing Zwingli and the other Reformed theologians, insisted that our Lord referred to himself and not to the bread. This forced Luther and his followers to explain how the physical body of Christ could be both in heaven and in various places on earth at once. They were forced to develop the doctrine of “the ubiquity of the

body of Christ,” i.e., that he could be physically in many places at once.

Figures of Speech

Short Figures of Speech

As has been previously introduced, there are various types of figurative language [*tropes*] and several categories of figures of speech: the short, the opaque and the extended. At this point, our concern is with short figures of speech. Some of the most common will serve as examples:

1. *Simile*,⁸⁶ a stated resemblance of two things introduced with “as” or “like.” The simile is based on resemblance; the metaphor on representation. “He eats like a pig” would be a simile describing a sloppy person without good table manners but with a big appetite. E.g., “All we like sheep have gone astray” (Isa. 53:6). “As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God” (Psa. 42:1). A *parable* is an extended simile.
2. *Metaphor*,⁸⁷ a comparison by representation and so without the introductory “as” or “like.” As the simile would state “He eats like a pig,” the metaphor would be, “He is a pig.” Scriptural examples include the following: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” (Psa. 23:1). “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers...” (Acts 20:28). “Except a man be born again...” (Jn. 3:3). An *allegory* is an extended metaphor, or comparison by representation.

⁸⁶ Lat: *similis*, “like, resembling, similar.”

⁸⁷ Gk: μεταφορά (*metaphora*), from μετά (*meta*) “over, beyond, across,” and φέρειν (*pherein*), “to carry,” hence a transference or resemblance.

3. *Proverb*,⁸⁸ a short, pithy saying in common use which illustrates a rule or principle of life. An example in English would be, “The early bird gets the worm.” This is meant to teach industry and punctuality. Some scriptural examples: 2 Pet. 2:22, “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” The point is that, like the dog which licks up its own vomit and the sow, though she might once wash herself, returns to her wallow, the nature of these false teachers is clearly manifest by their actions. Cf. also Lk. 4:23, “Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal thyself’: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.”
4. *Metonymy*,⁸⁹ a change of noun in which one name is used for another. An example would be, “The White House states...” using the “White House” to refer to the present presidential administration and policy. A scriptural example is, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” (Lk. 16:29). “Moses and the prophets” are used instead of “the Law and the Prophets,” or “the Scriptures.” “Moses” is often used for the Law, e.g., Acts 21:21.
5. *Synecdoche*,⁹⁰ an exchange between two associated ideas, differing from a metonymy, which is an exchange between two names or nouns. One of the most common

⁸⁸ Gk: παροιμία (*paroiimia*), from παρά (*para*), “beside,” and οἶμος (*oimos*), “way or path,” and so a wayside, or common saying. Lat: *proverbium*, from *pro* and *verbum*, word. An adage, a short, pithy saying in common use.

⁸⁹ Gk: μετωνυμία (*metōnumia*), from μετά (*meta*), “change”, and ὄνομα (*onoma*), a name.

⁹⁰ Gk: συνεκδοχή (*sunekdochē*), from σύν (*sun*), “together with,” and ἔδοχή (*edochē*), “a receiving from.”

synecdoches puts a part for the whole or the whole for a part. An example would be using “bread” for food, “He has to earn his own bread.” Scriptural examples: “Then Jephthah, the Gileadite died and was buried in the cities of Gilead” (Judg. 12:7). He was, however, buried in only one city. Beating “swords into plowshares and spears into pruninghooks” (Isa. 2:4) stands for total disarmament. Often “soul” is used for the whole person (Gen. 46:27; Acts 27:37). The words “all men” in 1 Tim. 2:4 stand for “all kinds of men” in the context.

6. *Hyperbole*,⁹¹ an exaggeration for the sake of emphasis. A common example is, “If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you a million times...” Scriptural examples: “Behold, the world is gone after him...” (Jn. 12:19). “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (Jn. 21:25).
7. *Irony*,⁹² a statement made in humor, sarcasm or emotion that is contrary to fact. An example would be, “My, aren’t you coordinated?!” when referring to a clumsy person just spilled or dropped something. Scriptural examples: the words of Elijah to the false prophets of Baal:

And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he *is* a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, *or* peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked (1 Kgs. 18:27).

Note the words of our Lord at the close of his prayer and garden agony:

Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them,
Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at

⁹¹ Gk: ὑπερβολή (*hyperbolē*), from ὑπέρ (*hyper*), “over, beyond,” and βάλλειν (*ballein*), “to throw, cast,” hence, an exaggeration.

⁹² Gk: εἰρων (*eirōn*), a dissembler in speech.

hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me. (Matt. 26:45–46).

Opaque Figures of Speech

Opaque [difficult to understand] figures of speech include fables, riddles, and enigmatic sayings.

1. *Fable*,⁹³ a story or narrative not based on fact. Often entities in animal creation or inanimate objects are given the gift of speech to illustrate a moral principle. Fables may also be used to convey sarcasm, ridicule or irony. The first fable recorded in Scripture is Jotham's fable in Judg. 9:7–20, where trees are represented as choosing a king over themselves. The bramble bush was meant to represent Abimelech who had been made king. The fable is interpreted by Jotham himself in v. 16–20. Cf. also 2 Kgs. 14:9, a fable teaching contempt.
2. *Riddle*,⁹⁴ “A statement intentionally worded in a dark or puzzling manner.”⁹⁵ Oriental cultures abounded in riddles. Note 1 Kgs. 10:1, where the word translated “questions” is literally “riddles.” Note also Prov. 1:6, where the words “dark sayings” are but one in the Hebrew—“riddles.” An Old Testament example is the riddle of Samson, used to confuse and take advantage of the Philistines (Judg. 14:5–6, 8–9, 12–19). A New Testament example of a riddle is the statement in Rev. 13:18 concerning the number 666.

⁹³ “Fable,” from the Lat. *fabula*, a discourse. The Gk. is ἀπόλογος (*apologos*), a story or tale.

⁹⁴ “Riddle,” from OE. *rædels*, “counsel, opinion, conjecture.” The Heb. חֵידָה (*chiydah*), denotes something tied in a knot, and so a saying which must be unraveled through insight and skill.

⁹⁵ *OED*, p. 1735.

3. *Enigma*,⁹⁶ a dark, mysterious, mystical saying. Some would differentiate between a riddle and an enigma by stating that a riddle is concerned with earthly things, whereas an enigma is concerned with the mysteries of spiritual truths. The saying of our Lord to Nicodemus (Jn. 3:3) may be considered enigmatic. See also Lk. 22:36.

Extended Figures of Speech

Extended figures of speech include similitudes, parables and allegories.

1. *Similitude*,⁹⁷ an extended simile. The similitude differs from a parable in that it uses the present tense rather than the past tense, and speaks about a customary or timeless truth whereas the parable focuses on a particular instance. Cf. the similitude of the lost sheep and the lost coin in Lk. 15:4–10.
2. *Parable*,⁹⁸ also an extended simile, or a story based on resemblance. Cf. The Parable of the Prodigal Son in Lk. 15:11–32 and the Parable of the Sower in Matt. 13:1–23. The parable uses the past tense and a specific instance to illustrate a truth.
3. *Allegory*,⁹⁹ an extended metaphor, or a comparison based on representation. The word occurs once in the New Testament with regard to Sarah and Hagar as representing two cities, peoples and the contrast between the Old and the New or Gospel Covenant (Gal. 4:21–31). The Lord’s discourse concerning the Vine and the

⁹⁶ “Enigma,” from the Gk: ἀίνιγμα (*ainigma*), from αἰνίσσασθαι (*ainissesthai*), “to tell a strange tale, to speak darkly or in a riddle.”

⁹⁷ “Similitude,” from the Lat: *similis*, like or resembling.

⁹⁸ “Parable,” from the Gk: παραβολή (*parabolē*) “a placing beside.”

⁹⁹ “Allegory,” from the Gk: ἀλληγορία (*allēgoria*), from ἄλλος (*allos*), “another,” and ἀγορεύειν (*agoreuein*), “to make a speech in the marketplace.”

Branches is an allegory (Jn. 15:1–10). Although the Scriptures make use of allegories as a natural and normal part of thought and expression, it is an altogether different matter to allegorize the Scripture to find some hidden meaning beneath the literal meaning or *usus loquendi*.

Understanding Figures of Speech

To adequately understand and interpret figures of speech, whether short, opaque or extended, the following must be kept in mind:

- Figures of speech are often mixed or intermingled in the biblical narrative, e.g., One must be able to identify the figure used, or a given degree of misunderstanding may result, and thus misinterpretation.
- One must have a clear conception of the realities on which the figures are based, which often necessitates a study of biblical languages, culture, geography and history.
- One must grasp the principle idea and not be misled by various incidental details. This is especially necessary when dealing with extended figures such as parables¹⁰⁰ and allegories.
- One must remember that when dealing with God and eternal, infinite truths, figurative language fails to fully convey the realities.

2. The Interpretation of Poetry

One third of the Bible is poetry. Most poetry is contained in the books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon and Lamentations. Other poetic examples occur as

¹⁰⁰ E.g., the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1–11). The theme is the necessity of watchfulness because of ignorance concerning the exact time of our Lord's coming. "Oil" is an incidental, and cannot consistently be made a type of the Holy Spirit in this parable without introducing both confusion and heresy.

songs¹⁰¹ or epic poems,¹⁰² etc. In addition to quotations of Old Testament poetry, there are hymns and probable hymns in the New Testament;¹⁰³ the doxologies may also qualify as poetry.¹⁰⁴ There are five essential issues concerning biblical poetry:

- Biblical poetry abounds in the various forms of figurative language. One must observe and seek to identify various figures of speech in poetic language.
- It must be noted that simply because the Scripture, especially the Old Testament, uses poetic language does *not* mean that what is described is not real or true. Poetry as a literary form does not preclude reality nor necessitate the existence of either myth or legend. Poetic language may describe what would otherwise be incomprehensible or indescribable to man.¹⁰⁵
- Biblical poetry was written in couplets or more extended stichs which can add up to six lines per stanza or strophe. Psa. 1:1 and Psa. 135:1, below, are an examples of a tristich, or three-lined strophe.
- Various types of arrangements give poetry its literary form. E.g., the acrostic, as seen in Psalm 119. Each section begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Other acrostics are not retained or identified in the English Bible.

¹⁰¹ E.g., The Prayer-Song of Hannah, 1 Sam. 2:1–10.

¹⁰² E.g., The Epic Song of David for Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1:17–27; the Epic Song of Deborah and Barak, Judg. 5:1–31.

¹⁰³ E.g., the hymn of Mary [*The Magnificat*] (Lk. 1:46–55) and the probable hymn of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ as written by Paul (Phil. 2:5–11).

¹⁰⁴ E.g., Rom. 8:28–39; 11:33–36.

¹⁰⁵ E.g., the creation narrative in Gen. chapters 1 and 2, etc. Rationalistic critics, denying the reality of Divine inspiration, creation, the Fall of man and other scriptural realities have resorted to relegating such narratives to the realm of myth and legend to void them of truth.

Note: “Acrostic” (from ἄκρον [*akron*], extremity, end, and στίχος [*stichos*], verse). Other examples of alphabetic acrostic poems, though not discernable in English are Psa. 25, 34, 111 and 112. The last twenty-two verses of Proverbs chapter 31 are acrostic, as is most of the book of Lamentations.

- Biblical poetry, especially Hebrew poetry, is not based on rhyme (assonance, or like sounds) but on a parallelism of thought. It ought to be noted that often much of the Hebrew idiom and word-order is lost when translated into English, thus the parallelism may not be as noticeable in the English. There are various types of parallelism. Following are several examples:

1. Synonymous parallelism (Psa. 103:3):

“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
who healeth all thy diseases”

2. Antithetical or contrasting parallelism (Prov. 15:1):

“A soft answer turneth away wrath:
but grievous words stir up anger.”

3. Emblematic parallelism (in which one line is figurative and the other literal (Psa. 42:1):

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”

4. Incomplete parallelism in which the thought either ascends or descends. E.g., the descending parallelism of Psa. 1:1:

“Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of
the ungodly,

nor standeth in the way of sinners,
nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

Note also the descending four lines of Psa. 91:5–6:

“Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night;
nor for the arrow *that* flieth by day;

nor for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness;
nor for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday.”

and the four lines of Psa. 91:9–10:

“Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my
 refuge,

even the most High, thy habitation;

There shall no evil befall thee,

neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”

also the ascending trisich of Psa. 135:1:

“Praise ye the LORD.

Praise ye the name of the LORD;

Praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD.”

5. Introverted parallelism (Psa. 30:8–10):

“I cried to thee, O LORD;

and unto the LORD I made supplication.

What profit *is there* in my blood,

when I go down to the pit?

Shall the dust praise thee?

shall it declare thy truth?

Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me:

LORD, be thou my helper.”

3. The Interpretation of Types and Symbols

Biblical Types

Biblical types¹⁰⁶ are Old Testament persons, places or things that anticipate or prefigure some aspect of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ or New Testament gospel realities. The fulfillment of the type is called its antitype.¹⁰⁷ Technically, to be a true Old Testament biblical type, the New Testament must

¹⁰⁶ “Type,” from the Gk: τύπος (*tupos*), a figure formed by a blow, an impression, and so an image or figure.

¹⁰⁷ “Antitype,” from the Gk: αντίτυπος (*antitupos*), that which corresponds to the type, the die that forms the impression, its counterpart, or fulfillment. The Gk. prep. *anti* connotes “face-to-face” and “instead of” as well as “against.”

contain a reference and explanation. Following are a few examples:

- Adam is a type of Christ in that he stood as Representative Man or federal head of the human race. His one act was thus imputed to all his posterity. Our Lord stood as Representative Man for his people, and his one act is imputed to his covenant people (Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:20–22; 45–47).
- The Tabernacle, priesthood and offerings of the Mosaic institution all prefigured the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- In some places, oil typifies the Holy Spirit. The holy anointing oil of the High Priest typified the Holy Spirit, and so was not to be duplicated upon penalty of excommunication and death (Ex. 30:22–38). In other places, oil does not (Cf. Matt. 25:1–13).
- The Passover and the Passover lamb typified Christ (Jn. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7).
- Jonah’s three days and nights in the belly of the fish typified the three days’ burial of our Lord (Jonah 2; Matt. 12:38–41).
- The brazen serpent made by Moses typified Christ lifted up as Savior (Numb. 21:1–9; Jn. 3:14–16).
- The rock in the desert that, smitten, gave forth water, was a type of Christ (Ex. 17:6; Numb. 20:11; 1 Cor. 10:1–4).
- Melchizedek is a type of Christ (Gen. 14:18–20; Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:5; 6:20–8:2). Thus, Melchizedek was not the [pre-incarnate] Lord himself, as the type cannot be the antitype!
- The parallels between Joseph and our Lord are exceptional, yet Joseph is never referred to as a type of Christ in the New Testament. Many commentators, however, refer to Joseph as a type of Christ because of such parallels, e.g., hated by his brethren, betrayed and

sold for several pieces of silver, condemned, then raised up as a savior or deliverer, etc.

- The river Jordan is commonly thought of as a type of death and Canaan as a type of heaven in sermons and hymns, because it was the “Promised Land.” Scripture, however, gives no warrant for this. Indeed, Canaan was the scene of warfare and conflict, not rest—and a land inhabited with a degenerate people that had to be exterminated.

There are three essentials for something to be a biblical type of another person, place or thing:

- There must be some notable or discernable point of resemblance or analogy between the type and the antitype, although there may be some great dissimilarities.¹⁰⁸
- There must be biblical evidence that the type was ordained or designed by God to represent the person or thing typified. There is a great danger of drifting from legitimate typology into an illegitimate allegorization.
- The type must anticipate or prefigure someone or thing [antitype] in the future.

Biblical Symbols

A biblical symbol is a recognizable sign in the form of a visual object. It carries a certain significance in itself and needs no antitype or future fulfillment for its significance. The rainbow was a symbol of God’s covenant faithfulness (Gen. 9:8–17). The pillar of cloud and fire that led the people of Israel was a symbol of the Divine presence [*Shekinah*] (Ex. 13:21–22). The vine was an Old Testament symbol for Israel and later for our Lord (Jn.

¹⁰⁸ All personal types of Christ, such as Adam, David, Solomon, were imperfect and are only types because of their position, office or experience.

15:1f).¹⁰⁹ The golden lampstands symbolized the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1:10–20). The seven stars in the hand of the exalted Christ are the seven angels [messengers] or elders of the seven churches (Rev. 1:20). The bread and wine as used in the Lord’s Supper are symbolic of the body and blood of our Lord.

Symbols are significant in that many of the prophecies contain symbols which must be correctly and consistently interpreted. One must discern whether two or more prophecies or writers use the same symbol in the same way or in different ways.

4. The Interpretation of Prophecy

The Problems of Prophetic Interpretation

The interpretation of prophecy is perhaps the most problematic aspect of understanding the Bible. The reasons for this are manifold:

- Tradition and prejudice color one’s presuppositions.
- Few can agree on what is to be taken literally and what is to be taken figuratively.¹¹⁰ Even the terms “literal” and “figurative” or “spiritual” have been and are used with various meanings or shades of meaning.
- Many biblical prophecies are visionary, and so filled with figurative and symbolic language.

¹⁰⁹ Thus, our Lord stated, “I am (emph.) the Vine, [I mean] the true one!” (Ἐγὼ εἶμι ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή [*Egō eimi hē ampelos hē alēthinē*]), replacing Israel.

¹¹⁰ E.g., The Amillennialists hold that the Book of Revelation is symbolic—a series of prophetic signs. The Dispensationalists hold that it is to be interpreted as literally as possible. Yet it is common for the Amillennialists to correctly take the first three chapters literally and the Dispensationalists to spiritualize these same chapters into various “church ages”! Many Dispensationalists seem to mix the literal and symbolic in a rather arbitrary manner.

- Some prophecies are a mixture of prophetic elements that call for a double fulfillment,¹¹¹ i.e., a figurative fulfillment in the present or immediate future and a literal fulfillment in the distant future.¹¹²
- Some prophecies are conditional, or based on various conditions; others are unconditional.
- Some prophecies mingle two time frames into one.

Note: E.g., the Old Testament prophets envisioned the coming of the Messiah, at times as a glorious, victorious Messiah; at others as a suffering Messiah. These aspects had to do with his first and second Advent. The Jews failed to realize this and rejected our Lord at his first advent. Jewish tradition, unable to comprehend their prophetic Scriptures and rejecting our Lord, envisioned two Messiahs, a suffering Messiah and a conquering, reigning Messiah.
- Some prophetic language is ambiguous, visionary or idealized. Prophetic visions were often limited to the prophet's own time and culture.¹¹³ Prophecies occur throughout Scripture, and take many forms. Several might view a given future event from different perspectives.

General Principles of Prophetic Interpretation

The following general principles will serve as a very basic guideline:

- One must give careful attention to the language used, including figures of speech, symbols and cultural

¹¹¹ Note carefully that the issue is a "double fulfillment"—not a double *interpretation*.

¹¹² E.g., Psa. 22:14–18. David's language is figurative of great suffering, but these were literally fulfilled in the crucifixion of our Lord.

¹¹³ E.g., prophecies concerning battles, weapons, kingdoms, etc., are usually described in terms of then existing conditions, as are prophecies of the New or Gospel Covenant. Failure to realize this has resulted in a misunderstanding of the New Covenant and strange speculations about the weapons and battles of times then future.

peculiarities. The literal [historico–grammatical] meaning must be the starting–point and safeguard in interpretation.

- One must consider the clarity of the text. The more obscure the passage may be through figures or symbolism, the less confident one can be of rightly understanding it. Conversely, the clearer the text, the more confident one can be of arriving at a right understanding.
- One must carefully consider the historical background or context of the prophecy.
- One must take careful notes of the flow of the prophetic passage and not be distracted by chapter or verse divisions.
- One must study any parallel passages which might throw light upon a given prophecy.
- One must seek to grasp the essence of the passage. Is it conditional or unconditional? Predictive or didactic? Fulfilled or yet unfulfilled?
- One must be aware of the Christological nature of prophecy, i.e., how it relates to Christ. His person and work, his two advents, form the central key to prophetic understanding.¹¹⁴
- One must understand that fulfilled prophecies may give a pattern for interpreting those yet unfulfilled.

¹¹⁴ E.g., to hold that Israel is the key to prophetic interpretation, or that in a future millennium, the Old Testament sacrificial system will be re–instituted, and that “The Church” is a parenthesis between God’s dealings with Israel is opposed to this principle (Eph. 3:20–21).

Part III: Methods of Bible Study

Introduction
 Three General Approaches to Bible Study
 The Survey Method
 The Synthetic Method
 The Inductive Method
 The Analytical Method
 The Theological Method
 The Historical Method
 The Biographical Method

Introduction

What is the secret to becoming a serious Bible student? The answer is that there is no secret or esoteric path. There are simply several areas in which time and concentration must be devoted to study, the necessary skills developed, and the proper attitude of the mind and heart retained:

- *The student of Scripture must devote the necessary time and effort to become thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures—a matter of both discipline and organization. This should not only consist of the study of the English Bible but, if possible, the essentials of the Scriptures in the original languages.*
- *The student of Scripture ought to begin with a general Bible survey, seeking to gain a general knowledge of the Bible as a whole and of every individual book in at least a general sense. One should at least become acquainted with the human author, his particular style,¹¹⁵ the historical context or circumstances under which the given book was written, and have a general idea of the book's development or outline.*

¹¹⁵ Even though the Holy Spirit is the ultimate Author of all Scripture (1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21), Divine inspiration is such that the human peculiarities of personality, style and vocabulary are retained to a given degree, making each human author distinct.

- *Some books or passages necessitate a thorough and often detailed study*, especially those directly concerned with doctrinal truth. Genesis and Exodus are strategic books, as they mark creation, the beginning of human history, and Israel's national history. The three Synoptic Gospels¹¹⁶ and the Gospel of John ought to be thoroughly studied to grasp the significance of the earthly life and teaching of our Lord. The Book of Acts is vital for comprehending the history, nature and character of primitive Christianity. The Book of Romans contains the most logical development of doctrine in Scripture. The Book of Hebrews opens the Old Testament and its institutions more than any other New Testament writing. The Book of Ephesians is the deepest and most comprehensive revelation of the Divine, eternal purpose.
- *The student of Scripture must gain a general skill and consistency* in seeking to interpret the Scriptures, by constant reference to and use of the principles of interpretation. Constant practice will result in an accumulation of interpretive skills.
- *The student of Scripture must be spiritually as well as intellectually prepared*. One must be prepared not only to read and study, but also to humbly submit to the truth revealed and impressed upon the consciousness.

Three General Approaches to Bible Study

There are ultimately only three methods of Bible study: synthetic, analytical and topical.

¹¹⁶ "Synoptic," from the same view. Matthew, Mark and Luke emphasize the Galilean ministry of our Lord, while John emphasizes the Judean ministry. Both are necessary for a complete composite portrait.

The Synthetic Approach

The synthetic¹¹⁷ approach works from the particulars to the general or the whole. It is a general study of Scripture in which a study of various passages, sections or books are combined to form a unified whole. It includes the following:

- *Bible Survey*, or taking the Bible in its entirety, Old Testament (historical, poetical and prophetic literature) and New Testament (historical, doctrinal and prophetic), and then book-by-book. It is a process of survey and summarization to gain a general overview and knowledge of Scripture.
- *A synthesis of each book of the Bible*, seeking to find its major thrust or message and thus its doctrinal, historical and logical place within the canon of Scripture.
- *An inductive approach*, which studies each book according to its general theme, outlining the contents demonstrating the development of this theme.¹¹⁸ Each book is broken down into paragraphs and outlined according to its major theme. Any further exposition would tend to become analytical, which is the next approach.

¹¹⁷ “Synthetic” (Gk: συνθετικός [*sunthetikos*], from σύνθεσις [*synthesis*]), a composition or something put together, a combination of parts into a whole. The opposite of analytical.

¹¹⁸ E.g., The Epistle of 1 Peter is the epistle of comfort and encouragement to Jewish Christians suffering persecution, who were apt to misunderstand their Scriptures. The Old Testament covenants promised blessings for obedience and judgment and suffering for disobedience. But these Jews were now suffering as Christians, even though they were living in obedience to God (E.g., cf. Prov. 16:7 vs. 1 Pet. 1:3–9, 12–23; 4:12–16). 1 Peter then becomes one of the major books of comfort and encouragement for suffering and persecuted believers. E.g., Romans has as its theme “The Righteousness of God.”

The Analytical Approach

The analytical¹¹⁹ approach works from the general to the particulars. It seeks to examine a given statement, paragraph, extended passage or book by dividing it into its component parts. This process, if followed thoroughly, includes:

- *Exegesis*, or dealing with the given passage or at least the critical statements grammatically and syntactically from the original language, if the necessary skills have been acquired.
- *Analysis*, or finding, developing and arranging the structure of the given passage as to its major and secondary grammatical components or issues (major points and sub-points, and even sub-sub-points).
- *Exposition*, or dividing the text into its constituent parts and drawing from the text its proper and legitimate doctrinal significance.

The Topical Approach

The topical¹²⁰ approach seeks to develop a given subject or topic of interest within the framework of Scripture. Such topics may be illustrated by the following examples:

- *Doctrinal or theological*. The total teaching of Scripture [analogy of faith], or the teaching of one human author or book may be brought to bear on one doctrine or some aspect of doctrinal teaching. This is especially true in the New Testament epistles, which are preeminently and directly doctrinal. In the Epistles of Paul, the practical is usually the direct and logical application of the doctrinal, and most of his letters may be simply divided into first, the doctrinal section, and second, the practical section.

¹¹⁹ “Analytical” (Gk: ἀναλύτικα [*analutika*], from ἀναλύσις [*analysis*]), an unloosing, expressing the diverse elements rather than combining them into a whole—the opposite of synthetic.

¹²⁰ “Topical” (Gk: τοπικός [*topikos*]) pertaining to a place or particular subject.

- *Historical.* Some books or sections of Scripture give themselves to a historical development or consideration. The Old Testament is technically termed “Epoch Revelation” because it is largely a record of redemptive history as seen in creation, the personal history of the patriarchs, the national history of Israel, the reign of the various kings, and the ministries of the prophets. The New Testament is preeminently historical in the Four Gospel Records and Acts.
- *Geographical.* Some books or issues, incidents and persons in Scripture need to be considered geographically. This is true of the wilderness journey of Israel in Exodus through Deuteronomy, of our Lord’s earthly ministry through Galilee, Samaria, Perea and Judea; and also of Paul’s three missionary journeys and the voyage to Rome.
- *Biographical.* The study of Bible characters always proves rich and instructive. Such study often necessitates studying passages in several books, or even in both the Old and New Testaments to adequately understand the biblical significance of a given personality. Remember that the Scriptures teach by precept (direct commandment), by principle (inductively revealed) and by example (in, through and by the lives of biblical personalities).

Observations

There are five observations on these essential approaches to an organized and consistent methodology in Bible study:

- In personal study, the beginning Bible student ought to concentrate first on Bible survey or a synthetic approach to acquire a wealth of general biblical knowledge as a foundation for all further study. Such a general knowledge of Scripture seems to be lacking in our day, both in the pulpit and in the pew.
- The student should seek to build a personal reference library to help in interpreting and expounding the

Scriptures. A suitable library ought to include linguistic helps, standard reference works such as a Bible Concordance, a Bible Handbook, a General Bible Introduction, a Dictionary, and studies on Biblical history and cultural backgrounds. Biblical commentaries are extremely helpful, if carefully chosen and wisely used. Obtain only the best—read only the best. Remember, the best library is a careful selection, not merely a collection.

- The various approaches may be combined according to need or emphasis. These approaches are not mutually exclusive, but are simply organized methods of studying the Scriptures as opposed to a disorganized or haphazard approach.

E.g., the missionary journeys of Paul ought to be studied both historically and geographically. E.g., the Epistles of Paul can be studied historically, in relation to his various journeys; geographically, in relation to their designation; doctrinally in relation to their teaching; evangelistically, as to their missionary principles and practices; socially, in relation to the various issues faced by first century Christians in a pagan society; or biographically, in relation to their order in correlation to Paul's ministry and life.

- Care must be taken neither to approach the Scripture in an artificial way, nor with an *eisegetical*¹²¹ agenda. History abounds in examples of the perversion and *eisegesis* of the Scriptures through improper hermeneutical principles, attitudes or ignorance.

Note: The allegorical method of the early Church Fathers "spiritualized" persons, places and objects in Scripture to the point of absurdity. E.g., they read foreign and inappropriate meanings into the text of the Old Testament "to find Christ where he was not," seeking to make it

¹²¹ *Eisegesis*, to read into the text a foreign meaning. The opposite of exegesis.

more of a “Christian book,” e.g., they read into the text the cross or baptism at any mention of either wood or water, etc.

- Truth encountered must be truth considered, and truth considered must be truth believed and applied, or the very purpose of Bible study is nullified.

After surveying the three different general approaches to Bible study, we will now investigate in further detail the various aspects and methodologies that present themselves.

The Survey Method

The Method Discussed

Bible Survey is an aspect of the synthetic method. This is the most basic approach to Bible study, and ought to be pursued by the beginning student to acquire a general understanding of Scripture. The Bible is read through book-by-book, with attention given to the general development and structure of the Bible as a whole, and also to the authorship, historical context (religious, social and political circumstances of writing) and structure of each book. A general outline of the structure of the Bible and each book greatly aids in the understanding of the Bible as a whole, and also of any given book.

As we are dealing with the beginning Bible student, two things are admitted: first, such an individual is seeking to acquire the most basic knowledge of the Scriptures, and so concentrates on reading to gain an intelligent grasp of the general contents of Scripture. He is seeking to establish a foundation for a lifetime of Bible study. Second, to read and gain this understanding, he needs guidance. Companions for such study would include a Bible Handbook,¹²² a Bible Dictionary, and a General Introduction to the Bible, all of which deal with authorship, date and circumstances of writing, the intended readers, the major issues dealt with by the given author, and an outline of each

¹²² *Halley's Bible Handbook* has proven the most useful. It gives notes on authorship, date of composition, archeological data, important incidents in history, and a general outline of each book.

book's contents.¹²³ The student should always have access to a dictionary of the English language.

The Method Illustrated
A General Survey of the Bible

The Bible must be read intelligently with a view to understanding its contents—the very Word of God inscripturated. The following considerations are in order as the Bible is read through:

- Bible study is a holy task, and so must never be divorced from prayer for such understanding (Psa. 119:18).
- The Scriptures are Christocentric, i.e., the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ are the keys to the Scriptures. This is a description of their content, purpose and emphasis, not necessarily a principle of interpretation.¹²⁴
- The student ought to first become acquainted with the general structure of Scripture. The Bible is comprised of two parts: the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament is preparatory to the New, and anticipates the New historically through “Epoch Revelation,”¹²⁵ and redemptively through types, symbols and prophecies. The New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old.

¹²³ The beginning student may need guidance in outlining each book of the Bible, although he should eventually, through his own study, seek to develop his own. Outlines can be found in such works as Bible Dictionaries, *Know Your Bible* by W. Graham Scroggie; Donald Guthrie, Gen. Ed., *The New Bible Commentary*; and Frank E. Gaebelien, Gen. Ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*.

¹²⁴ Luther considered interpretation to be Christological, and so, when pressed, found Christ through allegorizing the Old Testament Scriptures. This was a departure from typology to allegory, and thus into a form of *eisegesis*.

¹²⁵ Epoch revelation is Divine revelation historically—conditioned through the lives of the Patriarchs and nation of Israel.

- The Old Testament contains thirty–nine books, which, in our English Bible, are arranged in the following general manner:
 1. The Historical Books (Genesis–Esther)
 - The Pentateuch (Genesis–Deuteronomy)
 - The Old Testament History (Joshua–Esther)
 2. The Poetical Books, or “Wisdom Literature” (Job–Song of Solomon)
 3. The Prophetical Books (Isaiah–Malachi)
 - Major Prophets (Isaiah–Ezekiel)
 - Minor Prophets (Hosea–Malachi)

It is to be noted that the Old Testament is in logical order, not in chronological order, and it generally follows the Septuagint [LXX], not the Hebrew, which divides the Old Testament into “the Law, the Prophets and the Writings.”¹²⁶ Further, most of the titles derive from the LXX, with a few from the Latin.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ The Bible student ought to be aware of the arrangement of the Heb. O.T: (1) The Law (תּוֹרָה, *Torah*; LXX, Πεντετεϋχος, *Penteteuchos*, “The Five Scrolls”), Genesis–Deuteronomy. (2) The Prophets (נְבִיאִים, *Nbh’iyim*; LXX, Προφήταις, *Prophētais*). The Hebrews divided the Prophets into two groups: (a) the “Former Prophets” (Joshua–2 Kings) and the “Later Prophets” (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea–Malachi). (3) The Writings or “Psalms” (כְּתוּבִים, *Kethubhiym*; LXX, Ψάλμοι, *Psalmoi*). These “Writings” were composed of three parts: (a) “The First Three,” (Psalms, Job and Proverbs). (b) The Megilloth (מִגִּילוֹת, *M^eGillōth*), or “Scrolls” read at various feasts (Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther). (c) The “Final Five” (Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and 1 & 2 Chronicles).

¹²⁷ The Hebrews often named books after their introductory words. E.g., The Book of Genesis: The Heb. is בְּרֵאשִׁית (*B^erē’shiyth*), or “In [the] beginning...” The LXX is ΓΕΝΗΣΙΣ or “Genesis,” i.e., “beginning.” The Latin is used for a few titles, e.g., “Numbers,” which in the LXX is *Arithmoi*, and in Latin, *Liber Numeri*.

Note: The Septuagint [LXX] is the Greek translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew (c. 246 BC). Legend has it that approximately seventy scholars performed this task in seventy days, thus, the designation for the Septuagint is LXX, the Roman numerals for “seventy.” This was the common “Bible” in the New Testament era. Old Testament quotations or allusions in the New Testament are either from the Hebrew, the LXX, or a free translation and combination of both under Divine inspiration.

- The New Testament contains twenty–seven books which are very generally arranged in the following manner:
 1. History (Matthew–Acts)
 - The Gospels (Matthew–John)
 - The Acts of the Apostles
 2. Doctrinal (Romans–Jude)
 3. Prophetical (Revelation)

Note should be taken that this is only a very general, logical, and not a chronological arrangement, and that historical, doctrinal and prophetical elements occur throughout the New Testament.

- Through an intelligent reading of the Bible through both Testaments, the principle of progressive revelation can be easily noted. The student ought to begin arranging, at least in his thinking and in a notebook, the books of the Bible in a chronological order. “Chronology is the ‘backbone’ of history,” and is a valuable aid in interpretation.
- With the use of various helps, a general acquaintance with each individual book can be obtained. The student should eventually seek to develop his own outline of each given book, building upon and even eventually improving the outlines contained in the various helps.
- Bible survey forms the foundation on which all further study is based. Although a general knowledge of some books may be sufficient, other books deserve and even necessitate a much more detailed study, especially those

which are doctrinally and experientially strategic for faith and practice.

- A personal notebook or computer will prove invaluable. The essence of one's studies ought to be kept, and revised as study progresses and more light is obtained. This enables the student to both retain the fruit of his study in a convenient format and also saves the time and effort that would otherwise be wasted in re-searching information.
- Much of such study will eventually be retained mentally and become part of the student's thought-process. This is the accumulation of both biblical information and the development of hermeneutical skill.

A Survey of The Book of Genesis

Utilizing the survey or general synthetic approach, the following information may be gathered in an introductory study of the Book of Genesis:

- **The Title:** "Genesis," which means "Beginning." Heb. בְּרֵאשִׁית (*B^erē'shiyth*), "In [the] beginning." The Heb. named the book after its opening word. LXX, ΓΕΝΗΣΙΣ (*Genēsis*), "Beginning" or "Origin." The English title is derived from the LXX.
- **The Author:** Moses, who wrote the Pentateuch, or the Five Books of the Law [Genesis–Deuteronomy]. Although Moses is nowhere named as the author, the Old Testament and the New Testament both assume and declare the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Presupposing Divine inspiration and the self-authenticating nature of Scripture, Moses is the undisputed author (e.g., 1 Kgs. 2:3; 2 Kgs. 14:6; 2 Chron. 23:18; 2 Chron. 25:4; 34:14; 35:12; Ezr. 3:2; 6:18; 7:6; Neh. 8:1; 10:29; 13:1; Dan. 9:11, 13; Mk. 7:10; 12:19, 26;

Lk. 2:22; 5:14; 16:29; 24:44; Jn. 7:19, 22–23; Acts 7:22; 15:1; 21:21; 2 Cor. 3:15).¹²⁸

- **The Date:** Moses evidently wrote the Pentateuch during the wilderness sojourn after Israel left Egypt. The date would fall somewhere between the Exodus and Moses' death on Mt. Moab (c. 1447–1407 BC).

Note: Rationalistic Biblical Criticism ["Destructive 'Higher Criticism'"] denies the Mosaic authorship and (on the principle of denying the supernatural and so Divine inspiration and prophecy) has assigned a much later date to the entire Pentateuch.

One of the common rationalistic theories is that of the "Documentary Hypothesis," i.e., that there were several early traditions put into writing and constantly edited by later "redactors" until these documents came to their final form. This is commonly called the "JEDP Theory" ("J"= the "Jehovistic" element approx. 850 BC. "E"= the "Elohistic" element, approx 750 BC. The "JE" sections were a combination by later scribes. The "D"= the "Deuteronomic" element written approx 715–640 BC. "P"= the "Priestly Code" written during the time of the Babylonian Captivity, approx. 605–538 BC. Thus, to religious unbelieving "scholarship," the Pentateuch, and then most of the Old Testament is a product of early oral traditions put to written form and then re-edited until their present form.

The Documentary Hypothesis, later "Form Criticism" and the attempt to equate Heb. poetic expressions with myth as a valid form of communication, are all examples of seeking to avoid Divine inspiration, Divine creation, man as created in the image of God, the Fall and sinfulness of man, the need of redemption, primeval history and the authority of Scripture. The religion of Israel is explained away as a process of religious and social evolution, thus

¹²⁸ It is clear that the Jews, including our Lord himself, considered the "Law of Moses" as comprising the entire Pentateuch as "The Book of the Law," a unity, authenticating the Mosaic authorship of Genesis.

completely undermining both the Old and New Testaments.¹²⁹

The Scriptures are Divinely inspired and self-authenticating. Our Lord himself witnessed to the authority of the O.T. when he testified to its absolute authority (Matt. 5:17–18; Jn. 10:35), the historicity of creation and Adam (Mk. 10:6; 13:19), Abel (Matt. 23:35), Noah and the Flood (Matt. 24:37–38), Abraham (Jn. 8:39–40, 56–58), Isaac and Jacob (Matt. 22:32).

- **The Historical Circumstances:** Israel was sojourning in the wilderness under Divine judgment until all over the age of twenty who had left Egypt died (Numb. 14:28–35). The younger generation would then go into the Land of Promise to possess it.
- **The Purpose:** The purpose, as in most of the Old Testament Books, is three-fold:
 1. *Historically*, to preserve a record of the beginnings of creation, human history, the Fall, the confusion of languages at Babel, the history of redemption and the history of the Hebrew race through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the twelve patriarchs.
 2. *Doctrinally*, to demonstrate that God is both sovereign and faithful to his promises, and to emphasize the principle of Divine election or God's sovereign choice (e.g., Seth over Cain, Abraham,¹³⁰ Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau).

¹²⁹ The serious Bible student will soon learn that there exists an unregenerate biblical scholarship with high academic credentials, which has sought to undermine the authority of Scripture because it remains faithless. Critical commentaries must be chosen and studied with discernment.

¹³⁰ Abraham was an idolater in Chaldea when God chose him, appeared to him in sovereign grace and mercy, and led him to Canaan to begin the Hebrew race through which the Messiah and Redeemer was to come (Acts 7:1–4).

3. *Christologically*, to point to Christ, “the seed of the woman” (3:15. Cf. Isa. 7:14; 9:6–7; Lk. 1:26–35), of the line of Seth (4:25), of the line of Shem (9:27), the Seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:3; Rom. 4:16–17; 9:6–8; Gal. 3:16, 26–29), of the line of Isaac (21:12), of the line of Jacob (25:23) and of the tribe of Judah (49:10).
- **The Theme:** The theme is the Divine sovereignty, demonstrated as follows:
 1. The Divine Sovereignty in CREATION (Chapters 1–2). God created the ordered universe. Man was his crowning work, created and commissioned to glorify him through the creation mandate.
 2. The Divine Sovereignty in PROBATION (Chapters 3–5). The history of antediluvian mankind: the godly lineage through Seth and the corruption and wickedness of mankind in general.
 3. The Divine Sovereignty in DESTRUCTION (Chapters 6–9). God destroyed all human and animal life in the Flood, with the exception of Noah and his family.
 4. The Divine Sovereignty in DISPERSION (Chapters 10–11). God dispersed the human race at Babel through the confusion of languages.
 5. The Divine Sovereignty in ELECTION (Chapters 12–50). God chose one man, Abraham, and in Abraham a family and a nation. At each juncture, even beginning with Cain and Abel, he set aside the first-born to choose the second for covenant blessing. Through this lineage the Messiah and Savior would eventually come forth.
 - **Redemptive history** in Genesis is three-fold in its development:

GENERATION in Adam and POTENTIALITY (Chapters 1–2)
 DEGENERATION: Adam and POSTERITY (Chapters 3–11)
 REGENERATION: Abraham and PATRIARCHS (Chapters 12–50)

- **The vital importance** of the first statement in the Bible:
 1. “In the beginning...” denies the eternity of matter.
 2. “In the beginning God...” denies atheism and polytheism.
 3. “In the beginning God created...” denies fatalism, evolution, agnosticism and materialism.
 4. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” denies pantheism, panentheism¹³¹ and the idea of primeval chaos.

It is absolutely necessary to note that this opening statement of Scripture determines everything which follows. Gen. 1:1 begins with a presuppositional declaration of the existence of God and his absolute sovereignty. It establishes once-and-for-all the Creator-creature distinction and relationship. It also implicitly states that every fact is a created fact. Thus, there are no “brute” [uninterpreted] facts in the universe. This is vitally significant, as every fact is interpreted according to one’s presuppositions. Such realities have profound implications for Theology in general and Apologetics in particular.

- **The Prominent Issues:** The biblical record of creation; man created in the image and likeness of God, and created distinctly as male and female; the creation mandate; the Flood; the Noachic Covenant; the dispersion of the human race; the resumption of redemptive history through

¹³¹ Pantheism is the idea that God and creation are identical and co-extensive; Panentheism is the idea that the universe is God, but God himself is more than the universe; the universe emanates from him. This term is associated with “Process Theology” which holds that God is progressing, learning and expanding as the future unfolds into the present.

Abraham and the Hebrew race; the Abrahamic Covenant; the immigration of Israel into Egypt.

- **The literary structure of Genesis** is built around ten distinct sections, each associated with the words, “These are the generations of...”
 1. “These *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth” (Gen. 2:4).
 2. “This *is* the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man...” (Gen. 5:1).
 3. “These *are* the generations of Noah...” (Gen. 6:9).
 4. “Now these *are* the generations of the sons of Noah...” (Gen. 10:1).
 5. “These *are* the generations of Shem...” (Gen. 11:10).
 6. “Now these *are* the generations of Terah. Terah begat Abram...” (Gen. 11:27).
 7. “Now these *are* the generations of Ishmael, Abraham’s son...” (Gen. 25:12).
 8. “And these *are* the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son...” (Gen. 25:19).
 9. “Now these *are* the generations of Esau...” (Gen. 36:1).
 10. “These *are* the generations of Jacob...” (Gen. 37:2).
- The Outline is two-fold, each division emphasizing a beginning:
 - I. The Beginning of The Human Race: Primeval History (1–11).
 - A. From Creation to the Fall (1:1–3:7).
 - B. From the Fall to the Flood (3:8–8:14).
 - C. From the Flood to Babel (8:15–11:9).
 - II. The Beginning of The Hebrew Race: Patriarchal History (12–50).
 - A. Abraham (11:10–25:18).
 - B. Isaac (21:1–35:29).

C. Jacob (25:19–50:13).

D. Joseph (30:22–50:26).

Such a preliminary, general survey ought to underlie each study of a book of the Bible, providing the basis for all further, more in–depth study.

The Synthetic Method

The Method Discussed

While Bible Survey usually denotes a study of the Scriptures as a unified whole, or perhaps, either the Old or New Testament, the synthetic approach is usually concerned with an individual book. The given book is studied as to its authorship, historical context, key–words, salient points and outline or development in more depth than a survey approach. The synthetic is but an extension of the survey approach and builds upon it. The following examples presuppose that the survey approach has been done.

The Method Illustrated

The Book of Exodus and the Epistle to the Romans are taken as examples of the synthetic approach:

The Book of Exodus

The synthetic study should be based upon the survey study and presupposes it. Thus, we will assume that the matters of title, authorship, date, purpose, historical circumstances, etc., have already been dealt with and the notes entered into the student’s notebook or computer. The synthetic study begins with issues peculiar to Exodus, and to illustrate other necessary principles.

Miscellaneous Notes:

- There is often a relation to other books of the Bible, either as being part of a literary *corpus* such as the Pentateuch (Five Books of Moses), “Wisdom Literature” (Job–Song of Solomon), the four Gospel records, a series of Epistles (e.g., 1 and 2 Corinthians), or as immediately preceding or following another closely–related book. This is true typically and in principle in the Pentateuch. Of course,

much in the Old Testament is tribal and national, typical and anticipatory of New Testament gospel truth, as only a small remnant were truly and personally righteous—but the relationship is both true and present in principle and by application. God was slowly and typically preparing the world for the finality of his redemptive purpose in the gospel. Note the development:

GENESIS—	ELECTION	by Divine Sovereignty.
EXODUS—	REDEMPTION	by Divine Power.
LEVITICUS—	COMMUNION	and Divine Holiness.
NUMBERS—	DIRECTION	under Divine Grace.
DEUTERONOMY—	DESTINATION	through Divine Faithfulness.

- In the study of Exodus, there is a definite relation to both Genesis and Leviticus in the progression of Divine revelation and the redemptive purpose. Note the very general and typical relationship with Genesis and Leviticus.

GENESIS—Election, or God's electing Mercy, a People are CHOSEN.

EXODUS—Redemption, or God's electing Manner, a People are CALLED.¹³²

GENESIS—The Revelation of Nationality: The Redemptive PURPOSE.

EXODUS—The Realization of Nationality: The Redemptive PERFORMANCE.

GENESIS—God speaks from the HEAVENS (e.g., Gen. 11:7).

EXODUS—God speaks from the MOUNTAIN (e.g., Ex. 24:16).

LEVITICUS—God speaks from the TABERNACLE (e.g., Lev. 1:1).

EXODUS—Begins with Sinners and Salvation. Stresses Pardon.

LEVITICUS—Begins with Saints and Sanctification. Stresses Purity.

EXODUS—The People are BROUGHT NIGH and DELIVERED by God.

LEVITICUS—The People are KEPT NIGH and DEDICATED to God.

- Each book has a distinct place within the canon of Scripture which gives it its individual significance. The significance of Exodus includes:
 1. The promises of God are infallible and immutable; the power of God is absolute. After four centuries, God

¹³² See this relation in the truth of electing mercy (Acts 7:1–2; Dt. 4:37; 7:6–9).

suddenly moves to fulfill his promise, according to his word (Gen. 15:7–21).

2. The Ten Plagues and final destruction of Pharaoh. These actions by God would stand for centuries as a testimony to his power and greatness (e.g., 1 Sam. 4:3–8; Rom. 9:17).
3. The Passover (Ex. 12–14) unquestionably typifies the redemptive work of our Lord (Jn. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7).
4. The Exodus of Israel out of Egypt. The Family had become a mighty nation and so able to conquer and possess the Land of Canaan.
5. The giving of the Mosaic legislation, including the Decalogue at Mt. Sinai. The epitome of the Moral Law was codified at that time. It previously existed, but only written on the hearts (Rom. 2:14–16) and orally communicated in principle.¹³³
6. More space is given in the Scripture (over fifty chapters) to the Mosaic legislation, especially the Tabernacle, priesthood and sacrificial system—all typifying our Lord—than any other single subject. The important aspects are fully and finally explained as to their typical nature in the Epistle to the Hebrews.
7. The Tabernacle was complete, the priesthood dedicated and ordained, and the first sacrifices offered when the *Shekinah*¹³⁴ descended and filled the Tabernacle with glory, identifying it as the God—

¹³³ Rom. 5:1–14 does *not* teach that the Law did not exist from Adam to Moses, but rather that men sinned in a different manner from Adam—he sinned against a known, explicit commandment, they did not. The Apostle’s point is that sin was imputed, as men still died under Divine judgment, although the Law was not codified until it was given to Moses at Mt. Sinai.

¹³⁴ *Shekinah* is not a biblical term, but a term used for the symbolic glory or presence of God by later Rabbinic Judaism and thus incorporated into Christian thought and vocabulary.

ordained institution for that economy (Ex. 40:33–35). The same would hold true for Solomon’s Temple (1 Kgs. 8:3–11) and the New Testament Church as an institution (Acts 2:1–4).

8. The first generation of Israel out of Egypt largely failed through their constant unbelief and rebellion, but God brought their children into the Land of Promise (Numb. 13:1–14:39).

The Outline and Structure:

I. THE PREPARATION FOR REDEMPTION	(1:1–12:36)
A. The Preparation of the People in Servitude	(1:1–22)
B. The Preparation of Moses as a Savior	(2:1–4:28)
C. The Preparation of God in his Sovereignty	(4:29–12:36)
II. THE SEPARATION OF REDEMPTION	(12:37–18:27)
A. The Greatness of God Demonstrated	(12:37–15:21)
B. The Weakness of the Flesh Demonstrated	(15:22–18:27)
III. THE REVELATION OF REDEMPTION	(19:1–40:38)
A. The Will of God Revealed	(19:1–31:18)
B. The Will of God Rejected	(32:1–34:35)
C. The Will of God Realized	(35:1–40:38)

The Epistle to The Romans

The Epistle to the Romans is very systematically and logically developed, and so lends itself to all three basic types of study. The synthetic study builds upon the information gained in Bible survey. Its purpose is to acquire a more detailed knowledge of a book, its salient issues or doctrinal emphases and its basic development or outline. Such a study provides a general acquaintance with the book and also forms the basis for further study.

The basic procedure for a synthetic approach to the Epistle to the Romans could be the following:

- Read the epistle through several times, each time completely through at a sitting, seeking to capture the essence, nature and form of the Apostle’s arguments. As

the epistle is very logically developed, the doctrinal and practical sections are fairly easy to discover.

- Disregard, if necessary, both chapter and verse divisions, as some arguments transcend the chapter divisions of the English Bible.¹³⁵
- Make notes of the various transitional terminology which denotes the argumentation (“First,” “for,” “that,” “wherefore,” “therefore,” etc.). Study any doctrinal terms which are not completely understood. Trace the reasoning in the various arguments from their commencement to their conclusion.
- Take note of any recurring terms, as there may be key-words or phrases that reflect the general theme, trace the flow of the Apostle’s argument,¹³⁶ or open the interpretation of the book. Such terms may then be checked in an English Bible Concordance and then, if possible, in a Greek Testament, lexicon and Greek Concordance to see if the English corresponds to the original language in its significance.

The theme of Romans is “the righteousness of God” (1:16–17), i.e., that righteousness which God demands and which occurs only in and through the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ—Gospel righteousness. The term “righteousness” occurs variously

¹³⁵ E.g., omit the chapter division at 8:1, as the subject of the Believer’s relation to the law extends from 6:15 through at least 8:8 or beyond. E.g., omit the chapter division also at 10:1, as the flow of the Apostle’s argument makes 9:30–10:21 a single, unified passage. E.g., omit the chapter division at 15:1, as 14:1 through 15:13 form a single subject: the relation between the weaker and stronger brother in the context of Christian liberty.

¹³⁶ E.g., trace the formula, “What, then?” (Τί οὖν, *Ti oun?*) “What shall we say then?” (Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; , *Ti oun eroumen?*) or “What shall we say?” (τί ἐροῦμεν; , *ti eroumen?*), as marking the Apostle’s conclusion of an argument or making a transition to the next. Cf. Rom. 3:5, 9; 4:1; 6:1, 15; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14, 30; 11:7.

as the translation of the same root word in the following terms: “righteous,” “righteousness,” “just,” “justifieth,” “justifier,” “justify,” and “justification,” a total of sixty–five times. *The Greek text, however, has three additional occurrences, illustrating the necessity of consulting the original language if at all possible, to obtain the full significance of a theme, key–word or words.*

From the root word δίκαιος (*dikaios*), “righteous” or “just,” and its derivations, note the following in Romans: δίκαιος (*dikaios*, adj., n.), occ. 6 times as “righteous,” once as “just.” δικαιοσύνη (*dikaiosunē*, n.), occ. 36 times as “righteous.” δικαιοῶ (*dikaioō*, vb.), occ. 13 times as “justify,” once as “be freed [6:7, lit: “be justified],” and once as “justifier.” δικαίωμα (*dikaiōma*, n.), occ. 3 times as “righteousness,” once as “justification,” and once as “judgment” [1:32, lit: “righteousness” or moral self–consistency]. δικαίωσις (*dikaiōsis*, n.), occ. twice as “justification.” δικαιοκρισία (*dikaiokrisia*, n.), occ. once as “righteous judgment.”

The theme can be used for forming an outline of the book. Note the following outline developed from the “the righteousness of God”:

Righteousness Required from Humanity	(1:18–3:20).
Righteousness Revealed in Christ Alone	(3:21–26).
Righteousness Received by Faith Alone	(3:27–5:21).
Righteousness Realized in Sanctification	(6:1–8:11).
Righteousness Retained in Glorification	(8:12–39).
Righteousness Rejected by Non–Elect Israel	(9:1–11:36).
Righteousness Reproduced in a Converted Life	(12:1–16:27).

- Make a very general outline of the movement, contents or structure of the Epistle. The major divisions in Romans coincide with chapter divisions. Each of the three major divisions also ends with a doxology, except the final doxology, which closes the entire epistle. The preceding and the following are two general outlines from such a study. The second derives from a very logical development of the contents:

Introduction (1:1-15).

Part I: Doctrinal (1:16-8:39).

The key-note is 1:1-17, which introduces the theme of the Righteousness of God through faith. The Apostle works through the subjects of condemnation, justification, sanctification and glorification logically and progressively, revealing their necessary interrelationship.

Part II: Historical (9:1-11:36).

If the Divine redemptive purpose is infallible, has God's purpose failed with regard to Israel? No. There is both a physical, national people, and also a spiritual people, the true "Children and seed of Abraham," comprised of both Jewish and Gentile believers. Natural Israelites yet have a future—as Christians.

Part III: Practical (12:1-16:27).

How is the free and sovereign grace of God to be expressed in Christian experience? The Apostle deals with eight different aspects of the Christian life, deriving from the foregoing truth of 1:16-11:36.

Conclusion (16:21-27).

The synthetic approach builds upon the survey approach, and provides both a general acquaintance with a given book and a basis for further studies of a more developed nature.

The Inductive Method

The Method Discussed

The inductive¹³⁷ method of Bible study seeks to study the particulars with a view to understanding the whole of an extended passage or book. This type of study ought to build upon the preliminary survey and synthetic approaches for completeness. The following examples presuppose such studies.

¹³⁷ "Inductive" (Lat: *inductivus*, from *ducere*, "to lead"), a method which adduces separate facts or particulars to reach a general conclusion.

When attempting to study a given book of the Bible inductively, one of the best approaches is to first read the book through several times, then divide the book into paragraphs. Remember that the chapter and verse divisions are not inspired, and can be misleading. The Scripture in the original languages, especially the Greek, can be divided into logical paragraphs. A Bible without notes, such as the ASV,¹³⁸ has one of the best paragraph divisions. A list of the paragraphs can be given on several sheets of paper, with space for notes. As each paragraph is studied, its summary thought, theme or essence is written down. Once all the paragraphs of the book are thus summarized in order, an outline of the contents can be formed and an interpretive outline of the book obtained.

It will be noted that the writer's arguments often extend for one or more chapters, and the major transitions in thought occur within certain chapters, but invariably with new paragraphs. The inductive approach stands as a combination of both the synthetic and expository method.

The Method Illustrated

The Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle to the Hebrews will be used, as the general outline of Romans has already been developed and Hebrews illustrates other particulars to be kept in mind:

The Epistle to the Romans

- Building on the Synthetic approach, develop the general outline.

¹³⁸ The *American Standard Version* of 1901. However, no paragraph division may prove infallible. The student might find that he has to "correct" even the best attempts of scholars as he studies. No one person possesses all the truth. We are all sinners, suffer to varying degrees from the noetic effects of sin, and all have our own biblical, doctrinal and traditional bias. Yet we must not lightly dismiss the studies of our predecessors, some of whom gave their entire lives and intellectual energies to a study of the Scriptures.

- Using the paragraph method or some consistent procedure, avoid the chapter and verse divisions and seek to arrange each section into sub-sections. The object is to find and define the reasoning of the inspired author.
- The central issue in chapters 1–8 is the infallibility of the eternal, redemptive purpose of God in his grace (8:29–31, 38–39). The necessity of free and sovereign grace is clearly seen because the human race is *condemned* (1:18–3:20). Everyone freely *justified* (3:21–5:21) must necessarily be *sanctified* (6:1–8:11). Everyone thus justified and sanctified, will infallibly be *glorified* (8:12–39).
- Romans 9–11, after listing the religious advantages and privileges of Israel, begins with an objection and an answer in 9:6–8. The eternal redemptive purpose of God has *not* failed with regard to Israel, as an objector might conclude from the foregoing arguments (e.g., 8:28–30). A necessary distinction must be made between the *physical* “seed of Abraham” and the *spiritual* “children of Abraham,” i.e., believers. The eternal redemptive purpose has been fulfilled in Abraham’s *spiritual* children.

Note: A necessary distinction must be made between national Israel or the *physical* “seed of Abraham” (σπέρμα Ἰσραὴλ [sperma Israaēl]) and the *spiritual* “children of Abraham” (τέκνα Ἰσραὴλ [tekna Israaēl]), or believers. Abraham is the father of the faithful, or the prototype of the believer who is justified by faith (Cf. Rom. 4:1–25; Gal. 3:6–16, 25–29).
- In 9:30–10: 21, the Apostle reveals that it is Israel that failed, not the Divine purpose. Although the issues of election and rejection [reprobation] are discussed in the context of Divine sovereignty, the key-term in this section is “sovereign mercy,” and leans this entire section

toward the positive aspect of free and sovereign grace.¹³⁹ National Israel's rejection, however, is neither total as to number nor final as to time.

- Romans 12–16 are preeminently practical, and have for their foundation the foregoing eleven chapters. The various areas of Christian relationships are surveyed.
- Abbreviate these sub-sections into brief headings or sentences for ease of outlining. It must be understood that this is not exegesis, which only deals with the original language, and must be very precise by nature. It is only a very general exposition, but a necessary part of the process of inductively bringing the teaching of Scripture into a systematic form.
- The following development of each major division, and thus, of the entire epistle, could be as follows:

Introduction	(1:1–17).
I. Doctrinal	(1:18–8:39).
A. Condemnation	(1:18–3:20).
B. Justification	(3:21–5:21).
C. Sanctification	(6:1–8:11).
D. Glorification	(8:12–30).
Doxology	(8:31–39).
II. Historical	(9:1–11:36).
A. Personal Sincerity	(9:1–5).
B. Divine Sovereignty	(9:6–29).
C. Human Responsibility	(9:30–10:21).
D. Israel's Destiny	(11:1–32).
Doxology	(11:33–36).

¹³⁹ It is significant that the word “mercy” only occurs twice in the rest of this epistle (12:8; 15:9) and only five other times in all of Paul's writings, yet occurs in chapters 9–11 nine times in the Greek text. Carefully mark these occurrences: 9:15 (twice), 9:16; 9:18 (a second time in the Eng. to compensate for the Gk. *ellipsis*); 9:23; 11:30; 11:31 (twice), and 11:32.

III. Practical	(12:1–16:27).
A. The Believer’s Spiritual Obligation– Consecration	(12:1–2)
B. The Believer’s Congregational Obligation–Church	(12:3–13)
C. The Believer’s Social Obligation– Community	(12:14–21)
D. The Believer’s Civil Obligation– Citizenship	(13:1–14)
E. The Believer’s Ethical Obligation– Conscience	(14:1–15:13)
F. The Believer’s Evangelical Obligation– Calling	(15:14–33)
G. The Believer’s Mutual Obligation– Charity	(16:1–16)
H. The Believer’s Doctrinal Obligation– Caution	(16:17–20)
Doxology	(16:27)
Conclusion	(16:21–27)

The Epistle to the Hebrews

The inductive approach ought to follow, if possible the preliminary survey and synthetic studies. The following would be a further study to deal with the details and structure in more depth:

The Epistle to the Hebrews presents various considerations. From a general reading, it ought to be evident that the readers were Jewish Christians who sought to revert into Judaism to escape persecution as Christians (the author speaks to them as Christians, cf. 6:4–12; 10:32–34; 13:17–25). The author’s burden was to demonstrate that such an action would be apostasy and a denial of the fullness of the Gospel through the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the purpose of his letter was for exhortation or “consolation,” as stated in 13:22.

Note: Heb. 13:22, Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἀνέχεσθε τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως (*Parakalō de humas, adelphoi, anechesthe tou logou tēs paraklēseōs*), “Now I exhort you, Brethren, continue to be patient with this word of exhortation [encouragement].” Note: Παρακαλέω (*parakaleō*) means to call

aside or to one's side for the purpose of exhorting or encouraging. A παράκλητος (*paraklētos*), or "paraclete" was a lawyer, an advocate, one called alongside to help. This very term is used of the Holy Spirit as the "Comforter" (Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) and also of our Lord as our "Advocate" in 1 Jn. 2:1.

This exhortation was essentially three-fold:

- *to warn against apostasy* (The major warnings are in 2:1–4; 3:7–4:13; 5:11–6:20; 10:26–31; 12:12–29).
- *to make evident the typical and transitory character of the Mosaic institutions*, i.e., the Old Testament sacrificial and priestly system and the Old Covenant (7:11–19, 26–28; 8:6–13; 9:1–28; 10:1–18; 12:18–24; 13:10–16). The finality rests in the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:1–4; 7:23–25; 8:1–2; 9:11–14; 10:12–14).
- *to prove and affirm the finality of Christianity*. This not only stands in the Person and work of our Lord, but is also demonstrated in the perseverance of the Christian (10:19–13:21).

A careful study reveals various key-words, terms or phrases that develop the contrast between the Old and New Covenants, the superiority of faith, and emphasize the superiority of Christ's Person and finality of his redemptive work:

- "Perfect," "Perfection." (Gk: various forms of τέλειος, τελειόω [*teleios, teleioō*], connoting that which is mature, complete, fulfilled or accomplished). These terms occur 15 times: 12 times in the English Version (2:10; 5:9; 6:1; 7:11, 19; 9:9, 11; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; 13:21), 3 additional times in the Greek text translated in the English as "them that are of full age," 5:14; "consecrated," 7:28; "finisher," 12:2.
- "Eternal," "Forever," "Everlasting." (τὸν αἰῶν τοῦ αἰῶνος [*ton tou aiōnos*], εἰς τὸν αἰωνίαν [*eis ton aiōnian*], εἰς τοῦς αἰῶνας [*eis tous aiōnas*], αἰωνίου [*aiōniou*], αἰωνίαν [*aiōnian*]). Used of the abiding or permanent character of our Lord and Christianity as contrasted with the Mosaic

or Old Covenant. These terms occur 15 times (1:8; 5:6, 9; 6:2, 20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28; 9:12, 14–15; 13:8, 20–21).

- “Heaven,” “Heavenly.” (οὐρανός [*ouranos*], often in pl. form as an Hebraism). Used to contrast the glory and ultimate character of the work of our Lord and Christianity as contrasted with the earthly sphere and ministry of the Mosaic institutions. These words occur 16 times (1:10; 3:1; 4:14; 6:4; 7:26; 8:1, 5; 9:23–24; 10:34; 11:16; 12:22–23, 25–26).
- “Partakers.” (Gk. uses two terms: κοινωνέω [*koinōneō*], “to have in common.” As a noun κοινωνός [*koinōnos*], “a companion, partner, partaker,” 2:14. μέτοχος [*metochos*], “a sharer in something, a partner,” 3:1, 14; 6:4; 12:8, 10). These terms are used to connote a definite participation, association or companionship in the realities of the Gospel. Occur 6 times in the English Version.
- “Having therefore...let us...” This phrase occurs twice (4:14–16; 10:19–24), and introduces the major practical sections of the epistle: the practical exhortation to truly appropriate and implement what believers are to possess in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- “Once,” i.e., “once-for-all” (Gk. uses two terms: ἅπαξ [*hapax*] and ἐφάπαξ [*ephapax*]). This term occurs 12 times (6:4; 9:7, 26, 27, 28; 10:2; 12:26, 27) and in its emph. form ἐφάπαξ 3 times (7:27; 9:12; 10:10).
- “Lest.” (Gk: Various particles: μήποτε, μή [*mēpote, mē*]). Used to introduce several warnings about the fear of losing what believers are to possess in the fullness of the Gospel. This term occurs 10 times and is related to the 5 larger warnings against apostasy, which occur in this epistle (2:1; 3:12, 13; 4:1, 11; 11:28; 12:3, 13, 15–16).
- “Better.” (Gk: κρείσσων [*kreissōn*], from κράτος [*kratos*], “strong,” hence: “better, more useful, serviceable, more advantageous, excellent”). This word is used to emphasize the superiority of the Person and work of the

Lord Jesus Christ and the superiority of the Gospel Covenant over the Old Covenant. This term occurs 13 times:

1. 1:4 “better than the angels.” This is descriptive of the glorified, exalted Son of God as the Mediator of the New Covenant compared with the angels, who are messengers and ministers for God.
2. 6:9 “better things.” In view of possible apostasy from the Gospel, these “better things” are the realities associated with true faith.
3. 7:7 “the less is blessed of the better.” An argument applied to the blessing from Melchizedek conferred upon Abraham, emphasizing the greatness of this King–Priest.
4. 7:19 “a better hope.” The limitations or insufficiency of the Old Covenant are contrasted with the glorious sufficiency or hope of the Gospel Covenant.
5. 7:22 “a better testament.” This is the New Testament or Gospel Covenant founded in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. 8:6 “a better covenant.” This is the New or Gospel Covenant, which is not characterized by the inadequacies of the Old Covenant (Cf. 8:7–12).
7. 8:6 “better promises.” These are the promises of spiritual blessings as contrasted with the largely earthly blessings of the Old Covenant (8:10–13).
8. 9:23 “better sacrifices.” These refer to the High Priestly ministry and intercession of our Lord (9:24).
9. 10:34 “a better and an enduring substance.” The realities of the believer’s glorious inheritance as contrasted with earthly possessions.
10. 11:16 “a better country.” The pilgrimage of faith is not toward an earthly country or future, but transcends this life and views the glory of heaven.

11. 11:35 “a better resurrection.” This denotes the believer’s resurrection to glory. The context implies that to “accept deliverance” would have meant apostasy.
12. 11:40 “some better thing.” In the context of v. 39–40, this refers to the fullness of salvation and revelation in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, of which the heroes of old had only a rudimentary knowledge and promise.
13. 12:24 “the blood...that speaketh better things.” The contrast is between “the blood of Abel” that cried out to God for vengeance (Gen. 4:10) and the blood of our Lord that speaks pardon, peace and reconciliation.

Further, there are five major warnings against apostasy interspersed throughout the epistle, which ought to be studied in the Greek to perceive their full significance:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Do not Drift! | (2:1–4). ¹⁴⁰ |
| Do not Disbelieve! | (3:6b–4:13). |
| Do not Degenerate! | (5:11–6:20). |
| Do not Despise! | (10:26–31). |
| Do not Defile! | (12:12–17). |

An inductive study of the epistle would give the following structure and outline, covering the major and sub-points of the textual development:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| I. The Superior Person of Christ | (1:1–4:13). |
| A. Christ is Superior to the Old Testament Prophets | (1:1–3). |
| B. Christ is Superior to the Angels | (1:4–2:18). |
| C. Christ is Superior to Moses | (3:1–19). |
| D. Christ is Superior to Joshua | (4:8–10). |
| II. The Superior Priesthood of Christ | (4:14–10:18). |
| A. The Superior Person of Christ | (4:14–7:28). |

¹⁴⁰ μήποτε παραρῶμεν (*mēpote pararuōmen*), 2 aor. subj. pass. from παραρρέω (*pararreō*), “to flow past or by,” and so, “Lest we drift away.” The idea seems to be that of a vessel drifting away from a secure mooring or anchorage.

- B. The Superior Priestly Work of Christ (8:1–10:18).
- III. The Serious Perseverance of The Christian (10:19–13:17).
 - A. Encouragement to a Superior Approach (10:19–39).
 - B. Past Examples of Faith and Perseverance (11:1–40).
 - C. Personal Application and Exhortation (12:1–29).
- IV. Several Personal Admonitions (13:1–25).
 - A. Personal Admonitions concerning Practical Duties (13:1–6).
 - B. Personal Admonitions concerning Religious Duties (13:7–17).
 - C. Personal Encouragements concerning Prayer (13:18–21).
 - D. The Conclusion (13:22–25).

The Analytical Method

The Method Discussed

The analytical approach presupposes that God is a God of intelligence and order, and that his Word is self-consistent and non-contradictory, even to the minutiae. This approach dissects a given passage, section or book into its textual, grammatical and syntactical components.

In dealing with a book analytically, the ideal is to build upon preceding studies of a synthetic or inductive nature. The analytical method begins where the inductive approach ends, with its paragraph-by-paragraph breakdown and summarization of the book. Each paragraph is analyzed statement-by-statement. Each statement is then analyzed in accordance with its grammatical construction and significance.

In dealing with a given passage of Scripture, it is first studied in its larger and more immediate context to avoid misinterpretation. Then, if possible, it is analyzed grammatically and syntactically in the original language (exegesis). It is finally outlined logically according to its textual and doctrinal teaching.

The Method Illustrated

We will select two verses, Romans 1:16–17 to illustrate the analysis of a short passage; one chapter from Romans (6:1–23) and another from Acts (17:1–34) for our examples of a chapter, extended passage or section; and an analysis of the Epistles to the Hebrews and Romans for entire books.

Romans 1:16–17

This passage strikes the key-note of the entire Epistle to the Romans—the Righteousness of God. The theme that lends itself to an analysis is that this describes the gospel Paul preached. Since the days of the Apostles, there has always been more than one gospel. Note Gal. 1:6–9 and contrast between “...another gospel [of a different kind] which is not another [gospel of the same kind]...”¹⁴¹ Thus, it is absolutely essential that we understand the gospel Paul preached. The following analysis has been put into sermonic form:

I. The Gospel Paul Preached Gave Him No Cause for Shame (V. 16a).

“For I am not [at all] ashamed of the gospel of Christ...”
 οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (*ou gar epaischunomai to euaggelion tou Christou*).

The term “Gospel” (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) derives from εὖ (*eu*), “well, good,” and ἀγγελία (*angelia*),¹⁴² “message, news.” It is the good news or message of deliverance from self, from the reigning power of sin, and from Divine wrath and condemnation.

Paul was ready to preach the gospel at Rome. Indeed, he was indebted to all men to preach the gospel to them (v. 14). His delays in coming to Rome were not to be attributed to any shame connected with his message. Some evidently stated that his ministry to the Gentiles, and thus his “gospel” were different from the orthodox. He set out to correct this immediately (1:1–15).

Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel because it was the power of God unto salvation, because it was effectual

¹⁴¹ ...εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο... (*eis heteron euaggelion, ho ouk estin allo*).

¹⁴² Ἀγγελία. The double *gamma* (γγ) is pronounced and transliterated as “ng” as in ἄγγελος (*angelos*), or “angel, messenger.”

unto and through saving faith, because it focused on the righteousness of God (and so was in complete accord with the biblical and historic faith), and because it was all of and by faith, as witnessed in the Scriptures.

II. The Gospel Paul Preached Centers in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ (V. 16a).

“...the gospel of Christ...” τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ.¹⁴³
(*to euaggelion tou Christou*)

There is only one Gospel—that of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is inferred, if not stated in the text.

III. The Gospel Paul Preached is a Divine Dynamic that Actually Brings the Believing Sinner into a State of Deliverance from Self and Sin (V. 16b).

“...for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...” δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι. (*dunamis gar theou estin eis sōtērian panti tō pisteuonti*).

δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν (*dunamis gar theou estin*) is in the emphatic position, being placed first. Of the six different terms in the Greek New Testament for “power,” δύναμις points to the *source* of such power. A Divine power attends the preaching of the Word to render it effectual to actually deliver (εἰς σωτηρίαν) each believing sinner (παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι) and bring him into the realm of salvation. σωτηρία connotes both deliverance from something and into a state of health or well-being. Paul was not preaching a mere “decisionism,” but thorough conversion.

¹⁴³ The Crit. text omits the words τοῦ Χριστοῦ (*to Christou*) according to its general rule of preferring the shorter reading over the longer, and the more difficult over the easier. These rules presuppose and imply an alleged tendency to add glosses or explanatory notes by later scribes.

Paul will further develop the subject of saving faith in 3:21–5:11.

Paul’s knowledge of the effectual power of the gospel came through Divine revelation, his own personal experience (Acts 9:6–16; 1 Tim. 1:15–17), and his preaching ministry. One cannot truly preach the gospel unless he has personally experienced its power.

This state of deliverance will be further and fully expounded in chapters 6–8.

IV. The Gospel Paul Preached is Self–Authenticating from the Scriptures and Self–Asserting in Redemptive History (v. 16c).

“...to the Jew first, and also to the Greek...” Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι. (*Ioudaiō te prōton kai Hellēni*).

This reference “to the Jew first” characterized the redemptive purpose, the redemptive history (Jn. 4:22, ... ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν [*hē sōtēria ek tōn Ioudaiōn estin*]), and Paul’s own missionary methodology. He always sought to begin his evangelism in the local synagogue where there was a scriptural basis for hearing the gospel (Acts 13:5, 14, 42–48; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8).

V. The Gospel Paul Preached has as its Focal–Point the Righteousness of God (V. 17a).

“...For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith...” δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν. (*dikaiosunē gar theou en autō apokaluptetai ek pisteōs eis pistin*).

“Righteousness” (δικαιοσύνη, *dikaiosunē*) stands in the emphatic position. It is anarthrous (no def. article), stressing quality. It is the *very* righteousness—the very righteousness that God requires and the only righteousness he can and will accept! Note that the Eng. Version must insert the def. article to equate the Greek

idiom.¹⁴⁴ This righteousness is the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is appropriated by faith alone.

“Therein” ἐν αὐτῷ (*en autō*) refers to the gospel (neuter). ἀποκαλύπτεται (*apokaluptetai*), perf., “[constantly] stands revealed.” The continual focal–point of the gospel is the righteousness of God (ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν). Ἐκ (gen.) denotes source and εἰς (acc.) denotes the extent of action. This gospel–righteousness is not by works [self–effort], but absolutely by faith “from start to finish”! Cf. Jn. 1:12–13; Eph. 2:4–5, 8–10. This truth stands in sharp contrast to the modern “gospel,” which has Divine love as its focal–point and emphasis—a “love” stripped of its necessary moral character—and downgraded to a mere emotion!

Paul will further develop the doctrine of justification by faith in 3:21–5:21 and contrast the “‘of faith’ righteousness” with the “‘of works’ righteousness” in 9:30–10:13.

VI. The Gospel Paul Preached is Appropriated by Saving Faith (V. 17b).

“...as it is written, The just [righteous *man*] out of faith shall live.” καθὼς γέγραπται, Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. (*kathōs gegraptai Ho de dikaios ek pisteōs zēsetai*).

Throughout this epistle, Paul quotes almost every major assertion, as though footnoting his arguments from the Old Testament Scriptures. καθὼς γέγραπται (perf.), “just [exactly] as it stands written [with undiminishing authority]...” Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. “The

¹⁴⁴ Those few modern versions, e.g., *American Standard Version* [ASV] of 1901, the *Amplified Bible* and the *New International Version* [NIV], which translate and interpret as “a righteousness” completely miss the significance of the anarth. use of the article and thus, the truth Paul emphasizes.

righteous one (masc.) out of faith shall live.” ἐκ πίστεως emphatic by position, a paraphrase of the LXX of Hab. 2:4 (ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται). This phrase is quoted two other times in the New Testament, Gal. 3:11 (Ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται) and Heb. 10:38 (ὁ δὲ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται).

This reveals the consistent New Testament teaching that faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:4–5, 8–10), and the true Christian is a “believer” as the constant characteristic of his life and experience (ὁ πιστευων, *ho pisteuōn*, rel. pres. ptc.), i.e., the one who is constantly believing or acting out of faith!

Thus we have an adequate grasp of the gospel Paul preached, why he was not ashamed of it as the very power deriving from God unto complete deliverance, that it’s focal-point is the imputed righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, and how the truly justified man is to live.

Romans 6:1-23

The analytical or expository procedure could be along the following lines:

- Study the passage in its larger and more immediate context. This would include a thorough study of the entire epistle and especially Chapters 1–8, the doctrinal portion of the epistle. The student must review the overall doctrinal argument that binds condemnation, justification, sanctification and glorification together into one.
- Sanctification is now presented as the inevitable result or consequence of justification by faith alone. The interrelation between justification and sanctification is essential to a proper comprehension of this epistle and its teaching.

The subject of sanctification, however, does not properly begin at 6:1, but has been anticipated in 5:10, where

believers are “saved in [ἐν, *en*] his life,” i.e., in union with the [resurrection–] life of Christ.¹⁴⁵ It has further been approached positionally in 5:12–21, where Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ are both compared and contrasted.

This keeps sanctification objective in one’s union with Christ and not merely subjective and dependent upon one’s experience, or worse, as an optional experience to be sought.

- Considered with reference to justification by faith, chapters 6–8 are warnings. This entire section is marked out as the inevitable result or consequence of free justification and the believer’s union with Christ.
- Hence, holiness of life (i.e., sanctification, 6:1–8:16) and future glory (glorification, 8:17–30) are not optional or merely subjective, but objective, inevitable realities for every believer without exception. Thus, with the positive teaching of this section, there are three predominant warnings, all stemming from the leading question of 6:1, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” (i.e., what shall be said in view of what has been taught concerning free justification in Rom. 3:21–5:21?). These three warnings are:
 - A Warning Against ANTINOMIANISM (6:1–23)
 - A Warning Against LEGALISM (7:1–8:4)
 - A Warning Against PRESUMPTION (8:5–11)
- The entire passage revolves about two questions and their answers, v. 1–14 and 15–23. Careful exegesis reveals that the first question concerns the believer *living in sin*; the second is concerned with *lightly committing acts of sin*.¹⁴⁶ A supposed objector rhetorically asks, “Because grace far

¹⁴⁵ Rom. 5:10, σωθησόμεθα ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ. (*sōthēsometha en tē zōē autou*), “...we shall be saved in [ἐν] his life.”

¹⁴⁶ v. 1, ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ...; (*epimenōmen tē hamartia*), pres. tense of continuous action. v. 15, ἁμαρτήσωμεν...; (*hamartēsōmen*), aor. tense, i.e., punctiliar, an event or act.

outweighs and triumphs over sin, shall we not continue to live in sin that grace may abound?" (v. 1, based on the argument of 5:12–21, especially v. 20–21).

- Paul instinctively recoils from the very idea that grace should lead to antinomianism. His argument is two-fold: first (v. 1–14), the believer cannot continue to live in sin because his union with Christ is an objective truth and reality! Union in the death of Christ means that the reigning power of sin has been broken. Union in Christ's resurrection-life means the utter necessity of a converted life through the power of the Spirit.

Second (v. 15–23), taking even one act of sin lightly might possibly mean that one is yet unregenerate—unconverted—and as we once served sin, we must now serve God righteously in all holiness, remembering that the wages of sin is death—eternal death!

- Based on a detailed exegesis and exposition of the passage, the following analysis is the result, put into a very abbreviated outline:
 - I. A Doctrinal Warning concerning Antinomianism (6:1–14).
 - A. The Question (v. 1).
 - B. The Declaration (v. 2).
 - C. The Explanation (v. 3–10)
 - D. The Application (v. 11)
 - E. The Exhortation (v. 12–13)
 - F. The Conclusion (v. 14)
 - II. A Practical Warning concerning Antinomianism (6:15–23)
 - A. The Question (v. 15)
 - B. The Generalization (v. 16)
 - C. The Application (v. 17–18)
 - D. The Exhortation (v. 19)
 - E. The Explanation (v. 20–23)

The outline or analysis can now be filled in with exegetical, expository and explanatory notes. We have added many more doctrinal and explanatory notes for ease and fullness of study:

I. A Doctrinal Warning Concerning
Antinomianism

(6:1–14)

- A. *The Question* (v. 1). (Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσῃ; *Ti oun eroumen? epimenōmen tē hamartia hina hē charis pleonasē?*). The opening question of chapter 6 is generated by the preceding sections of the epistle, especially 5:20–21.¹⁴⁷ Shall believers continue to live in sin (ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, pres. intens.) in order to magnify the grace of God?¹⁴⁸
- B. *The Declaration* (v. 2). (μὴ γένοιτο. οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ; *mē genoito! hoitines apethanomen tē hamartia, pōs eti zēsomen en autē?!*).”May it never be!” How? Why? Every believer “has died” to sin.¹⁴⁹ Salvation is

¹⁴⁷ “What shall we say?” Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; (*Ti oun eroumen?*). This formula is common with Paul when introducing an objection of difficulty (It occ. at least 6 times in this epistle, Cf. 3:5; 4:1; 6:1, 15; 7:7; 9:14). This anticipation has been forming rather early in this epistle (Cf. 3:8, 28, 5:20–21).

¹⁴⁸ ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσῃ; Shall we continue to live in sin, or in a life of sin, a state of sinfulness? “Sin” arth. (τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ), refers to sin in this chapter as a personified entity, as is “Grace” (ἡ χάρις). This anticipated charge of antinomianism could only be made if the free and sovereign grace of God was presented without reserve. Had he preached legalism in any way, this objection could never be raised. His answer in this chapter is that the doctrine of grace does not lead to sin, but to holiness!

¹⁴⁹ μὴ γένοιτο. May it never be! οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, such ones as we are (qual. pers. pron.) who died to sin, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ; How shall we live any longer in it?! Cf. aor. ἀπεθάνομεν “died.” (Every occ. of “dead” is aor., and should be so translated from v. 2–10). Every believer “died” to sin, but is not “dead” to sin. What is the difference? *The language refers to a past act, not to a present state.* It is neither a present state of experience nor an experience to be sought. It is rather the reality of our union with Christ. Believers “died” to the reigning power of sin. Cf. Rom. 3:9, πάντας ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι (“all under sin [s’ dominion] are [as a state of existence]”).

primarily and decidedly a salvation from sin, not merely deliverance from hell. The Apostle declares the utter impossibility of believers continuing to live in sin (as do the unregenerate).

Note: Sin possesses five great realities: guilt, penalty, pollution, power, and presence. Salvation, if truly scriptural, must necessarily deliver from all the realities of sin! Any teaching concerning salvation which is only partial in its deliverance from sin, is evidently both inadequate and false.

Note: What exactly is the believer's relation to sin if he "died to sin" and yet still sins?! The necessary distinction must be made between living in sin (under its dominating or reigning power) and committing acts of sin. The believer no longer *lives* under the reigning power of sin, but he still commits *acts* of sin (Cf. Rom. 6:15, ἀμαρτήσωμεν and 1 Jn. 2:1, ἵνα μὴ ἀμάρτητε. καὶ ἕάν τις ἀμάρτη [hina hamartēte, kai ean tis hamartē]. Both are aor., and so ref. to *acts* of sin).

C. *The Explanation* (v. 3–10). The dramatic and astounding answer of v. 2 necessitates an explanation. The explanation is that union with Christ necessarily means union in both his death and in his resurrection. Both these realities have profound implications in the life and experience of the believer! But these necessary implications are all but denied by many in modern Christianity:

The development of this section is based on three statements:

"*Know ye not?*" –Union with Christ: Death and Life [emph. on *Death*] (v. 3–5).

"*Knowing this*" –Union with Christ: The Crucifixion of the Old Man (v. 6–7).

"*Knowing that*" –Union with Christ: Death and Life [emph. on *Life*] (v. 8–10).

"*Know ye not?*" Union with Christ: Death and Life (Emphasis on *Death*, v. 3–5). "You are not

ignorant of this, are you?”¹⁵⁰ The completeness of New Testament or apostolic preaching is implied in v. 3. The Apostle implies that these believers should not be ignorant of their union with Christ and its implications. Union ([identification] the figurative use of “baptized”) with [into] Christ in his death means that the reigning power of sin has been broken; union in his resurrection–life means a new [converted] life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Note: v 4. ἵνα [*hina*, in order that]. ὡςπερ ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς (*hōsper ēgerthē Christos ek nekron dia tēs doxēs tou patros*). The ref. to “glory” means the “glorious exercise of the Father’s power” as he raised our Lord from the dead by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:3–4). “Newness of life” ref. to our new life in Christ under the reign of grace, i.e., it is present and experiential, not future or eschatological.

Cf. the emph. pos. ... οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν. (*outōs kai ēmeis en kainotēti zōēs peripatēsōmen*) “In newness of life we should walk.” v. 5 εἰ γὰρ σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα... (*ei gap sumphutoi gegonamen tō homoiōmati tou thanatou autou, alla kai tēs anastaseōs esometha*) This emph. certainty! Union in his death necessarily means union in his resurrection–life. σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν, “having become grown together,” signifying the closest unity. ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα, “in the likeness of his resurrection we shall be” (emph. pos.).

¹⁵⁰ ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε...; (ἔ *agnoeite*...?) (framed in neg. for emph.). ὅτι, ὅσοι (*hoti hosoi*), as many as, emph. all believers. ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν (*ebaptisthēmen eis Christon Iēsoun*), A fig. use of “baptism” in the sense of “union with or identification with.” Note the aor. εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν; (*eis ton thanaton autou ebapisthēmen*) [were baptized or identified].

These two aspects of the believer's union with Christ demonstrate the necessary relationship between justification and sanctification.¹⁵¹

2. "*Knowing this.*" Union with Christ: The Crucifixion of the Old Man (v. 6–7). The "old man" was the unregenerate self, which was crucified with Christ (brought into union with his death) so that the reigning power of sin might be broken.

Note: v. 6. τοῦτο γινώσκοντες, (pres. ptc.). ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος, not merely an "old nature," or "the flesh," but the unregenerate self. συνεσταυρώθη (aor. pass.), co-crucified. "In order that...in order that" (ἵνα...τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν...) two final cl. emph. purpose or result.

The first is construed with *the body as dominated by sin* (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας) being stripped of its power as the controlling entity within the personality (καταργηθῆ [katargēthē] to reduce to inactivity). The second is construed with "serving as willing bondslaves to sin" τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ.

The view that the believer possesses two natures: the "old" nature and the "new" nature, and that these two natures are identical to the "old man" and the "new man" is *not* scriptural.

Note the following: (1) The "old man" was the unregenerate personality, which was co-crucified with Christ. The result of the spiritual, moral, and intellectual transformation at regeneration is the "new man." Cf. Gal. 2:20; Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:9–10 (Cf. the aor. inf. of result in these two passages); 1 Jn. 3:9. (2) The ministry of the Holy Spirit enables believers to live a holy life (Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:16–

¹⁵¹ Our union with Christ has two aspects: Identification in his *death*—we died to the reigning power of sin, identification in his *life* — we live in the context of the power of the Spirit of God who raised our Lord from the dead. This clearly and directly teaches the utter necessity of a converted life. Justification and sanctification both derive from our union with Christ (Cf. Eph. 1:15–20).

17). (3) In Rom. 7, the Apostle does not blame the “old man” or the “old nature” for his spiritual struggle, but indwelling or remaining sin and corruption. (4) The “crucifixion of the old man” is not an experience to be sought, but a fact to be reckoned. (5) Any view other than the preceding *cannot* be consistently squared with Scripture.

Mark the truth and reality of definitive sanctification. This describes sanctification as an *act*, and refers to that definitive breach or radical cleavage with the reigning power of sin that occurs at regeneration.¹⁵² It is “the crucifixion of the old man,” the consequences of the impartation of Divine life (Jn. 3:3; Eph. 2:4–5) and the re-creation of the image of God in principle (Cf. Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:9–10).

4. “*Knowing that.*” Union with Christ: Death and Life (Emphasis on *Life*, v. 8–10). There is a distinct parallel between our Lord and every believer. As our Lord died with respect to sin once-for-all (ἐφάπαξ *ephapax*), so believers, having been “crucified with Christ” are now alive only with reference to God. Sin is no longer the dominating, motivating factor of the life (i.e., its reigning power is broken).

Note: v. 8. “if we be dead with Christ.” εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ (aor., “died”). πιστεύομεν, in the sense of confidence or persuasion, bringing together as a certainty union in both his death and resurrection as these relate to the believer’s experience. “Shall live” (ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ) refers to the present life in the realm of enabling grace. It is the fut. of logical force, *not* the eschatological future. v. 9 εἰδότες [perceiving] ὅτι Χριστὸς ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν οὐκέτι ἀποθνήσκει, θάνατος αὐτοῦ οὐκέτι κυριεύει. His death was a once-for-all break with sin. v. 10. ὃ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν, τῇ

¹⁵² Sanctification is an act [definitive], a position [“in Christ”], and a process [practical or progressive] in the context of Christian experience.

ἁμαρτία ἀπέθανεν ἐφάπαξ “unto sin” emph. pos.
ἐφάπαξ, once-for-all [see p. 65, “once”]. His death
fully and finally dealt with sin. He now continues to
live only with reference to God (ὁ δὲ ζῆ, ζῆ τῷ θεῷ).

D. *The Application* (v. 11). (οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς [εἶναι] νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτία ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ, Ἰησοῦ. *houtōs kai humeis logizesthe heautous [einai] nekrous men tē hamartia zōntas de tō theō en Christō Iēsou*). This is the very first practical admonition or exhortation in this epistle. It is logical or intellectual in force and introduces the parallel between our Lord and believers.

Note that the term “dead” is different from the vb. used previously in this chapter.¹⁵³ Believers *died* to the realm, reign, dominion and kingdom of sin and are now alive in the realm, reign, dominion and kingdom of grace by virtue of their union with Christ.¹⁵⁴ This statement is a reckoning from reality, not merely from an ideal, i.e., this derives from a true, scriptural assessment of who and what the Christian is in Christ. This is neither an ideal to wish for nor an ideal to strive for. It is the application of the truth that the reigning power of sin has been broken and the believer is no longer bound to obey or respond to the solicitations of his old master, sin.

E. *The Exhortation* (v. 12–13). (Μὴ οὖν βασιλευέτω ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ, [*Mē oun basileutō hē hamartia en tō thnētō humōn sōmati eis to hupakouein tais epithumiais autou*] μηδὲ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν

¹⁵³ νεκροὺς (*nekrous*), *corpses* (not the various forms of ἀποθνήσκω [*apothnēskō*], as in v. 2–10), wholly or totally unresponsive to τῇ ἁμαρτία (*tē hamartia*. arth., ref. to sin as a *ruling entity* that seeks to enlist our services. We are no longer in her service.

¹⁵⁴ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, (*en Christō Iēsou*) “in,” not merely “through,” emph. our union and identification with him.

ὄπλα ἀδικίας τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας καὶ τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ [*mēde parestanete ta melē ē hopla adikias tē hamartia, alla parastēsate heautous tō theō hōsei ek nekrōn zōntas kai ta melē humōn hoopla dikaiosunēs tō theō*]).

What is logical in v. 11 is now brought to practicality in v. 12–13. The use of the term “let not” demonstrates that the reigning power of sin has been broken.¹⁵⁵ “Members” is an inclusive term expressive of the total personality as expressed through the body. Care must also be taken to mark the distinction between “stop yielding your *members*” and “with all determination and with a sense of urgency, yield *yourselves*.”¹⁵⁶ The term “instruments” is literally “weapons of warfare,” referring to the attempt of sin [personified by the def. art.], though “dethroned,” to wage a “guerrilla warfare” against the kingdom of grace.¹⁵⁷

F. *The Conclusion* (v. 14). (ἁμαρτία γὰρ ὑμῶν οὐ κυριεύσει· οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν [*hamartia gar humōn ou kurieusei: ou gar este hupo nomon alla hupo charin*]). This is an absolute statement of reality for every true believer. The reason

¹⁵⁵ v. 13. “Neither yield (μηδὲ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα ἀδικίας τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ, pres. and aor., to present, put at the disposal of) your members...but present yourselves.” Sin can no longer dominate the “self,” the “new man,” or regenerate person. Note the qualifying words, “as those that are alive from the dead.”

¹⁵⁶ μηδὲ παριστάνετε [pres. imp. of prohib.] τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν...ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε [aor. imp.] ἑαυτοὺς (yourselves, not merely your members). Grace demands much more!

¹⁵⁷ Both “sin” and “grace” are arth., fig. representing (in the fem.) two “reigning queens” and their respective kingdoms. “Instruments” (ὄπλα, *hopla*) refers to weapons of warfare.

is given in the latter part of the verse: we are no longer under a mere principle of outward commandment, but under an inward principle of enabling grace.¹⁵⁸

II. A Practical Warning Concerning

Antinomianism

(6:15–23)

A. *The Question* (v. 15). (Τί οὖν; ἀμαρτήσωμεν, ὅτι οὐκ ἐσμέν ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν; μὴ γένοιτο [*Ti oun? hamartēsōmen, hoti ouk semen hupo nomon alla hupo Charin? mē genoito!*]). The emphasis changes from living a life of sin to lightly committing acts of sin.¹⁵⁹

The issue is: is there an excuse for any sin in the believer's life? Can we casually commit any act of sin? Can we take even one act of sin lightly? This is a progression from v. 1–14. The exclamation reveals that such would be utterly incompatible with free justification and the grace of God.

Note: Careful note must be taken that at 6:15 Paul also begins to discuss the believer's relation to the Law, a discussion which does not conclude until well into chapter 8, showing that the chapter division at 8:1 is artificial and obscures the development of the passage. 8:1–4 are then transitional as Paul takes up and develops the hint of 5:5 and 11, and the statement of 6:3–5, and logically and finally develops the power of the Holy Spirit.

B. *The Generalization* (v. 16). The Apostle refers to the general principle of slavery to illustrate a spiritual

¹⁵⁸ Both "law" and "grace" are anarth., (οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον), but under a principle of enabling grace (ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν). It is a contrast between the mere outward commandment and the inward, vital and effectual principle of grace operating through the resurrection–life of Christ.

¹⁵⁹ ἀμαρτήσωμεν (aor.) ὅτι οὐκ ἐσμέν ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν; Shall we *commit acts of sin*? Cf. v. 1 where the tense was pres. (ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ), implying a life of sin or living in sin. This distinction between the pres. and the aor. is absolutely necessary to correctly see the transition and interpret v. 15–23.

truth: The master of the slave is revealed by whom the slave serves. Note the contrast: “sin unto death...obedience unto righteousness” (*not* obedience unto *life*. A very careful distinction is made between works–righteousness and sovereign grace).

- C. *The Application* (v. 17–18). (χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι ἦτε δοῦλοι τῆς ἀμαρτίας ὑπηκούσατε δὲ ἐκ καρδίας εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδαχῆς, ἐλευθερωθέντες [*Charis de tō theō hoti ēte douloi tēs hamartias hupēkousate de ek kardias eis hon paredothēte tupon didachēs, eleutherōthentes*]. δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀμαρτίας ἐδουλώθητε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ [*de apo tēs hamartias edoulōthēte tē dikaiosunē*]).

Believers have been pressed into the Gospel mold and it now forms or determines the shape of their lives.

εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδαχῆς (aor. pass. “unto which you were handed over”). This implies the dynamic of grace in their conversion. τύπον διδαχῆς, pattern of teaching or doctrine. τύπον ref. to a mold or pattern into which something is poured or stamped [by which it is shaped].

This is why even one act of sin is utterly incompatible with a converted life. Salvation is not freedom to sin, but rather a change of masters [under new management]! One is either a bondsman of sin or a bondsman of righteousness. This distinction is a necessity, by virtue of the believer’s union with Christ in both its necessary and effectual aspects.

- D. *The Exhortation* (v. 19). The apostle is not apologizing for his use of slavery as a figure for the necessity of a converted life. Nor does this imply some moral or intellectual lack on the part of the Roman believers. It is simply an explanation and attempt to draw from the realities of life in order to make spiritual truth comprehensible. The exhortation turns upon the words “for as...even so now” (ὥσπερ...οὕτως νῦν [*hōsper...outos nun*]).

The same singleness and fervency once used in the service of sin are now to be exemplified in the service of righteousness!

- E. *The Explanation* (v. 20–23). Once righteousness was not the motivating power in the believer’s life, but now it is.

Note: In what sense are unbelieving sinners “free” from righteousness? Not free from the claim of righteousness, which is upon every single human being through the law of God, but free from its practical claims, i.e., not activated, motivated, or governed by righteousness; we were *disengaged* from it. But now, as believers, we are *engaged* by it. A comparable illustration may be drawn from the relation of the clutch to the drive train in a vehicle. When the clutch pedal is pushed in, the drive train is *disengaged*; the it is released, the drive train is *engaged*. As unbelievers, we were disengaged from the power of righteousness; as believer we are disengaged from the reigning power of sin (v. 17–18, 20, 22).

As the life once produced nothing but sin and shame, so now it must produce holiness and anticipate the reality of everlasting life. To let any sin reign or have dominion will lead to eternal death!¹⁶⁰

Acts 17:1–34

This study will provide the student with various approaches to general and analytical study by way of comments and illustrations. Interspersed in the analytical outline are various textual, historical, doctrinal, cultural and practical notes used to illustrate the need for serious and diversified study.

¹⁶⁰ To take any act of sin lightly might betray the awful possibility of apostasy, i.e., that one’s profession of faith is merely outward or temporary—there is no true, vital union with Christ. The wages of sin, i.e., what sin doles out as fitting, what one earns, just compensation for services rendered.

Acts chapter 17 is a microcosm of the Apostle Paul's ministry. It reveals not only his fervor and tenacity, but also his methodology in approaching the Jews, the Gentiles and the pagan intellectuals of his day. It also records two of the six great spiritual awakenings that occurred under his ministry.

These incidents occurred during his second missionary journey, and the first entrance of the gospel into Europe (15:40–18:22). Paul and Silas had been illegally and severely beaten without a trial at Philippi (Acts 16:23), and so were still physically weak and wounded when they arrived at Thessalonica. The major divisions of the chapter are:

- The Ministry at Thessalonica (17:1–10)
- The Ministry at Berea (17:10–14)
- The Ministry at Athens (17:15–34)

I. The Ministry at Thessalonica (17:1–10)

Paul and Silas bypassed Amphipolis and Apollonia. The obvious reason is that, although on the *Via Egnatia*,¹⁶¹ there was no synagogue in either city. They journeyed down to Thessalonica, the capital of the Roman Province of Macedonia, a commercial city and a sea port with a large Jewish population.

A. Paul's Ministry (v. 1–3).

The Apostle's custom was to work at plying his trade six days a week, evangelizing in the marketplace, then preach in the synagogue on the Sabbath. This raises a question during his Thessalonian ministry.

Note: Paul always made it a very clear point that he labored to support himself so that he would not be chargeable to anyone, i.e., he earned his own living so as not to take money from anyone when he preached as an evangelist. Cf. 1 Cor. 9; 1 Thess. 2:5–10; Phil. 4:10–16.

¹⁶¹ The *Via Egnatia*, or "Eastern Way," was the major trade route from the East to Rome. Most Jews were merchants, and so evangelistic opportunity determined the route of Paul's group.

Why did the Philippians send money to Paul at least twice when he was at Thessalonica? It might have been out of pure, gospel love for the Apostle. Possible, but that would beg the question. It may be that his finances were exhausted because of his travels from Troas to Philippi and from Philippi to Thessalonica—the cost of shipfare for everyone from Troas to Samothracia, and perhaps for animals on the 100 mile trek from Philippi to Thessalonica, if he and Silas could not walk because of their injuries.

The ultimate answer is found in Roman records. There was a famine at that very time in Macedonia and the price of wheat rose six-fold!¹⁶² The Philippians knew this and sent relief to him to add to his own income as he labored day and night both in making tents and in preaching the Gospel.

This information illustrates the necessity of doing background studies, which are absolutely essential in biblical exegesis and exposition.

1. Paul's Customary Evangelistic Procedure (v. 1–2).

κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἰωθὸς (*kata de to eithos*), “according to custom,” implying that this was his usual evangelistic methodology, “to the Jew first...” (Rom. 1:16). Why? Because in a pagan society with no common grace or knowledge of the truth or the Scriptures, the Jews comprised the only group with some religious background—a knowledge of the true God, his moral character and the Scriptures. If possible, Paul would therefore always begin his ministry in the local synagogue. Most of his converts came from among the Gentile proselytes, very few from among the Jews themselves.

2. Paul's Preaching Methodology (v. 2–3).

Note the const: διελέξατο αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν, διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος (*dielexato autois apo ton graphon, dianoiгон kai paratithemenos*). The

¹⁶² Cf. F. W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, p. 287.

main vb. is “he reasoned” (διελέξατο), aor., i.e., “fully discoursed,” from the Scriptures, and so left nothing out. The two pres. ptes. explain the reasoning or declaration (διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος), “by means of fully opening [the Scriptures] and putting forth his arguments.” Note the following characteristics of his preaching:

- a. Paul had a preaching methodology. He found the best way, consistent with the Word of God, to preach the Gospel.
- b. Paul’s preaching methodology was eminently suited to his hearers. These hearers were Jews and Gentile proselytes who had espoused the Jewish religion to a given degree. Thus, they had a background upon which he could build. He also had a ready-made meeting each Sabbath day.
- c. Paul’s preaching methodology based the message upon the very text of Scripture. Paul was an exegetical or expository and logical preacher.
- d. Paul’s preaching methodology was intelligent and self-consistent.
- e. Paul’s preaching methodology was founded upon the analogy of faith. He took his text and expounded it within the context of the whole body of Scripture.
- f. Paul’s preaching methodology was reasoned and logical against great obstacles. Judaistic traditional understanding concerning the Messiah had completely obscured the spiritual meaning of their Scriptures.
- g. Paul’s preaching methodology emphasized the Person and work of Christ. “Preach” (ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω, *egō kataggellō*) means to preach with great authority. Paul’s burden of proof was

to argue that “this Jesus” whom he was preaching was indeed the promised Messiah.

- h. From subsequent verses (v. 7), it is clear that Paul proclaimed the “Lordship of Jesus Christ” strongly in his preaching!

B. The Immediate Results (v. 4–5).

1. Positive—multitudes converted (v. 4).

A great spiritual awakening took place, and most of the converts were from among the Jewish proselytes and pagan Greeks.

Note: The term “believed” is lit: “persuaded” (καί τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίει, *kai tines ex autōn*), “to believe or be persuaded” (aor. pass. of πείθω, *peithō*, pointing to this as an historical fact).

“Consorted” is lit: “assigned to them by lot.” προσεκληρώθησαν (*proseklērōthēsan*) aor. pass. “to assign by lot.” Cf. ἐκκληρώθημεν, to choose out by lot in Eph. 1:11, trans. “obtained.” The mid. would suggest that they threw in their lot with the preachers, but the pass. reveals the hand of God in the preaching and its results—God allotted them to Paul and Silas. (Both Crit. Text and the TR read προσεκληρώθησαν [pass.], but the KJV and ASV, against all ms. evidence, translate it as a mid.).

2. Negative—the Jews infuriated (v. 5).

The unbelieving Jews hired some “loungers of the marketplace or waterfront bums” and caused a city-wide riot, seeking in the confusion to harm or kill the group.

C. The Long-lasting Results (v. 6–10).

1. The Jews twist the truth into a charge of sedition (v. 6–8).

This charge of sedition “troubled”¹⁶³ the crowd and

¹⁶³ ἐτάραξαν, (*etaraxan*) aor., “trouble, disturb, upset; terrify, frighten...”

the rulers.¹⁶⁴ Why? Thessalonica was a Greek “free city” with its own ancient form of Greek government, and was in danger of losing this status through political disturbance, and having to have Roman garrisons stationed there.

2. Paul forced to leave Thessalonica and not return (v. 9).

3. Paul forced to flee by night to Berea (v. 10).

II. The Ministry at Berea (17:10–14)

Berea was approx. 50 miles southwest from Thessalonica, off the *Via Egnatia*, which headed directly west across the country to the seaport toward Rome. Thus, they were in a more rural, isolated setting. This would give the Apostle’s group time to evangelize before the Thessalonian Jews would find them and cause trouble.

A. Paul’s customary Evangelistic Procedure (v. 10).

Persecution could not dissuade Paul from his rigorous evangelistic procedure. The wording of the text emphasizes this tenacity in evangelism: οἵτινες παραγενόμενοι εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀπήεσαν (*hoitines paragenomenoi eis tēn sunagōgēn tōn Ioudaiōn apēesan*). Note the qual. pers. pron οἵτινες, “Such ones as, having arrived (aor. ptc.), into the synagogue (emph. pos.) kept on going repeatedly...!” This emph. that they seized every available opportunity to preach Christ in the synagogues! “Went” (ἀπήεσαν), imperf.,¹⁶⁵ implying a continued effort, on a daily basis, as the people of the

¹⁶⁴ The “politarchs” (τοὺς πολιτάρχας, *tous politarchas*) who ruled the city were five in number. Radical critics saw this title as an objection against Lucan authorship, as it was unknown. But later scholarship has revealed that such cities had exactly this form of ancient Greek government with the same designation. An ancient inscription with this very title was excavated at Thessalonica.

¹⁶⁵ ἀπήεσαν ind. imper act. 3. per. pl., from ἄπειμι (*apeimi*, from εἶμι; go, come) “were going continually, kept going [on a daily basis].”

congregation met to search the Scriptures that were kept in the synagogue. Now, a practical note:

Note: Mark the need for *group* Bible studies. Doubtless Paul and Silas were daily in the Synagogue to guide these studies and correct any misunderstanding or misinterpretation by the Rabbis.

- The necessity for group Bible studies. Group Bible study was necessary because; (1) The scrolls were kept in the synagogue under the care of the Rabbis. (2) Several were either reading or listening at any one time. (3) There was need for leadership that was doctrinally sound. (4) There were great opportunities to evangelize.
- The dangers of group Bible studies. It is of the utmost importance that three issues are resolved: (1) There must be a reverent attitude toward the Word of God. (2) There must be spiritual, doctrinal, mature leadership or the Bible study may do harm rather than spiritual good. (3) Issues must be consistently, scripturally and doctrinally resolved, or the Scriptures will be robbed of their authority and individuals will be left with their own erroneous thinking.
- Do we actually and consistently believe that God calls men to preach and teach his Word? If so, then we will not promote Bible studies that are undisciplined or unsupervised—apart from the spiritual leadership God has ordained in his church.

B. The Bereans' noble attitude and actions (v. 11).

C. The Immediate Results (v. 11–12).

Another great spiritual awakening took place among the Jewish proselytes and pagan Greeks, and extended to some of the prominent citizens.

(v. 11) “More noble” (εὐγενέστεροι, *eugenesteroi*), usually refers to birth or station, but here, plainly of character. “They were such ones as...” (οἵτινες ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον, *hoitines edexanto ton logon*), qual. pers. pron., emph. this blessed characteristic! They intelligently

welcomed the preached Word with all eagerness (μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας, *meta pasē prothumias*).

Then they met daily in the synagogue (where the scrolls were kept) to carefully investigate and verify the preaching (καθ' ἡμέραν, *kath' hēmeran* [daily, day after day])¹⁶⁶ ἀνακρίνοντες (*anakrinontes*) [make careful and exact research, submit to careful scrutiny, used of legal investigation or forensic procedures].¹⁶⁷ τὰς γραφὰς, *tas graphas* [the writings, i.e., the scrolls of Old Testament Scripture] εἰ ἔχοι ταῦτα οὕτως, *ei echoi touta houtōs* [“if these had it thus”]).

(v. 12) Therefore many of them believed (πολλοὶ μὲν οὖν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίστευσαν). There is here a distinct relation between the study of the Scriptures and belief.

D. The Persecution by the Thessalonican Jews (v. 13).

E. Paul again forced to flee the area (v. 14–15).

III. The Ministry at Athens (17:15–34)

Evidently Paul had either been beaten¹⁶⁸ or was suffering from his chronic disease, as he could not travel alone and had to be taken by others to Athens, approx. 222 miles to the southeast by ship.

Note: 2 Cor. 12:7–10. The “messenger of Satan” was evidently a chronic physical illness which periodically devastated him (ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί, ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ (*edothē moi skolops tē sarki, aggelos Satana hina me kolaphizē*)...was given to me a

¹⁶⁶ TR reads τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν. The def. art. particularizes the const., emphasizing the constancy of the action.

¹⁶⁷ At least six times so used in the New Testament: “scrutinize, sift, question carefully.” Cf. Lk. 23:14, “examined;” Acts 4:9, “examined;” Acts 12:19, “examined;” Acts 17:11, “searched;” Acts 24:8, “examining;” Acts 28:18, “examined.”

¹⁶⁸ Cf. 2 Cor. 11:22–28. These words were written about 3–5 years after the events of Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea, long before his shipwreck in Acts 27–28. Some of these beatings and shipwrecks had to have taken place during this very missionary journey. The student should always think and re–think as he reads and studies.

stake driven through my flesh, a messenger of Satan in order to me [emph.] continually smite [pres. subj.]...”).

This might have been either malaria or a disease of the eyes which incapacitated him for long periods of time. He makes other references to his eyesight (Cf. Gal. 4:15; 6:11).

Most of Paul's epistles were written by an amanuensis. Paul dictated them and signed them, evidently in a scrawling hand (Rom. 16:22; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17). Several times he seems to be led by others to help him escape from the Jews, e.g., Acts 17:15 (οἱ δὲ καθιστάνοντες τὸν Παῦλον ἤγαγον ἕως Ἀθηνῶν, *hoi kathistanontes ton Paulon ēgagon heōs Athēnōn*). pres. rel. ptc., “appoint, conduct.” “brought,” 2 aor.

A. Paul was left at Athens alone (v. 15).

He was sick, lonely and anxiously desired word on the state of the churches he had left at Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea (1 Thess. 3:1–7).

B. Paul's spirit stirred within him when he observed the idolatry of the city (v. 16).

A lengthy geographical, historical, cultural and religious note is in order to comprehend the significance of Athens at that time:

Note: Athens was situated approx. 222 miles southeast of Berea by sea. Paul sailed southeast through the Aegean Sea, past Mt. Olympus to the West, and landed at the port of Piraeus, about 7 miles distant from Athens—in all, a trip of about three days.

From Macedonia, Paul had passed by ship into the region of Greece or the Roman Province of Achaia and into the immediate region known as Attica. The capital city of Achaia was Corinth. Athens was not a commercial center, and no longer a major city in a modern sense.

Athens had been conquered by Rome in 146 BC and made a “free city” with its own government and supreme council, the *Areopagus*, named for its ancient meeting place on the Hill of Mars, overlooking much of the city with its temples and shrines.

Athens was, however, the cultural, intellectual and philosophical center of Greco-Roman civilization—”*The*

Metropolis of the World.” “The Eye of Greece, the Mother of all the arts and eloquence.”

It held in the thinking of the ancient, pagan world the position that ecclesiastical Rome would later hold in the thinking of traditional, statist Christendom. As the Romans had conquered the Greeks politically, the Greeks had conquered the Romans culturally and intellectually. Athens epitomized all that the Greco–Roman civilization was culturally, intellectually, philosophically, artistically and religiously. Here was the birthplace of philosophy and science, the place where the great men and minds of the past had put forth their teachings, held their academies or schools, and exercised their influence—the city of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Pericles, Demosthenes, Sophocles, Euripides, Zeno and Epicurus.

But these glorious days had passed on centuries before. It was now a university city, which basked in the sunset of its former glory, filled with pagan religious and philosophical speculation—a haven for resident and transient intellectuals.

Athens was the foremost idolatrous city in the Roman Empire. It was literally filled with altars and shrines—“full of idols!” (v. 16). Xenophon (Athenian Greek historian of the fourth century BC) stated that Athens was “all altar, all sacrifice and offering to the gods.” Petronius (a first century Roman satirist) stated that it was “easier to find a god than a man in Athens.” Pausanias (a second century Greek traveler and geographer in his multi–volume work, *Description of Greece*) comments that Athens had more images than the rest of Greece put together.

Pliny the Younger wrote that in the first century, Athens had more than 30,000 public statues in addition to the many private ones.¹⁶⁹ The Athenians deified not only every “god” of the Greco–Roman imagination, but also abstractions and characteristics. Every human passion, infirmity and desire was deified. There were shrines and altars to such entities as “Shame,” “Pity,” “Modesty,” “Fame,” “Energy,” “Persuasion,” etc., and even some to “unknown gods” as recorded by ancient travelers and

¹⁶⁹ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in NT.*, III, p. 278.

referred to by Paul himself (v. 23). This, then, was the Athens that Paul carefully observed from a consistent Christian perspective.

Richard C. H. Lenski, “Acts,” p. 708; Thomas Walker, *Acts*, p. 375; G. T. Stokes, “Acts,” *The Expositor’s Bible*, p. 475. Thought: “Persuasion” would not be deified and worshipped again until Charles G. Finney in the 19th century made it a substitute for the sovereign, effectual grace of the Holy Spirit!

Note: There are classic works that shed much light on early Christianity and are well worth the time spent in their perusal. The serious student will find ample descriptions of Athens by both ancient and modern travelers, in the following: Augustus Neander, *The Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles*, pp. 186–188; Coneybear & Howson, *The Life and Labors of St. Paul*, pp. 264–287f; F. W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, pp. 295–307f; and William Ramsay, *St. Paul, The Traveler and the Roman Citizen*, pp. 237–249f.

Paul’s spirit was stirred within (παρωξύνετο, *parōxuneto*, imperf.) him—a spiritual paroxysm, or sharp, constant pain in his heart!¹⁷⁰

A note is necessary here concerning the essence of idolatry:

Note: The relation of the deity to the idol. An image or idol was not the “god” itself, but merely a symbol or representation of the given “deity,” whether of a false “god” or of the one true God. This explains the often crude features of the idol. Each visible symbol or image was meant to portray a given characteristic or attribute (Acts 14:11).¹⁷¹ The golden calf [bull god] made and engraved by Aaron (Ex. 32:1–8), the image made by

¹⁷⁰ Paul expresses himself similarly, though with different terms in Rom. 9:1–2 concerning his sorrow and pain at the unbelief of Israel, ...ἀδιάλειπτος ὀδύνη τῆ καρδίᾳ μου (*adialeiptos odunē tē kardia mou*), i.e., “a constant [endless] pain in my heart”—a “spiritual angina.”

¹⁷¹ The statement was that “the gods have *come down* to us,” implying that the gods were actually in the heavens, and were only represented by images or men.

Micah (Judg. 17:1–11), and the calves [bull gods] made by Jeroboam (1 Kgs. 12:26–31), were meant to be—not pagan idols—but representations of Jehovah in his might or power!¹⁷²

Note: The worship of the image as a means to power. What was the significance of the idol or image? As a religious object or representation, it was the vehicle for contact with the given “god,” an avenue through which to gain its power through manipulation (sorcery,¹⁷³ incantation, sacrifice, etc.).

This is why Aaron made the golden calf (Ex. 32:1–8), and why the Israelites brought the Ark of God into their camp to gain victory over the Philistines (1 Sam. 4:1–8). But God was not represented by the calf, nor necessarily limited to the Ark, and Israel was judged because of one and defeated because of the other—the failure of a fetish and of an idolatrous mentality.

The same is true with the brazen serpent made by Moses on Divine command (Numb. 21:6–9). When it became an object of religious worship centuries later, it was destroyed by King Hezekiah (2 Kgs. 18:4). The use of the Urim and Thummim, an immediate means of discerning God’s will (Ex. 28:30; Numb. 27:21; 1 Sam. 30:7–8), did not always produce an answer—God was not limited to a pouch in a priest’s vestment—he could not be conjured by means of physical manipulation at the self-will of man (1 Sam. 28:5ff).

When King Saul could not conjure Jehovah to get an answer, he went to a spirit-medium to seek counsel. This demonstrates the image or idolater mentality in its search for power through manipulation.

Many modern, professing Christians attempt the same type of manipulation through “prayer,” neither

¹⁷² This is why Aaron represented the golden calf as “These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” The same was true of Jeroboam. Micah made the image, then took a Levite as his priest and thought that Jehovah would then bless him!

¹⁷³ Magic is the manipulation of supernatural forces through natural means, hence the alleged need for physical elements such as idols, images, fetishes, potions, etc. These are considered as avenues to power, prophecy or protection.

recognizing God for who he is nor submitting to his sovereign will and purpose. Bereft of a scriptural knowledge of God, these are deluded into thinking that answers to prayer may be obtained through [God may be manipulated by] perseverance, emotions and self-sacrifice—the exact process used by the prophets of Baal in 1 Kgs. 18:20–29!

- C. Paul began to evangelize both Jews and Gentiles (v. 17). He could never be a mere on-looker, a “sight-seer,” a “tourist”! He was a Christian, a missionary, an evangelist—and what he saw stirred him intensely because it was a perversion of the one true God!
- D. The Stoics and Epicureans listened to his message (v. 18).

Paul was exceptionally and providentially able to deal with these pagan philosophers. As a Jewish Rabbi before his conversion, he had been well-instructed in Greek philosophy. Growing up in Tarsus (one of the three great university cities of the ancient world, he had doubtless heard the various philosophers stand in the local agora and declare their teachings. He himself could quote from their minor poets and sages (Cf. v. 24–28)!

An exegetical note is in order here:

“Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him.” *συνέβαλλον* (*sunballon*, imperf.), “continued to encounter him” [over a length of time], implying that a crisis was soon reached over his teaching.

“And some continued to say” *ἔλεγον* (*elegon*, imperf.), “What would this babbler say?” *Τί ἂν θέλοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος λέγειν;* (*Ti an theloi ho spermologos houtos legein?*), “What would this ‘babbling’ say, if he really had anything to say?” *ἂν* with the opt. mood (4th cl. cond.). This implies both the utter contempt of these philosophers and their utter inability to put the elements of Paul’s message together!

ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος, denoting utter contempt! The term *σπερμολόγος* was originally used of a bird that hopped about and picked up seeds here and there, later, of one who frequented the agora and picked up pieces of discarded scraps and sold them, and then of pseudo-philosophers, eclectics, ignorant plagiarists, mere collectors

of words, re-thinkers of borrowed sayings, who gathered scraps of thought in a second-handed way from various religious and philosophical systems and patched them together in a hap-hazard way—an “intellectual scavenger.”

“Other some, of strange gods he seems a setter forth to be...” (οἱ δέ, Ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεὺς εἶναι, *hoi de Zenōn daimoniōn dikei kataggeleus einai*), Cf. emph. pos. One who preached or declared foreign minor deities or secondary gods. “because Jesus, and the resurrection he was continuing to preach.” (ὅτι τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν εὐηγγελίζετο, *hoti ton Iēsoun kai tēn anastasin euēggelizeto*). Cf. emph. pos. He seemed to be preaching “a male god” (τὸν Ἰησοῦν) and “a female goddess” (τὴν ἀνάστασιν). “Jesus” is masc., and “resurrection” feminine, or even possibly “healing” and “restoration!” It is noticeable, however, that they did acknowledge his zeal (καταγγελεὺς, one who declares with authority).

Note: F. F. Bruce, *Acts*, footnote 21, p. 351, quoting F. H. Chase, who suggests that these may have associated Ἰησοῦς (*Iēsous*) with ἰασις (*iasis*) “healing” and Ἰησω (*Iēsō*) the goddess of health. This is a distinct possibility in the context of such terms as σωτηρία (*sōtēria*) and σωτήρ (*sōtēr*, “salvation” and “Savior”), denoting restoration to health in the usual medical sense of that time.

Even astute philosophers could not make sense of Paul’s gospel because of their polytheistic mentality.

E. Paul was brought before the high Court of Athens to explain his strange religion and philosophy (v. 19–21).

Any new philosophical or religious teaching had to be cleared with the High Court of the Areopagus [Mars Hill]. This, however, was not a trial, but an informal hearing. Athens was filled with speculative thought and thinkers. They wanted to become acquainted with this new teaching, because they wanted the very latest topic or news.

“...saying, May we know (Δυνάμεθα γινῶναι, *Dunametha ginōnai*) gnomic aor. inf., “get to know, become acquainted.” “Saying” (λέγοντες, *legontes*, pres. ptc.), emph. the graphic picture. “This new doctrine which you have been teaching” (τίς ἡ καινὴ αὐτῆ ἢ ὑπὸ σοῦ

λαλουμένη διδαχή, *tis hē kainē hautē hē hupo sou laloumenē didachē*, perf.), pointing to a continuity of time up to that occasion.

“Strange [astounding] things” (ξενίζοντα, *xenizonta*). “We are determined [have a purpose] to know what these things are.” (βουλόμεθα οὖν γινῶναι τίνα θέλει ταῦτα εἶναι, *boulometha oun gnōnai tina thelei touta einai*). “For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.” “All Athenians and strangers [foreigners].” Athens was a haven for both serious and casual intellectuals. “Some new thing.” (τι καινότερον, *ti kainoteron*), lit: “the newer thing,” i.e., the latest news or speculation. Several ancient writers scolded the Athenians on this enduring characteristic!¹⁷⁴

F. Paul’s address before the Areopagus (v. 22–34).

Paul and his hearers did not agree on any of his fifteen points, yet they listened. Although he did not quote Scripture, each statement was a compendium of scriptural truth. Where his and their views came close, he always spoke from a scriptural perspective. His presentation was totally presuppositional and never neutral. It was an apologetic approach that consistently reflected the truth of Scripture, was wholly consistent with his own writings and preaching, and true to the nature of fallen, sinful man.

Note: There are two basic approaches to Apologetics, or defending the Christian faith: Evidentialism and Presuppositionalism. These two approaches are antithetical:

Evidential apologetic is an attempt to defend Christian truth—claims without assuming or presupposing special revelation [the inspired Scriptures]. Thus, Evidentialism reasons *to* the Scriptures from facts gathered from various sources such as science, archeology, history, etc.

¹⁷⁴ E.g., Demosthenes, etc. Cleon reproached them with “You are the best people at being deceived by something new that is said.” Quoted by F. F. Bruce, *Acts*, footnote, p. 352.

It seeks to find in science, reason, history and other data, “common [neutral] ground” with the unregenerate mind.

It assumes that an unregenerate person can adequately comprehend Divine truth and act upon it savingly apart from regenerating grace. Thus, Evidentialism fails to completely appreciate the implications of the noetic effects of sin and assumes the ability of men to believe and repent by their own ability. Evidentialism, if consistent, puts *faith* before regeneration, and essentially makes it synonymous with human trust.

Presuppositional apologetic is the attempt to defend Christian truth—claims by presupposing special revelation and so reasoning *from* the truth of Scripture.¹⁷⁵ It assumes or presupposes the absolute necessity of effectual grace *before* unconverted individuals can savingly believe and repent (i.e., that saving faith and repentance are the gifts of God, freely and sovereignly bestowed). It further holds that all reality is *created* reality and therefore there cannot be a neutral approach to the unconverted—no “brute [uninterpreted] facts”—as every fact is a created fact and must be interpreted in the context of God.

The presuppositionalist realizes that to seek an allegedly “neutral” position (admit the existence of “brute facts”) would be to compromise the truth concerning God and created reality. Presuppositionalism assumes that what unregenerate individuals need is not merely more information, or a change in the direction of their wills, but a radical transformation of nature—regeneration—before they can savingly come to terms with the truth of God. Therefore, Presuppositionalism puts *regeneration* before faith and makes saving faith a gift of God.

Note: There are six necessary, spiritual realities which accompany regeneration, apart from which the individual is yet unregenerate: (1) the impartation of Divine life (Jn. 3:3, 5; Eph. 2:1, 4–5), (2) the breaking of the reigning power of sin (Rom. 6:3–14), (3) the re-creation of the image of God in principle (Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:1–11), (4)

¹⁷⁵ Presuppositionalism may make use of evidence, but it is evidence from within a Christian framework, *never in order to prove* the validity or authority of Scripture.

the removal of natural heart–enmity toward God (Rom. 8:7–8), (5) the removal of satanic blindness (2 Cor. 4:3–6) and (6) the gifts of repentance and faith (Acts 11:18; Eph. 2:8–10).

Why does Paul not mention the Lord Jesus Christ, the work of the cross, or faith? He had been evangelizing these philosophers for almost a month on a daily basis in the agora (v. 18), in which time he had evidently fully and faithfully set forth the gospel in its fullness. Now, it was only left for him to have a few minutes without interruption to set “Jesus and the resurrection” in their proper, necessary historical and redemptive context and then declare the necessary consequences to sinful men—which he did.

1. His point–of–contact or common ground (v. 22–23).

“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars hill...” Σταθείς (*Statheis*), aor. ptc., “having taken his stand,” referring to his assuming the posture of an orator (Cf. σταθείς in Lk. 18:11; Acts 26:1). ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ Ἀρείου Πάγου (*en mesō tou Areiou Pagou*), i.e., in the midst of the *Areopagus* or Supreme Court of Athens.¹⁷⁶

The location could well have been on Mar’s Hill, where all about him he could have gestured toward the various prominent temples and shrines during his discourse. The members of the Court along with prominent observers could have crowded about and upon the rocky outcropping. The scene was awesome and dramatic. This is the most profound statement ever uttered in Athens—and not by Socrates, Plato or Aristotle—but by a Gospel Preacher!

“...and said, *Ye* men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.” δε...ἔφη, Ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι (*Andres! Athēnaioi!*), “Men, Athenians!”

¹⁷⁶ This was the Supreme Court of Athens, composed of thirty of their greatest philosopher–citizens over the age of sixty. One of the highest Twelve, “Dionysius, The Areopagite,” was converted that day!

The usual formal address used by the Athenian orators. Note that he doubtless used the term πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς (*panta hōs deisidaimon-esterous humas*) in an ambiguous way as “extremely religious.”

He took for his “text” an ancient, faded inscription (perf.) to an unknown god, and then asserted both their confessed ignorance (ὁ οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε, *ho oun agnoountes eusebeite*) and his own confident authority (τοῦτο ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν, *touto egō kataggellō humin*). Very carefully note that he used the neut., not the masc., referring to “Deity,” or the Divine nature, not the one true God.

2. His declaration of the one true God and the universe (v. 24–25).

Here he spoke of the one true God (ὁ θεός, *ho theos*, masc.), who is the source, support and end of all things (Cf. Rom. 11:36).

3. The relationship of God to the human race (v. 26–29).

He asserted the unity of the human race and the purpose of God in human history. He then took the words of several minor Greek poets and utilized them within a Christian context to emphasize the willful, responsible ignorance of these listeners.

4. The necessity of repentance in the context of certain future judgment (v. 30–31).

The gospel invitation is, in realty, a command! A Divine summons to repent in the face of certain judgment.

5. The results of the address (v. 32–34).

Was Paul interrupted, i.e., had he been given more time before he was so rudely interrupted, would he have said more? We think not. He had faithfully declared the truth and its consequences—and some were converted that very day.

- a. Some ridiculed (v. 32).

Ἀκούσαντες δὲ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν (*Akousantes de anastasin nekron*) “Having heard, upon hearing of” (aor. ptc.), anarth., the fact or reality of a resurrection of dead ones. Greek philosophy denied a bodily resurrection, though it held to the immortality of the soul. The body was a “prison house” for the soul, which was liberated at death. “Some mocked,” ἐχλεύαζον (*echleuazon*), imperf., “were jesting, jeering, scoffing” at him, treating him scornfully, implying both bodily expression and vocal disapprobation.

b. Some procrastinated (v. 32).

οἱ μὲν...οἱ δὲ εἶπαν (*hoi men...hoi de eipan*). The [μὲν...δὲ, “on the one hand...but on the other...”] const. implies two different reactions. Those who procrastinated were serious in their intent, and not merely politely dismissing Paul—although there is no record of their hearing him again (πάλιν, *palin*), i.e., a second time.

c. Some believed (v. 34).

Some have mistakenly thought that Paul failed at Athens and so when he came to Corinth, he was determined never again to “play the philosopher” (1 Cor. 2:1–5). Nothing could be further from the truth. He was the only man who could stand before the pagan intellectuals of his day upon solely Christian and consistent ground. He did so without compromise and some were converted. Further, he stayed on for some time after this—several weeks—evidently to strengthen the new church comprised of converts from this meeting (1 Thess. 3:1–7). The student should not rely on tradition, especially when it seems to conflict with Scripture.

The Epistle to the Hebrews

We have previously studied Hebrews inductively. The present study is not a thorough exegesis, but simply a further development of the book into its constituent parts for a more

complete analysis and exposition, with some added explanatory notes to help in interpreting the outline:

I. The Superior Person of Christ (1:1–4:13).

The epistle takes the form of a sermon or an oratorical presentation. There is no formal introduction, mention of the author, or salutation, implying that the writer and readers are on very familiar terms. The major theme and tone are struck at once in 1:1–3—the superiority and finality of the Lord Jesus Christ over the Old Testament.

A. Christ is Superior to the Old Testament Prophets (1: 1–3).

1. The contrast between the old and new revelation (1:1–2a).

The contrast is between the various times and means of the older revelation and the character and finality of the revelation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The superiority and glory of Christ as Son, Revealer, Redeemer and exalted Lord (1:2b–3).

B. Christ is Superior to the Angels (1:4–2:18).

1. His superiority confirmed from Scripture (1:4–14).

The exalted Son is seen from the Old Testament Scriptures to be greater than both the older revelation and the angels who were its messengers.

2. The First Warning: Do not Drift...! (2:1–4).

Because the Son is greater than the angels, the truth of the Gospel greater than the old revelation, and the witness of God greater than that of the old covenant, the judgment for neglecting or leaving such truth must be infinitely greater! Note the statement “Lest at any time we should let them slip.” is literally, “Lest we should drift past [away],” giving an opposite sense.

3. Christ as the True or Ideal Man (2:5–9).

The purpose of the incarnation and the humiliation of our Lord explained in view of his being higher or greater than the angels.

4. The necessity of the Incarnation (2:10–18).

The incarnation was necessary for our Lord to possess a true and complete humanity. Such humanity was a necessary qualification for his complete identification with his covenant people and his redemptive work.

C. Christ is Superior to Moses (3:1–19).

1. Christ the Son contrasted with Moses the Servant (3:1–6a).

Moses was the greatest figure or personage of the old covenant; the Son of God is infinitely greater. The contrast is between the servant and the Son, whose authority is not delegated but intrinsic.

2. The Second Warning: Do not Disbelieve...! (3:6b–4:13).

The failure of the first generation to enter the Land of Promise was due to a lack of faith. Disbelief led to disobedience. These believers are to enter into the rest of faith. Note the words in 3:12, “in departing from” (ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι [*en tō apostēnai*]), i.e., in apostatizing from!

D. Christ is Superior to Joshua (4:8–10).

Within this warning there is an added note that Christ is superior to Joshua (4:8) (Gk: Ἰησοῦς [*Iēsous*], not “Jesus,” as referring to our Lord, but to Joshua. The name is identical in Gk.).

II. The Superior Priesthood of Christ (4:14–10:18).

After demonstrating the superiority of the Son over the Old Testament prophets as the final and ultimate Revealer of the Word of God; over the angels as being greater than both the messengers and the message itself; over Moses the servant as the Son, and over Joshua, who led Israel into the Land of Promise; the author begins the very heart of his argument: the superiority of the high priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ over that of the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood of the Old Covenant. The approach of the author is essentially two-fold:

1. *The nature of our Lord's priestly ministry.* The priesthood “after the order of Melchizedek” is an

eternal priesthood that cannot be violated as contrasted with the Aaronic priesthood which had a long line of successors because each succeeding high priest died.

2. *The activity of our Lord's priestly ministry.* Members of the Aaronic priesthood had to continually stand "daily ministering and offering often times the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins..." (10:11); whereas Our Lord Jesus Christ, "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down..." (10:12). His work was and is complete and final!
- A. The Superior Person of Christ (4:14–7:28).
1. His Qualifications (4:14–5:10).
Two fundamental qualifications were necessary: sympathy and Divine appointment. The sympathy of the Levitical priesthood derived from a common sinful nature; that of our Lord derived from his sufferings as the God–Man.
 2. The Third Warning: Do not Degenerate...! (5:11–6:20).
The author interrupts his doctrinal argument concerning the priesthood of Melchizedek because his readers have degenerated in their spiritual progress to the point that, when they should be able to teach others, they have need of being taught all over again! The author then states that this teaching concerning the priesthood of Melchizedek is "the strong meat of the Word."
This very stern warning reveals the utter hopelessness that necessarily attends spiritual apostasy from the truth of the Gospel. Cf. 6:4–6, "For it is impossible....If they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance..." is literally, "having fallen away."

Note: Ἀδύνατον γὰρ...καὶ παραπεσόντας, πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν (*Adunaton gar...kai parapesontas, palin anakainizein eis metanoian*). Ἀδύνατον 2. aor. ptc., "having fallen away," not

hypothetical. The possibility or impossibility of apostasy is contained in the argument, not the word.

He states, however, that he is persuaded to the contrary that his readers are truly saved, although he further exhorts them to diligence and then gives them some consolation in the faithfulness of God (6:7–20).

3. The Priesthood of Melchizedek contrasted with the Priesthood of Aaron (7:1–28).

The author then proceeds to explain and work out his argument concerning the priesthood of Melchizedek. This individual was greater than Abraham, was a King–Priest, had no descent or genealogy recorded in Scripture, and then argues that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek while he was yet unborn in the person of Abraham (7:1–10). These points he then applies to the high priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ as contrasted with the Aaronic priesthood: Our Lord, born of the tribe of Judah, is the great King–Priest; as was Melchizedek, he has an eternal, and hence, an inviolable [“untrespassable”] priesthood¹⁷⁷ by virtue of his endless resurrection–life! (7:11–28).

B. The Superior Priestly Work of Christ (8:1–10:18).

1. A Superior or Heavenly Sanctuary (8:1–6a).

The contrast is between an earthly priesthood and a heavenly priesthood; between an earthly sanctuary, which is but the shadow of the true tabernacle in heaven, and the heavenly sanctuary.

2. A Superior or New Covenant (8:6b–13).

The contrast is between the Old Covenant (which was external and existed on tables of stone) and the New

¹⁷⁷ “...he hath an unchangeable priesthood.” ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην (*aparabaton echei tēn hierōsunēn*). The term ἀπαράβατον denotes (α primitive, or negative, and παράβασις (*parabasis*) a trespass, hence an “untrespassable” priesthood. No Jewish, Romish, High Protestant, Mormon or Sikh priest can trespass on the priesthood of our Lord.

Covenant, which is internal (written in the heart or inner being). The difference consists in both a change in substance and a change of administration. The argument is not only the superiority of the New Covenant, but the very fact that there is a New covenant means the other covenant is “old” and already rendered null and void.

3. The Ministries under the Old and New Covenants Contrasted (9:1–10:18).

a. The Heavenly Ministry contrasted with the Earthly ministry (9:1–24).

The earthly ministry in the tabernacle consisted of constant service in the outer sanctuary, but only once a year did the high priest enter the inner sanctuary within the veil, the “Holiest of All” with the sacrificial blood of animals. In contrast, our Lord, as Great High Priest, with his own blood, entered once [ἐφάπαξ, *ephapax*, “once-for-all,” emph.] into the heavenly sanctuary (the very presence [the face, τῷ προσώπῳ] of God), “having obtained eternal redemption for us!” (9:1–14).

Our Lord Jesus Christ has entered the heavenly sanctuary with his own blood [before the very “face” of God] to intercede for believers (9:15–24). The blood of Christ, in contrast to the blood of sacrificial animals, can alone cleanse the conscience.

b. The Continual and Imperfect priestly ministry of the Aaronic priesthood contrasted with the final and perfect ministry of our Great High Priest (9:25–10:18). The priests of the Old Covenant stood to offer the same sacrifices continually, i.e., their work was always incomplete and inadequate; but our Lord Jesus Christ, after he had offered “one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down....for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are

sanctified.” (10:11–14). The blood of the New Covenant means the full and final forgiveness and remission of sins (10:15–18).

III. The Serious Perseverance of the Christian (10:19–13:17).

This section is the great practical application in this epistle, filled with exhortations and encouragements to persevere in the faith.

A. Encouragement to a Superior Approach (10:19–39).

1. The First Encouragement to Boldness and Perseverance (10:19–25).

This encouragement echoes that of 4:14–16. The way to God, formerly restricted under the Old Covenant, has been opened by our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a way opened by life [his endless life], not death [of the sacrificial animals]. This calls for boldness, assurance, confidence and perseverance! (10:19–23).

These believers are to exhort each other and continue to assemble with other believers, not absent themselves as some have done (10:24–25).

2. The Fourth Warning: Do not Despise...! (10:26–31).

This warning is against a willful or determined turning from the truth. It is apostasy to turn from the Gospel and its finality. If under the Old Covenant, such punishment was “without mercy,” how much greater and final the judgment of those who turn from the Gospel!

3. The Second Encouragement to Persevere (10:32–39).

The writer reminds them of their former faithfulness under persecution (10:32–34), then encourages them to remain faithful in their present distress. To slacken or draw back (ὑποστολῆς, *hupostolēs*, metaphor of lowering a sail, hence to slacken, draw back) is a sign of apostasy (10:35–39)!

B. Past Examples of Faith and Perseverance (11:1–40).

This great chapter on the heroes of the faith is given as a series of examples to encourage these Jewish believers to persevere in the face of every possible difficulty (These were their ancestors and spiritual heroes)!

1. A Description of Faith (11:1–3).

Faith is described in its practical or experimental aspect as confidence, assurance and certainty.

2. The Characteristics of Faith as Exemplified by the Heroes of the Past (11:4–38).¹⁷⁸

The major characteristics of true faith or trust are: *righteousness* (i.e., living according to the Word or revealed will of God, righteous living and actions), *obedience* (to the revealed will and Word of God) and *perseverance* (in the truth regardless of circumstances).

3. The Goal of Faith (11:39–40).

New Testament believers possess the full and final revelation of salvation in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, including a greater knowledge of the sustaining grace of God and victory over death (Cf. 2 Tim. 1:9–10). New and Old Testament believers, however, will all equally share in the resurrection to life!

C. Personal Application and Exhortation (12:1–29).

1. Christ the Great Example (12:1–3).

The examples of the heroes of the faith noted in the previous chapter should stir these Jewish Christians themselves to persevere in the faith. But beyond these, the Lord himself is the Great Example! These believers are to “consider him...!” ἀναλογίσασθε (*analogisasthe!*), aor. imp.

2. The Significance of Discipline (12:4–11).

¹⁷⁸ Note the *anaphora* (ἀναφορά, from ἀνά *ana*, “again,” and φέρω *pherō*, “to carry”) in this chapter, i.e., the constant repetition of a certain word or phrase: “...by faith...by faith...by faith...”

Discipline is necessary, as God chastens all his children without exception. Divine discipline or chastening is therefore a mark of sonship, as God does not have any undisciplined children (12:4–8).

Unlike earthly fathers, God as our heavenly Father chastens for our profit and holiness. The present experience of Divine chastisement seems grievous, but it ultimately yields good results (12:9–11).

3. The Fifth Warning: Do not Defile...! (12:12–17).

Because Divine discipline is necessary and without exception, the readers must brace themselves for the inevitable hardships of pursuing peace and holiness (12:12–14).

They are further warned not be found graceless, immoral or profane. The example of Esau is given as one who, for momentary self-gratification and ease, forever lost his birthright, although he sought to change his father's mind with great anguish (12:15–17. Cf. Gen. 25:21–34; 27:30–40).

4. The Superiority of the New Covenant Maintained (12:18–29).

This is both an encouragement enlarging on the superiority and glory of the New Covenant (12:18–24), and also a warning to remember the awesome power of God (12:25–29).

IV. Several Personal Admonitions (13:1–25).

The final section and chapter contains the closing admonitions and encouragement, and ends with a short conclusion and benediction.

A. Personal Admonitions concerning Practical Duties (13:1–6).

These practical admonitions include the social, (13:1–3), moral (13:4) and private life (13:5–6).

B. Personal Admonitions concerning Religious Duties (13:7–17).

1. Remember your spiritual leaders and follow their faith. Leaders will die, but one remains changeless and alive—the Lord Jesus Christ (13:7–8).
 2. Remain doctrinally steadfast and established with grace, not with ceremonial foods as delineated in the Old Covenant (13:9).
 3. Believers of the New Covenant have access to a spiritual “altar” inaccessible to those under the Old Covenant: the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered, as it were, “outside the camp.” The “altar” and “sacrifices” of New Covenant believers are spiritual, not physical or material as under the Old Covenant. (Christianity was accused of having no literal altar and thus, no real religion). The call to “go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach,” is a call to identify completely with Christ and Christianity and completely leave the ceremonies of Judaism (13:10–16).
 4. Obedience to Church leaders enjoined (13:17). These leaders [pastors, elders] must give an account of their ministries and those under their care. It should be done with joy and not with grief.
- C. Personal Encouragements concerning Prayer (13:18–21).
1. The author asks for intercessory prayers on behalf of himself and his companions. He further asks for prayer for his release or restoration to them (13:18–19. Cf. 10:34)
 2. The Author’s Benediction for his readers (13:20–21). Even in this benediction, he refers to the reality of the New or Gospel Covenant that is mediated through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- D. The Conclusion (13:22–25).
- The author calls this epistle “the word of exhortation.” He then refers to Timothy who, as himself, is well-known to the readers. He finally sends greetings to their

leaders and to everyone else, and then prays for the grace of God to be with his readers.

The Epistle to the Romans

The entire Epistle to the Romans is considered in survey fashion in another section. Several key passages are also considered in this section. Following is an outline or analysis of the entire Epistle. This outline can be expanded by filling in the various sections with a suitable doctrinal, historical and practical commentary.

Theme: Divine Righteousness

The theme of Romans is the righteousness of God. Note the development of this theme throughout the epistle:

Righteousness Required From Humanity	(1:18–3:20)
Righteousness Revealed In Christ Alone	(3:21–26)
Righteousness Received By Faith Alone	(3:27–5:21)
Righteousness Realized In Sanctification	(6:1–8:11)
Righteousness Retained In Glorification	(8:12–39)
Righteousness Rejected By Non–Elect Israel	(9:1–11:36)
Righteousness Reproduced In A Converted Life	(12:1–16:27)

An Outline of the Epistle

Developed in a three–fold manner, each section is distinct—Doctrinal, Historical, Practical—and closes with a doxology. The following is a general outline of the epistle:

Introduction (1:1–17)

A. Salutation	(v. 1–7)
1. Personal Consecration	(v. 1)
a. A marked servitude	(v. 1a)
b. A missionary spirit	(v. 1b)
c. A marvelous separation	(v. 1c)
2. Gospel Manifestation	(v. 1–6)
a. Promised by the prophets in the OT	(v. 2a)
b. Inscripturated by the Spirit	(v. 2b)
c. Fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ	(v. 3–6)
3. Proper Salutation	(v. 7)
a. The readers	(v. 7a)
b. The request	(v. 7b)
B. Introduction	(v. 8–17)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Personal | (v. 8–15) |
| a. Supplication | (v. 8–10) |
| b. Anticipation | (v. 10–13) |
| c. Evangelization | (v. 14–15) |
| 2. Doctrinal | (v. 16–17) |
| a. The Gospel considered Dynamically | (v. 16a) |
| b. The Gospel considered Historically | (v. 16b) |
| c. The Gospel considered Morally | (v. 17a) |
| d. The Gospel considered Practically | (v. 17b) |

Part I: Doctrinal (1:18–8:39)

A. Condemnation (1:18–3:20)

Gospel righteousness absolutely needed by man and unattainable. Every approach that man might attempt is utterly cut off, for it is “by faith from start to finish.”¹⁷⁹ Sinful humanity is found to be:

- Ethically Condemned (1:18)
- Intellectually Condemned (1:19–20)
- Historically Condemned (1:21)
- Religiously Condemned (1:21–25)
- Morally Condemned (1:26–31)
- Willfully Condemned. (1:32)
- Racially Condemned (2: 1–3:9)
- Universally Condemned (3:9–18)
- Legally Condemned (3:19–20)

The Analysis is Four-Fold:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. The Moral History of Human Depravity | (1:18–32) |
| a) Man’s Responsibility to God | (1:18–20) |
| (1) Sin Is Deliberate | (1:18) |
| (2) Sin Is Inexcusable | (1:20) |
| b) Man’s Rejection of God | (1:21–23) |
| (1) Sin Is Theological | (1:21–23) |
| (2) Sin Is Judgmental | (1:21–23) |
| c) Man’s Reprobation by God | (1:24–32) |
| (1) Immorality and Idolatry | (1: 24–25) |
| (2) Immorality—Homosexuality | (1: 26–27) |
| (3) Immorality—Human Depravity | (1: 28–32) |

¹⁷⁹ ...ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν... ἐκ (gen.) denotes the source, and εἰς (acc.) the extent of the action.

- 2. A Logical Essay on Human Depravity (2:1–3:9)
 - a) The Jew and Divine Judgment (2:1–16)
 - (1) The Judgment of God Is According To Truth (2:2)
 - (2) The Judgment of God Is Universal (2:3)
 - (3) The Judgment of God Is Righteous (2:5)
 - (4) The Judgment of God is according to Works (2:6)
 - (5) The Judgment of God is without Respect of Persons (2:11)
 - (6) The Judgment of God is According to the Gospel (2:16)
 - b) The Jew and a Definite Revelation (2:17–29)
 - [An Introverted Outline of 2:17–29]
 - a) Being a Jew—A Spiritual Pride (2:17)
 - b) Jewish Claims to Privilege (2:17–18)
 - c) Jewish Claims to Superiority (2:19–20)
 - c) Jewish Claims to Superiority Refuted (2:21–22)
 - b) Jewish Claims to Privilege Refuted (2:23–24)
 - a) Being a Jew—A Spiritual Principle (2:25–29)
 - c) The Jew and a Distinct Advantage (3:1–8)
 - (1) The First Objection and Answer (3:1–2)
 - (2) The Second Objection and Answer (3:3–4)
 - (3) The Third Objection and Answer (3:5–8)
- 3. A Pictorial Anatomy of Human Depravity (3:9–18)
 - a) Human Depravity is Universal (3:9–12)
 - b) Human Depravity is Total (3:13–18)
- 4. The Legal Futility of Human Depravity (3:19–20)
 - a) The Authority of the Law (3:19a)
 - b) The Jurisdiction of the Law (3:19b)
 - c) The Condemnation of the Law (3:20a)
 - d) The Purpose of the Law (3:20b)

B. Justification ¹⁸⁰	(3:21–5:21)
1. The Analysis of Justification by Faith	(3:21–31)
a. The Revelation of the Divine Method of Justifying the Sinner	(3:21–26)
(1) The Great Transition	(3:21–23)
(a) The Revelation of a Gospel– righteousness	(3:21a)
(b) The Attestation of a Gospel– righteousness	(3:21b)
(c) The Operation of a Gospel– righteousness	(3:22a)
(d) The Non–distinction in a Gospel–righteousness	(3:22b–23)
(2) The Great Exposition	(3:24–26)
(a) Justification—A <i>Revelation</i> of its principle and means	(3:24)
(b) Justification—An <i>Explanation</i> of its propitiatory method	(3:25a)
(c) Justification—A <i>Declaration</i> of its purpose and meaning	(3:25b–26)
b. The Results of the Divine Method of Justifying the Sinner	(3:27–31).
(1) All boasting Excluded	(3:27–28)
(2) All distinctions Abolished	(3:29–30)
(3) The Law Established	(3:31)
2. The Apology for Justification by Faith	(4:1–25)
a) Justification <i>is</i> by Faith	(4:1–3)
b) Justification <i>is not</i> by Works	(4:4–8)
c) Justification <i>is not</i> by Circumcision	(4:9–12)
b) Justification <i>is not</i> by Law	(4:13–17)
a) Justification <i>is</i> by Faith	(4:18–25)

¹⁸⁰ δίκαιος, “righteous;” δικαίωσις, “justification,” or declaring righteous or just. Justification is a forensic or legal term. It is the *act* of God as judge pronouncing the sinner just or righteous through faith in Jesus Christ and claiming his imputed righteousness. It is not an experience or a process. It is more than mere pardon or forgiveness. Divine justification necessarily includes forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration to Divine favor.

[To fill in the outline, the format is re-arranged]

- a. Justification is by Faith (4:1–3)
- b. Justification is Not by Works (4:4–8)
 - 1. Abraham—A Positive Illustration (4:1–5)
 - 2. David—A Negative Illustration (4:6–8)
- c. Justification is Not by Circumcision (4:9–12)
 - 1. The Question—Is Justification an exclusive Jewish Privilege? (4:9)
 - 2. The Answer—Abraham was Justified by Faith as an Uncircumcised Gentile (4:10)
 - 3. The Implications—Devastating to Jewish Religious Pride and Security (4:11–12)
- d. Justification is Not by Law (4:13–17)
 - 1. Negative—The Promise and the Principle of Law—Works (4:13–15)
 - 2. Positive—The Promise and Faith—the Principle of Grace (4:16–17)
- e. Justification is by Faith (4:17–25)
 - 1. The Argument—The Faith of Abraham Described (4:17–22)
 - 2. The Application—The Faith of Abraham Applied (4:23–25)
- 3. The Assurance of Justification by Faith (5:1–21)
 - a. Assurance: Logical and Experiential (5:1–11)
 - 1. The Scope of Justification by Faith (5:1–2)
 - (a) A Past Fact (5:1a)
 - (b) A Present Reality (5:1b)
 - (c) A Present Privilege (5:1c–2a)
 - (d) A Future Hope (5:2b)
 - 2. The Strength of Justification by Faith (5:3–5)
 - (a) Perception, or the Development of Perseverance (5:3)
 - (b) Maturation, or the Development of Character (5:4a)
 - (c) Anticipation, or the Strengthening of Hope (5:4b)
 - (d) Confirmation, or the Assurance of Divine Love (5:5)
 - 3. The Sphere of Justification by Faith (5:5–11)
 - (a) Divine Love—Proof for the Present (5:5–8)

(1) The Copiousness of this Divine Love	(5:5)
(2) The Character of this Divine Love	(5:6–8a)
(3) The Constancy of this Divine Love	(5:8a)
(b) Divine Love—Assurance for the Future	(5:9–11)
(1) The Completeness of this Divine Love	(5:9)
(2) The Confidence of this Divine Love	(5:10–11)
b. Assurance: Logical and Positional	(5:12–21)
1. The Condemnation in Adam	(5:12–14)
(a) The Proposition	(5:12)
(b) The Proof	(5:13–14)
2. The Contrast Between Adam and Christ	(5:15–17)
(a) A Contrast of Nature	(5:15)
(b) A Contrast of Result	(5:16)
(c) A Contrast of Quality	(5:17)
3. The Comparison Between Adam and Christ	(5:18–19)
4. The Consideration of the Law	(5:20)
5. The Conclusion or Reign of Grace	(5:20–21)
(a) An Explanation of this Glorious Grace	(5:20)
(b) An Exposition of this Glorious Grace	(5:21)
C. Sanctification	(6:1–8:11)
Considered under the general heading of holiness of life:	
1. The Principle of Holiness	(6:1–11)
2. The Practice of Holiness	(6:12–7:6)
3. The Preventive of Holiness	(7:7–8:4)
4. The Power of Holiness	(8:1–16)
[Or, considered as to the various warnings in this section]	
1. A Warning against Antinomianism	(6:1–23)
a. The Question concerning <i>living in sin</i> answered	(6:1–14)
1. The Question	(6:1)
2. The Declaration	(6:2)

- 3. The Explanation (6:3–10)
 - 4. The Application (6:11)
 - 5. The Exhortation (6:12–13)
 - 6. The Conclusion (6:14)
 - b. The Question concerning *committing acts of sin* answered (6:15–23)
 - 1. The Question (6:15)
 - 2. The Generalization (6:16)
 - 3. The Application (6:17–18)
 - 4. The Exhortation (6:19)
 - 5. The Explanation (6:20–23)
 - 2. A Warning against Legalism (7:1–8:4)
 - a. Our relation to the Law (7:1–6)
 - 1. The Generalization (7:1)
 - 2. The Illustration (7:2–3)
 - 3. The Application (7:4–6)
 - b. A vindication of the Law (7:7–13)
 - 1. Sin is not Identical with the Law (7:7)
 - 2. Sin and the Nature of the Law (7:8)
 - 3. Sin and the Penalty of the Law (7:9–11)
 - 4. Sin is Revealed by the Law (7:12–13)
 - c. Sanctification and the Law (7:14–8:4)
 - 1. The Inward Struggle: A Portrait of Conflict (7:14–20)
 - 2. The Inward Struggle: Its Principles of Contradiction (7:21–25)
 - 3. The Inward Struggle: The Power of Consistence (8:1–4)
 - 3. A Warning against Presumption (8:5–11)
 - a. A contrast of States: Spiritual or Carnal (8:5–7)
 - b. A contrast of Spheres: Life or Death (8:8–11)
- [Or, to further outline the transition from present sanctification to future glorification]
- a. The Present Deliverance from the Penalty of Sin (8:1–2)
 - b. The Positive Deliverance from the Power of Sin (8:3–9)
 - c. The Projected Deliverance from the Presence of Sin (8:10–11)
 - d. The Powerful Determination to Mortify Sin (8:12–16)

- D. Glorification (8:12-39)
 - 1. The Believer's Awareness of Coming Glory (8:12-17)
 - a. The Consecration of Spiritual Sonship (8:12-13)
 - b. The Characteristic of Spiritual Sonship (8:14)
 - c. The Confidence of Spiritual Sonship (8:15)
 - d. The Confirmation of Spiritual Sonship (8:16-17)
 - 2. The Believer's Anticipation of Coming Glory (8:18-27)
 - a. The Present Affliction of the Believer (8:17-18)
 - b. The Promised Emancipation of the Believer (8:19-25)
 - c. The Present Intercession for the Believer (8:26-27)
 - 3. The Believer's Assurance of Coming Glory (8:28-30)
 - a. The Proposition, or Unshakable Conviction (8:28)
 - b. The Proof, or Undeniable Affirmation (8:29-30)
- E. The Closing Doxology (8:31-39)
 - 1. The Immutability of Divine Love (8:28-30)
 - 2. The Inexhaustibility of Divine Love (8:31-32)
 - 3. The Indivisibility of Divine Love (8:33-34)
 - 4. The Invincibility of Divine Love (8:35-39)

Part II: Historical (9:1-11:36)

- A. Personal Sincerity (9:1-5)
 - 1. The Sincerity of Paul (9:1-2)
 - 2. The Extremity of Paul (9:2-3)
 - 3. The Rationality of Paul (9:4-5)
- B. Divine Sovereignty (9:6-29)
 - a) The Promise of God: Immutable (9:6-9)
 - b) The Principle of Election: unconditional (9:10-13)
 - b) The Prerogative of Election: unquestionable (9:14-23)
 - a) The People of God: Spiritual (9:24-29)

[To fill in the outline, the format is re-arranged]

 - 1. The Promise of God-Immutable (9:6-9)
 - a. The Objection Anticipated (9:6)
 - b. The Objection Answered (9:6-9)
 - 2. The Principle of Election-Unconditional (9:10-13)
 - a. Election is Not Based on Foreseen Merit (9:10-12)
 - b. Election is Personal, not merely National (9:13)
 - 3. The Prerogative of Election-Unquestionable (9:14-23)
 - a. God Is Unrighteous (9:14-18)

b. God Is Unkind	(9:19–21)
4. The People of God–Spiritual	(9:24–29)
a. The Doctrinal Proposition	(9:22–24)
b. The Scriptural Principle	(9:25–29)
C. Human Responsibility	(9:30–10:21)
1. The Failure of Israel: Disobedience and Ignorance	(9:30–10:4)
a. The Reason for Israel’s Failure	(9:30–33)
b. The Results of Israel’s Failure	(10:1–3)
c. The Reality of Israel’s Failure	(10:4)
2. The Failure of Israel: Obedience of Faith	(10:5–15)
a. Righteousness by Faith: Its Necessity	(10:5)
b. Righteousness by Faith: Its Proximity	(10:6–10)
(1) Faith–Righteousness Personified	(v. 6–8)
(2) Faith–Righteousness Exemplified	(v. 9–10)
c. Righteousness by Faith: Its Security	(10:11)
d. Righteousness by Faith: Its Universality	(10:11–13)
e. Righteousness by Faith: Its Publicity	(10:14–15)
3. The Failure of Israel: Unbelief and Disobedience	(10:16–21)
a. The Universality of the Gospel	(10:16–18)
b. The Culpability of Unbelief	(10:19–21)
D. Israel’s Destiny	(11:1–32)
1. Israel’s Rejection not Total as to Number	(11:1–10)
a. The Question Asked	(11:1)
b. The Question Answered	(11:1–10)
2. Israel’s Rejection not Final as to Time	(11:11–32)
a. The Question Asked	(11:11)
b. The Question Answered	(11:11–32)
E. Second Doxology	(11:33–36)
1. The Inscrutability of the Divine Counsel	(11:33–35)
2. The Infinity of the Divine Character	(11:36)
Part III: Practical (12:1–16:20)	
A. The Believer’s spiritual obligation– Consecration	(12:1–2)
1. Consecration or Holiness in Principle	(12:1)
2. Transformation or Holiness in Practice	(12:2)

- B. The Believer's Congregational obligation-
Church** (12:3-13)
1. The Virtues and Graces of our Labor (12:3-8)
 - a. Humility (12:3-5)
 - b. Fidelity (12:6-8a)
 2. The Virtues and Graces of our Love (12:9-13)
 - a. Sincerity (12:8b-9a)
 - b. Purity (12:9b)
 - c. Impartiality (12:10)
 - d. Spirituality (12:11-12)
 - e. Generosity (12:13a)
 - f. Hospitality (12:13b)
- C. The Believer's social obligation-Community** (12:14-21)
1. Attitude toward the community (12:14-15)
 2. Associations with the community (12:16-18)
 3. Actions toward the community (12:19-21)
- D. The Believer's Civil obligation-Citizenship** (13:1-14)
- a) Our Attitude as Christians (13:1-5)
 - b) Our Allegiance as Christians (13:6-7)
 - b) Our Associations as Christians (13:8-10)
 - a) Our Actions as Christians (13:11-14)
- E. The Believer's ethical obligation-Conscience** (14:1-15:13)
1. Our Convictions: Christ is our Judge (14:1-12)
 2. Our Conscience: Faith is our Principle (14:13-23)
 3. Our Consideration: Christ is our Example (15:1-13)
- F. The Believer's evangelical obligation-Calling** (15:14-33)
1. The Confidence of Paul (15:14)
 2. The Calling of Paul (15:15-17)
 3. The Claim of Paul (15:18-23)
 4. The Contemplation of Paul (15:24)
 5. The Concern of Paul (15:25-33)
- G. The Believer's mutual obligation-Charity** (16:1-16)
- a) Love in Association (16:1)
 - b) Love in Action (16:2)
 - b) Love in Appreciation (16:2)
 - a) Love in Association (16:3-16)
- H. The Believer's doctrinal obligation-Caution** (16:17-19)
1. The Duty in Doctrinal Danger (16:17)

2. The Danger of Doctrinal Deception	(16:18)
3. The Duty of Doctrinal Discernment	(16:19)
I. Conclusion	(16:20-24)
The Closing Doxology	(16:25-27)
The Theological Method	
The Method Discussed	

The theological approach seeks to arrive at the theological teaching of a given passage or of a given aspect of doctrine in an inclusive and consistent manner. We have already given an example of this in our analysis and exegesis of Romans 6 concerning the believer's union with Christ.

The Bible is not a systematic theology; it is truth in the context of redemptive history, doctrinal and practical epistles, poetry and prophecy. Doctrinal truth must be extracted from Scripture by skillful study (2 Tim. 2:15). To do this consistently, the "analogy of faith," (the total teaching of Scripture as it bears upon any one aspect of Divine truth) must be considered.

This may be done by consulting a Bible Concordance and works on Biblical, Historical and Systematic Theology. The concordance will list every occurrence of the given doctrinal term. Each reference must be closely studied in its context with attention given to grammar and syntax (exegesis). When all the relevant Scriptures are then studied, analyzed and systematized, works on Biblical, Historical and Systematic Theology will define the historical development and nuances of the given doctrine, its relation to other aspects of doctrinal truth, and possibly list related Scriptures and aspects of truth one might otherwise miss.

The process is completed when one possesses an inclusive (from the whole of Scripture as opposed to a proof-text approach), consistent (non-contradictory) and biblical (often in contrast to traditional) grasp of the given doctrine. The student might even find at times that he must "correct" some of his theological works because of his own personal study of the Word and their bias or inadequacy.

The Method Illustrated
A Suggested Process

The process of pursuing a doctrinal or theological study may be generally outlined as follows:

1. Choose the doctrinal or theological topic to be studied. The student must remember that he is reverently dealing with God's Word, and that he seeking to understand truth, not pursue a personal bias or agenda, which might blind him to truth. He has to remember that every person has his own inherent or learned bias, with which he must come to terms in the light of Divine truth.
2. Through the use of a Bible concordance, list all the biblical references where the given doctrine is expounded or mentioned. If the student uses *Strong's Concordance*, he ought to note the numbering system to mark any use of synonymous terms and search their roots in the Hebrew-to-English or Greek-to-English dictionaries in the back sections of the Concordance. He should, if possible, then consult a Hebrew or Greek concordance to be certain that he has noted and studied each occurrence. It is often the case that one English word may be used for a variety of Hebrew or Greek terms. This will certainly affect the breadth of study and open other avenues of thought and point to other passages of Scripture.
3. Study each occurrence, giving attention to both the larger and the more immediate context. If necessary, study the syntax [exegete the grammatical context] so that the highest accuracy of translation and interpretation can be obtained. This is the point at which Hebrew or Greek lexicons and other linguistic aids ought to be utilized. Such study will make certain that all relevant passages are considered, the full significance of any relevant terms have been explored, and all the nuances of the given language and passage (emphatic

constructions, conditional sentences, idioms, etc.) have been studied. If any critical commentaries are consulted, the student must remember to do his own work first. In this way, he will experience some growth in knowledge and skill, and also will be better able to detect any prejudice or bias that exists in the thinking of the commentator. It is not uncommon to “correct” the commentators on rare occasions.

4. Categorize the biblical references into those passages which are major and those which are secondary. Remember that a strategic aspect of truth may be contained in a scriptural context as a secondary thought. Thus, a passage which may not deal with a certain doctrine in a direct way may yet contain vital information. Note the significance of any strategic statement. One ought to be conscious of the principle of progressive revelation, and may also have to list the scriptural references as to the progressive revelation of a given doctrinal truth in Scripture.
5. Seek to formulate a concise doctrinal statement of the biblical teaching, making sub-points concerning any subsequent issues or seeming contradictions, if necessary.
6. Study the given doctrinal topic in light of the analogy of faith, i.e., the inclusive, non-contradictory teaching of Scripture. Write down any questions that come to mind or any seeming contradictions that need to be reconciled.
7. Consult standard works, such as Bible and theological dictionaries, and also works in Biblical, Historical and Systematic Theology. Several comments are necessary:
 - Because the student has already done the basic scriptural and linguistic work, he is ready to intelligently consult the works of others without being unduly swayed. Independent Bible study should be prior to studying the works of others.

- Biblical Theology, because it has its roots in the biblical text, and also is concerned with progressive revelation, the personal style and emphasis of the human authors, may open avenues of study previously unexplored. The very point of the study is to be as thorough as possible.
 - Historical Theology may prove essential, as there is a distinct development of doctrinal truth from the close of the scriptural canon to the present time. Almost every aspect of biblical truth has been discussed, debated, rejected by some and defended by others. Thus, each doctrine may have a history which cannot be ignored without significant loss to the student of Scripture.
 - Systematic Theology is essential, as it may point to aspects of the doctrine hitherto overlooked or not considered. It may also deal with related passages of Scripture not yet considered. Finally, it will also usually seek to harmonize any seeming contradictory statements in Scripture. The student will profit from being exposed to all the various arguments on a given subject.
8. Having fully studied the given doctrinal subject biblically, linguistically, historically and theologically, the student ought to be able to define, describe and outline the given doctrinal teaching with the appropriate scriptural references. If this method were followed, how much less error and heresy would exist among well-meaning but ill-informed ministers, teachers and professing Christians!

Five Theological Illustrations

Five theological topics are considered to illustrate this method and demonstrate that a true biblical-theological study may produce a distinctly different result and understanding than traditional teaching: first, the doctrine of the “Baptism of the

Holy Spirit;” second, the doctrine of “Spiritual Adoption;” third, the question of the relevancy of the Moral Law for today, fourth, an “Expository–Doctrinal study of Justification by Faith.” Finally, a doctrinal–theological study of the doctrine of justification as derived from Scripture and considered in the light of doctrinal and historical controversies. Some of these illustrations are presented as challenges to traditionally–accepted teaching.

The Baptism of The Holy Spirit

Various Views

Traditionally among Evangelical, Fundamentalist and even some Reformed theologians, the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” is an act of the Spirit of God at conversion placing the individual believer positionally “in Christ,” or “baptizing him into the [mystical] body of Christ,” i.e., into the “universal, invisible Church.” Such teaching stands presupposed and almost unopposed, especially in Evangelical and Fundamentalist [Dispensational] Christianity. This act is taken to be non–experimental, individual and received by faith. The error of the Evangelicals and Fundamentalists is that the truth has been reversed, personalized and historically misplaced.

The Charismatics teach this “baptism” is an experience of the fullness, power and reception of the very Person of the Holy Spirit. It becomes experimentally a “second work of grace,” evidenced by “speaking in tongues,” and at times a manifestation of various other physical and emotional phenomena. The error of the Charismatics stems, first, from seeking as a present, individual experience, an event ordained by God for his church.

Second, because of their Pelagian view of salvation and man’s “free will,” they hold that when one is “saved,” he receives the Lord Jesus Christ, but he may yet lose this “salvation.” Thus, he must be both “saved and sanctified,” i.e., he must also receive the Person and power of the Holy Spirit in a distinct, “second work of grace” evidenced by tongues or other sensual phenomena.

Others have used this terminology of “baptism” to describe a fullness, anointing, or empowering of the Holy Spirit for a given ministry or event. The error of this last group is founded upon confusing the fullness or anointing of the Spirit with the New Testament event of the Spirit’s baptism. The biblical truth of the “baptism” in or with the Spirit connotes a once-for-all act, whereas fillings of the Spirit may be repeated (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 7:55; 9:17; 13:9, 52; Eph. 5:18).

The fallacies of these common, traditional and Pentecostal views are exposed when the Scriptures are allowed to speak for themselves without tradition or prejudice. Despite their diversity, the preceding views have two or three common elements: they hold that the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” is for the individual believer, is in no way directly associated with the church, and is an act that the Holy Spirit performs with respect to Christ.

There is another view, a view which is essentially non-personal, historical, and in complete harmony with the scriptural teaching concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This view holds the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was performed by the Lord Jesus Christ once to credential the institution of the New Testament church.

Tradition, Methodology and Problem Passages

To properly and scripturally understand “the baptism of [in or with] the Holy Spirit,” the following must be carefully noted:

- The passages which distinctly and directly teach this doctrine are six in number: Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:15–17. Following consistent hermeneutical principles, such as the perspicuity of Scripture and the study of parallel passages wherein the clearer passages explain the more obscure, the following must be concluded: first, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who baptizes in or with the Holy Spirit, and *not* the Holy Spirit who baptizes into Christ. Second, this “baptism of the Spirit” took place at Pentecost upon the already-existent church to mark it out as the God-ordained institution for

this gospel economy (Jn. 20:22; Acts 1:4–5; 2:1–4, 16–21, 33–36).¹⁸¹

- The confusion results from the importation of other passages into the doctrine, i.e., Rom. 6:3–5; 1 Cor. 12:13 and Col. 2:11–12. Rom. 6:3–5 and Col. 2:11–12 speak in figurative language of the believer’s union with Christ under the symbolism of a “baptism” or spiritual identification. Using “baptism” in such a figurative sense was common in secular Greek¹⁸² and also finds biblical warrant. Our Lord told his disciples that he had a “baptism” to be “baptized with,” i.e., his full and complete identification with sin, suffering and death (Mk. 10:35–40; Lk. 12:50). Paul states that Israel was identified with Moses as a distinct people in the glorious cloud and in the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:1–4).
- 1 Cor. 12:13 deserves careful investigation. It is the fulcrum by which the “baptism of [in or with] the Spirit” has been reversed through a process of *eisegesis*. The words “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...” are said to refer to each individual believer upon his conversion being “baptized into the body of Christ.” But these words may rightly be translated, “For in one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body...”¹⁸³ referring to the church as an institution, and the occasion being Pentecost and the identification of the church as the

¹⁸¹ At the initiation of every new God–ordained institution, God credentialed it with sensual [visible and audible] tokens or symbols of his presence and power, e.g., the Tabernacle (Ex. 40) and Solomon’s Temple (1 Kgs. 8:10–11).

¹⁸² The figurative use of βαπτίζειν (*baptizein*, inf., vb. or βαπτίσμα (*baptisma*, n.) to denote a change of identity or identity with someone or thing was fairly common.

¹⁸³ καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν (*kai gar en heni pneumatic hēmeis pantes eis hen sōma ebaptisthēmen*), “For in one spirit have we all been baptized [at a point or event],” aor. pass.

God-ordained institution for this gospel economy, not an individual reality.

- The alleged occasions of further “baptisms of the Spirit” (Acts 8:14–17; 10:44–48; 19:1–7¹⁸⁴) were occasions when the reception of the Holy Spirit was sensually manifest as a sign to those involved that God had ordained the given work or ministry.

It is thus seen how tradition may obscure the very clear teaching of Scripture, and how a proper biblical-theological study can be pursued using the Bible and a concordance, with some necessary references to the original languages. In cases where the traditional teaching has become almost sacrosanct, theological works may prove to be of little help. Thus, it is always profitable to do one’s own biblical work as thoroughly as possible.

Spiritual Adoption

Tradition and the Redemptive Purpose

The doctrine of the believer’s spiritual adoption is grounded in five scriptural statements: Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4;¹⁸⁵ Gal. 4:5 and Eph. 1:5. The essential teaching—the one most often found in theological works—is that when we are saved or converted, we are adopted into the family of God. We become God’s spiritual children through faith in Jesus Christ and fellow-heirs by virtue of our union with him (Rom. 8:16–17).

¹⁸⁴ Note that Paul asked in Acts 19:2, “Did ye receive the Holy Ghost *when* ye believed?” (Εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες; *Ei pneuma hagion elabete pisteusantes?*), aor. vb. and aor. ptc., emph. the same point in time. Further, as John the Baptist preached concerning the Baptism in or with the Holy Spirit, these disciples would have known of him and his ministry had they heard John the Baptist preach. They had evidently heard someone else who had ignorantly perpetuated John’s ministry—probably Apollos (Acts 18:24–28)—and so had not embraced the full truth of the gospel.

¹⁸⁵ Rom. 9:4 refers to the adoption of Israel as the covenant people of God. This passage, though not directly related to believers, yet must be included in the idea of Divine adoption.

The doctrine of soteriology [salvation] may be logically and chronologically summarized and represented as follows:¹⁸⁶

- *Election*. Eph. 1:4. Every believer was chosen in [union with] Christ before the foundation of the world. This election was personal and based purely on free and sovereign grace [Divine prerogative], Rom. 9:11.
- *Predestination*. Rom. 8:29–30; Eph. 1:5, 11. Predestination deals with the ultimate purpose for which the believer has been chosen. God has infallibly purposed to conform his elect into the image of his Son—a holy, redeemed people.
- *Covenant Redemption*. Our redemption was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ through his active and passive obedience (Heb. 9:12). This accomplished redemption or “finished work” of Christ is applied to us by the Holy Spirit, beginning with effectual calling and infallibly culminating in our glorification (Rom. 8:30–39).
- *Effectual Calling*. Jn. 6:37, 44; Acts 2:39; Rom. 8:30; Col. 1:12–13. In time and experience, God calls his elect to himself through the impartation of spiritual life, enabling them to savingly receive and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ through the message of the gospel.
- *Regeneration*. Jn. 3:3–8; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23. The quickening aspect of this effectual call is regeneration, which consists in: the impartation of Divine life (Eph. 2:4–5), the breaking of the reigning power of sin (Rom. 6:1–14), the re-creation of the image of God anew in principle in righteousness, holiness of the truth and knowledge (Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:9–10); a change in disposition

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Rom. 8:29–31; Eph. 1:3–14; Jn. 3:3–8; Eph. 2:1–10; Rom. 3:21–5:11. Cf. a basic survey of soteriology in C. H. Spurgeon, *Baptist Catechism*, Questions 19–20, 28–37, 69–70; Ernest F. Kevan, *Salvation*. Eng: Evangelical Press, 1979 reprint. 128 pp.; John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1970 reprint. 192 pp.

toward God and his truth (Rom. 8:7–8), and the removal of satanic blindness (2 Cor. 4:3–6).

- *Conversion.* Acts 17:30; Eph. 2:4–5, 8–10. Conversion consists of saving faith [God-given trust and reliance] and repentance [a change of mind]. The person enters into a life characterized by both belief and repentance.
- *Justification.* Rom. 4:1–7; 5:1–21. God reckons the believing sinner just or right in his sight through the imputation of the very righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- *Adoption.* Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5. Adoption pertains to believers being brought into God’s family (and also, as we shall note, it points to our ultimate salvation in glory).
- *Sanctification.* Rom. 5:12–8:27. As justification is righteousness imputed, so sanctification [biblical holiness] is righteousness imparted by the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s experience. The believer is to enliven this grace and mortify sin through the God-appointed means.
- *Glorification.* Rom. 8:30. The culmination of redemption and salvation is to be conformed to the image of God’s Son. This is to be finalized in glory (Rom. 8:29–30; 1 Jn. 3:1–4).

To this summarization most sound theological works will agree, as will most Reformed or Calvinistic Bible students and scholars. However, there is often some misunderstanding with regard to spiritual adoption because of a failure to properly understand the meaning of the biblical term “Adoption.”

The English derives from the Latin *adoptio*, “a taking as a child,” and usually refers theologically to the act of God in bringing the believer into the family of God through [experiential] union with Christ (Rom. 8:14–17; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). Because we have taken this term and its significance from the Latin rather than the Greek, and have read into it a more

modern idea, we might become limited in our thinking and miss the true eschatological significance of Paul's inspired statements in Rom. 8:23 and Eph. 1:5.

Adoption and the Resurrection

The Gk. term is υιοθεσία (*huiiothesia*, “to place as a son”), and is of a broad significance. It refers not only to children adopted into the family, but also to natural or blood-related sons. (There is a distinction to be made at times between τέκνον (*teknon*), a child, one born into the family, and υἱός (*huios*), a son. This latter term emphasizes the dignity, standing and character of the relationship).

When a son (adopted or blood-related) reached his manhood, the father, in a public ceremony, would take his son's boyhood toga [outer garment] off and replace it with the *toga virilis*, or toga of manhood, which was white. This signaled that the son was then both a full heir and had entered into his full citizenship. We will be publicly proclaimed as to who and what we are at the resurrection and the glorification of our bodies.¹⁸⁷

Thus, the term “adoption” in this biblical context (Rom. 8:23; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5) refers to the ultimate glorification of the physical body and the finality of the believer's redemption. Although we even now possess the “Spirit of adoption” (the indwelling Spirit of God who witnesses to our sonship and works out its characteristics by grace, Cf. Rom. 6:4–5, 14; 8:1–16), and so a present sense of our sonship and high calling, we will one day stand glorified and enter into the fullness of our redemptive or heavenly citizenship at our glorification. “We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” It will finally appear what we truly are—the sons of God in public manifestation (1 Jn. 3:1–3).

This would be entirely missed or lost unless one possessed a proper knowledge of the Greek term υιοθεσία (*huiiothesia*), and

¹⁸⁷ See the discussion in Donald G. Barnhouse, *God's Heirs, Romans* Vol. 7, pp. 90–92. Cf. also C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans* (ICC), I, p. 419.

of the Roman custom which Paul clearly had in mind in Eph. 1:5 and Rom. 8:23. Thus, these passages have a direct and distinct relation to the infallibility of the redemptive purpose and so of the believer's assurance of faith.

Is The Moral Law Relevant Today?

Some issues are often approached or settled in the context of one's doctrinal presuppositions, bias or prejudice, not from a thorough study of the Scriptures. We may simply note some aspect of biblical truth from the standpoint of our doctrinal system or personal prejudice and accept it, reject it, modify it, or consider it to be either true and significant or non-essential or non-applicable. This is often the case with a consideration of the relevancy of the Moral Law.

This study examines the various views of the Moral Law and through a series of statements and questions suggests a course of biblical study to obtain a consistent view—an example to illustrate principles for studying controversial issues.

Various Views and Their Assumptions

The following views demonstrate the strong and varied opinions which exist concerning the relevancy of the Moral Law—from Legalism to Antinomianism:¹⁸⁸

- Some hold the “Moral Law” to be co-extensive with the Decalogue [Ten Commandments]; others see the Decalogue as the epitome of the “Moral Law,” which actually includes all the moral teaching of Scripture. Some see the “Two Great Commandments” of Matt. 22:36–40 [love to God and neighbor] as the positive epitome of the Moral Law and the Decalogue as the more negative epitome of the Moral Law. Still others see the

¹⁸⁸ “Antinomianism,” lit: “against [the] law.” This term was first used by the Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther, as describing those who denied that the Moral Law was the standard for the believer's life. Thus, Antinomianism has been historically and theologically defined since the Sixteenth Century Reformation.

whole Mosaic institution as an indivisible “Law,” including the social, civil and dietary aspects. All evangelical Christians would hold that the sacrificial Levitical system, however, has been fulfilled in the Person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- While there are some who do not hold to the Moral Law as such, they admit that the commands of the Decalogue are mostly in force today, except possibly the commandment concerning the Sabbath Day. They know it is wrong—and has never been right—to indulge in idolatry, to dishonor one’s parents, to commit adultery, to steal, to lie, and to covet. They tend to see these commandments as God’s abiding principles or truths rather than God’s Moral Law.
- Dispensationalists view the Moral Law as non-applicable in the present era, and relegate it to the Jews of the Old Testament era, the “Dispensation of Law.” Christians are thought to be “not under the law but under grace,” and presently living in the “Dispensation of Grace.” Thus, Dispensationalism, as a hermeneutical approach, is necessarily and inherently antinomian in principle.
- “New Covenant Theology,” while seeking a position between Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism sees the Moral Law as a legal document given to national Israel. It has no relation to the Christian, for the Law was abrogated in Christ. This is simply Dispensational antinomianism redressed.
- Reformed Christians and historic Calvinists¹⁸⁹ view the Moral Law as not only relevant, but the God-ordained standard for all mankind, saved and unsaved. It is held to be the highest Law for the individual, the family, the

¹⁸⁹ This view has been termed “neo-Calvinism,” deriving from Abraham Kuyper and others in recent history, but Calvin himself viewed the Moral Law as Divine Law for and over all mankind.

church, the community, and the nation. The Moral Law is to speak with final authority to every “law–sphere” of life: spiritual, religious, moral, ethical, social and political. The Moral Law is the expression of the Divine character as absolutely righteous, and it is this Law that will be the standard for all mankind on the final day of judgment.

- Some hold strongly to the Moral Law as the instrument of condemnation for the unbeliever and the standard for the believer, but hesitate to state that the Moral Law should be applied to all of human society, i.e., as the standard for the religious, social, civil and political spheres.
- Extreme legalists view law–keeping as the means to salvation by human effort or works. Many who are “legalistic” tend to mix grace and law, and thus often confuse self–righteousness with an imputed righteousness.
- Some Antinomians hold that the Moral Law was abrogated in the redemptive work of Christ and is now completely irrelevant. Other Antinomians teach that the Moral Law still applies to the sinner as an instrument of condemnation, but not to the Christian, who is under “Christ’s law of love.” Many Antinomians, in rejecting the Moral Law, simply substitute their own “law,” a system of “do’s” and “don’ts” which is often very arbitrary or contradictory, by which they determine everyone’s spiritual state and spirituality.¹⁹⁰ They illustrate that antinomianism inevitably leads to legalism.

Thus, when approaching such a controversial subject, in which almost every view seems to have both positive and

¹⁹⁰ Antinomianism and legalism are but two sides of one issue. When one denies the Moral Law, he inevitably substitutes a “law” of his own—a “law” that is usually without grace.

contradictory or negative aspects when held to Scripture, how does one remain consistent with the Word of God?

A Consistent and Thorough Course of Study

By using a series of statements and questions, a suggested course of study follows, which ought to give sufficient direction and guidance for the serious Bible student:

First, by reading through the Scriptures with the help of a Concordance, list all relevant references to “law” in Scripture, i.e., all the passages which might deal with the subject of the “Moral Law.” Make at least three lists: (1) those passages that are directly related to the Decalogue, in both the Old and New Testaments, (2) those passages that are indirectly related and might help in interpretation, and (3) those passages that are questionable. Note that often a reference must be studied in both its immediate and larger context to adequately understand its significance.

Second, study the passages that are directly related to the Decalogue, writing down what observations are pertinent. Then deal with the passages indirectly related and use them to substantiate the direct references. Look again at the questionable references and do the same, if applicable. Then divide the study into Old Testament and New Testament references. The following questions need to be answered:

- What portions of the Mosaic Law have been fulfilled or are no longer relevant? Is it consistent to divide the Mosaic Law into the categories of Moral Law, Ceremonial Law and Civil Law? If so, then how and in what way are those portions no longer applicable? If such a division is not consistent, then, again, what is retained that was not fulfilled through the redemptive work of our Lord?
- Are any of the Commandments of the Decalogue reiterated in the New Testament? If so, then how and in what context? This is extremely important, as the New

Testament sheds much light on the Old, especially in the context of progressive revelation.

- What is the exact nature of the Decalogue? Are these Commandments limited to what is literally written, or are they examples of “case law,” i.e., do they represent particular instances of greater, more pervasive principles? E.g., do the commandments forbidding adultery and murder only forbid the overt acts, or do they forbid anything and everything that tends toward such acts?
- What is the scope of the Moral Law? Is the Decalogue the Moral Law, or only an epitome of the Moral Law? Can the “Two Great Commandments” be an epitome of the Moral Law? Does the Moral Law encompass all the moral teachings of Scripture? If the Decalogue *is* the Moral Law, then on what level may we hold the moral teaching of our Lord and the inspired Apostles?
- Is “Christ’s Law” the same as the Moral Law? Explain Matt. 5:17 and the following verses. If not, then how does it differ in principle and effect?
- If the Moral Law is perpetuated in the New Testament, has there been a change of administration under the gospel economy or the “New Covenant” (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezk. 36:25–27; 2 Cor. 3:2–18)? Does such a change in administration nullify the Moral Law?
- What is the New Testament emphasis on the Moral Law? Is it to unbelievers an instrument of condemnation, and to believers the revelation of the Divine righteous character, or does it pertain to all mankind? If so, how? Cf. Rom. 2:12–16; 3:19–20; 7:7–14; 1 Tim. 1:8–11; 1 Jn. 3:4. Is there any segment of the human race that is separate from the Moral Law? If so, who are these? What is their moral standard?
- What is the witness of the New Testament teaching of our Lord (e.g., Matt. 5:17–29)? Did our Lord set himself against the Moral Law, or against the traditional teaching

of the Rabbis? What was the approach of the inspired Apostles to the Moral Law? Did any of them view it as in effect? Was it in effect for Christians? Did it apply in any way for all mankind?

- What is the force of the negative and positive aspects of the Moral Law? Does a negative commandment presuppose simply an avoidance, or does it imply a positive action? What is the significance of the statement by James that if one breaks one of the Commandments, he is guilty of all (Jas. 2:8–12)?
- What are the explicit and implicit examples of the Law? E.g., when the Apostle charged the Jews with murdering the Son of God (e.g., Acts 2:23; 3:15; 4:10; 7:51–53; 13:26–30), were they not implicitly applying the Law, and specifically the Sixth Commandment? Or was this a charge of murder apart from the implicit preaching of the Law?

Third, having defined the scope and nature of the Moral Law, noted its application in the Old Testament, and studied its reiteration and application in the New Testament, deal with the passages that might seem to contradict your conclusions. The following questions need to be answered:

- What are the New Testament references that are used to deny the present relevance and authority of the Moral Law? E.g., Jn. 13:34–35; Rom. 6:14; 7:1–6; 10:4; 13:8–10; 1 Cor. 9:19–22; the Galatian Epistle.
- What of the passages in which Law and grace or law and faith are set in juxtaposition. What are the issues? Do they pertain to salvation by grace through faith as opposed to salvation by works—a faith–righteousness vs. a law–righteousness—or do they teach that the Moral law has been abrogated?

- What is meant in Rom. 6:14, that believers “are not under the law but under grace”¹⁹¹? What is the significance of the anarth. terms “law” and “grace”? Can this statement be legitimately interpreted in a dispensational sense? If not, then what is the correct interpretation?
- What relation does the Moral Law have to justification? If the Moral Law has been abrogated in Christ, how would this relate to the present reality and necessity of justification by faith? By what standard is there condemnation against the sinner?
- In Rom. 7:1–6, what is the discontinuity between the illustration of marriage and the believer’s union with Christ? Are believers dead to the Law as an instrument of condemnation or a standard for sanctification? In Rom. 7:13–8:8, would it be correct to state that although the Moral Law is the standard for the believer’s sanctification (its demands for justification and sanctification have been met in Christ), it cannot sanctify, was never intended to sanctify, and that sanctification is through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit?
- What does Rom. 10:4 mean, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth?” What does the context demand? Cf. the word “for” and the preceding context. Rom. 9:30–10:4. What is the meaning and scope of the anarth. terms “end” and “law” as used here? Has the Law been abrogated in Christ? Is the subject justification before God? Is this limited to believers?
- In what sense is love the fulfilling of the Law? Does the Law in any sense necessarily and objectively define love?

¹⁹¹ Rom. 6:14, οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν. (*ou gar este hupo nomon alla upo charin*). What is the significance of the anarth. terms? It must be, within the context, a principle of mere outward command as opposed to a principle of inward grace.

What objective standard does Christian love have apart from the Law? Is there an objective standard or only a subjective standard? How are the words of our Lord in Jn. 13:34–35 to be understood? What is the significance of the word “new”? Can the words “...as I have loved you.” be epitomized into a consistent “law”? How does this compare to Matt. 22:36–40, and loving one’s neighbor as himself? What light does 1 Jn. 3:10–19 shed on the subject of love and Law?

- What is the significance of 1 Cor. 9:19–22? Does the Apostle consider himself to be apart from the Law of God when he states that he is “‘in-lawed’ to Christ?”¹⁹² What does he mean? Does he mean that in Christ he is no longer under the Moral Law, or does he mean that in Christ he is in the sphere of the Law, not as a sentence of condemnation, but as a moral standard? What does the context demand? Is he speaking about salvation, his standing in Christ, or his demeanor and behavior among the Gentiles? Is Paul’s concept of grace in union with Christ antinomian? Cf. the context of 1 Cor. 7:19–22 and Rom. 6:1–23.
- Is the subject of Galatians justification or sanctification, i.e., is the emphasis on salvation by grace and justification by faith as opposed to the works of the Law, or to the Christian’s life and the Law?

What is the meaning of “Law” in the Galatian epistle? Is there more than one meaning? What “Law” is referred to in 3:24? What is the significance of the verb “was” in

¹⁹² 1 Cor. 9:21, μὴ ὣν ἄνομος θεοῦ ἀλλ’ ἐννομος Χριστοῦ. (*mē ὄn anomos theou all’ ennomos Christō*).

3:24?¹⁹³ Why are there references to “circumcision,” both as to the party spirit of the Jews and to the rite itself (e.g., 2:3, 7, 8, 9, 12; 5:2, 3, 6, 11; 6:12, 13, 15) in Galatians? Do these imply only the Moral Law or the whole Mosaic institution as opposed to grace and the gospel? Are we freed from the Law or from the curse of the Law? Cf. 3:13. Is there an antinomian grace? What is meant by the phrase “fallen from grace” in Gal. 5:4?

Finally, the student is ready to search through the various works on Biblical, Historical and Systematic Theology to complete his study. The benefit of this procedure is: (1) He does not approach such works until he has thoroughly studied the issues himself from the Scriptures. Thus, he ought to be able to read doctrinal issues and arguments with a great degree of discernment. (2) He can better appreciate valid and consistent arguments and detect fallacious ones. (3) He is prepared to deal with any new biblical references that he has not already considered. (4) A historical study will trace the development of doctrine and controversies and their effects within Christianity. (5) He will be able to condense his thinking and deal precisely with the various issues.

An Expository–Doctrinal Study of Justification by Faith:
Romans 3:21–5:21

This study is an expansion of the analysis of the Epistle to the Romans considered under the Analytical method in the previous section.

We have called this an “expository–doctrinal study” because it combines both the expository method and the topical method in the context of doctrine. Rather than take the entire New Testament, we will take the most lengthy passage on the subject

¹⁹³ Gal. 3:24, ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν (*hōste ho nomos paidagōgos hēmōn gegonen eis Christon, hina ek pisteōs dikaiōthōmen*), “Wherefore the law a pedagogue became [“remains or continues to be,” perf.] unto Christ in order that out of faith we might be justified.”

of justification by faith, Romans 3:21–5:21, and approach it as an exposition. The exposition and development of the doctrine of justification by faith in this passage can then be supplemented by other passages and biblical aspects of the truth.

The first step: a general biblical study on the biblical teaching on justification with the use of a Bible and Concordance. Research the passages where such terms as “justification,” “justify,” “justified,” “righteous,” “righteousness,” etc., occur. Arrange the relevant passages into two lists, Old Testament and New Testament.

The second step: a synthetic approach and outline developed by reading and studying through the passage in its context,¹⁹⁴ outlining the text according to its subject, “justification,” to obtain the general development and flow of the Apostle’s argument. A synthetic study might yield the following:

- *The Analysis of Justification by Faith* (3:21–31). This is the doctrinal core of the teaching. The language and argument are preeminently theological. The apostle is working out the significance of the cross past and present, and the relation of faith and works.
- *The Apology for Justification by Faith* (4:1–25). The Apostle, in order to make his apologetic [defense] of justification by faith, proceeds to demonstrate its reality in the lives of both Abraham and David. The issues of justification by faith, law–works, circumcision and the spiritual promises are explored.
- *The Assurance of Justification by Faith* (5:1–21). The Apostle seeks to prove that justification by faith, contrary

¹⁹⁴ The context is Rom. chapters 1–8. After stating the various aspects of the condemnation of mankind, the Apostle introduces the subject of “Justification by Faith.” His purpose is to demonstrate that justification is by faith apart from law–works (3:21–5:21), then, that everyone who is justified is also necessarily sanctified (6:1–8:16), and everyone who is justified and sanctified will ultimately and infallibly be glorified (8: 17–39).

to justification by law—works, which would be fairly evident in the life—style, possesses the utmost assurance or confidence. The headship of both Adam and Christ prepare for the following section on sanctification, which is inherent in the believer’s union with Christ.

The third step: an inductive approach which would further develop the outline, seeking to summarize the major elements of the doctrinal teaching:

1. The Analysis of Justification by Faith (3:21–31)
 - a) The Revelation of the Divine Method (3:21–26)
 - b) The Results of the Divine Method (3:27–31)
2. The Apology for Justification by Faith (4:1–25)
 - a) Justification IS by Faith (4:1–3)
 - b) Justification is NOT by Works (4:4–8).
 - c) Justification is NOT by Circumcision (4:9–12)
 - b) Justification is NOT by Law (4:13–17)
 - a) Justification IS by Faith (4:17–25)
3. The Assurance of Justification by Faith (5:1–21)
 - a) Assurance: Logical and Experiential (5:1–11)
 - b) Assurance: Logical and Positional (5:12–21)

The fourth step: an analytical approach, which would develop the outline as thoroughly as necessary to give a full exposition of justification by faith as expressed in this passage:

- I. The Analysis of Justification by Faith (3:21–31)
 - A. The Revelation of the Divine Method (3:21–26)
 1. The “Great Transition” from Condemnation to Justification (v. 21–23)
 - a. The *Revelation* of a Gospel—righteousness (v. 21a)
 - b. The *Attestation* of a Gospel—righteousness (v. 21b)
 - c. The *Operation* of a Gospel—righteousness (v. 22a)
 - d. The *Non—distinction* in a Gospel—righteousness (v. 22b–23)
 2. The “Great Exposition” of the Cross of Christ (v. 24–26)
 - a. Justification—A *Revelation* of its principle and means (v. 24)
 - b. Justification—An *Explanation* of its propitiatory method (v. 25a)

- c. Justification—A *Declaration* of its purpose and meaning (v. 25b–26)
- B. The Results of the Divine Method (3:27–31)
 - 1. All Boasting Excluded (v. 27–28)
 - 2. All Distinctions Abolished (v. 29–30)
 - 3. The Law Established (v. 31).

II. The Apology for Justification by Faith (4:1–25)

In this section, the Apostle anticipates and answers four objections:

- “But what of works?” (4:1–8)
- “But what of circumcision?” (4:9–12)
- “But what of the law?” (4:13–17)
- “But what of faith?” (4:17–25)

[The major development is in the form of an introversion]:

- a) Justification IS by Faith (4:1–3)
 - b) Justification is NOT by Works (4:4–8).
 - c) Justification is NOT by Circumcision (4:9–12)
 - b) Justification is NOT by Law (4:13–17)
 - a) Justification IS by Faith (4:17–25)

[To fill in this outline, we will re–arrange the format]:

- A. Justification IS by Faith (4:1–3)
- B. Justification is NOT by Works (4:4–8)
 - 1. Abraham—A Positive Illustration (v. 1–5)
 - 2. David—A Negative Illustration (v. 6–8)
- C. Justification is NOT by Circumcision (4:9–12)
 - 1. The QUESTION—Is justification an exclusive Jewish privilege? (v. 9)
 - 2. The ANSWER—Abraham was justified by faith as an uncircumcised Gentile (v. 10)
 - 3. The IMPLICATIONS—Devastating to Jewish religious pride and security (v. 11–12)
- D. Justification is NOT by Law (4:13–17)
 - 1. NEGATIVE—The Promise and the Principle of Law—works (v. 13–15)

2. POSITIVE—The Promise and Faith—The Principle of Grace (v. 16–17)
- E. Justification IS by Faith (4:17–25)
1. The ARGUMENT—The Faith of Abraham Described (v. 17–22)
2. The APPLICATION—The Faith of Abraham Applied (v. 23–25)
- III. The Assurance of Justification by Faith (5:1–21)
- Note the essential unity of this entire section as it pertains to the believer’s assurance, and the repetition of the words “much more:”¹⁹⁵
- “Much more”—Present justification means assurance in the prospect of future judgment (v. 9).
 - “Much more”—Reconciliation when enemies by the death of Christ means great assurance of final salvation “in [ἐν] his life” (v. 10).
 - “Much more”—The life in Christ by the gift of God’s grace is much greater than the reign of death in and through Adam (v. 15).
 - “Much more”—As sin abounded, grace floods over all! Being justified by faith, there is assurance that all the promised blessing will inevitably follow (v. 20).
- [Mark the development of this section in an introverted form]:
- a) Our Immediate POSSESSION through Christ (v. 1–2)
- b) Our Present AFFLICTION—Practical (v. 3–5)
- b) Our Divine CONFIRMATION—Logical (v. 5–11)
- a) Our Spiritual POSITION in Christ (v. 12–21)
- The development of this section is two-fold in the exposition:
- A. Assurance: Logical and Experiential (5:1–11)
1. The Scope of Justification by Faith (v. 1–2)
- a. A Past Fact (v. 1a)

¹⁹⁵ πολλῶ...μᾶλλον (*pollō...mallon*, “much...more,” v. 9, 10, 15, 17, 20) ...ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν (*hypereperisseusen*, v. 20, Lit: “super-abounded”).

- b. A Present Reality (v. 1b)
- c. A Present Privilege (v. 1c–2a)
- d. A Future Hope (v. 2b)
- 2. The Strength of Justification by Faith (v. 3–5)
 - a. Perception, or The Development of Perseverance (v. 3)
 - b. Maturation, or The Development of Character (v. 4a)
 - c. Anticipation, or The Strengthening of Hope (v. 4b)
 - d. Confirmation, or The Assurance of Divine Love (v. 5)
- 3. The Sphere of Justification by Faith (v. 5–11)
 - a. Divine Love—Proof for the Present (v. 5–8)
 - (1) The Copiousness of this Divine Love (v. 5)
 - (2) The Character of this Divine Love (v. 6–8a)
 - (3) The Constancy of this Divine Love (v. 8a)
 - b. Divine Love—Assurance for the Future (v. 9–11)
 - (1) The Completeness of this Divine Love (v. 9)
 - (2) The Confidence of this Divine Love (v. 10–11)
- B. Assurance: Logical and Positional (5:12–21)

Note the four “reigns” of this passage and their significance:

 - The reign of *Sin* (v. 21). Sin has held sway and the inevitable result is ever death!
 - The reign of *Death* (v. 14, 17). Death held sway over all humanity because of sin (original sin, imputed from Adam’s transgression, a sin–nature inherited from Adam, and subsequent and consequent personal sin).

- The reign of *Grace* (v. 21). Grace reigns through righteousness—never apart from righteousness. This truth prepares for the next argument (6:1–23).
- The reign of the *Believer* (v. 17). This is a note of victory and dominion in both this life and the next through the righteousness of Christ. Such is the abundant assurance of the believer who is justified by faith!

The essence of this passage is the solidarity of the human race in Adam and that of the redeemed race in Christ. We find:

- TWO Men—”One man–Adam” and “one Man–Christ” (the “second Man,” the “last Adam”). Both are representative.
- TWO Acts—The one offense, or original sin [disobedience] of Adam as opposed to the one righteous act [obedience] of Christ.
- TWO Results—The imputation of the sin of Adam parallel to and opposed to the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. All those identified with Adam are constituted sinners. All those identified with Christ are justified.

[Mark the structure of this section]:

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| A. The CONDEMNATION in Adam | (v. 12–14) |
| 1. THE PROPOSITION | (v. 12) ¹⁹⁶ |
| 2. THE PROOF | (v. 13–14) |
| B. The CONTRAST between Adam and Christ | (v. 15–17) |
| 1. A Contrast of NATURE | (v. 15) |
| 2. A Contrast of RESULT | (v. 16) |
| 3. A Contrast of QUALITY | (v. 17) |
| C. The COMPARISON between Adam and Chris | (v. 18–19) |
| D. The CONSIDERATION of the Law | (v. 20) |

¹⁹⁶ Sin entered the human race through the sinful act of one man—Adam. Death invaded the human race through this one sin because all sinned in Adam πάντες ἥμαρτον (*pantes hēmarton*) [aor., “all sinned,” an event]. The ref. is to the imputation of Adam’s sin, not personal sins. Cf. the same const. in Rom. 3:23, πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ. “For all sinned [aor., an event, sinned in Adam], and are constantly coming short [pres.] of the glory of God.”

- | | |
|--|------------|
| E. The CONCLUSION or Reign of Grace | (v. 20–21) |
| 1. An EXPLANATION of this glorious GRACE | (v. 20) |
| 2. An EXPOSITION of this glorious GRACE | (v. 21) |

The fifth step: a doctrinal approach which buttresses the outline with doctrinal aspects of justification by faith from both the Old and New Testaments. These can be added to the outline as explanatory notes. E.g., study Rom. 9:30–10:21, where the Apostle contrasts the “‘of faith’ righteousness” of Gentile believers with the “‘of works’ righteousness” of Israel, the impossibilities of a works–righteousness with the proximity of a faith–righteousness, and the culpability of Israel’s unbelief. E.g., Jas. 2:14–26 as compared to Rom. 4:1–25, where Paul stresses righteousness without works, and James stresses righteousness evidenced through works.

The sixth step: consult doctrinal and theological works to find all relevant Scriptures, to see if any have been missed or, perhaps misunderstood, and to see if the study needs a more complete investigation.

A Doctrinal–Theological–Historical Study of Justification

This study goes well beyond a study of the Bible alone. It is included to demonstrate that the text and teaching of Scripture ought to underlie all theology, and that Bible study necessarily merges into the study of Bible Doctrine and Theology. Indeed, the end of all Bible study is to arrive at doctrinal truth, which is systematized as one’s doctrinal faith and then applied to the life as consistent behavior. One cannot have a consistent Christian experience without consistent doctrine.

This approach further demonstrates that Bible study cannot be divorced from a knowledge of both Systematic and Historical Theology. Finally, this study demonstrates the necessity of reasoning from the “analogy of faith” or the general, coherent doctrinal teaching of Scripture. It should be the goal of the student to obtain a comprehensive grasp of both Scripture and its doctrinal teaching.

A Biblical-Doctrinal Description

What is justification? Justification is a forensic and gracious act of God, wherein he pardons all the believer's sins, declares him to be righteous in his sight, by virtue of the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and is received by and reconciled to God by faith alone.¹⁹⁷

Rom. 3:24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.¹⁹⁸

Gal. 2:16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.¹⁹⁹

Rom. 5:1–2. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.²⁰⁰

2 Cor. 5:21. For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Phil. 3:9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

¹⁹⁷ The judicious use of the classic, historic Catechisms, Confessions of Faith and standard theological works, together with their scriptural proofs, enable the student to intelligently formulate concise doctrinal statements.

¹⁹⁸ Rom. 3:24, "...freely by his grace..." δικαιούμενοι δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι... This emphasizes the utterly gratuitous nature of justification. It comes to the believing sinner without a cause in him.

¹⁹⁹ Gal. 2:16. Mark the two obj. gens., "...the faith of Jesus Christ," (...πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), an idiomatic expression which ought to be translated "faith *in* Jesus Christ."

²⁰⁰ Rom. 5:1–2. "Having been justified,"(δικαιωθέντες) aor. ptc. Note the one pres. (εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεόν), "we have as a continued state," and two perf. tenses: (τὴν προσαγωγήν ἐσχήκαμεν), "the access we have [and continue to have—it stands open]." (ἐν ἣ ἐστήκαμεν), "in which we have taken up our stand."

Rom. 4:5–8. ⁵ But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. ⁶ Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, ⁷ Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. ⁸ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

See also: Gen. 15:6; Dt. 25:1; Job 9:2; 25:4; Eccl. 7:20; Isa. 5:23; 53:11; Hab. 2:4; Matt. 5:6; 12:37; Lk. 18:14; Acts 13:39; Rom. 1:17; 3:19–20; 21–5:21;²⁰¹ 8:1, 29–34; 1 Cor. 1:30–31; 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:13–21; Gal. 2:15–5:1; Eph. 1:7; Phil. 3:4–14; Heb. 10:38; Jas. 2:14–26; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jn. 1:9.

The Biblical Terminology

The biblical terms concerning the truth of justification by faith revolve about two issues: first, the etymology of the Latin terms “justify” and “justification” and the biblical words and their use in the Old and New Testaments, and second, the grammatical constructions and sense of the term “faith” in relation to justification.

The Terminology Associated with Justification

The English terms “justify” and “justification” derive from the Latin *justificare* and *justificatio* [from *justum* and *facere*], and may mean either “to pronounce just or righteous” or “to make just or righteous.” This ambiguity has resulted in the false teaching that justification is an infused righteousness [*justitia infusa*] rather than an imputed righteousness [*justitia imputata*]. Because of this ambiguity, the meaning of justification must derive from the use of the biblical terms themselves, not simply their etymology.

²⁰¹ The great, extended sections dealing with justification are: Rom. 3:21–5:21; 2 Cor. 5:13–21; Gal. 2:15–5:1; Phil. 3:4–14 and Jas. 2:14–26.

The Old Testament terms from the Hebrew and LXX are formed from the Hebrew root *Tsadaq*²⁰² and the Greek verb *dikaioō*.²⁰³ Both denote “to declare righteous or just.” The New Testament word–group also derives from *dikaioō*, and all emphasize the forensic [legal or judicial] sense of justification.²⁰⁴

Note: The non–forensic use of the term “justify.” It should also be noted that the term “justify” is used in the sense of ascribing righteousness to either God or men in non–forensic contexts, e.g., such as when men are said to justify God, i.e., ascribe righteousness to him (Psa. 51:4; Lk. 7:29; Rom. 3:4). Men may also be said in this non–forensic sense to justify themselves (Lk. 10:29; 16:15). These have no bearing on the necessary biblical, forensic nature of justification by faith.

The Terminology Associated with Justification by Faith

The relationship of faith to justification is signified by the prepositions “by” or “through.” Saving faith is justifying faith. The believer is justified “by” or “through” faith, never “because

²⁰² The Heb. root צַדִּיק is used in the Hiph’il (causative) הִצַּדִּיק in the sense of declaring or pronouncing a person just or righteous, e.g., Dt. 25:1; Prov. 17:15. The LXX follows suit with δικαίωσωσιν in Dt. 25:1 and ὃς δίκαιον κρίνει τὸν ἄδικον ἄδικον δὲ τὸν δίκαιον ἀκάθαρτος in Prov. 17:15.

²⁰³ δικαίω is used both in the LXX and in the New Testament. Leon Morris notes that Gk. “verbs ending in –ώ and referring to moral qualities have a declarative sense; they do not mean ‘to make—.’” He then gives a series of examples. *New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1986, p. 70.

²⁰⁴ The New Testament terms are: δικαίω, “justify,” used forensically 30 times, e.g., Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24, 28; 4:2, 5; 5:1, 9. δίκαιος, “just” or “righteous,” used forensically some 43 times, e.g., Matt. 9:13; Rom. 1:17; 3:10; 8:30; Jas. 5:16. δικαιοσύνη, “righteousness,” used forensically over 40 times, e.g., Rom. 1:17; 4:3, 5–6, 9, 11, 13; 10:3–4, 10; 1 Cor. 1:30. δικαίωσις, “justification,” occ. twice, Rom. 4:25; 5:18.

of' faith.²⁰⁵ Faith is the instrumental means by which the believing sinner is pronounced just before God and his Holy Law. If faith were causative, then salvation would necessarily be by or through works [human ability], and the very principle of grace would be destroyed.

The Essential Truth of Justification

Justification is a gracious, forensic [legal] and constitutive act wherein God as judge declares the believing sinner just or righteous in his sight on the basis of the of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ procured through his active [sinless life lived under the Law] and passive [suffering and death] obedience and imputed through faith alone.

Separated into its constituent parts, the truth of justification by faith is explained in the following statements. The following analysis serves as both a summary and an introduction to the remainder of this study on justification.

- Justification is a revealed truth without analogy in the natural realm of general revelation or Natural Theology, or even in the human legal system. It is solely a matter of Divine, special, redemptive revelation.
- Justification is an objective, declarative and constitutive act of free grace on the part of God; it is neither deserved, nor is it a process (Rom. 3:24). It is not a subjective experience, i.e., it is not to be combined or confused with sanctification. God declares the believing sinner just; he does not make him just.
- Justification is forensic and constitutive, i.e., it is a legal pronouncement which declares the sinner righteous before the Divine tribunal. It answers fully and completely to

²⁰⁵ At least 42 times in the New Testament, we are said to be saved by or through faith [ἐκ πίστεως, δια πίστεως, gen., abl.], but never once "because of faith" [δια πιστιν, acc.] (e.g., Acts 15:9; 26:18; Rom. 1:17; 3:25, 28, 30; 5:1, 2; Gal. 3:8, 11, 14, 24, 26; 5:5; Eph. 2:8; 3:17; Phil. 3:9; Heb. 10:38, etc.).

both the demands and the penalty of the Moral Law of God (Acts 13:38–39; Rom. 3:19–31).

- Justification is the imputation of righteousness, not the impartation of righteousness, i.e., it is the very righteousness of Christ imputed to the believing sinner, not a righteousness imparted or infused. Justification changes one's standing or state before the demands and penalty of the Law as the standard of Divine righteousness; it does not change one's character or nature. In short, the sinner is declared righteous, not made righteous. God justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5–8).
- The mediatorial righteousness²⁰⁶ of the Lord Jesus Christ, procured by his active obedience to the Law during his earthly life, wherein he completely fulfilled its demands, and his passive obedience or suffering and death, wherein he made full satisfaction for the Law's penalty, are both imputed to the believing sinner, who until the moment of justification is yet ungodly (Rom. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:21).
- The believer's sins are all imputed to Christ and his righteousness is imputed to the believer (Rom. 5:12–19; 2 Cor. 5:21). Thus, there is pardon, forgiveness and remission of sins, and also the imputation of a positive righteousness.
- The imputation of Christ's righteousness is by or through faith alone (Rom. 5:1). As a gracious declarative or constitutive act, it cannot be because of faith, nor can the faith of the sinner stand in the stead of such Divine righteousness without destroying the gracious nature of justification and the reality of Divine imputation.

²⁰⁶ Distinction is necessarily made between the righteousness wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ in his mediatorial work [active and passive obedience] and his absolute, perfect or ontological righteousness which he possesses as a Person of the triune Godhead.

- The Protestant Confessions and Catechisms add the word “alone” to the biblical statement of justification by faith, i.e., “...by faith alone” because the Romish Church and others teach a mixture of faith and works.²⁰⁷ Faith and works [human ability] stand in juxtaposition. They are opposites. Saving faith is the gift of God, and therefore justification is a gracious act. We are justified by faith alone, but by a faith which does not stand alone, i.e., justification must not be divorced from sanctification. Justifying faith subsequently produces good works (Eph. 2:8–10; Jas. 2:14–26).
- Justification is an absolute, declarative act. All sins are pardoned or remitted—past, present and future. The believer will never come under Divine condemnation for his sins (Rom. 8:1). He may lose the consciousness of his fellowship with his Heavenly Father (Eph. 4:30), and be chastened (Heb. 12:4–14), but never condemned. One cannot lose his justification, i.e., become “unjustified,” and so become lost and come under condemnation again.
- As an act of God’s free and sovereign grace, justification does not vary from one believer to another, i.e., there are no degrees of justification. Both the most wicked sinner and the most self-righteous moralist can be equally justified through faith. The same is true for the weakest and the strongest believer. All stand equally justified through the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and have equal access to the Father (Rom. 3:21–31; 5:1–2).
- Justification is inseparable from regeneration and sanctification. Those whom God quickens and to whom he imputes righteousness, he also infallibly makes

²⁰⁷ See Johannes G. Vos, *The Westminster Larger Catechism: A Commentary*, p. 154.

righteous. Although he justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5), they do not remain so (1 Cor. 1:30–31; 6:11).

- Justification results in a state of peace between the believing sinner and an absolutely righteous God (Rom. 5:1). Not only is there pardon or remission of all sins, but also a restoration to Divine favor, with all the amenities and privileges of sonship (Jn. 1:12–13; Rom. 8:14–34; Gal. 3:6–7, 24–26; 4:4–7).
- Although not an experience, such as conversion or sanctification, the reality of justification forms the basis for the patience, joy, confidence and hope of the Christian experience (Rom. 5:1–11).

What is the Significance of Justification?

Justification by faith, i.e., a free or gracious justification, is the very heart and core of the gospel. It determines the very character of Christianity as a religion of grace and faith. It defines the life, suffering and death of our Lord as a full satisfaction in the context of Divine Law and justice. It sets in both proper perspective and bold relief Divine justice, mercy and grace in the punishment of sin and the pardoning of sinners in relation to the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It clarifies both faith and Christian morality, and forms the very basis of Christian confidence, assurance and hope. Justification by faith abolishes Jewish exclusivism and makes Christianity the one and only true religion for all mankind.

Justification by faith is essential and central to the gospel. This cardinal truth sets all gospel parameters. It establishes the proper concept of faith, condemns all and every attempt at a works-mentality and self-righteousness, and magnifies the free and sovereign grace of the triune Godhead. Luther stated that justification by faith alone is the article by which the church

stands or falls. Calvin declared justification by faith to be “the main hinge on which religion turns.”²⁰⁸

The reason the doctrine of justification by faith is of relatively little concern in our day is because modern Christianity is largely experiential rather than doctrinal in nature, has little true knowledge of the triune, self-disclosing God of Scripture, his righteous indignation and eternal wrath, and considers sin to be a light matter. Thus, the free and sovereign grace of God is scorned, and justification by faith remains a nebulous or forgotten truth obscured by religious emotionalism, subjective experience and religious “decisionism.”

Sin is minimized to the level of the psychological. Only when the nature and character of God are fully declared, his Moral Law proclaimed with authority, the horrendous reality of sin expounded with sincerity, and the redemptive work of the Son of God portrayed in all its passion and glory as the full satisfaction for the claims of Divine justice, will the truth of justification regain its proper place.

The Essential Issue

The essential issue is the most primary and basic question of all religion: “How should a man be just with God?” (Job 9:2). In reality, this question presupposes the Fall, apostasy and alienation of sinful man, the awful reality and nature of sin, and the absolute righteousness and awful wrath of a thrice-holy God. Only through the imputation [reckoning or accounting] of a righteousness which answers to both the requirements and the penalty of the Moral Law of God can the ungodly be justified and reconciled to the God of the Bible. Such an imputation must be by or through a God-given faith to render such imputation certain and preserve the reality and principle of free and sovereign grace.

²⁰⁸ Martin Luther, *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae*. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3.11.1. Cf. Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, pp. 755–756.

The Relation of Justification
to other Aspects of Biblical Truth

As the very heart and core of the gospel, the truth of justification possesses a necessary, vital relation to the other aspects of Divine, redemptive truth. Mark the following interrelationships, which serve as examples:

1. *Divine Revelation.* Justification by faith is a revealed truth without analogy in nature or even among men in a legal context: first, God does what no earthly judge could or should do—justify the guilty and ungodly (Dt. 25:1; Prov. 17:15; Rom. 4:5). This is the glory of Divine justification in relation to the principle of the free, gracious acts of imputation: ours sins are imputed to the Lord Jesus Christ and his righteousness is imputed to us (Rom. 3:24–25; 2 Cor. 5:21). Second, no earthly judge or court of law can restore the criminal to favor and right standing in society—but Divine justification does this very thing (Rom. 4:5–8; 5:1–11, 17–21; Gal. 4:4–5)!
2. *The Trinity.* Although justification is revealed in Scripture as the direct work of God the Father (Rom. 3:19–26; 8:30–33; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9), the triune Godhead is intimately involved: God the Son by his mediatorial work, i.e., his active and passive obedience by which he made a complete satisfaction to Divine justice, providing the ground or basis of justification (Rom. 3:24–26; 5:2, 9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13–14; 1 Pet. 3:18), and God the Spirit by granting saving or justifying faith in the application of Christ's accomplished redemption (1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 2:4–10).
3. *The Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.* The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and union of his two natures in that one Person, and his active and passive obedience all have determining effects upon the truth of justification. Was he *impeccable* [he could not and did

not sin] or *peccable* [liable to sin]?²⁰⁹ If the former, then his active obedience in fulfilling the demands of the Law could be imputed to sinners; if not, then the whole idea of justification must be limited to mere forgiveness.

4. *Divine Righteousness and Justice.* The active obedience of Christ, i.e., his earthly life lived impeccably under the Moral Law satisfied its demands. His passive obedience, i.e., his suffering and death, satisfied the eternal penalty due for transgression against the Moral Law. Both are imputed to the believing sinner. Thus, Divine justice is satisfied by the one and only righteousness which God can and will accept—the imputed righteousness of Christ appropriated by faith (Rom. 1:17).²¹⁰
5. *Divine Law.* Justification is a forensic term [*verbum forense*], i.e., a legal or judicial pronouncement. Sinners are justified in relation to the demands and penalty of the Moral Law of God and its Divine standard of perfect obedience and righteousness.

The earthly life of our Lord was lived in the context of the Moral Law (Gal. 4:4–5). His law-keeping or sinless life [active obedience] is imputed to believers as well as his suffering and death [passive obedience]. Through the first, he met the Law's demands; through the second, he paid its awful penalty.

²⁰⁹ *Non posse peccare*, not possible for him to sin, i.e., the impeccability of Christ. *Posse non peccare*, or possible that he did not sin, i.e., the peccability of Christ—he could have sinned, but did not. Should the latter have been true, then he could not have kept the Law vicariously, but only for himself—the view of Pelagians and some Arminians, resulting in justification becoming mere forgiveness or pardon and effectively destroying the principle of imputation.

²¹⁰ Rom. 1:17, δικαιοσύνη [emph. pos. anarth. to stress quality] γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. The gospel-righteousness is the very righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every other righteousness is a self-righteousness.

6. *The Eternal Covenant of Redemption and Grace.* Redemption in the Scriptures is by representation and imputation. There are three imputations in Scripture: first, the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, second, the imputation of the sins of believers to Christ, and third, the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers (Isa. 53:4–6, 11; Rom. 5:12–19; 2 Cor. 5:21). Justification is concerned with the latter two acts of imputation. For a review of this covenant as descriptive of the eternal redemptive purpose.
7. *The Atonement.* The biblical term is “reconciliation,” or “at-one-ment” (Rom. 5:11).²¹¹ The work of redemption included forgiveness of sins or pardon, as our sins were imputed to Christ, and justification before and reconciliation with God as Christ provided a true and complete satisfaction and his righteousness is imputed to us (2 Cor. 5:21).
8. *The Resurrection of Christ.* The focal-point of the resurrection is that it credentialed the claims of our Lord, i.e., declared him to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:3–4). With regard to justification, it is the guarantee that God accepted his vicarious, substitutionary death as the satisfaction for our sins (Rom. 4:25).
9. *The Purity of the Gospel.* The truth and purity of the gospel stand or fall with the truth of justification by faith. If either justification or faith is misconstrued, the gospel is lost. If righteousness were either thought to be imparted or infused rather than imputed, or faith were put for righteousness, the gospel would become fatally

²¹¹ Rom. 5:11. The word “atonement” occ. 81 times in Scripture, but only once in the New Testament: ...διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δι’ οὗ νῦν τὴν καταλλαγὴν [at-one-ment, reconciliation, being made right, reconciled to and restored to favor with God] ἐλάβομεν.

defective. If faith were thought to be cause of justification, the grace of the gospel would be utterly destroyed.

10. *Union with Christ.* The believer's union with Christ is a pervasive and inclusive truth and reality. In its widest scope, it commences in eternity past in Divine election (Eph. 1:3–5) and reaches into eternity future to ultimate glorification (Rom. 6:1–14; 8:23, 29–30). Effectual calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption and sanctification—the application of redemption—all presuppose the sinner's union with Christ. The believer's union with Christ in his life, death and resurrection—life form the ground of his justification and the efficient cause of his sanctification (Rom. 6:1–23).
11. *Effectual Calling.* This is the first step or act in the application of redemption. The biblical relation is that everyone effectually called is likewise justified in time and experience. Because justification is positioned between calling and glorification in Rom. 8:29–30,²¹² justification necessarily occurs in experience after calling.
12. *Regeneration.* Regeneration is at once: the impartation of Divine life, the breaking of the reigning power of sin, the removal of the natural heart—enmity against God, the re-creation of the image of God in principle and the removal of satanic blindness.

But regeneration neither removes Divine condemnation nor constitutes the sinner righteous before God. This is

²¹² Rom. 8:29–30. The five terms which occur here—all in the aor. tense—are: foreknown, predestined, called, justified and glorified. Why are not such realities as regeneration, conversion, and sanctification included? Because these are more experiential and might be imitated or mistaken. The five which do occur are acts of God alone without question, strengthening the infallibility of the Divine purpose and the assurance of the believer.

the act of justification. The necessary relation between regeneration and justification is that those who are regenerated are also infallibly justified and sanctified (Rom. 3:21–8:17). God justifies the ungodly, but he does not leave them in their sins.

13. *Conversion.* Conversion is comprised of saving faith and saving repentance. Saving faith is justifying faith, i.e., faith lays hold of Christ at the point of his imputed righteousness and appropriates it. Repentance involves a turning from sin to Christ in faith (Acts 11:18; 26:19–20; Eph. 2:8–10).
14. *Adoption.* Adoption is the gracious act of God wherein he receives the justified sinner as a son with all the status and privileges of sonship (Jn. 1:12–13; Rom. 8:11–17, 23).²¹³ As faith and repentance are the twin graces of conversion, so justification and adoption are simultaneous gracious, declarative, judicial acts. Justification changes one's legal status; adoption changes one's personal status. In the former, God acts as a judge; in the latter, as a father. Adoption is inseparable but distinct from justification.
15. *Sanctification.* Justification is righteousness imputed; sanctification is righteousness imparted. The two must not be confused, as is done when justification is thought to be an infused [imparted] righteousness and confused or amalgamated with sanctification. Neither are they to be separated, as though one may be justified yet not

²¹³ Jn. 1:12, ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι... The term τέκνα [children] emph. the filial relationship; the term υἱοὶ [sons] emph. the legal standing and relationship.

16. sanctified (1 Cor. 1:30).²¹⁴ The relation between the two is that everyone who is justified is infallibly sanctified (Rom. 3:21–8:16). A sanctified life is evidence of a justified state.

Note: The comprehensive argument of the Apostle Paul in Romans chapters 1–8, after establishing the utter condemnation of the entire human race (1:18–3:20) is that everyone who is justified (3:21–5:21) is infallibly sanctified (5:12–8:16), and everyone who is justified and sanctified must infallibly be glorified (8:17–39).

17. *Assurance of Faith*. Justification is related to one's assurance of faith or salvation in three ways: first, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness, the believer must be accounted as having kept the precepts of the Law and thus has a title to eternal life (Jn. 3:16; 5:24).

Second, as justified, he shall never come into condemnation, though his obedience and faith are both imperfect. He has peace with God and also rejoices in hope of the glory of God. It is significant that the Apostle Paul argues directly from justification to assurance (Rom. 5:1–2; 8:1).

Third, those who are justified are inevitably sanctified, and those who are justified and sanctified must infallibly be glorified—the Apostle's general argument and biblical logic in Romans chapters 3 through 8 (Rom. 3:21–8:39).

18. *The Church*. A true gospel church is evidenced by its faithfulness to the heart and core of the gospel as

²¹⁴ 1 Cor. 1:30. When revealing what the believer has in Christ, the Apostle declares, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," the terms "righteousness" and "sanctification" are grammatically connected by an untranslated part. [τε καὶ] which joins them as inseparable: δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ ἁγιασμός. They are not merely members of a series.

centered in justification by faith. On New Testament principles, a true gospel church not only declares the truth of the gospel, but is also bound by the gospel, i.e., a regenerate membership. On this truth of justification by faith, a church, as Luther said, either stands or falls.

19. *Eschatology*. In justification one's sins past present and future, are forgiven and remitted. It is as though the Great Day of Judgment has already passed for the believer. He shall never come into condemnation (Jn. 5:24; Rom. 8:1).

The Characteristics of Justification

The following summary builds upon the preceding discussions. It both summarizes the issues and also treats those issues which may necessitate further explanation:

- *The Nature of Justification*. Justification is a forensic, i.e., a legal, judicial declarative or constitutive act. The believing sinner is declared or reckoned righteous, not made righteous. Justification and sanctification must be neither confused or separated.
- *The Method of Justification*. Justification is a declarative act or pronouncement in the context of free grace [without any cause in the recipient]. This is why justification is "by faith" rather than "because of faith" [finding faith in mere human trust and therefore by works]. This grace centers in the Person and mediatorial Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. As to its method, it is by imputation and representation, i.e., the believer's union with Christ wherein the believer's sins are imputed to Christ and Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).
- *The Author of Justification*. Justification is predicated particularly of God the Father, who declares the believing sinner righteous by virtue of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 3:24–26; 4:8; 8:30–33). It must be noted, however, that none of the Persons of the

Godhead act wholly independent of the others or in any way contrary to the others. Justification is also attributed to the Son and to the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11).

- *The Subjects of Justification.* These are elect sinners (Rom. 8:33), who, in time, history and personal experience are brought to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Non-elect sinners are not included, as the eternal covenant of redemption and grace is a coherent scheme (Eph. 1:3–14; Rom. 8:29–39). Brutes and angels are not included, because only man is the image-bearer of God, and the essence of salvation, including justification, is the redemption of the Divine image in man.
- *The Necessity of Justification.* Justification is an absolute necessity because of the Divine demand for a morally-perfect righteousness which answers to the Moral Law—the transcript of God’s own moral self-consistency. God cannot arbitrarily set aside or ignore sin—and every human being stands utterly condemned apart from the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:18; 3:19–20, 24–31). Justification by faith is an absolute necessity because any and all human attempts would be a futile attempt at self-justification and self-righteousness. It is this Divine gift—this saving faith—which brings the efficacy of the atonement, the satisfaction of Christ, and Christ as surety to the believing sinner by imputation (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24–28; 5:1, 9; Gal. 2:16).

Justification is not only the center and core of the gospel, it is an intrinsic part of the redemptive purpose. No justification, no sanctification; no justification and sanctification, no glorification (Rom. 3:21–8:12, 29–34).

- *The Everlasting Nature of Justification.* Justification is for all sins—past present and future. It can never be reversed or rendered null and void.

The following realities demonstrate the immutable nature of justification: first, the eternal covenant of redemption

and grace necessitates an infallible justification (Rom. 8:29–39).

Second, the believer's union with Christ implies the breaking of the reigning power of sin and the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit as the dynamic of the life (Rom. 6:1–23).

Third, the necessary, inherent relationship between justification and sanctification necessitates a godly life evidenced by good works (1 Cor. 1:30–31; Jas. 2:14–26).

Fourth, because saving faith is the irreversible gift of God, and a faith which works by love (Gal. 5:6), it is the medium by which Christ dwells in our hearts (Eph. 3:17–19; Gal. 2:20). The tenor of the life is thus graciously set against returning to a life of sin.

Fifth, we are constantly being transformed into the likeness of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18) and conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29).

- *The Uniqueness of Justification.* The unique nature of justification by faith is evidenced in the following: first, God does what no earthly judge can do or would do without being contrary to law—justify the ungodly (Rom. 4:5). Thus, Divine justification finds no parallel in the judicial system of man.

Second, only God can restore the justified to favor. An earthly judge may justify the criminal before the law upon the fulfillment of the proper penalty, but he cannot restore that person to society as an upright citizen or procure his acceptance by society. God restores the believing sinner to full reconciliation and through adoption gives him all the rights and privileges of sonship.

Third, the most mysterious and difficult issue with the justification of the believing sinner is the constitutive aspect. God causes to be what he declares to be, i.e., God constitutes the sinner righteous through the imputation of Christ's righteousness so he can declare the sinner just or

righteous in his sight, i.e., his declarative act is based on his constitutive act.²¹⁵ This demonstrates the necessity of the imputation of the active obedience of Christ as well as his passive obedience.

On this gracious basis alone can the believer's imperfect faith and imperfect life be counted as righteous, and he remain justified from past, present and future sins.

- *The Source of Justification.* (also termed “the moving or efficient cause” of justification). The source of our justification is the free grace of God (Eph. 1:7; Titus 3:7; Rom. 3:24).²¹⁶ Justification proceeds from the free grace—utterly unmerited favor—of God. This is why saving faith must be a Divine gift [by or through faith]. Should justification be “because of faith,” then grace would be irreversibly corrupted and justification would be by works [human ability].
- *The Ground of Justification.* (also termed “the procuring cause” of justification). The ground or basis of justification cannot be by anything either wrought in us [an infused righteousness] or performed by us [a works-righteousness]. Further it must be an absolutely perfect righteousness, indeed, the very “righteousness of God” (Rom. 1:17), i.e., a righteousness which will answer perfectly to the demands of the Moral Law and also answer its eternal penalty. Such a righteousness is found only in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. As men were once united in the federal headship of Adam, and his sin imputed to them, so now believers are united by grace

²¹⁵ Cf. John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, pp. 122–125; *Collected Writings*, II, pp. 206–207; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 517.

²¹⁶ Rom. 3:24, “Being justified freely by his grace...” δικαιούμενοι δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι, freely, as a gift, without any merit in the believer.

in the sovereign headship of Jesus Christ and his righteousness is imputed to them (Rom. 5:12–21).

This imputed righteousness necessarily includes what our Lord procured in both his active and passive obedience (Rom. 3:24–26; 5:17–19; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 1:7). Thus, through the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, God can be both absolutely just [righteous] and the justifier [the one who pronounces the sinner righteous] of the one who believes in [closes in faith with] Christ.

- *The Object of Justifying Faith.* Saving faith is justifying faith, and the sole Object of such faith is the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith grasps Christ at the point of his righteousness. The Scripture graphically and succinctly declares that we are “...justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...through faith in his blood...” Cf. Jn. 3:16, 36; Acts 10:43; 16:31; Rom. 3:22, 25; 10:9–10; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9.
- *The Instrumental Means of Justification.* Faith is the instrumental means as the gift of God (Eph. 2:4–10). Thus, justification is “by” or “through” faith. Only if saving faith is the gift of God can the principle of grace be maintained. Should saving faith be mere human trust, the whole truth and reality of justification would be lost, as salvation would necessarily be by works [meritorious human ability]. Further, if saving faith were mere human trust deriving from an alleged “free will,” then conversion and justification would remain on the psychological level rather than the spiritual, and the possibility of disbelieving and becoming unjustified would be real.
- *The Elements of Justification.* There are two elements or aspects: positive and negative, or pardon [forgiveness, remission] of sins, and the positive imputation of righteousness. Both are necessary to answer the demands

of the Moral Law and also its penalty [the perceptive and penal aspects].

Thus, the active obedience of Christ is necessarily imputed to the believer. Without this imputation, the penalty of the Moral Law would be met, but necessary, positive righteousness demanded by the Moral Law would not be met. The denial of the imputation of the active obedience of Christ [his sinless life lived under the Law] has reduced justification to mere pardon and resulted in either a perfectionism or a modified perfectionist view which holds to the perfectibility of human nature.²¹⁷

- *The Benefits and Results of Justification.* All the subsequent blessings of the covenant of redemption and grace are vouchsafed to the believer in his justification (Rom. 8:28–31): first, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1).

Second, we have freedom from any and all condemnation and deliverance from Divine wrath (Jn. 3:36; Rom. 1:18; 5:9; 8:1, 33–34). Third, we have constant access into the very presence of God through the mediatorship of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest (Rom. 5:1–2;²¹⁸ Heb. 9:24; 1 Jn. 2:1).

²¹⁷ The perfectionist schemes of both Wesleyan Arminianism and Finney's modern Pelagianism, denying the imputation of Christ's active obedience, eventually reversed the relation of justification to sanctification, and posited that justification rested on sanctification. Thus, should one leave off living a sanctified life, he immediately lost his justification, i.e., became unjustified and lost his salvation.

²¹⁸ Rom. 5:2. The words "we have access" (τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχήκαμεν) are perf., i.e., the way of access has been opened into the presence of God never to be closed. It stands opened. The words "wherein we stand" (ἐν ἣ ἐστήκαμεν) are also perf., i.e., wherein we have taken up our stand. Both terms emph. the constant access of the believer to God through Christ.

Various Erroneous Views of Justification

The doctrine of a free justification²¹⁹ as the central doctrine of the gospel of the grace of God has made it liable to great misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Any deviation from the pure grace of God would immediately tend to modify justification by faith. In the early centuries of Christianity, with the advent of baptismal regeneration (c. 150), the rise of sacerdotalism,²²⁰ and a secularized state church system [“the Constantinian Change”],²²¹ the truth of a free justification was lost to institutionalized Christendom,²²² and never regained its true significance until the Sixteenth Century Reformation. Further, the Christological heresies, denying the Deity of our Lord, had their relative effects.

Since the Reformation, the rise of various errors—Socinianism, Classical and Evangelical Arminianism, revived Pelagianism, Dispensationalism, and even Fundamentalism—have modified the glorious truth of a free justification. The following studies are only some major examples of the errors.

²¹⁹ By “free justification” is meant justification by faith as opposed to justification because of faith, i.e., a free justification presupposes faith as the gift of God rather than mere human trust (Acts 18:27; Eph. 2:4–10; Phil. 1:29).

²²⁰ *Sacer*, Latin for “sacred.” Sacerdotalism is a priestly religion characterized by salvation through the sacraments. It is the antithesis to salvation by grace through faith.

²²¹ “The Constantinian Change” refers to the transition under the Emperor Constantine in 313 AD when he made Christianity the favored religion in the Roman Empire, effectively making it the state religion and the apostate Christianity of the day the “state church,” or rather made the church a department of the state, deriving its power and enforcement from the civil magistrate.

²²² “Institutionalized Christendom” refers to the predominant state church, a *corpus mixtum* [mixed body] of saved and unsaved. There were evangelical groups and churches which stood apart from the Romish ecclesiastical system and sought to maintain New Testament principles.

The Church Fathers and Roman Catholicism

The language of institutionalized Christendom changed from Greek to Latin by the middle of the second century AD. The Church Fathers, relying mostly on the Latin, and with little if any knowledge of Greek, took the Latin terms *justificare* and *justificatio* as meaning “to make righteous,” and so confused justification with sanctification, including the latter in the former.²²³

This error was perpetuated and promulgated by the Church of Rome with its semi-Pelagian concept of salvation. Salvation is essentially by baptismal regeneration, which washes away original sin, then partaking of the sacraments, which are means of grace to deal with subsequent sins and make the partakers righteous. Justification and sanctification are fused into one, and righteousness is by infusion rather than imputation.

Arminianism

Arminianism, a remonstrance against the Sixteenth Century Reformation and its soteriology, exists in two forms: Classical Arminianism is that of the original Remonstrants who formulated the “Five Points of the Remonstrants” after the death of Jacobus Arminius [James Hermandszoon] (1560–1609) in the early seventeenth century.

The second type is Evangelical or Wesleyan Arminianism, which was more practical in nature and added to the original system a kind of subjectivism and perfectionism. Both hold, in the context of their view of a universal atonement, that justification is merely pardon which deals with past sins. Subsequent sins are dealt with in the context of the believer’s own faith, which is imputed to him for righteousness. The consequent effect is that faith becomes the ground or foundation for one’s justification rather than the instrumental means, i.e.,

²²³ See R. L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, p. 619. Dabney then proceeds to see this as a strong argument for a knowledge of the original languages among church leaders!

justification is “because of” faith rather than “by” or “through” faith. This is a shift in principle from grace [a free justification] to a works–righteousness.

Modern Pelagianism

The modern revival of Pelagianism²²⁴ under such men as Charles G. Finney (1792–1875) maintains a doctrine of perfectionism and, with Evangelical Arminianism, reverses the relation of justification and sanctification, making the former dependent upon the latter, i.e., one had to remain sanctified in order to remain justified. Old–line Pentecostalism has followed suit.

Fundamentalism

Modern Fundamentalist Christianity has inherited, among other things, a modified perfectionist doctrine from Evangelical Arminianism in the form of the “carnal Christian” heresy and the denial of Lordship salvation. A believer may be either “carnal” or “spiritual.” He may also “take Christ by halves,” i.e., first as “Savior,” then subsequently as “Lord.” Added to this is an inherent antinomianism through the influence of Dispensationalism, which denies any validity to the Divine and perpetual nature of the Moral Law. Hence, there can be no imputation of the active obedience of Christ.

Further, holding to the Arminian view of a universal atonement and often the Pelagian notion of “free will,” justification becomes mere pardon and “because of faith.” Further, because Fundamentalism is largely subjective and experience–oriented rather than doctrinally and objectively oriented, justification by faith is essentially a lost doctrine.

A Modern Cliché

A modern cliché is often used to define justification: “Justified means ‘just as if I’d never sinned.’” This is an

²²⁴ Pelagianism holds that the will of man is completely unfallen and free—the power of contrary choice. Adam was only a bad example. No imputation of Adam’s sin to his posterity.

illustration of a partial truth becoming an untruth. Nothing is said about the nature, source, cause, ground, instrumental means, everlasting character, etc. of justification by faith, and so is quite misleading. On such doctrinal points, one must be certain to be adequate, even at the expense of brevity. Correctness and conciseness demand a careful, and even an extended explanation. Salvation by grace is one thing; “salvation by cliché” quite another! Would one ever really want to hang the eternal hope of his soul and destiny on a witty religious cliché?

Objections to Justification by Faith

Major Objections

There have been several arguments against and objections to the doctrine of justification by faith. The following four deal sufficiently with all such arguments, objections and answers:

1. *Justification is by both faith and works.* This is the teaching of Romanism. Using the meaning of the Latin *justificare* and *justificatio*, to *make* righteous, and Jas. 2:14–26, which allegedly teaches justification by both faith and works, Rome holds to an infused righteousness [*justitia infusa*] rather than an imputed righteousness [*justitia imputata*]. This combines and confuses justification with sanctification, leading in Romanism to the belief that baptismal regeneration remits original sin, and a faithful adherence to the sacraments deals with subsequent sins. Through these works a person is made and kept righteous.

This is the power of a sacerdotal system—salvation through the alleged necessity and power of priestly mediation and manipulation. Romanism thus holds, in principle, with Pelagianism and Pentecostalism, that justification is based on one’s sanctification [observance of the sacraments]. The answer to this objection is that, first, it is not the etymology of the Latin terms, but the *use* of the term “justification” in Scripture [both Old and New Testaments] which determines its meaning.

Second, which is discussed more completely in paragraph 4, there is no contradiction between James and Paul. James teaches that true justifying faith evidences itself in good works—justified by a faith which does not stand alone; whereas Paul emphasizes that justification is by faith alone, apart from works.

2. *The doctrine of a legal [forensic or objective] justification seems to exclude the principle and reality of grace.* Because justification is necessarily and biblically a forensic or legal act, it seems that it is not a gracious act. But the Scriptures clearly reveal that justification flows from the free grace of God (Rom. 3:24).

Indeed, justification with all its antecedents and consequences—election, predestination, the mediatorial work of our Lord, his vicarious or substitutionary work, calling, regeneration, conversion, adoption, sanctification and glorification—are all characterized by free, sovereign and infinite grace.

3. *The doctrine of a forensic [legal or objective] justification is a fiction or impious, i.e., it declares sinners to be righteous contrary to fact.* It is objected that the believing sinner is really declared righteous through the imputation of the very righteousness of Christ himself, so the believer has no righteousness in himself. This is true, for any righteousness other than the imputation of Christ's righteousness would plainly be a self-righteousness, which could only bring condemnation.

It must be noted very carefully that God constitutes what he declares to be, i.e., he declares the sinner just or righteous because he has constituted him so through the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Thus, the believer is truly and actually righteous before God (Rom. 8:31–33).

4. *The doctrine of a free justification leads to licentiousness.* This is the false conclusion the Apostle Paul addresses in Rom. 5:21–6:23. Note the following:

- The purpose and tenor of saving grace is to deliver from the reigning and polluting power of sin in this present life (Rom. 6:1–23; Eph. 2:4–10; Titus 2:11–14). This deliverance from sin and conformity in principle to the Moral Law is anticipated in election and predestination (Eph. 1:3–5; Rom. 8:29), secured in the mediatorial and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and realized in the personal application of the redemptive purpose in our calling, regeneration, justification, adoption and sanctification. See the discussion of grace in Quest. 73, “The Pervasive Nature of Divine Grace” in this Part.
- Second, the federal union of the believer with Christ secures his justification and is inseparable from his vital union with Christ in his death and resurrection–life, which secures his sanctification (Rom. 6:1–18).
- Third, only if justification is “free,” i.e., a gratuitous act (Rom. 3:24), are good works acceptable to God. Should justification be on the basis of works [not free, but merited, or because of faith, a works–righteousness, etc.], then none would or could be justified, as none could qualify under a works–righteousness which would demand an absolute righteousness under the requirements of the Moral Law. In short, there is no antinomian grace.

The Alleged Controversy between James and Paul

It has been alleged that, while Paul teaches justification by faith alone, without works (Rom. 3:24–31; 4:1–8; Gal. 2:16), James teaches justification by faith and works (Jas. 2:14–26). An alleged contradiction has been perceived which has led to various errors concerning the nature of justification, even to the confusion of justification and sanctification. This has resulted in

the belief in an infused righteousness [*justitia infusa*] rather than an imputed righteousness [*justitia imputata*].

It must be remembered that the Bible is the inscripturated Word of God. As such, it is inspired, infallible, inerrant and the ultimate authority. As the very Word of God, it is necessarily coherent [does not contain any inherent contradictions]. Any seeming contradictions are the result of human misunderstanding and doctrinal prejudice.

The following contrasts and comparisons reveal the respective emphases of James and Paul, and their compatibility:

- James wrote the first New Testament Scripture (c. 44 AD). Paul's first epistle was to the Galatians (c. 48 AD).²²⁵ Thus, the writing of James was some years prior to that of Paul. James wrote to Jewish Christians, some of whose profession of faith was merely traditional, without true substance, and contradicted by their conduct. Paul wrote to Gentile believers who had fallen prey to Judaizers who taught that one must become a Jew in order to become a Christian, i.e., sought to bring them under the bondage of the law (e.g., Acts 15:1).²²⁶

Thus, the religio-cultural situations, reasons for writing, and the readers were diverse. James is dealing primarily with faith; Paul primarily with justification.

- James denounces a dead faith; Paul writes concerning the necessity of a living faith. James describes what a living faith is as evidenced in the life and experience; Paul writes concerning faith as the instrumental means in justification.

²²⁵ The Epistle to the Galatians was written after his first missionary journey (Acts 13:2–14:27), during which he evangelized in the region of Southern Galatia and established churches.

²²⁶ The references to “the law” in the Epistle to the Galatians are not always to the Moral Law, but often are inclusive of circumcision and other Jewish rites. Antinomianism can find no sure footing in this epistle.

- James writes against antinomianism, which, while professing faith, either lacked its necessary fruit or was consonant with ungodliness. Paul writes against legalism, which sought justification either through a works–righteousness [self–righteousness, law–keeping], or a combination of both faith and works.
- The concern of James was with faith and its manifestation by good works. The concern of Paul was with the instrumental means of justification, which is through faith alone. Good works are the evidences of our faith and of justification, but never their cause.
- The emphasis of James is that we are saved by faith alone, but by a faith that does not stand alone. The emphasis of Paul is that we are justified by faith alone. In other places Paul states that this faith is not alone, but “works by love,” i.e., evidences itself as a living faith (Gal. 5:6). Both James and Paul decry a “dead” faith, and hold that true faith must evidence itself in good works (Jas. 2:14, 18, 26; Titus 3:8).
- James speaks of justifying our faith before men. Paul speaks of our justification before God. “Faith justifieth our persons, but works justify our faith, and declare us to be justified before men, who cannot see nor know our faith but by our works.”²²⁷
- Both James and Paul point to Abraham as the great example of justification by faith, and by a faith that evidences itself in good works (Jas. 2:21–24; Rom. 4:1–3, 9–22). The issue is the juxtaposition of two incidents in Abraham’s life. Paul points to Gen. 15:6, which focuses on the faith of Abraham apart from any and all his subsequent works. James points to the act of faith in the

²²⁷ Thomas Vincent, *The Shorter Catechism Explained from Scripture*, p. 94.

offering up of Isaac, which occurred about twenty–five years later.

Thus Paul, using Abraham as an example, emphasizes justification by faith alone, and James, using Abraham as an example, emphasizes that justifying faith evidences itself in acts of faith, i.e., good works.

The “New Perspective on Paul”

The “New Perspective on Paul,”²²⁸ which became an issue in the 1970s, is the culmination of over a century of studies in Pauline Theology [the theological distinctives of the Apostle Paul] and a subsequent departure from essential truths. This movement began with an investigation of first century Judaism [“Second Temple Judaism”], concluding that it had been caricatured by Lutheran and Reformation Theology with their doctrine of a forensic justification by faith alone, contrasted with an alleged legalistic Judaism, which maintained a works–righteousness.

Major doctrines have been re–cast in Pauline Theology: e.g., Paul was not converted on the Road to Damascus, he simply had a call to include the Gentiles in the covenant people of God. The “law” in Paul’s writings included circumcision, Sabbath and dietary laws—markers for Jewish covenant distinctiveness—and was not a polemic against a works–righteousness, but against a Jewish exclusiveness.

As the covenant–people of God was now to include the Gentiles, everything must be seen in the context of this covenant of grace [“covenantal nomism”], including the gospel, evangelism, baptism and justification. The “gospel” consists of community inclusion and Christ’s Lordship, not salvation.

²²⁸ This term was coined by James D. G. Dunn, one of its leading advocates. Other leading individuals are: E. P. Sanders, N. T. Wright and Norman Shepherd. These men have furthered their influence through their writings, articles, commentaries and lectures as authors and seminary professors.

Baptism has been elevated by some within this movement to a regenerative sacrament [baptismal regeneration]. Justification is seen as essentially ecclesiastical [church or covenant-related] rather than soteriological [salvation related].

Justification by faith is synonymous with justification by faithfulness, i.e., living in terms of the covenant, or one may become unjustified—a doctrine of an infused righteousness by an admixture of faith and works rather than an imputed righteousness. This is in reality a return to Rome.

Other major doctrines have been adversely affected. Strangely, this “New Perspective” has made great inroads into Reformed Theology, and continues as the greatest debate in Pauline Theology today.

The “Federal Vision”

This new departure from orthodox and Reformed theology is closely related to “The New Perspective on Paul,” and also represents a radical departure from the biblical and historic doctrine of justification by faith. John M. Otis of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the U.S. summarizes this movement:

The errors of the Federal Vision can be summarized as follows: Entrance into God’s covenant is objective via our water baptism....The term “elect” applies corporately to those who are objectively in the covenant. Water baptism is the distinguishing mark of those who constitute the elect of God. Our water baptism, be it infant baptism or adult baptism constitutes true union with Christ, meaning that we have all of the saving graces at our baptism.

Since we are in genuine union with Christ at our baptism and since apostasy is a real warning in Scripture, those who renounce the Faith or who live rebellious lives with regard to God’s commandments can lose their salvation. This means that one loses his initial justification. There is a final justification that must be maintained by faithful obedience to God’s Law throughout one’s lifetime.

Justification is seen in terms of “obedient faith” or as “faithfulness.” Good works are not merely the genuine fruit or evidence of saving faith; [they are] seen as the essence of faith. We are justified by covenant faithfulness, and

justification is progressive in the sense that we will be declared justified on the Day of Judgment as long as we did not apostatize during our lifetime.²²⁹

Justification and Christian Experience

Modern Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christianity is characterized by the precedence of subjective religious experience over propositional doctrinal truth. Such theological terms as justification being “a forensic declaration,” the death of our Lord being a “satisfaction,” or even the term “justification” itself seem to mean little in our day. Truth must always have the precedence, and the emotions or subjective religious experience ought to occur within this context, i.e., in a cause and effect relationship. If not, error and heresy will soon follow.

Although justification is a declarative and constitutive act on the part of God as Divine Judge, and is not at all an experience, yet it is inherently experience-related. In what way? One illustration will suffice. In Rom. 5:1–5 the Apostle Paul relates justification by faith to our conscious relationship to God through the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ, immediate access to God in prayer and communion, to our certain anticipation of future glory, our present experience with its trials, patience, hope and the abundant, blessed consciousness of Divine love.

Although justification itself is not an experience, it is determinative of our experience, i.e., contemplating, realizing our standing before God—our peace with God—logically leads us to rejoice in our Christian experience. This ought to be true in the relation of all doctrinal truth to our experience.

²²⁹ John M. Otis, *Danger in the Camp: An Analysis of the Heresies of the Federal Vision*, p. 29. A view espoused by the Auburn Ave. Presbyterian Church Affirmation and Pastor Steve Wilkins, and popularized through the writings of Doug Wilson, Editor of *Credenda/Aggenda*.

The Historical Method The Method Discussed

God gave us the Bible largely in the form of redemptive history. A sense and knowledge of history is especially necessary for the study of some portions of Scripture. Indeed, an understanding of the principle of progressive revelation forms one's basic hermeneutical approach to Scripture at the very outset, determining if one is hermeneutically Dispensational or Covenantal.

It is necessary to note the historical circumstances (and thus the religious, cultural and political contexts) in which any book was written. This is absolutely essential when studying any prophetic book, as the prophets wrote in the context of their own time and circumstances. Words may change in meaning, even within the time-frame of Scripture. Customs may also change with time.

Thus, it is sometimes necessary to focus on a given time-frame within Scripture to properly deal with a given passage, reference, custom or emphasis.

The Method Illustrated A Bible Chronology

The following historical study we suggest as an exercise for the personal use of the student as part of his basic Bible study. This is the primary and most elementary historical study of the Scriptures—the construction of a biblical chronology.

The most elementary and yet necessary historical work the Bible student can and must do is to arrange the various books of the Bible in a chronological order. The order of the development of a Bible Chronology which we would suggest proceeds along the following lines:

- Arrange the books of the Bible in a chronological order, giving the time-frame or dates for each book. Begin with the Old Testament and end with the New. It must be noted

that, although Moses wrote the first biblical books, biblical history properly begins with creation.

- After the books have been chronologically arranged, make a workbook in which there are several columns. One for the books of the Bible, one for important persons and incidents, and one for extra-biblical person and events. Leave sufficient space for further notes.
- The various historical elements, persons and issues can be added until a very complete Bible Chronology has been accomplished. It is essential to place the various prophetic books in conjunction with the history of the nation and kings of Judah and Israel, thus coordinating the prophecies with the reigns of the various kings, etc.
- A New Testament Chronology is helpful to trace the development of and distinctions within the various aspects or emphases of doctrine through the human authors.
- Finally, as one studies over the years, extra-biblical persons and events ought to be added, until a general historical perspective takes shape. For the serious student, a chronology of Church History would serve as a necessary and later companion.
- There are various helps which contain technical materials and explore the diverse views for the student's consideration. These will serve to acquaint the student with aspects of the biblical sciences from a conservative perspective and expose him to works that will heighten his discernment.

Note: This gives the student opportunity to be exposed to the false presuppositions and resultant theories of the rationalistic critics, which must be known and defeated. There are also conservative chronological or dating issues concerning the completion of the New Testament canon as to whether it was completed before or after 70 A.D. E.g., the dating for the Epistle to the Galatians. Did Paul evangelize in southern Galatia or northern Galatia?

If the former, then the epistle ought to be dated about 48–49 A.D., if the latter, then about 57 A.D. The “Southern Galatian” theory now holds preeminence over the older, “Northern Galatian” theory, which makes Galatians probably the first of Paul’s epistles, and second in the New Testament to the Epistle of James (c. 44 AD).

The following Chronology may serve as an example. This Biblical Chronology is basic. The dates are approximate.²³⁰ Its major purpose is to correlate the books of the Bible with their historical context in relation to prophets, kings and events with sufficient information to be adequate for biblical study.

Note: This chronology encompasses dates and persons of interest from Creation to the end of the First Century AD. A chronology of the Life of Christ is considered separately in a following study.

It is arranged in two columns from creation to the Mosaic era, then three columns beginning with the Pentateuch and continuing through the New Testament: the right is concerned with the order of the books of the Bible, the center with biblical events and persons, and the left with extra-biblical events and persons.²³¹

Old Testament Chronology (Creation–397 BC)

Extra-Biblical and Ancient Civilizations and Persons	Biblical Events and Persons
---	--------------------------------

²³⁰ There are several standard works which give a conservative dating of most biblical events and persons. These vary to a given degree, but are generally within a year to a decade in agreement.

²³¹ The following factors determine Biblical chronology: (1) The veracity of the inspired Scriptures (The major chronological passages are: Gen. 4:3–32; 11:10–32; 15:13–16; Numb. 14:32–34; Acts 13:20; 1 Kgs. 6:1; the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles; Jer. 25:11–12; Dan. 9:1–2, 24–26.). (2) The correlation of Hebrew dating and the coregency of the Hebrew kings. (3) Archaeological data. (4) Contemporary and extra-biblical history. The dates are thus approximate.

Primeval History:
Creation–The Call of Abraham

(Creation–2086 BC)

	Creation (Gen. 1–2)
	The Fall (Gen. 3)
Antediluvian civilizations of Cain and Seth (Gen. 4–6)	
	The Flood (Gen. 7–8)
Ancient Sumerian (Mesopotamian) and Egyptian Civilizations (4000–2000)	
	Tower of Babel and Dispersion of the Nations (Gen. 10–11)
Yao Dynasty in China (–2300)	
Sun Dynasty in China (2300–2205)	
Old Egyptian Kingdom (c. 2,000) (First–Sixth Dynasties)	Job (?)
First of the Hsai Dynasties in China (2200–1760)	
Cheops Pyramid, The Great Sphinx (c. 2500)	
	Call of Abraham (Gen. 12) (c. 2086)
Middle Egyptian Kingdom (2,000) (11–12 Dynasties)	

Patriarchal History: Call of Abraham–Exodus

(2086–1441 BC)

	Abraham (2166–1991) (Gen. 11:26– 25:10)
Ancient Hittite Kingdom (c. 2000–1500)	
The Code of Hammurabi (“Amraphel” of Gen. 14:1) Babylonian Monarch	
	Isaac (2066–1886) (Gen. 21:3– 35:29)
	Jacob (2006–1859) (Gen. 25:26– 49:33)
	The Twelve Patriarchs (Gen. 29:32– 50:26)
	Life of Joseph (1915–1805) Journey to Egypt (Gen. 37:1–50:26)

ERA OF THE UNIFIED KINGDOM (1051–931)
 Theocratic Rule Rejected, Saul Chosen as king
 Saul (1051–1011)
 David (1011–971)

RUTH
I & II SAMUEL
PSALMS²³³

Solomon (971–931)

SONG OF SOLOMON
ECCLESIASTES
PROVERBS

Beginnings of Pantheistic Brahmanism
 in India (1000–900)

The Era of The Divided Kingdom (931–721)

The Accession of Rehoboam (931): the Nation Divided into
 Judah and Israel (Cf. 1 Kgs. 12:16)²³⁴

The KINGS OF JUDAH and The KINGS OF ISRAEL²³⁵

Rehoboam (931–913) Jeroboam (931–910)

Ministries of Shemiah,²³⁶ Iddo,²³⁷ Ahijah²³⁸

and Two Unnamed Prophets²³⁹

Abijah (915–911)

Nadab (910–909)

Assyrian Empire (910–607)

Asa (911–870)

Baasha (909–886)

²³³ The Psalter is basically Davidic, with some Psalms written previously by Moses and inserted. Later Psalms were by some of the Levitical Singers, Hezekiah and some were post-exilic.

²³⁴ The country of the Northern Kingdom and the capitol city are often called “Samaria” in 1 & 2 Kings.

²³⁵ The kings of Judah occur to the left of center; the kings of Israel, to the right of center. Judah, the Southern Kingdom, had only one dynasty—Davidic. Israel, the Northern Kingdom had 9 dynasties and fell to the Syrians in 721 BC.

²³⁶ Shemiah. Cf. 2 Chron. 11:2–4; 12:5–7, 15.

²³⁷ Iddo the Seer. Cf. 2 Chron. 9:29; 12:15; 13:22.

²³⁸ Ahijah the Shilonite. Cf. 1 Kgs. 11:29–39; 14:1–18.

²³⁹ The Man of God from Judah and the old prophet from Bethel. Cf. 1 Kgs. 13:1–32; 2 Kgs. 23:18.

Ministries of Azariah,²⁴⁰ Hannani,²⁴¹ Jehu,²⁴² Jahaziel,²⁴³
 and Eliezer²⁴⁴
 Jehoshaphat (872–848) Elah (886–885)
 Ministry of Elijah (870–850)²⁴⁵
 Ministries of 100 Unnamed Prophets²⁴⁶ and Miciah²⁴⁷
 Jehoram (853–841) Zimri (885)
 Assurbanipul (885–860)
 Shalmaneser II (860–825)
 Ahaziah (841) Omri (885–874)
 Ahab (874–853)
 Ministry of Elisha²⁴⁸
 Ministry of Unnamed Prophets²⁴⁹
 Athaliah (841–835) Ahaziah (853–852)
 Homer, Greek Poet (840)
 Jehoram [Joram]
 (852–841)
 Ministry of Joel (845–791) **JOEL**
 Joash [Jehoash] (835–796) Jehu (841–814)
 Amaziah (796–767) Jehoahaz (814–798)
 Ministries of Unnamed Prophets²⁵⁰
 Azariah [Uzziah] (792–740) Jehoash [Joash] (798–782)

²⁴⁰ Azariah the son of Oded. Cf. 2 Chron. 15:1, 8.

²⁴¹ Hanani. Cf. 2 Chron. 1`6:7–10.

²⁴² Jehu the son of Hanani. Cf. 1 Kgs. 16:1–7; 2 Chron. 19:2–3.

²⁴³ Jahaziel. Cf. 2 Chron. 20:14–17.

²⁴⁴ Eliezer. Cf. 2 Chron. 20:37.

²⁴⁵ Elijah. Cf. 1 Kgs. 17:1–21:29; 2 Kgs. 1:1–2:14.

²⁴⁶ 100 unnamed prophets. Cf. 1 Kgs. 18:18:4, 13, 20, 28, 35–43.

²⁴⁷ Miciah the son of Imlah. Cf. 1 Kgs. 19:19–21; 2 Chron. 18:7–27.

²⁴⁸ Elisha. Cf. 1 Kgs. 19:16, 19–21; 2 Kgs. 2:1–25; 3:11–19; 4:1–9:3; 13:14–21.

²⁴⁹ Unnamed prophets. Cf. 1 Kgs. 20:13–14, 22, 35–42; 2 Kgs. 9:1–10.

²⁵⁰ Two unnamed prophets sent to Amaziah. Cf. 2 Chron. 25:7–9, 15–16.

	Ministry of Zechariah ²⁵¹	
	Jeroboam II (793–753)	
Ministry of Jonah (790–750)		JONAH
Jotham (750–732)	Zechariah (753–752)	
	Shallum (752)	
Ministry of Amos (780–740)		AMOS
	Menahem	
	(752–742)	
Founding of Rome (753)		
Tiglath–pileser III Subjugates Syria, Philistia and Samaria (747–727)		
	Ministry of Hosea (760–720)	HOSEA
		Pekahiah (742–740)
	Ministry of Oded ²⁵²	
		Pekah (736–732)
Ahaz (735–716)		Hoshea (732–722)
Shalmaneser IV (727–722)		
	Ministry of Isaiah (755–695)	ISAIAH
	Ministry of Micah (751–697)	MICAH
Sargon II (722–705)		

Era of The Isolated Kingdom (721–586 BC)

The Assyrian captivity of the Northern Kingdom (721)		
	Hezekiah (716–687) ²⁵³	
		Ministry of Micah the Horasthite ²⁵⁴
Sennacherib (705–681)		
	Manasseh (697–643)	

²⁵¹ Zechariah. Not to be confused with the later Zechariah of the Restoration Era who wrote the prophetic book of Zechariah. Cf. 2 Chron. 26:5.

²⁵² Oded the prophet. Cf. 2 Chron. 28:9–11.

²⁵³ Note that seeming discrepancies in the chronologies of the Kings is due to co–regency, i.e., in several instances a king’s successor would reign simultaneously as co–regent Cf. 2 Kgs. 15:1–7 (called “Azariah”) and 2 Chron. 26:1–23).

²⁵⁴ Micah the Horasthite. Cf. Jer. 26:17–19.

Ministries of Unnamed Prophets²⁵⁵

Esar–Haddon (681–668)

Amon (643–641)

Josiah (641–609)

Huldah the prophetess²⁵⁶

Nabopolassar (625–604)

Ministry of Zephaniah (639–608) **ZEPHANIAH**Ministry of Nahum (630–610) **NAHUM**Ministry of Jeremiah (626–586) **JEREMIAH**

Jehoahaz (609)

Jehoiakim (609–598)²⁵⁷Ministry of Urijah²⁵⁸

Neo–Babylonian Empire (607–536)

Nebuchadnezzar II (606–561)

Mayan Civilization in Mexico (600–500)

Battle of Carchemish (605)²⁵⁹Ministry of Habakkuk (608–586) **HABAKKUK**

Final destruction of Nineveh and Assyrian

Empire (612–605)

Nebuchadnezzar Conquers Jerusalem (606) (2 Kgs. 24;

2 Chron. 36)

Jehoiachin (598–597)

Zedekiah (597–586)

Babylonians return to Jerusalem (597)

LAMENTATIONS

Era of Captivity (606–536 BC)

Thales and the pre–Socratic Greek philosophers (585–)

²⁵⁵ Unnamed prophets in the time of Manasseh. Cf. 2 Kgs. 21:10; 2 Chron. 33:10.

²⁵⁶ Huldah the prophetess. Cf. 2 Kgs. 22:14–20; 2 Chron. 34:22–28.

²⁵⁷ Judah came under Babylonian control in 606 BC. The final deportment and destruction of Jerusalem occurred in 586 BC.

²⁵⁸ Urijah the son of Shemaiah. Cf. Jer. 26:20–23.

²⁵⁹ At the Battle of Carchemish (Jer. 48:2; 2 Chron. 35:20), Nebuchadnezzar II defeated Pharaoh Necho, breaking the Egyptian power on whom the Kings of Judah trusted.

Pythagoras, Greek Philosopher (582–510)
 City, Walls and Temple in Jerusalem Destroyed
 (586)
 Ministry of Obadiah (586–582)²⁶⁰ **OBADIAH**
 Ministry of Ezekiel (597–570) **EZEKIEL**
 Guatama Buddha [Sakyamuni] (563–483?)
 Jews in Babylon (586–536)²⁶¹
 Evil–Merodach (561–560)
 Nabonidus (555–536)
 Ministry of Daniel (606–534) **DANIEL**
 Confucius (551–479)
 Medo–Persian Empire (538–330)
 Cyrus (538–529)
 Cyrus Decrees to Rebuild Jerusalem and Temple (538)

Era of Restoration (536–397 BC)

I & II KINGS
I & II CHRONICLES²⁶²

Return under Zerubbabel (536)
 Foundation of Temple Laid
 Cambyses (529–522)
 Opposition by Samaritans
 Ministry of Haggai (520) **HAGGAI**

²⁶⁰ The date for Obadiah could be either c. 848 BC or c. 586 BC, as there are at least four possible and two probable situations that correlate to his prophecy concerning Edom, i.e., the Ishmaelites. Some consider him identical with the Obadiah of 1 Kgs. 18:3, and so argue for an earlier date. Most conservative scholarship positions him as post–exilic.

²⁶¹ The Babylonian Captivity from the final deportation (586) to the return of the Remnant under Zerubbabel (536) was approximately 51 years, not 70. Cf. Jer. 25:11–12; 29:10 and Dan. 9:2. The answer is that Jer. 29:10 reads לְבָבֶל (l^ebabel) “for Babylon,” rather than “at Babylon.” Judah was to be under Babylonian dominion for 70 years, which included the total time from the first conquest under Nebuchadnezzar II in 606 BC.

²⁶² These works were compiled from extant existing records that had been kept by official court chronologists and prophets during the Monarchical era.

- Ministry of Zechariah (520–51) **ZECHARIAH**
 Temple Completed (516)
- Darius I [Hystaspes] (521–48)
- Persian Wars: Battle of Marathon (490–449)
- Zeno, Greek Philosopher (b. 490)
- Xerxes [Ahasuerus] (485–465)
- Protagoras, Greek Dramatist (484)
- Battles of Thermopylae and Salamis (482–480)
- Herodotus, Greek “Father of History” (485–424)
- Events of Esther (478–465) **ESTHER**
- Artaxerxes I [Longimanus] (465–425)
- Return under Ezra (457) **EZRA**
- Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls of Jerusalem (444–422) **NEHEMIAH**
- Socrates, Greek Philosopher (471–399)
- Pericles (466–429)
- Peloponnesian Wars between Athens
 and Sparta (431–404)
- Ministry of Malachi (450–397) **MALACHI**
- Plato, Greek Philosopher (427–347)
- Hypocrates (420)
- Darius II [Nothius] (423–405)

The Intertestamental Era (c. 538–6 BC)

This era extends from the close of the Old Testament to the beginning of the New Testament. Much New Testament history depended on what occurred during this era.

The Persian Period (C. 538–331 BC)

The reigns of the Persian Kings Artaxerxes I (Longimanus, c. 465–424), Darius I (Darius, c. 424–404) and Artaxerxes II (Arsaces, c. 404–358) and the Book of Malachi (450?–397) end Old Testament history, the prophetic literature and the Hebrew canon.

Plato, Greek philosopher (c. 427–347).

Aristotle, Greek philosopher (384–322).

Revolt of Persian Jews against Artaxerxes III (c. 350).

The Persian Achaemenid Empire under Darius III (336–330) fell to the forces of the Greeks under Alexander the Great (336–323) at

Battle of Arbela [Guagamela] (331).

Zeno, Greek Philosopher (336–264)

The Greek Period (C. 331–37 BC)

The conquests of Alexander the Great meant the spread of the Greek language across the Near and Middle East. Even then Divine Providence was preparing the world for the gospel.

Demosthenes, Greek orator (d. 322).

Alexander dies at Babylon (c. 323). His kingdom is partitioned among his four generals. [The *Diadochi*]. Civil war erupts among the generals: Rise of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid powers.

The Ptolemaic Period (c. 331–198 BC)²⁶³

Epicurus, Greek Philosopher (342–270)

Alexandria in Egypt becomes center of Greek Learning under the Ptolemy Soter (c. 307).²⁶⁴

Rise of the Roman Republic and Roman military power (c. 290).

Archimedes, Greek Mathematician (287–212)

Hebrew Old Testament translated into Greek [LXX] (c. 246)²⁶⁵

The Great Wall of China Begun (214)

²⁶³ The Ptolemies were Egyptian–Greek rulers. The Seleucids were Syrian–Greek rulers over Palestine.

²⁶⁴ There were three centers of learning in the ancient world: Athens in Greece, Tarsus in Cilicia and Alexandria in Egypt. Athens was the birthplace of Greek philosophy. Tarsus was the birthplace and home of the Apostle Paul. Alexandria would have its greatest influence in the allegorical approach to scriptural interpretation borrowed from the pagan Greeks, imported into Judaism through Aristobulus and Philo, and then into Christianity through the Patristic writings.

²⁶⁵ The Septuagint was the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Κοινή, [common] Greek by Alexandrian Jews for the Ptolemaic rulers. An ancient tradition states that seventy (70–72?) scribes in seventy days independently made seventy identical translations of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. Thus, the traditional designation for the Septuagint is LXX. This was the “Bible” of the common people during the intertestamental era and the time of the New Testament and Apostolic Christianity. Later editions contained the Old Testament or Jewish Apocrypha. Old Testament quotations by New Testament writers are either from the Heb., the LXX, or a free rendering of either.

The Seleucid Period (c. 198–166 BC)

Antiochus IV [Epiphanes] (175–164) and the profanation of Temple at Jerusalem.

The Jewish *Apocrypha* and *Pseudopigrapha* were written during this era (c. 300–100)

Beginning of Roman domination after defeat of Perseus at Pydna (c. 168).

The Hasmonean Period (c. 166–67 BC)²⁶⁶

Mattathias (166)

Judas Maccabeus (166–161)

Aristobolus, the first Jewish allegorist (c. 160)²⁶⁷

Jonathan (161–144)

Rise of Jewish Sects: the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes²⁶⁸

Brief period of Jewish independence (110–63)

Simon Thassi [Maccabeus] (144–135)

Samaritan Temple Destroyed by John Hyrcanus (135–104) in 106

Cicero, Roman Statesman and Orator (106–43)

The Roman Period (c. 67–6 BC)

Gaius Julius Caesar Assassinated (44)

Virgil, Roman poet (70–19)

Horace, Roman poet (65–8)

Herod the Great (Idumean) (40–4)

Herodian Rule under Rome (40 BC–70 AD)

The Roman Republic becomes the Roman Empire (c. 27 BC).

²⁶⁶ The revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes was successful. The rededication of the Second Temple was celebrated by Hanukkah, the “Feast of Lights” or “Dedication.”

²⁶⁷ Jewish allegorical interpretation, begun with Aristobolus, reached its systemization and height with Philo. This hermeneutical method was later adopted by the Church Fathers.

²⁶⁸ “Pharisee,” from the Gk. φαρισαῖοι (from the Pers. fr; פְּרָשֵׁי, “to separate”), “separated ones,” the orthodox among the Jewish sects. “Sadducee,” from. Heb. צַדִּיק; (*tsadiyk*) “righteous.” These were the rationalists of that day. “Essene,” of uncertain origin, but possibly meant “holy ones.” These were ascetics and mystics who lived in cenobitic [monastical] communals along the Dead Sea.

Philo the Jew, Alexandrian philosopher (30 BC–40 AD)
 Battle of Actium: Mark Anthony and Cleopatra Defeated. Egypt becomes a Roman Province (31)
 Caesar Augustus (27 BC–14 AD)
 Rise of the Jewish Zealots who defied Roman Rule²⁶⁹
 Horace, Greek Poet (65–8 BC)
 Herod's Temple Built (20 BC–25 AD)
 Caesar Tiberius (Roman Emperor, 14–37 AD)
 Herod Philip the Tetrarch, Ruler of the Northern Provinces (4 BC–34 AD)
 Herod Antipas, Ruler of Galilee and Perea (4 BC–39 AD)²⁷⁰
 Herod Archelaus, Ruler of Idumea, Samaria and Judea.
 Deposed by Romans (4 BC–6 AD)

Chronology of The New Testament Era
 (6 BC–100 AD)

This age includes both the earthly life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and also the lives and ministries of the inspired Apostles.

Jeshua, Son of See, Jewish High Priest (3 BC–6 AD)
 Death of Herod the Great (c. 4 BC)
 Herod Philip the Tetrarch, Ruler of the Northern Provinces (4 BC–34 AD)
 Herod Antipas, Ruler of Galilee and Perea (4 BC–39 AD)²⁷¹
 Herod Archelaus, Ruler of Idumea, Samaria and Judea (4 BC–6 AD). Deposed by Romans
 The Annunciation and Birth of John the Baptist (6–5 BC)
 The Annunciation and Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (c. 4–6 BC)
 Joazar, Son of Boethus, Jewish High Priest (6 AD)

²⁶⁹ The Zealots were not an open political party, but were extremists and terrorists who sought to assassinate Roman soldiers and dignitaries. One of our Lord's disciples, Simon Zelotes [the zealot] (Lk. 6:15; Acts 1:13), had been of this group.

²⁷⁰ Herod Philip and Herod Antipas were sons of Herod the Great and ruled in various parts of Judea and Galilee during the earthly life and ministry of our Lord.

²⁷¹ Herod Philip and Herod Antipas were sons of Herod the Great and ruled in various parts of Judea and Galilee during the earthly life and ministry of our Lord.

- Annas, Son of Seth, Jewish High Priest (6–15)
- Caesar Tiberius, Roman Emperor (14–37)
 - Ishmael, Son of Phiabi I, Jewish High Priest (15–16)
 - Eleazar, Son of Annas, Jewish High Priest (16–17)
 - Simon, Son of Kami, Jewish High Priest (17–18)
 - Joseph Caiaphas, Jewish High Priest (c. 18–37)
 - The earthly ministry of Jesus the Christ (c. 26–30)
 - Pontius Pilate, Roman Procurator of Judea (26–36)
 - Jonathan, Son of Annas, Jewish High Priest (36–37)
- Caligula (Gaius), Roman Emperor (37–41)
 - Theophilus, Son of Annas, Jewish High Priest (37–41)
- Caligula ordered his statue placed in the Jerusalem Temple. Procrastination by Petronius and Caligula's death prevented this and a Jewish uprising (41)
 - Simon Kantheras, Son of Boethus, Jewish High Priest (41–42)
- Claudius Caesar, Roman Emperor (41–54)
 - King Herod Agrippa I, Procurator of Palestine (41–44)
 - Spread of the gospel through the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul and others (c. 33–63)
 - Matthias, Son of Annas, Jewish High Priest (42–43)
 - Elioenai, Son of Kantheras, Jewish High Priest (43–44)
 - Joseph, Son of Kami, Jewish High Priest (c. 443–47)
 - Ananias, Son of Nebedaius, Jewish High Priest (c. 47–58)
 - Marcus Antonius Felix, Roman Procurator of Palestine (52–60)
- Claudius commands all Jews to leave Rome (c. 54)
- Nero, Roman Emperor (54–68)
 - Ishmael, Son of Phiabi II, Jewish High Priest (58–60)
 - Porcius Festus, Roman Procurator of Palestine (c. 60–62)
 - Joseph Kabi, Jewish High Priest (60–62)
 - Ananus, Son of Ananus, Jewish High Priest (62)
 - Jesus, Son of Damnaeus, Jewish High Priest (62–63)
 - Jeshua, Son of Gamaliel, Jewish High Priest (63–65)
 - Herod Agrippa II (Marcus Julius Agrippa). Last of the Herodian Kings (c. 28–93)
 - First Roman State persecution of Christians (c. 64–68). Paul imprisoned, first at Caesarea, then at Rome.
 - Matthias, Son of Theophilus, Jewish High Priest (65–67)
 - Phinehas of Habta, Jewish High Priest (67–70)
- Galba, Roman Emperor (68–69)
- Otho and Vitellius, Roman Emperors (68–69)

- The Jewish War and destruction of the Temple (68–70)
 Vespasian Roman Emperor (69–79)
 The Jewish final stand and mass suicide at Masada (c. 73–74)
 Titus, Roman Emperor (79–81)
 Domitian, Roman Emperor (81–96)
 Nerva, Roman Emperor (96–98)
 Trajan, Roman Emperor (98–117)
 Hadrian, Roman Emperor (117–138)
 The final Jewish *Bar Kochbah* rebellion and end of Jewish national life (c. 132–135)²⁷²

Chronology of The Apostolic Age

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| I. The Messianic Era (26–30 AD) | |
| A. The Year of Obscurity | (26–27) |
| B. The Year of Opportunity | (27–28) |
| C. The Year of Opposition | (29–30) |
| II. The Apostolic Era (30–100 AD) | |
| A. The Era of Transition | (30–48) |
| B. The Era of Expansion | (48–64) |
| C. The Era of Persecution | (64–100) |
-

Contemporary Events
and Persons

Events and Persons Connected
with Church History

Messianic Era (26–30 AD)

This period of history properly commences with the events leading to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ministry of John the Baptist and the baptism and public ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note: Chronological data on the earthly life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ may be obtained from: Loraine Boettner, *A Harmony of the Gospels*; Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*; F. W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*; John Peter Lange, *The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ*; A. T.

²⁷² From the time of the Persian Empire there were repeated Jewish rebellions. The only one successful in gaining religious freedom was the Maccabean revolt. Most revolts were smaller in scope and crushed by the existing powers (e.g., Lk. 23:18–19, 25; Acts 5:34–37; 21:38). The final *Bar-Kochba* ["Son of the Star," Numb. 24:17–19] revolt ended with the destruction of Jewish national life.

Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels*; W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*.

Note: The chronology of the Messianic Era is detailed separately under a Harmony of the Gospels and a Chronology of the life of Christ at the conclusion of this section.

Apostolic Era (30–100 AD)

This period of history extends from the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to the end of the Apostolic Era or the end of the first century AD.

Era of Transition (30–48 AD)

Pentecost and the empowering of the N.T. Church
(30)²⁷³

Martyrdom of Stephen (33–35?)

Conversion of Saul (34–37?)²⁷⁴

Gaius (Caligula) Roman Emperor (37–41)

Marcellus, Roman Procurator (38)

Britain becomes a Roman province (43)

Primitive Christianity introduced into Britain (c.43)

Herod Agrippa I (37–44)

Epistle of James (44–46)²⁷⁵

Maryllus, Roman Procurator (39–44)

Claudius, Roman Emperor (41–54)

²⁷³ The Lord Jesus Christ instituted His church during His earthly ministry. The New Testament church had every essential before Pentecost. Pentecost was the empowering or credentialing of the already-existing New Testament church.

²⁷⁴ Chronological data on the life and missionary work of the Apostle Paul may be obtained from: W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, and F. W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*. A study on the Apostolic churches and doctrine may be found in Augustus Neander, *History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles*.

²⁷⁵ Invaluable data on the order, historical circumstances and content of the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament may be found in most standard New Testament Surveys and Introductions. See Bibliography.

- Martyrdom of James the Greater
(son of Zebedee) (c. 44)
- Cuspius Fadus, Roman Procurator (45–46)
Era of Expansion (48–64 AD)
- Tiberius Alexander, Roman Procurator (48)
- Ventidius Cumanus, Roman Procurator (49–52)
Paul's First Missionary Journey (48)
Epistle to the Galatians (48–49)²⁷⁶
- Herod Agrippa II (50–93)
The Jerusalem Conference (51)²⁷⁷
Paul's Second Missionary Journey (51)
**Epistles of 1 & 2 Thessalonians
(51–52)**
- M. Antonius Felix (Roman Procurator, 3–59)
Gospel of Mark (50–55)
Paul's Third Missionary Journey (53)
Philip the Apostle bound & stoned at
Hierapolis in Phrygia (c.54)
**Epistles of 1 & 2 Corinthians
(53–57)**
- Nero, Roman Emperor (54–68)
Epistle to the Romans (58)
Paul imprisoned at Caesarea (58–60)
Gospel of Luke (58–61)
- Porcius Festus, Roman Procurator (60–61)
Martyrdom of James the Just (61)
Paul taken as prisoner to Rome (61–63)

²⁷⁶ The date of the Galatian Epistle is determined by the usage of the term "Galatia." if referring to the whole province, then the "Churches of Galatia" would refer to the area of his first missionary journey (the "Southern Galatian" theory). This view, which internal evidence seems to substantiate, would necessitate the earlier date.

²⁷⁷ This is traditionally referred to as the "First Church Council" in an ecumenical sense. It was rather a church conference between the churches at Jerusalem and Antioch. Although the Apostles were present, there was no ecclesiastical hierarchy or court, rather a discussion and conclusion. The Apostles did *not decree* anything, but *requested* the compliance of Gentile Christians in certain matters pertaining to immorality, idolatry and diet (Cf. Acts 15).

**Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians,
Philippians, Philemon (60–63)**

Book of Acts (63)

Albinus, Roman Procurator (62–65)

Gospel of Matthew (60–66)

Paul's release from first Roman
imprisonment (63)²⁷⁸

**Epistles of 1 Timothy & Titus
(63–64)**

Era of Persecution (64–100 AD)

Note: It is remarkable that the latter part of the first century AD is virtually unknown to historians except in the most general terms. Such lack of historical detail must be considered in the context of the political unrest in the Roman Empire, the frequent transitions in leadership, and destruction of records. This is especially true with regard to matters of Church History. Much information rests on early tradition. Records of the martyrs were preserved and later generations venerated them. Many church records were destroyed during the Imperial persecutions of 303–310 AD.

The Great Fire in Rome and first persecution of Christians under Nero. Believers ravaged by beasts, crucified, used for human torches in Roman celebrations (64)

Barnabas martyred (burned to death) at Salamia in
Cyprus (64)

Annaeus Seneca, Roman statesman,
Stoic Philosopher (5 BC–65 AD)

**Epistles of 1 & 2 Peter, Hebrews,
Jude and 2 Timothy (64–68)**

Gessius Florus, Roman Procurator (66–70)

Martyrdom of John Mark the evangelist (c.68)

Martyrdom of Peter and Paul: Peter (traditionally)
crucified upside down. Paul beheaded (68)

²⁷⁸ There are two views of Paul's imprisonment. Some hold that there was one Roman imprisonment; others that there were two, between which Paul was released and re-visited many of the churches, ministering until the outbreak of the Neronian persecution.

- Aristarchus, Epaphrus, Priscilla, Aquilla, Andronicus & Junia martyred at Rome (c.68)
- Silas martyred at Corinth (c.68)
- Onesiphorus & porphyrius martyred (torn to death) (c.68)
- Andrew the Apostle martyred (crucified) at Patras in Achaia (c.68)
- Bartholomew the Apostle tortured & beheaded in Armenia (68)
- Thomas the Apostle martyred (tortured & burned alive) in Calamina (c.68)
- Matthew the Apostle martyred (tortured & beheaded) in Nad-davar (c.68)
- Simon Zelotes & Judas Thaddeus the Apostles martyred (one crucified, the other beaten to death) (c.68)
- Matthias the Apostle martyred (stoned & beheaded) (c.68)
- Prochorus, Parmenas & Nicanor, 3 of the first deacons martyred (c.68)
- Olympus martyred (c.68)
- Carpus martyred at Troas (c.68)
- Trophimus martyred (beheaded) (c.68)
- Maternus, Egystus & Marianus martyred in Germany (c.68)
- Hermagoras martyred at Aquileia (c.68)
- Onesimus & Dionysius the Areopagite martyred (c.68)
- Civil wars following the death of Nero (68–69) and the Principates of Galba (68–69), Otho (69) and Vitellius (69)
- Vespasian, Roman Emperor (69–79)
 - Apollinaris martyred at Ravenna (c.70)
 - Final revolt of Jewish Zealots and destruction of Jerusalem and Temple (70–72)
- Titus, Roman Emperor (79–81)
- Domitian, Roman Emperor (81–96)
- Flavius Josephus writes his *History of the Jews* (81–96)
 - General persecution of both Jews and Christians in the reign of Domitian (93–96)
 - Luke the evangelist martyred (hanged) (c.93)

Antipas martyred (burned alive) (c.95)

John exiled to Patmos (96)

**The Gospel of John, 1, 2, & 3
John, Revelation (90–98?)²⁷⁹**

Trajan, Roman Emperor (98–117)

Timothy martyred (stoned) at Ephesus (c.98)

Urticinus martyred (beheaded) at Ravenna (c.99)

The martyrs Vitalus (buried alive) & wife (beaten to death) at Milan (c. 99)

A Harmony of The Gospels
and
A Chronology of The Life of Christ

Introduction: A Harmony of the Gospels

The four Gospel records do not lend themselves to either a concise harmony or an exact chronology of the earthly life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since the *Diatessaron* of Tatian (c. 170 AD), countless attempts have been made to arrange a suitable Harmony from the four Gospel records, and yet there remain debated difficulties and differences.²⁸⁰

No one Gospel record is entirely complete in itself. There are definite reasons for this: first, the authors under Divine inspiration were presenting a Person, neither writing biographies nor furnishing their readers with an inclusive account of our Lord's earthly life and ministry.

²⁷⁹ The dating of the Johannine writings is divided between two views: First, the traditional view that John, out-living the other Apostles, wrote his works at the end of his life during the Domitian persecution (c.90–98 AD). Second, the preterist view that the New Testament canon was complete before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. John then wrote his works during the Neronian persecution. Both views have had strong conservative adherents.

²⁸⁰ Most standard works on the Life of Christ include a detailed Harmony of the Gospels and a chronology of events. The older, standard work is A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels for Students of the Life of Christ*, 1922. 305 pp.

Second, the records are fragmentary because the purpose of each writer was to bring the reader to the centrality and finality of our Lord's passion—the trial and suffering, the cross and the resurrection. The development of these Gospel records was more topical and cumulative than chronological. The bulk of each Gospel record deals with the final events of our Lord's life. Thus, the purpose was neither merely historical nor informative, but salvific—and intended for a specific group of readers (e.g., Jn. 20:30–31).

Third, the authors were writing for their contemporaries who would have understood much by way of time, dates, events and circumstances that biblical scholars at this distant time may not. Many of the first-generation believers were still alive (c. 50–63 AD) and there were evidently already many written accounts (Lk. 1:1–4).

Fourth, Although there are chronological markers such as dates and events, these are only approximate due to such issues as calendar variations, the date of the death of Herod the Great, the census of Quirinius (Lk. 2:2), the co-regency of Tiberius before his accession as sole Emperor (Lk. 3:1) and a lack of concern for the exactness of non-critical incidentals (Lk. 3:23). In the following chronology, the Gospel records are harmonized by scriptural references, giving the historical precedence to Mark, followed by Matthew and Luke, then John, as supplemental to the Synoptics.

Introduction: A Chronology of the Life of Christ

The major events which act as chronological markers are: the dates of our Lord's birth; his baptism, which marked the beginning of his ministry; the duration of his ministry and the date of his passion: his suffering, crucifixion, death and resurrection. The duration of our Lord's ministry may be calculated according to the number of Passover Feasts; four Passovers, given or implied in John's Gospel (Jn. 2:13; 5:1;

6:4; 11:55ff),²⁸¹ reveal a ministry of approximately three and a half years, a duration generally accepted by conservative biblical scholars.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand marked the apex of Christ's public and popular ministry; it began to wane from that point onward to the final events (Jn. 6:14–15, 24ff, 66), as he did not fulfill the traditional, popular Messianic expectations of the people—a miracle-working “Bread King” or a military leader to free them from Roman oppression. Further, opposition from the Jewish leaders constantly increased. His public ministry then became more esoteric, teaching more in parables while privately instructing his Disciples. A marked change also took place at Caesarea Philippi in our Lord's private discourses, just prior to his final journey to Jerusalem, as he prepared the Disciples for his passion (Matt. 16:13–21; Mk. 8:27–31; Lk. 9:18–22).

A General Overview

To avoid being inundated by all the events of a detailed chronology of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, an introductory general overview should enable the reader to grasp the general flow of the Gospel records and the earthly life of our Lord. This overview is enlarged in a following chronology.

The Prologue: (Lk. 1:1–4; Jn. 1:1–18)

This was essential to establish Christ's Deity and the purpose of the incarnation. It also revealed the multiplicity of early existing oral and written records of our Lord's life.

I. Thirty Years of Preparation (6 BC–27 AD)

This was essential to establish Christ's Virgin Birth (Matt. 1:18–26; Lk. 1:26–35), the heavenly announcement (Lk. 2:8–14) and proper Davidic lineage (Matt. 1:1–17; Lk. 3:23–38). Essentials considered: the fulfillment of Scripture (Matt. 1:21–

²⁸¹ While almost all conservative biblical scholars hold to a three and a half year ministry, there is disagreement concerning Jn. 5:1, an unnamed feast, possibly referring to a Passover.

25; 2:14–18, 23) and our Lord’s self-consciousness of his true person and purpose (Lk. 2:43–52).

[The Year of Obscurity: Christ begins his public ministry and his fame spreads]

II. Opening Events (27 AD)

The ministry of John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, marking the advent of the long-awaited Messiah and identifying our Lord to the people (Matt. 3:1–17; 11:1–15; 17:10–13; Lk. 3:21–22; 7:28–29; Jn. 1:15, 19–34).

The first Passover and miracles (Jn. 2:11ff).

III. Early Judean Ministry (27 AD)

The first cleansing of the Temple (Jn. 2:13–21), a public Messianic act.

IV. Samaritan Ministry (28 AD)

One of Christ’s greatest receptions and public success was in Samaria (Jn. 4:4–43).

V. Galilean Ministry (28–29 AD)

The greater part of Christ’s ministry was in the area of Galilee, with forays into Syro-Phoenicia, Iturea and areas to the north and into Decapolis to the east.

A. First Period (5 Months)

Second [unnamed] Passover [?] observed at Jerusalem (Jn. 5:1ff).

[The Year of Opportunity: Christ’s ministry expands throughout Galilee and beyond. He begins to encounter opposition from the Jewish leaders]

B. Second Period (One Year)

The Feeding of the Five Thousand and subsequent events (Mk. 6:35–46; Matt. 14:15–23; Lk. 9:12–17; Jn. 6:15) mark the apex of Christ’s public ministry. From this event and his refusal to comply with the popular demand of the people, the record emphasizes the private instructions to the Disciples and more retirement from public life.

Third Passover (Jn. 6:4).

[The Year of Opposition: The encounters with and opposition from the Jewish leaders increase and they seek to destroy him]

C. Third Period (6 Months)

Journeys to the north into Syro-Phoenicia and east into Decapolis.

VI. Later Judean Ministry (30 AD)

VII. Perea Ministry (30 AD)

This final journey to Jerusalem, following the usual pilgrim route on the east side of the Jordan River, marked Christ's ministry in Perea. Luke gives the most detailed account (Lk. 9:51–19:28; Jn. 10:42–44).

VIII. The Closing Events (30 AD)

The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mk. 11:1–11; Matt. 21:1–11, 14–17; Lk. 19:29–40; Jn. 12:12–19).

The second cleansing of the Temple (Mk. 11:15–18; Lk. 19:45–46), a public Messianic act.

Last public discourse: a Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees (Mk. 12:38–40; Matt. 23:1–39; Lk. 20:45–47).

Christ gives final instructions to his Disciples, including the eschatological discourses and the final prophecy of his own death and resurrection (Mk. 13:1–37; Matt. 24:1–25:46; Lk. 21:5–36).

The Final Passover (Jn. 11:55ff), arrest, trial and crucifixion (Mk. 14:1–15:37; Matt. 26:1–27:50; Lk. 22:1–23:46; Jn. 18:1–19:30).

Our Lord's resurrection (Mk. 16:1–15; Matt. 28:1–10; Lk. 24:1–48; Jn. 20:1–20).

IX. Post-Resurrection Confirmations (30 AD)

For forty days after his resurrection the Lord Jesus appeared repeatedly to the Disciples and others of the Christian community, then ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives (Mk. 16:1–20; Matt. 28:1–20; Lk. 24:1–53; Jn. 20:1–21, 25; Acts 1:1–11; 2:31–33; 3:13–15; 5:29–32; 10:38–42; 13:28–31; 1 Cor. 15:3–8).

A Chronology of the Earthly Life of Christ

This expanded chronology is developed from the foregoing overview. The Harmony is contained in the scriptural references to the various Gospels. Historical Dates are approximate.

The Prologue: (Lk. 1:1–4; Jn. 1:1–18)

1. The Prologue of John: the pre-incarnate state of the eternal Son of God and his incarnation as the manifestation and representation of God.

2. The Preface of Luke: a dedication and revelation of both his complete and accurate knowledge and his research methods from eye-witness accounts.
- I. Thirty Years of Preparation (6 BC–27 AD)
3. The genealogies of the Lord Jesus Christ, revealing his legal lineage through Joseph and his natural lineage through Mary (Matt. 1:1–17; Lk. 3:23–38).
 4. The Annunciation and Birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner and identifier of our Lord (6–5 BC) (Lk. 1:5–25, 57–80).
 5. The Annunciation of the Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (6–5 BC) (Matt. 1:18–25; Lk. 1:26–38).
 6. The visit of Mary to Elizabeth (Lk. 1:39–56).
 7. Birth and early life of John the Baptist (Lk. 1:57–80).
 8. The birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in Bethlehem of Judea. The Angelic Visitation and revelation to the Shepherds (Lk. 2:1–20).
 9. The circumcision and presentation of the infant Jesus (Lk. 2:21–39).
 10. The visit and worship of the Magi or Wise men (Matt. 2:1–12).²⁸²
 11. The Divine warning and flight into Egypt (Matt. 2:13–18).
 12. The slaughter of the Babes in the area of Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16–18).
 13. The return to Nazareth by Divine revelation (Matt. 2:19–23).
 14. Jesus' boyhood at Nazareth (Lk. 2:40).
 15. The Jerusalem Passover pilgrimage when Jesus was 12 years old. His disputations with the Jewish Teachers and his correction of his parents (Lk. 2:41–50).
 16. The 18 silent years at Nazareth: Jesus' adolescence and early manhood (Lk. 2:51–52).

²⁸² The Magi were not present at our Lord's birth, but arrived some time later. Luke's account has the family returning to Nazareth after the circumcision, presentation and Mary's 30 days of purification (Lk. 2:21–39). Only Matthew's account mentions the leading of the star, the presentation of the gifts (Matt. 2:8–12), the flight into Egypt (Matt. 2:13–15) and the age determined by Herod in the slaughter of the babes Matt. 2:16.

[The Year of Obscurity]

II. Opening Events (27 AD)

17. The ministry of John the Baptist, who came as the forerunner of the Messiah, to prepare the nation and identify our Lord to the people. The first spiritual awakening of the Gospel era (Mk. 1:2–8; Matt. 3:1–17; 11:1–15; 17:10–13; Lk. 3:7–23; 7:28–29; Jn. 1:15, 19–37).
18. The baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist and the witness of the Spirit (Mk. 1:9–11; Matt. 3:13–17; Lk. 3:21–22).
19. First five Disciples chosen (Jn. 1:35–51).
20. The Wilderness Temptation (Mk. 1:12–13; Matt. 4:1–11; Lk. 4:1–13).²⁸³
21. The first Miracle at Cana in Galilee: turning water into wine (Jn. 2:1–12).

III. Early Judean Ministry (27 AD)

22. The first Passover recorded by John (Jn. 2:13).
23. The first cleansing of the Temple (Jn. 2:13–21), a public Messianic act.
24. First public confrontation with Jewish authorities and first miracles in Jerusalem (Jn. 2:18–25).
25. Interview with Nicodemus: Discourse on Regeneration and Redemptive love (Jn. 3:1–21).
26. The parallel ministry of Jesus with John the Baptist. The Baptist's testimony concerning Jesus (Jn. 3:22–36).
27. Jesus' departure from Judea into Galilee through Samaria (Mk. 1:14; Matt. 4:12; Lk. 3:19–20; 4:14; Jn. 4:1–4).

²⁸³ The temptation, immediately following the first public proclamation, was necessary. Satan's kingdom was aroused and he must test the Son of God. This was the first step in dismantling Satan's kingdom (Gen. 3:15, "bruise," פָּרַץ, to grind down; 1 Jn. 3:8, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου). Our Lord was not tempted as a mere individual, but as the "Second Man" and "Last Adam" (Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:21–22, 45–47). The temptation of Adam the first and that of the "Last Adam" are parallel: to act independently of God and His Word, to act in presumption and to act prematurely. The first Adam failed; the last did not.

IV. Samaritan Ministry (28 AD)

28. The great Samaritan ministry: one of Christ's greatest receptions and public success (Jn. 4:4–42).

V. Galilean Ministry (28–29 AD)

A. First Period (5 Months)

29. Jesus' arrival in Galilee (Mk. 1:14–15; Matt. 4:17; Lk. 4:14–15; Jn. 4:43–45).
30. Healing of Nobleman's son (Jn. 1:46–54).
31. Second unnamed Passover [or Feast of Purim?] observed at Jerusalem (Jn. 5:1f).
32. Healing of the Lame man at the pool of Bethesda. Jews charge our Lord with blasphemy; our Lord's defense (Jn. 5:2–47).
33. Rejection at Synagogue in Nazareth (Lk. 4:16–30).
34. Removal of headquarters to Capernaum (Matt. 4:13–17).
35. John the Baptist imprisoned at Machaerus (Matt. 3:18; Lk. 3:19).
36. Miraculous draught of fishes; Call of the four Disciples: Peter, Andrew, James and John (Mk. 1:16–20; Matt. 4:18–22; Lk. 5:1–11).
37. Demonic healed at Capernaum (Mk. 1:21–28; Lk. 4:31–37).
38. Peter's mother-in-law healed with many others (Mk. 1:29–34; Matt. 8:14–17; Lk. 4:38–41).

[The Year of Opportunity]

39. First preaching tour of Galilee (Mk. 1:35–39; Matt. 4:23–25; Lk. 4:42–44).
40. The healing of a leper and the following publicity (Mk. 1:40–45; Matt. 8:1–4; Lk. 5:12–16).
41. The forgiving and healing of a paralytic (Mk. 2:1–12; Matt. 9:1–8; Lk. 5:17–26).
42. Call of Matthew; eating with publicans; the question of fasting. Parables of the Bride and Bridegroom, New cloth on Old Garment, New Wine in Old Wineskins (Mk. 2:13–22; Matt. 9:9–17; Lk. 5:27–39).
43. Controversy over plucking grain on the Sabbath (Mk. 2:23–28; Matt. 12:1–8; Lk. 6:1–5).
44. Healing man with withered hand on Sabbath (Mk. 3:1–6; Matt. 12:9–14; Lk. 6:6–11).

B. Second Period (One Year)

45. Withdrawal to the Sea. Teaching and healing the multitudes (Mk. 3:7–12; Matt. 12:15–21).
46. After a night of prayer, Jesus appoints Twelve Disciples (Mk. 3:13–19; Lk. 6:12–16).
47. The Sermon on the Mount. Parables: the Inward Light, the Two Builders, the Savorless Salt, Dogs and Swine, the Good and Bad Trees and Fruit, The Broad and Narrow Ways (Mk. 9:50; Matt. 5:1–8:1; Lk. 6:17–49; 14:34–35).
48. Healing of a centurion's servant at Capernaum (Matt. 8:5–13; Lk. 7:1–10).
49. A widow's son raised from the dead at Nain (Lk. 7:11–17).
50. The Inquiry of John the Baptist and Jesus' response and eulogy (Matt. 11:2–19; Lk. 7:18–35).
51. Jesus pronounces woes upon the cities where his most notable works were done because of their unbelief (Matt. 11:20–30).
52. Christ's feet anointed by a sinful but contrite woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee; Parable of the Two Debtors (Lk. 7:36–50).
53. Second preaching tour of Galilee (Lk. 8:1–3).
54. The "Long" or "Busy Day:" various parables, e.g., Secretly Growing Seed, crossing the Sea of Galilee, calming the storm and healing the demoniacs. Demons and the swine. Parables of the Returning Unclean Spirit, the Leaven in the Meal (Mk. 3:19–5:20; Matt. 8:18, 23–34; 12:22–13:53; Lk. 8:4–39).
55. Return to Galilee. Healing of the woman with the issue of blood. Raising of Jairus' daughter (Mk. 5:21–43; Matt. 9:18–26; Lk. 8:40–56).
56. Healing of two blind men and a dumb demoniac (Matt. 9:27–34).
57. Healing of another demoniac (Matt. 12:22–29; Lk. 11:14–22).
58. Parables of the Kingdom: Sower, Seed and Soils, Wheat and Tares, Mustard Seed, leaven, Hid Treasure or Pearl and The Net (Mk. Mk. 4:1–34; Matt. 13:1–53; Lk. 8:4–18).
59. The second rejection at Nazareth and Jesus final visit there (Mk. 6:1–6; Matt. 13:54–58).

60. Third and final preaching tour of Galilee. The Disciples sent forth by Twos (Mk. 6:6–13; Matt. 9:35–11:1; Lk. 9:1–9).
61. The death of John the Baptist and the guilty fears of Herod Antipas (Mk. 6:14–29; Matt. 14:1–12; Lk. 9:7–9).²⁸⁴
62. Third Passover (Jn. 6:4).
63. The first retirement and training of the Twelve; the feeding of the five thousand, marking the apex of Jesus' ministry (Mk. 6:30–44; Matt. 14:13–21; Lk. 9:10–17; Jn. 6:1–13).
64. The futile and aborted attempt to force Jesus to become king (Mk. 6:45–46; Matt. 14:22–23; Jn. 6:14–15).
65. The Disciples in the storm. Jesus walking on the water (Mk. 6:47–52; Matt. 14:24–33; Jn. 6:16–21).
66. The reception at Gennesaret.²⁸⁵ A multitude of miracles (Mk. 6:53–56; Matt. 14:34–36).

[The Year of Opposition]

67. The collapse of the Galilean campaign; Jesus will not conform to popular Messianic expectations (Jn. 6:22–71).
 68. A delegation of Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem reproach our Lord and his Disciples (Mk. 7:1–23; Matt. 15:1–20; Jn. 7:1²⁸⁶).
- C. Third Period (6 Months)
69. The second withdrawal to the regions of Tyre and Sidon. Healing of the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mk. 7:24–30; Matt. 15:21–28).
 70. The third withdrawal north through Phoenicia and east to Decapolis. Healing of deaf and mute man and feeding of the four thousand (Mk. 7:31–8:9; Matt. 15:29–38).
 71. A visit to Dalmanutha in Galilee. Opposition of Pharisees and Sadducees (Mk. 8:10–12; Matt. 15:39–16:4).

²⁸⁴ John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded at the Herodian fortress of Machaerus on the eastern coast of the Dead Sea.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Mk. 5. After the healing of the demoniac and drowning of the herd of swine the people rejected our Lord, but a year later they joyfully received him. The former demoniac had been sent back to proclaim Jesus' power and his testimony prepared the population for his return.

²⁸⁶ A period of 6 months between John 7:1 and 7:2.

72. The fourth retirement to Bethsaida Julias. Our Lord rebukes the dullness of the Disciples. A blind man healed (Mk. 8:13–26; Matt. 16:5–12).
73. At Caesarea Philippi: Peter's confession (Mk. 8:27–30; Matt. 16:13–20; Lk. 9:18–21).
74. Our Lord begins to instruct the Disciples concerning his suffering, death and resurrection (Mk. 8:31–37; Matt. 16:21–26; Lk. 9:22–25).
75. Prophecy of the coming of the Son of Man (Mk. 8:38–9:1; Matt. 16:27–28; Lk. 9:26–27).
76. The Transfiguration on a mountain [Hermon?] where our Lord's glory shone through his flesh, the prophets Moses and Elijah appeared and the Father's voice was uttered from heaven (Mk. 9:2–8; Matt. 17:1–8; Lk. 9:28–36).
77. Discourse concerning the resurrection and Elijah and John the Baptist (Mk. 9:9–13; Matt. 17:9–13; Lk. 9:36).
78. Healing of demoniac boy; the powerlessness of the Disciples (Mk. 9:14–29; Matt. 17:14–20; Lk. 9:37–43).
79. More private instruction concerning our Lord's death and resurrection (Mk. 9:30–32; Matt. 17:22–23; Lk. 9:43–45).
80. Our Lord and the Temple tax. The miracle of the coin in the fish's mouth (Matt. 17:24–27).
81. Teaching the Disciples concerning greatness and humility (Mk. 9:33–37; Matt. 18:1–5; Lk. 9:46–48).
82. Mistaken zeal rebuked. Stringent warning against causing one to stumble (Mk. 9:38–50; Matt. 18:6–14; Lk. 9:49–50).
83. The principle of dealing with private and public faults; forgiveness of a sinning brother. Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. 18:15–35).
84. Discourse on total commitment (Matt. 8:19–22; Lk. 9:57–62).
85. Feast of Tabernacles: Our Lord's unbelieving and ridiculing brothers counsel him to publicly exhibit himself in Judea. He rejects their counsel (Jn. 7:2–9).

VI. Later Judean Ministry (30 AD)

From the Feast of Tabernacles to the Feast of Dedication: approximately three months.

86. Journey to Jerusalem through Samaria. Rejection by the Samaritans because of Jesus' countenance (Lk. 9:51–56; Jn. 7:10).

87. Intense excitement during the Feast of Tabernacles by our Lord's presence and reputation. His public proclamation. Sanhedrin frustrated in seeking his arrest (Jn. 7:11–52).
88. Adulterous woman forgiven; accusing Jews frustrated and convicted (Jn. 7:53–8:11).²⁸⁷
89. Feast of Tabernacles: Jesus' claim, violent confrontation and the attempted stoning by the Jews (Jn. 8:12–59).
90. The man born blind healed and another Sabbath controversy. The boldness of the healed man and his excommunication (Jn. 9:1–41).²⁸⁸
91. Discourse on Door of the Sheepfold and the Good Shepherd and the resulting division among the Jews (Jn. 10:1–21).
92. The mission of the Seventy. The Lord rejoices in prayer on their return (Lk. 10:1–24).
93. The question of a lawyer and the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25–37).
94. Jesus the guest of Martha, Mary and Lazarus at Bethany (Lk. 10:38–42).
95. Our Lord's second discourse on and pattern for prayer. Parable of the Importunate Friend (Lk. 11:1–13).²⁸⁹
96. Blasphemous criticism by the Jews against our Lord, accusing him of being in league with Beelezbub (Lk. 11:14–36).
97. At breakfast with a Pharisee. Our Lord severely denounces the Pharisees and Lawyers (Lk. 11:37–54).
98. A public discourse to the Disciples and a great multitude concerning hypocrisy and covetousness, with warnings and parables, i.e., Parable of the Rich Fool, the Waiting and Watching Servants (Lk. 12:1–59).

²⁸⁷ The incident of the adulterous woman bears all the marks of authenticity. It has occupied various places in the Gospel records.

²⁸⁸ Many of our Lord's most notable miracles were performed on the Sabbath, raising great objections from the Scribes and Pharisees, who made the Sabbath observance the test of orthodoxy, and thus rejected our Lord despite his miracles.

²⁸⁹ The first lesson was the Model Prayer given during the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:5–15).

99. The report of two tragedies. A discourse on repentance and the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree (Lk. 13:1–9).
100. Healing of a crippled woman on the Sabbath; another Sabbath controversy and two parables concerning the kingdom (Lk. 13:10–21).
101. Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. Controversy between our Lord and the Jews concerning his being the Messiah (Jn. 10:22–39).²⁹⁰

VII. Perea Ministry (30 AD)

This journey to Jerusalem, following the usual pilgrim route on the east side of the Jordan River, marked Christ's ministry in Perea. Luke gives the most detailed account (Lk. 9:51–19:28). Approximately three months.

102. Withdrawal to Bethany beyond Jordan (Jn. 10:40–42).
103. Discourse concerning salvation, warned of Herod's hatred (Lk. 13:31–35).
104. A Sabbath dinner at the house of a Pharisee. Man with dropsy healed. Parable of the Great Supper (Lk. 14:1–24).
105. Our Lord warns the multitude to count the cost of discipleship. Parables of the Great Supper, the Unfinished Tower, The Unwaged War (Lk. 14:25–35).
106. Parable of Lost Things: Sheep, Silver, Sons (Lk. 15:1–32).
107. Parables concerning Stewardship, teaching on adultery (Lk. 16:1–13).
108. The true story of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19–31).²⁹¹
109. Discourse on being faithful, but unprofitable servants (Lk. 17:1–10).
110. A short journey to Jerusalem to raise Lazarus from the dead. The Sanhedrin plots Jesus' death (Jn. 11:1–44).
111. The final journey to Jerusalem through Galilee and Samaria. Healing of ten lepers (Lk. 17:11–19).

²⁹⁰ A span of about three months occurs between John 10:21 and 10:22, between our Lord's discourse about the Good Shepherd and the Feast of Dedication.

²⁹¹ Evidently a true story, as our Lord never names anyone personally in any other parable.

112. Discourse concerning the kingdom and prophecy of judgment (Lk. 17:20–37).
113. Two parables on prayer: The importunate widow, the Pharisee and Publican (Lk. 18:1–14).
114. Journey through Perea. Teaching on divorce (Mk. 10:1–12; Matt. 19:1–12).
115. Failure of Disciples to comprehend our Lord's attitude. Teaching on a child-like faith (Mk. 10:13–16; Matt. 19:13–15; Lk. 18:15–17).
116. The rich young ruler, danger of riches, reaction of the Disciples (Mk. 10:17–31; Matt. 19:16–30; Lk. 18:18–30).
117. Parable of the Householder and the workers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20:1–16).
118. Jesus instructs his Disciples concerning his passion and resurrection. He rebukes James and John (Mk. 10:32–45; Matt. 20:17–28; Lk. 18:31–34).
119. Jericho: blind Bartimaeus and companion healed (Mk. 10:46–52; Matt. 20:29–34; Lk. 18:35–43).
120. Conversion of Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1–10).
121. Parable of the Pounds (Lk. 19:11–28).

VIII. The Closing Events (30 AD)

122. Arrival at Bethany. Mary anoints him for his burial. Chief Priests take counsel to put both Christ and Lazarus to death (Jn. 11:55–12:11).
123. The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mk. 11:1–11; Matt. 21:1–11, 14–17; Lk. 19:29–40; Jn. 12:12–19).
124. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41–44).
125. Barren fig tree cursed. The second cleansing of the Temple (Mk. 11:12–18; Matt. 21:18–19, 12–13; Lk. 19:45–48), a public Messianic act.
126. Some Greeks seek to see Jesus (Jn. 12:20–50).
127. The fig tree withered (Mk. 11:20–26; Matt. 21:19–22). Parable of the Two Sons (Matt. 28–32).
128. The Sanhedrin formally challenges our Lord concerning his credentials as a teacher. Parables of the Marriage Feast for the King's Son, The wicked Husbandmen and the Rejected Stone (Mk. 11:27–12:12; Matt. 21:23–22:14; Lk. 20:1–19).

129. Pharisees and Herodians seek to ensnare Jesus concerning paying tribute to Caesar (Mk. 12:13–17; Matt. 22:15–22; Lk. 20:20–26).
130. Sadducees ask a question concerning the levirate marriage and the resurrection (Mk. 12:18–27; Matt. 22:23–33; Lk. 20:27–40).
131. A Lawyer asks a legal question, our Lord summarizes the Divine Commandments (Mk. 12:28–34; Matt. 22:34–40).
132. A question concerning Psa. 110 and the Son of David (Mk. 12:35–37; Matt. 12: 41–46; Lk. 20:41–44).
133. Last public discourse: a Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees (Mk. 12:38–40; Matt. 23:1–39; Lk. 20:45–47).
134. As an answer to the question concerning the beautiful stones of the Temple, Christ gives final instructions to his Disciples, including the eschatological discourses and the prophecy of his own death and resurrection. Parables of the Ten Virgins, Talents, Sheep and Goats, Householder and Porter, Master and Thief, Faithful and Evil Servants (Mk. 13:1–37; Matt. 24:1–25, 43–51; Lk. 21:5–36).
135. Jesus predicts his own crucifixion to come pass in two days (Mk. 14:1–2; Matt. 26:1–5; Lk. 22:1–22).
136. Judas conspires with the Sanhedrin to betray our Lord for thirty pieces of silver (Mk. 14:10–11; Matt. 26:14–16; Lk. 2:3–6).
137. The Final Passover (Mk. 14:12–17; Matt. 26:17–20; Lk. 22:7–30). Jesus washes the feet of the Disciples (Jn. 13:1–20).
138. Our Lord reveals his betrayal and Judas as the betrayer (Mk. 14:18–21; Matt. 26:21–25; Lk. 22:21–23; Jn. 13:21–30).
139. After the departure of Judas, Jesus warns the Disciples against desertion (Mk. 14:27–31; Matt. 26:31–35; Lk. 22:31–38; Jn. 13:31–38).
140. Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper as a memorial ordinance, concluding with a hymn (Mk. 14:22–25; Matt. 26:26–29; Lk. 22:17–20).²⁹²
141. The final upper room discourse (Jn. 14:1–31).

²⁹² The hymn was the final singing of the Hallel: Psa. 115–118.

142. Discourse on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane. Parable of the Vine and Branches (Jn. 15:1–16:33).
143. The intercessory of High Priestly Prayer of our Lord for his own (Jn. 17:1–26).
144. The Garden agony in Gethsemane (Mk. 14:26, 32–42; Matt. 26:30, 36–46; Lk. 22:39–46; Jn. 18:1).
145. The betrayal by Judas and the arrest of our Lord by the Romans and Jews. He heals the ear of Malchus, which Peter had cut off (Mk. 14:43–52; Matt. 26:47–56; Lk. 22:47–53; Jn. 18:2–13).²⁹³
146. Jesus is forsaken by his Disciples, and a young man escapes. Our Lord taken to Annas, the former High Priest, for examination before his two–phase trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin (Jn. 18:13–14, 19–23).
- Note: The reference to this young man clothed with a linen cloth, occurring only in Mark's account, refers to John Mark himself who wrote this Gospel record.
147. The mock trial before the Sanhedrin by which our Lord is condemned to death, then mocked and maltreated (Mk. 14:53, 55–65; Matt. 26:57, 59–68; Lk. 22:54, 63–65; Jn. 18:24).²⁹⁴
148. Peter, who had followed afar off, sits outside the trial chamber and denies his Lord thrice (Mk. 14:54, 66–72; Matt. 26:58, 69–75; Lk. 22:54–62; Jn. 18:15–18, 25–27).
149. Our Lord formally condemned and sent to Pilate (Mk. 15:1; Matt. 27:1; Lk. 22:66–71).
150. The remorse and suicide of Judas the betrayer (Matt. 27:3–10. Cf. Acts 1:15–20).
151. Our Lord's first appearance before Pilate (Mk. 15:1–5; Matt. 27:2, 11–14; Lk. 23:1–5; Jn. 18:28–38).²⁹⁵
152. His second appearance before Herod Antipas (Mk. 15:6–12).

²⁹³ The Roman detachment numbered 480 men [Roman cohort], consisting of a chief captain [Tribune, ὁ χιλίαρχος], six centurions, each with 80 men, in addition to the Temple guard.

²⁹⁴ Under oath, our Lord answers without reservation that he is the Messiah, the Son of God.

²⁹⁵ Both Jewish and Roman trials had three phases.

153. Jesus' final appearance before Pilate, who appeases the multitude, washes his hands and gives Jesus up to crucifixion, knowing his innocence (Mk. 15:6–15; Matt. 27:15–26; Lk. 23:13–25; Jn. 18:39–19:16).
154. Mockery by the Roman soldiers Mk. 15:16–19; Matt. 27:27–30).
155. The path to Golgotha. Simon of Cyrene compelled to bear Jesus' cross (Mk. 15:15–23; Matt. 27:31–34; Lk. 23:26–33; Jn. 19:17).²⁹⁶
156. The first three hours on the cross: 9 AM–Noon (Mk. 15:24–32; Matt. 27:35–44; Lk. 23:33–43; Jn. 19:18–27).
157. The final three hours of darkness on the cross: Noon–3 PM (Mk. 15:33–37; Matt. 26:45–50; Lk. 23:44–45; Jn. 19:28–30).
158. Confession of the centurion. Earthquake; Veil of Temple rent from top to bottom (Mk. 15:38–41; Matt. 27:51–56; Lk. 23:47–49).
159. Our Lord's death certified by the Roman government. His body taken by Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus and laid in a new tomb (Mk. 15:42–46; Matt. 27:57–60; Lk. 23:50–54; Jn. 19:31–42).
160. Some women who followed Jesus watch the tomb, and the Sanhedrin has a guard posted to prevent the Disciples from stealing his body (Mk. 15:47; Matt. 27: 61–66; Lk. 23:55–56).
161. Our Lord's resurrection. Angelic announcement to the women. Peter and John run to the tomb. Appearance to Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:1–8; Matt. 28:1–8; Lk. 24:1–8; Jn. 20:1–18).
162. The guards return to the Sanhedrin and reports; their invalid testimony becomes a tradition (Matt. 28:11–15).²⁹⁷
- IX. Post-Resurrection Confirmations (30 AD)
163. Our Lord appears to two of the Disciples on the road from Emmaus, and to Peter (Mk. 16:12–13; Lk. 24:13–35).

²⁹⁶ After the Roman scourging, the convicted were already half-dead from the torture, torn flesh and muscles and loss of blood.

²⁹⁷ Sleeping witnesses would be completely without credibility.

Note: See 1 Cor. 15:5–8 for a summary of our Lord's post-resurrection appearances.

164. Our Lord appears to his Disciples twice, once without Thomas being present, the second time with Thomas present (Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:36–43; Jn. 20:19–25).
165. Jesus appears to and discourses with seven of the Disciples by the Sea of Galilee. Second miraculous draught of fishes. Peter challenged as to his love for our Lord (Jn. 21:1–25).
166. Our Lord appears unto his half-brother James, who was destined to become the main leader in the Jerusalem church (1 Cor. 15:7).
167. The Great Commission given to 500 brethren at a mountain in Galilee (Mk. 16:15–18; Matt. 28:16–20).
168. Disciples commissioned at Jerusalem and prepared for Pentecost and world evangelism (Lk. 24:44–49; Acts 1:3–8).
169. The ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven (Mk. 16:19–20; Lk. 24:50–53; Acts 1:9–12).

The Biographical Method

The Method Discussed

The study of biblical personalities is necessary, rewarding and possesses a variety of practical application. Remember that the “Epoch Revelation” of most of the Old Testament was primarily through the lives of its personalities. As God in his Word teaches through principles and by example as well as by precept, much Divine truth has been expressed in the personalities, lives and experiences of Bible characters. Some very general principles related to such studies are:

- By the use of the Bible and a concordance, every passage dealing with or even mentioning a given personality must be thoroughly studied. The New Testament at times gives much added light on an Old Testament personality (e.g., Abraham, in Jn. 8:30–59; Rom. 4:1–25; Heb. 11:8–19) with either an inspired commentary or the true lasting biblical significance of the individual.

- Care must be taken to find if the person has any typical significance, i.e., is considered as a biblical “type” illustrating some truth, principle or anticipation of later fulfillment (e.g., Adam, Melchizedek, Aaron, Joshua, David, Solomon, and Jonah as types of Christ, Abraham as the proto-type of the believer, etc.).
- Doctrinal truth, obedience, disobedience, and the variety of issues in Christian experience may be illustrated from the lives of biblical characters. Care must be taken, however, not to revert to a mere moralistic view of these persons. The Bible can be used—and has been used—to teach a mere morality without coming to grips with the issues of sin, salvation and holiness.

Note: Moralism is the practice of a moral system or ethic apart from religion. It is possible to study the Bible and take only moral principles from the lives of Bible characters and incidents. E.g., Judas can be held up as a negative example of honesty with money. Cain can serve as an example of self-will. David’s adultery with Bathsheba and its consequences give a graphic illustration of the results of moral evil.

What is the difference between mere moralism and a biblical ethic? A biblical ethic presupposes the absolute, sovereign God and his moral self-consistency. It presupposes the workings of Divine providence and operations of free and sovereign grace. Right and wrong, good and bad are defined and seen within the context of the moral self-consistency or law of God. Human beings are to be viewed as sinners, either sustained by Divine grace or rebelling against the truth of God. Thus, when drawing examples and principles of right and wrong from the Scriptures, it is always within the context of God.

- A variety of practical observations can be made from the various the personalities of Scripture. The possibilities are almost endless, and can form the basis for personal interaction, teaching and preaching. The study on Joseph, as the last example, demonstrates such possibilities.

The Method Illustrated

The Book of Acts

For the first study, consider the Book of Acts. As it contains several preeminent personalities, one can use a combination of the Bible Survey, synthetic, historical and biographical approaches with the following general outline. The book itself is contained or encapsulated in 1:8...

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you [Acts 1–2]: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem [Acts 1–5], and in all Judaea [Acts 5–12], and in Samaria [Acts 5], and unto the uttermost part of the earth [Acts 13–28].

A simple outline of the book is two-fold, revolving about its two main personalities, their home churches and their ministries:

- *The Apostle Peter*, Jerusalem was the home church and center, emphasis on Jewish Christianity (Chapters 1–12).
- *The Apostle Paul*, Antioch was the home church and center, emphasis on Gentile Christianity (Chapters 13–28). The Syrian Antioch, not Jerusalem, became the missionary church of the first century. The Gospel never completely overcame Jewish racial, cultural and religious prejudice.
- The whole of the Apostolic Era (30–100 AD) can generally be outlined in terms of the predominant periods of time, persons and places:

Predominant Period	Predominant Person	Predominant Place
Era of Transition (30–45 AD)	Peter	Jerusalem
Era of Expansion (45–68 AD)	Paul	Antioch and Rome
Era of Persecution (68–100 AD)	John	Ephesus

The Life, Ministry and Significance of Elijah

We will take the character and life of Elijah the Tishbite for our second study and make some observations and suggestions.

- The first step is to list every occurrence of Elijah's name or reference to him in Scripture and study the context in which the reference occurs.
- Divide the study into Elijah's personal life, ministry, and his prophetic and New Testament significance. It is extremely edifying at times to discover what significance an Old Testament person is given in the New Testament.
- Study thoroughly Elijah's personal history. Elijah was a great man of God, mightily used, but also evidenced human weakness. His life contains many practical suggestions and applications for the student's own life and experience in principle and by example.
- Study thoroughly Elijah's ministry as to its time, significance, the condition of the kingdom under Ahab and Jezebel, and Elijah's prophecies. Baal worship had become the state religion and the worship of Jehovah had been outlawed, the prophets killed and their schools destroyed.
- Study the Old Testament and New Testament passages concerning Elijah after his lifetime. He is mentioned in Scripture 99 times, 69 times in the OT and 30 times in the NT (e.g., Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6; Matt. 11:12–13; 16:14; 17:3; 10–12; Lk. 1:17; 4:25–26; 9:54; Jn. 1:25; Rom. 11:2; Jas. 5:16–18). What relation did Elijah have to John the Baptist? Do all prophecies necessarily have a literal fulfillment?
- Throughout the study, make, keep revising your notes and attempt to produce a complete outline of Elijah's life, ministry and lasting significance. Always write down any practical observations which may legitimately present themselves.

Following is a very introductory outline of the life and ministry of Elijah with observations which may be greatly expanded:

I. The True Man of God Must be a Man of Prayer, Boldness And Have A God-Consciousness.

- (1 Kgs. 17:1; 18:1;²⁹⁸ Lk. 4:25; Jas. 5:17). Elijah had evidently been earnestly praying for at least six months before he stood before Ahab.
- Mark carefully that the description of earnest prayer does not refer to his praying on Mt. Carmel for rain, but to his previous prayers that it would *not* rain! Did those prayers continue throughout that whole time?!
- During his time of preparation, God gave him boldness!
- He was conscious that he had taken his stand before the living God of Israel! He had a sense of God's presence! He was so identified with God that God's Word and his word were one and the same!

II. God May Put Some of His Most Faithful Servants aside for an Extended Time, and Through Unexpected Trials, but His Providence Will Provide.

- (17:2–24). God may have had a two-fold purpose for hiding Elijah: first, to protect him from harm by Ahab, and also to cut off from Ahab and the nation any word from God.
- The only message they would receive was the providential message of Divine judgment!
- Elijah's time of exile at the brook Cherith and with the widow of Zarephtha lasted about a thousand days!
- During this time, the widow God raised up to provide for him lost her son. He brought the widow's son back to life.

III. The True Man of God will have to Endure Much Misunderstanding and Opposition.

1 Kgs. 18:17–18. And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Is it thou, thou troubler of

²⁹⁸ 1 Kgs. 18:1. הַשְּׁלִישִׁית בַּשָּׁנָה, LXX: ἐν τῷ ἐνιαυτῷ τῷ τρίτῳ.
Definitely within the third year.

Israel?²⁹⁹ And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.³⁰⁰

- Elijah was forced to defend himself and he personally charges Ahab with sin!
- (18:22) “I, *even* I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal’s prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men.” He thought he stood alone, but he stood fearlessly and boldly upon the Word of God, and so was willing to stand alone! The opposition was numerous, well-fed and prosperous—and had state support!
- It is important to note that as soon as he returned from his desert sojourn, that others began to appear as on the side of the Lord!

IV. God Blesses Obedience to His Word, Not mere Numbers, Activity or even Self-Sacrifice (18:22-29).

The prophets of Baal were like many today in their rituals and zeal! They were many [They had the numbers], they leaped upon the altar [They had zeal and excitement], and they gashed themselves with lancets [They were willing to go to the extremes of self-sacrifice].

A. Elijah Knew How to Pray

Elijah, by contrast, had boldness in prayer! His prayer was based on Divine promise and obedience! He had respect for the spiritual history of the past, and a heart for the present and future of God’s people!

18:30, 36–39. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that* was broken down. 36 And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham,

²⁹⁹ 1 Kgs. 18:17. **יִשְׂרָאֵל עָבַר זֶה הַאֲתָהּ**. “You” indep. pers. pron. (emph.). Vb. a Qal. ptc., “continuing to trouble...” LXX: εἰ σὺ εἶ αὐτὸς ὁ διαστρέφων τὸν Ἰσραηλ; pres. ptc., the perverter of Israel?!

³⁰⁰ 1 Kgs. 18:18. Note the emph.const. **כִּי אִם-אֲתָהּ**, a “but...if” const. “But if anyone has troubled Israel, it is you and your father’s house...!”.

Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant, and *that* I have done all these things at thy word. 37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again. 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench. 39 And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he *is* the God; the LORD, he *is* the God.

B. The Spiritual History of the Past Mattered to Him.

(18:29–30). “And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down.” When we are emphasizing our Baptist heritage, we are repairing the altar of the Lord which had been broken down and neglected.

C. His Faith was Strong.

(18:32–34). Elijah had the whole offering and altar soaked with water. He wanted to be certain that no one would accuse him of resorting to any trickery. He was utterly dependent upon God!

D. His Prayer was Founded upon the Divine Promise.

(18:36). “let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant, and *that* I have done all these things at thy word.”

E. His Prayer was Followed by Consistent Behavior.

(18:40). He had the false prophets all captured and he personally executed every one of them himself.³⁰¹ There were between 400 to 850 prophets which he personally dispatched (Cf. 18:19).

F. He Expected an Answer to His Prayers

- Our prayers must be consistent with the Word of God, and we must be consistent with our prayers!
- (18:41–46). He prayed for rain until he received an answer. And the rain did not come immediately! Sometimes God delays his answers to test our faith!

³⁰¹ 1 Kgs. 18:40–41. The vb. “slew” is sing. [וַיִּשְׁחָטֵם]. LXX [ἔσφαξεν αὐτοὺς ἕκαστῶν].

V. God is Absolutely Sovereign over all Things, even Evil Powers.

We may be quite unaware of God's sovereign power exercised for our good and the restraint of the ungodly. (18:26–29). Cf. 2 Kgs. 6:16–17. God evidently restrained any evil power from sending fire down from the skies! Cf. Job 1:16.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Cf. Rev. 13:13–14...

¹³ And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

¹⁴ And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means* of those miracles which he had power to do.

VI. The Greatest, Holiest and Boldest of God's Servants are only Men at Their Best.

- The danger of “ministerial burnout.” Elijah came to the city of Jezreel spiritually, mentally and physically exhausted. He had stood before the people all day, and had probably not eaten. He had prepared the altar and the sacrifice, had personally killed several hundred men, and then outran Ahab's chariot 12 miles to the entrance of Jezreel.
- The trial came after this great victory and was utterly unexpected. We have our vulnerable times!
- (1 Kgs. 19). From the high point of his faith to the lowest point in his life in one day! Elijah's boldness came from a sense of God's presence and power. When left to himself, he fell into a fit of depression and ran for his life in fear. He had no definite place to go, Athaliah, Jezebel's daughter, was queen in Judah. He found no rest in the agitation of fear and doubt.
- After all the months supernatural provision on a daily basis, raising the widow's son, and the great victory at Mt. Carmel, his faith failed him!

VII. God in His Grace and Mercy may not Answer Our most Earnest Prayers!

(19:4). “It is enough, now, O LORD...!” Everything finally crushed him with its cumulative effect.

VIII. God Can Restore His Exhausted and Depressed Servant.

First, an angel ministered to him physically, and then God answered all his objections and quieted all his fears. God is a kind and gracious Master!

- God sent an angel to minister unto him physically with food and water.
- God revealed his power to him at the entrance to the cave in the wind, the earthquake and the fire. Then he spoke to him in a still small voice.
- God revealed to him that he was not alone. There were several thousand faithful left. He was to anoint Elisha as his successor.
- God foretold the destruction of Ahab's rule and administration.

God restored Elijah, and sent him back to his scene of labor and conflict. He called Elisha to be his companion, and together they re-established the schools of the prophets.

IX. God will Honor His Servant, even if No One else Does!

(2 Kgs. 1:1–16). The three companies with their captains...

God sent down fire from heaven to consume the first two companies in answer to Eliha's command. The third captain and his men humbly besought "The Man of God" to come with them!

The Life of Joseph

General Considerations

The life of Joseph (Gen. 30:22–25; 32:6–7; 33:1–2; 37:2–36; 39:1–50:26), our final example, is possibly one of the most practical and edifying studies to be found in Scripture. By example and illustration, it touches on both the most profound and practical issues.

The key-verses of Joseph's life are: Gen. 39:2, 21 and 50:20. His life and experience are the most graphic illustration of the working of Divine providence in Scripture. *Divine providence is that process by which God brings to pass his eternal purpose or decree in time and experience.* The focus is on God bringing good out of evil.

The varied evils—parental indulgence, envy, jealousy, hatred, slavery, attempted seduction, lies, forgetfulness and widespread famine—none were good in themselves, but they all worked together for good (Rom. 8:28). It must be noted that Romans 8:28 must be considered in the context of eternity (8:28–31) and we must not expect to see all the answers in this life as Joseph did.

We walk by faith, not by sight. We see then that the righteous suffer, but also that God has a purpose in it. To say “God” is to say “purpose,” and to say “purpose” in the context of the God of the Bible is to say “predestination.” Predestination is only threatening or grotesque when taken out of the context of our loving and sovereign covenant God who is morally self-consistent (Cf. Rom. 8:28–31; Eph. 1:3–14).

Note: In viewing history, we can see the sovereign working of God in terms of generations, centuries and millennia, but in our own lives and personal experience, we can at best only get a glimpse of a very small portion of God’s purpose, and then may very possibly misunderstand what we do see.

Cf. the statement of Jacob from such a perspective: “...Me have ye bereaved *of my children*: Joseph *is* not, and Simeon *is* not, and ye will take Benjamin *away*: all these things are against me.” (Gen. 42:36). Yet nothing could have been further from the truth!

Joseph’s life thus gives an insight into the so-called “Problem of Evil,” which, for the Christian, points to the absolute sovereignty of God over evil. God can foreordain evil only if he himself is good, because evil is “evil” only by contrast with the goodness of God, who is absolute, and the Source, Support and End of all things (Rom. 11:33–36). Only then, if God is absolutely sovereign over and foreordains evil, can he bring forth his good purpose in it for his own glory.³⁰² This is graphically illustrated in the experience of Joseph.

³⁰² This mysterious, yet glorious truth is seen throughout Scripture, e.g., Acts 2:23; 4:27–28; Rom. 9:6–29.

The life of Joseph is filled with moral teaching—but it must be viewed in the context of a morally self-consistent God and never merely as an end in itself. What we see is not the moral self-resolve, the mere stoic perseverance of Joseph, the victory of traditional family values, or the powers of his mental reasoning alone, but the free and sovereign grace of God sustaining him, preserving him from sin, and the glorious purpose of God fulfilled in and through his life.

Joseph's life and experience also teach much concerning faith. Faith is the major characteristic of a true child of God (Rom. 1:17). God has ordained as the focal-point of the believer's experience that his faith be tried. It is in this way that God produces spiritual growth, refines our faith, and brings it to maturity. Faith rests itself in the Word of God despite all circumstances and conditions to the contrary. Each of the great personalities in Genesis demonstrates some aspect of faith. Note the following:

- *Abel* offered the firstling of the flock by faith (Heb. 11:4).
- *Enoch* walked with God in a right relationship by faith (Gen. 5:22; Heb. 11:5).
- *Noah* believed the truth of God concerning future judgment and acted upon the word of God by faith (Heb. 11:7).
- *Abraham* obeyed God when he did not hesitate to offer Isaac, but, logically reasoning from God's word, believed that out of the ashes God would restore Isaac to life again (Gen. 22:1–14; Heb. 11:17–19). Abraham is presented in both the Old and New Testaments as the first clinical example of the life of faith.
- *Isaac* lived a long and somewhat uneventful life, but was sustained by faith in the promises of God (Heb. 11:20).
- *Jacob's* life was one of seemingly constant trials, disappointments, and troubles. God was training him in his faith (Heb. 11:21).

- *Joseph* was greatly tested in various circumstances as to his faith or trust in a sovereign God. He lived his later adult life and died in the fullness of faith (Gen. 50:22–26; Heb. 11:22). Joseph demonstrated the trials, perseverance and triumph of faith.

Joseph and Typology

It is commonly held that Joseph is a type of Christ. *Strictly speaking, a true type must find an express antitype explained in the New Testament.* E.g., Adam (Rom. 5:12–21), the Passover lamb (Jn. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7), Melchizedek (Heb. 5:10; 6:20; 7:1–28), Jonah (Matt. 12:38–40), the Brazen serpent (Jn. 3:14–15).

Nowhere in the New Testament is it stated that Joseph was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ—yet the parallels are significant. Both were greatly loved by their Fathers. Both were greatly hated by their brethren. Both endured a great amount of misunderstanding and suffering. Both were sold for a few pieces of silver. Both were greatly exalted as rulers. If Joseph is not strictly a type of Christ, yet he is certainly a picture of our Lord in many ways.

Outline of the Life of Joseph

A survey of Joseph's life could be outlined in the following fashion:

- I. The Early Years from His Birth to His Enslavement. 17 Years (Gen. 30:1–2, 22–25; 37:1–17).
 - A. Joseph's Birth and Sojourn to Canaan (30:22–35:15).
 - B. The Death of Joseph's Mother (35:16–20).
 - C. Joseph: an Attendant to his Father (37:1–2, 13–14).
 - D. Joseph Hated by his Brethren because of Jacob's Favoritism and for his Dreams (37:3–11).
 - E. Joseph sent to Inquire after his Brethren (37:13–17).
 - F. The plot to kill Joseph (37:18–20).
 - G. The Plot Foiled, Joseph Sold into Slavery (37:19–36).
 - H. The Brothers' Lie (37:29–35).
- II. The Middle Years. 13 Years (Gen. 37:18–36; 39:1–40:23).
 - A. Joseph in the House of Potiphar (Gen. 37:36; 39:1–19).
 - B. Joseph in Prison (39:20–41:13).

- III. The Later Years. 80 Years (Gen. 41:14–50:26).
- A. Joseph and the Dreams of Pharaoh (Gen. 41:1–32).
 - B. Joseph Exalted as Prime Minister of Egypt (Gen. 41:33–46).
 - C. The Seven Years of Plenty (Gen. 41:47–53).
 - D. The Years of Dearth (Gen. 41:54–57).
 - E. The First Trip of Joseph’s Brethren into Egypt (Gen. 42:1–38).
 - F. The Second Trip of Joseph’s Brethren into Egypt (Gen. 43:1–44:34).
 - G. Joseph Reveals Himself to his Brethren (Gen. 45:1–24).
 - H. The House of Israel Goes down into Egypt (Gen. 45:25–46:28).
 - I. Joseph and Jacob Meet (Gen. 46:29–30).
 - J. The House of Israel Settled in Goshen (Gen. 46:31–47:6, 11–13).
 - K. Jacob Blesses Pharaoh (Gen. 47:7–10).
 - L. Joseph and the Egyptians (Gen. 47:14–27).
 - M. The Last Days of Jacob: His Faith, Blessings, Prophecies and Death (Gen. 47:28–50:14).
 - N. The Final Lie of Joseph’s Brethren (Gen. 50:15–21).
 - O. The Final Days and Death of Joseph (Gen. 50:22–26).

A Practical Approach to the Life of Joseph

A very practical approach, which is well-suited to a study of Joseph’s life, is to make a list of practical observations within a given time-frame of his experience, building on the biblical narrative, and adding to the record with the customary realities of that ancient culture. This is the method we will use with the following observations. Such a study will serve to illustrate the need for biblical exegesis or exposition, for studies in the ancient cultures and customs, and also how to meditate on the Scripture and make application to one’s life and experience.

Observations on the Birth of Joseph

For instance, mark the following practical observations on the birth of Joseph as it occurred in the context of Jacob’s exile,

his conniving father-in-law, the desire to return to his homeland and the hope of the covenant-promise (Gen. chaps. 29–31):

1. The birth of a child often causes one to pause and re-evaluate the issues of life, and even to change in habits and demeanor. God teaches us through the *birth* of babies as well as through the *death* of others.
2. Jacob may have wanted Joseph reared in a different—better, more godly—atmosphere. The older sons certainly lived, thought, and acted as the heathen about them. Our greatest concern for our children should not be merely social, educational, or financial—it must be spiritual, and in this context, moral and ethical!
3. What influence we have over and upon our children! It is from their fathers and mothers in the context of the home and family that they should first learn to be conscious of God, to know his nature and character and fear him, to understand the reality and penalty of sin, to be pointed in the way of salvation.
4. It is here that they first begin to understand authority, law, how to live uprightly in a sinful world, what is right or wrong, moral or immoral, sinful or righteous. Here they learn to love, be responsible, work, deal with their own sinful human nature.
5. Here also they look to their parents for their examples in adulthood and marriage. They learn by our example what marriage and family are to be, how to live and act as fathers and mothers. The birth of a child should be one of the great turning-points in a parent's life and in a marriage.
6. May God use such events in our lives to conform us more to the image of his Son (Rom. 8:29) and make us conscious of who and what we are in relation to him and his purpose. It is a great responsibility to train up a child in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord!” (Eph. 6: 1–4).

Observations on Joseph's Early Life

Again, practical observations may be made on Gen. 37:2, which finds Joseph in his early years learning responsibility. He was put to work in the family business. Note the following observations:

1. Parents err when they do not teach their children to be responsible. Mothers who always clean up after their children and indulge them, and fathers who seek to give everything to their children, fail in their God-ordained task. Mark the sinfulness of an indulgent parent in the case of Eli (1 Sam. 2:22–29; 3:13).

Note: The study of Bible backgrounds, cultures and customs is extremely important to understand much of the Scripture. Although all the Hebrew customs in biblical times are *not* inspired, they do deserve some consideration.

A boy was reared by his mother to age five. It was under his mother's care that he first learned the rudiments of religion from her lips and actions. He was then in his father's care from age five to maturity.

The father had three great obligations to his son: to circumcise him, to teach him the law, and to teach him a trade (The ancient Jewish literature taught that "if a father does not teach his son a trade, he teaches him to be a thief"). Thus, the Law of God was to govern the relationship of a son to his father. The son was to be spiritually instructed as he was trained in the skills of a given trade. Ideally, the conversation was not on sports, or other "man-talk," but upon the things of God and the responsibilities of manhood.

2. There is a biblical work ethic, i.e., a philosophy or theology of work derived from the Scriptures. Work is *not* part of the curse. Man was created to work (Gen. 1:26–28; 2:15). It is not work, but the exhausting labor or toil and its disappointing results that are the result of the curse (Gen. 3:17–19). A child's education at home must include work to teach him responsibility, obedience, industry, and

necessary skills. A young man or woman unskilled or unused to the responsibility and discipline of work is unfit for the realities of life, adult society, and marriage.

3. It was customary in that age and culture for a younger son to become an attendant, valet, or special servant and helpful companion to the father or patriarch of the family. Joseph was doubtless at his father's side much of the time, learning and being educated in the issues of life. Parents must understand that they teach their children by their conscious efforts, and also unconsciously by their relation with others, attitudes, habits, language, and view of life.
4. It is in the context of the family, under parental love, guidance and discipline, that children are to first learn obedience and submission to authority, self-restraint, and responsibility.

Note: It is in the context of the family that the child first learns obedience to authority, and probably the first authority that he will question and disdain or rebel against is that of his *mother*. How important that the father reinforce the parental authority of the mother in the earliest years! The husband's treatment of his wife—the father's treatment of the mother—will inevitably evidence or reflect itself in the behavior of the children.

The first step a godly father takes toward rearing his children in the fear and admonition of the Lord is to be a godly husband, for his God-consciousness and reverential fear of God will be reflected in his own attitude and behavior toward his wife, and will in turn be reflected in the attitude and behavior of his children.

5. In the context of the family, children first learn of God and are to witness about them a consistent Christian world—and-life-view in the lives and example of their parents.

Observations on Joseph as a Slave: The House of Potiphar

Another example may be taken from Joseph's sojourn as a slave in the house of Potiphar (Gen. 39:1–20). Here he was providentially prepared for his destiny in the providence of God:

1. The will and purpose of God are infallible. Even seeming adversity and opposition in reality only furthers the Divine purpose (Psa. 76:10). We must remember that we are never without God's protection or apart from his purpose! God is yet working out his mysterious and sovereign purpose—even when it seems to fail.
2. It is the ultimate purpose of God to make Joseph prime minister of a foreign land. He had to be highly educated in every sphere of life. What school of higher learning would God send him to?—slavery and imprisonment! God's "University" has its own "schools"—hard work, experience, adversity, humility, patience and temptation!
3. Even the seemingly worst of circumstances are ordered by Divine providence. Joseph was providentially sold to Potiphar, who was a high official in the royal court. Here his education commenced:
 - He would learn to work hard and bear increasing responsibility.
 - He would be promoted because of his sense of responsibility and his conscientiousness to his position—and because the Lord was with him.
 - He would readily become acquainted with and educated in the Egyptian language, and the manners and customs of the educated and royal class.
 - He would learn Egyptian protocol and become responsible for a very large household.
 - He would also establish himself as a responsible administrator. He who would one day rule the kingdom as an administrator, must first be a household servant—a simple, lowly domestic—and be found faithful in a few things!
 - He would doubtless make some political connections and acquaintances.
 - Although the time would seem incredibly long, the trials severe and the years disappointing, God did

not waste one moment in preparing Joseph for his high calling! Thirty years of age is unbelievably young for any high government official and especially a prime minister!

There is no part of our lives and experience that is without meaning or significance in the providence of God. Long before we are prominent or useful to any degree in the kingdom of God, we are educated, prepared, brought into various relationships and exposed to manifold testings that we might be seasoned as the servants of God. Cf. young David, who, before he killed Goliath, had proven himself by killing both a lion and a bear (1 Sam. 17:34–37).

4. Even earthly masters are ordained by God. Potiphar got a bargain when he purchased Joseph, and Joseph became the source of great blessing to Potiphar. Not only is the purpose of God infallible, but every aspect of it is interrelated (“...all things work together for good...” Rom. 8:28).
5. Humiliation usually comes before exaltation. (Lam. 3:27–29). God refines through trial and adversity, not through blessing (Isa. 55:8–9). Joseph passed through a period in his youth that would mark most men for life and leave them untrustworthy, embittered, bent on revenge, or determined to escape.
6. The character is not to be determined by the circumstances, but circumstances are to be overcome by character. Some men’s characters are determined by the circumstances. King Saul was changed for the worse through his exaltation (1 Kgs. 9–16). Saul of Tarsus was converted and, although his character [conviction, zeal, determination] was not changed, the direction of his energy was! (Acts 9–).

Joseph’s character was not transformed by his circumstances—he did not become embittered, filled with thoughts of revenge or seek to escape; rather, he

served diligently and faithfully to the glory of God. There is a great difference between godly character and mere human determination, between faith and a selfish personal agenda!

7. Great trials and great blessings often occur together in the purpose of God. This is often necessary to temper us in our circumstances. Great blessings without great trials would tend to make us complacent; great trials without great blessings would tend to crush us. God gives us both for our discipline, encouragement and spiritual growth. God mitigated Joseph's circumstances with his promotions. Even the greatest of trials may have tokens of God's presence and blessings.
8. We must be prepared for sudden changes in our lives—and trust ourselves to God. Joseph's life seemed to consist of a series of crises! Almost every change in Joseph's life came as the result of a sudden crisis: from freedom to the pit, from the pit to slavery, from service in Potiphar's house as his highest servant and trusted manager to prison, and from prison to the highest office in the land.
9. Often the most seemingly incidental relationship or acquaintance may prove to be a great determining factor in the life. It is probable that Potiphar was either the chief steward or executioner. This implies that Joseph would already have made the acquaintance of the chief jailer and was known to him as a very responsible and able administrator. He may have made the acquaintance of many high level officials during his service in Potiphar's house. Joseph's good reputation may have preceded him to prison.

Our faithfulness, responsible behavior and honesty today may serve us well as the servants of God tomorrow. Cf. David, who, long before he was king, was in Saul's house to soothe him with his musical ability. It was during this time that David doubtless learned much

concerning protocol, tradition, administration and royal deportment (1 Sam. 16).

10. Exaltation or advancement may be temporary. Both Joseph and David were temporarily advanced for a relatively short time in their early lives in the providence of God, but the far-reaching reason was not realized until years afterward. Joseph, after being the highest servant of the estate was imprisoned. David, after being Saul's personal minstrel, was again left with "those few sheep in the wilderness." Can we accept temporary advancement, then the humiliation of a renewed obscurity? God has a purpose in both!
11. We may have our greatest opportunities under adverse circumstances. Joseph was being prepared by God for far greater things, but then as a slave, he learned responsibility in a far greater way than he would have under his father's care. We should make the very best of any given circumstance and not constantly seek the path of least resistance or less responsibility. The people God uses are those who have proven themselves faithful in smaller matters and under adversity.

Observations on the Attempted Seduction of Joseph

Finally, some observations may be made from the attempted seduction of Joseph by Potiphar's wicked wife (Gen. 39:6b–20). There is much in this incident that is practically instructive for young people.

The issue here, which was somewhat unavoidable due to natural circumstances of growth, physical maturity, handsomeness, the achievement of a relatively high position, and the wickedness of a wealthy, wicked woman of high social standing, became a point of great temptation.

Joseph was physically well-built and very handsome as he matured into manhood.

Note: **וַיְהִי יוֹסֵף יְפֵה־תָאֵר וַיִּיְפֵה מְרָאָה**, (*yoseph y^ephēh to'ar wyipheh mār^eeh*) Lit: "Joseph was fair in form and fair in

face.” LXX: καὶ ἦν Ἰωσήφ καλὸς τῷ εἶδει καὶ ὠραῖος τῇ ὄψει σφόδρα (*kai Iōsēph kalos tō heidei, kai hōraios tē hopsei sphodra*) “And Joseph was beautiful in [physical] form, and exceedingly beautiful [handsome] in countenance.” The reference to Joseph’s physique infers that he had done enough hard work to be very muscular. As Joseph had been promoted at that time to the highest possible position, it is very probable that he was at least in his mid–to–late twenties and so in the very bloom of life and strength.

Potiphar’s wife began to lust after him because of his personal attractiveness and position, and sought to seduce him.³⁰³ Joseph refused. The attempted seduction became a constant threat, so Joseph avoided her altogether.³⁰⁴ As he was in the house alone for business purposes, she accosted him physically, grabbing him.³⁰⁵ He immediately fled, leaving his outer garment in her hand. She fabricated the lie that Joseph attempted to rape her. Potiphar became angry and put Joseph into prison.

Note: The usual punishment for such criminal behavior as attempted rape by a slave was torture and death. Joseph was only imprisoned. The possible providential reasons are:

(1) Potiphar might well have had reason to discount his wife’s fabrication. From ancient inscriptions, Egyptian women moved freely among the men of that society and had a reputation for

³⁰³ וְשָׁכַבָה עִמָּי (*shik^ebah ‘immiy*) Qal. imp. “Lie with me!” The LXX reads: ...κοιμήθητι μετ’ ἐμοῦ (*koimētheti met’ emou*), aor. imp. ἐμοῦ (*emou*) emph. pron. “Sleep with me!” Both the Heb. and Gk. are in the imp. —the Heb. in the emph. imp. [the imp. vb. ending with the emph. הַ, *ah!*], and the Gk. has the aor. imp., both connoting a determined and urgent entreaty. This was a euphemism for illicit sexual intimacy.

³⁰⁴ לֹא־יָהוּת עִמָּה (*loh^eyoth ‘imma*) “to be with her” implies a complete avoidance of her company. (לֹא, (*l’o*), “not,” the strong neg., implying a definite avoidance altogether).

³⁰⁵ The root תָּפַס (*taphas*) signifies “to seize.” (LXX, ἐπεσπάσατο [*epespasato*], aor. and intens., violently pulled him to her tightly!). This action implies some violence and attempted close physical contact on her part to force his body to hers to sexually arouse and so seduce him.

unfaithfulness, self-indulgence and moral looseness. Potiphar's wife lived and belonged in that society, and probably did very much as she pleased in her high position.

(2) Such behavior was completely out of character for Joseph, to whom Potiphar had entrusted everything without reserve. To execute Joseph would have been to definitely put an end to his own prosperity and blessing, for he perceived that God was with Joseph.

1. Physical, personal, social, emotional, mental or intellectual attractiveness all possess their own inherent dangers. In a masculine way, Joseph reflected his mother's beauty and personality. As a Semite, he was of more noble features than a native Egyptian and possibly of lighter skin. His high intellect and proper manners were evidently outstanding. He had risen to great heights in power and skill. He was, even as a servant, a highly desirable man.

Potiphar's wife found him irresistible. Attractiveness must be tempered with an unquestionable and outstanding godliness or difficulties will certainly arise. There should be a self-consciousness that evidences itself in a godly modesty (i.e., godly, discreet behavior) and proper [suitable] attire:

Note: 1 Tim. 2:8–10, "...modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety..." (...γυναίκα ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης...). Lit: [the] women in suitable [orderly] clothing, with modest and sober behavior..." The term "modest" is to be construed with behavior, not apparel, as most believe. The modern idea of modesty is present in the term "suitable" or orderly. The Scriptures begin consistently with the heart and behavior, not the clothing!

This is certainly true in the necessarily and usual close relationship enjoyed by the people of God in a church context, where, in a religious atmosphere, one's guard may be let down, and one's affections may be easily seduced.

2. God will not shield us from the common ills of all men—great trials, temptations, pain, reverses, depression, discouragements or disappointments. These are the very

difficulties that are meant to try and strengthen our character, increase our faith and season us for the future. Every one of these realities came upon Joseph for his spiritual education in preparation for the great work that God called upon him to perform.

3. God has ordained that every believer be tested in the area of his faith (i.e., his relation to God and trust in God amidst trials, adversity and temptation). Our religious principles will certainly be put to the test! Cf. Abraham (Gen. 12:10). What we do not read is that Abraham sought the face of God in prayer as to what he should do. He had arrived in the Land of Promise. On what basis should he leave? He had journeyed by faith every step of the way until then.

He did not fail as a husband, leader, or owner of much property—he failed as a believer in not seeking the will of God in prayer. With the sojourn into Egypt and the procuring of Hagar, the consequent history of the Middle Eastern peoples would never be the same!³⁰⁶

4. Prosperity is not security. The modern lie that sells so much insurance and strives for safety and security at a high price states that prosperity is security. The truth is that life itself is, humanly speaking, very uncertain. Prosperity, position, wealth, trustworthiness, high morality, a consistent ethic, good health—none of these things protected Joseph in the hour of trial and deceit! We must ultimately look to God and not to ourselves or what we can accomplish for our own protection. In financial and physical matters—and at times in the moral realm—we can do what is humanly possible—but our ultimate protection and security rest with God. Fulfilled human

³⁰⁶ Through Hagar's son by Abraham, Ishmael, the Arabian peoples were brought into existence—with all the subsequent religious and racial strife between Jews and Arabs, Jews and Moslems, and Christians and Moslems.

responsibility is a strong stand from which to then trust God explicitly.

5. Temptation turns innocence into virtue. One who has not yet been tempted cannot plead virtue as can one who has withstood the onslaught of temptation under trying circumstances. It takes no faith or moral strength to resist a temptation that does not exist. But it takes the grace of God to withstand great temptation in a positive, consistent and godly manner.
6. Sin lies not in the temptation itself, but in *yielding* to the temptation (1 Cor. 10:1–13; Jas. 1:13–16; Heb. 4:14–16). Sinful human nature has an attraction [affinity] for sin. It is natural to sin; it is in the realm of grace that we resist temptation to sin.

Note: Heb. 4:14–16. Our Lord was and is *impeccable*, i.e., he could not sin (*non posse peccare*, i.e., “not possible to sin.” Not *posse non peccare*, it was possible that he could have sinned, but did not. This would have been *peccability*). “He was in all points tempted like as we are,” with the exception of sin.

He was, in the days of his flesh, liable to all sinless emotions and liabilities—hunger, physical tiredness, thirst, etc. He wept, became angry in a righteous sense, etc. He also experienced the deceit of false friends, the consequences of falsehoods against him, the hypocrisy of traditional religion, and the pride, ignorance and gross inconsistencies of his disciples.

In short, our Lord experienced the whole range of human experience with the exception of personal sin. He was acquainted with the awfulness of sin when the sins of his people were imputed to him when he suffered as their sinless substitute.

7. Promotion may be precarious—because it may be attended by great trial and temptation. Advancement in the world always means danger for the believer. Promotion to a higher position may mean increased pressure to conform

to the world's godless [relativistic] standards in morality and ethics, in family and relationships, in business dealings and finances. The believer is to be a moral absolutist before both God and men—in a world or society based upon moral relativism.

8. There is no temptation that is false or without a certain attraction—or such would not be temptation at all! Our sinful human nature possesses a great affinity for sin (Jas. 1:13–16). Potiphar's wife must have been physically desirable to some extent, and, perhaps, very beautiful. She certainly threw herself at Joseph in a blatant manner and made constant, overt sexual advances toward him.

Joseph was a physically normal young, mature man with normal sexual desires. The temptation was real enough! The heart must be kept, as all sin begins within the inner personality (Prov. 4:23; Matt. 5:27–30). Great care must be taken to guard the “windows of the soul,” i.e., the eyes, the ears, the tongue and the hands and feet—the sense of touch, of smell and also sound and taste.

Lust may easily masquerade as “love.” Potiphar's wife intended to make her solicitations sound like love, and to make them attractive to this young man, but he saw it as it was— “great wickedness and...sin against God.” What is the difference between lust and love? It may only exist in the moral context. Sexual love and intimacy as ordained and blessed by God are to exist in the context of marriage alone.

Apart from the God-ordained context, all love is lust! Great care must be taken for those who are seeking a wife or husband that their “love” does not degenerate into lust. Further, true love puts either husband or wife second—and God first! Only then can either husband or wife rest assured that the other is faithful, for faithfulness begins with God, and then with each other.

10. The time to refuse to sin or to take a godly stand against sin is at the moment of temptation. Sin must be opposed at the very beginning (Jas. 1:13–16; Psa. 66:18). Joseph took immediate, intelligent, proper steps to deal with the situation—he immediately refused, then avoided the woman altogether. How different would history have been and how much sorrow would have been spared not only the royal family, but the entire nation, had David looked away and dealt with heart–lust and heart–sin when he first saw Bathsheba!
11. Our refusal to sin must be Scriptural, godly, consistent, wise and intelligent. Joseph’s refusal is a classic study in its content:
 - *It was immediate and definite.* “..he refused...” He did not wait for temptation to gain a hold upon his mind or heart. He acted, it seems, almost by instinct. He seemed to recoil from such a thought. This seems quite in accord with his general character. He was a young, vulnerable man, but he was also a godly man, and also both responsible and trustworthy. It behooves us to consider all things and take immediate and definite action in moral and ethical situations. No one should be left in ignorance as to our moral persuasion! The Christian’s world–and–life view should be part of his testimony.
 - *It was intelligent.* His reasoning shows that he was not given to irrational behavior nor could be easily deceived or seduced. His whole response reveals both a high intelligence and a moral foundation which seemed unassailable. Irrational religion is a weak religion as feelings and impressions take precedence over the truth.
 - A religion founded on truth is by nature intelligent. The Christian religion must be intelligent. True spirituality is primarily intellectual, as both our objective reality and subjective experience is to derive from the propositional truth of Scripture.

- *It was consistent.* He gave every rational reason that was necessary to end any thought of seduction:
 - He argued his position with his master Potiphar, who had placed him in a position of utmost trust and confidence. Such an act would inevitably lead to repetition of the same—the breaking of a great trust and loyalty. Such a relationship would necessarily lead to all sorts of infidelity.
- He argued his own standing as the greatest servant—a position that had taken years to achieve, and was achieved because of his skill and responsible character and actions. This he would be a fool to jeopardize. He was not the type of person to irrationally throw everything away in a moment.
- He argued the sanctity of marriage—something she was more than willing to abandon. She was his master’s wife. She belonged to him, and not to any other man. To break the marriage vow would be to introduce utter deceit, distrust and devastation within the house and every relationship. Joseph clearly saw this and wanted to impress her with the same reality.
- He argued the reality of God. This was an outrageous sin, the greatest sin that could be committed against God and against Potiphar.

Note: הַרְרָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת (*hra’ah hgdolah hizzo’th*)

The words are emphatic, “this! this wickedness! this great one!” The LXX reads: “...πῶς ποιήσω τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ ποιηρὸν τοῦτο...(pōs poiēsō to rhēma to poiēron touto), rest. att. “...how shall I do this thing that is said, this wickedness, this!...”

- *It was wise.* He never charged her directly with sin, but pointed to the horrible fact of such sin. She was his master’s wife, and he, except for such intimacy as she wanted from him, was under her control. He was in no position to directly accuse her, although his answer must have filled her with rage as a woman scorned.

- *It was godly.* He pled the reality and moral self-consistency of God. He also sought to impress her with the enormity of her words and her intentions. He sought to give the proper defense for himself as a godly man, and also sought to convict her of what she was attempting to do. His theology determined his morality—this was his impeccable testimony!
12. Every circumstance, situation or incident in our lives reveals our world-and-life view. Our world-and-life view is our philosophy of life, our perception of ourselves in the context of ultimate reality.³⁰⁷ It is co-extensive with our testimony as Christians. It makes our Christian witness intelligent and consistent—if it is thoroughly biblical. Joseph's world-and-life view was theocentric [God-centered]. This was the great secret of his life, moral convictions, consistency, work ethic and attractive personality.
 13. Behind every act of the will [volition] are necessarily the intellect and emotions. The will acts as the expression of the motivation or inclination of the heart [the inner personality]. Thus, we are responsible for our actions. When Potiphar's wife willed to do—pressed to do—such a sinful thing, she had no doubt given thought to the enormity of the deed and its possible consequences to a given extent. Joseph's refusal with its reasons reveals that he had considered the matter very carefully and thoroughly. We must question our motives and consider our inclinations—and carefully and thoroughly submit all to the Word of God!
 14. There is never an excuse for sin—even if it seems to put us in an impossible situation. We must never be seduced into thinking that we can use our calamities as an excuse

³⁰⁷ Technically, our world-and-life view is the sum-total of our presuppositions, axioms, or assumptions, which determine our approach to all of reality.

for sin. For Joseph, there was no easy alternative. He could have argued that God had led him into such circumstances, that he himself was a mature man with like needs and desires, that he had been abandoned to such circumstances by fate, and that such a relationship was even providential! But his knowledge of and belief in God enabled him to stand consistently. Our hermeneutic determines our theology, and our theology determines our morality.

15. Any and every sin is against God, and any offense against God must be exceedingly great! Cf. David in his repentance after committing adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah her husband (Psa. 51). He had been forgiven, but knew that the joy of the Lord, that which he had often experienced in fellowship and communion with God had been broken. He wanted to *experience* that forgiveness in his soul and mind! Note the enormity of sin in its relation to God:

- *Sin is rebellion against God's Law.* All and every sin implies God. All and every sin also implies a Divine standard or Law (1 Jn. 3:4). A true, biblical God-consciousness is the best preventive from sin.
- *Sin is a defiance of God's authority.* It is self-willed refusal to submit to his revealed will. What could possibly be in God's will that would not be the highest good? Yet from the very beginning, fallen man has sought to call God into account rather than submit to the highest good (Gen. 3:9–13; 4:3–14; Rom. 9:14–21).
- *Sin is a willful ignorance of God's immanence.* God is not only omnipresent, he is immanent, i.e., he fills all space fully, intelligently, morally and completely (Jer. 23:23–24). This is a great comfort in danger, a great incentive to believing prayer, but also a great witness against the awful, wicked nature of sin.
- *Sin is a defiance of God's revealed will.* The very essence of the Christian mind and will should be that

God's will "be done on earth, as it is in heaven," i.e., willingly, completely, and without opposition (Matt. 6:10). Sin sets itself against this will.³⁰⁸

- *Sin is a denial of God's justice.* It takes lightly the precious blood of Christ which has redeemed us, and despises the infinite sufferings of our loving Savior (Heb. 10:26–31; 1 Pet. 18–20).
- *Sin is a refusal of God's righteousness.* Every sin possesses its own wicked self-righteousness that stands impudently in the face of God. There are ultimately only two kinds of righteousness for man: the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ or one's own self-righteousness (Rom. 3:21–26; Titus 3:5).
- *Sin is an abuse of God's goodness.* His goodness should lead us to repentance, not presumption or wicked indulgence (Rom. 2:4).
- *Sin is a repudiation of God's grace.* His grace views us as wholly undeserving of his loving kindness, yet enables and sustains us (Eph. 2:5, 8–10). Sin tramples and disdains such free and sovereign grace.
- *Sin is a rejection of God's mercy.* His mercy views us as suffering the ravages of indwelling sin and remaining corruption (Psa. 103:8–18; Psa. 136; Eph. 2:4). Sin repudiates this mercy for its wicked self-indulgence.
- *Sin is a betrayal of God's love.* How can any true believer lightly betray or spurn the infinite, glorious, self-sacrificing love of our heavenly Father (Jn. 3:16; Jas. 4:4; 1 Pet. 1:18–20; 1 Jn. 4:9–10)?

³⁰⁸ This is epitomized in the following rhyme:

Not my will, but thine be done,
To the Father prayed the Son,
And revealed in this I find
The essence of the Christian mind.

—W. R. D.

- *Sin is presumption upon God's providence.* Divine providence should produce a pervasive God-consciousness, not a wicked presumption upon the Divine character (Psa. 19:13). Every willful sin presumes upon the forbearance of God.
- *Sin is a maligning of God's holiness.* He is absolutely holy and demands such from his own (Rom. 6:15–22; 1 Pet. 1:15–16). How can any true believer take even one willful, deliberate sin lightly?
- Sin is a polluting of God's moral purity. How repulsive must be our sins to a Holy, morally perfect God! He cannot bear with them, except through the imputed righteousness and constant intercession of Christ (Hab. 1:13). How precious to us ought to be the grace of God in Christ which keeps us from judgment!
- *Sin is a despising of God's wisdom.* At the very heart of any sin is the horrible thought that we are wiser than God, that such sin is better than his will and purpose for our lives (Rom. 11:33–36).
- *Sin is deceit and hypocrisy in the face of God.* God knows all things, including the human heart and mind. Yet outwardly religious persons pretend to know and serve him with their actions while their hearts are slaves to sin and under its reigning power, thus tainting whatever they do (Rom. 6:16–18).
- *Sin is a presumption upon God's remembrance.* Men believe that simply because they lightly commit sin and then forget it that God will do likewise. Any and every sin which is not repented of, and forgiven must be dealt with scripturally (Rom. 6:1–6; Rev. 20:11–15).
- *Sin is an insult to God's intelligence.* God knows. God sees. God judges. God chastens (Heb. 12:3–15). Could it possibly be otherwise? Sin necessarily includes a deficiency in or a refusal of the true knowledge of God.

- *Sin is a provocation of God's anger.* His love is holy, righteous and consistent, and he will chasten sufficient to correct (Heb. 10:31; 12:3–15).
16. God-consciousness is a great preventative of evil. We should consider the necessity of catechizing our children concerning the attributes of God as a barrier to sin. Joseph's great argument was the consciousness of the presence of God and the reality of his moral self-consistency! He, despite the inconsistencies of his early home-life, had been well-catechized in the truth of God!
 17. The unsaved have a low estimate of sin because they have a low estimate of God. Theology determines morality, i.e., one's concept of God either allows him to dally in sin or to avoid it. In this matter between Joseph and Potiphar's wife, we have this distinction illustrated—paganism vs. a belief in the one true God. True belief is necessarily exemplified in the totality of the life!
 18. We must see both the human and Divine aspects of sin. Both humanly and Divinely, sin is devastating! Potiphar's wife should have considered the enormity of what she desired and its inevitable consequences—it would be, not a one-time act (things of this nature never are), but the establishment of a relationship that would ultimately pull down the entire marriage, home, estate and future. Mistrust, deceit, immorality, contention, betrayal—these things would necessarily bring about the downfall of everyone involved. And in addition to these, the direct judgment of God!
 19. Moral relativism has always been a characteristic of sinful humanity. Every society in every age sanctions some sins, especially those of a sexual nature. Moral relativism derives from a corrupt and thus untrue or false concept of God (Rom. 1:18–25ff). A true concept of God produces a conviction of sin and about sin!

20. Some trials are meant to wear us down and make us fall through weariness. We may weaken if we allow ourselves to be worn down or seduced by constant temptation. Cf. the downfall of Samson through the importunity of Delilah. Even the strongest may be worn down and seduced through time and circumstances. Joseph's trial in this matter was of the most trying, dangerous nature!
21. We must avoid all temptation to sin as much as is possible. This is necessary for the following reasons: (1) We by nature have an affinity for sin. Sin has a natural attraction for us, and some sins more than others. (2) Temptation is always present, and so a constant guardedness is necessary. (3) Thinking about various temptations has a way of wearing us down so that we might become dulled to sin.

...[Joseph]...knew that all the honors of Egypt could not buy off the guilt of one sin; and therefore abhors not only her bed, but her company. He that will be safe from the acts of evil, must wisely avoid the occasions....Lust yielded unto is a pleasant madness; but it is a desperate madness when it is opposed: no hatred burns so furiously as that which arises from the quenched coals of love.³⁰⁹

22. Things that are necessary, innocent or natural in themselves may become a source of moral danger and a cause for sin. Cf. Eve in Gen. 3. The seduction of the human race by Satan was somewhat gradual. Satan began with questioning the Word of God, then, perceiving Eve's ignorance of God's word, separated her from it and seduced her into sin. She also acted apart from her husband's leadership in her conversation. Adam surrendered his headship in following the leading of his wife.

Cf. David in 2 Sam. 11. Where did David's sin of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah begin? Was it

³⁰⁹ Bishop Joseph Hall, *Contemplations*, p. 29.

sinful for him to take a nap, to walk about his own house? He should have been with his army in the field. Cf. Sarah in Gen. 12:10–20. Abraham failed in that he did not pray concerning going down into Egypt. Sarah evidently did not unduly show herself, but in the common activities of life was noticed by the Egyptians and commended to Pharaoh. Cf. Dinah in Gen. 34:1–2. Such social intercourse was natural, but it was also very dangerous for a single, attractive woman. Joseph had to be about his business or usual duties. But it put him into the path of moral danger!

23. Unsanctified desires are dangerous! The desires of Potiphar's wife were naturally unsanctified, as she was truly godless. What would have been the horrible outcome had Joseph's desires been unsanctified?! Against nature and in the context of grace he stood firm with an intelligent concept of God and reality. Such a stand implies—not a casual, intermittent prayer life—but a constant communion with God that was buttressed with ardent and fervent prayer and contemplation of the truth!
24. Certain temptations to sin call for drastic measures. Sexual sins are the more dangerous because they are the more natural. Some sins are not natural, but acquired, e.g., drunkenness, theft, murder, etc., but sexual sins begin within the normal range of the thought–process and bodily functions. Adultery is morally wrong simply because God has declared so in his word. He has established the institution of marriage and made this the exclusive context for sexual union. Joseph fled as fast and as far as was necessary. To stay, even in the same house with this woman, would have been great folly!
25. Sexual sin is not merely physical, rather, it is very complex. It begins with the thought–process of lust or

inordinate desire (Matt. 5:27–28)³¹⁰ and includes the satisfaction of pride (that another would find us attractive enough to break the marriage bond and transgress God’s law). The natural functions and inclinations of the body are aroused. The moral barriers have already been transgressed when willing though seemingly incidental physical contact takes place.

Further, sexual union is not simply the conjoining of two bodies, but of two personalities, of two souls! This is why the sin of adultery is so heinous—it is a betrayal of the most profound, closest human relationship possible, as two must commit themselves to each other without reservation, breaking any and all vows, ties and relationships (1 Cor. 6:15–16)!

26. There may be no easy alternative to sin. For Joseph, it was either flee or fall! Our relation to God [communion, daily walk, attendance to the means of grace] must be carefully maintained. This was no time to consider the issues, or pray about the matter, but to act immediately, decisively and drastically!
27. Different temptations to sin call for different measures. Satanic attacks must be resisted in the faith (Eph. 6:10–11; 1 Pet. 5:8–9). The temptations to worldliness must be met by non-conformity (Rom. 12:1–2; 1 Jn. 2:15–17). Temptations to sexual sin must be met by fleeing—because they are so much in tune with our natural instincts (1 Cor. 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:22)! It is not always cowardice to run away!
28. No place or time is completely safe from temptation and sin. This is because (1) temptation to sin may come upon us during the general duties of life, even when our

³¹⁰ In Matt. 5:28, our Lord used the specific term “adultery (μοιχεύω, *moicheuo*),” not the more general term “fornication (πορνεία, *porneia*),” implying that either the one looking or the one looked at was known to be married at the time.

behavior is not sinful, but glorifying to God, and (2) sin begins in the mind or heart in our reaction to temptation, thus we carry the possibility of sin always with us.

29. Some types of employment may put us in great danger of temptation and sin. Some employment is not fit for believers, because they will be put in constant jeopardy. Some types of work may be safe in themselves, but put believers in jeopardy because of others who work in the same environment. There is no place or employment where we can allow ourselves to be complacent.
30. Secrecy, questionable personal relationships and intimacy are favorable to temptation and sin. This is why even Christian fellowship or church relationships may become an environment for temptation and sin—not only such sins as gossip and self-righteousness, but even indecent behavior and immorality.
31. Refusal to sin may take spiritual, moral and even physical courage. Thus, it behooves every believer to attend to the private and public means of grace constantly! We cannot allow ourselves to become dull or spiritually lethargic. Joseph is the picture of a young man whose life was lived in the context of God.
32. Sexual harassment is not confined to the masculine sex. Indeed, the Scriptures seem to give more warnings against a young man being seduced or harassed by an evil woman than a young woman being seduced by an evil man (E.g., Prov. 6:23–35; 7:1–27; 9:12–18)! Great sinners come in both sexes! Sexual harassment is not confined to the workplace. It can occur in any human relationship—in the confines of the family, among relatives, in any social circle—including the church!
33. Superiors may take undue advantage of those under their power. Potiphar's wife saw Joseph as a slave—her husband's property—but she neither saw his God nor understood his faith. Our Christian testimony may be put

to the test by someone who would seek to seduce us, either sexually or morally and ethically to do what is wrong and sinful—not only to commit sexual sin, but to lie, steal, cheat, etc.

34. The unregenerate seek to bring everyone down to their own level. Potiphar’s wife wanted Joseph to descend to her moral level, and sought to seduce him into betraying his relation to God, his trustworthiness to Potiphar and his reliability as a servant.

There is an inherent struggle in every human relationship between the godly and ungodly. Believers must struggle to lift the relationship; the ungodly seek to lower it to their level. This is why evil companionships corrupt good manners; why Christians must avoid many relationships and protect their children from such! This is also why some relationships tend to weaken us and so must be terminated.

35. The fear of God must be included in the means of grace. The fear of the Lord is an intelligent and reverential fear, a fear that fears to offend, a fear with a distinct reverence and moral quality that is meant to both govern and moderate our attitudes and actions (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Gen. 42:18; Lev. 19:14, 32; Dt. 13:4).

Note: The “means of grace” are *not* sacramental. The only sacrament for New Testament believers is the efficacious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The “means of grace” are those entities or ordinances which edify believers and teach or encourage them in their growth in grace. There are both private and public means of grace.

Evangelical preaching is a primary public means of grace as it expounds and applies the truth under the authority and unction of the Holy Spirit. Public worship is a means of grace in the congregational singing of hymns, the reading of the Scriptures and prayer for the same reason.

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are means of grace as they symbolize Divine truth which edifies and revives the people of God as they recall the realities thus

symbolized. True, godly Christian fellowship is a means of grace as it is expressed in edifying conversation.

The primary private means of grace are prayer and the study of the Scriptures. The fear of the Lord is a reverent God-consciousness that dwells upon his glory, power and moral character. As such, it is a means of grace as both a preventative of evil thoughts, words and actions, and a great encouragement in times of adversity.

36. Some situations or temptations to sin are more dangerous than others. Some forms of evil are more subtle or seductive than others, as they bear an affinity for our own natural desires or instincts. The inordinate love of Potiphar's wife was much more dangerous than the hatred of Joseph's brethren. Joseph was a young man in the bloom and strength of his youth, yet he was normal, unmarried and doubtless had normal sexual feelings and desires.
37. Some instances or crises in our lives may be repeated. This was the second time Joseph lost his coat, and both times it was used in a matter of deceit and evil. May God give us grace to see the issues for what they are and submit, fight or flee as the situation may require!
38. We must do the best we can in dangerous situations that might involve temptation and sin. Joseph lost his coat rather than his virtue and his conscience. Cf. Rahab, who acted in faith in a very difficult moral context (Josh. 2; Heb. 11:31).
- We must take heed that we do not put too much stock or confidence in material things. We live in a society and age that puts material things above the ethical and moral—and all but denies the spiritual! We must remember that we not only live in the material realm, but also in the spiritual, moral and ethical realms—and God sovereignly rules over all.
39. At what price do we give up our character? Joseph would rather lose his life than his character! The truth is more

important than life. Have we ever contemplated what our religion might cost us? Our Lord laid out the requirements for consideration to those who were following him and listening to his teaching. He told them to “count the cost.”

To be a true follower of Christ might mean the ultimate sacrifice! (Lk. 14:25–35). Note that the vb. “hateth” (μισεῖ, *misei*) is pres., denoting the constant attitude toward what concerns the self! Self-denial may [and must, if faithful to God] extend to death!

40. The favor of some persons may mean disfavor with God. To have the favor of Potiphar’s wife would mean to lose the favor of God and to commit great and horrendous sin against God and a moral crime and offense against Potiphar. How much do we value the friendship or favor of others? Enough to deny God? Enough to deny our testimony and our usefulness in his Kingdom?!

The Christian must never approach situations from the perspective of a moral relativist, but from a consistent biblical perspective. Only the moral relativist is left in a dilemma.

41. Ungodly and wicked people will lie about us. Joseph is accused of the very sin he refused to commit, and it was even cast in a darker mode [not mere sexual intercourse, but forcible rape]. What can we expect from the ungodly? Those who live without God have no love or kindness toward those who do, except to their own advantage. Any unnecessary relationship with the ungodly should be avoided. May we take great care in our relationships with those who do not acknowledge God!
42. Wicked people will seek to lay guilt upon the innocent to remove suspicion from themselves. Potiphar’s wife blamed her husband. She declared that *he* was the one who brought Joseph into the house as a slave and promoted

him!³¹¹ In this way, she attempted not only to remove suspicion from herself, but laid guilt upon her husband to play upon his own emotions. Such is the horrible deceitfulness of sin! Such is the mind and heart of the sinner with no conviction about evil! We must take neither sin nor sinners lightly!

43. It is characteristic of sinful human nature to seek to ruin or destroy what it cannot have. This is the sinful, humanistic philosophy behind vandalism—the wanton, needless destruction of someone else’s property. This is an instance of moral vandalism. Such sinfulness is seen in gossip, envy, jealousy and false accusations. May God enable us to know, see and love the truth!
44. Others may add to our woes by either false accusation or sinful silence. Joseph was the greatest servant in Potiphar’s house—the general manager over all his estate and finances—so the other servants may have envied him, were even guilty of the same offense, or were filled with fear and so remained sinfully silent. They certainly did not hear her cry out, for her “cry” was “Lie with me!” They certainly should have known what manner of woman Potiphar’s wife was by her demeanor. May we never be silenced through sin, envy or fear!
45. We must be patient under false accusations if we cannot soon clear ourselves. It is a great test of faith to be silent when we know that we are or have done right and we cannot clear ourselves or we are not believed when we do try to set the matter right! There undoubtedly wells up in the heart and consciousness a horrible sense of injustice that may well overwhelm us. It is in such circumstances that we must trust ourselves to God alone and act upon what we believe! It is a trial of our faith—and this is ever excruciating! Cf. 1 Pet. 2:18–24.

³¹¹ Note the wording: “...*he* hath brought...” (v. 14). “...which *thou* hast brought...” (v. 17).

46. Empirical evidence does not always tell either the truth or the whole story. The empirical evidence was Joseph's coat. The witness of Potiphar's wife to herself—that she “cried with a loud voice” was largely subjective because it was not heard by any witnesses. Thus, she sought to put the preponderance of “evidence” on her side by involving her husband's alleged culpability in bringing Joseph into the house as a slave.

Note: Empiricism is the philosophical and scientific approach that bases all reality on sense experience or evidence. In the moral realm, such as the alleged attempted rape of Potiphar's wife and the selling of Joseph into slavery, much was left to the mind of the examiner to draw his own conclusions. Every man, though not self-admitted, is a presuppositionalist, i.e., acts in terms of his own subjective assumptions or prejudices. The consistent Christian thinks from the *pou sto* [point-of-reference] of a revelational epistemology, i.e., he reasons from the Word of God.

Cf. the case of Joseph's coat soaked in blood and given to Jacob. Empirical evidence reached a false conclusion. We must beware that we act in and by faith in moral matters and do not presume upon mere empirical evidence, as we are dealing with sinful human beings who will lie, twist the truth or make statements or insinuations that might well lead to false conclusions.

47. To have a conscience void of offense may cost us much. Joseph had to silently maintain his innocence and so went to prison. His was but the word of a slave, not withstanding his relatively high position in his master's house. But God knows and counts the cost of such! This is the great secret of the godly person—he or she knows that God knows, and faith rests in the unseen God who orders all things. This is what Spurgeon termed “the pinch of faith,” referring to Rom. 8:28.
48. We may find ourselves in unjust circumstances and must leave all in the hand of God. We must remember that our God—the one and only true God—is a righteous, just and holy God, and he will bring justice in due time—if only on

the great Day of Judgment. Recall the multitude of martyrs, all unjustly condemned—and all unjustly murdered—and that by the religious leaders! Yet God will avenge them on the day of judgment (Rev. 6:9–11).

49. Sinful affections may turn to hatred. The temptress of Joseph became his accuser. The old cliché, though much overstated, is here clearly seen, “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.” She may well have taken his refusal as a reflection upon herself—not her immoral desires—but her person, beauty and desirableness. There is often but a moment or slight distinction between love and hate—when such love is illicit, impure, or self-centered. Cf. the sinful, sad situation that occurred between Amnon and his half-sister, Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1–17).
50. Strong emotions tend to blind the judgment. An impure love blinded the judgment of Potiphar’s wife, grief blinded the judgment of Jacob, and anger blinded the judgment of Potiphar (Prov. 6:32–35).³¹² Theoretically, judgment, by its very nature, presupposes a clear and relatively unbiased mind. Divine grace means a bias toward righteousness. May we exercise righteous judgment in all matters by the grace, Spirit and Word of God!³¹³
51. All human revenge is necessarily and inescapably tainted with sin. This is certainly true in the case of Potiphar’s

³¹² Cf. Gen. 39:19, “...his [Potiphar’s] wrath was kindled.” אָפוּ וַיִּחַר (w’yyc̄har ‘apo), lit: “...and glowed his anger.” LXX: καὶ ἐθυμώθη ὀργῆ (kai ethumōthē orgē), “became incensed with anger.” Men are usually the more swayed by the demands of a much younger or very beautiful wife who can thus demand greater attention.

³¹³ The statement “Judge not that ye be not judged” (Matt. 7:1) is often greatly misunderstood. This is not an outright prohibition of judgment, but a warning that we ourselves will be judged on the same basis that we judge others, therefore, we are to judge righteously (Cf. Matt. 7:2; Lk. 6:37–38; Jn. 7:24; 1 Cor. 2:14–15; Phil. 1:9–11).

wife and her accusation against Joseph. Personal revenge³¹⁴ is prohibited by God because it usurps the Divine prerogative. God alone has both the right and the means to equitably exact vengeance (Rom. 12:19–21).

52. The purpose of God is infallible—an unspeakable confidence to the believer! Potiphar’s wife, for all her conniving and deceit was only fulfilling the providential purpose of God.

Illust: The story is told of Thomas Edison, whose laboratory was often visited by important people. The gate at the front was old and rusty. A sign stated: “Please Close the Gate.” It was both difficult to open and to close. When asked by a visitor why he did not repair the gate, Mr. Edison replied, “I have a water tank on top of our laboratory. When you open the gate, you pump one gallon of water into the tank—and when you shut it, you pump another gallon into it.” So men do what they desire to do, but all the while, they are inescapably fulfilling the Divine purpose.

53. There may be no one who believes or protects us but God. This is, indeed, a great trial of our faith! But to leave everything—including our very lives—in the hand of God should be a daily affair in the experience of the people of God (Cf. the acknowledgments and petitions of the Model Prayer, Matt. 6:9–13).

Joseph had to commit himself to God alone and bear the consequences of the allegations. This time of severe trial and injustice would prove to be the very means whereby he was brought before Pharaoh and exalted to prime minister of that empire! To know and trust God is to know and trust that he has a purpose, and that that purpose is righteous, infallible, and for our ultimate good.

³¹⁴ This pertains only to personal vengeance for personal offenses that are not criminal. Personal crime or public justice is another matter and is to be left in the hands of the civil magistrate (Rom. 13:1–7).

The life of Joseph is well-fitted for the instruction of and warning to godly young men who are destined to live in a sinful world. This study has taken us from exegesis to exposition and finally to very practical application. It lends itself also to geographical, historical and theological study.

The study of Bible characters is thus seen to be extremely profitable, practical, edifying and illuminating for a topic, as the Scriptures teach through precept, principle and example.

Conclusion

The Bible student, through prayerful meditation, experience, the acquisition of a working library, the development of hermeneutical skills, and the accumulation of biblical knowledge, should eventually develop a methodology that is suitable to his needs. He should come to some degree of spiritual maturity through his studies, and also become doctrinally consistent and conversant. One's usefulness in the work of the Lord, the church and the kingdom of God is usually in direct proportion to one's relation to, and the study, memorization and implementation of the Scriptures. We trust that the directions, admonitions, principles, suggestions and illustrations in this short, introductory work have and will continue to prove their value.

Appendix I

Why Study The Original Languages of Scripture?

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman
that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word
of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

This appendix has been added to provide a stimulus for the study of the original languages. There is simply no substitute for a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. The perusing of this appendix may provoke some to engage in such a study.

The Prejudice of Modern Religion

Most Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christians see no reason for taking the time, making the effort, or disciplining themselves to study the Scriptures in their Original Languages. Such study, we are often told, is too time-consuming. Our time and efforts could be better spent in some evangelistic, ecclesiastical or church-related social activity. After all, we are to be interested in *souls* and *people*. Most simply believe that serious language or Bible study is unnecessary.

Many strongly hold that the *King James Version* is completely adequate for any Christian, evangelist, preacher or pastor. Others think that with all the modern translations and versions in the English language, the study of Greek or Hebrew would simply be “re-inventing the wheel.” Still others think that it is wasting time that ought to be spent “soul-winning,” reducing the calling and task of the believer to personal evangelism.

Some among the traditionally Reformed groups also deprecate the necessity for a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. These believe that, as we possess the great Creeds and Confessions, which are based on scriptural exegesis and sound theology, we do not need to carefully examine the Scriptures through an exegesis of the Original Languages.

Such thinking—or rather, non-thinking—has helped to produce the relatively weak, ignorant, inconsistent and worldly

state of present Christianity. Evangelicalism, which prides itself in being identified with the Bible, is relatively ignorant of the very Bible which is supposed to characterize its very existence and distinctives.

Modern Fundamentalism, which prides itself in “Believing the whole Bible and not a Bible full of holes,” suffers, at times, from an astounding ignorance of the truth of Scripture and a failure to consistently apply it. Reformed tradition has a tendency at certain points to resort to the Creeds and Confessions rather than directly to the Scriptures, and thus suffers by erecting a barrier between itself and the Holy Word of God.

It needs to be stated at the outset that we do not deprecate the English Bible. It is rather the inadequacies of the English language—or any secondary language—that is our concern. No version of a translation—however close it seeks to equate the original—will suffice. It is simply impossible. And in this impossibility lies the critical area which makes a study the original languages a perpetual necessity.

The Original Languages and Divine Inspiration

It is common for beginning or relatively uneducated Bible students to believe that a study of the original languages of Scriptures is unnecessary. The truth is, that the nuances and intricacies of the original languages can never be transferred through a translation or version, and to the extent that such elements of the language, grammar and syntax are not transferred or in some way obscured, they are lost to the student limited to his English Bible. Doctrine depends on Divine revelation, and Divine revelation depends on language, and language depends on grammar and syntax, and grammar and syntax are considered only by careful exegesis in the original language. The grammar and syntax of a secondary language is *not* inspired!

There is a direct relationship among verbal, plenary inspiration, a study of the original language, biblical exegesis and interpretation. Divine inspiration presupposes the inspiration of the very grammar, syntax, nuances and idioms of the original

language. To discount biblical exegesis in the original language is to necessarily, though, perhaps inadvertently, deprecate Divine inspiration itself.

The Necessity of and Basis for an
Accurate Study of The Bible

Reasons for a Study of the Original Languages

Why should Christians, study the Scriptures in the original languages? We suggest the following reasons:

God evidently had his reasons for giving and inscripturating his Divine revelation in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. These reasons have not changed with time. To deprecate the study of these languages as an essential part of biblical studies is to corrupt the reality and force of Divine inspiration, disregard the most essential elements of Divine revelation, neglect the very language and text in which God has revealed himself, and fail to maintain a proper basis for interpretation and application.

Every human being, converted or unconverted, is a sinner, and as such suffers to a given degree from the noetic effects of sin.³¹⁵ Access to and some knowledge of the original languages help to offset one's natural misunderstanding of the inscripturated Word of God.

Spiritual illumination—the possession of every true believer (1 Cor. 2:9–16; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27)—is not infallible, i.e., is not equivalent to inspiration. Neither is such spiritual illumination static. It may regress through refusal to believe certain aspects of truth or apply such to the life (Heb. 5:11–

³¹⁵ “Noetic” derives from the noun νοῦς “mind” [the seat of reflective consciousness, perception, understanding, judging or determining], and the corresponding verb νοέω “to think, understand, perceive, judge, intelligently determine.” The noetic effects of sin refer to the effects of the Fall [apostasy] upon the mind or intellectual ability of man as a sinner. Cf. Mk. 12:24; Rom. 1:18–20; 8:7–8, 26; 1 Cor. 2:14; 8:2; Eph. 4:17–19; Heb. 5:11–14.

14).³¹⁶ Great and godly Christians have been greatly mistaken because of their ignorance, presuppositions, bias, traditional teaching, or limitation to the English Bible.

The Bible is our exclusive and inclusive textbook for both faith and life (2 Tim. 3:16–17). As most Confessions of Faith state or strongly infer, the Scriptures are our sole rule of both faith and practice. They are our one objective standard and touchstone for doctrinal truth and for practical application. Everything else—our presuppositions, experience, tradition, speculation, emotions—is ultimately subjective and relative.

According to the Scriptures, we are to give the utmost diligence to be approved or well-pleasing to God as skilled craftsmen who are able to correctly and skillfully handle [exposit, interpret and expound] the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

Our primary obligation in the study, interpretation and exposition of the Scriptures is God-ward. Consistent hermeneutics, or the interpretation of the Word of God, is seriously crippled, if not outright impossible, to any given degree without and apart from the original languages.

There is absolutely no substitute for a knowledge of the original languages. No translation or version can equal the original languages of Scripture.

There are three major reasons: first, a translation or version is necessarily in the grammar and idiom of the secondary language, and thus loses the inspired grammatical and syntactical constructions, nuances and emphases of the original language—and both doctrinal and practical truth often hinge on such. One must realize and remember that the grammar and syntax of text of the original languages are

³¹⁶ Note *γεγόνατε...γεγόνατε...* “*ye have become and continue to be dull of hearing...and have become and continue to be such...*” Both verbs (v. 11 and 12) are perf., and evidently emph. a regression to a lesser state of spiritual perception.

Divinely inspired³¹⁷ (Matt. 5:17–18; 2 Tim. 3:16–17;³¹⁸ 2 Pet. 1:21)—that of any secondary language is not. Unless a translation or version is framed on the often inexplicable and ever foreign constructions and idioms of the original, it is necessarily to a given degree a paraphrase at best. Even the so-called “word-for-word translation” found in a Greek or Hebrew interlinear miserably fails to convey the grammar, syntax, nuances and idioms of the original. The English language by comparison is relatively bankrupt of expression as compared to either the Greek or the Hebrew. Thus, one may give an exegesis of the text in the original language,³¹⁹ but only an exposition of the text in a translation or version.

Second, our English Bible is not a translation, but a version of a translation, and so adheres much more to the secondary language with its peculiarities and limitations than to the original. This accounts for the continued publications of various “versions” of the Bible in the English language. Were any one of these versions the full, final word, others would not be necessary.

Third, translation necessarily involves a given amount of interpretation and accommodation, and these are unavoidably

³¹⁷ The orthodox doctrine of Divine inspiration is technically concerned only with the “autograph manuscripts,” or the original copies of Scripture. Thus the Scriptures in the original languages, as they have been providentially [Divinely] preserved, are in the form [language, grammar, syntax] given by God.

³¹⁸ “All scripture is given by inspiration of God...” *πάσα γραφή θεόπνευστος...* Lit: “every [particle, aspect, nuance] of Scripture is God-breathed...” This necessarily includes every aspect of grammar and syntax.

³¹⁹ Exegesis means to bring out of the text the meaning, nuances, idioms of the original language. An exposition is akin to an analysis of the text either grammatically or doctrinally. An exegesis in a secondary language tends to misunderstanding and error, as it ignorantly or knowingly assumes the inspiration of the grammar and syntax of the secondary language.

colored by some degree of subjective misunderstanding, and also cultural, historical and doctrinal presuppositions.

Even great and godly men have erred greatly in their attempts to understand the Scriptures, largely because they did not have access to the Scriptures in the original languages. This is evident in the writings of the Church Fathers and other early Christian writers who were largely limited to the Old Latin translation and the later and more influential Latin Vulgate Version.³²⁰ An absence of the knowledge of the original languages ultimately became a void filled with speculation, superstition, tradition, allegorization—and thus a corrupt theology, church, worship, religion and society. Such error is sadly evident today in many of the devotional works and commentaries for readers limited to the English language.

The Church of Rome grievously erred for over a millennium in giving a unique, divinely-inspired status to the *Latin Vulgate*—a version of a translation. Many modern Fundamentalists and Evangelicals are little different—a mentality which we may refer to as “the infallibility of ignorance.” The idea that the exclusive use of the King James Version—a version of a translation—is sufficient, is relatively recent among evangelical Christians.³²¹

This attitude, based largely on emotions and prejudice—not rational, historical or linguistic arguments, or an orthodox view of Divine inspiration—arose in the late 1800s and early 1900s as an anti-intellectual reaction to Rationalistic Biblical Criticism and “Modernism.” This was accompanied by a disdain for the ancient, so-called “dead” languages and the rise of modern humanistic or secularized, “progressive” education which emphasized experience over educational discipline and rote learning.

³²⁰ An example of misinterpretation: the *Latin Vulgate* by Jerome (c. 406) interpreted “repentance” by “penance.”

³²¹ The Church of Rome has held the *Latin Vulgate* (c. 406)—a version of a translation—to be Divinely and fully inspired for centuries.

Further, the “Bible School” movement was designed to replace theological seminaries with their required study of the original languages. Because corruption had entered through Rationalistic Biblical Criticism, it was believed that men could be adequately prepared for the gospel ministry and kept from the influence of error through the study of the English Bible alone. All biblical scholarship became suspect. Before this era, a study of the original languages was considered vital to the ministry, and any lack in this area was thought to be a serious hindrance.

Men called to the gospel ministry, above all others, need to be well-versed in the Scriptures—and there is no substitute for the ability to work through the text in the very languages given by God. The minister who is bereft of such skill is seriously crippled in his Divine calling, yea, such is inexcusable in this day and age when an abundance of tools and opportunities are available for such study.³²²

Hermeneutics and Theology are sacred sciences: they are organized areas of study which rest upon certain principles and strive for certain conclusions. As sacred sciences, they must, as any science, rest upon original sources for their authority, data and materials. For Christianity, for Christian Theology, for the Christian ministry, for the individual believer, the ultimate source is the inscripturated Word of God, and to delve into the Word of God fully and accurately, one needs a knowledge of the original languages.

Not only has the text of the English Bible at times furthered misunderstanding, but many professing Christians fail even to come to terms with the truth clearly taught in the

³²² Computer language programs put the Greek and Hebrew within the reach of the average pastor with little preparation. It is possible with some programs, such as *BibleWorks*, to exegete the text in either Greek or Hebrew with a minimal amount of preparation in either language. Cf. *Bibleworks*. by Hermeneutika (www.bibleworks.com).

Scriptures, in whatever language it is taught. Eisegesis³²³ is a viral infection of the religious mind. Such is the natural opposition of man to biblical truth that even the clear, consistent teaching of Scripture is often denied, circumvented or modified, and humanistic assumptions are read into the Scriptures. This is certainly true of such glorious truths as the sovereignty of God, Divine election, predestination, the covenant nature of the atonement and kindred truths. A study of the original languages emphasizes the relation between the text and its doctrine, and so enforces truth as no translation or version can.

Not only heretical teachers and cults, but many others—including well-meaning evangelical Christians—often err in basing their theological assumptions, doctrinal teaching and practical application on the text of the English Bible. No doctrine or practice can be made to stand upon the grammar or syntax of a secondary language alone, i.e., upon a translation or a version of a translation, without departing from the Word of God to a given extent and at times falling into error and even outright heresy. Divine inspiration only pertains to the text [grammar and syntax] of the original. Yet many base their beliefs on the grammar of the English Bible.

Examples of Inadequate Translation

Translations and versions in any secondary language are necessarily filled with inadequate translations or interpretations of the original. This derives from several sources, including such things as the necessity of keeping the wording as brief as possible to avoid becoming a general paraphrase of the original; using various additional words of explanation, which are often necessary to transfer the full connotation; word-order, and other devices of expression lacking in the secondary language. The following are taken by way of very general example:

³²³ *Eisegesis* means to read into the text something that is not there. It is the opposite of exegesis.

1. The Hebrew concept of time, as expressed in its two “tenses”—perfect and imperfect—is that of either completed or incomplete action. Cf. Psa. 1:1, from the Hebrew, reads, “Oh (Interjection) the [complete] blessedness of the man who has never walked (perf.) in the counsel of the ungodly, nor in the way of sinners (emph. pos.) has ever stood (perf.), nor in the assembly of the scornful (emph. pos.) has ever sat!”(perf.). The use of the perfect tense (completed action) and the emphatic position of words give this statement much greater force.
2. The Greek has the idea of a punctiliar [an event]³²⁴ or linear [a process] action, or a combination of both. Often such concepts are not or cannot adequately be transferred to a secondary language, e.g., Jn. 2:19–21. The Jews’ retort to our Lord’s claim that he would raise this temple [of his body] in three days was that “forty and six years was this temple in the building!” Exactly what was emphasized in their retort?³²⁵
3. The Hebrew language has seven verbal “stems,” Qal and Niph’al or simple active and passive (or reflexive), Pi’el and Pu’al, intensive active and passive, Hiph’il and Hoph’al, causative active and passive, and Hithpael, the intensive reflexive.

³²⁴ The aorist or punctiliar tense, views something without reference to its progress or time, i.e., usually, as an event or as an action considered as a whole.

³²⁵ τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἕξ ἔτεσιν οἰκοδομήθη ὁ ναὸς οὗτος. The words “forty and six years was in building” are emphatic by position, before the subject, “this temple.” One would expect the imperf. tense to be used, stressing the length of time as process, or, perhaps a periphrastic const. to emphasize duration, but the ptc. is aor. pass., which signifies punctiliar action, an event, or views the whole time of forty–six years as a single block of time. The Jews’ retort was to take the whole long duration of the temple’s construction and push it in our Lord’s face as one huge, ponderous fact or lump of time.

The nuances and force of these various verbal distinctions are often necessarily omitted in translation. E.g., Ex. 32:19, "...and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." The word "brake" is Pi'el [active intensive], and is literally, "utterly dashed them to pieces!"³²⁶ The full force of Moses' intense action as expressed in the Hebrew is lacking in the English language and therefore in the bare translation of the facts.

Another example may be taken from 2 Sam. 11:4, "And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house." The sense is probably that "she cleansed herself" (Hithpa'el, intens. reflex. ptc.)³²⁷ after their illicit sexual act, which had made them ceremonially unclean until evening (Lev. 15:16–18). They kept the "letter of the Law," but blatantly committed adultery!

4. At times, participles are translated as verbs and verbs as participles, shifting the force of a given statement in the secondary language, e.g., Matt. 28:19 and the command of the "Great Commission" to "Go..."—a "command" which is simply not there.³²⁸ Quite often through brevity of language compound words are inadequately translated,

³²⁶ וַיִּשְׁבֵּר (way^eshaber). Pi'el imperf. with Waw consec.

³²⁷ 2 Sam. 11:4, וַהֲיֵא מִתְקַדְּשֶׁת מִטְמֵאוֹתָהּ. This probably referred to the law of the "seed of copulation" [male sperm] and not to menstrual uncleanness.

³²⁸ See Exegesis of Matt. 28:18-20. The same is true of Mk. 16:15, πορευθέντες [aor. pass. ptc.] εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κηρύξατε [aor. imp. vb.] τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει. Lit: "Having gone into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature!" The force is on the verb "preach." That Christians are to "go" is presupposed by the ptc.

e.g., Rom. 1:18, “holding [habitually suppressing] the truth in unrighteousness.”³²⁹

5. The Greek of the New Testament has four past tenses— aorist, imperfect, perfect and pluperfect—each distinctly used in conveying Divine truth, e.g., Jn. 8:7. The Jews who brought the woman taken in adultery kept taunting our Lord repeatedly with, “But you—what do you say?! “But you—what do you say?!” etc.³³⁰ E.g., Jn. 19:30, “It is finished!”³³¹ The publican in the parable of Lk. 18:9–14 continually smote his breast, repeating the words, “God be merciful to me the sinner!”³³² In Gal. 3:24, the verb is in the perfect tense, and ought to be translated, “...the law ‘has become and continues to be’ our pedagogue unto Christ...”³³³ In Acts 17:23, Paul makes reference to “an

³²⁹ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, “the truth in unrighteousness [emphatically] habitually suppressing.” κατεχόντων is a pres. ptc., from ἔχω, to hold and κατὰ, down, and so “to constantly hold down or suppress.”

³³⁰ Jn. 8:5 “But what sayest thou?” σὺ οὖν τί λέγεις; Note the emph. pers. pron. “you.” Jn. 8:7, “they continued asking him.” ἐπέμενον ἔρωτῶντες αὐτόν, (a periphrastic const. comprised of an imperf. vb. and a pres. ptc.), i.e., “they persisted in [repeatedly] asking him.” Further note that if she were taken in the very act, then the man also, according to Mosaic law, would have been brought. Perhaps they themselves were guilty of this very sin (as the context implies), as this was clearly a set-up intended to publicly embarrass our Lord.

³³¹ Jn. 19:30, τετέλεσται. perf., stressing in the fullest sense the fulfillment of the promises, types and shadow, and the completion of our Lord’s redemptive work, which would then stand forever. The perfect tense denotes something that is done in an event and then continues on in a finished state. The culminative perfect denotes that which comes to culmination and then exists in a completed state. Both are applicable here. How could anyone think that this was a cry of defeat and not of victory?

³³² ...ἀλλ’ ἔτυπεν τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ λέγων... An imperf. verb with a pres. temporal ptc., connoting a repetitive or continual action.

³³³ ...ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν...

ancient altar with its ‘faded inscription,’” which had stood as a witness to their sense of the Divine nature.³³⁴

6. The Greek also uses periphrastic expressions to emphasize various actions. These are usually a verb and a participle combined for giving a certain emphasis.³³⁵ Cf. Matt. 16:19, and the use of the periphrastic fut. perf., “...whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have been already bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have already been loosed in heaven.”³³⁶

Such characteristic linguistic nuances are all but missing in the English language, or omitted through brevity, and therefore often missing in an English translation or version of the Scriptures. Such misunderstanding gave Peter papal power in the teaching of the Romish Church.

7. The original languages have an abundance of synonyms which are often brought into the English Bible without their necessary distinctions, lessening the force and clarity of the text in the secondary language. For example, the Hebrew has several words for “man,” each emphasizing some aspect of humanity in its strength, weakness, mortality, relationship with others, etc. The Greek New Testament has two different terms for “love,” seven for “servant,” six for “power,” three for “knowledge” and at least two for “form.” These all have both doctrinal and practical nuances and often hermeneutical implications which are somewhat nebulous without recourse to the original language.

³³⁴ Acts 17:23, εὐρον καὶ βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπεγέγραπτο· Ἰαγνώσω θεῶ. the pluperf. tense denotes a period of time in the past.

³³⁵ E.g., Acts 2:42, Ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες... The combination of an imperf. verb and pres. ptc, “And they were continuing steadfastly [obstinately, without slacking]...”

³³⁶ Matt. 16:19, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν δήσης ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν λύσης ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

8. An example of the failure to mark distinctions between synonyms is the statement of Paul in the English version of Gal. 1:6–7, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” Some have lessened Paul’s very stringent warning, saying that “It really wasn’t ‘another’ gospel,” taking the words “which is not another” as a diminishing comment. The very opposite is true, as not only noted by the context, which imprecates damnation upon those who preach “another gospel,” but in the very terms used, i.e., “...another gospel [of an altogether different kind], which is not [at all] another [gospel of the same kind]...”³³⁷
9. The Hebrew and Greek languages have various devices for expressing emphasis. The Hebrew, for instance, reserves a special place for the emphatic imperative, e.g., Gen. 39:7, “...his master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, ‘Lie with me!’” The verb “lie” (a euphemism for sexual intercourse) is in the emphatic imperative. Both the Hebrew text and the Septuagint show the full emphasis,³³⁸ as they do Joseph’s inherent moral recoil and emphatic response.³³⁹

³³⁷ Gal. 1:6–7, ...εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο...

³³⁸ וַיִּשְׁכַּבְהָ וַיִּנְמֵי Qal. emph. imp. “Lie with me!” The LXX reads: ...κοιμήθητι μετ’ ἐμοῦ. κοιμήθητι is aor. imp. ἐμοῦ (emph. pron.) “Sleep with me!” Both the Heb. and Gk. are in the imp.—the Heb. in the emph. imp., and the Gk. in the aor. imp., both connoting a determined and urgent entreaty.

³³⁹ Gen. 39:9, “...how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Heb: אַעֲשֶׂה הַרְעָה הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת וְחָטָאתִי לְאֱלֹהִים וְאֵיךְ “...how then can I do [the] evil [the] great [the] this and sin against God?!” LXX, πῶς ποιήσω τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ ποιηρὸν τοῦτο [this thing, this evil—this!] καὶ ἁμαρτήσομαι ἐναντίον [contrary, opposed to] τοῦ θεοῦ.

The Hebrew infinitive absolute is usually reserved for intensifying the verb or making it emphatic.³⁴⁰ The participle in Hebrew is reserved for continuity of action without intermission, making it more continuous than the imperfect. The Hebrew makes great use of independent [emphatic pers. prons.] E.g., Gen. 3:7, Eve became fixated with the fruit as a means of obtaining wisdom. The Hebrew attaches an independent [emph.] pronoun to the noun “something to be desired [greatly coveted]...”³⁴¹

10. The Greek possesses two imperatives, present and aorist.³⁴² The English does not differentiate and so the English Bible almost always fails to give the full connotation. Consider the present imperative of prohibition, which commands the cessation of an action in progress, and is to be translated, “Stop...!” E.g., Eph. 4:30, “Stop grieving the Spirit of God...!” Col. 3:9, “Stop lying to one another...!” E.g., Matt. 7:7, “Keep on

³⁴⁰ E.g., Ex. 20:8, the Fourth Commandment: The first command, “Remember,” is an inf. absol.; the second, “to keep it holy,” is a Pi’el inf. const. This is grammatically the strongest Commandment of the Decalogue! The Fifth Commandment, to honor one’s parents, the other positive command, is in the Pi’el imp., and the eight negative Commandments are all framed in the imperf. with the neg. לֹא, giving the force of a perpetual prohibition.

³⁴¹ Gen. 3:6, וְכִי תֹאמַרְהוּנָא, The emph. pers. pron תֹּאמַרְהוּנָא attached by Maqqeph to the word for emph., implying that Eve was completely absorbed with the fruit as a means to wisdom. הִיא a common pron. in Books of Moses. Fem. form occ. only 11 times.

³⁴² The pres. imp. commands “keep on doing something” (Matt. 7:7, Αἰτεῖτε...ζητεῖτε...κρούετε... “Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking...”) that has already been reality. The aorist imperative commands the commencement of an action with a sense of urgency and determination. 2 Tim. 2:15, “Study,” σπουδάσῃς, aor. imp. i.e., give the utmost diligence!”

asking...keep on seeking...keep on knocking...”³⁴³ E.g., Matt. 28:19, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...” The command to “Go” is non-existent, being a participle and not a verb of command. The very nature of Christianity implies a missionary imperative. The command is rather “with a sense of urgency and with all determination, make disciples!”³⁴⁴

E.g., of the aorist imperative in 2 Tim. 4:2, 5. There are eight aor.imps., each denoting an urgent, determinate action. The only pres. imp. in this list is “watch thou in all things...” The same holds true for the present and aorist prohibitions. The present imperative of prohibition means to stop an action already in progress, e.g., Phil. 4:6, “Be careful for nothing...” This denotes “Stop being anxious about even one thing!”—and even this translation fails to take into account the emphasis of word-order.³⁴⁵

The aorist subjunctive of prohibition means “do not even begin to,” e.g., Matt. 3:9, “And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father...” The force of John the Baptist’s argument is, “Do not even let it enter your mind!” Do not even begin to think to say!”³⁴⁶

11. The Hebrew often uses repetition for emphasis, e.g., Isa. 26:3, where “perfect peace” is the interpretation of the repetitive word for “peace.”³⁴⁷

³⁴³ Matt. 7:7, Αἰτεῖτε καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν, ζητεῖτε καὶ εὕρησете, κρούετε καὶ ἀνοιγήσεται ὑμῖν·

³⁴⁴ πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε, “Having gone, make disciples...!” This is not an imperatival ptc. Some think it a circumstantial ptc. which would be coincident with the main vb. (?).

³⁴⁵ μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε... Lit: “About even one thing, stop being anxious!”

³⁴⁶ καὶ μὴ δόξητε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ. Lit: “And do not even begin to think to say within yourselves, A Father [emphatically] we have in Abraham!”

³⁴⁷ שְׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם, or lit: “peace, peace.”

12. In Hebrew, the infinite absolute, derives from the same root as the finite verb, and occurring before it, serves to intensify the verbal idea, Gen. 2:17, which is literally “dying thou shalt die!”³⁴⁸ Cf. also Gen. 3:4, Satan’s vehement denial of the Divine, perpetual prohibition, “you shall absolutely not die!”³⁴⁹ This was the exact negative counterpart to God’s original positive statement, “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”
13. There are various forms of emphatic particles and other constructions in both Hebrew and Greek, which are often not translated, and thus their force is lost to the reader of a secondary language.³⁵⁰ E.g., the emph. part. **נָא**, which occurs twice as “beseech” in Jonah 1:14, “And they said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man’s life!”³⁵¹
14. English is not an inflected language, and therefore is limited in and by its word–order. In an inflected language (such as Hebrew and Greek), word–order is usually reserved for emphasis.

³⁴⁸ E.g., Gen. 2:17, “...in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” מוֹת תָּמוּת, “dying thou shalt die!” מוֹת, the inf. absol. of the same root as the vb., and occurring immediately before תָּמוּת is used for emph.

³⁴⁹ Gen. 3:4, לֹא־תָמוּת תָּמוּת, the inf. absol. is used as in God’s positive statement, but made even more emph. by the use of the neg. לֹא before the inf.

³⁵⁰ Cf. Ps. 1:2, 4, both of which contain a “but if” or exceptive const. (כִּי אִם). V. 2, “But if he has any delight at all, it is in the law of the LORD...” V. 4, “But if the wicked are like anything at all, they are like the chaff which the wind driveth away!” Cf. also the many μὲν...δὲ consts. in Greek, “one the one hand, but on the other...”

³⁵¹ Jonah 1:14, אַנְהּ יְהוָה אֵלֵנָּא נֹאבְדָה בְּנַפְשׁ הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה וַיֹּאמְרוּ.

Note: An inflected language is formed on root words or word stems to which are added a pattern of endings [suffixes] or preformatives [prefixes] to denote various grammatical elements. Thus, words may occur in different order for emphasis without affecting the essential meaning.

In Hebrew, a Semitic language, the verb (in a verbal sentence) usually occurs first. If a word or phrase is placed before the verb, it is emphatic. E.g., Job. 1:21, "...The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." In each statement, the name of Jehovah [Yahweh], or the "LORD" is placed first for emphasis. This is then a profound statement of Job's faith.³⁵²

E.g., Gen. 3:10, Note the emphatic position of the direct object, "voice:" "And he said, Thy voice I heard in the garden..."³⁵³ E.g., Gen. 3:10–11. Note the present sense of Adam's sinful consciousness of being naked before God, emphasized by the word-order and emphatic personal pron., "...because naked I am!" And God's question, "Who told you that 'naked you are?!'"

15. The Greek also uses word-order for emphasis. The usual word-order, however, is Subject-Verb-Object. E.g., Jn. 3:16, which places emphasis on the verb, "For so loved God the world..."³⁵⁴

16. Another example from the Greek is found in Jn. 8:33–37:

We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant

³⁵² יהוה נתן ויהוה לקח יהי שם יהוה מְבֹרָךְ, lit: "Jehovah hath given, Jehovah hath taken, Jehovah's name be blessed!"

³⁵³ Gen. 3:10, וַיֹּאמֶר אֶתְקֹלֶךָ שְׁמִיעֵתִי בְנִן, "Voice" a def. dir. obj, placed before the verb for emphasis.

³⁵⁴ Jn. 3:16, οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον...

abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever.³⁶ If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

That there was an exchange of words between our Lord and the Jews which must have been emotional is without doubt. The word–order and emphasis of v. 33 and 37 reveals it clearly in the original language and Greek text, “‘Seed of Abraham’ are we!” To which our Lord retorted, “I know that ‘Seed of Abraham’ are ye!”³⁵⁵

E.g., 2 Tim. 4:7, Paul’s epitaph: “The good fight I have fought [unfaltering right up to the very end], the course I have finished [unfaltering right up to the very end], the faith I have kept [unfaltering right up to the very end]!”³⁵⁶ A final example may be taken from 2 Cor. 9:7, “...for God loveth a cheerful giver.” Even this seemingly simple statement and truth cannot be adequately expressed in English! The word–order makes almost every part of this statement emphatic, with the adjective modifying the direct object placed first, the direct object next, and then the verb placed before the subject.³⁵⁷

17. Repeatedly, some slight nuance is necessarily left out of translation because of the inadequacy of the English language and idiom, and therefore the English version of the Bible. This means that various shades of expression are totally lacking for the English reader.

³⁵⁵ σπέρμα Ἰβραάμ ἐσμεν...Οἶδα ὅτι σπέρμα Ἰβραάμ ἐστε. The whole passage is highly charged with emotion which the English language largely fails to communicate.

³⁵⁶ 2 Tim. 4:7. τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα ἠγωνίσαι, τὸν δρόμον τετέλεκα, τὴν πίστιν τετήρηκα. In each clause, the dir. obj. is place first for emph. Each vb. is perf., connoting a culminative action which leads up to a given point.

³⁵⁷ ἰλαρὸν [cheerful, hilarious] γὰρ [for] δότην [giver] ἀγαπᾷ [loves] ὁ θεός [God].

For example, the personalities of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, are contrasted in one being too busy with serving to listen, and the other sitting at our Lord's feet intently listening (Lk. 10:38–42). Mary evidently had a more sensitive nature than Martha, who was more practical and active. This same distinction is preserved in the Greek text when the English reads the same in the statement from both sisters after the death of their beloved brother, Lazarus, “Lord if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died” (Jn. 11:21, 32). Although identical in the English, they are different in the original, revealing the grief of both but the heightened degree of sensitiveness and loss of Mary.³⁵⁸

18. Phraseology and clauses, such as contained in the various conditional sentences are vital to the understanding, and often fail in translation.³⁵⁹ Note the subtlety of Satan in the wilderness temptation, “Since you are the Son of God, command these stones to bread to become!” (Matt. 4:4).³⁶⁰ The temptation was not to prove to Satan that Jesus was the Son of God, that was already assumed. The

³⁵⁸ Martha said, κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὡδε οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός μου. “Lord if you had been here *had not died* my brother!” The verb “had not died” is in the emph. pos. Mary said, κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὡδε οὐκ ἂν μου ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός. “Lord, if you had been here, *my would not have died* [the] brother.” The word–order is awkward in English. Martha put the words “had not died” emphatically forward; Mary not only does the same, but puts the possessive “my” even before the emphatic position of the verb, revealing much more than Martha her personal sense of loss.

³⁵⁹ There are four types of conditional sentences in Greek, each one containing an “if” clause [protasis] and a conclusion [apodosis]. The first assumes something to be true, the second, something to be false, the third is contingent [probable future action], and the fourth, less probable action. Each of these has a definite grammatical const.

³⁶⁰ Matt. 4:3, εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰπέ ἵνα οἱ λίθοι οὗτοι ἄρτοι γέινωται. A first class cond. sent. assumes the condition to be true, and so ought to be translated “since you are...”

temptation was to act independently, to fulfill a legitimate appetite or need, as our Lord had the power and prerogative to do so. This was, in principle, the same temptation that caused the fall of the First Adam—to act independently of God and his Word (Gen. 3:1–7).

19. Both Hebrew and Greek have two negatives, which are used in specific constructions.³⁶¹ The English has but one. In the New Testament, these negatives imply either a positive or negative answer in rhetorical questions,³⁶² and when used together [double negative], are emphatic.³⁶³
20. Such seemingly simple things, as use of the definite article in both Hebrew and Greek, may be filled with nuances which are highly significant, yet untranslatable. The presence of the definite article in Greek stresses identity; its absence stresses quality or character, thus the English may insert the definite article when the Greek would omit it. E.g., Rom. 1:17, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed...” This is *anarthrous* [absence of the definite article] in the Greek text, stressing the quality or character of Divine righteousness. It is

³⁶¹ When used in commands, the Heb. negs. are **אל** with the imperf. to denote an absolute, abiding or perpetual command (see eight of the Ten Commandments), and **אל** to denote a command with immediate, but not necessarily abiding implications.

³⁶² Nicodemus actually said, “A man cannot be born the second time old [emph.] being...he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb can he and be born? Of course not! πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὦν; μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δευτέρον εἰσελεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι; The neg. μὴ implies a “No” answer.

³⁶³ E.g., Heb. 13:5, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” οὐ μὴ σε ἀνω οὐδ’ οὐ μὴ σε ἐγκαταλίπω. There are five negs. here in the occurrences of both οὐ and μὴ and the term οὐδ’, and also an emph. word–order, and so, lit: “Never ever [by no means] you [emph.] will I ever [never] leave [I mean never by any means] nor will I ever [never ever] you forsake!”

inexplicable that some modern translations and versions insert the indefinite article “a,” completely obscuring the thought. By omitting the definite article, the stress is given to the truth that the focal–point of the gospel is on that very righteousness which God demands.³⁶⁴ The anarthrous use of the definite article with the emphatic word–order is significant in Jn. 4:24, there the correct translation would be “God is spirit,” referring to the nature or essence of God. Lit: “Spirit God is [as to his essence or nature]!”³⁶⁵

21. One or more words may occur between the definite article and its antecedent, marking them out in a descriptive manner which is untranslatable, but greatly significant. E.g., Jude 3, “...the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”³⁶⁶ E.g., Rom. 10:3, 6, “...God’s righteousness...the righteousness which is of faith...” Here the terms are held between the definite article and the noun [its antecedent] in a close syntactical unit which

³⁶⁴ δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. Note further that the word “righteousness” is emphatic by position, the verb is in the perfect tense, denoting “stands revealed,” ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, means” by faith from start to finish,” and in the quotation from the Old Testament, ἐκ πίστεως is emphatic by position.

³⁶⁵ Jn. 4:24, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός... Our Lord emphasized the essence of God and then drew a good and necessary consequence that true worship derives from and corresponds to the essence of God, i.e., it must also be in spirit and in truth.

³⁶⁶ τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις πίστει. The def art. τῇ is construed with πίστει. The words gathered between are emphatically descriptive of this kind of faith. It is the faith [doctrinal content] unique to Christianity, which was one time (ἅπαξ, once–for–all) delivered to Christians. In English we would hyphenate all into one word as a single grammatical unit or term, i.e., “the–‘once–for–all–delivered–unto–the–saints’–faith.”

is more definite and forceful than the English can convey.³⁶⁷

22. The Greek has some idioms or figures of speech which bear close scrutiny. One is *Chiasmus* [cross], in which the first and third phrases correspond and the second and fourth, e.g., 1 Pet. 3:7, which construes knowledge and weaker vessel, and giving honor with being heirs together: “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, as unto the weaker vessel, and giving honor unto the wife, as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”³⁶⁸
23. There are a host of nuances denoted by participles, the use of case, number and gender, word-order, phraseology, conditional sentences, etc., which can never be reproduced in translation. These have been termed “untranslatable riches,” and are such—a wealth of linguistic meaning which must remain with the original languages. Some may be rather insignificant, but many are very significant, and failing to understand such may have great hermeneutical and doctrinal consequences.
24. Take, for example, “number,” i.e., singular or plural. These may well change the significance and thus the interpretation of a given statement: such seemingly minor issues as number [singular or plural] often have great significance, e.g., Lk. 14:16–24, and the Parable of the Great Supper. The context has the Lord of the supper speaking to his servant to go out and compel people to come to the feast, then he states in v. 24, “For I say unto

³⁶⁷ Rom. 10:3, τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην, “the ‘of-God’ righteousness.” Rom. 10:6, ἡ...ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη, “the ‘out-of-faith’ righteousness.”

³⁶⁸ 1 Pet. 3:7 Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως, συνοικούντες κατὰ γνώσιν ὡς ἀσθενεστέρω σκεύει τῷ γυναικείῳ, ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν ὡς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.

you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.” But the word “you” is plural.³⁶⁹ It is no longer the Lord who made the Great Supper speaking to his servant, but our Lord applying his parable to those who were sitting and listening at that moment. E.g., Lk. 22:31, “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not...” The first “you” is plural; the second is singular. Satan desire to have all the disciples to sift them as wheat, but he has to single out Simon Peter, and our Lord specifically prays for him.³⁷⁰

Examples of Mistranslation and Misinterpretation Based on the Latin Language

The early centuries of Christianity witnessed the transition from Greek to Latin as the language of Christianity and of Christian writings and theology (c. 200—). Many of the Church Fathers were deficient in their knowledge of Greek and relied solely on the Latin Versions [*Old Latin Version, Latin Vulgate*]. Only a very few of the Church Fathers and other early Christian writers had any knowledge of Hebrew at all. This meant the ascendancy of a secondary language, Latin, in the place of the original Hebrew and Greek, and also the universal use of a version of a translation for faith and practice. From this transition to the Latin came a variety of misunderstandings and mistranslations. Two will suffice for examples:

1. The biblical word and doctrine of “adoption,” which occurs five times in our English Bible.³⁷¹ The theological meaning of this term has been based on the Latin,

³⁶⁹ Lk. 14:24, λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν...

³⁷⁰ Lk. 22:31–32, Σίμων Σίμων, ἰδοὺ ὁ σατανᾶς ἐξήτησατο ὑμᾶς (pl.)...Satan has desired to have all of you... ἐγὼ δὲ ἔδεήθην περὶ σοῦ (sing.), but I have prayed concerning you...

³⁷¹ Rom. 8:15 (υἰοθεσία), 8:23 (υἰοθεσίαν), 9:4 (ἡ υἰοθεσία), Gal. 4:5 (τὴν υἰοθεσίαν) and Eph. 1:5 (υἰοθεσίαν).

adoptio, not the Greek. The doctrine of adoption, we are told, is that declarative act of God as our spiritual Father, simultaneous with justification, whereby he brings into his family and constitutes us as his children or sons. Thus, the *ordo salutis* [order of salvation] is Effectual Calling, Regeneration, Conversion, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification and Glorification.

The Greco–Roman significance of adoption, however, dealt with legal status, and included not only those brought into the family, but also true, natural sons as well. The Greek is literally “placing as a son,” i.e., recognizing one as the legal heir to an estate and to the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship. This alone adequately explains Rom. 8:23, where our adoption is the future glorification of the body and final restoration of creation.³⁷²

2. The biblical and theological idea of justification. The Hebrew terms mean “to pronounce just or right.”³⁷³ The Greek terms can both mean either “to make righteous” or “to declare righteous.”

Note: The New Testament terms are: δικαίω, “justify,” used forensically 30 times, e.g., Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24, 28; 4:2, 5; 5:1, 9. δίκαιος, “just” or “righteous,” used forensically some 43 times, e.g., Matt. 9:13; Rom. 1:17; 3:10; 8:30; Jas. 5:16. δικαιοσύνη, “righteousness,” used forensically over 40 times, e.g., Rom. 1:17; 4:3, 5–6, 9, 11, 13; 10:3–4, 10; 1 Cor. 1:30. δικαίωσις, “justification,” occ. twice, Rom. 4:25; 5:18. δικαίω is used both in the

³⁷² At the time of his majority, a young man was presented to the city dignitaries and was dressed in his *toga virilis*, or manly garment. He was then given full citizenship rights and assumed full responsibility as the heir to the estate. This finds its parallel in our future glorification.

³⁷³ The Heb. root קָדַךְ is used in the Hiph'il (causative) הִקְדִּיךָ in the sense of declaring or pronouncing a person just or righteous, e.g., Dt. 25:1; Prov. 17:15. The LXX follows suit with δικαίωσωσιν in Dt. 25:1 and ὃς δίκαιον κρίνει τὸν ἄδικον ἄδικον δὲ τὸν δίκαιον ἀκάθαρτος in Prov. 17:15.

LXX and in the New Testament. Leon Morris notes that Gk. “verbs ending in $\text{-}\acute{\omicron}\omega$ and referring to moral qualities have a declarative sense; they do not mean ‘to make—’.” He then gives a series of examples.³⁷⁴

The Latin terms are *justificare* and *justificatio*, and may mean either “to *pronounce* just or righteous” or “to *make* just or righteous.” This ambiguity has resulted in the false teaching that justification is an infused righteousness [*justitia infusa*] rather than an imputed righteousness [*justitia imputata*].

This error began with the Latin Church Fathers, who missed the forensic nature of the biblical texts and usage, and this became the Romish doctrine which has combined and confused justification with sanctification. Because of this ambiguity, the meaning of justification must derive from the use of the biblical terms themselves, and not simply their etymology.³⁷⁵ Exegesis, hermeneutics and theology are inseparably linked—and all begins with the reading of the text—its words, grammar and syntax.

Examples of Mistranslation and Misinterpretation Based on the English Language

The following examples are taken from varying degrees of misunderstanding or mistranslation of the Greek. The Old Testament Hebrew and the Septuagint [Greek Old Testament] are not referred to, although they form a distinct body of study in

³⁷⁴ Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1986, p. 70.

³⁷⁵ Failure in this area has entered into such recent controversies as the “New Perspective on Paul” and the “Federal Vision” Theology which has turned to and infused righteousness and justification by both faith and faithfulness, i.e., a mixture of grace and works. This is a radical break with Evangelical and Reformed Christianity and a turn toward Rome.

mistranslation and misinterpretation.³⁷⁶ Some are examples of grave doctrinal departures, others are less important, and some are simply illustrative of grammatical issues. The common element is that they rely on either the English language in general or the English grammar in particular.

1. The Roman Catholics hold the *Latin Vulgate* of Jerome (406 AD)—the version of a translation of the Old Latin, which was itself a translation—to be inspired, as though it were the original language. The Mormons [“Latter-Day Saints”] publicly promote the *King James Version* of the Bible—and hold it—a version of a translation—to be inspired as the final authority. They have no concept of the nature or importance of the original languages of Scripture. Some Fundamentalists hold the *King James Version* of the Bible to be Divinely inspired as though it were the original language—a view which is utterly irrational—and thus see no need of or for a study of the original languages.

Note: The view known as “King James Onlyism” is characteristic of some within Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism. Many hold that the KJV was based on the *Textus Receptus*, and so is the only “pure” Bible. This view is both unhistorical and irrational, and based on ignorance. The Greek text of Erasmus (1516), a Roman Catholic,³⁷⁷ was an eclectic text comprised of various manuscripts gathered together uncritically to form almost enough to complete the New Testament. Erasmus himself translated the final verses of Revelation from Latin into

³⁷⁶ We take but one example from the Heb. of Ruth 3:15, “and she went into the city,” the English Bible referring to Ruth. The text reads וַיֵּבֶן הָעִיר וַיֵּבֶן הָעִיר, 3 pers. masc. sing. referring to Boaz, i.e., “He went into the city.” The LXX is nebulous (καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν), perhaps taking “her” as the nearer possible antecedent? Boaz was in love and acted immediately, arriving before the elders had assembled at the city gate to sit in judgment on any transaction (Cf. Ruth 4:1–2ff).

³⁷⁷ That Desiderius Erasmus was a Romanist is only mentioned because of some who believe that the KJV is “pure,” and all other versions have been tainted or corrupted by Romish writers and influences.

Greek to complete the work. This eclectic text became the *Stephanus Text* of 1550, and was the text which served as a basis for the *King James Version* of 1611. This text was later edited again with emendations from Beza's Greek text and in 1633 was described in its publication as "the text received by all," hence the idea of *Textus Receptus*.

The facts of history plainly reveal three issues: first, the so-called *Textus Receptus* is itself an eclectic text. It was the "critical text" of its day, i.e., the best which then contemporary scholarship could produce from the best available sources. It was not a single, mysterious, perpetual text which had been kept "pure" for many centuries.

Second, when the Waldenses made their version in vernacular, the *Romount Version* in 1180, it was translated from the Latin Vulgate. They evidently did not possess the Greek mss. Which has supposedly been kept pure for centuries.

Third, the so-called *Textus Receptus*, as an entity, did not exist until 1633, over twenty years after the King James Version was in print. To assert that the KJV was based on the *Textus Receptus* betrays an ignorance of historical facts and sequence. To say that there is a preserved text is one thing; to say that the text has been preserved is quite another.

Whatever one's belief in such matters, he must take into account the facts of history as well as the preservation of God's Word. Even liberal critics such as Wescott and Hort have admitted that the true text does exist, has been preserved in the existing mss., and has been collated by the process of textual criticism. The text of the Greek New Testament, even by alleged liberal scholars, is about 99.99 percent restored.³⁷⁸

Whatever one's views are on textual "families," the Byzantine or Majority Text, or the eclectic, Critical Text, it should be well-thought through and ought to take into account textual, historical the theological issues. Often all

³⁷⁸ See the following for the purity of the Greek text of the NT: B. B. Warfield, *Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, pp. 12–14; H. S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, p. 280; Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, p. 365–6.

the truth is not necessarily in one view or another. Pride, prejudice and irrationality make their way even into scholarly circles.

2. The Russelites [“Jehovah’s Witnesses”] mistranslate the final clause of John 1:1 as, “...and the word was a god,” denying the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.³⁷⁹ The rules of Greek grammar are misunderstood and thus misapplied, and the English rules of grammar are followed, inserting the indefinite article “a” and thus obscuring the opposite meaning of the Greek idiom [anarthrous use of the def. art.], which actually emphasizes the Deity of our Lord.
3. The Campbellites [“Church of Christ” Church] teach that water baptism is essential to salvation from Acts 2:38, “...repent and be baptized...” The two verbs are taken as equal or compound verbs according to the rules of English grammar, giving the argument that “repentance plus baptism equals salvation.”³⁸⁰ But the verbs are not equal in the Greek.
4. The Pentecostal or Charismatic idea that the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” is expressed by speaking in “unknown tongues,” i.e., ecstatic utterances, is based on a word added by the English translators and so italicized. The idea is that

³⁷⁹ The wording of the three independent clauses in John 1:1 are in reality, arguments for His eternity, equality and Deity. The final clause reads, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. The absence of the definite article before θεός, called the “anarthrous use,” in the Greek idiom stresses quality or character. The words are emphatic by position. The clause ought to be translated, “and the word as to his essence was [existed as] [emphatically] God.”

³⁸⁰ The Eng. [KJV] of Acts 2:38 grammatically makes “Repent” and “be baptized” compound verbs and thus equal—the classic argument of the Campbellites, but the Greek reads (Μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν). “Repent” is aor. imp. act. pl. “be baptized” is aor. pass imp. sing. i.e., “All of you with a sense of urgency and all determination, Repent!...and [then] let each one of you be baptized.” The former receives the emphasis and the latter is much less a command.

of foreign languages, not an ecstatic non-linguistic, non-intelligent flow of syllables.³⁸¹ It is not only dangerous, but irrational to base one's doctrine on italicized words added by translators!

5. Italicized words are those added to the English text for clarification. However, sometimes added words, not in the Greek text, have been added in the English through a faulty interpretation—and *not* italicized, implying that they do occur in the original language.

E.g., Hebrews 2:9, "...should taste death for every man."³⁸² The word "man" does *not* occur in the Greek—in any text or manuscript. The words "every one" [ὑπὲρ παντός] must be interpreted by the context, and necessarily refer to the "many sons" of v. 10, "they who are sanctified" and the "brethren" of v. 11, "my brethren" of v. 12, "the children which God hath given me" of v. 12. Yet this has become a proof-text for arguing the universality of the atonement, an argument largely based on a non-existent word.

6. An example of misunderstood gender in Ruth 3:15. After Ruth and Boaz meet on the threshing floor, and she is laden down with grain, the KJV reads, "and she went into the city," referring to Ruth. The verb, however, is masculine, referring to Boaz.³⁸³

³⁸¹ "Pentecostalism" is itself a misnomer, as Pentecost witnessed Spirit-filled men speaking distinctly in other, previously unlearned languages, which the hearers clearly understood. The Corinthian tongues were dubious in nature, and may have been ecstatic utterances. They were, of course, the least of the gifts in that era of temporary spiritual revelation. Those who do not make the necessary distinction between the tongues of Pentecost and Corinth greatly err.

³⁸² Hebrew 2:9, ὑπὲρ παντός γεύσεται θανάτου. Lit: on behalf of every one [sing.] he might taste [experience] death.

³⁸³ יָבֹואִ is masc. sing., not fem. Boaz was in love! He immediately left for the city and gathered the elders, who had not had time to gather in the morning yet (4:1ff)!

7. Temporal participles are subservient to the main verb. The English may translate a verb as a participle and a participle as a verb,³⁸⁴ thus shifting the whole force of a given statement, or fail to properly carry the relationship between a participle and a verb.³⁸⁵
8. At times, possibly because of a euphemism [phrasing something in a more pleasing or acceptable way, and avoiding harsh or offensive terms], some words may *not* be translated into English. Cf. Rom. 9:10, which reads in the KJV, “And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac...” The word “one” in English seems to refer to Isaac. The full, correct translation, however, would be “...by one sexual act [or emission of sperm]...”³⁸⁶ The emphasis is on the minuteness of Divine predestination that in one emission of

³⁸⁴ The Gk. of the New Testament abounds in the use of ptcs. A ptc. is a verbal adjective, and so, if used with a temporal significance, is always subordinate to the main verb. Note in Heb. 1:1–2, “God...spake...hath spoken...in [his] son...” The first vb. in Eng., however is a ptc. in Gk., putting the stress upon the main vb. which occurs in v. 2, emph. the progressive nature, finality and uniqueness of the Divine revelation in the Lord Jesus Christ, (ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας... ἐλάλησεν... ἐν υἱῷ) i.e., “God...having spoken...spoke...in [his] son...” Note that the words “in son” use the loc. sense, and “son” is anarth., i.e., God spoke *through* the prophets, but in a unique and final way *in* the Lord Jesus Christ who is his “Son.” Our Lord was and *is* the unique revelation of God. It was an “in son” kind of revelation—a subtlety completely lost in the Eng.

³⁸⁵ E.g., Matt. 28:19 (πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε), “having gone, therefore, make disciples!” Lk. 18:11 (σταθείς...προσηύχeto), “having taken his stance...began [and continued] to pray.” Acts 17:22 (Σταθείς δὲ [ὁ] Παῦλος...ἔφη), “then Paul, having taken his stand [assumed the stance of an orator with his hand outstretched, palm upward, to address the court]...said.”

³⁸⁶ Rom. 9:10, ἐξ ἑνὸς κόιτην. Lit: out of one sexual act [emission of sperm].

sperm. From Isaac, two nations and destinies were determined through the conception of the twins.

9. Does the Bible command that women wear “modest apparel” in 1 Tim. 2:9? Traditionally, this has been the great proof-text for such teaching. The command is rather for suitable apparel and modest behavior, i.e., the term “modest” is to be construed with “behavior” and not with clothing as the English Bible assumes.³⁸⁷ Modesty begins with one’s behavior, not with one’s dress. This strengthens rather than weakens the mandate.
10. Most Christian churches have women Sunday School or Bible teachers, never questioning the scriptural teaching of 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 or 1 Timothy 2: 8–15. Yet the Scriptures are very clear that men are to assume the leadership and women are to remain silent and be in submission. Some would interpret 1 Tim. 2:12 to mean simply that women should not teach men, but the Greek does not support this argument, forbidding to women a teaching position altogether in the context of the church.

Note: But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. Note that the comma after “teach” is an attempt to equate the Greek, which teaches that: (1) the woman is not to be in a teaching position within the sphere of the church, (2) she is not to usurp authority over the man, and (3) She is to remain in silence.

Note: διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός, ἀλλ’ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ. This ought to be literally translated: “But to teach [emph.], a woman [emph.] I do not allow [permit], nor to usurp authority over a man [be in a position of leadership or authority in the church], but [quite the opposite] to be in silence [quietness].”

³⁸⁷ 1 Tim. 2:9, “...Ὡσαύτως [καὶ] γυναικας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης...” “suitable or proper clothing,” καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ, i.e., orderly. “with modesty and sound judgment [decency],” μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης refers to one’s behavior.

Modern thinking, however, has replaced biblical teaching to such an extent that truth is ridiculed at the very thought that women should not teach in the sphere of the church. The compromise idea that a “Sunday School” is not part of a church and its ministry is utterly absurd. If “Sunday School” is not an essential part of the church’s ministry, then what church would be scriptural? The answer must be, the church that does not have a “Sunday School.” Such reasoning leads to absurdities. Whatever one’s view, it must be aligned to the Scriptures, and not simply based on tradition, religious politics or accommodation.

11. Another example of English punctuation obscuring the meaning of the text occurs in Eph. 4:11, where apostles, pastors, teachers, etc., are given by Christ “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry...” The comma after “saints” ought to be omitted. Saints are to be equipped through the preaching and teaching ministry for the service of Christ.³⁸⁸
12. The translation or interpretation of certain words as “perfect” rather than “mature,” “complete,” “completely developed,” or “finished,” has led some to espouse a “Christian” or “sinless” perfectionism.” Such teaching began with John Wesley as a rather relative “Christian perfectionism” which was a complete dedication of love to Christ and later developed into the Oberlin or sinless perfectionism of Asa Mahan and Charles Finney, and then furthered in a modified form by A. B. Simpson.³⁸⁹ Some elements of modern evangelicalism retain a non-

³⁸⁸ Eph. 4:12, πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας... “for the equipping [outfitting] of the saints for [unto] the work of ministering or service.”

³⁸⁹ For a history of perfectionism and its distinctives, see B. B. Warfield, *Perfection and Perfectionism*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1971. 464 pp.

Pentecostal modified form of perfectionism as “The Higher Life” Movement and the “Keswick Movement.”

Note: The statements which may be construed to buttress the doctrine of perfectionism are listed after the following Greek terms or their cognates. All which refer to human beings in a spiritual sense ought to be translated as follows:

(1) τελειόω, τελείωσις, τελειότης, τέλειος, ἐπιτελέω connote “coming to an end, and thus completion, being finished, mature, adult,” e.g., Matt. 5:48; 19:21; Jn. 17:23; 1 Cor. 2:6; 2 Cor. 12:9; Gal. 3:3; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:12, 15; Col. 1:28; 4:12; Heb. 5:9; 10:1; 11:40; 12:23; Jas. 1:4; 2:22; 3:2; 1 Jn. 4:17–18;

(2) ἄρτιος, καταρίζω, καταρτισμός, κατάρτισις connote “to be fully-limbed, symmetrically developed, completed, outfitted,” e.g., Lk. 6:40; 2 Cor. 13:11; 2 Tim. 3:17; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 5:10; (3) πληρώω means “to fill up” and so “to complete,” Rev. 3:2.

13. The words of our Lord to Mary Magdalene in John 20:17, “Touch me not...” have been alleged to mean that because he, as our Great High Priest, had not yet ascended to offer the sacrifice, she must not pollute him by any physical contact, are without sufficient foundation. This argument has been used to counter the seeming contradiction of Matthew 28:9, where the two Marys are described as having “held him by the feet and worshipped him.” Actually, the present imperative of prohibition ought to be translated, “Stop clinging to me” rather than “touch me not.”³⁹⁰
14. It is commonly thought and taught that the pronoun “it” in Romans 6:12 refers to “sin,” which is the subject of the sentence. “It,” however, refers to “body,” not because it is

³⁹⁰ μή μου ἅπτου, pres. imp. of prohib. “Stop clinging to me!” It was not out of fear of contamination as the Great High Priest sanctified to offer sacrifice, but as the Great High Priest who was not to be detained.

the nearer antecedent, but because it agrees grammatically in gender with “body.”³⁹¹

15. What does the word “which” refer to in Hebrews 12:14? Does it refer, as in English, to both “peace...and holiness” as compound direct objects, or to one or the other?³⁹² Is a kind of pacifism included as a requirement “to see the Lord”? The Greek grammar is decisive.
16. Eph. 6:19, “...that I may open my mouth boldly...” is often used as a request for boldness in opening one’s mouth to proclaim the gospel. The word “boldly,” however, is not to be construed with opening one’s mouth, but rather with the following, “to make known the mystery of the gospel.” This may not be vitally important, but it is an example as to the influence of the English text and punctuation upon one’s theology and thus upon one’s thought and prayers.³⁹³
17. The word “whosoever” in John 3:16 is non-existent—despite its being a focal-point for modern evangelism, which seeks to be as all-embrasive as possible. The wording is actually intensely personal and emphasizes an intensely personal and persevering faith. The Greek is emphatically definite where the English is somewhat indefinite by evangelistic implication.

³⁹¹ Μὴ οὖν βασιλευέτω ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ. “It” [αὐτοῦ] is neut. sing., as is “body” [σώματι]. “Sin” [ἡ ἁμαρτία] is fem. sing. The body is no longer the boss of the truly converted individual.

³⁹² Εἰρήνην διώκετε μετὰ πάντων καὶ τὸν ἁγιασμόν, οὐ χωρὶς οὐδεὶς ὄψεται τὸν κύριον... The word “which” [οὗ] is masc. sing., referring to “sanctification” [τὸν ἁγιασμόν], not “peace” [Εἰρήνην] which is fem. Holiness is the one great requirement for heaven.

³⁹³ Eph. 6:19, καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ [and for me], ἵνα μοι δοθῆ λόγος [in order that to me might be given a word, utterance] ἐν ἀνοιξίᾳ τοῦ στόματός μου [in the act of opening my mouth], ἐν παρρησίᾳ γνωρίσαι [with boldness or unreservedness of speech to make known] τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου...

Note: John 3:16 is an exegetical or explanatory statement appended to the preceding, v. 14–15. Our Lord approaches Nicodemus on the presuppositional level, destroying his religious presuppositions—physical descent from Abraham, circumcision and law-righteousness. Our Lord, taking the Old Testament reference to Moses and the serpent of brass (Numb. 21:4–9), prophecies of his own sacrificial death and emphasizes that one has eternal life through faith alone—an intensely personal, persevering faith. Note the parallel between v. 15 and 16 and the reading, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν, “in order that [a final clause] every single one without exception constantly or characterized as exercising faith [the singular relative participle ὁ πιστεύων with πᾶς] into him...” “To believe in[to]” [πιστεύων εἰς] was a technical expression of that culture and era that clearly denoted utter, unreserved commitment to someone or thing.

18. It is widely taught that believers need to “die to sin” in their experience. This is not only common to such traditions as the “Higher Life” movement, the Keswick [non-Pentecostal] holiness movement, and to many in the Evangelical tradition, it is also taught in some of the old Reformed and Baptist Catechisms.³⁹⁴ Such teaching is based on passages such as Romans 6:1–10; Galatians 5:24 and Ephesians 4:22–24, making dying to sin, or becoming “dead to sin” an experience to be sought by those who desire to become preeminently spiritual. This, however, is a teaching based on an inaccurate and inadequate translation of the Greek. Note the following: first, the words referring to “being dead” to sin in Rom. 6:1–10 are all in the aorist

³⁹⁴ The *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, followed by those of Keach and Spurgeon, reads:

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

Ans. Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.

tense, denoting a past event, a punctiliar action, and ought to be translated “died,” not “dead.”

Note: Cf. Rom. 6:2, μὴ γένοιτο. May it never be! οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, such ones as we are (qualitative. pers. pron.) who died to sin, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ; How shall we live any longer in it?! Cf. aor. ἀπεθάνομεν “died.” (Every occ. of “dead” is aor., and should be so translated from v. 2–10). Every believer “died” to sin, but is not “dead” to sin. What is the difference? *The language refers to a past act, not to a present state.* It is neither a present state of experience nor an experience to be sought. It is rather the reality of our union with Christ. Believers “died” to the reigning power of sin. Cf. Rom. 3:9, πάντας ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι (“all under sin[’s dominion] are [as a state of existence]”).

The believer’s union with Christ has changed his relationship to sin. Second, this past event (denoted by the aorist tense) was our union with Christ in his death and resurrection–life at regeneration, which means for the believer that the reigning power of sin has been broken, and he now lives in the context of the resurrection–life and power of the Holy Spirit, necessitating a converted life (Romans chapter six, the entire passage).³⁹⁵ Third, Romans 6:11 uses a different term, “corpse,” a noun, not a verb.

Rom. 6:11, ὑμεῖς λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς [εἶναι] νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς [εἶναι] νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. This statement, the first practical admonition or application in the Roman Epistle, declares that believers are to be totally unresponsive to their old master because

³⁹⁵ What exactly is the believer’s relation to sin if he “died to sin” and yet still sins? The necessary distinction must be made between living in sin (under its dominating or reigning power) and committing acts of sin. The believer no longer *lives* under the reigning power of sin, but he still commits *acts* of sin (Cf. Rom. 6:15, ἁμαρτήσωμεν and 1 Jn. 2:1 ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε. καὶ ἕαν τις ἁμάρτη... Both are aor., and so ref. to acts of sin). Modern Fundamental and Evangelical Christianity, with their doctrine of the “carnal Christian” heresy, unwittingly deny the necessary and practical implications of the believer’s union with Christ.

they have been brought into union with Christ, which means a new sphere of life and activity. Sin, though no longer our ruling master, yet seeks to recruit, as it were, our members to wage a “guerilla warfare” against the reign of grace.

Believers are to reckon themselves to be “corpses” with respect to sin, i.e., having already “died” by virtue of their union with Christ. We are to reckon ourselves to be, as it were “corpses” [totally, wholly unresponsive] to the solicitations of sin, which was once our ruling master but has now been dethroned. Note the remarks in the preceding paragraph, and also the context of the entire chapter.

Fourth, the passages in Eph. 4:22–24 and Col. 3:9–10 are parallel, both containing the use of the aorist infinitive of result,³⁹⁶ i.e., *believers have already put off the old man and put on the new by virtue of their union with Christ.* Thus, both statements (Col. 3:9–10 being translated correctly in the English version) refer to a past event and present fact, not to an exhortation to be realized in one’s experience. Thus, a body of erroneous and widely-accepted teaching has arisen because it is based solely on the English text and grammar.

19. It is traditional to speak and sing about the “fiery trials” of our faith (1 Pet. 4:12). Part of the scriptural basis for this traditional saying is found in 1 Peter 1:7, and the words, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” What does the pronoun “it” refer to? “faith”

³⁹⁶ Eph. 4:22–24, ἀποθέσθαι ἡμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον...καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον... Col. 3:9–10, ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον... καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον... See John Murray, *Principles of Conduct*, pp. 202–221 for a thorough discussion of the use of the aor. inf. of result and also of the experiential aspects of the believer’s union with Christ.

or “gold?” It refers to “gold,” not “faith”—although some trials are called “fiery” by Peter.³⁹⁷

20. An example of *eisegetis*—reading a foreign meaning into the text—is found in the idea of the “backslidden Christian.” It is commonly accepted by Christians of almost every doctrinal persuasion that a believer can “backslide,” i.e., slide or gradually slip back into former sinful ways or habits. The major proof-text for such a doctrine is Proverbs 14:14, “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways...”

The whole idea pictured by “backsliding” is erroneous. The term and its cognates occur seventeen times in Scripture, all in three books of the Old Testament: Proverbs (once), Jeremiah (twelve times) and Hosea (three times). With the possible exception of the statement in Proverbs, every instance refers to the rebellion and apostasy of Israel.

The English term is an *interpretation* of four Hebrew terms and a variety of Greek terms in the LXX.³⁹⁸ The comprehensive picture is one of turning back, open rebellion, a refractory shoulder which throws off the yoke, and apostasy. The idea of sliding or skipping backwards, or the common preaching *simile* of a cow sliding back into a mud hole while trying to get out is based on a thought

³⁹⁷ ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως πολυτιμότερον χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζομένου... “Faith” [τῆς πίστεως] is fem. sing.; “gold” [χρυσίου] is neut. sing. and the words “though it be tried” are also neut. sing. [τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου]. The grammatical gender determines the antecedent of the pronoun.

³⁹⁸ (1) The most common term [10 times] מִשְׁבֵּבָה, “to turn back, apostatize” (Jer. 2:19 [LXX, ἡ ἀποστασία σου]; 3:6, 8, 11, 12; 5:6; 8:5; 14:7; Hos. 11:7; 14:4). (2) The next most common term [5 times] שׁוֹבֵב, “back-turning, apostasy” (Jer. 3:14, 22 [LXX: ἐπιστρέφητε υἱοὶ ἐπιστρέφοντες]; 8:5; 31:22; 49:4). (3) סִרְרָה, Qal. ptc., “characterized as rebellious or stubborn” (Hos. 4:16). (4) סִיג, Qal. ptc., “a characteristic turning back, being recreant, proving faithless, apostate” (Prov. 14:14).

conjured from the English language. It is diametrically opposed to the idea of the Hebrew. While a Christian may be taken in sin, a mere professing believer may eventually apostatize, but it is highly questionable to import an Old Testament doctrine into the New Testament by a process of eisegesis. If “backsliding” is equated with apostasy, there is correspondence. See Heb. 3:12 and the word “departing” [ἀποστῆναι], which means apostasy.

21. The Greek has its share of idiomatic expressions. One is the objective genitive,³⁹⁹ i.e., “when the noun in the genitive receives the action, being related as the object to the verbal idea contained in the noun modified.”⁴⁰⁰ E.g., “the preaching of Jesus Christ” [τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] (Rom. 16:25). It is not our Lord who is preaching, but rather the one being preached about. Mk. 11:22, “Have faith in God” [ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ], i.e., it is not God’s faith, but our faith in God, i.e., God is the object of our faith. E.g., Rom. 10:2, “have a zeal of God” [ζῆλον θεοῦ], not God’s zeal, but the traditional religious zeal of the Jews. Cf. Rom. 3:3, “make the faith of God of none effect” [τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσει], it is faith in God, not God’s faith, which is made of none effect.

The importance of this idiomatic use is seen in such passages as: Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph. 3:12; Phil. 3:9. In each of these passages, the KJV reads, “...the faith of Christ.” The correct translation of the objective

³⁹⁹ See Dana–Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 72–83. See also: A. T. Robertson, *Shorter Grammar*, pp. 224–232; A. T. Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, pp. 491–551; Blass–Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, pp. 89–100; J. H. Moulton, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, I, pp. 72–74; III, pp. 207, 210–212; IV, p. 84; C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom–Book of New Testament Greek*, pp. 39–41; and Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 92–95.

⁴⁰⁰ Dana–Mantey, *Loc. cit.*, p. 78.

genitive is “faith in Christ.” From a misunderstanding [ignorance] of the obj. gen., has derived the irrational idea that one is saved “by Christ’s faith.” Aside from being a denial of a recognized idiom, such would have a profound effect on the Deity of our Lord (a “lesser deity”?). If Mk. 11:22, an objective genitive, is translated, “Have faith in God,” rather than “Have God’s faith,” then why not these other passages referring to Christ? It would also work great confusion concerning our justification by faith and other major doctrines.

Testimonies from the Past concerning the Importance
of Studying the Original Languages⁴⁰¹

Striving for a practical working knowledge or even a basic acquaintance with the Greek New Testament and some knowledge of the Hebrew may indeed be the single most important and significant effort of your Christian life and experience. It will open to you the very Word of God, and not merely a version of a translation. It will enable you to meet with the triune God in his Word without a translator or an interpreter. It will enable you to experience the very conviction, fervency, emotion, and force of the truth that the very first readers experienced. It will determine your whole approach to the study of the Scriptures. It will give consistency, depth, maturity and discernment to your perspective of doctrine, theology and Christian experience. It will largely determine what books you will purchase, and what you will read. It will necessarily change your life in the context of its truth. It will make you a stronger, and a more intelligent and consistent Christian because the vital force of the truth you study will necessarily transform your life through the Spirit and grace of God.

⁴⁰¹ Notes: (1) Italics or bold print have not been used, except as they might be used by the authors themselves, as the entire quotations should be read and contemplated. (2) In some cases, the exact location of the quoted material is unknown.

Martin Luther

Martin Luther (1483–1546) was the German leader of the Protestant Reformation, who, by the study of the Scriptures in their original languages, found the grace of God and the freedom from sin that only comes by that grace. On this ground, he became convinced that reading Greek and Hebrew was one of the greatest privileges and responsibilities of the Reformation preacher, so as to preserve a pure gospel.

Whoso is armed with the Text, the same is a right Pastor, and my best advice and counsel is, that we draw water out of the true Fountain; that is, diligently to read in the Bible. He is a learned Divine that is well-grounded in the Text; for one text and sentence out of the Bible is of far more esteem and value than many writings and glosses, which neither are strong, sound, nor armour of proof.

Few arguments for the importance of biblical languages are clearer than Luther's 1524 treatise, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools." The following is an excerpt from this work.

And let us be sure of this we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and, as the gospel itself points out, they are the baskets in which are kept these loaves and fishes and fragments. If through our neglect we let the languages go (which God forbid!), we shall...lose the gospel...

Experience too has proved this and still gives evidence of it. For as soon as the languages declined to the vanishing point, after the apostolic age, the gospel and faith and Christianity itself declined more and more...On the other hand, now that the languages have been revived, they are bringing with them so bright a light and accomplishing such great things that the whole world stands amazed and has to acknowledge that we have the gospel just as pure and undefiled as the apostles had it, that it has been wholly restored to its original purity, far beyond what it was in the days of St. Jerome and St. Augustine...

Yes, you say, but many of the fathers were saved and even became teachers without the languages. That is true. But how do you account for the fact that they so often erred in the Scriptures?...Even St. Augustine himself is obliged to confess...that a Christian teacher who is to expound the Scriptures must know Greek and Hebrew in addition to Latin. Otherwise, it is impossible to avoid constant stumbling; indeed, there are plenty of problems to work out even when one is well versed in the languages.

There is a vast difference therefore between a simple preacher of the faith and a person who expounds Scripture, or, as St. Paul puts it, a prophet. A simple preacher (it is true) has so many clear passages and texts available through translations that he can know and teach Christ, lead a holy life, and preach to others. But when it comes to interpreting Scripture, and working with it on your own, and disputing with those who cite it incorrectly, he is unequal to the task; that cannot be done without languages. Now there must always be such prophets in the Christian church who can dig into Scripture, expound it, and carry on disputations. A saintly life and right doctrine are not enough. Hence languages are absolutely and altogether necessary in the Christian church, as are the prophets or interpreters; although it is not necessary that every Christian or every preacher be such a prophet, as St. Paul points out in I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4...

Since it becomes Christians then to make good use of the Holy Scriptures as their one and only book and it is a sin and a shame not to know our own book or to understand the speech and words of our God, it is a still greater sin and loss that we do not study languages, especially in these days when God is offering and giving us men and books and every facility and inducement to this study, and desires his Bible to be an open book. O how happy the dear fathers would have been if they had had our opportunity to study the languages and come thus prepared to the Holy Scriptures! What great toil and effort it cost them to gather up a few crumbs, while we with half the labor—yes, almost without any labor at all—can acquire the whole loaf! O how their effort puts our indolence to shame! Yes, how sternly God will judge our lethargy and ingratitude!

Here belongs also what St. Paul calls for in I Corinthians 14, namely, that in the Christian church all teachings must be judged. For this a knowledge of the language is needful above

all else. The preacher or teacher can expound the Bible from beginning to end as he pleases, accurately or inaccurately, if there is no one there to judge whether he is doing it right or wrong. But in order to judge, one must have a knowledge of the languages; it cannot be done in any other way. Therefore, although faith and the gospel may indeed be proclaimed by simple preachers without a knowledge of languages, such preaching is flat and tame; people finally become weary and bored with it, and it falls to the ground. But where the preacher is versed in the languages, there is a freshness and vigor in his preaching, Scripture is treated in its entirety, and faith finds itself constantly renewed by a continual variety of words and illustrations. Hence, Psalm 129 likens such scriptural studies to a hunt, saying to the deer God opens the dense forests; and Psalm 1 likens them to a tree with a plentiful supply of water, whose leaves are always green.⁴⁰²

Ulrich Zwingli

Ulrich Zwingli, an older contemporary of Luther, and the leader of the Swiss Reformation, was said to have memorized the entire Greek New Testament. It was his strong conviction that the Scriptures form the sole authority of the Christian's life, and thus emphasized their study in the original languages. In his day, Latin was the official academic, ecclesiastical and diplomatic language, thus he emphasized Latin among the languages to be mastered. His comments are, however, still pertinent for this day. The following is from his treatise, *On the Education of Youth*.

Once a young man is instructed in the solid virtue which is formed by faith, it follows that he will regulate himself and richly adorn himself from within: for only he whose whole life is ordered will find it easy to give help and counsel to others.

But a man cannot rightly order his own soul unless he exercises himself day and night in the Word of God. He can do that most readily if he is well versed in such languages as Hebrew and Greek, for a right understanding of the Old

⁴⁰² "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," in *Luther's Works*, ed. W. Bran and H. Lehman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), pp. 357–366. Quoted in part from Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 118–120.

Testament is difficult without one, and a right understanding of the New Testament is equally difficult without the other.

But we are instructing those who have already learned the rudiments, and everywhere Latin has the priority. In these circumstances I do not think that Latin should be altogether neglected. For an understanding of the Holy Scripture it is of less value than Hebrew and Greek, but for other purposes it is just as useful. And it often happens that we have to do the business of Christ amongst those who speak Latin. No Christian should use these languages simply for his own profit or pleasure: for languages are gifts of the Holy Ghost.

After Latin, we should apply ourselves to Greek. We should do this for the sake of the New Testament, as I have said already. And if I may say so, to the best of my knowledge the Greeks have always handled the doctrine of Christ better than the Latins. For that reason, we should always direct our young men to that source. But in respect of Greek as well as Latin we should take care to garrison our souls with innocence and faith, for in these tongues are many things which we learn only to our hurt: wantonness, ambition, violence, cunning, vain philosophy and the like. But the soul...can safely steer past all these...

I put Hebrew last because Latin is in general use and Greek follows conveniently. Otherwise, I would willingly have given Hebrew precedence, for in many places even amongst the Greeks those who are ignorant of Hebrew forms of speech have great difficulty in attempting to draw out the true sense of Scripture...

If a man would penetrate to the heavenly wisdom, with which no earthly wisdom ought rightly to be considered, let alone compared, it is with such arms that he must be equipped. And even then he must still approach with a humble and thirsting spirit.⁴⁰³

Herman Witsius

Herman Witsius, a seventeenth century Dutch scholar and theologian wrote:

Let him apply himself diligently to the acquisition of different languages, and especially to those which God has

⁴⁰³ Quoted in part from Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Ibid*, pp.135–136.

distinguished by making them the channels of conveyance for His heavenly oracles, that he may understand God when He speaks, as it were, in His own language, that he who acts as the interpreter of God and hears the word at His mouth, may not require an interpreter for himself.⁴⁰⁴

John Owen

John Owen was one of the greatest of the Puritan writers and preachers. He was also Vice Chancellor of Christ's College, Oxford, during the Cromwellian Era.

There is in the originals of the Scripture a peculiar emphasis of words and expressions, and in them an especial energy, to intimate and insinuate the sense of the Holy Ghost unto the minds of men, which cannot be traduced into other languages by translations, so as to obtain the same power and efficacy.⁴⁰⁵

...a great help for the investigation of truth is the diligent study of the Holy Scriptures in those languages in which they were written by the Holy Spirit. Not only is this the only well from which we can draw the original force and meaning of the words and phrases of Divine utterance, but also those languages (especially the Hebrew) possess a weight of their own—a vividness which brings to the understanding fine shades of meaning with a power which cannot survive the passage into another tongue.⁴⁰⁶

C. H. Spurgeon

C. H. Spurgeon was one of the greatest and most widely used preachers ever called and gifted by God. His attainments were largely through self-effort, yet he personally studied the Scriptures in the original languages.

A man to comment well should be able to read the Bible in the original. Every minister should aim at a tolerable proficiency both in the Hebrew and the Greek. These two languages will give him a library at a small expense, an inexhaustible thesaurus, a mine of spiritual wealth. Really, the

⁴⁰⁴ Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Divine Covenants between God and Man*.

⁴⁰⁵ John Owen, *Works* IV, p. 270.

⁴⁰⁶ John Owen, *Biblical Theology*, p. 701.

effort of acquiring a language is not so prodigious that brethren of moderate abilities should so frequently shrink from the attempt. A minister ought to attain enough of these tongues to be at least able to make out a passage by the aid of a lexicon, so as to be sure he is not misrepresenting the Spirit of God in his discoursings, but is, as nearly as he can judge, giving forth what the Lord intended to reveal by the language employed. Such knowledge would prevent his founding doctrines upon expressions in our version when nothing at all analogous is to be found in the inspired original.⁴⁰⁷

J. M. Reu

John Michael Reu was a professor of Homiletics at Capital Seminary, and noted the great importance of the original languages as a basis for preaching.

If the preacher, owing to defective preparation, has no Hebrew, he may find a...stopgap...As for the preacher incapable of using the Greek New Testament, he will have difficulty to prove his right to exist.⁴⁰⁸

Thomas Murphy

Thomas Murphy, a nineteenth century pastor and author of a volume on Pastoral Theology, devotes a chapter to “The Pastor in the Study,” and in this chapter, a section on “The Study of Hebrew and Greek.” His comments are worthwhile:

It is to be feared that most pastors, as soon as they leave the theological school and enter upon the hard work of the ministry, drop the study of the original languages. At the very time when they are ready to enjoy the reading of the sacred word in the tongues in which it was first written, and to profit by it, and to go on improving in the exercise, they lay it aside, in very many cases to be taken up no more. By so doing, they lose, in a great measure, the advantages of an important study of the previous years. The commencement of one’s ministry is the time, and the only time, for averting this danger. The knowledge already acquired should be carefully kept up. It should be increased until the sacred languages could be

⁴⁰⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries*, pp. 24–25.

⁴⁰⁸ J. M. Reu, *Homiletics*, p. 340.

read with ease and pleasure. Some plan for persevering in this study should be adopted at the beginning.

It need not take much time. Want of time arising from the pressure of other duties is generally the great obstacle. But there need not be many hours spent in it. One hour a week devoted to the Hebrew and one to the Greek will serve to keep up that knowledge of them already attained, and even to make a little progress....The knowledge which is at first fresh is easily retained, and then, if ever so little is added to it from week to week, it will gradually grow into a grand attainment in years. The systematic study may be very much aided by the careful examination in the original of each text with its context which is taken up for sermon or lecture. Some ministers keep up their knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek fairly in this way.

The slowness of the progress, and the imperfect knowledge of these languages already attained, very often at first discourage from attempting further effort. It is so tedious to search out the interpretation of a passage, there is so little satisfaction in the operation, and there is such a mountain to be overcome before the task will be much easier, that it is frequently given up in despair. But is it not much if, even with difficulty, a passage can be traced back into the very language in which it was written by men inspired of God? And if present difficulties should be ever so great and present improvement ever so slow, yet what will not steady progress at length achieve? What will not an hour a week, of even the slowest advance, amount to in ten years? The rule should be to keep up what has been already attained, and aim after some improvement, no matter how little.

The advantages...of being acquainted with the original languages of the Scriptures are very great.

1. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Bible can be better understood through the aid of this knowledge than it can possibly be without it....
2. We get nearer to the mind of the Spirit in this way. Every version must necessarily be a remove from it....
3. Out of all the possible languages of the world these were the ones which were providentially chosen for conveying the will of God to man....
4. It must be an unspeakable pleasure to get at the very terms which were written by inspired pens, the very sounds that

were uttered by Jehovah, and heard from his lips by his highly-favored servants....

5. To be skilled in these languages gives one an independence in interpreting the Scriptures and an authority in expounding them which cannot be too highly valued....
6. Some of the best modern commentaries on the Scriptures cannot be used to full advantage without a knowledge of these languages....

How much it is regretted by multitudes of older pastors that in the beginning of their ministry they did not undertake and rigidly pursue this study!They feel the great want at every turn in their studies, and mourn that they had not understood it an earlier day and provided against it.⁴⁰⁹

B. B. Warfield

Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield was a professor at Princeton Seminary, continuing the legacy of Archibald Alexander the Charles Hodge.

Extremes meet. Pietist and Rationalist have ever hunted in couples and dragged down their quarry together. They may differ as to why they deem theology mere lumber, and would not have the prospective minister waste his time in acquiring it. The one loves God so much, and the other loves him so little, that he does not care to know him. But they agree that it is not worthwhile to learn to know him.

The simple English Bible seems to the one sufficient equipment for the minister, because in the fervor of his religious enthusiasm, it seems to him enough for the renovating of the world, just to lisp its precious words to man. It seems to the other all the theological equipment a minister needs, because in his view the less theology the better. He considers him ill employed in poring over Hebrew and Greek pages, endeavoring to extract their real meaning—for what does it matter what their real meaning is?...If the minister is simply an advance agent of modern culture, a kind of University-Extension lecturer, whose whole function it is to “elevate the masses” and “improve the social organism”—why,

⁴⁰⁹ Thomas Murphy, *Pastoral Theology: The Pastor in the Various Duties of His Office*, pp. 129–134.

of course art and literature should take the place of Greek and Hebrew, and “sociology” the place of Theology in our seminary curriculum.

If the whole function of the minister is “inspirational” rather than “instructional,” and his work is finished when the religious nature of man is roused to action, and the religious emotions are set surging, with only a very vague notion of the objects to which the awakened religious affections should turn, or the ends to which the religious activities, once set in motion, should be directed—why, then, no doubt we may dispense with all serious study of Scripture...

But, if the minister is the mouth-piece of the Most High, charged with a message to deliver, to expound and enforce; standing in the name of God before men, to make known to them who and what this God is, and what his purposes of grace are, and what is his will for his people—then the whole aspect of things is changed....No second-hand knowledge of the revelation of God for the salvation of a ruined world can suffice the needs of a ministry whose function it is to convey this revelation to men, commend it to their acceptance and apply it in detail to their needs...⁴¹⁰

Kenneth Wuest

Kenneth Wuest was professor of Greek at Moody Bible Institute and the author of several volumes on Greek studies. He noted that:

The simple application of the rules of Greek grammar and syntax will often lead to the discovery of some tremendous truth which would be passed by unnoticed in the use of the English translation...⁴¹¹

Questions that are answered in hours of wading through commentaries, can often be answered in five minutes by recourse to a Greek lexicon.⁴¹²

⁴¹⁰ B. B. Warfield, *Shorter Writings*, I, pp. 371–372.

⁴¹¹ Kenneth Wuest, *The Practical Use of the Greek New Testament*, p. 39

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, p. 96.

A. T. Robertson

A. T. Robertson was professor of New Testament Greek at Louisville Seminary and author of several massive, practical works on New Testament Greek.

There is nothing like the Greek New Testament to rejuvenate the world, which came out of the Dark Ages with the Greek Testament in its hand. Erasmus wrote in the preface to his Greek Testament about his own thrill of delight: "These holy pages will summon up the living image of His mind. They will give you Christ Himself, talking, healing, dying, rising, the whole Christ in a word; they will give Him to you in an intimacy so close that He would be less visible to you if He stood before your eyes."

The lexicon may point the way to life...Grammar is a means of grace...

...the Greek Testament....There is no sphere of study where one is repaid more quickly for all the toil expended...the real New Testament is the Greek New Testament. The English is simply a translation of the New Testament, not the actual New Testament...there is much that cannot be translated. It is not possible to reproduce the delicate turns of thought, the nuances of language, in translation. The freshness of the strawberry cannot be preserved in any extract....

It is possible for one to teach himself the elements of Greek so as to get a great deal of benefit from the study of the Greek New Testament....One does not have to be a gifted linguist to follow a course of study like this. It requires only a half hour a day and the determination to stick to it steadily, and one will win out and be glad of it all his life.

The trouble with all translations is that one's mind does not pause long enough over a passage to get the full benefit of the truth contained in it. The Greek compels one to pause over each word long enough for it to fertilize the mind with its rich and fructifying energy. The very words of the English become so familiar that they slip through the mind too easily. One needs to know his English Bible just that way, much of it by heart, so that it will come readily to hand for comfort and for

service. But the minute study called for by the Greek opens up unexpected treasures that surprise and delight the soul.⁴¹³

Bernard Ramm

The interpreter who interprets Scripture in his modern language is always working with a linguistic veil between himself and the original texts. And he never knows how thin or thick this veil is.⁴¹⁴

Concluding Note

There is no greater or more vital study for the Christian than the inscripturated Word of God. To know God's Word as thoroughly and intimately as possible, to know and love its doctrinal propositions, and to consistently apply it to one's life by the grace of God—this is the core and substance of Christianity. Our love to and service for the Lord Jesus Christ, our faithfulness in every sphere of life, our joy in trial, our strength in temptation, and our glorious anticipation of future glory in the very presence of God, all hang upon our relationship to God's Word. A careful study of the Scriptures, seeking to develop some knowledge of and skill in the original languages, ought to become an integral part of the Christian's practical experience.

⁴¹³ A. T. Robertson, *Preface to A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research and The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, pp. 15–21.

⁴¹⁴ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, p. 107.

Appendix II

Opening the Text: Verbal, Plenary Inspiration a Necessary Implication

“All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

2 Tim. 3:16-17

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. Divine inspiration is both verbal [extending to the very choice of words, grammatical constructions and syntactical relationships in the original languages] and plenary [full or extending to every part]. This is the uniform witness of all orthodox Christianity. It is the essential presupposition of true Christianity from which all else derives. Apart from the authority of Scripture in its exactness, one is left with tradition, subjective experience or imagination, none of which are infallible or authoritative.

A necessary implication of verbal, plenary inspiration is that the preacher must open the text. This must be the inspired source through which he feeds his flock and evangelizes the unconverted. Preaching ought to indulge itself to a given degree when necessary in both exegesis and hermeneutics to open and explain the text and its meaning.

Yet this is rarely the case. Sadly, in most pulpits one might merely hold to inspired concepts, as one hears, not careful scriptural exposition, explanation and hermeneutical clarification, but mere general references and proof-texts thrown into the sermon—and often without substantial comment. The emphasis is on an outline, illustrations or the emotions rather than opening the inspired Word of God and expounding it as the basis for the message. The preacher is a prophet—God’s spokesman—one who declares the Word of God. Thus, he must seek to make this Word clear and understandable.

Homiletically, there are essentially two types of sermons: textual and topical, i.e. one either opens and expounds a given passage or finds a text to introduce a given subject. Either way, the text should be opened, i.e., exegeted, expounded and clarified or made plain. The sermon should flow from the text. Every text mentioned from the pulpit should be commented upon in some way so it suitably fits into the scheme of the message and the people may be fed and taught.

Further, a careful distinction ought to be made between interpretation and application. The failure to do so is one of the gravest faults of the pulpit ministry. The Christian ministry is an instructional ministry—didactic, evangelistic, polemic and apologetic. The minister’s task is not only to declare the gospel, but to educate the congregation. Sitting under a sound, well-rounded ministry in the ordinary church services should be a biblical and doctrinal education. If not, then there is necessarily a given amount of failure in the very nature of that ministry itself. Sitting under a godly, expository ministry for several years ought to approach the character of a seminary education.

What is the testimony of Scripture regarding opening or expounding the text? Moses was not only the first author of Scripture, he was also the first expository preacher. His orations in Deuteronomy were largely an exposition of the Moral Law. Was not this the personal occupation of the “blessed man” in Psa. 1:2? Consider David and his pondering the meaning and force of the Law (Psa. 119:9, 11, 18, 27). Take careful note of the studies and searching of Daniel in the prophecies of Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2).

Was this not the ancient method adopted by the scribes under Ezra during the Era of Restoration (Neh. 8:1–8)? They “caused the people to understand the law....they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.” The returning remnant from the Babylonian Captivity spoke Aramaic, an ancient Chaldean dialect. The Scriptures were written in Hebrew.

The Scribes had to open or expound the text and give the sense so the people could understand the Word of God exactly. They evidently engaged in both exegesis, or what the text said, and hermeneutics, or what the text meant. The exact meaning of Scripture is of the utmost importance. Our very salvation, doctrinal convictions, Christian experience and hope of eternity rest upon it! This is the essence of the time-worn truth that “the Bible is our sole rule of both faith and practice.” Thus, it behooves us to know it thoroughly.

This was the very approach our Lord took with the Lawyer (Lk. 10:25–26). “What is written in the Law? How readest thou?” This necessarily implies both a careful exegesis and also an interpretation of the text. The entire passage, which contains the “Parable of the Good Samaritan,” encompasses the whole of expository preaching, from the “What is written in the Law? How readest thou? To the “Go and do thou likewise!”

Did not our Lord do the same with his disciples (Matt. 13:52; Lk. 24:25–27, 32, 44–47)? He completely opened the Scriptures to their understanding, and his “text” was the entire Old Testament!

Note: Matt. 13:52 implies both an instructional ministry and a progression in that ministry. Lk. 24:27 [διερμήνευσεν], unfold the meaning, expound. V. 32 [διήνοιγεν ἡμῖν τὰς γραφάς] to unfold the sense completely. V. 45 [τότε διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς] to open the thought-process completely to comprehend the meaning of the Scriptures.

What a great, enlightening sermon that must have been—and no one complained about its depth or length.

Was not the Apostle concerned with an exact exegesis of the text (e.g., Gen. 12:1–3; 22:18; Rom. 1:17; 3:9–18; 4:3,7–9, 13, 16–18; Gal. 3:16)? He took the Abrahamic Covenant in its essence (Gen. 22:18), even to the use of the singular reading in the Hebrew and showed that it referred, not to the “seed of Abraham” in the plural, i.e., the Israelitish people, but in the singular; it referred to the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16). Did not the Apostle urge Timothy in the strongest language to do a

careful exegesis and exposition of the very text of Scripture in 2 Timothy 2:15?

This was also the inspired, customary model of the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:2–3). This is a graphic illustration of inspired preaching. It ought to be studied closely. This was Paul’s customary method of reaching out to the Jews in the synagogue ministry. The Jews knew their Scriptures, yet were blind to the saving truth contained therein. This the Apostle carefully laid out before his critical audience through a careful exegesis and interpretation of the text. What an example to modern preachers who must stand and declare the Word of God to unbelievers and often to those who have been mistaught and need exact instruction and correction!

Some objection might be made against this pervasive principle by appealing to such passages as Acts 17:22–34 and Paul’s address to the Areopagus at Athens. In the greater context of v. 16–34 this address, the first recorded confrontation between Christianity and Greek philosophy, Paul quoted not one passage of Scripture. The answer is that he had been preaching “Jesus and the resurrection,” i.e., the gospel, for several weeks in the synagogue and on a daily basis in the agora. This address, a culminative and summary statement in the form of a Christian World–and–Life View, was meant to put “Jesus and the resurrection” in their proper historical and redemptive context.⁴¹⁵ Every statement he made was thoroughly grounded in Scriptural truth, although such was not explicitly stated.

Others may object by stating that exegetical and expository preaching would be “over their people’s heads.”

⁴¹⁵ Cf. Acts 17:18. “Jesus” is masculine [τὸν Ἰησοῦν] and “resurrection” is feminine [τὴν ἀνάστασιν]. These philosophers thought Paul was preaching a male “god” and a female “goddess,” “Anastasia.” Their polytheistic presuppositions completely obscured the truth of the Gospel. Paul thus set forth the truth in his address before the Aeropagus.

The fault lies with the preacher who does not systematically instruct his people in the Word of God. The people will grow in grace, knowledge and spiritual appetite if the preacher himself grows and progresses in his studies, and his studies then develop and enrich his ministry. Rich expository preaching develops the spiritual appetite of God's people. Remaining limited to spiritual "milk" is a picture of spiritual degeneration, not one of spiritual advancement (Heb. 5:10–14).

The preacher who opens the text will be constantly educated in the Scriptures himself and in corresponding spiritual growth and knowledge. Such a preaching ministry will have at its disposal an infinite store of truth and an inexhaustible room for the growth of the hearers if the text of Scripture is always opened. One should be constantly edified and educated under the ministry.

Conversely, ministers who do not habitually open the text deprive themselves and their hearers of spiritual understanding and growth. One may sit under such a deprived ministry for years and learn very little. May we strive to open the text and seek to make the meaning plain for our hearers. Did not our Lord command, not only to "feed my lambs," but also to "feed my sheep"?

Appendix III:
A Basic Library for the Bible Student
The Importance of Reading⁴¹⁶

“Bring the books, but especially the parchments...” Paul

Christianity is preeminently a religion—not only of One Book—the Bible—but of *books*.⁴¹⁷ What do we know about the Bible, except through books that delve into the original languages, into the consistent principles of exposition and interpretation?

The Scriptures were given in another era, another culture, and in other languages. In order to adequately comprehend the inscripturated Word of God, we must cross such barriers—and we do so through books.

What do we know about the truth and belief of biblical Christianity except through books about doctrine and theology? What do we know about the history of Christianity, its Controversies, Creeds, Confessions, martyrs, heroes and victories, except through books? Books help open to us a consistent understanding of the Scriptures, their doctrinal truth, their practical application to our lives and the history of biblical religion.

Mark the following words from C. H. Spurgeon, who well knew the value of good books:

Even an apostle must read...Paul is inspired, and yet he wants *books*! He has been preaching for at least thirty years, and yet he wants *books*! He had seen the Lord, and yet he wants *books*! He had had a wider experience than most men, and yet he wants *books*! He had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard things which it was unlawful for a man to utter. yet he wants *books*! He had written the major part of the New Testament, and yet he wants *books*! The apostle

⁴¹⁶ The materials in this introduction are abbreviated from the author's *Theological Propaedeutic*, pp. 523–533.

⁴¹⁷ Throughout the *Qu'ran*, Mohammed constantly refers to Christians as “the People of the Book.”

says to Timothy and so he says to every preacher, "Give thyself unto reading".

The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men's brains. proves that he has no brains of his own. Brethren, what is true of ministers is true of all our people. You need to read. Renounce as much as you will all light literature, but study as much as possible sound theological works, especially the Puritanic writers, and expositions of the Bible. We are quite persuaded that the best way for you to be spending your leisure, is to be either reading or praying. You may get much instruction from books which afterwards you may use as a true weapon in your Lord and Master's service. Paul cries. "Bring the Books"—join in the cry.

Paul herein is a picture of industry. He is in prison; he cannot preach: What will he do? As he cannot preach, he will read. So it was with the fishermen of old and their boats: the fishermen were gone out of them. What were they doing? Mending their nets. So if providence has laid you upon a sick bed, and you cannot teach your class—if you cannot be working for God in public, mend your nets by reading. If one occupation is taken from you, take another, and let the books of the apostle read you a lesson of industry.

He says, "especially the parchments." I think the books were Latin and Greek works, but that the parchments were Oriental; and possibly they were the parchments of Holy Scripture; or as likely, they were his own parchments, on which were written the originals of his letters which stand in our Bible...Now, it must be "especially the parchments" with all our reading; let it be especially the Bible....Read the books, by all manner of means, but especially the parchments. Search human literature, if you will, but especially stand fast by that Book which is infallible, the revelation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.⁴¹⁸

A good library should be looked upon as an indispensable part of church furniture....If a man can purchase but very few books, my first advice to him would be, let him purchase the very best. If he cannot spend much, let him spend well....Don't buy thin soup; purchase the essence of meat....You require

⁴¹⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 9, pp. 668–669.

accurate, condensed, reliable standard books, and should make sure that you get them....The next rule I shall lay down is, master those books that you have. Read them thoroughly....A student will find that his mental constitution is more affected by one book thoroughly mastered than by twenty books which he merely skimmed....In reading, let your motto be, 'Much, but not many.'⁴¹⁹

The following works have been taken from the listings in the author's *The Minister's Library*. Several works in each category are listed to give the student a broader view of available works. Those works most advantageous to the beginning student are marked with an asterisk (*) and those which might be considered essential with a double asterisk (**).

Reference Works

Bible Handbooks

Alexander, David, *Eerdman's Handbook to the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973. 680 pp.

*Halley, Henry H., *Halley's Bible Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965. 860 pp.

Although an older work, Halley's is an excellent handbook, and older editions are to be preferred over the newer.

Unger, Merrill F., *Unger's Bible Handbook*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1966. 930 pp.

*Kitto, John, *Daily Bible Illustrations*. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1881. 8 Vols.

Bible Atlases

*Aharoni, Yohanan and Avi-Yonah, Michael, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Pfeiffer, Charles F., *Baker's Bible Atlas*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961. 333 pp.

May, Herbert G., *Oxford Bible Atlas*. London: Oxford University Press, 1974. 144 pp.

⁴¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, pp. 175–178.

Wright, George E., and Filson, Floyd V., *The Westminster Historical Atlas To The Bible*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974. 130 pp.

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias⁴²⁰

*Douglas, J. D., Org. Ed., *The New Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973. 1375 pp.

*McClintock, John and Strong, James, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981. 12 Vols.

Muller, Richard A., *Dictionary of Greek and Latin Theological Terms*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989. 340 pp.

*Orr, James, Gen. Ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1939. 5 Vols.

*Tenney, Merrill C., Gen. Ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*: Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966. 927 pp.

_____, Gen. Ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library. 5 Vols.

Bible Customs⁴²¹

*Bailey, Kenneth E., *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008. 443 pp.

*_____, *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011. 560 pp.

⁴²⁰ The *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* has served the best, although a somewhat older work. McClintock & Strong's *Cyclopedia* is massive, and has articles which no others possess. This is available on CD. *I.S.B.E.*, the older edition edited by James Orr, is excellent.

⁴²¹ The works of Edersheim, a converted Jew, are all of the highest order. Thompson's *Land and the Book* is the diary of a missionary to Palestine in the late 1800s, and is indispensable.

- *Edersheim, Alfred E., *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967. 342 pp.
- *_____, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969. 414 pp.
- Freeman, James M., *Manners And Customs of The Bible*. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1972. 515 pp.
- *Thomson, William M., *The Land And The Book*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966. 718 pp.
- *Wright, Fred H., *Manners And Customs Of Bible Lands*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1966. 336 pp.
- Basic Linguistic Works⁴²²
- *Strong, James A., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990. 1260 pp. with additional appendices and dictionaries.
- *Silva, Moisés, Ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2014. 5 Vols.
- Brown, Francis, Driver, S. R., and Briggs, C. A., *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford University Press, 1962, 1127 pp.
- Davidson, B., *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1966, 784 pp.
- *Harris, R. Laird, Ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. 2 Vols.
- Holladay, W. L., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988.

⁴²² The works by Brown, Driver, Briggs, Tregelles, Davidson, Holladay, Wigram and Thayer are for students with some working knowledge of the original languages. Those by Strong, Colin Brown, Harris and Vine are more suited to the English reader.

- *Smith, J. B., *Greek–English Concordance to the New Testament*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1965, 430 pp.
- Thayer, J. H., *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965, 726 pp.
- Tregelles, Samuel P., *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964. 919 pp.
- *VanGemeren, Willem A., Ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997. 5 Vols.
- *Vine, W. E., *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1962. 3 Vols–in–One.
- Wigram, J., *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, n.d., 444 pp.
- *Wallace, Daniel B., *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1996. 827 pp.
- *Wilson, William, *Old Testament Word Studies*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1978. 566 pp.
- Biblical Introductions and Surveys
- *Baxter, J. Sidlow, *Explore the Book*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965. 6 Vols.
- *Geisler, Norman L. and Nix, William E., *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1971, 480 pp.
- *Miller, H. S., *General Biblical Introduction*. Houghton, NY: Word–Bearer Press, 1960. 422 pp.
- *Phillips, John, *Exploring the Scriptures*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1967. 288 pp.
- *Scroggie, W. Graham, *Know Your Bible*. London: Pickering & Inglis, 1965. 2 Vols–in–one.

Old Testament Introduction

- *Crossley, Gareth, *The Old Testament Explained and Applied*.
Darlington, Eng: Evangelical Press, 2002. 866 pp.
- *Dumbrell, William J., *The Faith of Israel*. Grand Rapids:
Baker Book House, 1988. 286 pp.
- *Geisler, Norman L., *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*.
Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990. 299 pp.
- Harrison, R. K., *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand
Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971,
1325 pp.
- *Hill, Andrew E., and Walton, John H., *A Survey of the Old
Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House,
1991. 461 pp.
- Young, E. J., *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand
Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965,
431 pp.

New Testament Introduction

- Brown, Raymond E., *An Introduction to the New Testament*.
New York: Doubleday, 1997. 878 pp.
- *Carson, D. A., Moo, Douglas J. and Morris, Leon, *An
Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids:
Zondervan, 1992. 537 pp.
- *Gromacki, Robert G., *New Testament Survey*. Grand Rapids:
Baker Book House, 1974. 433 pp.
- **Guthrie, Donald, *New Testament Introduction*. Chicago:
InterVarsity Press, 1966. 3 Vols.
- Harrison, Everett F., *Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand
Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968.
480 pp.
- **Hiebert, D. Edmond, *An Introduction to the New Testament*.
Chicago: Moody Press, 1975. 3 Vols.
- *Kostenberger, Andreas J., Kellum, L. Scott and Quarles,
Charles L., *The Cradle, the Cross and the Crown: An*

Introduction to the New Testament. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2016. 1130 pp.

*Tenney, Merrill C., *New Testament Survey.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. 465 pp.

*Thiessen, H. C., *Introduction to the New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966. 347 pp.

Zahn, Theodor, *Introduction to the New Testament.* Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1977. 3 Vols.

Bible Commentaries⁴²³

Commentaries on individual books are necessary. Those listed here are fairly conservative, and are either on the whole Bible, or the Old or New Testaments. Some sets of critical commentaries [those which deal extensively with the original languages] are omitted because they are usually beyond the capabilities of the student and also because they often approach textual, historical and doctrinal issues from a more liberal point-of-reference.

Commentaries on the whole Bible

*Barnes, Albert, *Barnes' Notes on the Old and New Testaments.* Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2005 reprint. 14 Vols.

*Calvin, John, *Commentaries on the Holy Scripture.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948. 22 Vols.

⁴²³ Calvin's commentaries stand unique as a monument to his dictum of "clear brevity." They are basically as relevant today as when written centuries ago. B. H. Carroll's *Interpretation* is a unique work which surveys the English Bible. Very profitable. The most useful general biblical commentaries for the average reader and student would be those old works by Matthew Henry, John Gill and Albert Barnes. Among the newer works, we would highly recommend the conservative commentaries edited by Dockery [*The New American Commentary*] and Gaebelain [*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*].

- *Carroll, B. H., *Interpretation of the English Bible*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1943. 17 Vols. (reprinted in 6 large volumes).
- *Dockery, David S., Gen. Ed., *The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991. 38 + Vols.
- *Gaeblelein, Frank E., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1979. 12 Vols.
- *Gill, John, *Dr. Gill's Commentary on the Holy Scripture*. Atlanta: Turner Lassetter, n.d., (reprinted by the Baptist Standard-Bearer). 6 Vols.
- *Guthrie, Donald, Gen. Ed., *The New Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976. 1310 pp.
- *Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, n.d. 6 Vols.
- *Jamieson, Robert, Fausset, Arthur and Brown, David, *A Commentary: Critical, Experimental and Practical on the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967. 6 Vols.
- *Lange, John Peter, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960. 12 Vols.
- *Poole, Matthew, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*. London: The Banner of Truth, 1962. 3 Vols.
- *Spence, H. D. M., and Excell, Joseph E., Eds., *The Pulpit Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961. 24 Vols.

One of the standard works. Contains a verse-by-verse commentary in addition to general and more specific sermon outlines and illustrations. As with any composite work, it varies in orthodoxy and value with the given author.

*Trapp, John, *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*.
Eureka, CA: Tanski Publications, 1997. 5 Vols.⁴²⁴

Old Testament⁴²⁵

*Harrison, R. K., and Hubbard, Robert L., Gen. Eds., *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968—. 14 vols.

Keil, K. F., and Delitzsch, Franz, *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997. 10 Vols.

*Wiseman, D. J., Gen. Ed., *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1960's—. 27 Vols.

New Testament⁴²⁶

*Bruce, F. F., Gen. Ed., *The New International Commentary on the New Testament [NICNT]*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, v.d. 18 Vols.

Carson, D. A., Gen. Ed., *The Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Leicester, ENG: Apollos. 1992—. 16 Vols.

Chadwick, Henry, Ed., *Black's New Testament Commentaries*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, v.d. 17 Vols.

*Hendriksen, William, and Kistemaker, Simon, *New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, v.d. 13 Vols.

*Tasker, R. V. G., Gen. Ed., *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959. 20 Vols.

⁴²⁴ Trapp was one of Spurgeon's favorite commentators.

⁴²⁵ Keil & Delitzsch are the old standard, but uneven. The Tyndale commentaries on both OT and NT are profitable.

⁴²⁶ All the commentaries listed are very good, although some are incomplete. The NICNT series edited by F. F. Bruce are excellent. The series by Wilson are very brief, but pointed.

*Wilson, Geoffrey B., *New Testament Commentaries*.
Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, v.d. 10 Vols.

Hermeneutics

*Berkhof, Louis, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969. 169 pp.

*Downing, W. R., *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. Morgan Hill, CA: PIRS, 2001. 221 pp.

Fairbairn, Patrick, *Opening Scripture*. Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2004 (reprint of 1858 ed.). 480 pp.

*Farrar, F. W., *The History of Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961. 553 pp.⁴²⁷

Klein, William W., Blomberg, Craig L., and Hubbard, Robert L., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993. 518 pp.

Maier, Gerhard, *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994. 526 pp.

Masters, Peter, *Not Like Any Other Book: Interpreting the Bible*. London: The Wakeman Trust, 2004. 161 pp.

Mickelsen, A. Berkeley, *Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963. 425 pp.

*Ramm, Bernard, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969. 274 pp.

*Terry, Milton S., *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964. 782 pp.

Doctrinal and Theological Works

Dictionaries of Theology

Elwell, Walter, A., Ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990. 1204 pp.

⁴²⁷ Farrar is defective in his view of Scripture. His value lies in his historical research, which is always of the highest order.

Erickson, Millard J., *Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990. 187 pp.

*Ferguson, Sinclair B., Wright, David F. and Packer, J. I., *New Dictionary of Theology*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988. 738 pp.

*Harrison, Everett F., *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966. 566 pp.

Biblical Theology

Guthrie, Donald, *New Testament Theology*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973. 1064 pp.

House, Paul R., *Old Testament Theology*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. 655 pp.

*Ladd, George Eldon, *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974. 661 pp.

*Vos, Geerhardus, *Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948, 453 pp.⁴²⁸

Historical Theology

*Berkhof, Louis, *The History of Christian Doctrines*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949, 293 pp.⁴²⁹

*Cunningham, William, *Historical Theology*. London: Banner of Truth, 1960, 2 Vols.

Fisher, George P., *History of Christian Doctrine*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1949, 576 pp.

Gonzales, Justo L., *A History of Christian Thought*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1987. 3 Vols.

⁴²⁸ Vos is the standard, introductory work. G. E. Ladd is more than adequate for the NT.

⁴²⁹ Berkhof is the best introductory work. All of the others listed can be perused with great profit.

**Schaff, Philip, *The Creeds of Christendom*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1877. 3 Vols.

Seeberg, Reinhold, *The History of Doctrines*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. 1977. 2 Vols.

Theological Encyclopedia

*Downing, W. R., *Theological Propaedeutic*. Morgan Hill, CA: P. I. R. S. Publications, 2010. 461 pp.

*Schaff, Phillip, *Theological Propaedeutic*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904. 536 pp.

Systematic Theology

Systematic Theologies are numerous. The following are simply examples of standard works. A one-volume work is adequate for most elementary studies. Remember that no one man has all the truth; and there may be both profundity and error in every theological writer. §= Dispensational.

*à Brakel, Wilhelmus, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*. Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1992. 4 Vols.

§Bancroft, Emery H., *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961. 372 pp.

§_____, *Elemental Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970. 326 pp.

*Bavinck, Herman, [John Bolt, Ed., John Vriend, Transl.], *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2003. 4 Vols.

*Berkhof, Louis, *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963. 784 pp.

Berkouwer, G. C., *Studies in Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979. 10 Vols.

*Boyce, J. P., *Abstract of Systematic Theology*. Hayward, CA: Baptist Republication Society, Reprint of 1887 ed. 496 pp.

*Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. London: James Clarke & Co., 1962. 2 Vols.

- §Chafer, Lewis Sperry, *Systematic Theology*. Dallas, TX: The Dallas Seminary Press, 1964. 7 Vols.
- *Dabney, Robert L., *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972. 903 pp.
- Dagg, John L., *Manual of Theology and Church Order*. Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1982. 2 Vols.
- *Fitzwater, P. B., *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958. 567 pp.
- Garrett, James Leo., *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990. 2 Vols.
- *Gill, John, *A Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*. Atlanta, GA: Turner Lassetter, 1965. 1023 pp.⁴³⁰
- Henry, Carl F. H., *God, Revelation and Authority*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1983. 6 Vols.
- *Hodge, A. A., *Outlines of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972. 678 pp.
- Hodge, Charles, *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d. 3 Vols.
- Hoeksema, Herman, *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1973. 917 pp.
- *Muller, Richard A., *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2003. 4 Vols.
- *Owen, John, *The Works of John Owen*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976. 17 Vols.
- *Reymond, Robert L., *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998. 1210 pp.
- *Shedd, W. G. T., *Dogmatic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969. 3 Vols.
- §Simmons, T. P., *A Systematic Study of Bible Doctrine*. Daytona Beach, FL: Associated Publishers, 1969. 503 pp.

⁴³⁰ The first true Baptist Systematic Theology.

*Strong, Augustus H., *Systematic Theology*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1967. 3 Vols—in-1.

Apologetics

*Bahnsen, Greg L., [Robert R. Booth, Ed.], *Always Ready*. Texarkana: Covenant Media Foundation. 1996. 289 pp.

_____, [Joel McDurmon, Ed.], *Presuppositional Apologetics*. Powder Springs, GA: American Vision Press & Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2008. 296 pp.

*_____, *Van Til's Apologetic*. Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1998. 764 pp.

Clark, Gordon H., *God's Hammer: The Bible and its Critics*. Jefferson, Maryland: The Trinity Foundation, 1992. 190 pp.

_____, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*. Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1987. 140 pp.

_____, *Religion, Reason and Revelation*. Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1986. 264 pp.

*Downing, W. R., *The Bible and the Problem of Knowledge*. Morgan Hill, CA: P.I.R.S. Publications, 2006. 148 pp.

*Frame, John M., *Apologetics to the Glory of God*. Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1994. 265 pp.

*Oliphant, K. Scott, *The Battle Belongs to the Lord*. Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003. 206 pp.

*_____, *Reasons for Faith*. Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2006. 363 pp.

*_____, *Revelation and Reason*. Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2007. 336 pp.

*Nelson, Paul S., *Presuppositionalism: A Biblical Approach to Apologetics*. P.I.R.S. Publications, 2014. 254 pp.

Reymond, Robert L., *Contending for the Faith*. Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-Shire, GB: Mentor, Christian Focus Publications, 2005. 442 pp.

* _____, *The Justification of Knowledge*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1976. 168 pp.

Rushdoony, Rousas J., *The Mythology of Science*. Nutley, NJ: The Craig Press, 1967. 134 pp.

Van Til, Cornelius, *Apologetics*. Syllabus, Westminster Theological Seminary. 99 pp.

_____, *The Defense of the Faith*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1967. 299 pp.

Historical works

Biblical History

*Edersheim, Alfred E., *Bible History: Old Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995. 1006 pp.

Life of Christ

*Edersheim, Alfred, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967. 2 Vols.

Apostolic Church History

*Coneybeare, W. J. and Howsan, J. S., *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964. 850 pp.

*Farrar, F. W., *The Early Days of Christianity*. London: Cassell and Company, 1909. 664 pp.

* _____, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*. London: Cassell and Company, 1908. 781 pp.

Ramsay, William M., *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1893. 494 pp.

_____, *The Cities of St. Paul*. Minneapolis: James Family Publishers, reprint of 1908 ed. 452 pp.

_____, *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962. 402 pp.

General Church History

*Baker, Robert A., *A Summary of Christian History*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959. 391 pp.

Gonzales, Justo L., *The Story of Christianity*. San Francisco: Harper, 1984. 3 Vols.

*Houghton, S. M., *Sketches from Church History*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1991. 256 pp.

Latourette, Kenneth Scott, *A History of Christianity*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953. 1516 pp.

*Schaff, Philip, *History of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962. 8 Vols.⁴³¹

Sheldon, Henry C., *History of the Christian Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988. 5 Vols.

Walker, Williston W., *A History of the Christian Church*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925. 624 pp.

*Walton, Robert C., *Chronological Background Charts of Church History*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. 94 pp.

Dictionaries of Church History

Cross, F. L., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957.

*Douglas, J. D., Gen. Ed., *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974. 1074 pp.

A Concluding, Personal Comment

As a young preacher, I knew my liabilities with a very meager education. In the first years of my pastoral ministry, I taught myself both Greek and Hebrew sufficient to read the text and use the basic tools. I “burned the midnight oil”⁴³² to open the Scriptures—while cutting and splitting firewood for a living during the day.

⁴³¹ Schaff has been the standard work for years, but goes only through the Sixteenth Century Reformation. Baker's work is an excellent one-volume summary.

⁴³² John Calvin's cousin, Pierre Olivetan, who was also a great Reformer, gained the name “Olivetian” for burying the midnight [olive] oil lamp in his studies.

I also knew the value of a good, working library. A few well-chosen books, diligently used, can help outfit the minister. The Bible, a Greek interlinear, *Strong's Concordance*, W. E. Vine's *Dictionary of New Testament Words*, *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Scroggie's *Know Your Bible*, James Orr's the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Matthew Henry's *Commentary*, a basic Systematic Theology, a good Church History and a complete English Dictionary might form the foundation. Other volumes could be added: expository and critical commentaries on various books of the Bible and biographies and devotional books to balance the mind and heart. A modern computer Bible program which works in the original languages, such as *BibleWorks*, is a tremendous help.

When the opportunity arose, I returned to Bible College and continued my studies, achieving graduate degrees in Theology and Education—and finally a Ph.D., teaching in several theological institutions, as well as pastoring several churches in over fifty-three years in the work of God.

The foundation was laid in those formative, trying years of constant, late night studies and hard, physical labor. Who, except Almighty God, knows what your life might be if you prepare your heart and mind, give yourself to prayer and apply yourself to a diligent study of the Scriptures?

A Glossary of Biblical Figures of Speech

A figure of speech occurs when a word is used in a way and context other than it is ordinarily used. This is also known as the tropical sense.

There are several categories of figures of speech: (1) short figures, such as similes and metaphors; (2) opaque [difficult to understand] figures, such as riddles, fables and enigmatic sayings; (3) extended figures, such as similitudes, parables and allegories; and (4) those figures that are derived from grammatical or rhetorical styles and progress from the very simple to the more complex.

Figures of speech are often extended devices for intensity or emphasis. The following are common and simply suggestive⁴³³:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Acrostic | Gk: from ἄκρον, “extremity, end,” and στίχος, “verse.” A literary device in which each line, statement or section begins with a given letter of the alphabet. See Psa. 119. |
| Allegory | Gk: ἀλληγορία, from ἄλλος “another,” and ἀγορεύειν, “to make a speech in the agora.” An extended metaphor, or a comparison based on representation. Although the Scriptures make use of allegories as a natural and normal part of thought and expression, it is an altogether different matter to allegorize the Scripture to find some hidden meaning beneath the literal meaning or <i>usus loquendi</i> . E.g., Gal. 4:24. |
| Alliteration | Gk: ὁμοιοπρόφρον, from ὅμοιος, “similar,” + προφέρω, “to carry or place before;” Lat: <i>allittera</i> , “additional words.” A figure of speech in which |

⁴³³ For an exhaustive study, refer to E. W. Bullinger’s massive work, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968. 1104 pp.

- the same letter or syllable is repeated in successive words. See Gk. text of Rom. 11:33; Heb. 1:1.
- Anabasis** Gk: ἀναβάσις, “a stepping, ascent.” Lat: *incrementum*. A figure of speech in which there is an increase of intensity with each ascending step. E.g., Psa. 1:1.
- Anacoluthon** Gk: ἀνακόλουθον, from ἀν, “not” + ἀκολουθός “following.” A change from one grammatical construction to another within the same sentence, an absence of sequence or connection in a sentence or paragraph. There is a change of subject due to argumentation or deep emotion, emphasis or elegance. The failure to complete a sentence as intended. An introverted rhetorical style. E.g., Gen. 3:22.
- Analogy** Gk: ἀναλογία, “proportion.” (1) A partial similarity between two entities otherwise unlike. (2) An explanation by comparison. E.g., Matt. 17:20.
- Anaphora.** Gk: ἀναφορά from ἀνά, “again,” and φέρω, “carry, bear.” and so “to carry again or to repeat.” The repetition of the same word at the beginning of a series of phrases, clauses or sentences. See the repetition of Πίστει [“By faith”] in Heb. 11.
- Annominatio** Gk: παρανομασία; “to place beside;” Lat: *annominatio*, “to a name.” A figure of speech in which the sense and sound are similar. See “Paronomasia.” See Heb. text of Gen. 1:2.
- Anthropo-morphism** Gk: ἀνθρωπομορφη, from ἄνθρωπος, “man,” + μόρφη, “form,” also συνκαταβάσις, “to go down together with.” Lat: *Condensio*, “condescension.” A figure of speech ascribing human actions or attributes to God. E.g., Ex. 13:14.
- Anthropo-patheia** Gk: ἀνθρωποπάθεια, from ἄνθρωπος, “man, and πάθος, “affections or feelings.” Lat: *Condensio*, or condescension. The technical term for an

- anthropomorphism ascribing human emotions or passions to God. E.g., Ex. 32:11.
- Aposiopesis Gk: ἀποσιώπησις, a becoming silent; Lat: *reticentia*. A figure in which a statement is suddenly broken off and left incomplete. E.g., Ex. 32:31–32.
- Apostrophe Gk: ἀποστροφή, from, ἀπο, “away, from,” and στρέφω, “turn,” and so “a turning away from.” Another Gk. term: προσφονεσις, “to speak toward.” The Latin is *Aversio*, or “aversion, a turning from.” This is a turning away from the direct to address the indirect, or diverting the speech to someone or something else. E.g., Neh. 6:9.
- Apposition Lat: *appositionem*, “the act of opposing.” The placing of a word beside or parallel to another as a complement. The apposition “renames the subject.” See “Epexegetical.”
- Ascensive Lat: *ascendere*, “upwards, rising, progressive, ascending.” The intensive use of a conjunction in a given context.
- Asyndeton Gk: ἀσύνδετον, from ἀ privative, or “no,” and σύνδετον, “bound together.” Also called *Asyntheton*, or “no placings.” A series of clauses, phrases or statements without conjunctions. This construction may be used for emphasis, poetical style or dramatic effect. E.g., Ex. 15:9–10, where the coordinate conjunction “and” is left out some seven times. Cf. also Judg. 5:27, which describes the killing of Sisera by Jael. Cf. also Isa. 33:7–11.
- Assonance Lat: *assonans*, from *assonare*. “to sound to.” Likeness of sounds, rhyme. English poetry is usually based on assonance; Hebrew poetry on parallelism of thought. This also occurs in the prose of the Gk. NT. See Gk. text of Heb. 1:1.
- Brachology Gk: βραχυλογία, from βραχύς “short” + λόγος “discourse.” A figure of speech in which words are omitted for the sake of brevity, an ellipsis. See

- “Ellipsis.” E.g., Rom. 8:31; Phil. 1:21.
- Chiasmus,
Chiastic Gk: χιάσμος from χιάζειν, “to mark with the letter “X,” or a cross. A figure in which two or more items of thought are repeated in an introverted or reverse order, i.e., a reverse parallelism. Commonly, when the first and fourth, second and third items correspond—the rhetorical introversion of the second of two parallel clauses. See 1 Pet. 3:7
- Ellipsis Gk. ἔλλειψις, “a leaving in,” from λείπειν, “to leave.” A gap or space left in a statement, and thus a word or words are omitted. An ellipsis may be used for emph., as when the equitive vb. is omitted. E.g., Phil. 1:21; Rom. 8:31.
- Enigma Gk: αἴνιγμα, from αἰνίσσασθαι, “to tell a strange tale, to speak darkly or in a riddle.” A dark, mysterious, or mystic saying. See Numb. 12:8.
- Epexegetis,
Epexeget-
ical Gk: from ἐπι, “upon,” ἐξ, “out,” and ἡγεῖσθαι, a leading or bringing. Lit: a returning to explain: ἐπεξηγεῖσθαι, “to bring out in addition to.” A word or words that explain or elucidate a preceding term. Also called *Epichrema*, a furnishing what is needful. A repetition for the purpose of explaining something more fully, an apposition. This is used in poetic expressions to more fully explain or emphasize. E.g., Psa. 17:1.
- Euphemism Gk: εὐφημισμός, from εὖ, “well,” and φημί “to speak,” hence to speak well of. Eng: “euphemism,” or to substitute a more agreeable term for one which is disagreeable. See Rom. 9:10 and the addition of “even” and the omission of κοίτην.
- Fable Lat: *fabula*, a discourse. Gk: ἀπόλογος, a story or tale. A story or narrative not based on fact. E.g., Judg. 9:7ff.
- Hendiadys Gk: from ἓν, “one,” διὰ, “by,” and δύο, “two.” The use of two words for one for emphasis or as an idiomatic expression. Some are lost in translation.

	E.g., Prov. 3:25
Hyperbaton	Gk: ὑπέρβατον, “a stepping over, transposition.” A figure of speech in which a word or words are put out of their natural and grammatical order. E.g., Heb. 12:2.
Hyperbole	Gk: ὑπερβολή, from ὑπέρ, “over, beyond,” and βάλλειν, “to throw, cast, hence, an exaggeration. An exaggeration for the sake of emphasis. E.g., Jn. 21:25.
Idiom	Gk. ἴδιος “peculiarity,” ἰδιωματικός, “peculiar characteristic.” (1) The language or dialect of a people or region. (2) The peculiar way in which the words of a particular language are joined together to express thought. Every language has its “idioms.” E.g., Gal. 5:4.
Irony	Gk: εἴρων, a dissembler in speech. A statement made in humor, sarcasm or emotion that is contrary to fact. E.g., Mk. 14:42.
Litotes	Gk: λιτότης, simplicity. Also known as <i>meiosis</i> (from μειώω, to make smaller), a lessening. The Latin is <i>Diminutio</i> or <i>Extenuatio</i> . Used to diminish one thing in order to increase another. An understatement. E.g., Gen. 18:27.
Metaphor	Gk: μεταφορά, from μετά “over, beyond, across,” and φέρειν, “to carry,” hence a transference or resemblance. A comparison by representation and so without the introductory “as” or “like.” E.g., Psa. 23:1.
Metonymy	Gk: μετωνυμία, from μετά “change,” and ὄνομα, “a name.” A change of noun in which one name is used for another. E.g., Jn. 12:19.
Oxymoron	Gk: ὀξύμωρον, from ὀξύς, “sharp, pointed,” and μωρός, “dull, foolish.” Lat: <i>Acutifatum</i> . A smart or wise saying that is contradictory for emphasis. E.g., 1 Cor. 1:27–29.
Parable	Gk: παραβολή, “a placing beside.” An extended simile, or a story based on resemblance. The parable uses the past tense and a specific instance

- to illustrate a truth. Matt. 13:1ff.
- Paradiastole Gk: παραδιαστολή from παρά “along, beside,” διὰ “by,” and σόλη, “sending.” Lat: *Disjunctio*. A type of anaphora in which the terms “neither...nor” or “either...or” are repeated. E.g., Ex. 34:4.
- Parenesis, paraenetic Gk: Παραίνεσις, LLat: *paraenesis*. Exhortation, advice, hortatory.
- Periphrasis Gk: περίφρασις, from περί “around, about,” and φράζειν, “to speak.” Lat: *Circumlocutio*. Using more words than necessary, or an around about way of stating something to emphasize a given character, quality or type of action. In Gk. NT, using a form of εἰμί + a pres., aor. or perf. ptc. to emph. a given action.
- Pleonasmos Gk: πλεονασμός, more than enough, a redundancy. A pleonasm is a redundancy, or using more words than necessary for style or emphasis. E.g., Gen. 11:8.
- Polysyn- Gk: πολυσύνδετον, “many bound together.” A deton form of Anaphora in which a series occurs connected by the conjunction “and.” E.g., Gen. 8:22.
- Prosapadosis Gk: προσαποδόσις, “a return or giving back.” The other term in Gk. was *Diezeugmenon*. Lat. had both *Redditio* and *Sejugatio*. This is a return for the sake of repetition and explanation. E.g., Jn. 16:8–11.
- Proverb Gk: παροιμία, from παρά beside, and οἶμος, way or path, and so a wayside, or common saying. Lat: *proverbium*, from *pro* and *verbum*, word. A short, pithy saying in common use which illustrates a rule or principle of life. See Proverbs.
- Riddle OE. *raedels*, “counsel, opinion, conjecture.” The Heb. קִנְיָה denotes something tied in a knot, a saying which must be unraveled through insight and skill. A statement intentionally worded in a dark or puzzling manner. E.g., Judg. 14:18.

- Simile Lat: *similis*, “like, resembling, similar.” A stated resemblance of two things introduced with “as” or “like.” The simile is based on resemblance; the metaphor on representation. E.g., Lk. 13:18ff.
- Similitude Lat: *similis*, “like, resembling, similar.” An extended simile. The similitude differs from a parable in that it uses the present tense rather than the past tense, and speaks about a customary or timeless truth whereas the parable focuses on a particular instance. E.g., Lk. 13:18ff.
- Solecism Gk: σολοικισμός, speaking incorrectly; Lat: *solacismus*. An irregularity in speech or diction, a violation of the rules of grammar or syntax. See Gk. text of Jn. 16:33.
- Synecdoche Gk: συνεκδοχή, from σύ, “together with,” and ἔδοχή “a receiving from.” An exchange between two associated ideas, differing from a metonymy, which is an exchange between two names or nouns. One of the most common synecdoches puts a part for the whole or the whole for a part. E.g., Matt. 3:5.
- Trope,
Tropical Gk. τρόπος, “to turn or change.” When a word is employed in another other than its primary meaning, or applied to some object different from that to which it is appropriated in common usage, it is called a trope or figure of speech. E.g., 1 Pet. 2:2.
- Zeugma Gk: ζεύγμα, a yoke. Hence, to yoke together. A figure in which one verb is yoked to two subjects while it strictly belongs only to one of them. E.g., 1 Tim. 4:3.

