

How to Understand the Bible

**A Five Minute Bible Study
Student Workbook**

Aaron Battey

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content of this book without even knowing. Their influence on me, book recommendations over the years, and steady advice molded the understanding of scripture I share in this book. May God bless you all.

Introduction

In June of 2017 I started a personal website and decided on the name Five Minute Bible Study. At that time I was receiving questions on a regular basis; Christians were asking me where to start studying the Bible. Some of these people had been members of the church their whole life; others were very new in the faith. I did not have a recommended A-B-C method to Bible study that I could offer at the time. The best I could do was refer them to a trusted book. Unfortunately, most people do not spend much time reading, and so this answer seemed ineffective. Five Minute Bible Study was thus created as an effort to give beginning Bible students the foundations of Bible study in bite size portions. Even if you do not like reading, surely you can bear five minutes at a time.

This series, *How to Understand the Bible*, was completed as an online study in December 2017. Since then, other series have been published online: *What You Need to Know About the Old Testament*, *How to Identify the Church*, *Reading the Bible With Purpose*, and *The Bible Themes Series*. This is the first effort to make these series available in print and as a workbook. Each lesson in this series will take the average reader no more than five to seven minutes to read without pausing. Take a few extra minutes to pause and digest. Then answer the homework questions at the end of each lesson. There will be four to five homework questions for each lesson on average. Some questions will have answers found directly from the text; other

questions will require independent, critical thinking. All scripture quotations and answers are taken from the *NKJV*.

This series is written for a mixed audience. Lessons 1-7 are introductory and written for people who have very little knowledge of the Bible. Lessons 8-15 are still introductory level, but these lessons may prove more difficult for someone who has read very little of the Bible or has done very little in the way of purposeful Bible study. These latter lessons will hopefully be of benefit to all audiences, but they will especially be helpful for the average congregational teacher.

Reading this workbook and answering the questions will not make you a better Bible student in and of itself. No workbook has this power. You will have to take the information from this book and apply it to personal reading and study of the scripture. This means you will have to learn to set aside time on a regular basis to understand the Bible slowly. God's word is a steak, not an ice cream sandwich. I hope you enjoy this workbook and it meets your expectations. Now get to studying!

Lesson 1 - Attitudes in Bible Study

The very first thing you need to know about studying your Bible is this: there are no cheat codes. In other words, there is no substitute for diligent time spent in study and reading of God's word. Buy, "*The Bible for Dummies*," and you will still have to read, read, read, if you really want to know your Bible.

Second, you need to know exactly what Paul instructed a young preacher, "Remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine (teaching)... Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith..." (1 Timothy 1:3,5). In instructing Timothy to stop false teaching in this congregation, Paul stressed Bible reading (1 Timothy 4:13) conjoined with an honest and sincere heart, among other things. What does this have to do with understanding your Bible? A pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith have every effect on how you will interpret the Bible. Consider why people believe what they believe, and this might make more sense.

Six Common Reasons for Personal Faith

1. Repetition. If you are told something is true 1,000 times, you will start to believe it regardless if it is actually true.
2. "The preacher said so." People in authoritarian positions carry influence simply because of their position or title.
3. "No one believes that!" Broad brush statements, assuming the

overwhelming denial or acceptance of fact or error tend to influence people's belief, whether true or not. This is evidenced by the false claim that there are no scientists who believe in God, when in fact there are hundreds. 4. Inherited religion. Much like hand-me-down clothes are passed from the parent or relative to a young child, so is religious belief often passed down. The child grows up, never questioning why they believe what they believe. 5. Feelings. Feelings are more sure and steady for some people than the uncontested fact that peanut butter goes with jelly. 6. Defiance. Some are bold enough to admit: "I guess I just don't want to believe ***insert belief***." I have actually been told this on more than one occasion.

Perhaps the most unpopular reason for the justification of one's faith is a pure and honest heart, a heart that believes truth for the sake that it is truth. John 6 reveals this was unpopular even in the days of Jesus. There, Jesus makes several statements about His words carrying eternal life. The sermon culminates at v. 63, "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe." The audience did not believe, because they were more interested in physical food than spiritual food (v. 26).

You must ask yourself the uncomfortable question, "Why do I believe what I believe?" Mark Twain famously summarized this debacle, "It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand." If we would be honest with ourselves, we would stop holding

erroneous beliefs based on any of the six justifying principles above. Secondly, we would read God's word for what it is: God's self-revelation to man.

The Bible is not a Zig Ziglar book of motivation. It is not a "How to Get Rich Quick" scheme book. The Bible is life. If we read the Bible with honesty, then and only then can we utilize it to full capacity.

Homework Questions

1. What are two essentials for effective Bible study?
2. Explain in your own words why Bible reading is important and necessary?
3. What are three common reasons people believe what they believe?
4. What or who is the biggest influence in your core beliefs about God?

5. Name some activity that offended your conscience at one time but no longer does. Can you identify what influenced the change in your conscience to occur?

Lesson 2 - What is Truth?

The previous lesson focused on embracing a proper attitude before opening the Bible. The conclusion was that proper Bible understanding requires a good conscience, a pure heart, and sincere faith. Having a pure heart presumes that the heart is also honest, and an honest heart will accept the truth without wavering. Nonetheless, in a world where mullets and speedos are allowed to parade the sidewalk unrestrained, there is certain to be confusion. Such is the case as we approach the question, “What is truth? Why do we even have to ask this question? The answer is simple: dishonest hearts. An honest heart can look at a person that is 5’ 5” and certainly know the person is not 6’5”. This is an exercise in identifying truth. Truth is nothing more than what accords with fact or objective reality (*Merriam-Webster*). However, when objective reality is obscured with a dishonest heart, a heart that says truth is whatever feels right to the individual, then thousands of babies die, men look in a mirror and call themselves women, Hitler is justified for killing millions of Jews, and otherwise intelligent people cannot discern 5’ 5” anymore. Rather, they can simply choose otherwise.

Truth is objective. Truth is absolute. If truth were subjective and each person’s opinion was just as true as the next, then it would actually be right and justifiable to say, “Black lives don’t matter.” Of course, something deep inside the human intuition and being says this cannot be true.

The reason most people believe that truth is relative, or varies from person to person, is because such a philosophy fits their preferred lifestyle. That way, two passionate souls can have sex before marriage and everything is all good, because it feels right. This is not what the Bible teaches about truth.

If you want to understand the Bible, you have to grasp this core concept: the Bible teaches there is an absolute standard of right and wrong. In John 7, Jesus makes two statements which prove this fact. In v. 19 Jesus says, “None of you keeps the law.” Why would Jesus make such a bold and exclusive statement if truth were relative? In v. 24 Jesus goes on, “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.” Why would Jesus tell His audience to judge, for one, and why would He imply there is such a thing as a standard judgment that is “right,” if truth were relative? A more indelible example is found in Acts 9: Saul (later named Paul) is blinded by the Lord and told to stop persecuting Christians. In recounting this event later on in life, Paul would tell Timothy that he was persecuting Christians “ignorantly in unbelief,” (1 Timothy 1:14). So basically, when Saul was executing innocent Christians, it felt right. Wait... it *felt* right. The moral of the story is this: truth is not relative, and God requires all men to live according to His moral and revealed standard of right and wrong set forth in scripture. Read the Bible with this truth impressed on your mind or be very confused very frequently.

So far you have learned a lot *en route* to understanding your Bible! Step 1: Approach the Bible

with an honest heart. Step 2: Realize that the Bible teaches truth to be absolute and objective. Step 3: Understand the Bible claims to be the very breath of God contained in ink (Lesson 3).

Homework Questions

1. An honest heart will accept the truth _____
_____.
2. Truth is:
 - A. Objective
 - B. Subjective
 - C. A & B
3. The Bible teaches there is an _____
standard of right and wrong.
4. Why do you think most people reject God, the Bible, and His standard of truth?

Helpful Resources

I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist by Norman Geisler & Frank Turek

Love Your God With All Your Mind by J. P. Moreland.

Lesson 3 - Is the Bible really the Word of God in ink?

Criticism of the Bible's trustworthiness is perhaps at a peaking point in history. The late 1900s provided a battleground for new attacks on the Bible's integrity, but the flaunt of relativism (discussed in Lesson 2) in the 21st century has taken these attacks a step further. So, we must ask the question, "Can the Bible be trusted as being the very words of God?" Many children have asked this question with the response given them, "Just have faith." Such a response is sure to remove the last step in a stairway to confusion and doubt. Instead, let us give an able defense for the reason of the hope that lies within our hearts (1 Peter 3:15).

I propose to you: the Bible is the very out-breathed word of God. By "the Bible," I do not mean to include the apocryphal (pseudonymous) books included in the Catholic Bible at the Council of Hippo in 393 A.D. Neither do I have in mind the Eastern Orthodox Bible which includes more Old Testament apocryphal books, written under pseudonyms during the 400 years between the Old and New Testaments. I refer to the 39 books of the Old Testament Hebrew Bible and the 27 books of the New Testament Christian Bible.

This is such a lengthy topic of discussion, that a Five Minute Bible Study can hardly serve it justice, but here we go. The discussion includes: 1. Does the Bible

claim to be the word of God? 2. Is the Bible we have today the same as the Bible of the 1st and 2nd century? 3. Did man decide which books should be in the Bible? These and many other questions are worthy of response. For the sake of space and time, a basic answer will be given to each of these questions, with a list of resources at the end of this post for your further research.

1. Does the Bible claim to be the word of God?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 answers in the affirmative. The King James Version (*KJV*) translates vs. 16, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God...” while the Amplified and New International Versions say, “All scripture is God-breathed...” The latter renders the idea better into English. Literally, Paul is saying that God exhaled His words into the mind of the Bible writers. This is what Peter had in mind when he said, “For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit,” (2 Peter 1:21).

“Scripture has a double authorship,”

says J. I. Packer (Comfort 31). By this he means, the Bible was penned by men, but the guiding influence was the Holy Spirit. This is manifest in the Bible’s own words, as the phrase “Thus says the Lord” is used some 359 times in scripture (Comfort 32).

2. Is the English Bible we have today the same as the Bible of the 1st and 2nd century?

The raw answer is no. This is inevitably the case when one language is translated into another language, as is the case with the Bible which was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The question then becomes, can the Bible be trusted? The answer is yes. The principles of inerrancy and infallibility need clarified in answering this question. Inerrancy means that something is perfect and without error. Infallibility means that something may have error but is still trustworthy. The original biblical manuscripts (hand written copies) were inerrant, while subsequent translations or copies are simply infallible. You may notice the secondary meaning for a word given in the center column reference of your Bible. This may imply that early manuscripts disagree on a word's meaning, or the word has more than one possible meaning. This is an example where your modern English Bible may not be inerrant, but based on the truckloads of early, well preserved Bible manuscripts and other external proofs, we can be sure it is trustworthy.

This question about preservation of scripture entails more discussion on biblical manuscripts and the translation process. Suffice it to say, the Bible has hundreds more manuscripts, as well as, hundreds of earlier manuscripts than any other writing before or after it. There are just under 15,000 discovered and preserved New Testament manuscripts as of recent count (Geisler and Turek 225). For more information

and studies on the transmission and preservation of scripture, see the Five Minute Bible Study video series—*The Creation & Evolution of the Old Testament*.

3) Did man decide which books should be in the Bible?

The simple answer is no. 2 Peter 3:15-16 acknowledges Paul's epistles in the plural form, and also references them alongside, "the rest of the Scriptures." Clearly there was already a practice of collecting the inspired writings in the first century while the Bible was still being written. Many naive souls will say the Bible canon (collection of books of the Bible) was collected and declared for the first time at the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.). That is blatantly false. The Council of Nicea was a Catholic council convened to affirm the deity of Christ. But neither is it true that this first took place at the Council of Hippo (393 A.D.), the Catholic council where church bishops put their authoritative stamp on which books should be included in the canon. Tertullian (2nd century Christian writer) was the first person recorded to call the collection of apostolic writings the "New Testament" in 190 A.D. (Comfort 66). Milton Fisher writes about the Catholic church's declaration of the New Testament canon in the 4th century. He states,

"A need for officially defining the canon was not pressing until then (300s A.D.),"

(Ibid. 67). Paul warned the Christians at Thessalonica not to believe coming imposters who would write epistles in the names of the apostles, trying to deceive (2 Thess. 2:1-2). By the time of the Council of Hippo in 393 A.D., such imposters were at large, influencing the Catholic bishops to make an official statement about which books were authoritative and which were not. All of this to make the point: no pope, man named Tertullian, or church council decided which books should be included in the Bible. The inspired collection of Bible books was recognized prior to any uninspired man putting his stamp on the cover. My standing up in an audience of people and authoritatively declaring that the jar in my right hand is peanut butter does not make the item peanut butter. Peanut butter is what it is without my help. The same is true of the collective books of the Bible.

Hopefully you benefited from this study! This post only touched the skeleton of what is an enormous beast: the inspiration of the Bible. In our next study we will find out the answer to the question: how much of the Bible is authoritative now? For helpful resources on the topic today, check out the list on the next page or go listen to the audio sermon on fiveminutebiblestudy.com entitled— *Can You Trust the Breath of God?*

Homework Questions

1. How many books are in the Old Testament? How many books are in the New Testament?
OT = _____
NT = _____
2. What scripture teaches very clearly that the Bible is the word of God?
3. Define Infallibility—
4. Define Inerrancy—
5. What fact from this lesson is most convincing to you in building trust in the Bible?

Helpful Resources

The Origins of the Bible by Philip Comfort

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist by Norman Geisler & Frank Turek

apologeticspress.org

crossexamined.org

Lesson 4 - How Much Bible is Authoritative?

The last lesson answered the question, “Is the Bible really the word of God in ink?” The answer was, “Yes.” That was simple enough, but now consider the consequences of this answer. Does that mean that every single chapter, paragraph, sentence, down to the individual words are God breathed? Answering this question correctly is absolutely foundational to how you will interpret the Bible.

In 2014, the *Pew Research Center* polled 391 Oklahoman adults about their view of the Holy Bible. 48% of adults said they read the Bible at least once a week (*Ibid.*). 36% of adults believed the Bible was the word of God and should be taken literally (*Ibid.*). 29% of those polled believed the Bible was the word of God but should not be taken literally (*Ibid.*). While this polling was not exhaustive, the results provide context for the question asked in this study.

While 65% of adults believed the Bible to be the word of God, far fewer knew how to interpret the Bible (Ibid.).

I believe every word of the Holy Bible was breathed out by God and is authoritative today, as far as it is properly translated. This answer is based on 2 Timothy 3:16-17, and is the measuring rod for today’s study.

Most people have little reservation agreeing with my confession about the Bible; that is, until they come across a Bible verse that violates their preferred lifestyle or worship style. For example, difficult passages such as Matthew 5:38-48, 1 Cor. 5:9-13, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Cor. 11:2-16, 1 Cor. 14:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:8-15, etc. change people's view of scripture very quickly. Suddenly, people make claims that not all the Bible is inspired. Some people are very bold, act as their own god, and hand pick which verses are invalid or culturally irrelevant. Others throw out any teaching by Paul altogether. Still others downplay any words besides those of Jesus. There are drastic consequences to such manipulation. Because of the heavy interdependency of the Bible writers, to throw out part of the Bible as uninspired is to throw out all the Bible. Either the whole Bible is inspired and authoritative, or none of it is.

Consider what the Bible teaches about the chain of authority. In 1 Cor. 11:3, Paul lays out this chain, and states that the head (authority) of Christ is God the Father. Jesus says as much in John 12:49. Secondarily, Christ claimed to have more authority than the Holy Spirit when He told His 12 disciples that the Holy Spirit would eventually come and lead them into all truth (John 16:13-14). In John 20:21-23, Jesus then breathed the Holy Spirit into His disciples prior to proclaiming to them the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. That breathing the Holy Spirit into them equated to giving them inspiration, so it would seem from John 20:23. In the Great Commission of Matthew 28, Jesus

clearly gave all authority to His disciples. This number would shortly thereafter include Paul the apostle, added to the twelve other apostles according to Luke in Acts 9:26-30. Paul would then go on to teach that he had no less authority than any of the other apostles (2 Cor. 11:5). According to this series of Bible verses, there is strong corroboration between Matthew, John, Luke, and Paul, testifying to the fact that Jesus gave authority/inspiration to all the apostles including Paul.

What about those who were not apostles? Luke was not an apostle. However, Paul cites Luke's gospel as authoritative in 1 Timothy 5:18. Milton Fisher in *The Origin of the Bible* cites evidence from 1st & 2nd century disciples— Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp— who reference or quote much of the New Testament's authorship, either referencing or quoting it as scripture (Comfort 70-74). While some in that early period, just like people today, questioned the authority of some of the later New Testament epistles during the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th centuries, the highly respected historian Eusebius (A.D. 270-340) gave much validity to the 27 books of the New Testament in his book *Church History* (Ibid. 74). Eusebius attested to the canonicity of all the New Testament books and gave the majority census of his day (Ibid. 74).

If you believe that God is the only answer for the universe coming from nothing, then surely you must be able to conceive that such a God could preserve His divine word for hundreds of years, unstained, even while in the care of imperfect men. Add to this equation numerous historical testimonies from persons such as

Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Eusebius, to mention a few. Finally, factor in the harmonious testimony within the Bible itself. Now do you believe Paul when he said, “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord,” (1 Cor. 14:37)? The whole Bible is the word of God. You either accept it all as inspired, or you inevitably deny every single word by saying that even one verse is uninspired. There is no middle ground. There is no room for moderation.

Homework Questions

1. True or False:
There are some books of the Bible that are inspired and others that aren't. The only words that are authoritative are the words in red: the words of Jesus.

2. What is the biblical chain of command according to 1 Corinthians 11:3?

The head of Christ is _____.

The head of Man is _____.

The head of Woman is _____.

3. Answer with one word what Jesus gave to the apostles in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20.

4. In your own words, explain why proper Bible interpretation is important and necessary?

Helpful Resources

The Origins of the Bible by Philip Comfort

apologeticspress.org

willofthelord.com

(<http://www.willofthelord.com/2009/11/09/bible-authority-1-establishing-bible-authority/>)

The Pew Research

(<http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/oklahoma/>)

Lesson 5 - How to Choose a Bible Translation

The previous two lessons in this series have focused on the inspiration and authority of the Bible. A person cannot expect to understand the Bible correctly without first coming to grips with these two foundational principles. The Bible contains the very words of God in ink, and every word from alpha to omega is authoritative to the life of each intellectual organism. Now, which Bible translation should you use in order to understand correctly God's self-revelation?

Choosing a good Bible translation is do-or-die to your personal Bible study. This is made grossly obvious if you pick up and read *The Word on the Street* translation. Of course, *The Word on the Street* is not really even a translation upon investigation. And while this satirical version is recognized as a joke, other translations of the Bible are equally lacking in their relaying of the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages used by the Biblical prophets. For example, *The Message* is the next step down from the *The Word on the Street*. *The Message* is so far from a translation of the Bible, this work is nothing more than a commentary that passes for a Bible. Near the end of this lesson, there will be a table scale of Bible translations in order to highlight which modern translations are more word for word and which are more or less commentaries like *The Message*.

There are two phrases you should be familiar with: *formal equivalent* and *dynamic*

equivalent. These phrases describe the two overarching categories of Bible translation methods. Formal equivalent translation is a fancy name for translating early Bible manuscripts word-for-word. One example of a word-for-word translation would be an interlinear Bible, where the Greek text is spelled out word-for-word, and underneath each Greek word is the English correspondent. However, because sentence structure and grammar do not flow over fluidly into the English language, this provides for a very choppy, difficult reading, in its most raw form that is. With some modifications to word order for the sake of readability, there are some English translations like the American Standard Version, which are considered by Biblical scholars the world round to be the most literal Bible translation on the market (outside of interlinear translation). Dynamic equivalent translation is another fancy name for translating early Bible manuscripts thought-for-thought. Instead of providing an English word that renders the original Greek text as literally as possible, this method of translation provides a thought-for-thought equivalent. This latter method of translation provides more room for interpretation by the translator himself, so that when the average reader gets hold of the translation (i.e. *New Living Translation*) he is getting a scholar's commentary on the original manuscripts, more or less. The most gross example of such a translation would be *The Message*. A translation that rides the fence between word-for-word and thought-for-thought translation is the *New*

International Version. James Smith relays the modern debate on the *NIV* very succinctly when he says,

“The NIV has been criticized for crossing the line at times from translation into commentary,” (61).

Several criteria (accuracy, appropriateness, naturalness, and form) are considered by Bible translation committees in order to produce a reading in the modern language that is simultaneously literal and readable (Comfort 233). If the translation is so literal and choppy that no one can read it, the process has failed. Then again, if the translators seek to make the modern version so readable that the English Bible loses the original meaning intended by the Holy Spirit, the process has likewise failed. Raymond Elliott summarizes this tender balance as follows,

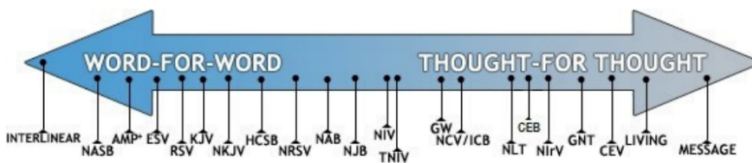
“Is a Bible translation the inspired Word of God? Yes-to the extent that the translation relays to the reader what God directed the authors to write,” (Ibid. 259).

Because no translation is absolutely perfect, there is sometimes a need to consult Greek & Hebrew dictionaries in your Bible study. These will be covered in Lesson 15.

Finally, which translation should you use when studying the Bible? The simple answer is this: use a

Bible translation that is as literal as possible, yet one that you can read easily. My personal favorite is the *New King James Version* for this reason. If I were to read another translation, I might choose the *English Standard Version* or the *New American Standard Bible*. Figure 1 is a chart relating modern English translations of the Bible with the most literal (word-for-word) translations from left, to the more free (thought-for-thought) translations on the right. The only mistake on this chart is the placement of the Amplified Bible, which provides commentary interspersed with its translation, often leaving no indication where the commentary starts and where it ends.

(Figure 1)



I hope you enjoyed this study. The thoughts contained here are a small needle-in-the-haystack of content that spans the discussion of Bible translation. Buy one of the books below and read it for

more scholarly information on the subject. Your decision on this matter will shape your understanding of the Holy Bible.

Homework Questions

1. There are two foundational principles that must be accepted before you can understand the Bible.

The Bible is _____.

The Bible is _____.

2. True or False:
All Bible translations are pretty much the same.

3. Match:

A. Formal Equivalent _____ Thought for Thought

B. Dynamic Equivalent _____ Word for Word

4. Why did you choose the Bible translation you currently read from? Is it a formal or dynamic equivalent translation? (*Hint: use Figure 1 to find your translation and help in answering the question.*)

Helpful Resources

Choosing a Bible by Leland Ryken

The Word of God in English by Leland Ryken

Introduction to Biblical Studies by James Smith

The Origin of the Bible by Philip Comfort

apologeticspress.org

Lesson 6 - “How Should You Interpret the Bible?”

This lesson picks up right where Lesson 5 left off. Bible translations by their very nature involve interpretation. Bible translation committees often have to ask the question, “What English word would best convey the original Greek word ***insert Bible verse***?” In spite of this fact, some honest churchgoers talk as if studying the Bible involves no interpretation at all. Have you ever heard someone say, “The Bible is all we need! Anything besides the Bible is a man’s interpretation and is dangerous!” Their hearts are in the right place, but perhaps they have missed the mark by a hair.

The fact of the matter is this: the Bible can be understood, but understanding the Bible involves a human reading and interpreting what is written. There is a reason Peter said,

“Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you...in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction...” (2 Peter 3:15-16)

The Bible can be understood, but this does require diligent study and careful interpretation. The Ethiopian eunuch required Philip to interpret the Old Testament in light of its fulfillment in the 1st century

when he said, “How can I (understand Isaiah 53) unless someone guides me?” (Acts 8:31). You don’t need to go to seminary to understand what the eunuch understood! With proper care and reverence for God’s holy, inspired Word, you can understand the Bible just like the eunuch!

How should you interpret the Bible? All the lessons up to this point are foundational to answering this question today. You must first have an honest heart seeking the truth, decide there is such a thing as absolute truth, agree the Bible contains the very words of God from Genesis to Revelation, understand that every word in the Bible carries the full weight of God’s authority, and realize the importance of a good Bible translation. Without this foundation, you are apt to make the same mistake one preacher made in explaining Mark 13:15. The preacher declared women should never wear their hair up in a top-knot (“bun”) because the Bible said, “topknot go down.” The Bible actually said, “Let him who is on the housetop not go down.” While this supposedly true story is an extreme example of poor Bible interpretation, oh so many interpretations of the Bible apply the same “topknot” method when explaining away grossly large sections of scripture.

Six Truths About Bible Interpretation

- 1.** The Bible is written by a single author, the Holy Spirit, with a single story line running from beginning to end. If you have not read the story of Adam and Eve

sinning and losing their immortality, you will not understand what Paul says about Adam in Romans 5:12-21, and the application he makes.

2. The Bible is written over a 1,500 year period, utilizing many different forms of literature (i.e. poetry, argumentative discourse, legal documentary, narrative history, evangelistic discourse, apocalyptic prophesy, etc.) If you do not understand when a Bible writer lived and the literary style being utilized, you could walk away believing Daniel 4 is a prophecy fulfilled in 1914 like the Jehovah Witnesses' Watch Tower literature claims.

3. The New Testament was meant to be read and understood only after reading the Old Testament. There is absolutely no way you will fully grasp the intended meaning of any New Testament book without first reading the Old Testament. The over 300 quotes of the Old Testament within the New Testament are proofs to this fact.

4. Chapter and verse divisions were added by Bible translators. "The Bible's chapter divisions were created in the early 1200s by a lecturer at the University of Paris. Its current verse divisions were not fully developed until 1551," (Smith 63). Understanding this will help you understand the continuous flow of thought across chapters and verses of the Bible (i.e. James 4 & 5). That to say, do not let verse and chapter divisions hinder you from seeing the big picture or understanding the meaning of particular verse.

5. Every Bible passage has an original, inspired meaning. Discovering that original meaning is the

primary goal of Bible interpretation. Too often, people make application from a passage before understanding what the passage even means. Whether innocent or not, this habit can lead to much false teaching.

6. When reading a particular Bible verse, apply all the principles above, and realize the verse is positioned within a specific context. The surrounding verses make up the literary context. Secondly, the author's historical setting and purpose for writing constitute another important context essential to understanding the verse's meaning.

These are six basic truths to help you start understanding the Bible. This study just brushes the surface of biblical interpretation. Peruse the list of articles and books below for more helpful reading material on this subject.

Homework Questions

1. What Bible story teaches that it is okay to ask for help to understand the Bible?
2. "Paul, according to the _____ given to him, has written to you...in which are some things _____ to understand, which untaught and unstable people _____ to their own destruction..." (2 Peter 3:15-16).
3. How many times does the New Testament quote the Old Testament?

4. What is the most helpful approach you have found in understanding the Bible?

Helpful Resources

How to Understand the Bible for Yourself by Aaron Battey

<https://oldpathsadvocate.wordpress.com/2017/03/12/how-to-understand-the-bible-for-yourself/>

A Study Guide to Greater Bible Knowledge by Wayne Jackson

Introduction to Biblical Studies by James Smith

How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets by Peter J. Gentry

Lesson 7 - How to Discover the Single Meaning of Scripture

The previous lesson introduced the more gritty side to Bible study. It is great to talk about foundational concepts like the inspiration of the Bible and absolute truth, but eventually the sleeves have to roll up and the hands have to get dirty.

The object of every person studying their Bible should be to discover each Bible verse's single, intended, and objective meaning. Everyone comes to the Bible with preconceived ideas about God and the Bible itself. This is where the pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith of Lesson 1 come strongly into play, because we want to identify the Bible's single meaning and not our self-imposed and tainted interpretation of it. This may sound like a difficult task, and it is sometimes, but until you embrace this truth, the Bible will continue to be nothing more than a sounding board for your personal wants and wishes. God used men to write down the intents of His heart so that man could then read those thoughts and understand them (2 Peter 1:19-21). Paul explained the inspiration process and the idea of a single meaning of all scripture when he said, "By revelation He made known to me the mystery...by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets..." (Ephesians 3:3-5). Consider this passage in view of Bible study

approaches. The typical approach to a group Bible study is:

“What does this Bible verse mean to you?”

This question is asked with the leading impression that each passage of scripture has a personally tailored meaning to the individual. But wait...I thought Paul said, “When you read, you may understand *my* knowledge in the mystery of Christ.” Furthermore, he would tell Corinth, “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant,” (1 Cor. 14:37-38). Call me crazy, but these two brazen statements by Paul do not seem to jive with the, “What does this Bible verse mean to you?” approach to study. The question, “What does this Bible verse mean to you?” is meant to satisfy multiple meanings to a single Bible verse rather than the single meaning the Holy Spirit intended every reader to walk away with. I may be wrong about my interpretation of Ephesians 3:3-5 or 1 Cor. 14:37-38. With that said, to imply these Bible verses have multiple meanings based on the culture they are read in, does not justify my wrong interpretation. This is not a popular view today among life groups, Bible campus ministries, youth groups, or any assortment of the kind. In fact, Michael Shank shares an incident from 1989 that illustrates the unpopularity of this view in his must-read book *Muscle and a Shovel*. He was in a married couples’ life group

that went on for 20 minutes without a Bible verse being read (Shank 195). When asked his opinion on husbands loving their wives, Michael read Ephesians 5:21-33 to the group (Ibid. 195). The fact that Michael believed the passage to have a single meaning which was still relevant to 21st century married couples briskly led to his dismissal from the Bible class (Ibid. 197). This is not a farfetched example. A single meaning to scripture is not popular, and certainly Aquila and Priscilla would not be welcomed in many modern Bible groups or churches today (Acts 18:24-28).

How do you avoid missing the single, intended meaning of any given Bible verse? First, go back and read the first six lessons in this series. Every lesson is foundational to answering this question, and each lesson builds on the one before it. Second, start asking essential questions like these: “Who is the author?”, “When did he write?”, “Who was his audience?” Using this principle, we will start with the most general questions and work down to the more specific questions. There are many more questions that play into this method of Bible study, and these will be discussed next.

Homework Questions

1. How many meanings does a Bible verse have?
2. What did Paul want the Ephesian audience to understand upon reading his letter?
3. What did Aquila and Priscilla do that might get them dismissed from some Bible study groups today?
4. Does your preacher ever actually explain the single meaning of the text he is preaching from?

Helpful Resources

Muscle and a Shovel by Michael Shank

A Study Guide to Greater Bible Knowledge by Wayne Jackson

Lesson 8 - Seven Questions You Need to Ask About Bible Context

Every passage has a single meaning. That was well established in Lesson 7. Now, there must be a method to finding that single meaning. In this lesson, seven questions will be submitted, questions that need to be asked whenever seeking the single meaning of any given Bible passage.

It all starts with context. Context refers to the various parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning (*Merriam Webster*). That being said, there are lots of contextual lights to shine, and it helps to approach them one at a time. An important rule of thumb is to go from big to small (see Figure 1 for an example).

Figure 1-



Using this principle, we will start with the most general contextual questions and work down to the very specific ones.

The Theological Question

How does this Bible passage or Bible book develop the greater story of the Bible? There are at least two overarching themes that are developed and revealed from Genesis to Revelation: God's kingship/kingdom and God's redemption fulfilled in Jesus Christ. To be fair, there are several other dominating themes, but for the sake of simplicity, I narrowed it down to these two. Job develops both of these themes (Job 12:10 & 9:33). Always ask the theological question when reading, as every book of the Bible arguably develops one or both of these bigger themes. This theological question looks at the big picture of the Bible books as a unified whole, but it is also important to note that each Bible book has a narrow purpose that will be discussed below under the "Motivation Question."

The Literary Question

What type of literature am I reading? Each Bible book is written using a certain type of literary form. For example, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Lamentation are poetry. Poetry primarily uses figures of speech and parallelism to explain or emphasize a point. A rod (i.e. Psalms 2:9) is used as a figure of speech to illustrate the king of Israel's authority and rule. Bible books are written in a number

of literary forms including historical narrative, argumentative discourse, legal documentary, evangelistic discourse, apocalyptic prophesy, etc. The type of literature employed will have a huge influence on whether you should interpret phrases and words literally or figuratively. However, also note that books like 1 Samuel (historical narrative) can contain other types of literature at the same time. In 1 Samuel 2:1-10 you will find poetry. Always be aware of your literary surroundings.

The Dispensational Question

What time period (dispensation) or law governed God's people when this Bible book was written? Many people are naïve to the fact that the Bible contains different dispensations of law, including the Patriarchal Dispensation (Job, Genesis, Exodus 1-19), the Mosaic Dispensation (the rest of the Old Testament), and the Christian Dispensation (previewed in the gospels and spanning Acts to Revelation). Without asking this question, you might end up sacrificing a bull in your backyard or believe God is speaking to you in a night vision.

The Situational Question

During what situation, culture, and time was this Bible book written? Understanding that Jeremiah writes leading up to the captivity of Jerusalem by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar makes a big difference. The culture and practices of Israel in that time help explain the reason for the captivity and

imagery of future restoration that Jeremiah prophesies about throughout the book.

The Audience Question

Who is the audience of this Bible book or verse? This question cannot be emphasized enough. For example, understanding that Revelation is written to Christians during the 1st century who are amidst physical persecution (Revelation 1:9 & Ch. 2-3) and need encouragement will greatly impact your interpretation of imagery throughout the book. I do not believe Revelation directly prophesies about the events of 9/11. This event had absolutely no bearing on John's audience and would be an otherwise arbitrary inclusion by John and the Holy Spirit.

The Motivation Question

What motivated the author of this Bible book to write the things he did? If you do not ask this question, you will not understand Paul's purpose in writing 1 Timothy. Remembering what Paul said to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:29 is key to understanding the motivation for writing 1 Timothy. This motivation question is perhaps the most important question to keep in mind when reading through Bible books or when examining single verses within a book.

The Immediate Context Question

What surrounds the Bible book or verse I am reading? This is a multi-faceted question. First, notice the location of the book you are reading. 1 Samuel 1:1

picks up where Judges 21:25 left off. This provides definition for the purpose and theme of Samuel. Second, notice the location of the chapter you are reading. Jeremiah 31 is in the middle of Jeremiah 30-33. All four of these chapters are talking about the same thing: the restoration of Israel. Failing to notice this might lead to a misinterpretation of events and imagery in any one of these chapters. Third, notice the location of the verse you are reading. John 3:16 is in the middle of a discourse about being born again by water, not coincidentally followed by a narrative about John the Baptist baptizing in the water of the Jordan River. Failing to notice these key surrounding verses can lead to misinterpretations of John 3:16.

This is just the beginning. There are other questions that need asked pertaining to context. These include asking the definition of single words, identifying the speaker within the story, and comparing the verse or phrases with other parts of the Bible. In the next lesson these seven context questions will be put to the test in the book of Acts.

Homework Questions

1. What does *context* mean?

2. What are two major themes found throughout scripture?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

3. What is the first question you should ask to determine if a word or phrase is intended to be understood literally or figuratively?

4. Which question is important to ask so you do not end up stoning your neighbor, requiring Passover observance, and binding other Old Testament laws?

5. Which of the seven context questions do you neglect the most in your personal Bible study?

Helpful Resources

Introduction to Biblical Studies by James E. Smith

A Study Guide to Greater Bible Knowledge by Wayne Jackson

Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts by Thomas Nelson Publishers

Lesson 9 - Practice...Learning the Context of Acts

If you didn't skip any lessons to this point in the series you have either learned a lot or are looking for something more intense at this point. If "learned a lot" is rubber and "looking for something more intense" is road, then Lesson 9 is here to put rubber to the road. Open your Bible and your mind as we unfold the context of Acts as a book, and specifically Acts 2:38-39, applying the seven context questions from Lesson 8.

The Theological Question

How does this Bible passage or Bible book develop the greater story of the Bible? Lesson 8 noted two themes that span the unified Bible: the kingdom of God and the redemption fulfilled in Jesus Christ. When considering the theological context of Acts 2:38-39, we must determine which of these two themes are being emphasized in Acts as a whole. While both themes receive attention in Acts, notice the emphasis on the kingdom of God. First, note that the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts are actually a unified narrative intended to be read together. Both books are addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:3 & Acts 1:1), Acts picks up directly where the Gospel of Luke leaves off (Luke 24:50-53 & Acts 1:4), and both books heavily emphasize the kingdom of God and the spiritual restoration of Israel (redemption) at both their beginnings and endings (Luke 1:32-33; 24:21 & Acts 1:6; 28:20), not to mention the heavy stress these two themes receive

throughout the bodies of both works. Second, the book of Acts starts with a recap of the Gospel of Luke. The climactic ending to this recap is as follows, “(Jesus) being seen by them (the apostles) during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,” (Acts 1:3). This highlights the theme of Acts from the very onset, the kingdom of God. Keep this overarching biblical theme on the bridge of your nose like a pair of reading lenses as you attempt to discover the meaning of Acts 2:38-39 in context.

The Literary Question

What type of literature am I reading? The simple answer is brief: primarily the book of Acts is historical narrative. This means, as opposed to apocalyptic literature (i.e. Revelation), Luke is written primarily using literal language. The “language(s)” of Acts 2:6 are actual, studied, and easily understood human languages which each person comprehended according to their native language. The audience of Acts 2:36 literally “crucified” the Christ as Peter accuses them. The “remission of sins” in Acts 2:8 is literal forgiveness of sins. However, it must be noted, there are many quotations and allusions within Acts (particularly Chapter 2) that refer to Old Testament prophecies written in figurative language (i.e. Acts 2:34-35).

The Dispensational Question

What dispensation or law governed God’s people when this Bible book was written? The book of Acts

and the command of Acts 2:38-39 is written under the new Christian dispensation or new covenant dispensation as opposed to the old Mosaic dispensation or old covenant. In Luke 23:45, the veil of the most holy place in the temple is torn upon Jesus giving up His last breath. This signified that neither the temple nor the holy place were holy anymore. There is a new covenant and law that takes the place of the old Mosaic covenant starting with Jesus' death (Hebrews 9). Therefore, men no longer have to worry about disfiguring the edges of their beard (Lev. 19:27), but they do have to observe the new commandments given to those that would seek to be Christians and receive forgiveness of sins in Acts 2:38-39.

The Situational Question

During what situation, culture, and time was this Bible book written? Most biblical scholars agree the book of Acts was written roughly around 60 A.D. The Roman Empire ruled the nation of Israel at this time, and there was no sign of deliverance from Rome. When Jesus came claiming to be the coming Messiah, the people misinterpreted this to mean He would physically deliver them from Rome (John 6:15). Peter preaches his sermon in Acts 2 amidst this time of Jewish tragedy, heightened by the fact that the claimed Messiah was just killed by His own people (Acts 2:36).

The Audience Question

Who is the audience of this Bible book or verse? The audience is plainly identified as a man

named Theophilus (Acts 1:1). Although a Greek name, this was actually a common name among Jews and Gentiles in the 1st century. I lean toward the persuasion that Theophilus must have been a Jewish or Gentile convert. Otherwise, Luke is expecting an unconverted Gentile to be extremely familiar with the Old Testament, as the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts are deeply entrenched in a rich use of the Old Testament.

The Motivation Question

What motivated the author of this Bible book to write the things he did? While there is room for conjecture in answering this question, there are two items that point to a certain motivation for Luke to write the book containing Acts 2:38-39. First, Luke wants to declare the coming of the kingdom of God over a redeemed, spiritual Israel, while at the same time highlighting the fact that physical Israel, for whom this promise was meant, has largely rejected God's kingdom and His special plan to redeem them (Acts 28:20). Second, Luke writes the letter as an eyewitness account to the certainty of the events pertaining to and following the mission of Jesus Christ. This second motivation is clearly outlined in Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-3.

The Immediate Context Question

What surrounds the Bible book or verse I am reading? Pertaining to the specific verses in Acts 2:38-39, ponder how all six questions answered so far shed

light on the meaning of these two verses. We should expect Peter to proclaim to the Jews in Jerusalem about the kingdom of God. He does just that. Acts 2:17-21 is a quotation from Joel 2:28-32. Joel 2 is a prophecy which anticipates the restoration of Israel. Next, in Acts 2:25-28, Peter quotes from Psalm 16:8-11, a promise that the Messiah would resurrect, never to die again. Lastly, in Acts 2:34-35, Peter quotes Psalm 110:1 which is a prophecy picturing Messiah ruling as the king of heaven and earth. This all leads beautifully into Acts 2:38-39 where Peter gives the conditions for receiving the blessings of salvation and spiritual gifts promised by Joel. According to Peter, the conditions of entrance into the restored Kingdom of God are repentance (just as Jesus commanded in Luke 24:47) and burial in water — reenacting the death, burial, and resurrection to glory of the risen King Jesus (Romans 6:3-5). Such an act results in the washing away of sins (Acts 22:16) or “remission of sins” as Peter puts it.

This lesson was a little more difficult than prior lessons. If Lesson 8 seemed too easy then Lesson 9 shows how Bible study can be a bit more complex when getting in the thick of it. Do not let this lesson discourage you. I did not discover all the contextual angles of Acts 2 overnight. In fact, I heard many sermons on Acts 2 growing up in the church before I started to truly understand its deeper connection to other scriptures through Bible study. Good study habits and fruits of labor take time and patience, so do not lose heart.

Homework Questions

1. True or False:
Although the book of Acts is primarily historical in nature, it contains both figurative and literal language?
2. What event in the gospels signified that the holy place, temple, and the old covenant altogether were no longer in effect?
3. Who wrote the book of Acts, and what world empire ruled during the events recorded in the book?
4. List two factors that motivated Luke to write the book of Acts.

- a. _____

- b. _____

5. Short Answer:

List below the tools and/or questions you initially used when studying Acts 2:38-39 in order to come to your interpretation of Peter's message.

Helpful Resources

The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus by Alan J. Thompson

A Popular Survey of the New Testament by Norman Geisler

A Commentary on Acts by J. W. McGarvey

Lesson 10 - Studying the Shape of Scripture

Studying the Bible is more than just reading one verse at a time, coming up with a few anecdotal quips, and moving on to the next verse. Hopefully the previous lesson made this fact clear. In this lesson we learn how studying singular verses in isolation can lead to misunderstanding scripture. This goes beyond studying the words of scripture themselves and into observing how those words are arranged intentionally.

Form shapes content.

Leland Ryken quips, “In a literary text it is impossible to separate what is said (content) from how it is said (form),” (Comfort 124). Identifying how the message is intentionally formed: this is what is meant by studying the Bible as literature. Notice the difference between Acts and Psalms. You should notice a remarkable difference in the form of writing. Acts tells a progressive story with one scene building on the next. When reading Acts 3:1-10, the reader must pay attention to what comes before and after this scene in order to understand why the healing of the lame man is relevant. The healing is sandwiched by sermons from Peter about the spiritual restoration of Israel. No doubt, the story of the lame man’s strength being restored has some illustrative import to Peter’s sermons. The amazing power of God displayed in healing the lame man is the same power at play in

restoring lost souls through the gospel. As opposed to this beautiful rhythm found in Acts 2-3, Psalms is a series of stand alone poems in which Psalm 51 is not necessarily connected with the psalm either before or after. There may be exceptions, but it would seem that intended connections from one psalm to the next is infrequent. This example illustrates why identifying the type of biblical literature is important: history (Acts) versus poetry (Psalms).

There are many different types of literature used by the Bible writers: historical narrative (the gospels), poetry (Job), apocalypse (Ezekiel), prophecy (Jeremiah), argumentative discourse (1 Corinthians), and legal documentary (Ezra 1:2-5). Within these categories are more subcategories which make things a little difficult. Narrative is the most common form of literature in the Bible. With that being said, examine how the teachers at your church approach the scriptures during a midweek study.

The Popular Approach

This approach to studying the Bible requires no specific rules of interpretation. Consequently, this approach is becoming very high risk for misinterpretation and false teaching. Let's see how the gospels are interpreted using this approach.

The gospels are nothing more than one disjointed snapshot from the life of Jesus, one after another, together giving various evidences for Jesus. More importantly, they were meant to

provide hundreds of sermon illustrations. I may not have a clue what a passage means, but it sure provides a good illustration!

You may notice this approach employed by the teacher who opens up reading a Bible passage and proceeds to give a sermon on a totally unrelated subject. This is the way many people approach studying the gospels whether they will admit it or not. This is not to assume that the average teacher approaches the scripture with dishonesty. Many have simply never had anyone show them a better way. A better way starts with realizing the Bible writers used great care in crafting their inspired accounts, not only the words themselves but also the arrangement of those words. Failing to notice how Matthew and Luke meticulously arranged their information (literary style) determines whether one catches the message or misses the mark at times.

Consider the story of Lazarus. How many times have you heard the story of Jesus raising Lazarus? This story in John 11 has been preached to death (pun intended) in comparison to other gospel narratives. However, rarely ever does a preacher actually explain why John chose this story out of all the other things that Jesus did (John 21:25). Is the raising of Lazarus just a story to teach compassion as a character trait that needs to be lived out? Is it nothing more than one more miracle attesting to Jesus' deity? It seems more logical that Jesus proving to have power over death and the grave as He approaches Jerusalem for the final time makes the arrangement of the Lazarus

story in John's gospel helpful to its interpretation. Again, form shapes content.

The Literary Approach

This approach realizes that John's gospel is a historical narrative with a plot line introduced in Chapter 1 and progressively developed until its climax in Chapter 19. Immediately preceding the raising of Lazarus, Jesus teaches He is the good shepherd prophesied about in Ezekiel 34 and makes an announcement, "The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep," (10:11) and, "I lay down My life that I may take it again," (10:17). The good shepherd speech sets up the scene for Jesus to raise Lazarus from the dead, at which point He says, "I am the resurrection and the life..." (11:25). It is no coincidence that this is the last miracle Jesus performs before being crucified and resurrecting. Neither is it a coincidence that in the very next chapter, Jesus is anointed in preparation of His own death (12:7-8).

Thus, while someone might teach the importance of compassion from John 11, or Jesus' deity being proven through yet another miracle, this misses the central point of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. This historical narrative is given at a turning point in John's gospel to preview Jesus' own death, followed by resurrection. Historical narratives typically have progressive scenes that build on one another until reaching a climax, and John's gospel holds true to that pattern.

To summarize, identify the type of literature employed by the Bible writer. The type of literature being written will influence its shape. Remember, the individual words of scripture are important, but how those words are arranged will help determine the single meaning of a verse or set of verses. With all that being said, make sure to examine a verse's immediate surroundings before making free application.

Homework Questions

1. What does it mean to study the Bible as literature?

2. Which type of literature is most commonly found in the Bible?
 - a. *narrative*
 - b. *poetry*
 - c. *argumentative discourse*
 - d. *prophecy*

3. Read Daniel 7 and identify what type of literature would best describe this writing. Choose one of the answers from the list given in the last question.

4. Read Psalm 1 and identify what type of literature would best describe this writing. Choose one of the answers from the list above.

Helpful Resources

The Origin of the Bible by Philip Comfort

How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets by

Peter J. Gentry

The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus by Alan J. Thompson

Lesson 11 - Why Study the Old Testament?

This lesson takes a new trajectory of sorts. Starting now we begin to shift our focus on the Old Testament while still developing the Bible study tools already learned to this point. In this lesson we answer the question: why study the Old Testament?

The Old Testament (OT) is just as much the breath of God as the New Testament (NT). The OT lays foundation and precedent for the NT. If you can imagine watching the last episode of a TV series without seeing the first season, you can understand the absolute necessity of watching the OT premiere before seeing the NT grand finale. The OT establishes many things about the history of God and man. From the very beginning, Genesis makes it clear that God created man for the purpose of spreading the glory of God into all the earth (Gen. 1:27-28; Num. 14:21; Ps. 72:19; Isaiah 6:3; Habakkuk 2:14). However, with the introduction of sin into the world, the story of the Old Testament then becomes one of restoring the glory of God through the mystery of man's redemption. How God will redeem man and restore His glory becomes progressively clearer as one reads the Old Testament. Moses, David, Isaiah, and all the prophets each peel away a layer of the onion, eventually revealing that a singular man will act as the world's savior. When this savior will come is highly anticipated on every page. What will He look like? How will he accomplish this

task? These questions and more are all previewed in the OT.

A full understanding of Jesus Christ requires the student of scripture to return to the OT. The very name “Christ” finds its origins in the OT. “Christ” is simply the Greek translation of the Hebrew word “Messiah” (Dan. 9:25) meaning “anointed one.” The Messiah’s deep OT roots lead James Smith to this conclusion in his book *Introduction to Biblical Studies*:

“No person can intelligently make the confession that Jesus is the Christ without some knowledge of Old Testament prophecies that predict the details of his life.” (118)

This may seem far-fetched if you have not spent much time in the Old Testament, but Smith’s conclusion is well in order. Lesson 14 will give further evidence to this opinion. B. W. Johnson calculated there to be a total of 855 OT quotations or references in the NT! There are many times the NT writers subtly reference the OT by using a singular word, phrase, or by some use of imagery. There is a good chance you have overlooked many of these quotations and references in your Bible reading. This information hopefully instills a desire to read the Old Testament just as much as the New.

Three Reasons People Do Not Study the Old Testament

There are more than three reasons people avoid the books that come before Matthew. Permit the list to be shorted to three, and pardon my straight shooting momentarily.

Reason 1—People do not know any better. Many congregational teachers and even preachers, whether naive or otherwise, start their audiences off with a disadvantage by the way they treat the OT. The OT is treated as if it is good for nothing more than a helpful illustration book of anecdotes and stories. Romans 15:4 is a passage that often gets abused as a justification for this effort. There Paul says, “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning...” While the OT certainly provides good illustrations for application, the OT was not written for this express purpose.

Reason 2—People can be straight up lazy when it comes to Bible study. According to Peter Rodgers, “The level of literacy was estimated to be at least 20%, and was probably closer to 10%, of the population in the Greco-Roman world of the first century,” (Rodgers 82). With practically every church member in America being literate and owning 2-3 Bibles, you would expect a greater degree of Bible knowledge. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Even though the literacy rate was low in Jesus’ day, those first century Jews converted to Christianity were used to sitting in the synagogue every Sabbath and listening for hours to the OT being read

and taught aloud (Acts 13:13-15; 15:21; 17:1-3). Language literacy versus Bible literacy are two different things. The comparison and contrast between 1st century Bible literacy and 21st century Bible illiteracy is disturbing. Making things worse: most congregational teachers have not read the Bible completely through in their lifetime. I say this, not making assumptions, but based on asking several teachers while traveling from place to place. Again, some may be naive. That is excusable to a degree. But if you have been made aware of the importance of Bible reading and are still negligent, start reading or stop teaching. A person cannot teach what they do not know, and teaching is too great a responsibility to treat indifferently (James 3:1). The congregation is only as great as its leaders.

Reason 3- Those people that may be seeking a greater understanding of their OT and NT often do not know where to start. This is the very reason I created Five Minute Bible Study. Hopefully, between this workbook and other resources made available, a solid starting foundation is in place.

Where to Start

Start reading your Bible through on a regular basis. Start reading to your children on a regular basis. Start Genesis every January and end in Revelation every December. This is not as difficult as it seems if you make a commitment and have accountability. Eventually, this will become second

nature. I am so thankful for my father integrating annual, family Bible reading into the daily routine since before I was born. You owe it to yourself, and you owe it to your children even more. Also, consider the Five Minute Bible Study series, *What You Need to Know About the Old Testament*. Stop making excuses and start today.

Homework Questions

1. True or False:
You do not need to spend much time reading and studying the Old Testament, because we are not bound by this scripture today.
2. In your own words, how would you sum up the story of the Bible in one to two sentences?

3. Have you read your Old Testament all the way through?
If not, in the space provided below, write down a date.
This date will be your personal goal for completing the
Old Testament.

Lesson 12 - How to Identify the Old Testament in the New

Lesson 11 hopefully opened your eyes to the importance of Old Testament studies. Lesson 12 will show you exactly how this is foundational to understanding the New Testament.

Recall the estimated 855 references to the Old Testament scriptures within the New Testament. This means that some citation to the OT is found on almost every page of the NT. Sometimes an OT reference is loud and boisterous. At other times, the reference is a soft whisper. Don your spectacles and learn the difference between a yell and a whisper.

1. Quotation

This is the loudest and easiest type of reference to identify. When a Bible writer says anything along the lines of, “As it is written...” your sensory feelers should go off. This is a classic way of the Holy Spirit saying, “Listen up, I’m about to quote something you can go and read word for word in the Old Testament!” Most Bible editors will even be so nice as to italicize and indent these quotations in your Bible. (*Examples: Matthew 1:23; Mark 12:36; Luke 19:38; John 12:14-15; Acts 2:34-35; Romans 15:21; 1 Cor. 2:9; and others*)

2. Allusion

This type of reference is a little more difficult to spot. An allusion is when the author indirectly

references the Old Testament in such a way that it does not disturb the flow of writing. There is no introductory formula such as, “That it might be fulfilled...” (Matt. 1:23). An allusion is much more subtle than this. Observe the following example from Matthew 24:30:

“Then the signs of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

This last phrase about the Son of Man coming on clouds is a direct allusion to Daniel 7:13. If you set the two texts side by side, there is no doubt in this parallel. Jesus might as well have used an introductory formula and quoted Daniel, but He didn’t. Daniel’s prophecy is woven into the text so that only people familiar with their Old Testament and Daniel will be able to identify the reference. (*Examples: Matthew 2:20; John 1:11, 1:14, 1:29; 4:13-14; Peter 1:22-25*)

3. *Echo*

This type of reference wins the award for most likely to fly under the radar. Echoes are like allusions but shorter. While an allusion may be a sentence in length, an echo can be as brief as a single word. Consider echoes that are common in the English language like “9/11” or “Katrina.” These single words

or phrases illicit immediate flashbacks to monumental moments in American history without any further explanation. Here is a great example of an echo found within the story of Jesus' transfiguration:

“And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”

(Luke 9:30-31)

The Greek word for “decease” is “εξοδον.” This Greek word literally means “exodus.” With one word the Holy Spirit provides context to Jesus' transfiguration and death. The transfiguration occurred so the disciples could see the glory of Jesus that was to be veiled when He hung on the cross. They were supposed to understand from this event, that when Jesus died on the cross, He was leading the people of God in a salvation event like the Exodus but greater than the Exodus. Go to fiveminutebiblestudy.com and see *The Bible Themes Series* for more on this New Exodus theme. The point of using Luke 9:31 is to show just how subtle an echo can be. Echoes can be difficult to spot as said before, and they require an advanced handle on the Old Testament narratives, prophecies, and so forth. Even then, it can be difficult to identify a true echo. (*Examples: Mark 1:11/Psalm 2:7, Matthew 16:18-19/Daniel 2:44-45, Romans 3:20/Psalm 143:2, Matt. 24:1/Ezekiel 10:18*)

4. *Midrash*

This is a Hebrew name for a common feature found in Jewish literature, including the Bible. As Peter Rodgers defines the term, a midrash is, “running commentary on the scriptures,” (41). While this rigid definition may mean nothing to you, consider this more crude explanation. In Simple Simon terms, a midrash is when the writer takes two or more passages and combines them together. Together, the combined passages are used by the writer to help interpret whatever is under discussion. Consider this midrash:

*“Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,
who will prepare Your way before You. The
voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare
the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.’”*

(Mark 1:2-3)

Perhaps you have read this passage a hundred times and never knew that Mark is not quoting a singular passage from the Old Testament. On the contrary, Mark combines passages from Exodus 23:20, Malachi 3:1, and Isaiah 40:3, quoting variant phrases from each passage as if it were a single quotation. This is a classic midrash at the very beginning of the gospel. This does two things: it sheds meaningful light backward on the OT texts quoted, and it shines light forward on the ministry of Jesus. The bottom line of Mark 1:2-3 is that Jesus is the epicenter of biblical history. Three is better

than one, as Solomon said, and all three of these OT prophecies combine to effectively prove the fulfillment found in the gospel of Jesus. (*Examples: Mark 1:11, 14:62; John 10:7-29; Romans 3:10-18; Hebrews 10:37-38; 1 Peter 2:6-8*)

Conclusion

You can be saved without ever having learned the term “midrash.” In fact, I suppose many people will be in heaven who never heard of an “echo.” Knowing these terms and how to discover them are not saving grace in themselves. However, many times the right doctrine is taught from the wrong text, or simply a false doctrine is taught because of ineptitude in understanding how the New Testament uses the Old. It takes practice to get good at identifying allusions, echoes, and midrash. Start practicing, and your Bible reading will take on new levels of purpose.

Homework Questions

1. True or False:
An echo is more subtle than an allusion, and an allusion is more subtle than a quotation.
2. Fill in the Blank:
“Daniel’s prophecy is woven into the text (Matt. 24:30) so that only people familiar with their _____ and _____ will be able to identify the reference.”

3. What is a midrash?

4. There is a midrash in Romans 3. Find the midrash and then write down all the different Old Testament scriptures found in it. (*Hint: use a Bible that has a center column reference to make this exercise easier.*)

Helpful Resources

Exploring the Old Testament in the New by Peter Rodgers

Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament by G. K. Beale

Lesson 13 - How to Interpret the Old Testament in the New

Once you have identified a New Testament passage that references the Old Testament, it is time to learn how to go about interpreting such a reference. Consider Psalm 2:7. This verse was very important to the New Testament prophets based on how much it is referenced, but how does the Holy Spirit expect one to understand Psalm 2:7 when referenced in a NT context?

“When a text from the Old Testament was quoted by a New Testament author, it was not simply lifted from its context and applied to the new Christian situation. Rather...the early Christians cited texts with the wider context in mind,” (Rodgers 27).

In other words, when the voice of God in Mark 1:11 alludes to the prophecy of Psalm 2:7, the audience is being invited to go back to Psalm 2, consider what this psalm meant to its original audience, and then realize this original meaning is the foundation for the Father saying to Christ in Mark 1:11, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

7 Keys to Interpreting the OT in the NT

The titles and outline for these seven keys of interpretation were derived from chapters in the book *Exploring the Old Testament in the New* by Peter Rodgers.

1. Form

How does the OT passage appear in the NT? Sometimes the NT author does not quote the OT word for word when the two texts are placed side by side (i.e. Acts 2:17-21 & Joel 2:28-32). Sometimes the discrepancy may simply be related to the NT writer using a different translation than the original OT author. At other times, perhaps the NT author is providing some inspired commentary, thus shedding new light on the original text.

2. Introduction

How does the NT writer introduce the OT passage? Sometimes the NT writer uses an introductory formula such as, "As it is written..." This announces the OT prophecy with great pizzazz. Whenever the NT writer skips the introductory formula and chooses to reference an OT text by subtle allusion or even echo, perhaps the reader is expected to pay more attention. In other cases, perhaps the Holy Spirit's subtle echo back to Psalm 2:7 in Mark 1:11 is helpful for a 21st century reader twice removed from that time and culture to understand how familiar Jesus' audiences were with this Messianic psalm. If Jews were

so familiar with this psalm that even a three-word echo sparked their memory, perhaps this reveals the importance this psalm played in the earnest expectation of Messiah in Jesus' day.

3. *Selection*

Why did the NT writer choose this OT passage? This goes back to considering the original context of the OT passage. For example, Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:16 saying, "The just shall live by faith." Why did Paul choose this OT passage? Go back to Habakkuk, and you understand that Habakkuk was writing to Israelites in Babylonian captivity. While the Babylonians were proud, trusting in their own might rather than the true God, Israel was to maintain faithfulness to God. Paul is saying the same thing as Habakkuk, "Remain faithful, continue to trust in God, and you will live." Paul chose Habakkuk, because the context of Habakkuk's message and the message in itself fit hand-in-hand with Paul's message to the Roman churches.

4. *Application*

How does the NT writer's application of an OT passage affect the meaning of that OT passage? This was briefly discussed under "Form." Consider this example of Jesus applying OT prophecy to His death on the cross. In John 19:36, Jesus applies a passage from Exodus 12:46 about the Passover lamb to Himself. If prior to reading John 19:36, you did not realize the Passover lamb was symbolic of Jesus, this application

by Jesus Himself should transform your understanding of the original passage. This is very helpful when considering much more difficult prophecies in the OT.

5. Combination

Is the NT writer combining multiple OT passages? This is also called a midrash (see Lesson 12). When multiple OT passages are grouped together such as already illustrated in Mark 1:11, they help interpret one another. Mark combined Exodus 23:20, Malachi 3:1, and Isaiah 40:3. If you can find out what one of these passages is teaching it will help you understand the other two. This in turn will help shed light on the NT passage where they are quoted. You might call this a give and take relationship.

6. History

Understanding history about the worlds of the New Testament and Old Testament can often help in understanding why a NT writer alludes to an OT passage. History from 300 B.C. to the time of Christ is very revealing about Messianic expectations. Many false messiahs arose and were killed as insurrectionists during this silent period between the old and new covenants. This might change one's perspective of John the Baptist and Jesus who come preaching about the Messianic kingdom. So ask yourself, "Does the history of the time period I am studying help shed any light on this chapter or verse under consideration? This question has the tendency to open many doors of speculation. Be careful when reading historians of the

Bible worlds. Distinguish between when the historian reports the facts and when he reports his interpretation of the facts. Just because something was culturally prevalent in Judea during Jesus' day doesn't necessarily mean Jesus partook in whatever it was. Nonetheless, learning biblical history will remind you to ask this question more often.

7. Story

How does this NT quotation or allusion of the OT help me better understand the story of the Bible? The Bible is a story with a running plot line from Genesis to Revelation. See Lesson 11 for a review of this item. When John alludes to Genesis 1 in John 1:1-9, he helps identify the progression of the biblical plot line. We understand, things that were introduced in the very first chapter of the Bible are coming full circle now.

Conclusion

What have you learned? Hopefully you have learned to appreciate the great intention used by the NT authors when citing the OT. Their citations were not haphazard, the same should go for your Bible study.

Homework Questions

1. Use a separate sheet of paper to write out side by side Acts 2:17-21 and Joel 2:28-32. What differences do you find in the words or phrases of these parallel readings?

2. What are at least two reasonable explanations why Peter's quotation of Joel in Acts 2:17-21 is not identical word-for-word?
 - a. _____

 - b. _____

3. In 2 Corinthians 3:7-18, Paul alludes to an Old Testament passage. What chapter from the Old Testament is the allusion drawn from? (*Hint: Use your center column reference if you have one.*)

4. "Jesus used the four Passover cups of Jewish tradition when He ate the last supper in the upper room during the passion week." Does this conclusion come from simply reading the New Testament scriptures, or is this an interpretation from Jewish history around the time of Jesus? Read the last supper accounts in answering your question: Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-23.

Helpful Resources

The following resource is a moderately difficult read. Reading Peter Rodgers' book without having completed reading the Bible is not advised.

Exploring the Old Testament in the New by Peter Rodgers

Lesson 14 - The Most Important Old Testament Prophecies

The previous two lessons featured critical studies in how to identify and interpret whenever the New Testament authors make reference to the Old Testament. This will be the last study in this area, so enjoy.

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit relied heavily on the Old Testament. In his book *According to the Scriptures*, C. H. Dodd gives a list of 15 especially important Old Testament prophecies at the foundation of the New Testament:

*Genesis 12:2; Deuteronomy 18:15,19;
Psalm 2:7; 8:4-6; 110:1; 118:22-23; Isaiah
6:9-10; 28:16; 40:3-5; 53:1; 61:1-2;
Jeremiah 31:31-34; Joel 2:28-32;
Habakkuk 2:4; Zechariah 9:9 (Rodgers
27).*

It could be easily argued that other prophecies deserve to be on this list (i.e. Genesis 3:15; 2 Samuel 7:12-16), but Dodd's list is altogether concise and fulfilling just the same. Being familiar with these Old Testament scriptures will greatly improve your study and understanding of the New Testament as these prophecies find themselves making redundant appearances, both pronounced and subtle. You may

have read the New Testament before, but have you listened to the New Testament? If you listen closely, you will hear Moses, David the King, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many other Old Testament prophets. You do not need to know music, but you do need to know your Old Testament.

Homework

Using a separate sheet of paper and Psalm 2:7 for a starting point, do some homework on the following passages, noticing how each one either quotes, makes allusion to, or echoes this Messianic psalm: Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:21-23; 9:35; 22:69; John 1:49; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:2,5; 5:5; Revelation 19:15.

Lesson 15- What You Need to Know About Biblical Word Studies

Lesson 5 promised there would be a lesson on the use of Bible dictionaries and the sort related to word studies. This is that lesson.

Disclaimer!

This Bible study is not a tutorial for using a Bible dictionary, concordance, or encyclopedia. If you would like to learn this skill, I recommend reading James Smith's *Introduction to Biblical Studies*. Chapter 5 of that book is entitled, "Working With Biblical Words," (67-90). Afterwards, get your hands on a Bible dictionary (lexicon) and read the front cover introduction on how to use the tool. This lesson is more about the science of word studies: things to keep in mind and pitfalls to avoid.

Introduction

Word studies are the all-time favorite of many teachers. While there is a time and place for word studies, some can strangle the art to death. To be more straightforward, word studies are helpful and complimentary to studying a verse of scripture or even an entire topic, but Bible study consists of more than finding every occurrence of a given word in scripture. Arbitrary studies such as, "Rocks in the Bible," that dryly go through all the different types of rocks mentioned in scripture might prove interesting to some geologists but spiritually lacks meaningfulness. This

particular type of study stems from the misappropriation of a word study tool called the concordance which will be examined last in this lesson. Even if you are not a teacher at church or a leader of Bible studies, you may be wondering how to go about identifying the meaning of a word in the Bible. This can prove very helpful. You don't have to be a Hebrew or Greek scholar, but you do need a basic understanding of languages, literature, and lexicons.

Four Principles for Word Studies

Greek & Hebrew

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). There are even a couple of Old Testament books written in Aramaic originally. This fact should highlight the ever-present need for defining biblical words. The English language has changed quite a bit since the first Greek to English Bible was penned by William Tyndale (1525-1526). Even if it had not changed, a single Greek or Hebrew word might have four or five English synonyms. The question then becomes, which English word best captures the original meaning of the Greek word in a given Bible passage? For example, the single Greek word "*pneuma*" has at least the four following definitions in English according to *Thayer's* lexicon: 1) wind 2) the vital principle by which the body is animated 3) the conscious soul distinct from the body 4) God's Spirit, often called the Holy Spirit. With four possible renderings, how should the single Greek word

be translated in 1 Timothy 4:1? There is another basic principle needed to answer this question.

Context

When a Greek Lexicon (i.e. *Thayer*, *Liddell-Scott*, *Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker*, etc.) says the word “*pneuma*” in 1 Timothy 4:1 is best rendered as “Holy Spirit” in the English, they are making an interpretation based largely on the surrounding context and a strong knowledge base of how the word is used elsewhere in the Bible and even non-biblical, contemporary literature. That is right, context again plays a major role. The surrounding context can give a word like “*pneuma*” a different shade of meaning in one passage as opposed to another. While it can be translated “wind,” what kind of wind did the author intend to convey- breath or a strong gale? Thus, the lexicons will give very long lists for each Greek and Hebrew word, not only listing each possible definition, but also identifying the different shades of meaning for that definition. Ample Bible verses are then cited where the word is best rendered with that shade of meaning. John 3:8 is a very controversial verse where *pneuma* appears and the Bible student will have to reference several lexicons, compare several other passages where the word is used, and furthermore rely on a solid Bible knowledge base to make an educated interpretation as to how the Greek word should be translated: wind or spirit?

It's Not a Buffet

The scholars that authored lexicons such as *Liddell & Scott Greek Lexicon* dedicated years of their life in order to give commoners an educated decision for interpreting Bible words. All that to say this, it is lazy, careless, and dangerous to pick a specific definition simply because it suits your personal bias on a doctrinal argument. For example, the Greek word “*eis*” can be rendered “for/unto” or “because of”. The Amplified Bible is the only English translation to translate the word “*eis*” in Acts 2:38 the following way, “Be baptized...*because of (eis)* the forgiveness of sins.” Every other English translation properly translates Acts 2:38, “Be baptized...for (*eis*) the forgiveness of sins.” How the word is translated into English completely changes the understanding of baptism’s purpose. The Amplified Bible’s translation committee believes baptism does not wash away sins; thus, they unscrupulously translate the Greek word in Acts 2:38 to fit their doctrinal bias. Word studies and Bible translation is not a buffet to pick and choose the definitions as you wish. Souls may hang in the balance in some situations.

Concordances Are Not All-Sufficient

Concordances list all the findings for any given word in the Bible. Consider the word “temple.” You can look this word up in a concordance and find every place it is used in the Bible. However, this does not lend to an exhaustive study of the topic. Study will show that the Garden of Eden meets all the qualifications of a

temple, but the word “temple” is never used in Genesis 1-3. This is true of many biblical words and concepts. Thus, a word study is good and helpful, but a strict word study is still insufficient in itself.

Conclusion

This is a vast subject. This lesson will hopefully present good guidelines to follow when starting out on word studies. This part of Bible study is just like anything else, it takes practice, and practice makes perfect. The art of word studies is not particularly difficult with a little practice, though some words can present great difficulty. Listed below are some helpful word study resources that can be accessed on the internet.

Homework Questions

1. What is another name for a biblical dictionary?
2. What primary language was the Old Testament originally written in?
3. What primary language was the New Testament originally written in?
4. Who translated the New Testament from Greek into English for the first time, and when did this take place?

5. True or False:

However a Greek word is translated into English in one passage, it is safe to assume the same Greek word takes on the same meaning in the next passage where it appears?

Free Online Resources

1. *blueletterbible.org****
2. *studylight.org*
3. *e-Sword*
4. *biblestudytools.com*

***This website is a very user-friendly and resourceful online help. Blueletterbible.org has a built-in concordance, *Strong's* and *Thayer* lexicons, Bible dictionaries, interlinear translation, *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* cross reference tool, and Bible translation comparison tool, along with other free Bible charts and study aids.

Conclusion

How to Understand the Bible has introduced a little bit of everything. Think back to everything you have learned. Now you know how to approach the scripture as the word of God that has a single meaning. It is up to you as the reader to employ sound mechanics in discovering that single meaning and teaching it to others. I hope this series motivates you to seize the opportunity and advantages available in today's world.

Now that you have finished, I would encourage you to go to the Five Minute Bible Study YouTube channel and start watching the series *Reading the Bible With Purpose*. This series will give you specific questions that need to be asked while reading the Bible. It will also give you an opportunity to start reading the Bible and practicing the tips you learned in this series. May God bless you in your studies, and to Him be the glory.

Answer Key

Lesson 1

1. pure heart, good conscience and sincere faith
2. Paul commanded Timothy to read (1 Tim. 4:13).
When read, the word of God converts the soul, makes the simple wise, makes the heart glad, and guards from error (Psalm 19:7-11).
3. They have been told the same thing over and over. They trust their preacher blindly. They are persuaded by broad brush generalities that get thrown around. They were raised in a given denomination or religion. What they have always done *feels* right.
4. *Several answers may apply*
5. *Several answers may apply*

Lesson 2

1. Without wavering
2. (A) objective
3. Absolute
4. *Several answers may apply*

Lesson 3

1. OT = 39
NT = 27
2. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
3. Infallibility = trustworthy
4. Inerrancy = without error
5. *Several answers may apply*

Lesson 4

1. False, according to 2 Tim. 3:16-17, all scripture is inspired, not just the words of Jesus.
2. The head of Christ is *God*.
The head of Man is *Christ*.
The head of Woman is *Man*.
3. Authority
4. *Several answers may apply*
5. One major reason correct Bible interpretation is important is so that man does not put words in the mouth of God. If the Bible is God's exhaled breath (2 Tim. 3:16-17), then man is putting words in God's mouth when he interprets what is written as meaning something that God never intended.

Lesson 5

1. The Bible is the word of God.
The Bible is authoritative.
2. False (lesson 5, paragraph 2)
3. Formal Equivalent = word for word
Dynamic Equivalent = thought for thought
4. *Several answers may apply*
5. See Figure 1 in lesson 5 and find your translation to find out if it is more formal or dynamic equivalent.

Lesson 6

1. The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)
2. “Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you...in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction...” (2 Peter 3:15-16).
3. >300 times
4. *Several answers may apply*

Lesson 7

1. One
2. “My knowledge in the mystery of Christ...” (Eph. 3:4).
3. They corrected Apollos. They told Apollos his interpretation of scripture was not correct.
4. *Several answers may apply*

Lesson 8

1. “The various parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning,” (lesson 8, paragraph 1).
2. God’s kingdom and God’s redemption
3. The Literary Question: What type of literature am I reading?
4. The Dispensational Question: What time period (dispensation) or law governed God’s people when this Bible book was written?
5. *Several answers may apply*

Lesson 9

1. True
2. The tearing in two of the veil separating the holy place from the most holy place, see Luke 23:45. This occurred when Jesus exhaled His last breath on the cross.
3. Luke = author; World Empire = Roman Empire
4. See “*The Motivation Question*” within Lesson 9 for a complete answer to this question.
5. *Several answers may apply.* Compare your answers with the seven questions put forth in lessons 8 & 9 to see if your approach could improve.

Lesson 10

1. “Identifying how the message is intentionally formed: this is what is meant by studying the Bible as literature,” (lesson 10, paragraph 1).
2. (a) narrative
3. Prophecy
4. Poetry

Lesson 11

1. False
2. “From the very beginning, Genesis makes it clear that God created man for the purpose of spreading the glory of God into all the earth (Gen. 1:27-28; Num. 14:21; Ps. 72:19; Isaiah 6:3; Habakkuk 2:14). However, with the introduction of sin into the world, the story of the Old Testament then becomes one of

restoring the glory of God through the mystery of man's redemption," (lesson 11, paragraph 2)

3. *Several answers may apply.* If reading approximately three chapters per day, the average reader can finish the Old Testament in nine months.

Lesson 12

1. True
2. Old Testament; Daniel
3. "A running commentary on the scriptures," (see lesson 12, <Midrash>, paragraph 1).
4. Romans 3:10-18; The Old Testament scriptures that make up the midrash are these: Psalm 14:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Isaiah 59:7-8; Psalm 36:1.

Lesson 13

1. The biggest difference is between Acts 2:21 and Joel 2:32. They both say the same thing, except Acts 2:21 leaves off the last part contained in Joel 2:32—
 "For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls."
 However, if you continue to read Acts 2, you will find the last half of Joel 2:32 alluded to by Peter in v. 39.
2. "Sometimes the discrepancy may simply be related to the NT writer using a different translation than the original OT author. At

other times, perhaps the NT author is providing some inspired commentary, thus shedding new light on the original text,” (lesson 13, <Form>)

3. Exodus 34
4. Because in Luke 22:14-23 there are two references to Jesus taking a cup, many scholars interpret the first taking of the cup in v. 17 to be Jesus taking the fourth Passover cup found in later Jewish traditions of the Talmud. A prominent Judeo-Christian scholar named Alfred Edersheim is usually cited for this interpretation. However, there is nothing in the historical accounts Old Testament or New Testament to indicate that such a Jewish tradition was commonplace in the days of Jesus or that Jesus would have followed such a man-made tradition. This is an example to show that while history can be helpful in shedding light on the original meaning of scripture, scholars and others can let history overextend its place in biblical interpretation.

Lesson 14

1. Matt. 3:16, Jesus going through the water of baptism is a possible allusion to Israel going through the waters of the Red Sea which Paul later described as baptism (see Exodus 14:29-30 & 1 Cor. 10:1-2).
Matt. 3:17, the Spirit of God alighting upon Jesus, revealing the glory of God is a possible

allusion to God's glory in the Exodus event (see Exodus 14:19).

Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:21-23; 9:35—

God calling Jesus, "My Son," is a possible

allusion to Exodus 4:22 and Isaiah 42:1

Luke 22:69, allusion to Daniel 7:13-14

John 1:49, allusion to Psalm 2:6-7; Isaiah 9:6-7;

Jer. 23:5

Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:2; 1:5; 5:5— quotations of

Psalm 2:7

Revelation 19:15, God's judgment described as a rod of iron and treading in a winepress are both

allusions to prophecies in Is. 11:4; 63:2-6;

Lamentations 1:15

Lesson 15

1. Lexicon
2. Hebrew
3. Greek
4. William Tyndale, 1525-1526
5. False, any given Greek word can have several possible definitions. It is the job of the Bible student to determine which definition best fits the immediate context.

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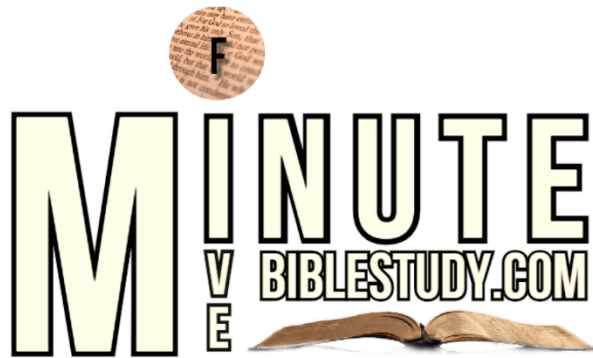
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