



## How To Study Your Bible

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There was a very poor Russian family that had been reduced not only to the breadline but to starvation after World War 1. We can hardly imagine the terrible conditions that prevailed at that time. This Russian family had reached the stage where they were down to the last ounce of bread and all they possessed was a sixpence which would be equivalent to 5 US pennies. They badly wanted a Bible. Somehow they felt that if they could get a Bible their troubles would be over. It was a question of 'bread' or the 'Bible'. It was a hard choice. The father put it to the mother. The mother looked at the children. How desperately they needed food. But sixpence even in those days would not go far. The choice was made. The decision was to buy an old used Bible. What happened to those poor folk we do not know, but I am sure that we will find out one day in when Jesus comes to take His people Home to Heaven.

In a land like ours it is a disgrace for anybody not to know the Bible. In this day of online communication there are so many Bibles to download - most of which are free of charge. So there is no reason why every person should not have a Bible to study it and find out the things of eternal salvation.

2 Timothy 2:15 says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We are told to study the Bible in order to know the difference between truth and error. The apostle Paul gives a further warning in 2 Timothy 3 and verse 7, "Ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth."

It is a great tragedy when people go on reading the Bible but never actually coming to the Truth. You see, it is possible to read your Bible and yet not find the Truth. Or, if you do find the Truth, not to keep that Truth. I know of an individual who actually read the entire Bible through 6 times but still did not know what happens when you die!

Now if you are one of those people who have found the Truth, you are sure that this is the Truth, and yet you don't keep that Truth, then I can assure you that the Bible says you won't be going into the Kingdom. Isaiah 26:2 says, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." So you can see very clearly from this that in order to be among the saved you need to be keeping the Truth by the power of the indwelling Christ. And we need to know the Truth. But what does it mean to know the Truth?

2 Peter 3:16 says, "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." The Bible warns against those who wrest the Scriptures. The interpretation of the word "wrest" here is "to twist - to twist the Scriptures to suit ones preconceived ideas. That is what the Devil did in the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. So you can see that there are some people who study the Bible or would it be better to say that they mis-study the Bible, because they try to make the Bible say what they want it to say.

What is the key to understanding the Truth? How can we find the key that unlocks the precious Old Book? 1 Corinthians 2:13,14 says, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Paul here is telling us that we do not need great wisdom in order to understand the Bible. It is the Spirit that teaches us.

Some folk say "I am not very clear about the Bible", or "I find the Bible hard to understand." Why, we are told that the natural man receiveth not the things of God. You just cannot understand the Bible without the help of the Holy Spirit. The Bible comes to us from the Spirit of God. 2 Peter chapter 1: 19-21, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

So God gave the eternal message of Truth and these holy men of God wrote them down. The words that you read in your Bible today are not the words of man but they were given by the Holy spirit. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. John 16:13 says, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all Truth..." We should always open the Bible with prayer so that God will give us understanding. John 7:17 says, "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine."

The fact is that many folk never come to understand the doctrines because they close the Bible by their attitude to it. Many people read the Bible but they cannot understand it because they are not willing to obey it. Jesus said, If a man is willing to obey God's will then God will open it to them. But the moment you refuse to obey God, immediately you close the Bible and that is the reason why millions of professed Christians in the world today scarcely know that the Bible has two covers, for they are not willing to obey it.

But God said if you are willing to obey it then He will reveal it to use. And this is how He does it. By letting one part of the Bible explain another. Isaiah 28: 9-10, "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." An example of linking texts together:

Daniel 8:16 says, "And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision." God is speaking and He tells of a being by the name of Gabriel, who was to make Daniel to understand the Book. Who was Gabriel? Well let us compare this text with Luke 1:26. Luke 1:26 says, "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth." You see when we link these two texts we find that Gabriel is an angel. There is no need to speculate about that. By following Bible counsel and the guiding of the Spirit can we come to a knowledge of all truth.

Now notice as we build up a study on the 2nd Coming, see how it is done. And now we will take the following text, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and verse 16, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." We are told here that the LORD will shout. Now what will He shout? We could speculate all things. But if we turn to John 5:28 we are told Why He will shout. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice." Christ gives a mighty shout to awaken the dead. And we are told that the Dead hear His voice. Now what is it that Christ says to the Dead? Isaiah chapter 26 and verse 19 says, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust..." Here we are told the very words that Christ will utter on that great and glorious day.

So you see 1 Thessalonians 4 tells us that Jesus is going to Shout. John 5 says that the Shout will awaken the dead. Isaiah gives the very words He utters. And now the psalmist adds this. Psalm 50:3 says, "Our God shall come and shall not keep silence...". There are some people who say He will be silent when He comes again, but the Scripture does not say that, "Our God shall come and shall not keep silence." Psalm 40:4,5 says, "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather my saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice."

And so you see how that you can continue to build up a wonderful picture of the coming of Christ. In just these few texts you have the full story:

1. Jesus is going to Shout.
2. That Shout will awaken the dead.
3. The actual words He utters.
4. Jesus shall not keep silence.
5. His instruction to the Angels.

You see God's method of Bible Study is to take a whole series of texts and then you have a watertight case. You are comparing Scripture with Scripture, Spiritual things with Spiritual.

Now here is another example. Isaiah 66:15 says, "For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury and His rebuke with flames of fire." The LORD will come with His chariots! You could speculate for weeks about this one. What are the chariots of God? Turn to Psalm 68:17, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels:

the LORD is among them, as in Sinai in the holy place." The Bible tells us that the chariots of the LORD are great companies of angels. There is no need to speculate over what the chariots mean. This is how you arrive at the Truth. Then you won't have anyone's interpretation of the Bible. In this way you do not have a Baptist interpretation, or a Methodist or Adventist interpretation, but God's own interpretation. It is the only method that will give you God's Truth! You will find that throughout all the Bible, when you are comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Again, how can we gain a True knowledge of the Bible? Isaiah 28:9 says, "Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." The Doctrines are the great teachings of the Bible. There are some people who say "We don't want the doctrines of the Bible or We don't need the doctrines anymore. We just need the love of Jesus." They talk about the doctrines as if they were something dry and of little use. I want to tell you friends, the Doctrines are the only things worth teaching. If you don't preach the doctrines you only preach froth and foam. Now again note the next verse, Isaiah 28:10 "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.."

The great teachings of the Bible are the doctrines. You see some Christians never advance any further than John 3:16. But we are told to grow in the Scriptures. It would be a terrible thing if a baby decided to cling to its bottle and not to start eating solids. One of our little girls used to love her bottle along with her doll. It was the dearest possession she had, but that bottle had to go. And so it is with a Christian. They will have to move on from the milk stage to the solid food of the great doctrines. Why, the doctrines show the Love of God. We are told in John 3:16 that God loves the world. But as we take the further step of deeper study we find just the great depth of God's love. And we study bit by bit. A little at each time until we really know our Bibles. And I tell you that you will have to know your Bibles very well in order not to be deceived in these last days.

I could preach any heresy imaginable from one text. We need to study the way that Jesus studied. Luke 24:27 says, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Did you notice that Jesus began at Moses. Now who was Moses? He was the first writer in the Bible. The first Five Books were written by Moses. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. In the Hungarian Bible you have 1st Book of Moses and so on. How many Christians today would begin with the Books of Moses? It is a strange thing but most so called Christians today do not even believe in the Books of Moses. They don't believe in Creation as given in Genesis, or the true Sabbath as given in Genesis, the record of the flood, and many other things. And yet we are told that Jesus began with Moses, and then He quoted from the Prophets.

I would say that we have to be very careful of preachers that cut out portions of the Old Testament. I personally would not have any confidence in them at all, for the Old Testament was the Bible that Jesus used. And how a man can reject something that Jesus believed in and at the same time call himself a Christian, that is something that I cannot understand. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." We must take All of the Scripture, not just what we think is suitable. Yes, it is all inspired, not just portions of it. In the next verse it says, "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The study of the Complete Bible makes a man perfect. It gives him a complete understanding of the

will of God. Yes, what we need is to study the Word of God. The sweetest joys that can come to a man's soul is the study and understanding of the Bible.

2 Peter 1:20 says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." Peter tells us that you can't put your own interpretation on Scripture, it is not to be done. That is the trouble in the Christian world today. Men are using the very method that God said is the wrong way to study. Men have put their own interpretation on the Bible teachings, people say the Bible contradicts itself, or you can't really believe what the Bible says. It is a great tragedy. Christians who do this should hang their heads in shame and in disgrace, for they have made the Word of God of no avail.

The big question is "How do you find the texts that you need to help you in your study?" One way is in your marginal references. These can be helpful but at times they can be misleading. Then of course you can take a concordance that will give you the various words right from the Bible, and you can trace them through. There are a number of books out there that will help you. The Bible Handbook by Stephen Haskel is very hard to beat. Also J.L. Shuler's book, "Help to Bible Study." These books take all the texts and group them all together. Also in the back of most Bibles you will find Special helps to Bible study.

There is nothing like daily Bible study. Take a subject and follow it through so that you will really know it. And as you do this you will be truly blessed. The Bible is to be our guide to Heaven. You will find that it will change your home. Perhaps you are finding that there is a lot of arguing and trouble in your home. Pick up your Bible and study it like you perhaps never had before. You will soon discover that all those troubles will vanish like a cloud. As you study the Bible you will find that the Holy Spirit is a personal matter, you can't get it from the minister. It is only as you open your heart to God and study your Bible that the Spirit will take control of your life.

Then there is that terrible threat that one day soon we cannot be sure when, our Bibles will be taken away. Amos 8:11,12 says, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it." While it is still time, while we have the opportunity, let us make the very best of the good Old Book.

In your study of the Bible you will find some things that are very awkward. You are asked to do something that you won't want to do. I read about a wayward son who ran away from home and he was gone for years. He came home just in time to be at his father's funeral and to hear the will read. Everybody was surprised when the will went into detail about the lad and his waywardness. The young man was angry and he stormed out of the room. Nothing was heard of him for several years until one day he met an old friend and this friend told him that while the father had outlined his wayward career, he went on to say that he had forgiven the lad and left him a large sum of money. What a pity the boy had not waited for just a few more moments and heard the rest.

So friends, when you come to the Word of God and you find some things that are not very pleasant, for instance you will read that "the wages of sin is death." Don't stop halfway through the verse. Just go right on, be willing to obey God and He will lead you into the full light of His truth. Take time each day to commune with God through His Holy Word.