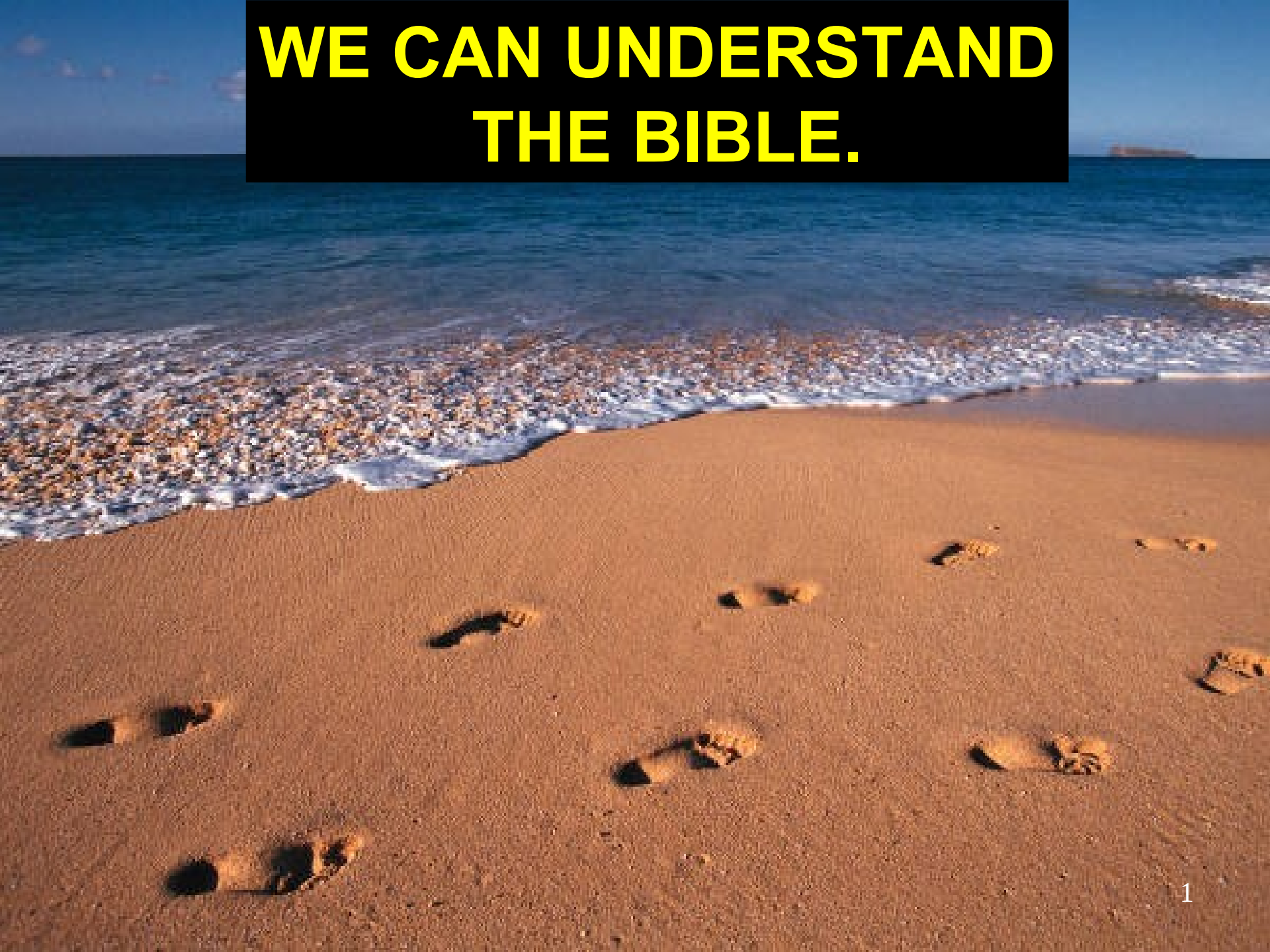


**WE CAN UNDERSTAND
THE BIBLE.**



THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD.

A great many people recognise the Bible as the word of God and actually desire to know its teaching but are handicapped by a lack of knowledge of how to study it.

To others, the Bible is a formidable book because of its great size. It contains 66 separate volumes, 1189 chapters, more than 31,000 verses, and more than 3/4 of a million words.

However it can be read in less than 90 hours, even when read aloud,

Another approach to the reading of the Bible is to **read three chapters** each week day, **five** each weekend day throughout the year.

This covers the entire Bible.

THE BIBLE - GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN.

To build upon our belief that the Bible is God's own words written by men for Him, here are several internal and external proofs of its inspiration.

The Bible was written over a period of 1,500 years by a group of about 40 men.

These writers spoke different languages, lived in different areas, were from various walks of life, and often never met each other.

They were kings, prophets, tax collectors, fishermen, physicians and shepherds.

THE BIBLE - GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN.

Some of the writers were highly educated,
some unlearned, some rich, some poor.

Yet with all these diverse factors,
the books of the bible show a unique unity
and harmony, without any contradiction.

There can only be **one answer**
to this perfect unity, and that is
behind the writers lies the inspiration of God.
2 Tim 3:16-17;

THE BIBLE - TEXT 'S PROVEN ACCURATE.

Many ask if today's translations of the bible are accurate?

The **O.T. writings** began about 1,500 yr. B.C.

They were written in Hebrew and Aramaic.

The N.T. writings were written in the 1st century AD.

They were for the most part written in Greek.

Today we have **ACCURATE copies** of these writings
translated into most languages of the world.

Accuracy is assured by the fact that there are
literally **thousands of copies** exist.

The three main copies of the New Testament are
the **Siniatic manuscript** 340 AD.

The **Vatican manuscript** 350 AD and
the **Alexandrian manuscript** from the 5 century.

These manuscripts can be seen to be accurate when
compared with the many other ancient translations.

THE BIBLE - TEXT 'S PROVEN ACCURATE.

Also many of the Early church leaders from the 1st 2nd and 3rd centuries quote from the bible in their letters to friends.

Authorities said that we could reproduce the whole of the bible from the writings of these men alone.

More Recently a copy of the **book of Isaiah** was found in a cave by the dead sea, now referred to as the **"dead sea scrolls"** These manuscripts date back to the 1st century before Christ, and the text is virtually identical to the text we have today.

This is an example of how God's providential care has protected the Bible **as stated in 1 Peter 1:24-25;**
"the grass withers and the flowers fall but the word of the Lord stands forever."

THE BIBLE - GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN.

MANY COPIES OF NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS ARE AVAILABLE?

Over 4,000 Greek manuscripts; 13,000 copies of portions of the New Testament in Greek!

Compare this with other ancient historical writings:-

- a. **Caesar's "Gallic Wars"** - only 10 Greek manuscripts
- b. "Annals" of **Tacitus** – 2 manuscripts
- c. **Livy** – 20 manuscripts
- d. **Plato** – 7 manuscripts
- e. **Sophocles** – 100 manuscripts

THE BIBLE - GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN. WHAT LENGTH OF TIME PASSED BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL AND THE EARLIEST COPIES?

A number of the **PAPYRI FRAGMENTS**
have been dated to within:-
50-100 years of Christ's death.

We have several nearly complete New Testament
GREEK MANUSCRIPTS which were copied
within 300-400 years, for example:-

- a. **Codex Sinaiticus**, found near Mt. Sinai.
- b. **Codex Alexandrinus**, found near Alexandria in
Egypt.
- c. **Codex Vaticanus**, located at the Vatican in Rome.

THE BIBLE - GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN. COMPARE THIS WITH MANUSCRIPTS OF VARIOUS CLASSICAL HISTORIES:-

a. "Histories of Thucydides." :-

Earliest copy is 1300 years after the original.

b. "Histories of Herodotus." :-

Earliest copy is 1350 years after the original.

c. Caesar's "Gallic War." :- 950 years after the original.

d. Roman History of Livy. :- 350 years (and the earliest copy is only a fragment.)

e. "Histories" of Tacitus. :- 750 years after the original.

f. "Annals" of Tacitus. :- 950 years (and there are only two manuscripts.)

THE BIBLE - GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN.

**"The evidence for
our New Testament writings
is ever so much greater than the evidence
for many writings of classical authors,
the authenticity of which
no one dreams of questioning.
And if the New Testament were a collection
of secular writings, their authenticity
would generally be as beyond all doubt."
F. F. BRUCE.**

GOD'S WORD IS ETERNAL.

The Bible has proven to be indestructable.

It has withstood the tests of time,
and has consistently
shown its wonderful influences for a better life
wherever it has been studied and followed.

In every age it has been **challenged**
and strong efforts have been made
to completely destroy it.

All these attempts have failed.

GOD'S WORD IS ETERNAL.

Diocletian, a Roman emperor ruling most of the world in AD 301-304. Made a concentrated effort to destroy all bibles.

A later emperor **Constantine** asked for a copy of a bible & within 24 hours 50 copies were laid at his feet.

Diocletian had failed and instead of ridding the world of the bible his efforts only made it available to more people.

SCIENTIFIC FACTS STATED BEFORE MAN WAS AWARE OF THEM.

As mentioned before the Bible is scientifically accurate with many statements made years before these facts were accepted as truth by men.

Isaiah 40:22; says "He sits enthroned above the CIRCLE (KHUG) of the earth"

This refers to the world being round while many in the world thought the earth was flat until the time of Columbus.

SCIENTIFIC FACTS STATED BEFORE MAN WAS AWARE OF THEM.

Science in its simplest form means knowledge derived from observation, study and experimentation.

True science has limitations:-

There must be an **observation of the facts.**

The **statement of a problem.**

They must **experiment and test this hypothesis.**

If enough data is gathered to support the hypothesis it then becomes a theory.

The final step for something to become a law or true science is the theory must be thoroughly tested and firmly established that is true.

THE BIBLE - GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN.

The Bible and Astronomy. Astronomy is

**the study of the planets and the stars together
with their movements and relations to one another.**

“As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.”

Jeremiah 33:22;

150 BC Hipparchus estimated less than 3000 stars.

3 centuries later Ptolemy counted 1,056

By today's estimation 4000 stars can be seen by the naked eye. 100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 estimated stars in the universe.

He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name.

Great is our Lord, and mighty in power;

SCIENTIFIC FACTS STATED BEFORE MAN WAS AWARE OF THEM.

Psalm 89:35 Once for all I have sworn by my holiness;
I will not lie to David. 36 **His offspring** shall endure forever,
his throne as long as the sun before me. 37 **Like the moon**
it shall be established forever, a **faithful witness** in the skies.

**In this passage, God refers to the seed of David
as being like the moon in faithfulness.**

But, it is interesting that the Psalmists
would refer to the moon as a witness.

Why a witness? What does a witness do?

Does he not testify of something that he has seen or heard?

Likewise, the moon is a witness of the Sun's light on
the earth. The moon itself contains no natural light source.
The light that the moon gives off
is a reflection (**witness**) of the Sun's light.

**SCIENTIFIC FACTS STATED
BEFORE MAN WAS AWARE OF THEM.
The Big Bang Theory.**




Pagan and Proud of it!

The Cosmic Egg.

SCIENTIFIC FACTS STATED BEFORE MAN WAS AWARE OF THEM.

The Hebrew writer in the 11:3 tells us that the worlds were framed by the word of God and Romans 1:20;
For **since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.



The Bible teaches us that the God made the Universe **and that we** have no excuse to see that it was made by God. Even if didn't have the Bible we could tell that the Universe was created by someone because once you start seeing how mathematical precise our universe is **It should be clear that it had designer.**

The Cosmic Egg.

SCIENTIFIC FACTS STATED BEFORE MAN WAS AWARE OF THEM. **The Big Bang Theory**

Yet what do scientist do they cling to Big Bang Theory. They believe that about 20 Billon years ago all matter existed in small dense and hot mass called an “**cosmic egg**” that exploded 15 Billion years ago creating the universe as we know it.



Pagan and Proud of it!

The Cosmic Egg

No one seems to know where this cosmic egg came from. So, you could say that haven't been able to find the cosmic chicken yet. The Big Bang Theory has many problems that cannot be overcome.





The Earth:
93 million miles away from the sun.
Spins on its axis 1000 mph at the equator.
Makes minute adjustments to conform
to its elliptical track.



If was off by one tenth of an inch the earth would move toward outer space becoming a frozen ball.
If it were off one eighth of an inch it would be pulled into the sun and burned up.

SCIENTIFIC FACTS STATED BEFORE MAN WAS AWARE OF THEM.

Isaiah 40:22; It is He who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to dwell in.



SCIENTIFIC FACTS STATED BEFORE MAN WAS AWARE OF THEM.

Job 26:7; says "He spreads out the northern skies over the empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing."
Implying the law of gravity discovered by Newton in 1687.
Also there is an Empty space in the Northern Hemisphere.



**Psalm 19:1; “The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.”**

SCIENTIFIC FACTS STATED BEFORE MAN WAS AWARE OF THEM.



“The ancient Greeks and Romans were the most advanced peoples in their time, yet they believed that the earth was held in place by poles or by the neck of Atlas. **Others believed** that Atlas had the earth on his shoulders. **Others said** by four elephants standing on a giant turtle”
Some said that the earth floated on water and should one go too far out on the sea he would surely perish.”

SCIENTIFIC FACTS STATED BEFORE MAN WAS AWARE OF THEM.

Matthew Fontaine Murray discovered the sailing paths in the sea “Before Matthew Fontaine Murray lived there were no sailing lanes and few proper charts of the sea. One day, when he was ill, his son read to him from the eighth Psalm. He read that God put under man ‘...the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the *paths of the sea.*’”

‘Read that again’, he said. Upon hearing it the second time, the venerable scientists said, ‘**If the Word of God says** there are paths in the sea, they must be there. I will find them.’”
(Dehoff, pg. 53.)

He is called the father of Oceanography which is the study of the history, geography, motions and chemical composition of the Ocean.



Sea Charts

Bible

**Psalm 8:8; Refers to the "paths" in the sea.
Maurice Fontayne Murray. The father of Oceanography
discovered that the Ocean has currents or paths and
ships are now able to follow these paths,
taking advantage of the currents.**

**He used the Paths in the sea to show where to lay
an underground cable from Britain to America.**



The topography of the ocean floor.

Acts 27:28; So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms.

20 fathoms = 120 feet.

15 fathoms = 90 feet.



Psalm 33:7 He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses.

Job 38:16 "Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep?

In 1873 British scientist discovered a recess in the Pacific Ocean that was 5 ½ miles deep and then another team found an area that was over 6 miles deep.

“Before the invention of echo-sounding equipment it was generally thought that the bottom of the oceans would present the appearance of plains, plateaus and gently rolling terrain. Now we know that it also has valleys and mountain ranges, and even canyons, to equal all the forms we find on land.” (A.E. Parr)

Jonah 2:5-6; “The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head **at the roots of the mountains.**

I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.

Job 38:16; "Have you entered into the **springs of the sea,.. Earliest mentioning of these springs **in secular history** comes from Strabo around 63 B.C. – 21 A.D.**

The ocean:-

Covers around 70% of the earth's surface
Primary source of our life given rain.

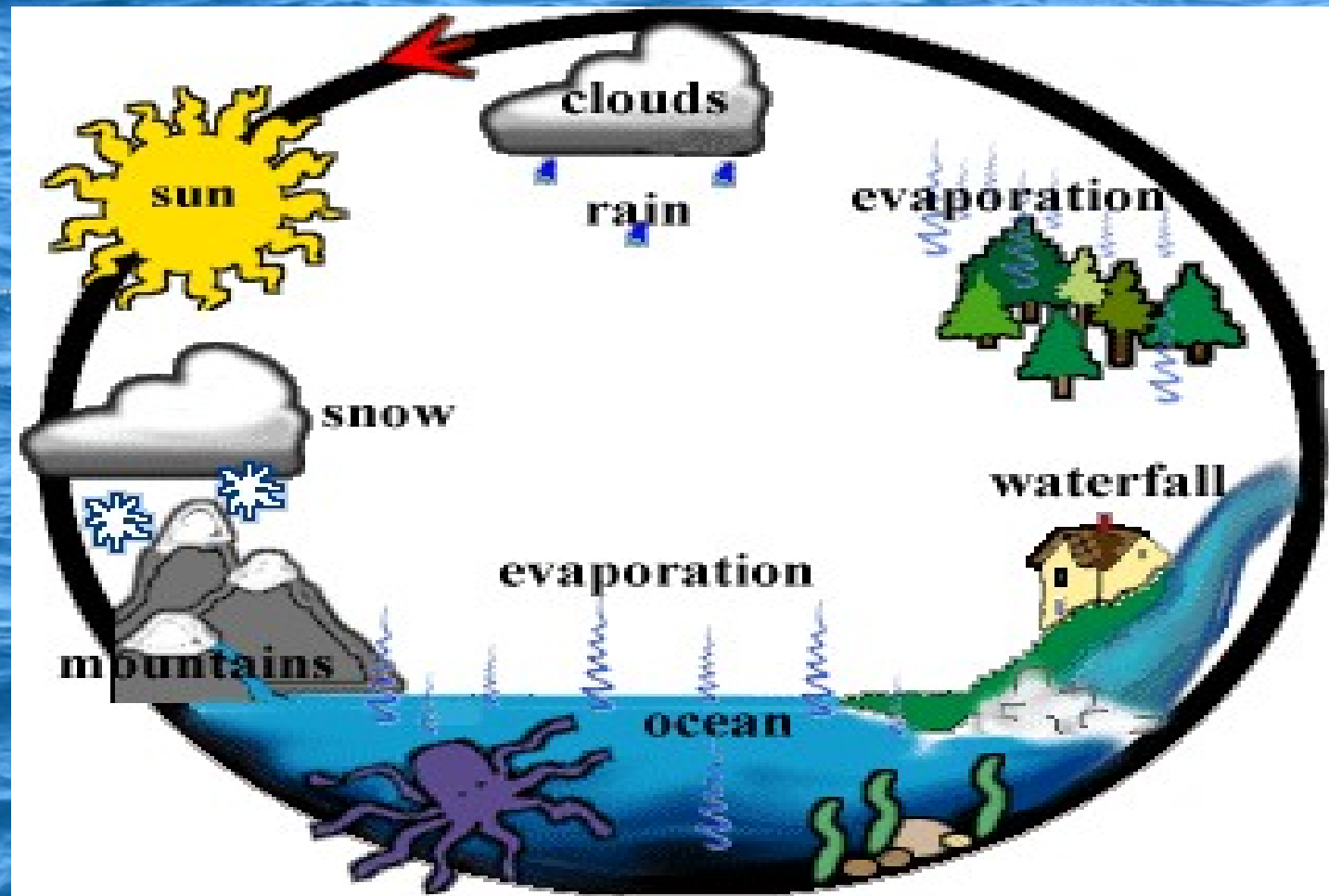
The Water Cycle:-

Job 36:27; For He draws up drops of water, Which distill as rain from the mist, 28 Which the clouds drop down And pour abundantly on man. 29 Indeed, can anyone understand the spreading of clouds, The thunder from His canopy?

Amos 5:8; “He calls for the waters of the sea And pours them out on the face of the earth; The LORD is His name.
(Around 760 B.C.)

Ecclesiastes 1:7; “All the rivers run into the sea, Yet the sea is not full; To the place from which the rivers come, there they return again. (Around 935 B.C.)

The water cycle:-



**Wasn't generally understood until
the 16th or 17th century.**

THE BIBLE:- GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN.

Other passages for your own research!

PSALM 109; SANDS SET BOUNDARY OF THE SEAS.

PSALM 107:16: SNOW LIKE WOOL.

PSALM 104:2; HEAVENS AS A CURTAIN.

These are but a few of the many Scientific references made in the Bible, written hundreds of years before man had any knowledge of the facts, and some of these concepts could only have been revealed at that time under the inspiration of God.

Voltaire, a well known French agnostic of the 18 century predicted that **the bible** would be an **unknown** book in 100 years. It is interesting to note that the **Geneva Bible Society** has been located for a period in Voltaire's former house, and in 1933, **40 bound volumes of Voltaire's works were sold for 8 shillings. (less than 50p)**

THE BIBLE:- GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN.

While in the same year the British Museum paid £100,000 for the Codex Sinaiticus.

Many communist countries were trying to suppress the bible, yet thousands of copies were flowing into these countries every year because of the demand for the Bible.

Throughout the years those who have opposed the bible have caused it to be read and believed by more people.

THE BIBLE'S MESSAGE CAN CHANGE US.

**Your words were found, and I ate them and
your words became to me a joy and
the delight of my heart" Jeremiah 15:16;**

**"The holy Scriptures are able to make you wise unto
salvation" 2 Tim 3:15;**

**"Receive with meekness the implanted word,
which is able to save your souls" Jam 1:21;**

THE BIBLE'S MESSAGE CAN CHANGE US.

**"These Jews of Berea were better disposed than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the Message with great readiness, and daily examined the scriptures to see if what was said was true."
20th Century New Testament.**

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." KJV. Acts 17:11;

**"The Bible can mean anything you want it to mean"
is a common enough claim and
there is a sense in which that is true.**

**The Bible can be made to say anything you want it
to say if you approach it with a certain
frame of mind that fails to observe
some basic rules of interpretation."**

**The existence of cults confirms how a bad
interpretation of Scripture produces bad results.
And even "mainstream" Christians sometimes have
beliefs and practices that owe their existence
to a wrong interpretation of Scripture.**



So how can we interpret the Bible correctly?

When we come to Scripture we must do so in a spirit of humility and dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

The author of the Bible is the Holy Spirit and He is its best interpreter.

We need to keep the following scriptures ever before us:-

2 Timothy 3:16-17;

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." 1 Peter 1:10-11;

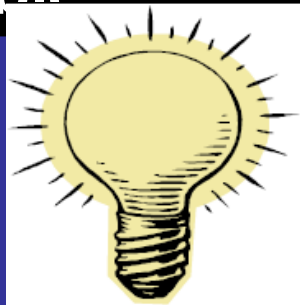
2 Peter 1:21;

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Divine Enlightenment:-

We must come to the Bible, not to have our opinions confirmed, our prejudices reinforced, our pet issues endorsed, or our "proof texts" approved, but to hear the voice of God and learn of His will for our life.

We must have a spirit of obedience and submission to the authority of His word each time we read the Bible



The attitude of the Psalmist is one we would do well to imitate:- "Open my eyes," he says, "that I may see wonderful things in your law." **Psalm 119:18**

The psalmist is asking for enlightenment, for insight, for understanding; **he is asking God to reveal His will.** Without the illumination of the Holy Spirit we will remain in darkness and not know the meaning of the Scriptures. Like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus whose mind the Lord opened so they could understand the Scriptures, we too need our mind to be opened by the Lord. (Luke 24:32)

But we must also exercise our mind through reflecting and meditating upon what God has said. A blessing is pronounced upon the man whose **"delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night."** (Psalms 1:2)

This man is engaged in prayerful reflection upon the word. **God's people have always sought spiritual enlightenment.**

A very perplexed prophet sought insight into what God had said and an angel came in answer to his prayer and said to him, **"Do not be afraid Daniel, Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them." (Daniel 10:12)."**

Paul gives this instruction to Timothy:-
"Reflect" he says, "on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this." (2 Timothy 2:7;)

To the community of believers in Philippi Paul says:-
"And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you." (Philippians 3:15)
The use of our mind, along with the guidance of the Spirit, is indispensable in our interpretation of the Bible.

The importance of interpreting the Bible correctly can be illustrated by the story of a very discouraged man who decided to seek comfort from the Bible.

He randomly opened the Bible and placed his finger on a verse in the hope that it would say something uplifting.

His finger landed on Matthew 27:5; which said:-

"Then Judas went away and hanged himself."

Finding no comfort there he repeated the procedure.

This time his finger landed on Luke 10:37;

"Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise"

He thought he would try one more time:-

This time his finger landed on John 13:27; which said,

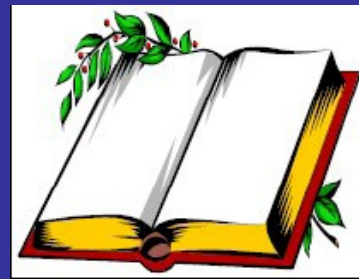
"What you are about to do, do quickly."



When Scripture is taken out of context, the results can be disastrous. Every cult and every heresy that has arisen in the church owes its origin to the MISINTERPRETATION of Scripture.

The point cannot be overstated that the context of each verse of Scripture must be respected.

Here are a few examples that should prove instructive.



THE SABBATH: TO WORK OR NOT TO WORK?

The fourth commandment could not be stated more clearly: **"But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work..."**
(Exodus 20:9-10;)

**There it is in black and white:-
"you shall not do any work".**

Is its meaning not obvious?

Well, not really, especially when other Scriptures are taken into consideration. It was the failure of the Pharisees on this very point that had them hurling accusations at Jesus for violating the Sabbath.



THE SABBATH: TO WORK OR NOT TO WORK?

They viewed what Jesus did on the Sabbath through this one Scripture and saw Him as a violator.

Jesus defended himself by saying, "Haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent?" (Matthew 12:5)

Of the seven days in the week, the Sabbath was the busiest day for the priests, yet they were INNOCENT of violating the law that said "you shall not do any work" on the Sabbath.

The problem created by the Pharisees was that they had taken this one verse of Scripture and neglected everything else God had said on the subject.



As a result, they turned the Sabbath into a religious straightjacket. And Jesus had to remind them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27;)

The Sabbath was intended by God to be a gracious blessing to His people Israel, not a religious burden as the Pharisees had made it.

Jesus performed miracles on the Sabbath, and therefore was working, to show the Pharisees that **their narrow interpretation of this Scripture was wrong. (John 5:16-18;)**

**Scripture must be understood in its context
and supported by other Scriptures
that address the same subject.**

**This should produce
a correct interpretation of Scripture.**

What have we learned so far?

**When the law says "you shall not do any work,"
we have seen that it was never intended to prevent
the priests doing their work on the Sabbath,
nor was it intended to prevent
a work of kindness being done on the Sabbath.**

TO CIRCUMCISE OR NOT TO CIRCUMCISE?

The early Galatian congregations were being infected with false teaching that said circumcision was necessary for one to be saved. (Acts 15:5;) This teaching was an **ATTACK** upon the **GOSPEL** of Jesus Christ.

Having established that it is by **GRACE**, not by circumcision or any other legalistic work, **THAT WE ARE SAVED.**

Paul gives clear teaching on the consequences of opting for a legalistic religion:-

"Mark my words! I Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law." (Galatians 5:2-3;)

Paul is teaching that when the gospel is supplemented with the legalistic requirement of circumcision, it nullifies the death of Jesus for that person. **Why?**



How do we resolve this dilemma?

Paul teaches the Galatians that circumcision is not a salvation issue.

Jesus is the saviour, not circumcision!

Therefore one does NOT need to be circumcised in order to be saved.

The context in which Paul forbids circumcision is when it is made a CONDITION of salvation.

BUT when Paul circumcises Timothy, it has nothing to do with salvation.

Rather Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him “because of the Jews in that area.” (Acts 16:3;) Paul would not have been allowed to bring an uncircumcised Gentile into the Synagogues.

This has nothing to do with salvation; it was an expedient. There is no contradiction when the context is respected.

TO BAPTISE OR NOT TO BAPTISE?

Paul said, "For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the gospel..." (1 Corinthians 1:17;)

Paul's words to the Corinthians have created needless confusion among Christian people but they serve to show how important it is to have a proper method of interpreting the Scriptures.

If we take Paul's words without due respect to their context we create an enormous problem by **presuming Paul contradicts himself and the whole tenor of Scripture on the subject of baptism.**

If Paul was NOT sent to baptise, then we have to ask some searching questions.

TO BAPTISE OR NOT TO BAPTISE?

**Is Paul playing down the importance of baptism
as a response to the gospel?**

**Or are we to believe that Jesus gave him a commission
that differed from the one given to the disciples
before ascending to heaven when He said:-**

**"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptising them in the name of the Father and of the
Son and of the Holy Spirit?" (Matthew 28:18-19;)**

**Why did he baptise some believers in Corinth
when he was NOT to baptise?**

**"I am thankful," he says, "that I did not baptise
any of you except Crispus and Gaius...
I also baptised the household of Stephanas."
(1 Corinthians 1:14-16;)**

TO BAPTISE OR NOT TO BAPTISE?

**When Paul baptised these people was
HE BEING DISOBEDIENT TO CHRIST?**

**Furthermore, why did Paul take some of those
disciples who had received John the Baptist's
baptism and re-immense them? (Acts 19:1-5;)**

**This is very strange behaviour for a man who was not sent to
baptise. Or was he not sent to baptise only in Corinth?
And if Paul was not sent to baptise, is that not strange
For a man who himself submitted to baptism and called
upon the Lord to save him from his sins? (Acts 22:16;)**



TO BAPTISE OR NOT TO BAPTISE?

Paul's words are found in the middle of a discussion about **division in the church** at Corinth.

The believers had divided themselves into factions.
"I follow Paul", "I follow Apollos", "I follow Cephas",
"I follow Christ". (1 Corinthians 1:12;)

Because of the divisive spirit within the church, Paul is glad not to have baptised any more of them, **"so that no one can say you were baptised into my name"** (1 Cor 1:15;) and **then claim that they belonged to Paul and not to the Christ who died for them.**



TO BAPTISE OR NOT TO BAPTISE?

Paul saw that if he had baptised many of the believers this might contribute further to the problem of division and for this reason he said that Jesus didn't send him to baptise, **that is, not to form a sectarian party in his own name.**

Summary.

When the Bible says:-

"you shall not do any work on the Sabbath."

It does NOT mean that
work of every kind must cease.



Summary.

When the Bible says:-

**"if you let yourselves be circumcised,
Christ will be of no value to you."**

It does NOT mean circumcision
is prohibited in all circumstances.

When the Bible says:-

"Christ did not send me to baptise",

It is NOT minimising the importance
of baptism as a response to the gospel.

HOW ARE WE TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT.

God has **revealed His will in the Scriptures** with the obvious intention of being understood. So when we **READ** the Bible we **NEED TO KNOW** if we are reading **historical narrative, poetry, psalms, prophecy, doctrine or an account of the life of Jesus.**

Furthermore, we need to appreciate the distinctive **style** of each writer and the **cultural background** against which he wrote.



HOW ARE WE TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

Some Guiding Principles.

There are "**tools**" we can use to ensure that we strive to arrive at a **correct interpretation of the Scriptures.**

For example, if you were interpreting the letters the following must be kept in mind:-



HOW ARE WE TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

1. To whom was the letter written?
2. What was the purpose of the letter?
3. How would the recipient of the letter have understood it?
4. What is the obvious meaning of the text?
5. What is the context of the text?
6. Is the text written with a particular historical setting or culture in mind?
7. Is the interpretation in harmony with the rest of Scripture?
8. A text always means what the author intended it to mean.



HOW ARE WE TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

Let's look at a few examples that show the importance of applying these tools.

Both James and Paul find a common ally in Abraham to support what they are teaching.

Paul sees in Abraham the perfect example of a man justified by faith apart from works. Rom 4:1-3;

**While James sees in Abraham the perfect example of a man justified by faith that does works.
(James 2:21-24;)**

HOW ARE WE TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

Both men can legitimately call upon Abraham for the support they need in what they are teaching.

**Paul is arguing against the LEGALISM that was creeping into the church;
A legalism that taught that one could NOT be saved unless one performed works.**

This teaching, though well intentioned, was **an attack upon the gospel** that claims the **death burial and resurrection of Jesus** is the basis of our salvation.

HOW ARE WE TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

James, on the other hand, teaches that a living faith can be SEEN because it is an ACTIVE faith.

The faith of Abraham responded in obedience to the command of God to offer up his son Isaac.

James sees in this incident a living faith, responding to the commands of God.

While Paul is teaching that works (meritorious deeds done in an attempt to earn God's favour) have NO part in our salvation.

Paul and James are not in conflict.
(as Luther thought)

Once we understand the context of their teaching.

HOW ARE WE TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

Another example is found in Romans 6.

This chapter states that in baptism the penitent sinner is identified, by faith, with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and becomes a new creation in Christ.

But it is not Paul's primary purpose in this chapter to teach about baptism.

His MAIN purpose is to answer the foolish question "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?"

(Romans 6:1;)

HOW ARE WE TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

He does this by showing how **UNACCEPTABLE** it is for one who has been baptised to **CONTINUE** living in sin:

It's not impossible, but it's totally incompatible with the profession of faith made in baptism.

The emphasis of the chapter is on **holy living**, not on the need to be baptised, though one's need to be baptised is included. We can only see this emphasis **when we ask the text the right questions and use the text as intended by the writer.**

HOW ARE WE TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

Philippians 2:1-11; Provides another example.

With utmost clarity Paul shows that Jesus is indeed God, but that is not his main point.

Paul is concerned with showing that Jesus is God who BECAME A SERVANT, so that believers will see Him as a MODEL TO IMITATE.

We will miss the instruction to live as servants, if we miss the main purpose for which the text was written.

HOW ARE WE TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

How often have we heard these words used to provide assurance when only a few turn up for the prayer meeting:-

"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:20;)

**That the Lord is ALWAYS WITH US
is the testimony of His word.
(Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5-6;)**

But the words of our Lord are stated in the context of church discipline being taken by the leaders of the church towards an unrepentant sinner.

HOW ARE WE TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

**In the decision they have to take,
the Lord is with them.**

**We will gain a fuller understanding of God and
His will for our lives, and in some cases
avoid outright heresy and church division.**

**If our interpretation of Scripture is the result of
asking the text the right questions and attempting
to understand the context of each passage.**

**When we ask the right questions of the text
we OUGHT to end up with the right answers.**

Studying a small section of Scripture.

This might be a chapter (although chapter divisions are not always good dividing points in understanding the meaning).

It could be a prayer, parable, miracle or a statement.

Certain rules apply in this type of study.

1. Always see the passage, in light of what comes before and what follows.

See it in its setting or context.

For example:- Luke 10:29; is important in understanding the parable of the good Samaritan. (Luke 10:30-37).

CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

**2. Read the passage and try to understand it as a whole.
To crystallize a passage into a sentence helps clear thinking.**

A simple example would be Hebrew 1.

This passage demonstrates from the Jew' s own scriptures the superiority of Christ to Angels, and shows Him to be the divine Son of God. You may not yet understand all the details of the passage, but you can grasp the overall thrust.

**3. After getting the feel of the passage,
it is good to make an analysis of its contents.
For example:- I Corinthians 13 could be entitled
"The More Excellent Way." (see I Cor 12:31;)**

CORRECTLY INTERPRET SCRIPTURE?

We know its subject is love and partial gifts;
Now we need to break it down.

- a) The all importance of Love. vs.1-3;
- b) The definition of Love. vs.4-7.
- c) The permanence of Love in contrast to the Temporary gifts. vs.8-13.
- d) The Temporary state of the revealed word and the mature state when the rest of the word is revealed.

4. Consider other Scriptures that shed light on the one you are considering for example Eph 4:4;.

The use of a reference Bible or Concordance is important here.

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

5. Look up words or phrases that you do not fully understand or that you feel you need to get a deeper understanding of.

For example:- James 5:7-8;.

The word "**Patient**" needs to be understood.

A Dictionary or Commentary would tell you that it is more than to passively sit down and bear something but it is to actively move forward towards a goal, in the face of difficulty.

The exhortation then is not to sit and wait for the Lord. But press on, keep going, in spite of every unfavourable situation, until the Lord comes.

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

ASK the QUESTIONS!.

- 1. What does it say?**
- 2. What does it mean?**
- 3. How can I apply it to my life?**

The Study of a Person in the Bible!

There are over 3,000 different people mentioned in Scripture so we have plenty of choice!

It is possible to select a specific group of People to study.

- 1. Anonymous characters.**
- 2. Jesus' friends.**
- 3. Kings.**
- 4. Rich men.**
- 5. Servants.**
- 6. People who become Christians, etc. etc.**

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

A character study can be very rewarding for we can learn from the people that have travelled the path before us.

Both from their success and from their failure.

A simple **Concordance** study can prove very rewarding. Within minutes, one can have all the places that a person is mentioned in scripture and a character study is born.

Books are also available with specific character studies. The most common are:-

ALL THE MEN OF THE BIBLE.

and WOMEN OF THE BIBLE.

Both written by Herbert Lockyer.

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

Other books deal with a few characters in detail, some just one character.

F.B. Meyer's '**ELIJAH**' is a good study.

A Bible Dictionary will also have **all the characters** of the Bible listed and information on their lives.

Procedure.

1) It is helpful in studying a Character to try to divide his life up in some way.

Even if it is only into childhood, manhood etc.

Example:- Jonah.

1. Running away from God. 2. Running back to God.

3. Running with God. 4. Running ahead of God.

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

Or John the Baptist.

1. His family background.
2. His preparation.
3. His manner of life.
4. His mission or work.
5. His message.
6. His character.
7. His death.

In studying a character, it is good to try to get some idea as to the time and situation in which he lived.

For example:- To understand **Jeremiah's** situation helps greatly in appreciating his character.

Writing a **biography** of the person's life is a good way to become acquainted with him or her.

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

One writer suggests the following.

15 Points in doing a character study.

1. **Collect all the material** which the Bible contains concerning the one character about to be studied.
(Note different characters of the same name.)
2. **Carefully study** the ancestry of each character, and especially the characteristics of the parents, if they are known.
3. **Attempt to estimate** the advantages in training which the subject of your study had during the early days of his or her youth.
4. **Carefully attempt** to determine the work which your characters accomplished.

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

5. **What was the** great crisis in this person's life, and how did he meet it?
6. **What traits** of character does this person display throughout his life?
7. **What friendships** did the man have? Were they noble or ignoble; did they help him or hinder him in his life work?
8. **Determine, as far as possible**, the influence this particular character had upon others, upon the nation, upon the history of religion.
9. **What growth does** the character of this person show?

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

10. **Carefully determine** the religious experience of the character you are studying.

His prayer life, faith in God, service of God, knowledge of the Scriptures, courage in testimony, and his attitude in worship.

11. **What faults** and short comings are revealed?

12. **What do you find** to be the character and influence of this person's children?

13. **What do you think** was the great sin in any one character's life, if there is one? What was the nature of the sin? What steps lead up to the sin? What effect did this sin have upon this person's future?

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

14. **In what way** do you think the character you are studying is a type or anti-type of Christ?
(If one at all?)

15. **What is the** one great lesson in this person's life for you?

A WORD STUDY!

Word meanings are vitally important.

Their meanings are often obscured in translation
and only as we dig beneath the surface
do we grasp the deeper meaning.

WORD STUDY HELPS and RESOURCES.

There are a number of good word studies that show how rewarding such a study can be.

William Barclays' "New Testament Words" is a study of about 60 important New Testament words.

W.E. Vine's "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words" is a more general work listing most of the important New Testament words.

Words like "**grace,**" "**faith,**" "**justification,**" are rich in meaning and need to be understood fully if we are to read the Bible intelligently.

Even the tenses of words can be very important in a proper understanding of Scripture.

See I John 3:9; The present infinitive is used, which means he does not continue in sin or sin habitually.

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

The use of several different methods of study should be used, in order to get a balanced diet.

If we only **studied characters**, we would be weak on doctrine.

If we only **studied doctrines**, we would become depressed seeing only the ideal and not the real.

Remember, as the following statements indicate, the richest rewards are to the diligent student!:-

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

A. Richard C. Trench said:- "Holy Scripture is not the Book for the slothful.

It is a field, rather, upon the surface of which, if sometimes we gather manna easily and without labour, given as it were, freely to our hands;"

“yet of which also many portions are to be cultivated with pains and toil, ere they will yield food for the use of man.”

“This bread of life also is to be eaten in the wholesome sweat of our brow's.”

HELPFUL WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE!

After fifty years of Bible study,

G. Campbell Morgan said:-

"The Bible yields its treasures to honest toil more readily than does any other serious literature.

The Bible never yields to indolence".

USEFUL EXERCISES.

Do a character study on one
of the following people:-

1. John the Baptist. 2. Joseph. 3. Samuel.
4. Timothy. 5. Lydia. 6. Martha and Mary.

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Some say no!

“Without supernatural help, the common man cannot understand the Bible.

They point to the many divisions in Protestantism to prove their point.”

Those who say no! Quote 2 Peter 1:20; NASB

“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation.”

“They interpret this verse to mean that no individual can interpret the Scripture by himself!

He must depend on the church to tell him what the Scriptures mean.”

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

What does the Bible say about
the Bible being understandable?

Timothy understood. 2 Tim 3:15; NKJV)

“and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, **which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”**

**Timothy understood, from childhood.
And that was the Old Testament!**

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

The Art of Bible Study is, to some extent, one which man has to learn for himself, but there is a good deal which may be passed on from one learner to another.

Whole books were to be read to congregations.

1 Thess 5:27; “I charge you by the Lord that this letter be read to all the holy brethren.”

Paul said **when they read, they would understand.**

Eph 3:4; “by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.”

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Parts of books were addressed to husbands,
wives, slaves, and children.

Eph 6:1; “Children, obey your parents in the Lord,
for this is right.”

Those addressed were expected to understand
what the will of the Lord was for them.

Eph 5:17; “Therefore do not be unwise,
but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

That is the WAY we NEED to understand it.
It offers truth on every spiritual subject.
If there is a problem
it is in OUR misunderstanding.

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

That is why Paul could expect Christians to be in harmony when they speak, or think, or discern:-

1 Cor 1:10; “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be **no divisions** among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

The New Testament consistently speaks of
“THE FAITH.”

Acts 6:7; “A great many of the priests were obedient to THE FAITH.”

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Eph 4:5; “one Lord, ONE FAITH, one baptism.”

Eph 4:13; “till we all come to the **UNITY**
of THE FAITH.”

2 Cor 13:5; “Examine yourselves as to whether
you are in THE FAITH.”

1 Tim 6:10; “some have **strayed from** THE FAITH.”

Jude 1:3; “to contend earnestly for THE FAITH which
was **ONCE for ALL** delivered to the saints.”

We SHOULD TRY to understand the Bible alike.
Partly so that:- John 17:21;
“the **WORLD** may **BELIEVE.**”

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

We should be able to understand the Bible alike.
But, often we do not understand the Bible alike.
Why is that?

Sometimes our understanding is affected:-

By our heart. Or

A desire to justify a particular doctrine.

A conclusion we want to keep.

A prejudice from past experiences or teachings.

An attitude of not accepting.

We must be honest seekers. 

2 Thess 2:10; “receive the love of the truth,
that they might be saved.”

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?



Sometimes our understanding
is affected by our head.



**We must be willing to take time to study.
The Bible is the most important book we will ever
study because of its eternal consequences.**

**We should apply our best abilities
in a most diligent way to understand its truths.
We should desire to grow in our ability
to study and understand the Bible.**

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

**We need to look at a few fundamental principles
of “How to Study the Bible.”**

**Then we need to apply them
to resolve any alleged contradictions.**

READ IT!

**It may sound absurd to suggest that
the first method of Bible study is to read the Bible,
but it is much needed advice.**

**The unfamiliarity of the average Christian
with most parts of the Bible is one reason
why many never grow in Christ.**

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

**Listed below are 6 questions of Jesus
from one gospel only!**

"have ye not read (Genesis?)" - Matt 19:4;

"have ye not read (Exodus ?)" - Matt 22:31;

**"have ye not read in the Law?
(Leviticus and numbers)." - Matt 12:5;**

**"have ye not read what David did? (1 Sam?)"
- Matt 12:3;**

"have ye not read? (Psalms?) " - Matt 21:16;

**"have ye not read in the Scriptures? (Psalms?)"
- Matt**

21:41;

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

These questions were asked of the religious leaders of the Jews, and they imply that the chief weakness from which the nation was suffering was ignorance of the real meaning of the Scriptures that they so highly cherished.

Matt 22: 29; **Jesus said to them:-**

"You keep going astray because you are men who do not know the Scriptures or the Power of God"

Throughout History, revival and reformation have only come when people have turned back to reading the Scriptures.

Read 2 Chronicles 34:14-33; and Nehemiah 8:1-18;

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

**Of what importance are the scriptures,
in the light of 2 Timothy 3:15-17;**

1. "Make wise unto Salvation."

2. "profitable for teaching."

3. "For reproof."

4. "For correction."

**5. "For training or instruction unto
righteousness."**

**6. "That we might be equipped completely
for every good work."**

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Read with understanding.

It's not important how much we read,
it's what we get out of it.

We need to think about what we are reading.

Read with Prayer.

Ask God for wisdom in understanding it aright.
James 1:5;

Read with a notebook and pencil at the ready.

Jot down in your own words
what you are reading.

Make a note of any words you don't understand.
Marking one's Bible can also be helpful.

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Read one thing at a time.

Don't wander all over the Bible ' If you start with Mark's Gospel (this is a good place to start) stick at it; don't give up and start reading Psalms.

Remember the Books of the Bible are meant to be read as a whole.

The Bible is not meant to be used in bits and pieces to prove what we believe.

Read with an open mind.

Ask 'what is God saying', rather than going to it to find what we want. This may mean us changing as we find new truths, This takes courage. But the only way in which God's Word can help us is when we go to it eagerly, seeking what it has to say.

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Read with persistence.

If you read something and don't understand it,
don't give up. Read it again.

Look up what it means (see tools for Bible study)
or ask someone to help you understand.

Apply what we read.

It is never good enough just to know
what the Bible says.

All our learning should lead to living!

We need to apply to our lives what we read.

READING THROUGH THE BIBLE IN A YEAR.

Reading through the Bible requires developing a plan
of daily reading that holds events and prophecies of
the Old Testament in perspective with the heart of divine
revelation as embodied in Jesus the Christ.

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE? WHY READ THE BIBLE THROUGH?.

The Bible is worth reading because:-

"all scripture is profitable for teaching reproof, correction, and training in righteousness".

It is God's speaking to us, every book chapter and verse has a message worth reading and understanding, although we may not understand all of what we read.

We must seek out the truth of scripture that we might be "equipped for every good work"

2 Tim 3:17;

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

The Bible reveals God's nature to us in many of its multifaceted forms.

We need to gain the panoramic view of God's power, wrath, love, mercy, intelligence, pity, and greatness, to begin to understand that He is the same I AM of Exodus that we hear Him say "This is my beloved son in whom I AM well pleased" Matt 3:17;

Reading the Bible ought not to be a drudgery but an insight into heavenly places. It contains some of the greatest literature of the world.

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

In the 18th Century a gentle man was not a gentleman until he had read the word of God.

**It can be exciting, captivating, inspiring,
filled with tragedy and humour.**

When we allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us through God's word, our reading crosses over from mere enjoyment to **life transformation.**

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Set aside a definite time each day no matter how you feel, the beginning of the day is best.

Consider it a daily appointment with God, and keep the appointment faithfully.

Read deliberately without letting the pressure of time cause you to hurry.

Drink deeply of God's word, let the people, events and teachings come alive for your life.

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Use Bible study aids such as Concordance, Bible Dictionaries, and Atlases. don't let them take over from your Bible reading.

Read for overall understanding.

Read the bible over and over until it has become familiar to you, not in every detail but in overall scope, get the BIG picture.

Pick a book and read it several times until its stories become alive, its overall purpose becomes clear and its message cheers your heart.

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Read from different versions.

Keep a notebook so that you can record your thoughts or comments or questions.

Perhaps try to write the passage in a paraphrase style?

**Read prayerfully with a desire to know God more;
a desire to know His will better; a desire to
understand what you already know deeper;
a desire to be a doer of the word
not just a hearer only.**

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

The NEED - Over a hundred years ago there was produced in Paris a book that had a striking history. **A Frenchman** named Henri Lassevre picked one up in an idle moment, and became engrossed in it.

He realised suddenly that he was reading the gospels with great interest, **simply because** he had forgotten it was the Bible and, therefore **supposed to be dull!**

This led him to make a simple translation of the four gospels, resembling an ordinary French novel. **The book sold like hot cakes and reached a 25th edition.**

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Many today fail to find the Bible of interest because they use it as a scrap book to pick and choose bits from here and there, instead of taking a book and studying it.

Always ask and answer clearly what can this book teach me.

Can I find in it something to strengthen my faith and trust in God.

Can I find in it any example to follow?

Can I find in it any command to obey?

Can I find in it any promise to claim?

Can I find in it any warning?

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

**Can I find in it anything to lead me
to praise and thank God?**

Can I find in it any prayer to echo?

**Can I find in it any thought to share with others?
How can the message of this book change my life?**

Principles #1:- Occasion?

Consider the occasion when originally spoken or written.

Who is speaking or writing (and who does he represent)?

Who is being addressed (and who do they represent)?

How would the original audience have understood the meaning?

Principles #2: Context?

Consider the context of the message.

The **immediate** context—the statements just before and just after.

The **broader** context—the occasion and message of the entire letter or speech.

The **subject** context— all that we know from the Bible about the subject.

God's entire revelation and “flow” of Scripture.

Principles #3: Language?

Consider the language used.

How does the author use those words or phrases on this and other occasions?

How do other NT authors use those words or phrases?

What kind of expression is it, - literal, figurative, poetic, a proverbial saying?

Are there translation or textual issues involved?

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

The Bible was never written to answer specifically every possible eventuality that may arise in life, but there are principles in Scripture that give us divine guidance concerning the issues we face today.

Jesus taught that such principles exist. He said, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread – which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests." (Matthew 12:3-4;)

There is no doubt that those to whom Jesus spoke had read about this event many times, but never grasped the broad principle enshrined in the text.

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Jesus explains that human need - in this case, David relieving the hunger of himself and his men, in some cases is more important than ceremonial law.

Hence Jesus words, "Have you not read...?"

This was a passage he expected them to understand.

The Apostle Paul understood this principle very well.

In his letter to Timothy, he says that the elders who both shepherd and teach the church are to be paid for their work. (1 Timothy 5:17;)

And where does Paul go for his proof text?



CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Straight to Deuteronomy 25:4: A text with instruction for the fair treatment of an ox:
"Do not muzzle the ox while it treads out the grain."

Paul understood **the principle** that if **God is concerned** for the **fair treatment** of a **working ox** - that he can eat the fruit of his labour and must not be prevented from doing so.

Surely it follows that God is also concerned for the financial welfare of those who work in leading His church.

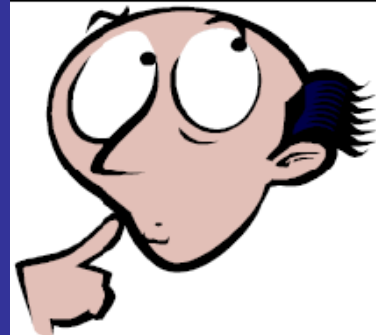
CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

FINDING AN EQUIVALENT FOR TODAY.

We need to learn to read the Bible with an eye open to the broader application of the text.

For example, Jesus said, "And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward." (Matthew 10:42;)

How can we take the words of Jesus about giving "A CUP OF COLD WATER" in His name and find an acceptable equivalent for today?



CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

If you went to Siberia – in winter, – the last thing they need is a cup of cold water.

What would be an acceptable equivalent?

Would a cup of hot soup, a warm blanket, or pair of gloves qualify? Of course they would.

The rigid, narrow approach to Scripture embraced by the Pharisees, (and by some Christians today) was the root of so many of their problems.

They would have taken the words of Jesus - **"a cup of cold water"** - and debated as to whether or not the water could be served in a glass, or must it only be a cup, and just how cold should the water be?

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Would lukewarm water be okay?

Endless debate and discussion would have revolved around the text **while the central point would have been missed entirely.**

At one time scholars spent years arguing over how many angels would be able to stand on top of a pin head?

Although we must be very careful.

It is legitimate to move outside the actual words of Scripture in embracing **a principle** that harmonises with the will of God.

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

For example, we are told, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink." (Romans 12:20;)

To fulfill this instruction must the needs of our enemy be met only by supplying him with groceries and beverages, or could we fulfil the teaching of this Scripture by providing him with the **funds** to become **self-employed**?

Could we **fund a training course** that would qualify him for gainful employment? **Of course we could.**

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

If someone objects and says, "Where in the Bible does it say that we have the right to finance a training course for someone?"

We reply by saying it is divinely enshrined in the words, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him."

The Bible teaches us that meeting man's needs is more important than ceremonial law and that being merciful to one in need is the right thing to do.

But we must also realize that in doing good to our fellow man does NOT give us the right to IGNORE the Bible and start making up OUR OWN RULES AND LAWS for worship and religious practice.

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

The principles found in Scripture provide us with the authority from God to do what needs to be done in carrying out His will.

And because **"all Scripture is God-breathed"** it is said to be **"useful... for every good work."**
(2 Timothy 3:16;)

Let us always approach Scripture with prayer, reverence and humility so that we can understand how to apply the principles taught therein.

WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE.

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**Next in the series:-
Who is the Holy Spirit?**