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## **A GUIDE TO GOOD BIBLE READING: A PERSONAL SEARCH FOR VERIFIABLE TRUTHS**

Can we know truth? Where is it found? Can we logically verify it? Is there an ultimate authority? Are there absolutes which can guide our lives, our world? Is there meaning to life? Why are we here? Where are we going? These questions—questions that all rational people contemplate—have haunted the human intellect since the beginning of time (Eccl. 1:13-18; 3:9-11). I can remember my personal search for an integrating center for my life. I became a believer in Christ at a young age, based primarily on the witness of significant others in my family. As I grew to adulthood, questions about myself and my world also grew. Simple cultural and religious clichés did not bring meaning to the experiences I read about or encountered. It was a time of confusion, searching, longing, and often a feeling of hopelessness in the face of the insensitive, hard world in which I lived.

Many claimed to have answers to these ultimate questions, but after research and reflection I found that their answers were based upon (1) personal philosophies, (2) ancient myths, (3) personal experiences, or (4) psychological projections. I needed some degree of verification, some evidence, some rationality on which to base my world-view, my integrating center, my reason to live.

I found these in my study of the Bible. I began to search for evidence of its trustworthiness, which I found in (1) the historical reliability of the Bible as confirmed by archaeology, (2) the accuracy of the prophecies of the Old Testament, (3) the unity of the Bible message over the sixteen hundred years of its production, and (4) the personal testimonies of people whose lives had been permanently changed by contact with the Bible. Christianity, as a unified system of faith and belief, has the ability to deal with complex questions of human life. Not only did this provide a rational framework, but the experiential aspect of biblical faith brought me emotional joy and stability.

I thought that I had found the integrating center for my life—Christ, as understood through the Scriptures. It was a heady experience, an emotional release. However, I can still remember the shock and pain when it began to dawn on me how many different interpretations of this book were advocated, sometimes even within the same churches and schools of thought. Affirming the inspiration and trustworthiness of the Bible was not the end, but only the beginning. How do I verify or reject the varied and conflicting interpretations of the many difficult passages in Scripture by those who were claiming its authority and trustworthiness?

This task became my life's goal and pilgrimage of faith. I knew that my faith in Christ had (1) brought me great peace and joy. My mind longed for some absolutes in the midst of the relativity of my culture (post-modernity); (2) the dogmatism of conflicting religious systems (world religions); and (3) denominational arrogance. In my search for valid approaches to the interpretation of ancient literature, I was surprised to discover my own historical, cultural, denominational and experiential biases. I had often read the Bible simply to reinforce my own views. I used it as a source of dogma to attack others while reaffirming my own insecurities and inadequacies. How painful this realization was to me!

Although I can never be totally objective, I can become a better reader of the Bible. I can limit my biases by identifying them and acknowledging their presence. I am not yet free of them, but I have confronted my own weaknesses. The interpreter is often the worst enemy of good Bible reading!

Let me list some of the presuppositions I bring to my study of the Bible so that you, the reader, may examine them along with me:

### **I. Presuppositions**

- A. I believe the Bible is the sole inspired self-revelation of the one true God. Therefore, it must be interpreted in light of the intent of the original divine author (the Spirit) through a human writer in a specific historical setting.

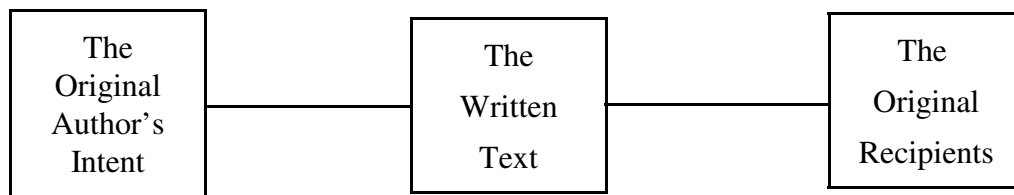
- B. I believe the Bible was written for the common person—for all people! God accommodated Himself to speak to us clearly within a historical and cultural context. God does not hide truth—He wants us to understand! Therefore, it must be interpreted in light of its day, not ours. The Bible should not mean to us what it never meant to those who first read or heard it. It is understandable by the average human mind and uses normal human communication forms and techniques.
- C. I believe the Bible has a unified message and purpose. It does not contradict itself, though it does contain difficult and paradoxical passages. Thus, the best interpreter of the Bible is the Bible itself.
- D. I believe that every passage (excluding prophecies) has one and only one meaning based on the intent of the original, inspired author. Although we can never be absolutely certain we know the original author’s intent, many indicators point in its direction:
  1. the genre (literary type) chosen to express the message
  2. the historical setting and/or specific occasion that elicited the writing
  3. the literary context of the entire book as well as each literary unit
  4. the textual design (outline) of the literary units as they relate to the whole message
  5. the specific grammatical features employed to communicate the message
  6. the words chosen to present the message
  7. parallel passages

The study of each of these areas becomes the object of our study of a passage. Before I explain my methodology for good Bible reading, let me delineate some of the inappropriate methods being used today that have caused so much diversity of interpretation, and that consequently should be avoided:

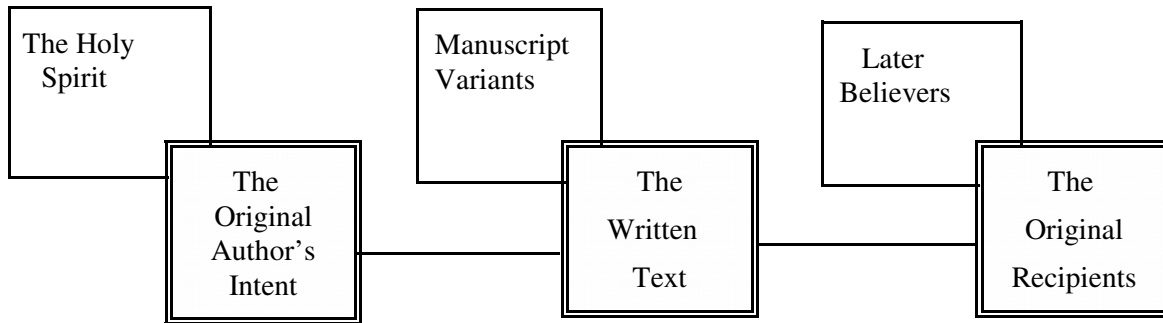
**II. Inappropriate Methods**

- A. Ignoring the literary context of the books of the Bible and using every sentence, clause, or even individual words as statements of truth unrelated to the author’s intent or the larger context. This is often called “proof-texting.”
- B. Ignoring the historical setting of the books by substituting a supposed historical setting that has little or no support from the text itself.
- C. Ignoring the historical setting of the books and reading it as the morning hometown newspaper written primarily to modern individual Christians.
- D. Ignoring the historical setting of the books by allegorizing the text into a philosophical/theological message totally unrelated to the first hearers and the original author’s intent.
- E. Ignoring the original message by substituting one’s own system of theology, pet doctrine, or contemporary issue unrelated to the original author’s purpose and stated message. This phenomenon often follows the initial reading of the Bible as a means of establishing a speaker’s authority. This is often referred to as “reader response” (“what-the-text-means-to-me” interpretation).

At least three related components may be found in all written human communication:



In the past, different reading techniques have focused on one of the three components. But to truly affirm the unique inspiration of the Bible, a modified diagram is more appropriate:



In truth all three components must be included in the interpretive process. For the purpose of verification, my interpretation focuses on the first two components: the original author and the text. I am probably reacting to the abuses I have observed (1) allegorizing or spiritualizing texts and (2) “reader response” interpretation (what-it-means-to-me). Abuse may occur at each stage. We must always check our motives, biases, techniques, and applications. But how do we check them if there are no boundaries to interpretations, no limits, no criteria? This is where authorial intent and textual structure provide me with some criteria for limiting the scope of possible valid interpretations.

In light of these inappropriate reading techniques, what are some possible approaches to good Bible reading and interpretation which offer a degree of verification and consistency?

### III. Possible Approaches to Good Bible Reading

At this point I am not discussing the unique techniques of interpreting specific genres but general hermeneutical principles valid for all types of biblical texts. A good book for genre-specific approaches is *How To Read The Bible For All Its Worth*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, published by Zondervan.

My methodology focuses initially on the reader allowing the Holy Spirit to illumine the Bible through four personal reading cycles. This makes the Spirit, the text and the reader primary, not secondary. This also protects the reader from being unduly influenced by commentators. I have heard it said: “The Bible throws a lot of light on commentaries.” This is not meant to be a depreciating comment about study aids, but rather a plea for an appropriate timing for their use.

We must be able to support our interpretations from the text itself. Three areas provide at least limited verification:

1. the original author's
  - a. historical setting
  - b. literary context
2. the original author's choice of
  - a. grammatical structures (syntax)
  - b. contemporary work usage
  - c. genre
3. our understanding of appropriate
  - a. relevant parallel passages
  - b. relationship between doctrines (paradox)

We need to be able to provide the reasons and logic behind our interpretations. The Bible is our only source for faith and practice. Sadly, Christians often disagree about what it teaches or affirms. It is self-defeating to claim inspiration for the Bible and then for believers not to be able to agree on what it teaches and requires!

The four reading cycles are designed to provide the following interpretive insights:

A. The first reading cycle

1. Read the book in a single sitting. Read it again in a different translation, hopefully from a different translation theory
  - a. word-for-word (NKJV, NASB, NRSV)
  - b. dynamic equivalent (TEV, JB)
  - c. paraphrase (Living Bible, Amplified Bible)
2. Look for the central purpose of the entire writing. Identify its theme.
3. Isolate (if possible) a literary unit, a chapter, a paragraph or a sentence which clearly expresses this central purpose or theme.
4. Identify the predominant literary genre
  - a. Old Testament
    - (1) Hebrew narrative
    - (2) Hebrew poetry (wisdom literature, psalm)
    - (3) Hebrew prophecy (prose, poetry)
    - (4) Law codes
  - b. New Testament
    - (1) Narratives (Gospels, Acts)
    - (2) Parables (Gospels)
    - (3) Letters/epistles
    - (4) Apocalyptic literature

B. The second reading cycle

1. Read the entire book again, seeking to identify major topics or subjects.
2. Outline the major topics and briefly state their contents in a simple statement.
3. Check your purpose statement and broad outline with study aids.

C. The third reading cycle

1. Read the entire book again, seeking to identify the historical setting and specific occasion for the writing from the Bible book itself.
2. List the historical items that are mentioned in the Bible book
  - a. the author
  - b. the date
  - c. the recipients
  - d. the specific reason for writing
  - e. aspects of the cultural setting that relate to the purpose of the writing
  - f. references to historical people and events
3. Expand your outline to paragraph level for that part of the biblical book you are interpreting. Always identify and outline the literary unit. This may be several chapters or paragraphs. This enables you to follow the original author's logic and textual design.
4. Check your historical setting by using study aids.

D. The fourth reading cycle

1. Read the specific literary unit again in several translations
  - a. word-for-word (NKJV, NASB, NRSV)
  - b. dynamic equivalent (TEV, JB)

- c. paraphrase (Living Bible, Amplified Bible)
- 2. Look for literary or grammatical structures
  - a. repeated phrases, Eph. 1:6,12,13
  - b. repeated grammatical structures, Rom. 8:31
  - c. contrasting concepts
- 3. List the following items
  - a. significant terms
  - b. unusual terms
  - c. important grammatical structures
  - d. particularly difficult words, clauses, and sentences
- 4. Look for relevant parallel passages
  - a. look for the clearest teaching passage on your subject using
    - (1) “systematic theology” books
    - (2) reference Bibles
    - (3) concordances
  - b. Look for a possible paradoxical pair within your subject. Many biblical truths are presented in dialectical pairs; many denominational conflicts come from proof-texting half of a biblical tension. All of the Bible is inspired, and we must seek out its complete message in order to provide a Scriptural balance to our interpretation.
  - c. Look for parallels within the same book, same author or same genre; the Bible is its own best interpreter because it has one author, the Spirit.
- 5. Use study aids to check your observations of historical setting and occasion
  - a. study Bibles
  - b. Bible encyclopedias, handbooks and dictionaries
  - c. Bible introductions
  - d. Bible commentaries (at this point in your study, allow the believing community, past and present, to aid and correct your personal study.)

#### **IV. Application of Bible interpretation**

At this point we turn to application. You have taken the time to understand the text in its original setting; now you must apply it to your life, your culture. I define biblical authority as “understanding what the original biblical author was saying to his day and applying that truth to our day.”

Application must follow interpretation of the original author’s intent both in time and logic. We cannot apply a Bible passage to our own day until we know what it was saying to its day! A Bible passage should not mean what it never meant!

Your detailed outline, to paragraph level (reading cycle #3), will be your guide. Application should be made at paragraph level, not word level. Words have meaning only in context; clauses have meaning only in context; sentences have meaning only in context. The only inspired person involved in the interpretive process is the original author. We only follow his lead by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. But illumination is not inspiration. To say “thus saith the Lord,” we must abide by the original author’s intent. Application must relate specifically to the general intent of the whole writing, the specific literary unit and paragraph level thought development.

Do not let the issues of our day interpret the Bible; let the Bible speak! This may require us to draw principles from the text. This is valid if the text supports a principle. Unfortunately, many times our principles are just that, “our” principles—not the text’s principles.

In applying the Bible, it is important to remember that (except in prophecy) one and only one meaning is valid for a particular Bible text. That meaning is related to the intent of the original author as

he addressed a crisis or need in his day. Many possible applications may be derived from this one meaning. The application will be based on the recipients' needs but must be related to the original author's meaning.

## V. The Spiritual Aspect of Interpretation

So far I have discussed the logical and textual process involved in interpretation and application. Now let me discuss briefly the spiritual aspect of interpretation. The following checklist has been helpful for me:

- A. Pray for the Spirit's help (cf. I Cor. 1:26-2:16).
- B. Pray for personal forgiveness and cleansing from known sin (cf. I John 1:9).
- C. Pray for a greater desire to know God (cf. Ps. 19:7-14; 42:1ff.; 119:1ff).
- D. Apply any new insight immediately to your own life.
- E. Remain humble and teachable.

It is so hard to keep the balance between the logical process and the spiritual leadership of the Holy Spirit. The following quotes have helped me balance the two:

- A. from James W. Sire, *Scripture Twisting*, pp. 17-18:

“The illumination comes to the minds of God’s people—not just to the spiritual elite. There is no guru class in biblical Christianity, no illuminati, no people through whom all proper interpretation must come. And so, while the Holy Spirit gives special gifts of wisdom, knowledge and spiritual discernment, He does not assign these gifted Christians to be the only authoritative interpreters of His Word. It is up to each of His people to learn, to judge and to discern by reference to the Bible which stands as the authority even to those to whom God has given special abilities. To summarize, the assumption I am making throughout the entire book is that the Bible is God’s true revelation to all humanity, that it is our ultimate authority on all matters about which it speaks, that it is not a total mystery but can be adequately understood by ordinary people in every culture.”

- B. on Kierkegaard, found in Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, p. 75:

According to Kierkegaard the grammatical, lexical, and historical study of the Bible was necessary but preliminary to the true reading of the Bible. “To read the Bible *as God’s word* one must read it with his heart in his mouth, on tip-toe, with eager expectancy, in conversation with God. To read the Bible thoughtlessly or carelessly or academically or professionally is not to read the Bible as God’s Word. As one reads it as a love letter is read, then one reads it as the Word of God.”

- C. H. H. Rowley in *The Relevance of the Bible*, p. 19:

“No merely intellectual understanding of the Bible, however complete, can possess all its treasures. It does not despise such understanding, for it is essential to a complete understanding. But it must lead to a spiritual understanding of the spiritual treasures of this book if it is to be complete. And for that spiritual understanding something more than intellectual alertness is necessary. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and the Bible student needs an attitude of spiritual receptivity, an eagerness to find God that he may yield himself to Him, if he is to pass beyond his scientific study unto the richer inheritance of this greatest of all books.”



## INTRODUCTION

- A. The Desperate Need for Personal Bible Study
  - 1. Most Christians do not know the Bible because they never study it personally.
  - 2. Most Christians only know what they have been told by others.
  - 3. Most Christians like it that way because then Christianity can be a ticket to heaven or an insurance policy instead of a daily relationship of obedience and service.
  
- B. Why Christians Neglect Personal Bible Study
  - 1. Frustration
    - a. They want instantaneous results (modern western consumerism).
    - b. They do not see it as their responsibility (the unbiblical clergy-laity dichotomy).
    - c. Our cultural trend toward specialists (e.g., medical doctors).
    - d. The confusion caused by so many conflicting interpretations (denominationalism and post-modernity).
  - 2. Dogmatism
    - a. They learn a close-minded attitude toward religious truth. “I think it unwise to dogmatize about the meaning of any Scripture. Where the meaning of Scripture is self-evident, we need not dogmatize; and where it is not self-evident, we should not dogmatize. All that the interpreter of Scripture is called upon to say is, ‘This is how I understand it, and these are my reasons for understanding it so.’ Indeed, you will commonly find in ordinary life that it is the more doubtful statements that are most dogmatically affirmed.” (taken from F. F. Bruce, *Answers to Questions*, p. 76)
    - b. They are indoctrinated by their denomination.
    - c. They are overly influenced by their own existential circumstances.
      - (1) Personality type
      - (2) Personal experience
      - (3) Spiritual gift
    - d. Be careful of:
      - (1) If it happened to me, it ought to happen to you.
      - (2) If it has not happened to me, it cannot or should not happen to you.
  
- C. Four Sources of Authority
  - 1. Revelation (inspiration)
  - 2. Reason (illumination)
  - 3. Experience
  - 4. Traditional/culture
  - 5. Authority is the key question!
    - revelation vs. human reason (rationalism)
    - revelation vs. human experience (existentialism)
    - revelation vs. human traditions (denominations)God created us in His image (cf. Gen. 1:26-27), so our mind and experiences are significant, but not ultimate. This is also true of our traditions/culture (cf. Isa. 29:13)
  
- D. An intentional personal price must be paid to know the Bible for ourselves.
  - 1. Prayer
  - 2. Persistence
  - 3. Training
  - 4. Regular study
  - 5. Personal application

### III. Ancient Bible Study Method

- A. The historical-grammatical or literal method of interpretation offers us a consistent and verifiable approach to personal Bible study.
- B. One's presuppositions about the Bible itself are the first determinative factor. The author's basic presuppositions are:
  1. The Bible came from God (cf. II Tim. 3:15-17). He wants us to know Him and His will. He is speaking, we are not listening.
  2. The Bible, like hermeneutics, is not an end in itself but a means of meeting God through Christ, who is God's supreme revelation (cf. John 1:18; I Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:13-20; Heb. 1:2-3).
  3. The Bible is written in normal human language (though culturally and historically conditioned). The Spirit spoke clearly, not with hidden meanings (but often in seeming paradoxes).
  4. The Bible is primarily redemptive and for all humans (cf. Ezek. 18:23,32; John 4:42; I Tim. 2:4; 4:10; II Pet. 3:9).
  5. The Holy Spirit is an indispensable guide (cf. John 14:26; 16:13-14; I John 2:20-21,27).
    - a. We must balance:
      - (1) human effort (cf. II Tim. 2:15)
      - (2) the Spirit's guidance (cf. John 14:26; 16:13-14; I John 2:27)
    - b. Bible interpretation is a spiritual gift, but like most spiritual gifts, all believers participate in them at some level (i.e., prayer, giving, evangelism).
    - c. The Bible has a spiritual dimension that goes beyond both the original authors and ourselves. The proper interpretation of some texts will only be fully realized at a special time or occasion! (cf. Dan. 12:9).
    - d. The Spirit will help us find the central, basic message of the passage (i.e., the paragraph) as we work with Him, but not exhaustive truth in all areas.
  6. The Bible does not directly address every modern question:
    - a. It is historically conditioned.
    - b. It is sometimes ambiguous.
    - c. Some truths are sealed for the future and, therefore, are hidden.
    - d. Some truths relate primarily only to certain cultures (e.g., genealogies and African tribe).
    - e. What is revealed is adequate for our faith and lifestyle.
- C. The historical-grammatical method's basic approach:
  1. It is the only method of interpretation that provides controls on interpretations. It also allows limited verification and consistency. Authorial intent and contextual, grammatical, lexical, and historical insights provide a norm for rational interpretations and evaluation of the interpretation of others. A Bible that can mean anything means nothing! (Gordon Fee)
  2. It is not a method for scholars only, but for the common man (faith seeking understanding). However, differences in language and culture require research. It must be interpreted in light of the original author's purpose, historical setting, and literary context.
  3. Interpretation is a focused attempt to use the same procedures done unconsciously in ordinary human communication through written texts. It involves an understanding of:
    - a. the type of genre of the text.
    - b. the contemporary meaning of the terms in the text.
    - c. the historical and cultural setting of the text.
    - d. the whole literary unit or book before the parts are interpreted.
  4. The difficulties in interpreting an ancient text multiply because:
    - a. knowledge of any given language from the past is limited.
    - b. knowledge of the author's intent is an assumption.
    - c. knowledge of the purpose of selected genres is uncertain.

- d. knowledge of idioms and metaphorical language are uncertain.
- 5. It requires that one must attempt to ascertain the original author's intent. The following are basic content and context questions we should ask of every text:
  - a. what did the original author say? (textual criticism)
  - b. what did the original author mean? (exegesis)
  - c. what did the original author say elsewhere on the same subject? (parallel passages)
  - d. what did other biblical authors say on this subject? (parallel passages)
  - e. how did the original hearers understand it? (when available)
  - f. how does the original message apply to my day? (cultural application)
  - g. how does the original message apply to my life? (personal application)

#### IV. Some General Statements About the Seminar

- A. Sin affects everyone's (including this author's) interpretation, systematization, and implementation of truth. Filter what is presented through your Spirit-led understanding.
- B. New insights and theological adjustments are painful but necessary. Let me challenge your traditions and see if they are biblical.
- C. In order to help open our understanding, this seminar will employ controversial examples to:
  - 1. Show valid alternate interpretations.
  - 2. Show inappropriate interpretations.
  - 3. Illustrate hermeneutical principles.
  - 4. Get and keep your attention and interest.
- D. The examples are meant to illustrate the methodology. They are not meant to be definitive, but thought provoking.
- E. Christian maturity is a painful, tension-filled road of self-examination and Spirit-led Bible study.

#### V. Why take the time to study hermeneutics?

- A. Believers must be able to "self-feed." Too many Christians are tricked or side-tracked by minor issues!
- B. Believers must participate in regular Bible study, both corporately and individually.
- C. Believers must remember how great a privilege it is to have a written revelation from God. But this privilege is also an awesome responsibility for ourselves, families, friends, and faith communities!

# THE BIBLE

## I. Author's General Presuppositions

- A. God exists and He wants us to know Him.
- B. He has revealed Himself to us.
  - 1. He acted in history (revelation)
  - 2. He chose certain men to record and explain His acts (inspiration)
  - 3. His Spirit helps the reader (hearer) of this written revelation understand its main truths (illumination)
- C. The Bible is the only trustworthy source of truth about God. It is collectively our only source for faith and practice. (OT and NT books written to specific occasions and times are now inspired guides for all occasions and ages). However, they do contain some cultural truths that do not transcend their own time and culture (i.e. polygamy, holy war, slavery, celibacy, etc.).

## II. Its Literary Limits — Assumed Canonization Principles

- A. The Protestant Canon contains all the inspired books—the canon is closed! (Jude v. 3)
  - 1. accepted OT from Jews
  - 2. twenty-seven books in NT (a progressive historical process)
- B. New Testament authors are connected to Jesus or an Apostle (a progressive historical process).
  - 1. James and Jude to Jesus (His half-brothers)
  - 3. Mark to Peter (turned his sermons at Rome into a Gospel)
  - 4. Luke to Paul
  - 5. Hebrews traditionally to Paul
- C. Theological unity with Apostolic teaching (later “rule of faith”)
  - 1. because of the rise of heresy (i.e., adoptionism, Gnosticism, Marcionism, and Montanism)
  - 2. because of the delayed Second Coming
  - 3. because of the death of the twelve Apostles
- D. The permanently and morally changed lives of hearers
- E. The general consensus of the early churches through a consensus in a large geographical and diverse cultural context before the major church councils can be seen in the early lists of canonical books.
  - 1. Origen (A.D. 185-254) asserts that there were four Gospels and the Epistles of the Apostles.
  - 2. The Muratorian Fragment dates between A.D. 180-200 from Rome (the only copy available today is a damaged, late Latin text). It lists the same 27 books as the Protestant NT (but adds Apocalypse of Peter and Shepherd of Hermas).
  - 3. Eusebius of Caesarea (A.D. 265-340) introduced a threefold designation (as did Origen) to describe Christian writings: (1) “received” and thereby accepted; (2) “disputed” and thereby differences among churches; and (3) “spurious” and thereby unaccepted and not to be read in churches. The ones in the disputed category were: James, Jude, II Peter, and II and III John.

4. The Cheltenham list (in Latin) from North Africa (A.D. 360) has the same 27 books (except for Hebrews, James, and Jude [Hebrews is not specifically mentioned, but may be included in Paul's letters]), as the Protestant NT, but in an unusual order.
5. Athanasius' Easter Letter of A.D. 367 is the first to list exactly the same 27 books as the Protestant NT with no additions.
6. The concept and contents of an authoritative list of unique books was a historical and theological development.

F. Suggested reading:

1. *The Canon of the New Testament* by Bruce Metzger, published by Oxford Press.
2. Articles on canon in *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1. pp. 709-745.
3. *Introduction to the Bible* by William E. Nix and Norman Geisler, published by Moody Press, 1968 (esp. the chart on p. 22)
4. *Holy Writings - Sacred Text: The Canon in Early Christianity* by John Barton, published by Westminster John Knox Press, 1997

G. The Old and New Testaments are the only literary productions of the ancient Near East that were canonized as especially coming from and revealing Divine purposes. There are no other religious lists which differentiate between canonical (i.e., authoritative) vs. non-canonical religious writings. How, why, and when did this historical process happen?

1. Was it by the decisions of the church councils of the third and fourth centuries A.D.?
2. Was it by the use of Christian writers of the second century?
3. Was it by the churches of the late first-fourth centuries?

### III. It Speaks for Itself

A. The words of Jesus about the Bible's significance and eternity. (In context Matt. 5:17ff shows Jesus' superiority over the Old Testament and rabbinical literature (cf. Acts 15; Gal. 3; Hebrews). Jesus lifts the Old Testament in order to lift Himself above it as its only true interpreter.)

1. Matt. 5:17-19
  - a. The Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ, not abolished.
  - b. The Old Testament is eternal. It is always relevant.
  - c. The Old Testament is a means or standard of judgment (cf. Galatians 3).
2. Matt. 5:21-48
  - a. The current rabbinical interpretations were wrong.
  - b. The Old Testament is inspired, not fallen human interpretations of it.

B. The words of Paul and Peter about its inspiration.

1. II Tim. 3:16
  - a. "all" or "every" Scripture
  - b. "God breathed" (*theoneutos*)
2. I Cor. 2:9-13 (the Spirit reveals God)
3. I Thess. 2:13 (not words of humans, but of God)
4. I Pet. 1:23-25 (God's Word is eternal)
5. II Pet. 1:20-21 (not from humans, but from the Holy Spirit)
6. II Pet. 3:15-16 (Paul's writings as Scripture). This is one of the few places where NT writings are placed on par with Scripture (it is also implied by Matt. 10:10 and Luke 10:7, where Jesus

makes a comment based on Deut. 25:4. Both Jesus's comment and Deut. 25:4 are then quoted in I Tim. 5:18, where both are called Scripture).

- C. The words of Paul about the OT relevance
  - 1. Rom. 4:23-24; 15:4 (Bible is for believer's instruction and encouragement)
  - 2. I Cor. 10:6, 11 (Old Testament is an example for us)
  - 3. I Peter 1:10-12 (OT authors knew their writings about the Messiah were for future believers)

#### IV. The Bible's Basic Purpose

- A. It is not a rule book
  - 1. Its basic purpose is redemption (cf. II Tim. 3:15).
  - 2. Its secondary purpose is Christ-like maturity (cf. II Tim. 3:16b-17).
    - a. profitable for teaching, reproof, and correction
    - b. profitable for training in righteousness
    - c. makes believers mature and equipped for every spiritual task
  - 3. It focuses on relationships, not on rules (cf. Col. 2:16-23). It is not a "Christian Talmud." Rules can become barriers instead of bridges. The Bible does contain guidelines for conduct, but not in every area. Ambiguity is present and gray areas will be encountered. The major gift is "the Guide," not the guidelines. We can know enough to live a life pleasing to God. We must walk in the light we have in love, realizing there are always some ambiguous areas.
- B. It is not a science book. Modern people are asking questions of the Bible that it was not meant to answer!
  - 1. It is pre-scientific, not anti-scientific
  - 2. It is a world view (God did it), not a world picture (how God did it)
  - 3. It is written in the language of description (phenomenological).
    - a. the dead live in the ground (Sheol)
    - b. the earth floats on water
    - c. even modern English uses idiomatic language (i.e., figurative or what appears to be true to the common observer)
      - (1) dew falls
      - (2) sun rises
  - 4. suggested reading
    - a. *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science* by R. Hooykaas
    - b. *The Scientific Enterprise and the Christian Faith* by Malcolm A. Jeeves
    - c. *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* by Bernard Ramm
    - d. *Science and Hermeneutics* by Vern S. Poythress
    - e. *Darwinism on Trial* by Phillip Johnson
    - f. *Reasons to Believe* by Hugh Ross, Pensacola Bible Church, Pensacola, FL
- C. It is not a magic book. In our love for the Bible and our desire to know God's will for our lives we do strange things to the Bible, using it as a:
  - 1. crystal ball (letting the Bible fall open and putting our finger on a text)
  - 2. magic charm (put it on our desks or dash boards)
  - 3. fetish (take it to the hospital with us simply for its presence)The Bible is a message to be read. Its physical presence is not enough.

## V. Author's Basic Presuppositions About the Bible

“I believe the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is the only clear self-revelation of God. The New Testament is the perfect fulfillment and interpreter of the Old Testament. I believe the one and only Eternal, Creator, Redeemer God initiated the writing of our canonical Scriptures by inspiring certain chosen persons to record and explain His acts in the lives of individuals and nations. The Bible is our only clear source of information about God and His purposes. Natural revelation (cf. Job 38-39; Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:19-20; 2:14-15) is valid but not complete. Jesus Christ is the capstone of God's revelation about Himself (cf. John 1:18; Col. 1:14-16; Heb. 1:2-3). The Bible must be illuminated by the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14:23; 16:20-21; I Cor. 2:6-16) in order to be correctly understood (in its spiritual dimension). Its message is authoritative, adequate, eternal, infallible and trustworthy for all believers. The exact mode of its inspiration has not been revealed to us, but it is obvious to believers that the Bible is a supernatural book, written by natural men under special leadership.”

## VI. Evidence For a Supernaturally-Inspired Bible

### A. Predictive prophecy

1. Isa. 9:1ff. (Galilee as focus of Jesus' early ministry)
2. Mic. 5:2 (cf. Matt. 2:4-6, the exact location of Jesus' birth)

### B. Archaeology

1. The same names (but not the biblical people) of Gen.11-12 are found in other second millennium B.C. texts from Mesopotamia (i.e. Mari and Nuzi texts).
2. The Hittite civilization is mentioned in the OT (cf. II Kgs. 7:6, 7; II Chr. 1:17, possibly Heth in Gen. 10:15), but was unknown by documentary evidences until 1950's
3. Belshazzar (cf. Daniel 5) not listed in Babylonian Kings lists, but now known as the son of the last Neo-Babylonian king (Nabonidus) and co-regent in charge of the city of Babylon when besieged by Cyrus' army)
4. Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*, p. 31, “No archaeological discovery has ever been made that contradicts or controverts historical statements of Scripture.”

### C. Consistency of the message

1. Written over a 1600 year period (depending on the date of the Exodus).
2. Written in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Koine Greek).
3. Written by men of vastly different social status and cultural situations.
4. Yet there is a unity of message!

### D. Permanently changed lives of hearers

E. Bishop H. C. G. Moule, “He [Christ] absolutely trusted the Bible, and, though there are in it things inexplicable and intricate that have puzzled men so much, I am going, not in a blind sense, but reverently to trust the Book because of Him.” Harford and MacDonald, *The Life of Bishop Moule*, 1922 (p. 138).

F. A good book which extends these evidences is D. James Kennedy's *Why I Believe*.

## VII. Problems Related to Our Interpretation of the Bible (hand copied manuscripts and limits of human languages)

### A. Manuscript Problems (textual criticism)

#### 1. Suggested reading:

- a. *Biblical Criticism: Historical, Literary and Textual*, by R.H. Harrison
- b. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration* by Bruce M. Metzger
- c. *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism and Scribes, Scrolls, and Scriptures*, by J.H. Greenlee
- d. *The Books and the Parchments* by F.F. Bruce
- e. *The Early Versions of the New Testament* by Bruce Metzger
- f. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* by F.F. Bruce
- g. *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism* by D.A. Carson
- h. *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* by K.A. Kitchen
- i. *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, by Bart D. Ehrman
- j. *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism*, edited by David Alan Beach

#### 2. The major sources of our modern Bible

##### a. Old Testament

- (1) Masoretic text (MT) - The Hebrew consonantal textual form was set by Rabbi Aquiba in A.D. 100 (probably the text of the Pharisees). The addition of vowel points, accents, marginal notes, punctuation, and apparatus notes were finished in the ninth century A.D. by Masoretic scholars. This textual form is quoted in the Mishnah, Talmud, Targums (Aramaic translation), Peshitta (Syriac translation), and Vulgate (Latin translation).
- (2) Septuagint (LXX) - Tradition says it was produced by 70 Jewish scholars in 70 days for the library of Alexandria, Egypt. It was supposedly requested by a Jewish leader of King Ptolemy II living in Alexandria (285-246 B.C.). The Ptolemy rulers of Egypt boasted of the largest library in the world. This tradition comes from "Letter of Aristeas." The LXX provides a differing Hebrew textual tradition from the text of Rabbi Aquiba (MT). Both traditions are represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- (3) Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) - written in the Roman B.C. period, close to New Testament times by a sect of Jewish separatists (left temple worship because the high priest was not of the line of Aaron) called the "Essenes." The Hebrew manuscripts (MSS) were found in 1947 in several cave sites around the Dead Sea. They contain the Hebrew textual family behind both the MT and the LXX.
- (4) The LXX has helped to understand the MT (one example):
  - (a) the LXX of Isa. 52:14 - "as many shall be amazed at him"
  - (b) the MT of Isa. 52:14 - "Just as many were astonished over you"
- (5) The DSS has helped to understand the MT (one example):
  - (a) the DSS of Isa. 21:8 - "then the seer cried, upon a watchtower I stand. . ."
  - (b) the MT of Isa. 21:8 - "And I cried a lion! My Lord, I always stand on the watchtower by day. . ."
- (6) Both the LXX and DSS have helped our understanding of Isa. 53:11
  - (a) LXX & DSS - "after the travail of his soul he will see light, he will be satisfied"
  - (b) MT - "he shall see of the travail of his soul. He shall be satisfied" (The MT doubled the verb but left out the first object).



b. New Testament

- (1) Over 5,300 manuscripts (whole or fragmentary) of the Greek New Testament are in existence today. About 85 of these are written on papyri. There are 268 (uncial) manuscripts written in all capital letters. Later, about the ninth century A.D., a running script (minuscule) was developed. The Greek manuscripts written in this form number about 2,700. We also have about 2,100 copies of lists of Scripture texts used in worship that are called lectionaries.
- (2) The Papyri - About 85 Greek manuscripts containing parts of the New Testament are extant, written on papyrus, dating from the 2nd century A.D., but most are from the third and fourth centuries A.D. None of these manuscripts contain the whole New Testament. Some are done by professional scribes but many of them are hastily copied by less exact copyists. Just being old does not in and of itself make it better.
- (3) Codex Sinaiticus which is known by the Hebrew “A” (*aleph*), “ℵ” or (01). It was found at St. Catherine’s monastery on Mt. Sinai by Tischendorf. It dates from the fourth century A.D. It contains both the Old Testament and New Testament. It is of “The Alexandrian Text” type, as is Codex B.
- (4) Codex Alexandrinus which is known as “A” (*alpha*) or (02). It is a fifth century A.D. manuscript which was found in Alexandria, Egypt.
- (5) Codex Vaticanus which is known as “B” or (03). It was found in the Vatican’s library in Rome and dates from the middle of the fourth century A.D. It contains both the Old Testament and New Testament. It is of “The Alexandrian Text” type, as is Codex ℵ. Its roots go back into the second century from P<sup>75</sup>.
- (6) Codex Ephraemi which is known as “C” or (04). It is a fifth century A.D. manuscript which was partially destroyed. Its roots go back to the third century P<sup>45</sup>. Codex W from the fifth century is also of the textual family.
- (7) Codex Bezae which is known as “D” or (05). It is a fifth or sixth century A.D. manuscript. Its roots, according to Eldon Jay Epp, go back into the second century based on the Old Latin and Old Syriac translations, as well as many papyri fragments. However, Kurt and Barbara Eland do not list any papyri connected to this textual family and they put it to the fourth century and no earlier, but they do list a few precursor papyri (i.e., P<sup>38</sup>, P<sup>48</sup>, P<sup>69</sup>). It is the chief representative of what is called “The Western Text.” It contains many additions and was the main Greek witness behind the third edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament which was the Greek witness for the King James translation.
- (8) The NT manuscripts can be grouped into three, possibly four families of manuscripts that share certain characteristics.
  - (a) Alexandrian “local” text which includes:
    - i. P<sup>75</sup>, P<sup>66</sup> (about A.D. 200) which record the Gospels
    - ii. P<sup>46</sup> (about A.D. 225) records Paul’s letters
    - iii. P<sup>72</sup> (about A.D. 225-250) records Peter and Jude
    - iv. Codex B called Vaticanus (about A.D. 325), which includes the whole OT and NT.
    - v. quoted by Origen
    - vi. other manuscripts which show this text type are ℵ, L, W, 33
  - (b) Western text from North Africa which includes:
    - i. quotes from North Africa: Tertullian, Cyprian and the Old Latin
    - ii. quotes from Irenaeus
    - iii. quotes from Tatian and Old Syriac

- iv. Codex D “Beza”
- (c) Byzantine text
  - i. is reflected in over 80% of the 5,300 manuscripts (mostly minuscules)
  - ii. is quoted by leaders from Antioch of Syria: Cappadoceans, Chrysostom and Therdoret
  - iii. Codex A in the Gospels only
  - iv. Codex E (eighth century) for full NT
- (d) the fourth possible type is “Caesarean”
  - i. it is primarily seen only in Mark
  - ii. some witnesses to it are:  
P<sup>45</sup>, W, H
- c. Some examples of the problems related to Old Testament quotes in the New Testament:
  - (1) Compare Num. 25:9 (24,000 died) with I Cor. 10:8 (23,000 died) (possible allusion to Exod. 32, not Num. 25:9);
    - (a) I Cor. 10:7 quotes Exod. 32
    - (b) Exod. 32:25 mentions “YHWH smote them,” cf. Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, Zondervan, pp. 140-41.)
  - (2) Matt. 27:9 quotes from Zechariah but attributes it to Jeremiah. Some theories for this problem:
    - (a) The Peshitta (5th century A.D. Syriac translation) removes the name “Jeremiah” from the text.
    - (b) Augustine, Luther, and Keil say an error has occurred in the Masoretic Text.
    - (c) Origen and Eusebius say it was an early copyist error in the New Testament manuscript.
    - (d) Jerome and Ewald say it is a quote from an apocryphal work attributed to Jeremiah, but now lost.
    - (e) Mede says Jeremiah wrote Zechariah 9-11.
    - (f) Lightfoot and C. I. Scofield say that Jeremiah was considered the first of the prophets by post-exilic Judaism and, therefore, his name implies “in the prophets section of the canon.”
    - (g) Hengstenberg says Zechariah quoted Jeremiah.
    - (h) Calvin says an error has crept into the text, but how is unknown.
- d. Brief explanation of the problems and theories of “lower criticism” or “textual criticism.”
  - (1) How did the variants occur?
    - (a) Inadvertent or accidental (vast majority of occurrences)
      - i. Slip of the eye
        - a) in hand copying which reads the second instance of two similar words and, thereby, omits all of the words in between (homoioteleuton)
        - b) in omitting a double letter word or phrase (haplography)
        - c) in hand copying mental error in repeating a phrase or line of a Greek text (dittography)
      - ii. Slip of the ear in hand copying by oral dictation where a misspelling occurs (itacism) in similar sounding words. Often the misspelling implies or spells another Greek word.
      - iii. The earliest Greek texts had no chapter or verse divisions, little or no punctuation, and no division between words. It is possible to divide letters into different words.
    - (b) intentional
      - i. Changes were made to improve the grammatical form of the text copied.

- ii. Changes were made to bring the text into conformity with other biblical texts (harmonization of parallels).
  - iii. Changes were made by combining two or more variant readings into one long combined text (conflation).
  - iv. Changes were made to correct a perceived problem in the text. (cf. Bart Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, pp. 146-50 concerning Heb. 2:9).
  - v. Changes were made to make the text more doctrinally orthodox (cf. I John 5:7-8).
  - vi. Some additional information as to the historical setting or proper interpretation of the text was placed in the margin by one scribe, but placed into the text by a second scribe (cf. John 5:4).
- (2) The basic tenets of textual criticism (transcriptional probabilities):
- (a) The most awkward or grammatically unusual text is probably the original because scribes tended to make the texts smoother.
  - (b) The shortest text is probably the original because scribes tended to add additional information or phrases from parallel passages (this has recently been challenged by papyrus comparative studies).
  - (c) The older text is given more weight because of its historical proximity to the original, everything else being equal.
  - (d) Manuscripts that are geographically diverse usually have the original readings.
  - (e) Attempts to explain how variants could have occurred. This is considered the most important tenet by most scholars.
  - (f) Analysis of a given biblical author's literary style, vocabulary, and theology is used to decide probable original wording.
  - (g) Doctrinally weaker texts, especially those relating to major theological discussions of the period of manuscript changes like the Trinity in I John 5:7-8, are to be preferred. At this point I would like to quote from J. Harold Greenlee's book *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*

“No Christian doctrine hangs upon a debatable text; and the student of the New Testament must beware of wanting his text to be more orthodox or doctrinally stronger than is the inspired original” (p. 68).
  - (h) “W.A. Criswell told Greg Garrison of *The Birmingham News* that he (Criswell) doesn't believe every word in the Bible is inspired, ‘at least not every word that has been given to the modern public by centuries of translators.’ Criswell said: ‘I very much am a believer in textual criticism. As such, I think the last half of the 16th chapter of Mark is heresy: it's not inspired, it's just concocted. . .When you compare those manuscripts way back yonder, there was no such thing as that conclusion of the Book of Mark. Somebody added it. . .’
- The patriarch of the SBC inerrantists also claimed that “interpolation” is also evident in John 5:4, the account of Jesus at the pool of Bethesda. And he discusses the two different accounts of the suicide of Judas (cf. Matt. 27 and Acts 1): ‘It's just a different view of the suicide,’ Criswell said. ‘If it is in the Bible, there is an explanation for it. And the two accounts of the suicide of Judas are in the Bible.’ Criswell added: ‘Textual criticism is a wonderful science in itself. It is not ephemeral, it's not impertinent. It's dynamic and central. . .’”

3. Some examples of the problem of hand-copied manuscripts in the Greek New Testament:
- a. Mark 16:9ff - In the Greek manuscript tradition of Mark there are four different endings. The longest ending of 12 verses found in King James is missing in manuscripts  $\aleph$  and B. The Greek texts used by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius and Jerome also lack the ending. The ending is present in manuscripts A, C, D, K, U and  $\aleph^c$ . The earliest witness in the Fathers is Irenaeus (ministered A.D. 177-190) and the Diatessaron (A.D. 170). The passage is obviously non-Markan.
 

These verses contain terms and theology not found elsewhere in Mark. They even contain heresy (i.e., drinking of poison and handling snakes).
  - b. John 5:4 - This verse is not in P<sup>66</sup>, P<sup>75</sup>, nor the uncial manuscripts  $\aleph$ , B, C, or D. However, it is found in A. It was obviously added by a scribe to explain the historical setting.
 

This is obviously Jewish folklore answering the question why there were so many sick people around this pool. God does not heal by angels stirring water with the first to enter being rewarded with physical healing.
  - c. John 7:53-8:11 - This passage does not appear in any of the ancient Greek manuscripts or early church Fathers until the 6th century A.D. in a manuscript "D" called Bezae. No Greek church Father until the 12th century A.D. comments on this passage. The account is found in several other places in the Greek manuscripts of John, after 7:36, after 7:44 and after 21:25. It also appears in Luke's Gospel after Luke 21:38. It is obviously non-Johannine. It is probably an oral tradition from the life of Jesus. It sounds so much like Him, but it is not from the pen of an inspired Apostle, therefore, I reject it as Scripture.
  - d. Matt. 6:13 - This verse is not found in manuscripts  $\aleph$ , B, or D. It is present in manuscripts K, L, and W but with variations. It is also absent from the early church Father's comments on the Lord's Prayer (i.e., Tertullian [A.D. 150-230], Origen [A.D. 182-251], and Cyprian [A.D. ministered 248-258]). It is found in the King James translation.
  - e. I John 5:7-8 - These verses are not found in manuscripts  $\aleph$ , A or B nor any other Greek manuscript except four dating from the 12th century A.D. This text is not quoted by any of the Greek Fathers even in their defense of the concept of the deity of Christ or the Trinity. They are absent from all ancient translations including Jerome's Vulgate. They were apparently added later by well-meaning copyists in order to bolster the doctrine of the Trinity. They are found in the King James translation because of their inclusion in Erasmus' third edition (and only this edition) of the Greek New Testament.
  - f. Luke 22:43-44 - These verses are found in the ancient manuscript Greek uncial  $\aleph^*$ ,  $\aleph^2$ , D, K, L, X, and Delta. They are also found in the quotations of Justin, Martyr, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Eusebius, and Jerome. However, they are omitted in MSS P<sup>69</sup> [probably] <sup>75</sup>,  $\aleph^c$ , A, N, T, and W, as well as the manuscripts used by Clement of Alexandria and Origen. The UBS<sup>4</sup> ranks their omission as "certain" (A).
 

Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, pp. 187-194, assumes these verses are an early second century addition to refute docetic (agnostic) Christologies who denied Christ's humanity and suffering. The church's conflict with Christological heresies was the source of many of the early manuscript changes.

The NASB and NRSV bracket these verses, while NKJV, TEV, and NIV have a footnote which says, "some ancient manuscripts omit verses 43 and 44." This information is unique to Luke's Gospel.
  - g. Our modern translations of the Bible do have some textual problems. However, these do not affect a major doctrine. We can trust these modern translations of the Bible for all that is necessary for faith and practice.
  - h. One of the translators of the RSV, F.C. Grant, said, "No doctrine of the Christian faith has been affected by the revision, for the simple reason that, out of thousands of variant

readings in the manuscripts, none has turned up thus far that requires a revision of Christian doctrine.”

- i. “It is noteworthy that for most scholars over 90% of all the variants of the NT text are resolved, because in most instances the variant that best explains the origins of the others is also supported by the earliest and best witnesses” (Gordon Fee, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 (p. 430).

## B. Translation Problems

1. Translation from one language to another is always difficult. All translations are a commentary on the language of the original author.
2. Theories of translation
  - a. literal—word for word correspondence
    - (1) King James Version and New King James Version
    - (2) American Standard Version and New American Standard Bible
    - (3) Revised Standard Version (between literal and idiomatic) and New Revised Standard Version
  - b. idiomatic—dynamic equivalent
    - (1) Good News for Modern Man (Today’s English Version)
    - (2) New English Bible and Revised English Bible
    - (3) Jerusalem Bible and New Jerusalem Bible
    - (4) New International Version
    - (5) Williams Translation (the NT in the language of the people)
  - c. concept for concept or paraphrase
    - (1) Living Bible
    - (2) Amplified Bible
    - (3) Phillips Translation
  - d. by comparing a and b one sees
    - (1) MSS variants
    - (2) word meanings options
    - (3) punctuation options
3. Suggested readings:
  - a. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
  - b. *The Books and the Parchments* by F.F. Bruce
  - c. *The Bible in Its Ancient and English Versions* by H. Wheeler Robinson

## C. The Problem and the Limitations of Human Language

1. our language is finite and, therefore, not exhaustive
  - a. anthropomorphism (God described in human terms)
    - (1) God with human body
      - i. walking - Gen. 3:8; 18:33; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:14
      - ii. eyes - Gen. 6:8; Exod. 33:17
      - iii. man on throne - Isa. 6:1; Dan.7:9
    - (2) God as female
      - i. Gen. 1:2 (Spirit as female bird)
      - ii. Gen. 17:1 (El Shaddai)
      - iii. Deut. 32:18 (God as mother)
      - iv. Exod. 19:4 (God as mother eagle)
      - v. Isa. 49:14-15; 66:9-13 (God as nursing mother and also possibly Hos. 11:4)
    - (3) God as advocating lying (cf. I Kgs 22:19-23)

- (4) NT examples of “God's right hand” (cf. Luke 22:69; Acts 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 13:1; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; I Pet. 3:22)
- b. Human titles used to describe God
  - (1) Shepherd (cf. Ps. 23)
  - (2) Father (cf. Isa. 63:16; Ps. 103:13)
  - (3) Go’el - Kinsman redeemer (cf. Exod. 6:6)
  - (4) Lover - husband (cf. Hos. 1-3)
  - (5) Parent, father, and mother (cf. Hos. 11:3-4)
- c. Physical objects used to describe God
  - (1) Rock (cf. Ps. 18)
  - (2) Fortress and stronghold (cf. Ps. 18)
  - (3) Shield (cf. Gen. 15:1; Ps. 18)
  - (4) Horn of salvation (cf. Ps. 18)
  - (5) Tree (cf. Hos. 14:8)
- 2. Language is part of the image of God in mankind (cf. Gen. 1:26-27), but sin has affected all aspects of our existence, including language.
- 3. God is faithful and communicates to us adequately, if not exhaustively, knowledge about Himself. This is usually in the form of negation, analogy, or metaphor.

## BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

I. It is a basic principle of interpretation that common sense dictates that one begins with a textual and historical reconstruction of authorial intent

A. The problem of authority

1. There are so many interpretations of the Bible; so many claim to speak for God!
2. How can one evaluate those who claim to speak from God? Here are some ways:
  - a. Deut. 13:1-5 (sign or wonder in name of another god)
  - b. Deut. 18:20-22 (accurately predicts the future in name of another god)
  - c. Matt. 7:15-23 (by their fruits you shall know them)
  - d. Matt. 24:24 (miracles are not automatically a sign of God)
  - e. I John 4:1-3 (Christological, one nature-God and man)
  - f. II Pet. 3:15-16 (they misinterpret revelation - 3:2)

B. Proposed definition of biblical authority (two aspects: then and now)

1. What the inspired biblical author was saying to his day (it cannot mean what it never meant-Gordon Fee)
2. Applying that truth to our day
3. This definition will limit our easy answers (need for verification and consistency) and learned dogmatism (beware of biases and pre-conditioning). It is always fair to ask anyone, "Where in the Bible do you find that truth?"
4. Every context has only one meaning and that is the intended meaning of the original inspired author. However, every context has multiple significances (i.e. applications) but they must be inseparably linked to the one original intent.

II. The Need for Verifiable Interpretation

A. Denominationalism. The plague of the Reformation was and is the continuing splintering of Christendom. We have no hope of unity at this point but at least we can start with

1. the Bible being the only source for faith and practice
2. the need for verification
3. consistent application of hermeneutical principles.

B. Defense of our interpretation and the analysis of other interpretations from:

1. The writers of Scripture used normal human language and expected to be understood.
2. Modern interpreters seek the original author's intent by documenting several types of information
  - a. Historical setting
  - b. Literary context (literary unit, paragraph)
  - c. Genre (historical narrative, prophecy, law, poetry, parable, apocalyptic)
  - d. Textual design (e.g., John 3 - Mr. Religious and John 4 - Ms. Irreligious)
  - e. Syntax (grammatical relationships and forms)
  - f. Contemporary word meanings (what the word meant in the author's day and language)
    - (1) Hebrew
      - (a) Parallel passages
      - (b) Cognate languages
      - (c) The ancient versions

- (2) Greek
    - (a) Septuagint
    - (b) Papyri finds from Egypt
    - (c) Greek literature
  - 3. The balance of all of Scripture (parallel passages) because it has one Divine author (the Spirit)
  - 4. Christlikeness (Jesus is the goal and fulfillment of Scripture. He is the perfect revelation of Deity. He is the perfect example of true humanity.)
  
- C. It is a basic presupposition that every text has one and only one proper interpretation and that is the original author's intent. This authorial meaning had an original application. This application (significance) can be multiplied to different situations but they must be inseparably linked to the original intent (cf. *The Aims of Interpretation* by E.D. Hirsch).
  
- D. The plague of proof-texting and spiritualizing
  - 1. "The practice of isolating sentences, thoughts, and ideas from their immediate context is nearly always fatal when applied to Paul. 'Solitary proof-texts,' says Professor H. A. A. Kennedy, 'have wrought more havoc in theology than all the heresies,'" *A Man in Christ* by James Steward, p. 15).
  - 2. "The proof-text method of interpreting Paul's letters, which views them as direct revelations of the supernatural will of God conveying to men eternal, timeless truths that need only to be systematized to produce a complete theology, obviously ignores the means by which God has been pleased to give to men his Word," G. E. Ladd, *Theology of the NT*, p. 379
  - 3. Some examples:
    - a. Matt. 24:17 (loss of context)
    - b. I Cor. 13:8 (theological bias)
    - c. Col. 2:21 (proof-texting)
    - d. John 11:44 (spiritualizing)
    - e. II Sam. 9 (spiritualizing)
    - f. Rom. 10:13, "Call on the name of the Lord," only "Jeshua" (literalizing)
    - g. Deut. 23:18, "Do not give the hire of a dog," (loss of context and English word meaning)
    - h. John 2:15, overturned their tables ("what they were 'counting' on") (word play)
  
- E. Suggested reading:
  - 1. *Scripture Twisting* by James W. Sire
  - 2. *Biblical Words and Their Meaning* by Moises Silva
  
- F. What can be done?
  - 1. We all must re-examine our presuppositions and methods of biblical interpretation.
  - 2. We all must spend time in confession, prayer, and regular Bible study.
  - 3. We all must remain teachable, humble.
  - 4. We must all stay with the main point of the paragraph.
  - 5. If your interpretation surprises the original author, it probably surprises God!
  - 6. Check with the believing community (believing friends, church leaders, commentaries, research helps) to confirm one's interpretations.



## THE INTERPRETER

- I. All interpreters are historically, culturally, and experientially conditioned (see life and Bible through filtered glasses)
  - A. Personality type
  - B. Personal worldview
  - C. Personal experiences
  - D. Spiritual gift
  - E. Place of birth
  - F. Time of birth
  - G. Parental and denominational training
  - H. Personal sin
  
- II. Some Examples of our historical and denominational biases from American Evangelicalism of the Twentieth Century
  - A. Christian music is said to be evil, especially certain instruments, beat, form, or the participation of the audience, all of which are cultural or generational.
  - B. Mixed swimming is said to be sinful in some parts of the country (usually not lake communities on coastal areas).
  - C. Use of tobacco is said to be hurtful to the body, but other bad habits, like overeating or lack of exercise are never mentioned (use of tobacco is the unpardonable sin in the Baptist churches of South America).
  - D. Use of alcohol is said to be against the teachings of the Bible, yet people in both the OT and NT drank wine, including Jesus.
  - E. Storehouse tithing (from Leviticus or Malachi, yet only mentioned in the NT to the Pharisees in Luke 11:42; 18:12) There are no NT guidelines for regular Christian giving.
  - F. Inter-racial marriage is said to be out of the will of God based on Leviticus or Ezra-Nehemiah (which is not inter-racial, but inter-religious), but Num. 12:2 is ignored.
  - G. Baptismal time, method, administrator or formula (also Lord's Supper).
  - H. How one celebrates Christmas and Halloween (or other cultural holidays).
  
- III. What Can Be Done?
  - A. If we identify our biases (racism, sexism, anti-semitism, a particular systematic theology, denominational traditions, favorite Bible author or book, etc.) we can control their influence to some degree.
  - B. Personally discern the irreducible minimums of the Christian faith (i.e. what is the least one must believe to be a Christian).
  - C. Cling to these major truths of historical Christianity (that which all churches affirm) and discuss the peripherals in love.
  - D. Maturity will make one less dogmatic and judgmental.
  - E. Suggested reading: *Why Christians Fight Over the Bible* by John Newport

#### IV. The Responsibility of the Interpreter

- A. The concept of the priesthood of all believers (cf. Exod. 19:5; I Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6) is a community of faith's task (evangelism and Christlikeness, cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). Be careful of an over emphasis on individualism (western culture). This catch phrase does not support "soul competency"!
- B. The Bible demands interpretation (cf. Matt. 5:29-30).
- C. The Spirit is crucial in interpretation (cf. I Cor. 2:10-13). Interpretation is not just a natural ability or supernatural spiritual gift.
- D. We must walk in the light that we have (level of Bible knowledge, denominational and/or family traditions, cultural conditioning, etc.), always open to more light from the Bible and from the Spirit (cf. Rom. 1:17; 14:23). We will be judged only in relation to our understanding and our lifestyle!
- E. List and analyze your presuppositions (you do have some!).

# THE HISTORICAL-GRAMMATICAL OR LITERAL METHOD

## I. Its History and Development

### A. The Jewish Precursor

1. There was a slight tendency among the Palestinian Rabbis to make the ancient laws applicable to their day by means of allegory (cf. Asher Feldman, *The Parables and Similes of the Rabbis, Agricultural and Pastoral*).
2. Philo
  - a. He (20 B.C.-A.D. 55) was an intellectual Jewish Platonist from Alexandria, Egypt.
  - b. He learned his method from the allegorical tradition of the Greeks. They had wed the religious writings of Homer to the philosophical and historical writings by the use of allegory. *The Iliad and The Odyssey* by Homer was used to teach logic, ethics, and science. Philo was heavily influenced by Plato and Pythagoras (160 B.C.) another Alexandrian Jew.
  - c. He was not influential among the Palestinian rabbis because he lived in the Diaspora and was not a rabbi.
  - d. He found hidden philosophical meaning in the Old Testament by purposely disregarding the historical setting and the intent of the original biblical author's message.
  - e. He allegorized the Old Testament passages if:
    - (1) the text spoke of that which seemed unworthy of God.
    - (2) the text contained any perceived inconsistencies.
    - (3) the text contained any perceived historical problems.
    - (4) the text could be allegorically applied to his Greek mind set and culture.
  - f. He attempted to remove the exclusiveness of Israel and the physical aspects of YHWH (i.e., anthropomorphism following Aristōbūlus of Alexandria).
  - g. He allegorized the Old Testament in an attempt to make it relevant to his day and culture.
  - h. He believed that God spoke to humans supremely through the Jewish Scriptures but also by His Spirit through the Greek philosophers.

### B. The development of the allegorical school in Alexandria, Egypt

1. Philo's basic approach to interpretation was utilized by early Christian leaders at Alexandria in interpreting the Old and New Testaments.
2. Clement's (Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 150-216) five levels of interpretation from the least significant to the most significant are:
  - a. the historical or literal sense
  - b. the doctrinal sense (moral, religious, and theological)
  - c. the prophetic or typological sense
  - d. the philosophical sense (uses historical events and persons as representations of philosophical truths and categories)
  - e. the mystical or allegorical sense
3. Origen (A.D. 182-251) continued this basic approach:
  - a. He reacted to the uneducated literalism of popular theology of his day by finding symbolism in everything.
  - b. He arbitrarily combined Prov. 22:20-21 with I Thess. 5:23 to form a hermeneutical principle.

- c. With this combination of Scriptures he asserted that every text had three levels of interpretation.
    - (1) a “bodily” or literal sense (for the common man)
    - (2) a “soulish” or moral sense (for leaders and merchants)
    - (3) a “spiritual” or mystical/allegorical sense (for the *pneumatikoi* who have time, insight, and interest)
  4. The allegorical method of interpretation focused on the symbolic use of numbers:
    - a. The alphabets of Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) languages were also used for their numbering system: aleph = 1, beth = 2, gimal = 3, delet = 4, etc. Therefore, words had numerical values. Words with equivalent values could be substituted for each other in Bible passages.
    - b. Numbers also had symbolic meaning themselves (this is also true of the OT):
      - (1) 1 - God
      - (2) 4 - the earth
      - (3) 6 - human imperfection
      - (4) 7 - divine perfection
      - (5) 10 - completion
      - (6) 12 - organization
  5. Ambrose’s (A.D. 340-379) allegory influenced Augustine (A.D. 354-430) in his four levels of interpretation, the last being the best. Augustine used II Cor. 3:6 (“Not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills but the Spirit gives life”) as a proof-text for his practical depreciation of the literal sense.
    - a. the literal—teaches historical events
    - b. the allegorical—what you should believe
    - c. the moral—what you should do
    - d. the mystical—what you should hope
  6. An example of Augustine’s four-fold method is “Jerusalem” in Gal. 4:22ff.
    - a. literal—the city
    - b. allegorically—the church of Christ
    - c. moral—the human soul
    - d. mystical—the heavenly city which is mother of us all
  7. Augustine's theory of hermeneutics was very different from his practice. His theory was very similar to the principles of the literal school, but his practice tended to be allegorical (cf. Bernard Ramm’s *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 36-37).
  8. See Augustine’s use of the parable of the Good Samaritan in *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, p. 136.
- C. The strengths of the allegorical method:
1. attempted to use the Old Testament as a Christian document pointing to Christ
  2. followed the example of Jesus (Matthew 13; Mark 4, Parable of the soils) and Paul (Galatians 4:25-26, the two mountains, Sinai and Moriah) who used typology
  3. attempted to relate gospel truth to their day (as did Philo and Gnostics)
  4. Suggested reading: *Has the Church Misread the Bible?* by Moises Silva
- D. The problems of the allegorical method:
1. It imported meaning into the text.
  2. It forced a hidden meaning behind every text.
  3. It put forth fanciful and far-fetched interpretations.

4. It did not allow words and sentences to bear their obvious, normal meanings.
5. It allowed human subjectivity (the interpreter) to dominate the plain message of the original author.
6. There are no controls on interpretation, no way to evaluate an interpretation.
7. Martin Luther called it “clerical jugglers performing monkey tricks,” “a sort of beautiful harlot.”
8. In *Hexaemeron* (9,1) Basil of Caesarea (A.D. 330-379) says:
 

“I know the laws of allegory, though less by myself than from the works of others. There are those who do not admit the common sense of the Scriptures, for whom water is not water, but something else, who see in a plant, in a fish, what their fancy wishes, who change the nature of reptiles and of wild beasts to suit their allegories, like the interpreters of dreams who explain visions in sleep, to make them serve their own ends. For me grass is grass—plant, fish, wild beast, domestic animal, I take it all in the literal sense. For I am not ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16).”

There are the two extremes—allegory and literalism. The Bible is a library of literary works related to a specific time and culture. Genre and context are crucial!

9. It needs to be admitted that the early “orthodox” theologians were from Alexandria. God used this approach to interpretation to speak to the lost and the saved for several centuries.

## II. The Reactionary School of Antioch of Syria (Lucian [A.D. 250-312], Diodorus of Tarsus [A.D. 378], Theodore of Mopseutsia [A.D. 350-428, Chrysostom [A.D. 345-407])

- A. It has something of a precedent in the literal hermeneutical approach of the rabbis (Aquiba and Hillel).
- B. It focuses on the plain, obvious, ordinary, common sense meaning of words and sentences.
- C. It tried to understand the original author’s intent and interpret in light of his historical setting.
- D. Because of its textual focus, it came to be called the historical-grammatical school of interpretation.
- E. It became involved in the controversy over the natures of Christ (Nestorianism heresy which asserted Jesus had two natures, human and divine) and was disciplined out of existence by the Western church (Rome).
- F. Therefore, it moved from Antioch in Syria to Persia after A.D. 553 and lost its influence.
- G. Its basic tenets were the interpretive approach of the Classical sixteenth century Protestant Reformers (Luther, Calvin and Zwingli), which they received, in part, from Nicholas of Lyra.

## III. Its Basic Tenets

- A. The Bible is written in normal human language. James W. Sire in his book *Scripture Twisting* makes two good points:
  1. “The illumination comes to the minds of God’s people—not just to the spiritually elite. There is no guru class in biblical Christianity, no illuminati, no people through whom all proper

interpretation must come. And, so, while the Holy Spirit gives special gifts of wisdom, knowledge and spiritual discernment, He does not assign these gifted Christians to be the only authoritative interpreters of His Word. It is up to each of His people to learn, to judge and to discern by reference to the Bible which stands as the authority over even those to whom God has given special abilities” (p. 17).

2. “To summarize, the assumption I am making throughout the entire book is that the Bible is God’s true revelation to all humanity, that it is our ultimate authority on all matters about which it speaks, that it is not a total mystery but can be adequately understood by ordinary people in every culture” (pp. 17-18).

B. The Bible must be interpreted in light of its own historical setting and literary context.

C. The intent of the original inspired author as expressed in the text is the focus of interpretation.

#### IV. Seven Interpretive Questions to Help Modern Interpreters Think Through All of these Hermeneutical Issues

A. What did the original author say? (textual criticism)

B. What did the original author mean? (exegesis)

C. What did the original author say elsewhere on the same subject? (parallel passages and biblical theology)

D. What did other biblical authors say on the same subject? (parallel passages and systematic theology)

E. How did the original hearers understand it? (historical and literary context)

F. How does the original message apply to my day? (cultural application)

G. How does the original message apply to my life? (personal devotion and implementation)

H. These seven questions (and four reading cycles) will be used in this seminar as stages of interpretive methodology.

#### V. The First Interpretive Question: Establish the original text—textual criticism

A. The problem of the original languages

1. Must we know the original languages of the Bible (i.e., Ancient Hebrew, Royal Aramaic and Koine Greek) to accurately interpret it?

2. The author’s presuppositions about interpretation:

- a. God wants all mankind to know Him!

- b. He gave us a written record (to a particular culture in a particular time) in order that we may know Him.

- c. He sent His Son to reconcile us to Himself.

- d. He wants all humans to be saved.

- e. The vast majority of the world only has a translation of the Bible.

- f. Scholars are not priests or mediators—even they disagree.

- g. Scholars are gifts to the church, but the average person can understand for himself/herself the vast majority of the Bible's message and certainly what is needed for faith and practice.

## B. The use of modern translations

1. They are adequate for understanding biblical truths, but need to be handled with caution.
2. When studying the Bible compare at least two translations which differ in translation theory:
  - a. literal (word for word correspondence)
    - (1) interlinears (Hebrew or Greek text with English under each word)
    - (2) King James (KJV)
    - (3) New King James (NKJV)
    - (4) American Standard Version (ASV)
    - (5) New American Standard Bible (NASB)
    - (6) Revised Standard Version (RSV)
    - (7) New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
  - b. idiomatic (dynamic equivalent, expresses the same meaning but do not focus on how many words)
    - (1) New English Bible (NEB)
    - (2) Revised English Bible (REB)
    - (3) Jerusalem Bible (JB)
    - (4) New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)
    - (5) New International Version (NIV)
    - (6) The New Testament in the Language of the People by Charles Williams
    - (7) Good News for Modern Man or Today's English Version (TEV)
3. Most manuscript problems can be identified by referring to the marginal notes of modern study Bibles (especially helpful is the *NIV Study Bible*, which is the only modern study Bible where the translators of the original text also wrote the footnotes; now available in *NASB Study Bible*)
4. The comparing of English translations from differing translation theories will identify problem areas.
  - a. manuscript variations
  - b. word meaning options
  - c. grammatical options
  - d. theological biases
5. Suggested reading
  - e. See Appendix Two of this Seminar
  - b. *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, p. 34-44.
  - c. *Translator's Handbooks* published by United Bible Societies (on each separate book of the Bible).

## C. The problem of manuscript variants

1. We do not have "the autograph copies" of Scripture. This refers to the original handwritten manuscripts of the Bible authors.
2. We are over a thousand years from OT originals and hundreds of years (i.e., 200-400) from NT originals. All that we have are handwritten copies of copies of copies of copies! Some of these are good, some not so good, but all are hand copied.
  - a. Old Testament
    - (1) Masoretic Text (MT) finished in the 9th century A.D.
    - (2) Dead Sea Scrolls (DDS) from the Roman B.C. period

- (3) Septuagint (LXX) from about 250 B.C. (i.e., the Letter to Aristeas) to possibly 100 B.C. (i.e., modern scholarship)
- b. New Testament
  - (1) the Papyri from the second century A.D.
  - (2) the Greek texts (uncials) written in all capital letters with no spaces between words, from the fourth through the ninth centuries A.D.
  - (3) the Greek texts (minuscules) written in all small connected letters (running script) from the ninth through the fifteenth centuries A.D.
3. Suggested reading
  - a. *The Book and the Parchments* by F.F. Bruce.
  - b. "Texts and Manuscripts of the Old Testament" *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 5, p. 683ff.
  - c. "Texts and Manuscripts of the New Testament" *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 5, p. 697ff.
  - d. *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* by J.H. Greenlee.
  - e. *Biblical Criticism: Historical, Literary, and Textual* by Bruce Waltke and Gordon Fee.
  - f. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* by F.F. Bruce.
  - g. *Translating the Word of God* by J. Beekman and J. Callow.
4. Suggested helps
  - a. Notice the marginal readings of modern translations.
  - b. Compare modern translations from different categories of translation theories. One excellent tool is *The Bible in Twenty-Six Translations*, Baker Publishers, ed. Curtis Vaughan.
  - c. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, published by The United Bible Societies.

D. The problem of human language when talking about God

1. It is based on analogous relationships, metaphors, figures of speech and negations.
2. It is limited by our fallen human condition and this physical world's terminology.
3. It is never exhaustive.
4. It is adequate.

E. The problem of interpreting ancient written texts

1. The changing meaning of words and idioms.
2. The absence of voice inflection and body language.
3. The syntactical differences in human languages.

VI. The Second Interpretive Question - Understanding the Original Author's Meaning

A. Identify the original author's purpose(s) in the biblical book.

1. Understanding the whole Bible book or literary unit will help analyze the parts (deductive reasoning).
2. Outlining of the entire book to paragraph level is the best approach to facilitate identifying and following the original author's thought units. This should be done without the use of research helps.
3. Use a series of four reading cycles to identify the genre, the literary context, and the historical setting.
  - a. First reading (read the whole book or at least the literary unit you are studying in one sitting)



- (1) Look for overarching plan or purpose(s) of the book.
  - (2) Look for the key verse(s) or paragraph(s) that express its theme(s).
  - (3) Identify the literary genre of the book or literary unit.
- b. Second reading
- (1) Note the major literary units (thought units or topics).
  - (2) Summarize their content in your own words in a simple phrase or sentence.
  - (3) Check your outline with study aids:
    - (a) study Bibles
    - (b) Bible encyclopedias, handbooks, or dictionaries
    - (c) commentaries
    - (d) biblical introductions
- c. Third reading
- (1) Note the internal information (i.e., from the writing itself) about the historical setting.
    - (a) author of writing
    - (b) date of writing
    - (c) recipients of writing
    - (d) occasion of writing
  - (2) Add to your outline the major literary units the paragraph divisions. This will form a detailed outline of the entire book. Paragraph divisions will change from translation to translation (compare several translations). They are not inspired. Look at several and decide for yourself which one best divides the original author's thought units into subjects.
  - (3) Capsule the content of each paragraph in a brief statement (try to express the central thought or topical sentence of the paragraph in your own words). This is the best way to follow the original author's topics and thoughts.
  - (4) The difficulty in outlining to paragraph level is that paragraphs often function at different levels of our outlining. Sometimes they form a major unit in and of themselves. But oftentimes they form a small part of a larger literary unit. When you first begin this interpretive procedure compare your outline with several study Bibles, commentaries, and other Bible interpretation helps.
- d. Fourth reading
- (1) Use parallel passages (in the Bible) and systematic theologies (a type or research book) to gain the big picture (i.e., biblical worldview)
    - (a) The need to compare parallel passages asserts the belief that all biblical texts have one divine author—the Holy Spirit, and therefore, do not contradict, but rather complement each other. However, for study purposes there is an order of exegetical significance.
      - i. the same literary unit
      - ii. the same book
      - iii. the same author
      - iv. the same genre
      - v. the same testament
      - vi. all of the Bible
    - (b) the use of a type of theology book generically called “systematic theologies” is very helpful (but the most denominationally biased). They divide the truths of the Bible into categories (God, mankind, Scripture, salvation, etc.). By using the Scriptural index at the back of these books one is able to quickly see how the

text being studied relates to the major themes of the Bible (only one, one of several, part of a paradox).

- (2) Develop specialized ways to develop specialized lists in order to discern the original author's structure/thought.
  - (a) list the major and minor characters (i.e., Genesis)
  - (b) list key term(s)
    - i. major theological terms
    - ii. recurrent terms
    - iii. terms used to express the central truth of the passage
    - iv. unusual or unknown terms
  - (c) list the major events (Acts)
  - (d) list the geographical movements (Exodus and Numbers or Acts)
- (3) Note especially difficult passages (textual, historical, theological, or verses that cause confusion).
- (4) At this point it is helpful to complete the detailed outline of the entire book. On the left hand side of a page put the content outline (major literary units and paragraph divisions with your brief statement of their central truth). On the right hand side of the page put the possible application points related to each item in the content outline. There should be an application truth for each major literary unit and paragraph. As you discern the author's central thought in each paragraph, how does that truth, illustration, parable, example, etc. apply to your culture, your day, your life? There are examples, e.g., Rom. 1-3 and Titus, in the back of this seminar.

## B. The significance of literary genres

1. Examples of the different types and their basic literary units which vary from genre to genre
  - a. poetry: strophe or stanza
  - b. proverb: look for thematic parallels
  - c. prophecy: whole oracle
  - d. historical narrative: the event
  - e. gospels: pericope
  - f. letters
  - g. apocalyptic: oracle
2. The different interpretive principles related to specific genres
  - a. Poetry
    - (1) Hebrew poetic structure is related to thought relationships, not rhyme. These thought relationship structures are the key to Old and New Testament poetry.
      - (a) synonymous (same thought restated, Ps. 8:4)
      - (b) antithetical (opposite thought, Prov. 10:1; 15:1)
      - (c) synthetic or climatic (thought is developed, Ps. 19:7-9)
      - (d) chiasm
    - (2) Identify figurative language - restate it in a declarative statement.
    - (3) Express central truth of the strophe in a simple declarative statement.
    - (4) Do not push the details.
  - b. Proverb
    - (1) Look for application to daily life.
    - (2) Parallel passages on the same topic are more helpful than context.
    - (3) Isolate and identify figures of speech.

- (4) The truth expressed is usually general in nature and not always applicable to every particular situation.
- c. Prophecy
- (1) The historical context is crucial.
  - (2) Focus on central truth of the whole oracle, not details.
  - (3) There are often multiple fulfillments (i.e., virgin birth in Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:26-38 and abomination of desolation in Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14).
    - (a) Check Old Testament background or parallels.
    - (b) Check Jesus' teachings.
    - (c) Check New Testament parallels.
    - (d) Check immediate context both before and after the passage or literary unit for possible historical setting.
  - (4) Messianic prophecy (i.e., OT) has two focuses.
    - (a) the Incarnation
    - (b) the Second Coming
  - (5) The prophets often record more than they understood. In this case it is the authorial intent of the Holy Spirit not the original human author that is the key. This can be ascertained by historical and/or New Testament fulfillments. Parallel passages become very helpful at this point.
  - (6) This genre is often hard to interpret.
    - (a) H.H. Rowley: "It is not to be denied that prophetic books are not easy to understand. They consist so largely of brief oracles, put together on no very clear principles of arrangement, with sudden transitions from one oracle to another, and usually with but the scantiest of evidence of the situation that gave them birth." *The Relevance of the Bible* (p. 53).
    - (b) R. Girdlestone: "There is no royal road to the scientific study of prophecy." *The Grammar of Prophecy* (p. 104).
    - (c) T. Miles Bennett: "Prophecy has its own peculiar time perspective. . . For a correct understanding of their point of view the interpreter must think first of the signpost rather than the blueprint."
    - (d) Douglas Stuart in *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, says "Less than 2 percent of OT prophecy is messianic. Less than 5 percent specifically describes the New Covenant Age. Less than 1 percent concerns events yet to come" (p. 166).
- d. Historical Narrative
- (1) Read much larger sections of Scripture, often several chapters (i.e. life of Abraham or Joseph).
  - (2) Often the truth is implied, not stated.
    - (a) notice the dialogue between characters
    - (b) notice repeated words or phrases
    - (c) notice authorial comments
    - (d) look for summary statements which conclude the literary units
  - (3) This type of genre expects the reader to
    - (a) have read the whole book
    - (b) be familiar with previous Scripture
  - (4) A good book in the area is *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible* by Robert H. Stein, pp. 151-167.

- e. The Gospels
  - (1) Comparing the different Gospels is often not as helpful as focusing on immediate context. The Gospel writers did not intend their work to be compared with other accounts of the life of Jesus. Focus on why they selected, adapted or arranged an event in Jesus' life.
  - (2) Identify thought units and genre.
  - (3) Remember the New Testament letters interpret and apply the Gospels.
  - (4) Jesus said some hard and ambiguous things, however, we must focus on the obvious and clear statements.
  - (5) The Gospels are not western biographies or autobiographies, but evangelistic tracts! (cf. John 20:31)
  - (6) Parables in the Gospels
    - (a) Notice context
      - i. introductory statements
      - ii. concluding statements
      - iii other elements in the literary unit
    - (b) Look for central truth(s) (cf. Luke 15:1-24, 25-32).
    - (c) Do not usually push the details of the story (exceptions are: the parable of the sower and the wicked vineyard keepers).
    - (d) Some parables emphasize similarity (Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-32) and others contrast (the Wicked Judge, Luke 18:1-8).
    - (e) Look for that which would startle or surprise the original hearers. This is usually the key point.
    - (f) Parables require us to change the way we think or act about spiritual things. They are meant to effect a change.
    - (g) Do not build doctrine solely on parables.
- f. NT Letters and other historical narratives
  - (1) This is the easiest genre to interpret because it is structured like western logical writings.
  - (2) Focus on context:
    - (a) historical setting
    - (b) literary context: : literary unit (i.e., chapter[s] or paragraph[s])
  - (3) The central truths of the literary unit and the paragraph are the stepping stones to understanding the original inspired author's thoughts.
- g. Apocalyptic
  - (1) Apocalyptic is a uniquely Jewish literary genre. It was often used in tension-filled times to express the conviction that God was in control of history and would bring deliverance to His people. This type of literature is characterized by
    - (a) a strong sense of the universal sovereignty of God (monotheism and determinism)
    - (b) a struggle between good and evil, this evil age and the age of righteousness to come (dualism)
    - (c) use of secret code words (usually from the OT or intertestamental Jewish apocalyptic literature)
    - (d) use of colors, numbers, animals, sometimes animals/humans
    - (e) use of angelic mediation by means of visions and dreams, but usually through angelic mediation and interpretation
    - (f) primarily focuses on the soon-coming, climatic events of the end-time (new age)

- (g) use of a fixed set of symbols, not reality, to communicate the end-time message from God
- (2) There is a sense of duality in this genre. It sees reality as a series of dualisms, contrasts, or tensions (so common in John's writings) between:
  - (a) heaven - earth
  - (b) evil age (evil humans and evil angels) - new age of righteousness (godly humans and godly angels)
  - (c) current existence - future existence

All of these are moving toward a consummation brought about by God. This is not the world God intended it to be, but He is continuing to plan, work, and project His will for a restoration of the intimate fellowship begun in the Garden of Eden. The Christ event is the watershed of God's plan, but the two comings have brought about the current dualisms

- (3) These apocalyptic works were never presented orally; they were always written. They are highly structured, literary works. The structure is crucial to a proper interpretation.

Two very helpful and insightful books are D. Brent Sandy's *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* and John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*.

### 3. Suggested reading

- a. *Interpreting the Bible* by A. Berkely Mickelsen
- b. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
- c. *How to Understand Your Bible* by T. Norton Sterrett
- d. *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* by Bernard Ramm
- e. *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* by Peter Cotterell and Max Turner
- f. *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation* by Tremper Longman III
- g. *Exegetical Fallacies* by D.A. Carson
- h. *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks* by D. Brent Sandy
- i. *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible* by Robert H. Stein

### C. Identify the Grammatical Relationships by Comparing English Translations of Differing Translation Theory (a more detailed discussion of Greek grammar is at the back of the seminar entitled "Definitions of Greek Grammatical Forms that Impact Interpretation")

- 1. Word and clause order (use interlinear)
  - a. Normal word for Koine Greek is verb, subject, object.
  - b. Usually the emphatic word is placed first. This is called fronting
    - (1) Gal. 2:20 "with Christ"
    - (2) Heb 1:1 "bit by bit and in many different ways"
- 2. Verbs (every form except AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE) have some type of marked prominence
  - a. Tense (kind of action and indicative of time)
  - b. Voice (the who of the action)
  - c. Mood (the reality of the action)
  - d. An example: the verb tenses describe salvation
    - (1) Saved: AORIST, Acts 15:11; Rom. 8:24; II Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5
    - (2) Have been saved: PERFECT, Eph. 2:5, 8
    - (3) Being saved: PRESENT, I Cor. 1:18; 15:2; II Cor. 2:15

- (4) Shall be saved: FUTURE, Rom. 5:9, 10; 10:9; I Cor. 3:15; Phil. 1:28; I Thess. 5:8-9; Heb. 1:14; 9:28
3. Conjunctions and connectors
  4. Repetitions of word or phrases
    - a. “these are the generations of” in Gen. 2:1; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2
    - b. “to the praise of His Glory” in Eph. 1:6, 12, 14
    - c. Series of AORIST PASSIVE VERBS, I Tim. 3:16
  5. Idioms
    - a. “hate” (cf. Gen. 29:31, 22; Deut. 21:15; Luke 14:26; John 12:25; Rom. 9:13)
    - b. “bless” (cf. Job 1:5, 11; 2:5, 9)
    - c. “all” versus “many” (cf. Isa. 53:6, 11-12 and Rom. 5:15-19, esp. compare v. 18 and v. 19)
  6. Grammatical structure
    - a. CONDITIONAL sentences (4 types)
    - b. PRESENT IMPERATIVE with the NEGATIVE PARTICLE (usually means to stop an act in process)
    - c. AORIST IMPERATIVE with the NEGATIVE PARTICLE (do not start an act)
  7. Suggested reading
    - a. *Word Pictures in the New Testament* by A.T. Robertson
    - b. *Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible* by Joseph Bryant Rotherham, published by Kregel, reprint 1902 (Revell Pub.)
    - c. *NIV Study Bible, NASB Study Bible*
    - d. Study Guide Commentary Series, *You Can Understand the Bible* by Bob Utley, published by Bible Lessons International (free at [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org))

#### D. Identify the Key Words in a Given Context

1. Find the most important words of the paragraph or literary unit. These are the words that communicate (or confuse) the central truth of the context.
2. Be sure not to read your historically, culturally, and theologically (i.e., denominationally) conditioned definitions into biblical words.
  - a. “dog,” Deut. 23:18 (male prostitute of the fertility cult)
  - b. “righteousness,” Matt. 6:1 (giving of alms every week)
  - c. “leaven,” Matt. 13:33 (in this case it is positive, used of permeation)
  - d. “Pharisees,” Luke 18:9-14; Matt. 5:20 (they were the most respected religionists)
3. Remember that the context determines the meaning of words, not a preset (dictionary or lexicon) definition.
4. Be careful of reading one biblical author’s fully developed theological definitions into every usage of that term in Scripture.
5. Examples of changing meaning of words (even in English):
  - a. KJV of I Thess. 4:15, “prevent,” but New American Standard Bible has “precede.”
  - b. KJV of Eph. 4:22, “conversation,” but NASB has “manner of life.”
  - c. KJV of I Cor. 11:29, “damnation,” but NASB has “judgment.”
6. Examples of the different biblical authors using the same word with different meaning:
  - a. John’s use of “world” (*kosmos*)
    - (1) physical planet and all who live on it (cf. John 3:16; 16:33; I John 4:14).
    - (2) human society organized and functioning apart from God (cf. I John 2:15; 3:1,13; 4:4-5; 5:4-5).
  - b. Paul’s use of “flesh” (*sarx*)

- (1) physical body (cf. Rom. 1:3; Eph. 2:11,14; 5:29,31; 6:5,12)
  - (2) sin nature (cf. Rom. 8:3-4; Eph. 2:13)
  - c. Paul's use of "temple" (*naos*)
    - (1) entire local congregation (cf. I Cor. 3:16-17)
    - (2) individual believer (cf. I Cor. 6:19)
  - d. James' use of "save" (*σῶζω*)
    - (1) spiritual salvation (cf. Jas. 1:21; 2:14)
    - (2) physical deliverance (cf. Jas. 5:15, 20)
  - e. author's use of "rest" in Hebrews 3 and 4 (*katapausis, katapauomai*)
    - (1) the Promised Land (cf. 3:11, 18; 4:8)
    - (2) the Sabbath rest (cf. 4:3, 4, 9, 10)
    - (3) the Kingdom of God (cf. 4:1, 9-10, 11)
  - f. use of "all" vs. "many" in Isaiah and by Paul
    - (1) "all" means "all" (cf. Isa. 53:6; Rom. 5:18)
    - (2) "many" can mean "all" (cf. Isa. 52:11, 12; Rom. 5:18, 19)
    - (3) the above is a good example of:
      - (a) the use of idioms
      - (b) the significance of parallel passages
      - (c) the use of context
7. Helpful guidelines for determining the meaning of words in a given context (use concordance or reference Bible).
- a. use of the same term by the same author ("heavenly *places*" in Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12).
  - b. relation of term to its immediate context ("righteousness," Matt. 6:1)
  - c. be sure to focus on contemporary usage of the term ("It is finished," John 19:30 from Koine papyri found in Egypt, "paid in full").
  - d. Check the OT usage and relate this to the developed or metaphorical meaning (faith, Hebrew- *emun, aman, emunah* to Greek- *pistis, pistos*).
8. Suggested resources for word studies.
- a. An exhaustive concordance such as Young's or Strong's or a good reference Bible.
  - b. For those with no background in OT and NT words
    - (1) *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* by W.E. Vine.
    - (2) *New Testament Words* by William Barclay
    - (3) *Synonyms of the Old Testament* by Robert Girdlestone
  - c. For those with some background in Hebrew and Greek
    - (1) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (5 vols)
    - (2) *New International Dictionary of Theology* (4 vols.)
  - d. *Biblical Words and Their Meaning* by Moises Silva.
  - e. *Exegetical Fallacies* by D.A. Carson
  - f. Introductory Articles in *New International Dictionaries*

## VII. The Third and Fourth Interpretive Questions: The Use of Parallel Passages

- A. First try to find parallel passages by the same author.
  - 1. in the same paragraph or literary unit
  - 2. in the same book
  - 3. in other books by the same author

- B. Find parallel passages by other biblical authors.
1. same genre
  2. same period
  3. same covenant
  4. Scripture in general
- C. Concentric circles of significance.
1. This is often referred to by the phrase “analogy of Scripture.” This assumes that:
    - a. all Scripture is inspired (cf. II Tim. 3:16)
    - b. there is no contradiction within Scripture
    - c. the Scripture is the Scripture’s best interpreter.
    - d. parallel passages reveal Authorial (Holy Spirit) intent.
  2. Degrees of interpretive significance
    - a. the immediate context is most important
    - b. used by the same author in the same book (preferably the same literary unit, i.e., “rest” in Heb. 3-4)
    - c. used by the same author in another biblical book (“filled by the Spirit” - Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16)
    - d. same subject by another biblical author of the same period or genre (“Abomination of desolation,” Dan. 9:27; 11:1; 12:1, used in Mark 13:14 and Matt. 24:15)
    - e. check the whole Bible (“virgin birth” of Isa. 7:14 and Matt. 1:18, 23; Luke 1:27)
    - f. check the believing community for confirmation of your interpretation (“head covered,” I Cor. 11 and F. F. Bruce, *Questions and Answers*)
  3. The method characterized
    - a. Exegesis is related to the immediate context.
    - b. Biblical theology is related to wider context but the same period, genre, subject or author.
    - c. Systematic theology relates to the use of the parallels within the entire Bible, the believing community, and beyond.
  4. Examples of the need for parallel passages (exegesis alone can cause overstatements and unbalanced theology)
    - a. baptism in the name of Jesus (versus John’s baptism) necessary for salvation (Acts 2:38)
    - b. universalism (Rom. 5:18-19; Col. 1:20)
    - c. husband of one wife (I Tim. 3:2; 5:9; Titus 1:6)
  5. One moves from the magnifying glass (exegesis) to the telescope (systematic theology)! Be careful to find true parallels. Our biases enter the process quickly and subtly!
- D. The Big Picture - Biblical paradoxes
1. This insight has been the most helpful to me personally as one who loves and trusts the Bible as God’s Word. In trying to take the Bible seriously it became obvious that different texts reveal truth in selected, not systematic ways. One inspired text cannot cancel or depreciate another inspired text! Truth comes in knowing all Scripture (all Scripture, not just some, is inspired, cf. II Tim. 3:16-17), not quoting a single passage (proof-texting)!
  2. Most biblical truths (eastern literature) are presented in dialectical or paradoxical pairs (remember the NT authors, except Luke, are Hebrew thinkers, writing in common Greek). Wisdom Literature and Poetic Literature present truth in parallel lines. The antithetical parallelism functions like the paradox. This synthetic parallelism functions like parallel passages. Somehow both are equally true! These paradoxes are painful to our cherished, simplistic traditions!



- a. predestination versus human free will
  - b. security of the believer versus the need for perseverance
  - c. original sin versus volitional sin
  - d. Jesus as God versus Jesus as man
  - e. Jesus as equal with the Father versus Jesus as subservient to the Father
  - f. Bible as God's Word versus human authorship
  - g. sinlessness (perfectionism, cf. Romans 6) versus sinning less
  - h. initial instantaneous justification and sanctification versus progressive sanctification
  - i. justification by faith (Romans 4) versus justification confirmed by works (cf. James 2:14-26)
  - j. Christian freedom (cf. Rom. 14:1-23; I Cor. 8:1-13; 10:23-33) versus Christian responsibility (cf. Gal. 5:16-21; Eph. 4:1)
  - k. God's transcendence versus His immanence
  - l. God as ultimately unknowable versus knowable in Scripture and Christ
  - m. Paul's many metaphors for salvation
    - (1) adoption
    - (2) sanctification
    - (3) justification
    - (4) redemption
    - (5) glorification
    - (6) predestination
    - (7) reconciliation
  - n. the kingdom of God as present versus future consummation
  - o. repentance as a gift of God versus repentance as a mandated response for salvation (cf. Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21)
  - p. the OT is permanent versus the OT has passed away and is null and void (cf. Matt. 3:17-19 vs. 5:21-48; Romans 7 vs. Galatians 3)
  - q. believers are servants/slaves or children/heirs
3. Use of Systematic Theologies
- a. This type of reference book is one of the most helpful and the most biased.
  - b. These books help us move from one context, through the limited scope of biblical theology, into the whole Bible, systematic theology.
  - c. Be careful that you do not let systematic theology smother or silence individual texts that do not fit neatly into your theological system.
  - d. Purchase several of these types of books from differing theological positions (see list of suggested books at the end of this seminar).
  - e. Helpful quote from *Answers to Questions* by F. F. Bruce, Zondervan, "It is important to remember that, when the teaching of Scripture is systematized, something is usually left out in the process" (p. 196).

## APPLICATION

### I. The Fifth & Sixth Interpretive Questions

- A. No interpretation is complete without personal application. The “then” of Scripture must become the “now” of illumined understanding, proclamation, and lifestyle.
- B. Some factors that affect application:
  - 1. personal need
  - 2. personal situation
  - 3. personal level of maturity
  - 4. personal desire to know and follow God
  - 6. cultural and denominational traditions
  - 7. current historical situation
- C. “According to Kierkegaard the grammatical, lexical, and historical study of the Bible was necessary but preliminary to the true reading of the Bible. ‘To read the Bible as God’s word one must read it with his heart in his mouth, on tip-toe, with eager expectancy, in conversation with God. To read the Bible thoughtlessly or carelessly or academically or professionally is not to read the Bible as God’s Word. As one reads it as a love letter is read, then one reads it as the Word of God’” (from *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* by Ramm, p. 75).

### II. Some Possible Guidelines

- A. Be sure to apply the major intent of the original author as expressed in the biblical context (i.e., paragraph, literary unit, entire book), not merely the details.
- B. Be careful of arbitrarily principalizing, especially of ambiguous texts; use only clear passages. “The effort to discern between those things which are culturally and historically relative and those which are transcendent is in actuality engaged in by all Christians, in one way or another. At issue is only whether such discernment results from our likes and dislikes, our own cultural conditioning and prejudices, or whether it is the application of a clear principle that emerges from a proper understanding of the nature and purpose of Scripture” (from *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, p. 28).
- C. All truth is to be applied but first check “the believing community.”
- D. Application of one biblical passage should never violate another passage. Believers do not have the right to choose some texts and ignore others! However, the New Testament does take precedence over the Old Testament. Gospel truths take priority over cultural aspects (i.e. slavery).
- E. Some basic questions to ask every text (this is taken from *How to Interpret the Bible for Yourself* by Mayhue, p. 64).
  - 1. Are there examples to follow?
  - 2. Are there commands to obey?
  - 3. Are there errors to avoid?
  - 4. Are there sins to forsake?
  - 5. Are there promises to claim?

6. Are there new thoughts about God to analyze?
7. Are there principles by which to live?

### III. The Interpreter's Responsibility

- A. Walk in the light you have! Believers are only responsible for what they do understand the Bible teaches (e.g., wearing jewelry, Rom. 14:23).
- B. Share your insight from the Scripture, in love! (cf. Eph. 4:15) Arrogance, dogmatism, and one-upmanship are always inappropriate!
- C. Always be open to new light from the Bible and the Spirit! Believers must continue to grow in Christ.
- D. Don't fight over minor points (cf. Romans 14:1). We all have strengths and weaknesses. Freedom is not a license (cf. Rom. 14:13-23).

### IV. Suggested Readings

- A. *Applying the Bible* by Jack Kuhatschek
- B. *Understanding and Applying the Bible* by J. Robertson McQuilkin
- C. *Living by the Book* by Howard G. Hendricks and William B. Hendricks
- D. *Why Christians Fight Over the Bible* by John Newport

## POSSIBLE PITFALLS

- I. Remember the need for: (1) a logical process; (2) a textually-focused method of interpretation and (3) a Spirit-led teachability. Our interpretation should be verifiable to others based on our logical thought processes and evidence from the text itself.
  
- II. Document textual evidence
  - A. From genre of the biblical book or literary unit
  - B. From the literary context of a passage.
    - 1. immediate context
    - 2. larger literary unit
    - 3. the whole book
    - 4. books by the same author
    - 5. books of the same genre
  - C. From the historical setting of a biblical book
    - 1. author (who)
    - 2. hearers or readers (to whom)
    - 3. occasion or purpose of writing (why)
    - 4. date (when)
  - D. From the grammatical structure of a text
    - 1. relationship of the parts of the sentence (syntax)
    - 2. relationship of the sentences to the paragraph
    - 3. relationship of paragraph to literary unit
  - E. From the words of the text
    - 1. semantic field
    - 2. author's usage
    - 3. other biblical author's usage from the same period, covenant or genre
    - 4. whole Bible
  - F. From the parallel passages
    - 1. immediate context
    - 2. same literary unit
    - 3. same book
    - 4. same author
    - 5. another biblical author of the same period
    - 6. another biblical author of the same Testament
    - 7. another biblical author from the Bible
  
- III. Examples of interpretive abuses
  - A. abuse because of presuppositions (examples)
    - 1. bias concerning miracles (William Barclay's logical positivist's interpretation of Matt. 14:13-21)
    - 2. bias concerning women in ministry (deaconesses in Rom. 16:1, 7; I Tim. 3:11)
    - 3. bias concerning church polity (cf. John 21:15-17; Acts 15; Titus 1:5)
    - 4. bias concerning all believers to speak in tongues (cf. I Cor. 12:29-30)
  - B. abuse of context because of proof-texting (examples)
    - 1. "top knots" (Matt. 24:17, "top not," woman's hairstyle)
    - 2. rule focused legalism (cf. Col. 2:21, do not touch, taste, or handle)

3. “the” plan of salvation (cf. Rev. 3:20, written to believers; Rom. 10:9-13, not in same literary unit as Rom. 3:23; 5:8; and 6:23)
  4. baptism for the dead (cf. I Cor. 15:29)
  5. dispensational proof-text (cf. II Tim. 2:15)
  6. transubstantiation (cf. John 6:52ff)
  7. personal leisure versus World mission (cf. Ps. 46:10)
- C. abuse of literary genre because of literalism (examples)
1. Ps. 114:3-6 (poetry)
  2. Rev. 12-13,17 (apocalyptic)
  3. Luke 16:19-31 (parable)
- D. abuse of figures of speech or cultural idioms (examples)
1. “hate” (cf. Gen. 29:31, 33; Deut. 21:15; Rom. 9:13; Mal. 1:2-4)
  2. “pluck out. . .cut off” (cf. Matt. 5:29-30)
  3. “many” as referring to “all” (cf. Isa. 53:6 versus 53:11-12; Rom. 5:18 versus 5:15, 19)
- E. over simplification of truth (examples)
1. God is love yet God is also wrath
  2. saved by grace yet faith and repentance needed (cf. Mark 1:15; Acts 3:16, 19; 20:21)
  3. salvation is free yet demand for good works (cf. Eph. 2:8-10 and James 2:14-26)
- F. Selectivity of certain passages (examples)
1. unlimited prayer (cf. John 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, but Matt. 7:7-8; James 1:6-7; 4:3; I John 3:22; 5:14-15)
  2. long hair (cf. I Cor. 11:6, but Num. 6:5; Lev. 19:27)
  3. women keep silent in church (cf. I Cor. 14:34, but I Cor. 11:5)
  4. tongue speaking (cf. I Cor. 13:8, but 14:5, 18, 39)
  5. food laws binding (cf. Lev. 11, but Matt. 15:11; Mark 7:18-23; Acts 10:10-16)
  6. humans are trichotomous as God is a Trinity (cf. I Thess. 5:23 and Heb. 4:12)
  7. “the” model of salvation (cf. Acts 2:38 [baptism]; 8:14-25 [tongues]; 16:19-34 [only believe])
- G. Majoring on minors (examples)
1. to whom did Jesus preach while in Hades (cf. I Pet. 3:19; 4:6)
  2. how will the earth be destroyed (cf. II Pet. 3:10)
  3. what is the sin unto death (cf. I John 5:16)
  4. millennium (cf. Rev. 20:1-6)
- H. abuse of historical setting (examples)
1. Gideon’s fleece (cf. Jdgs. 6:36-40)
  2. polygamy (cf. I Tim. 3:2; 5:9; Titus 1:6)
- I. Suggested reading
1. *Scripture Twisting* by James Sire
  2. *Exegetical Fallacies* by D.A. Carson
  3. *Biblical Words and Their Meaning* by Moises Silva
  4. *Why Christians Fight Over the Bible* by John Newport

## PRACTICAL PROCEDURES

### I. Preliminary Steps

#### A. The Spiritual Aspect (which is so necessary but so difficult to define because godly, sincere, educated people disagree over interpretation)

1. Pray for the Spirit's help every time we read and try to understand the Bible (cf. I Cor. 1:26-2:16).
2. Pray for personal cleansing (cf. I John 1:9).
3. Pray for greater desire to know God (cf. Ps. 19:7-14; 42:1ff; 119:1ff).
4. Apply new insights to your own life (cf. Eph. 4:1; 5:2, 15; I John 1:7).
5. H.H. Rowley: "It perceives that no merely intellectual understanding of the Bible, however complete, can possess all its treasures. It does not despise such understanding, for it is essential to a complete understanding. But it must lead to a spiritual understanding of the spiritual treasures of this book if it is to be complete. And for that spiritual understanding something more than intellectual alertness is necessary. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and the Bible student needs an attitude of spiritual receptivity, an eagerness to find God that he may yield himself to Him, if he is to pass beyond his scientific study unto the richer inheritance of this greatest of all books" *The Relevance of the Bible* (p. 19).
6. A good article is found in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 1 pp. 66-67.
7. A good book is *Listening to the Spirit in the Text* by Gordon D. Fee.

#### B. The Logical Process of Analyzing An Ancient Literary Document

1. Allow time to read the whole book through at one setting.
2. Re-read the entire book (or the literary unit) in several translations from differing translation theories.
  - a. literal (word for word correspondence)
  - b. idiomatic (dynamic equivalent)
3. Basic practical procedures
  - a. seven interpretive questions (exegesis and application)
  - b. four reading cycles for specific information (historical setting and literary content)
  - c. use of research tools in graded steps
4. These procedures are an attempt to help us check all the steps of interpretation. They are similar to the way professional airline pilots use take-off and landing checklists. They have done these hundreds of times, but sometimes human beings forget. The checklist is a way of assuring a well known procedure. Pilots have very important jobs, hundreds of lives depend on them. How much more important is the Bible interpreter's? People's eternal lives depend on them!

Our processes of interpretation and the reasons for our interpretations need to be documented so that other rational creatures made in God's image can follow our logic and evaluate our biblical evidence. Good interpretation is:

- a. common sense interpretation
- b. textual interpretation
- c. logical interpretation
- d. Spirit-guided interpretation
- e. biblically consistent interpretation.

- II. Take Good Notes of Your Reading Observations (Read analytically, sample form on pp. 50-53).
- A. Read the entire book (1st reading).
1. Look for overarching plan or purpose(s) of the book.
  2. Look for the key verse(s) or paragraph(s) that express this theme(s).
  3. Identify the literary genre.
- B. Re-read the entire book (2nd reading).
1. Identify the major literary units or subject divisions (outline).
  2. Summarize their content in your own words in a brief phrase or sentence.
- C. Check your outline.
1. With your church leaders
  2. With mature Christian friends
  3. With a commentary
  4. With an introduction to the Bible
  5. With Bible encyclopedia, handbook or dictionary
  6. With a Study Bible
- D. Re-read the entire book (third reading).
1. Try to answer from the biblical book itself the questions concerning the historical setting:
    - a. the author of the writing
    - b. the date of the writing
    - c. the recipients of the writing
    - d. the occasion of the writing
    - e. the historical setting of the writing
  2. Identify the paragraph divisions (compare translations) and give a brief summary of each one in your own words. Develop an outline to paragraph level. Compare the paragraph divisions of modern translations, then do your own outline.
  3. Check your observations on the historical setting as you checked your outline (cf. II. C).
- E. Re-read the entire book (fourth reading).
1. Use parallel passages (concentric circles) and systematic theology books to gain the big picture.
    - a. Let the passage itself speak.
    - b. Let the whole book speak.
    - c. Let the same Testament speak.
    - d. Let the entire Bible speak.
      - (1) similar teaching
      - (2) paradoxical teaching
  2. Develop specialized lists (if applicable) in order to ascertain the original author's intent.
    - a. List the major and minor characters.
    - b. List the key term(s).
      - (1) major theological terms
      - (2) recurrent terms
      - (3) terms used to express the central truth of the passage
      - (4) unusual or unknown terms

- c. List the major events.
- d. List the geographical movements.
- 3. Note especially difficult passages.
  - a. textual problems
  - b. historical problems
  - c. theological problems
  - d. terms, phrases or verses that cause confusion
- 4. Note application points of every major literary unit and paragraph.

F. These reading cycles are structured to help you discover as much information as possible from your personal reading of the Bible. Research tools should not take the place of personal Bible reading. You, the Bible, and the Spirit are priority!

### III. Proposed Order for the Use of Research Tools After You Have Finished the Four Reading Cycles.

- A. Start with the historical setting.
  - 1. Use Bible introductions.
  - 2. Use articles in Bible encyclopedias, handbooks or dictionaries.
  - 3. Use introductions in biblical commentaries.
  - 4. Use study Bible notes.
  - 5. A good book on how to use these study aids is *How to Use New Testament Greek Study Aids* by Walter Jerry Clark. A more scholarly approach would be *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study* by Frederich W. Danker.
- B. Use several types of commentaries.
  - 1. Small. These will help you get an over all understanding of the passage. (Examples: Tyndale, Zondervan's Study Guide Commentary)
  - 2. Technical. These will help you answer difficult questions. (Examples: The New International Commentary, The Expositor's Bible Commentary)
  - 3. Devotional. These will help you develop application points. (Examples: Matthew Henry, Griffith Thomas)
- C. Use supplementary specialized material. (See recommended books section at back of notebook.)
  - 1. word study books
  - 2. cultural background books
  - 3. geographical books
  - 4. archaeology books
  - 5. apologetics books

### IV. FINAL EXHORTATIONS

- Remember that we receive truth in increments.
- Do not take shortcuts in your study.
- Do not expect instantaneous results.
- Do not become discouraged.
- Stay with the program.
- Expect tension and disagreement in interpretation. Remember that interpretation is a Spirit-led task as well as a logical process.



- ▣ Read the Bible analytically.
- ▣ Use research tools critically.
- ▣ Make a commitment of at least thirty minutes every day.
- ▣ Find a quiet place.
- ▣ Set aside a specific time.
- ▣ Choose a short New Testament book first.
- ▣ Assemble some research tools.
- ▣ Get paper and pencil.
- ▣ Pray—and start!

## SAMPLE CATEGORIES FOR NOTE TAKING

### I. First reading

- A. The overarching theme or purpose of the whole book is: (brief description)
- B. This theme is exemplified in (choose one):
  - 1. Verse
  - 2. Paragraph
  - 3. Chapter
- C. The type of literary genre is:

### II. Second reading

- A. The major literary units or content divisions are:
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - Etc.
- B. Summarize the subject (in a declarative sentence) of each major division and note their relationship to each other (chronological, logical, theological, etc.)
- C. List the places you checked your outline

### III. Third reading

- A. Internal information concerning the historical setting (give chapter and verse):
  - 1. Author of the book
    - a.
    - b.
    - c.
  - 2. Date of its writing or date of event
    - a.
    - b.
    - c.
  - 3. Recipients of the book
    - a.
    - b.
    - c.
  - 4. Occasion of the writing
- B. Fill in your working content outline by adding the paragraph divisions. Compare translations from the different translation theory groups, especially from the literal and idiomatic (dynamic equivalent). Then write out your own outline.

- C. Summarize each paragraph in a declarative sentence.
- D. List possible application points with each major division and/or paragraphs.

#### IV. Fourth reading

- A. Make note of significant parallel passages (both positive and negative). Observe these concentric circles of significance:
  - 1. Same book or literary units
  - 2. Same author
  - 3. Same period, subject or literary genre
  - 4. Same Testament
  - 5. Entire Bible
- B. Check systematic theology books.
- C. Develop specialized lists in order to discern structure.
  - 1. List the major and minor characters.
  - 2. List key terms (theological, recurrent or unusual terms).
  - 3. List the major events.
  - 4. List the geographical movements.
- D. Make note of difficult passages.
  - 1. Textual problems
    - a. from margin of your English Bible
    - b. from comparing English translations
  - 2. Historical problems and uniqueness
  - 3. Theological problems of uniqueness
  - 4. Those verses that cause you confusion

#### V. Application truths

- A. Write your detailed outline on the left side of a sheet.
- B. On the right side write down (in pencil) possible application truths for the major literary units and/or the paragraphs.

#### VI. Use of Research Tools

- A. Read research tools in appropriate order. Take notes on a “work sheet.” Look for:
  - 1. points of agreement
  - 2. points of disagreement
  - 3. new thoughts or applications
  - 4. record possible interpretations on difficult passages
- B. Analyze insights from research tools and develop a final detailed outline with application points. This master outline should help you to discern the original author's structure and purpose.
  - 1. Do not major on minors.

2. Do not forget the context.
3. Do not read into the text more than, or less than, the original author intended.
4. Application points should be done on three levels:
  - a. theme of the whole book—first reading
  - b. major literary units—second reading
  - c. paragraphs—third reading
5. Allow parallel passages to confirm and clarify your interpretation as the final step. This allows the Bible to interpret itself. However, doing it last safeguards us from allowing our overall systematic theological understanding of the Bible from silencing, ignoring, or skewing difficult passages.

## VII. Theological Insight

- A. Use systematic theology books to find how your text relates to the major truths of the Bible.
- B. Describe in your own words the major truth(s) of your passage. Your sermon or teaching lesson should reflect this truth!

## EXEGETICAL PROCEDURES

- I. The Text (minimum one paragraph in English)
  - A. Establish the original text (manuscript variants)
  - B. Translation options
    1. Word for word (KJV, ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV)
    2. Dynamic equivalent (NIV, NEB, Jerusalem Bible, Williams, TEV)
    3. Other ancient translations (LXX, Vulgate, Peshita, etc.)
    4. No paraphrase translations at this stage
  - C. Check significant variables in translations and why
    1. Greek manuscript problem(s)
    2. Difficult word(s)
    3. Unique construction(s)
    4. Theological truth(s)
- II. Exegetical items to be checked
  - A. Note immediate contextual unit (literary unit and paragraph)
  - B. Note structural elements
    1. Parallel structures
    2. Quotes/Allusions
    3. Figures of speech
    4. Illustrations
    5. Poem/Hymn/Song
  - C. Note grammatical elements (syntax)
    1. Verbs or verbals (tense, voice, mood, number, gender)
    2. Special construction (conditional sentences, prohibitions, etc.)
    3. Word or clause order
  - D. Note key words
    1. Give full semantical field
    2. Which meaning(s) fit the context best
    3. Be careful of set theological definitions
  - E. Note significant Biblical parallels of words, topics or quotes
    1. Same context
    2. Same book
    3. Same author
    4. Same genre
    5. Same period
    6. Entire Bible

## **HISTORICAL SUMMARY**

- I. How the specific occasion of the writing effects the truth statements.
- II. How the cultural milieu effects the truth statements.
- III. How recipients effect the truth statements.

## **THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY**

- I. Theological truths
  - A. State clearly the author's theological assertion:
    1. Special terminology
    2. Significant clause or phrase
    3. Central truth of sentence(s) or paragraph(s)
  - B. How does this relate to the subject or truth of the literary unit?
  - C. How does this relate to the subject or truth of the entire book?
  - D. How does this relate to the subject or truth as revealed in Scripture?
- II. Special points of interest
- III. Personal insights
- IV. Insights from commentaries

## **APPLICATION TRUTHS**

- I. Application truth of literary unit
- II. Application truth(s) of paragraph(s) level
- III. Application truth of theological elements within the text

## BASIC PROCEDURES FOR A NT BIBLICAL WORD STUDY

- I. Establish the basic meaning and semantic field**  
Use *A Greek-English Lexicon* by Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker
- II. Establish the contemporary usage (Koine Greek)**
  - A. Use *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* by Moulton, Milligan for Egyptian papyri
  - B. Use the Septuagint and Redpath's Concordance of the LXX for Palestinian Judaism
- III. Establish the semantic domain**  
Use *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* by Louw, Nida or *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by Vine
- IV. Establish the Hebrew background**  
Use Strong's Concordance with its numbers linked to the *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Brown, Driver, Briggs; *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, edited by Van Gemneren (5 vols.) Or *Synonyms of the Old Testament* by Girdlestone
- V. Establish the grammatical form of the word in context**  
Use an interlinear Greek-English New Testament and an analytical lexicon or *Analytical Greek New Testament* by Timothy and Barbara Friberg
- VI. Check the frequency of usage by genre, authors, subject, etc.**  
Use a concordance
- VII. Check your study with:**
  - a Bible encyclopedia  
use *Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia* (5 vols) or *The International Bible Encyclopedia* (five vols)
  - a Bible Dictionary  
use *Anchor Bible Dictionary* or *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary*
  - a theological word book  
use *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (3 vols) edited by Colin Brown,  
or *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (abridged) by Bromiley
  - a systematic theological book  
use *Systematic Theology* by Berkhof; *A Theology of the New Testament* by Ladd; *New Testament Theology* by Stagg; or a number of others
- VIII. Write out summary of significant interpretive findings**

## A SELECTED LIST OF RECOMMENDED RESEARCH TOOLS BY CATEGORY

### I. The Bible

- A. Understanding the process of translating.
  - 1. J. Beekman and J. Callow, *Translating the Word of God*
  - 2. Eugene Nida, *God's Word in Man's Language* (William Carey, N.D.)
  - 3. Sakae Kubo and Walter Specht, *So Many Versions* (Zondervan, 1983)
  - 4. F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Revell, 1963)
- B. History of the English Bible
  - 1. F. F. Bruce *The English Bible: A History of Translations From the Earliest Versions to the New English Bible* (Oxford, 1970)
  - 2. Ira Maurice Price, *The Ancestry of our English Bible* (Harper, 1956)

### II. How to do Research

- A. Walter J. Clark, *How To Use New Testament Greek Study Aids* (Loizeaux Brothers, 1983)
- B. F.W. Danker, *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study* (Concordia, 1970)
- C. R.T. France, *A Bibliographic Guide to New Testament Research* (JSOT Press, 1979)
- D. D. W. Scholer, *A Basic Bibliographic Guide for New Testament Exegesis* (Eerdmans, 1973)

### III. Hermeneutics

- A. James Braga, *How to Study the Bible* (Multnomah, 1982)
- B. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Zondervan, 1982)
- C. Richard Mayhue, *How to Interpret the Bible for Yourself* (Moody, 1986)
- D. J. Robertson McQuilkin, *Understanding and Applying the Bible* (Moody, 1983)
- E. A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible* (Eerdmans, 1963)
- F. John MacArthur, Jr., *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Word, 1992)
- G. Bruce Corley, Steve Lemke, and Grant Lovejoy, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Broadman & Holman, 1996)
- H. Robert Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*



#### IV. Basic Introductions

##### A. Old Testament

1. R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1969)
2. William Sanford LaSor, David Allen Hubbard and Frederic Wm. Bush, *Old Testament Survey* (Eerdmans, 1982)
3. Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1949)
4. T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament* (Baker, 1998)
5. Peter C. Craigie, *The Old Testament: Its Background, Growth and Context* (Abingdon, 1990)

##### B. New Testament

1. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (IVP, 1970)
2. Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth and Content* (Abingdon, 1965)
3. D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Zondervan 1992)
4. Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament* (Baker 1998)
5. Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament* (Zondervan, 1994)

#### V. Bible Encyclopedias and Dictionaries (multi-volume)

- A. M. Tenney, ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia*, 5 vols. (Zondervan, 1976)
- B. G.A. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible and Supplement 5* (Abingdon, 1962-1977)
- C. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* 5 rev. ed. (Eerdmans, 1979-1987)
- D. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and J. Howard Marshall editors, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (IVP, 1992)
- E. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid editors, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (IVP, 1993)

#### VI. Commentary Sets

##### A. Old Testament

1. D.J. Wiseman, ed., *The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (InterVarsity, 1970)
2. *A Study Guide Commentary Series* (Zondervan, 1977)
3. R.K. Harrison, ed., *The New International Commentary* (Eerdmans, 1976)
4. Frank E. Gaebelein, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1958)

##### B. New Testament

1. R.V.G. Tasker, ed., *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Eerdmans, 1959)
2. *A Study Guide Commentary Series* (Zondervan, 1977)

3. Frank E. Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1958)
4. *The New International Commentary* (Eerdmans, 1976)
5. Bob Utley, *You Can Understand the Bible Study Guide Commentary Series* (Bible Lessons International, 1997-2006)

## VII. Word Studies

### A. Old Testament

1. Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1897)
2. Aaron Pick, *Dictionary of Old Testament Words* (Kregel, 1977)
3. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Moody, 1980)
4. William A. Van Gemeren, editor, *Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols. (Zondervan, 1997)

### B. New Testament

1. A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Broadman, 1930)
2. M.R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (MacDonald, 1888)
3. W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Revell, 1968)
4. William Barclay, *A New Testament Wordbook*, (SCM, 1955)
5. \_\_\_\_\_, *More New Testament Words* (Harper, 1958)
6. C. Brown, t. al., *The New Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 5 vols. (Zondervan, 1975-1979)

### C. Theological

1. Alan Richardson, ed., *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (MacMillan, 1950)
2. Everett F. Harrison, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Baker, 1975)

## VIII. Cultural setting

### A. Customs

1. Adolf Deissman, *Light From the Ancient East* (Baker, 1978)
2. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2 vols. (McGraw-Hill, 1961)
3. James M. Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible* (Logos, 1972)
4. Fred H. Wright, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands* (Moody, 1953)
5. Jack Finegan, *Light From the Ancient Past*, 2 vols. (Princeton University Press, 1974)
6. Victor H. Matthews, *Manners and Customs in the Bible* (Hendrickson, 1988)

### B. Histories

1. John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Westminster, 1981)
2. D.J. Wiseman, ed., *Peoples of Old Testament Times* (Oxford, 1973)
3. P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans, ed., *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1970)

### C. New Testament

1. Adolf Deissmann, *Light From the Ancient East* (Baker, 1978)
2. F.F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Doubleday, 1969)

3. Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Harper's World of the New Testament* (Harper and Row, 1981)
4. Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Eerdmans, 1971)
5. A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford, 1963)
6. J. W. Shepard, *The Christ of the Gospels* (Eerdmans, 1939)

#### D. Archaeology

1. Jack Finegan, *Light From the Ancient Past*, 2 vols. (Princeton University Press, 1946)
2. H.T. Vos, *Archaeology of Bible Lands* (Moody, 1977)
3. Edwin M. Yamauchi, *The Stones and the Scriptures* (Holman, 1972)
4. K.A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and the Old Testament* (InterVarsity Press, 1966)
5. John H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context* (Zondervan, 1989)

#### E. Geography

1. C.F. Pfeiffer and H.F. Vos, *The Wycliffe Historical Geography of Bible Lands* (Moody, 1967)
2. Barry J. Beitzel, *The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands* (Moody, 1985)
3. Thomas V. Brisco ed., *Holman Bible Atlas* (Broadman and Holman, 1998)

### IX. Theologies

#### A. Old Testament

1. A.B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (Clark, 1904)
2. Edmond Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Harper & Row, 1958)
3. Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Zondervan, 1978)
4. Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (IVP, 1998)

#### B. New Testament

1. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (InterVarsity, 1981)
2. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1974)
3. Frank Stagg, *New Testament Theology* (Broadman, 1962)
4. Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, vol. 2 (Harper & Row, 1978)

#### C. Entire Bible

1. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Eerdmans, 1948)
2. L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Eerdmans, 1939)
3. H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* (Beacon Hill Press, 1940)
4. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* second ed. (Baker, 1998)

#### D. Doctrine—historically developed

1. L. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Baker, 1975)
2. Justo L. Gonzales, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 1 (Abingdon, 1970)

## X. Apologetics

- A. Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Baker, 1976)
- B. Bernard Ramm, *Varieties of Christian Apologetics* (Baker, 1962)
- C. J. B. Phillips, *Your God Is Too Small* (MacMillan, 1953)
- D. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (MacMillan, 1978)
- E. Colin Brown, ed., *History, Criticism and Faith* (InterVarsity, 1976)
- F. F. Bruce, *Answers to Questions* (Zondervan, 1972)
- G. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce and Manfred T. Brauch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (IVP, 1996)

## XI. Bible Difficulties

- A. F. F. Bruce, *Questions and Answers*
- B. Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Zondervan, 1982)
- C. Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask* (Victor, 1992)
- D. Walter C., Kaiser, Jr., Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce and Manfred F. Baruch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (IVP, 1996) and *More Hard Sayings of the Bible*

## XII. Textual Criticism

- A. Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament, Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration* (Oxford, 1964)
- B. J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Eerdmans, 1964)
- C. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, (United Bible Societies.)

## XIII. Lexicons

- A. Old Testament (Hebrew)
  - 1. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Clarendon Press, 1951)
  - 2. Bruce Einspahr, *Index to Brown, Driver and Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*
  - 3. Benjamin Davidson, *Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (MacDonald)
  - 4. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 2 vols.

B. New Testament (Greek)

1. Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (University of Chicago Press, 1979)
2. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon*, 2 vols. (United Bible Societies, 1989)
3. James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Eerdmans, 1974)
4. William D. Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (Zondervan, 1993)

XIV. Available websites to buy used and discounted books

- A. [www.Christianbooks.com](http://www.Christianbooks.com)
- B. [www.Half.com](http://www.Half.com)
- C. [www.Overstock.com](http://www.Overstock.com)
- D. [www.Alibris.com](http://www.Alibris.com)
- E. [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com)
- F. [www.BakerBooksRetain.com](http://www.BakerBooksRetain.com)
- G. [www.ChristianUsedBooks.net](http://www.ChristianUsedBooks.net)

## BRIEF DEFINITIONS OF HEBREW GRAMMATICAL FORMS WHICH IMPACT EXEGESIS

### I. Brief Historical Development of Hebrew

Hebrew is part of the Shemitic (Semitic) family of southwest Asian language. The name (given by modern scholars) comes from Noah's son, Shem (cf. Gen. 5:32; 6:10). Shem's descendants are listed in Gen. 10:21-31 as Arabs, Hebrews, Syrians, Arameans, and Assyrians. In reality some Semitic languages are used by nations listed in Ham's line (cf. Gen. 10:6-14), Canaan, Phoenicia, and Ethiopia.

Hebrew is part of the northwest group of these Semitic languages. Modern scholars have samples of this ancient language group from:

- A. Amorite (*Mari Tablets* from 18<sup>th</sup> century B.C. in Akkadian)
- B. Canaanite (*Ras Shamra Tablets* from 15<sup>th</sup> century in Ugaritic)
- C. Canaanite (*Amarna Letters* from 14<sup>th</sup> century in Canaanite Akkadian)
- D. Phoenician (Hebrew uses Phoenician alphabet)
- E. Moabite (Mesha stone, 840 B.C.)
- F. Aramaic (official language of the Persian Empire used in Gen. 31:47 [2 words]; Jer. 10:11; Dan. 2:4-6; 7:28; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26 and spoken by Jews in the first century in Palestine)

The Hebrew language is called "the lip of Canaan" in Isa. 19:18. It was first called "Hebrew" in the prologue of Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Ben Sira) about 180 B.C. (and some other early places, cf. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, pp. 205ff). It is most closely related to Moabite and the language used at Ugarit. Examples of ancient Hebrew found outside the Bible are

- 1. the Gezer calendar, 925 B.C. (a school boy's writing)
- 2. the Siloam Inscription, 705 B.C. (tunnel writings)
- 3. Samaritan Ostraca, 770 B.C. (tax records on broken pottery)
- 4. Lachish letters, 587 B.C. (war communications)
- 5. Maccabean coins and seals
- 6. some Dead Sea Scroll texts
- 7. numerous inscriptions (cf. "Languages [Hebrew]," ABD 4:203ff)

It, like all Semitic languages, is characterized by words made up of three consonants (triconsonantal root). It is an inflection language. The three-root consonants carry the basic word meaning, while prefixed, suffixed, or internal additions show the syntactical function (later vowels, cf. Sue Green, *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 46-49).

Hebrew vocabulary demonstrates a difference between prose and poetry. Word meanings are connected to folk etymologies (not linguistic origins). Word plays and sound plays are quite common (*paronomasia*).

### II. Aspects of Predication

#### A. VERBS

The normal expected word order is VERB, PRONOUN, SUBJECT (with modifiers), OBJECT (with modifiers). The basic non-flagged VERB is the *Qal*, PERFECT, MASCULINE, SINGULAR form. It is how Hebrew and Aramaic lexicons are arranged.

VERBS are inflected to show

- 1. number—singular, plural, dual
- 2. gender—masculine and feminine (no neuter)
- 3. mood—indicative, subjunctive, imperative (relation of the action to reality)

4. tense (aspect)
    - a. PERFECT, which denotes completed, in the sense of the beginning, continuing, and concluding, of an action. Usually this form was used of past action, the thing has occurred. J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, says
 

“The single whole described by a perfect is also considered as certain. An imperfect may picture a state as possible or desired or expected, but a perfect sees it as actual, real, and sure” (p. 36).

S. R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew*, describes it as,

“The perfect is employed to indicate actions the accomplishment of which lies indeed in the future, but is regarded as dependant upon such an unalterable determination of the will that it may be spoken of as having actually taken place: thus a resolution, promise, or decree, especially of Divine one, is frequently announced in the perfect tense” (p. 17 e.g., the prophetic perfect).

Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. *From Exegesis to Exposition*, defines this verbal form as

“. . .views a situation from the outside, as a whole. As such it expresses a simple fact, whether it be an action or state (including state of being or mind). When used of actions, it often views the action as complete from the rhetorical standpoint of the speaker or narrator (whether it is or is not complete in fact or reality is not the point). The perfect can pertain to an action/state in the past, present or future. As noted above, time frame, which influences how one translates the perfect into a tense-oriented language like English, must be determined from the context” (p. 86).
    - b. IMPERFECT, which denotes an action in progress (incomplete, repetitive, continual, or contingent), often movement toward a goal. Usually this form was used of Present and Future action.
 

J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, says,

“All IMPERFECTS represent incomplete states. They are either repeated or developing or contingent. In other words, or partially developed, or partially assured. In all cases they are partial in some sense, i.e., incomplete” (p. 55).

Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. *From Exegesis to Exposition*, says

“It is difficult to reduce the essence of the imperfect to a single concept, for it encompasses both aspect and mood. Sometimes the imperfect is used in an indicative manner and makes an objective statement. At other times it views an action more subjectively, as hypothetical, contingent, possible, and so on” (p. 89).
    - c. The added *waw*, which links the VERB to the action of the previous VERB(s).
    - d. IMPERATIVE, which is based on the volition of the speaker and potential action by the hearer.
    - e. In ancient Hebrew only the larger context can determine the authorial-intended time orientations.
- B. The seven major inflected forms and their basic meaning. In reality these forms work in conjunction with each other in a context and must not be isolated.
1. *Qal (Kal)*, the most common and basic of all the forms. It denotes simple action or a state of being. There is no causation or specification implied.
  2. *Niphal*, the second most common form. It is usually PASSIVE, but this form also functions as reciprocal and reflexive. It also has no causation or specification implied.
  3. *Piel*, this form is active and expresses the bringing about of an action into a state of being. The basic meaning of the *Qal* stem is developed or extended into a state of being.
  4. *Pual*, this is the PASSIVE counterpart to the *Piel*. It is often expressed by a PARTICIPLE.

5. *Hithpael*, which is the reflexive or reciprocal stem. It expresses iterative or durative action to the *Piel* stem. The rare PASSIVE form is called *Hothpael*.
6. *Hiphil*, the active form of the causative stem in contrast to *Piel*. It can have a permissive aspect, but usually refers to the cause of an event. Ernst Jenni, a German Hebrew grammarian, believed that the *Piel* denoted something coming into a state of being, while *Hiphil* showed how it happened.
7. *Hophal*, the PASSIVE counterpart to the *Hiphil*. These last two stems are the least used of the seven stems.

Much of this information comes from *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, by Bruce K. Walke and M. O'Connor, pp. 343-452.

Agency and causation chart. One key in understanding the Hebrew VERB system is to see it as a pattern of VOICE relationships. Some stems are in contrast to other stems (i.e., *Qal* - *Niphal*; *Piel* - *Hiphil*)

The chart below tries to visualize the basic function of the VERB stems as to causation.

VOICE or Subject	No Secondary Agency	An Active Secondary Agency	A Passive Secondary Agency
ACTIVE	<i>Qal</i>	<i>Hiphil</i>	<i>Piel</i>
MIDDLE PASSIVE	<i>Niphal</i>	<i>Hophal</i>	<i>Pual</i>
REFLEXIVE/ RECIPROCAL	<i>Niphal</i>	<i>Hiphil</i>	<i>Hithpael</i>

This chart is taken from the excellent discussion of the VERBAL system in light of new Akkadian research (cf. Bruce K. Waltke, M. O'Conner, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, pp.354-359).

R. H. Kennett, *A Short Account of the Hebrew Tenses*, has provided a needed warning.

“I have commonly found in teaching, that a student’s chief difficulty in the Hebrew verbs is to grasp the meaning which they conveyed to the minds of the Hebrews themselves; that is to say, there is a tendency to assign as equivalents to each of the Hebrew Tenses a certain number of Latin or English forms by which that particular Tense may commonly be translated. The result is a failure to perceive many of these fine shades of meaning, which give such life and vigor to the language of the Old Testament.

The difficulty in the use of the Hebrew verbs lies solely in the point of view, so absolutely different from our own, from which the Hebrews regarded an action; the *time*, which with us is the first consideration, as the very word, ‘tense’ shows, being to them a matter of secondary importance. It is, therefore, essential that a student should clearly grasp, not so much the Latin or English forms which may be used in translating each of the Hebrew Tenses, but rather the aspect of each action, as it presented itself to a Hebrew’s mind.

The name ‘tenses’ as applied to Hebrew verbs is misleading. The so-called Hebrew ‘tenses’ do not express the *time* but merely the *state* of an action. Indeed were it not for the confusion that would arise through the application of the term ‘state’ to both nouns and verbs, ‘states’ would be a far better designation than ‘tenses.’ It must always be borne in mind that it is impossible to translate a Hebrew verb into English without employing a limitation which is entirely absent in the Hebrew. The ancient



Hebrews never thought of an action as past, present, or future, but simply as *perfect*, i.e., complete, or *imperfect*, i.e., as in course of development. When we say that a certain Hebrew tense corresponds to a Perfect, Pluperfect, or Future in English, we do not mean that the Hebrews thought of it as Perfect, Pluperfect, or Future, but merely that it must be so translated in English. The *time* of an action the Hebrews did not attempt to express by any verbal form” (preface and p. 1).

For a second good warning, Sue Groom, *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew*, reminds us,

“There is no way of knowing whether modern scholars’ reconstruction of semantic fields and sense relations in an ancient dead language are merely a reflection of their own intuition, or their own native language, or whether those fields existed in Classical Hebrew” (p. 128).

### C. Moods (Modes)

1. It happened, is happening (INDICATIVE), usually uses PERFECT tense or PARTICIPLES (all PARTICIPLES are INDICATIVE).
2. It will happen, could happen (SUBJUNCTIVE)
  - a. uses a marked IMPERFECT tense
    - (1) COHORTATIVE (added h), first person IMPERFECT form which normally expresses a wish, a request, or self-encouragement (i.e., actions willed by the speaker)
    - (2) JUSSIVE (internal changes), third person IMPERFECT (can be second person in negated sentences) which normally expresses a request, a permission, an admonition, or advice
  - b. uses a PERFECT tense with *lu* or *lule*  
These constructions are similar to SECOND CLASS CONDITIONAL sentences in Koine Greek. A false statement (protasis) results in a false conclusion (apodosis).
  - c. uses an IMPERFECT tense and *lu*  
Context and *lu*, as well as a future orientation, mark this SUBJUNCTIVE usage. Some examples from J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament* are Gen. 13:16; Deut. 1:12; I Kgs. 13:8; Ps. 24:3; Isa. 1:18 (cf. Pp. 76-77).

D. *Waw* - Conversive/consecutive/relative. This uniquely Hebrew (Canaanite) syntactical feature has caused great confusion through the years. It is used in a variety of ways often based on genre. The reason for the confusion is that early scholars were European and tried to interpret in light of their own native languages. When this proved difficult they blamed the problem on Hebrew being a “supposed” ancient, archaic language. European languages are TENSE (time) based VERBS. Some of the variety and grammatical implications were specified by the letter WAW being added to the PERFECT or IMPERFECT VERB stems. This altered the way the action was viewed.

1. In historical narrative the VERBS are linked together in a chain with a standard pattern.
2. The *waw* prefix showed a specific relationship with the previous VERB(s).
3. The larger context is always the key to understanding the VERB chain. Semitic VERBS cannot be analyzed in isolation.

J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, notes the distinctive of Hebrew in its use of the *waw* before PERFECTS and IMPERFECTS (pp. 52-53). As the basic idea of the PERFECT is past, the addition of *waw* often projects it into a future time aspect. This is also true of the IMPERFECT whose basic idea is present or future; the addition of *waw* places it into the past. It is this unusual time shift which explains the *waw*’s addition, not a change in the basic

meaning of the tense itself. The *waw* PERFECTS work well with prophecy, while the *waw* IMPERFECTS work well with narratives (pp. 54, 68).

Watts continues his definition,

“As a fundamental distinction between *waw* conjunctive and *waw* consecutive, the following interpretations are offered:

1. *Waw* conjunctive appears always to indicate a parallel.
2. *Waw* consecutive appears always to indicate a sequence. It is the only form of *waw* used with consecutive imperfects. The relation between the imperfects linked by it may be temporal sequence, logical consequence, logical cause, or logical contrast. In all cases there is a sequence” (p. 103).

#### E. INFINITIVE - There are two kinds of INFINITIVES

1. INFINITIVE ABSOLUTES, which are “strong, independent, striking expressions used for dramatic effect. . .as a subject, it often has no written verb, the verb ‘to be’ being understood, of course, but the word standing dramatically alone” J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*” (p. 92).
2. INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, which are “related grammatically to the sentence by prepositions, possessive pronouns, and the construct relationship” (p. 91).  
J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, describes the construct state as “When two (or more) words are so closely united that together they constitute one compound idea, the dependent word (or words) is (are) said to be in the construct state” (p. 44).

#### F. INTERROGATIVES

1. They always appear first in the sentence.
2. Interpretive significance
  - a. *ha* - does not expect a response
  - b. *halo* - the author expects a “yes” answer

#### NEGATIVES

1. They always appear before the words they negate.
2. Most common negation is *lo*.
3. The term *'al* has a contingent connotation and is used with COHORTATIVES and JUSSIVES.
4. The term *lebhilit*, meaning “in order that. . .not,” is used with INFINITIVES.
5. The term *'en* is used with PARTICIPLES.

#### G. CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

1. There are four kinds of conditional sentences which basically are paralleled in Koine Greek.
  - a. something assumed to be happening or thought of as fulfilled (FIRST CLASS in Greek)
  - b. something contrary to fact whose fulfillment is impossible (SECOND CLASS)
  - c. something which is possible or ever probable (THIRD CLASS)
  - d. something which is less probable, therefore, the fulfillment is dubious (FOURTH CLASS)
2. GRAMMATICAL MARKERS
  - a. the assumed to be true or real condition always uses an INDICATIVE PERFECT or PARTICIPLE and usually the protasis is introduced by
    - (1) *'im*
    - (2) *ki* (or *'asher*)

(3) *hin* or *hinneh*

- b. the contrary to fact condition always uses a PERFECT aspect VERB or a PARTICIPLE with the introductory PARTICLE *lu* or *lule*
- c. the more probably condition always used IMPERFECT VERB or PARTICIPLES in the protasis, usually *'im* or *ki* are used as introductory PARTICLES
- d. the less probable condition uses IMPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVES in the protasis and always uses *'im* as an introductory PARTICLE

## **DEFINITIONS OF GREEK GRAMMATICAL FORMS THAT IMPACT INTERPRETATION**

Koine Greek, often called Hellenistic Greek, was the common language of the Mediterranean world beginning with Alexander the Great's (336-323 B.C.) conquest and lasting about eight hundred years (300 B.C.- A.D. 500). It was not just a simplified, classical Greek, but in many ways a newer form of Greek that became the second language of the ancient near east and Mediterranean world.

The Greek of the New Testament was unique in some ways because its users, except Luke and the author of Hebrews, probably used Aramaic as their primary language. Therefore, their writing was influenced by the idioms and structural forms of Aramaic. Also, they read and quoted the Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT) which was also written in Koine Greek. But the Septuagint was also written by Jewish scholars whose mother tongue was not Greek.

This serves as a reminder that we cannot push the New Testament into a tight grammatical structure. It is unique and yet has much in common with (1) the Septuagint; (2) Jewish writings such as those of Josephus; and (3) the papyri found in Egypt. How then do we approach a grammatical analysis of the New Testament?

The grammatical features of Koine Greek and New Testament Koine Greek are fluid. In many ways it was a time of simplification of grammar. Context will be our major guide. Words only have meaning in a larger context, therefore, grammatical structure can only be understood in light of (1) a particular author's style; and (2) a particular context. No conclusive definitions of Greek forms and structures are possible.

Koine Greek was primarily a verbal language. Often the key to interpretation is the type and form of the verbals. In most main clauses the verb will occur first, showing its preeminence. In analyzing the Greek verb three pieces of information must be noted: (1) the basic emphasis of the tense, voice and mood (accidence or morphology); (2) the basic meaning of the particular verb (lexicography); and (3) the flow of the context (syntax).

### **I. TENSE**

- A. Tense or aspect involves the relationship of the verbs to completed action or incomplete action. This is often called “perfective” and “imperfective.”
  - 1. Perfective tenses focus on the occurrence of an action. No further information is given except that something happened! Its start, continuation or culmination is not addressed.
  - 2. Imperfective tenses focus on the continuing process of an action. It can be described in terms of linear action, durative action, progressive action, etc.
  
- B. Tenses can be categorized by how the author sees the action as progressing
  - 1. It occurred = AORIST
  - 2. It occurred and the results abide = PERFECT
  - 3. It was occurring in the past and the results were abiding, but not now = PLUPERFECT
  - 4. It is occurring = PRESENT
  - 5. It was occurring = IMPERFECT

6. It will occur = FUTURE

A concrete example of how these tenses help in interpretation would be the term “save.” It was used in several different tenses to show both its process and culmination:

1. AORIST - “saved” (cf. Rom. 8:24)
2. PERFECT - “have been saved and the result continues” (cf. Eph. 2:5,8)
3. PRESENT - “being saved” (cf. I Cor. 1:18; 15:2)
4. FUTURE - “shall be saved” (cf. Rom. 5:9, 10; 10:9)

C. In focusing on verb tenses, interpreters look for the reason the original author chose to express himself in a certain tense. The standard “no frills” tense was the AORIST. It was the regular “unspecific,” “unmarked,” or “unflagged” verb form. It can be used in a wide variety of ways which the context must specify. It simply was stating that something occurred. The past time aspect is only intended in the INDICATIVE MOOD. If any other tense was used, something more specific was being emphasized. But what?

1. PERFECT TENSE. This speaks of a completed action with abiding results. In some ways it was a combination of the AORIST and PRESENT TENSES. Usually the focus is on the abiding results or the completion of an act. Example: Eph. 2:5 & 8, “you have been and continue to be saved.”
2. PLUPERFECT TENSE. This was like the PERFECT except the abiding results have ceased. Example: “Peter was standing at the door outside” (John 18:16).
3. PRESENT TENSE. This speaks of an incomplete or imperfect action. The focus is usually on the continuation of the event. Example: “Everyone abiding in Him does not continue sinning,” “everyone having been begotten of God does not continue to commit sin” (I John 3:6, 9).
4. IMPERFECT TENSE. In this tense the relationship to the PRESENT TENSE is analogous to the relationship between the PERFECT and the PLUPERFECT. The IMPERFECT speaks of incomplete action that was occurring but has now ceased or the beginning of an action in the past. Example: “Then all Jerusalem were continuing to go out to him” or “then all Jerusalem began to go out to him” (Matt. 3:5).
5. FUTURE TENSE. This speaks of an action that was usually projected into a future time frame. It focused on the potential for an occurrence rather than an actual occurrence. It often speaks of the certainty of the event. Example: “Blessed are. . .they will. . .” (Matt. 5:4-9).

## II. VOICE

- A. Voice describes the relationship between the action of the verb and its subject.
- B. ACTIVE VOICE was the normal, expected, unemphasized way to assert that the subject was performing the action of the verb.
- C. The PASSIVE VOICE means that the subject was receiving the action of the verb produced by an outside agent. The outside agent producing the action was indicated in the Greek NT by the following prepositions and cases:
  1. a personal direct agent by *hupo* with the ABLATIVE CASE (cf. Matt. 1:22; Acts 22:30).
  2. a personal intermediate agent by *dia* with the ABLATIVE CASE (cf. Matt. 1:22).
  3. an impersonal agent usually by *en* with the INSTRUMENTAL CASE.
  4. sometimes either a personal or impersonal agent by the INSTRUMENTAL CASE alone.

- D. The MIDDLE VOICE means that the subject produces the action of the verb and is also directly involved in the action of the verb. It is often called the voice of heightened personal interest. This construction emphasized the subject of the clause or sentence in some way. This construction is not found in English. It has a wide possibility of meanings and translations in Greek. Some examples of the form are:
1. REFLEXIVE - the direct action of the subject on itself. Example: “Hanged himself” (Matt. 27:5).
  2. INTENSIVE - the subject produces the action for itself. Example: “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light” (II Cor. 11:14).
  3. RECIPROCAL - the interplay of two subjects. Example: “They counseled with one another” (Matt. 26:4).

### III. MOOD (or “MODE”)

- A. There are four moods in Koine Greek. They indicate the relation of the verb to reality, at least within the author's own mind. The moods are divided into two broad categories: that which indicated reality (INDICATIVE) and that which indicated potentiality (SUBJUNCTIVE, IMPERATIVE and OPTATIVE).
- B. The INDICATIVE MOOD was the normal mood for expressing action that had occurred or was occurring, at least in the author's mind. It was the only Greek mood that expressed a definite time, and even here this aspect was secondary.
- C. The SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD expressed probable future action. Something had not yet happened but the chances were likely that it would. It had much in common with the FUTURE INDICATIVE. The difference was that the SUBJUNCTIVE expresses some degree of doubt. In English this is often expressed by the terms “could,” “would,” “may,” or “might.”
- D. The OPTATIVE MOOD expressed a wish which was theoretically possible. It was considered one step further from reality than the SUBJUNCTIVE. The OPTATIVE expressed possibility under certain conditions. The OPTATIVE was rare in the New Testament. Its most frequent usage is Paul's famous phrase, “May it never be” (KJV, “God forbid”), used fifteen times (cf. Rom. 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; I Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14). Other examples are found in Luke 1:38, 20:16, Acts 8:20, and I Thess. 3:11.
- E. The IMPERATIVE MOOD emphasized a command which was possible, but the emphasis was on the intent of the speaker. It asserted only volitional possibility and was conditioned on the choices of another. There was a special use of the IMPERATIVE in prayers and 3rd person requests. These commands were found only in the PRESENT and AORIST tenses in the NT.
- F. Some grammars categorize PARTICIPLES as another type of mood. They are very common in the Greek NT, usually defined as a verbal adjective. They are translated in conjunction with the main verb to which they relate. A wide variety was possible in translating participles. It is best to consult several English translations. *The Bible in Twenty Six Translations* published by Baker, ed. Curtis Vaughan, is a great help here.

- G. The AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE was the normal or “unmarked” way to record an occurrence. Any other tense, voice or mood had some specific interpretive significance that the original author wanted to communicate.

IV. For the person not familiar with Greek the following study aids will provide the needed information:

- A. Friberg, Barbara and Timothy. *Analytical Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988.
- B. Marshall, Alfred. *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976.
- C. Mounce, William D. *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.
- D. Summers, Ray. *Essentials of New Testament Greek*. Nashville: Broadman, 1950.
- E. Academically accredited Koine Greek correspondence courses are available through Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, IL.

V. NOUNS

- A. Syntactically, nouns are classified by case. Case was that inflected form of a noun that showed its relationship to the verb and other parts of the sentence. In Koine Greek many of the case functions were indicated by prepositions. Since the case form was able to identify several different relationships, the prepositions developed to give clearer separation to these possible functions.
- B. Greek cases are categorized in the following eight ways:
  1. The NOMINATIVE CASE was used for naming and it usually was the subject of the sentence or clause. It was also used for predicate nouns and adjectives with the linking verbs “to be” or “become.”
  2. The GENITIVE CASE was used for description and usually assigned an attribute or quality to the word to which it was related. It answered the question, “What kind?” It was often expressed by the use of the English preposition “of.”
  3. The ABLATIVE CASE used the same inflected form as the GENITIVE, but it was used to describe separation. It usually denoted separation from a point in time, space, source, origin or degree. It was often expressed by the use of the English preposition “from.”
  4. The DATIVE CASE was used to describe personal interest. This could denote a positive or negative aspect. Often this was the indirect object. It was often expressed by the English preposition “to.”
  5. The LOCATIVE CASE was the same inflected form as the DATIVE, but it described position or location in space, time or logical limits. It was often expressed by the English prepositions “in, on, at, among, during, by, upon, and beside.”
  6. The INSTRUMENTAL CASE was the same inflected form as the DATIVE and LOCATIVE cases. It expressed means or association. It was often expressed by the English prepositions, “by” or “with.”

7. The ACCUSATIVE CASE was used to describe the conclusion of an action. It expressed limitation. Its main use was the direct object. It answered the question, “How far?” or “To what extent?”
8. The VOCATIVE CASE was used for direct address.

## VI. CONJUNCTIONS AND CONNECTORS

- A. Greek is a very precise language because it has so many connectives. They connect thoughts (clauses, sentences, and paragraphs). They are so common that their absence (asyndeton) is often exegetically significant. As a matter of fact, these conjunctions and connectors show the direction of the author’s thought. They often are crucial in determining what exactly he is trying to communicate.
- B. Here is a list of some of the conjunctions and connectors and their meanings (this information has been gleaned mostly from H. E. Dana and Julius K. Mantey’s *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*).
  1. Time connectors
    - a. *epei, epeid ē, hopōte, hōs, hote, hotan* (subj.) - “when”
    - b. *heōs* - “while”
    - c. *hotan, epan* (subj.) - “whenever”
    - d. *heōs, achri, mechri* (subj.) - “until”
    - c. *priv* (infin.) - “before”
    - d. *hōs* - “since,” “when,” “as”
  2. Logical connectors
    - a. Purpose
      - (1) *hina* (subj.), *hopōs* (subj.), *hōs* - “in order that,” “that”
      - (2) *hōste* (articular accusative infinitive) - “that”
      - (3) *pros* (articular accusative infinitive) or *eis* (articular accusative infinitive) - “that”
    - b. Result (there is a close association between the grammatical forms of purpose and result)
      - (1) *hōste* (infinitive, this is the most common) - “in order that,” “thus”
      - (2) *hiva* (subj.) - “so that”
      - (3) *ara* - “so”
    - c. Causal or reason
      - (1) *gar* (cause/effect or reason/conclusion) - “for,” “because”
      - (2) *dioti, hotiy* - “because”
      - (3) *epei, epeidē, hōs* - “since”
      - (4) *dia* (with accusative) and (with articular infin.) - “because”
    - d. Inferential
      - (1) *ara, poinun, hōste* - “therefore”
      - (2) *dio* (strongest inferential conjunction) - “on which account,” “wherefore,” “therefore”
      - (3) *oun* - “therefore,” “so,” “then,” “consequently”
      - (4) *toinoun* - “accordingly”
    - e. Adversative or contrast
      - (1) *alla* (strong adversative) - “but,” “except”
      - (2) *de* - “but,” “however,” “yet,” “on the other hand”
      - (3) *kai* - “but”



- (4) *mentoi, oun* - “however”
- (5) *plēn* - “never-the-less” (mostly in Luke)
- (6) *oun* - “however”
- f. Comparison
  - (1) *hōs, kathōs* (introduce comparative clauses)
  - (2) *kata* (in compounds, *katho, kathoti, kathōsper, kathaper*)
  - (3) *hosos* (in Hebrews)
  - (4) *ē* - “than”
- g. Continuative or series
  - (1) *de* - “and,” “now”
  - (2) *kai* - “and”
  - (3) *tei* - “and”
  - (4) *hina, oun* - “that”
  - (5) *oun* - “then” (in John)
- 3. Emphatic usages
  - a. *alla* - “certainty,” “yea,” “in fact”
  - b. *ara* - “indeed,” “certainly,” “really”
  - c. *gar* - “but really,” “certainly,” “indeed”
  - d. *de* - “indeed”
  - e. *ean* - “even”
  - f. *kai* - “even,” “indeed,” “really”
  - g. *mentoi* - “indeed”
  - h. *oun* - “really,” “by all means”

## VII. CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

- A. A **CONDITIONAL SENTENCE** is one that contains one or more conditional clauses. This grammatical structure aids interpretation because it provides the conditions, reasons or causes why the action of the main verb does or does not occur. There were four types of conditional sentences. They move from that which was assumed to be true from the author’s perspective or for his purpose to that which was only a wish.
- B. The **FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE** expressed action or being which was assumed to be true from the writer’s perspective or for his purposes even though it was expressed with an “if.” In several contexts it could be translated “since” (cf. Matt. 4:3; Rom. 8:31). However, this does not mean to imply that all **FIRST CLASSES** are true to reality. Often they were used to make a point in an argument or to highlight a fallacy (cf. Matt. 12:27).
- C. The **SECOND CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE** is often called “contrary to fact.” It states something that was untrue to reality to make a point. Examples:
  - 1. “If He were really a prophet, which He is not, He would know who and of what character the woman is who is clinging to Him, but He does not” (Luke 7:39).
  - 2. “If you really believed Moses, which you do not, you would believe me, which you do not” (John 5:46). Also see John 4:10; 8:19,39,42; 9:33,41; 11:21,32; 14:2,11,28; 15:19; 19:11.
  - 3. “If I were still trying to be pleasing to men, which I am not, I would not be a slave of Christ at all, which I am” (Gal. 1:10).

- D. The THIRD CLASS speaks of possible future action. It often assumes the probability of that action. It usually implies a contingency. The action of the main verb is contingent on the action in the “it” clause. Examples from I John: 1:6-10; 2:4,6,9,15,20,21,24,29; 3:21; 4:20; 5:14,16.
- E. The FOURTH CLASS is the farthest removed from possibility. It is rare in the NT. As a matter of fact, there is no complete FOURTH CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE in which both parts of the condition fit the definition. An example of a partial FOURTH CLASS is the opening clause in I Pet. 3:14. An example of a partial FOURTH CLASS in the concluding clause is Acts 8:31.

## VIII. PROHIBITIONS

- A. The PRESENT IMPERATIVE with MĒ PARTICLE often (but not exclusively) has the emphasis of stopping an act already in process. Some examples: “stop storing up your riches on earth. . .” (Matt. 6:19); “stop worrying about your life. . .” (Matt. 6:25); “stop offering to sin the parts of your bodies as instruments of wrongdoing. . .” (Rom. 6:13); “you must stop offending the Holy Spirit of God. . .” (Eph. 4:30); and “stop getting drunk on wine. . .” (5:18).
- B. The AORIST SUBJUNCTIVE with MĒ PARTICLE has the emphasis of “do not even begin or start an act.” Some examples: “Do not even begin to suppose that. . .” (Matt. 5:17); “never start to worry. . .” (Matt. 6:31); “you must never be ashamed. . .” (II Tim. 1:8).
- C. The DOUBLE NEGATIVE with the SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD is a very emphatic negation. “Never, no never” or “not under any circumstance.” Some examples: “he will never, no never experience death” (John 8:51); “I will never, no, never. . .” (I Cor. 8:13).

## IX. THE ARTICLE

- A. In Koine Greek the definite article “the” had a use similar to English. Its basic function was that of “a pointer,” a way to draw attention to a word, name or phrase. The use varies from author to author in the New Testament. The definite article could also function
  1. as a contrasting device like a demonstrative pronoun;
  2. as a sign to refer to a previously introduced subject or person;
  3. as a way to identify the subject in a sentence with a linking verb. Examples: “God is Spirit” John 4:24; “God is light” I John 1:5; “God is love” 4:8,16.
- B. Koine Greek did not have an indefinite article like the English “a” or “an.” The absence of the definite article could mean
  1. a focus on the characteristics or quality of something
  2. a focus on the category of something
- C. The NT authors varied widely as to how the article was employed.

## X. WAYS OF SHOWING EMPHASIS IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

- A. The techniques for showing emphasis vary from author to author in the New Testament. The most consistent and formal writers were Luke and the author of Hebrews.

- B. We have stated earlier that the AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE was standard and unmarked for emphasis, but any other tense, voice or mood had interpretive significance. This is not to imply that the AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE was not often used in a significant grammatical sense. Example: Rom. 6:10 (twice).
- C. Word order in Koine Greek
1. Koine Greek was an inflected language which was not dependent, like English, on word order. Therefore, the author could vary the normal expected order to show
    - a. what the author wanted to emphasize to the reader;
    - b. what the author thought would be surprising to the reader;
    - c. what the author felt deeply about.
  2. The normal word order in Greek is still an unsettled issue. However, the supposed normal order is:
    - a. for linking verbs
      - (1) verb
      - (2) subject
      - (3) complement
    - b. for transitive verbs
      - (1) verb
      - (2) subject
      - (3) object
      - (4) indirect object
      - (5) prepositional phrase
    - c. for noun phrases
      - (1) noun
      - (2) modifier
      - (3) prepositional phrase
  3. Word order can be an extremely important exegetical point. Examples:
    - a. “right hand they gave to me and Barnabas of fellowship” (Gal. 2:9). The phrase “right hand of fellowship” is split and fronted to show its significance.
    - b. “with Christ” (Gal. 2:20), was placed first. His death was central.
    - c. “It was bit by bit and in many different ways” (Heb. 1:1), was placed first. It was how God revealed Himself that was being contrasted, not the fact of revelation.
- D. Usually some degree of emphasis was shown by
1. The repetition of the pronoun which was already present in the verb’s inflected form. Example: “I, myself, will surely be with you. . .” (Matt. 28:20).
  2. The absence of an expected conjunction, or other connecting device between words, phrases, clauses or sentences. This is called an asyndeton (“not bound”). The connecting device was expected, so its absence would draw attention. Examples:
    - a. The Beatitudes, Matt. 5:3ff (emphasized the list)
    - b. John 14:1 (new topic)
    - c. Romans 9:1 (new section)
    - d. II Cor. 12:20 (emphasize the list)
  3. The repetition of words or phrases present in a given context. Examples: “to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:6, 12 & 14). This phrase was used to show the work of each person of the Trinity.

4. The use of an idiom or word (sound) play between terms
    - a. euphemisms - substitute words for taboo subjects like “sleep” for death (John 11:11-14) or “feet” for male genitalia (Ruth 3:7-8; I Sam. 24:3).
    - b. circumlocutions - substitute words for God’s name, like “Kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 3:21) or “a voice from heaven” (Matt. 3:17).
    - c. figures of speech
      - (1) impossible exaggerations (Matt. 3:9; 5:29-30; 19:24).
      - (2) mild over statements (Matt. 3:5; Acts 2:36).
      - (3) personifications (I Cor. 15:55).
      - (4) irony (Gal. 5:12)
      - (5) poetic passages (Phil. 2:6-11).
      - (6) sound plays between words
        - (a) “church”
          - i. “church” (Eph. 3:21)
          - ii “calling” (Eph. 4:1,4)
          - iii “called” (Eph. 4:1,4)
        - (b) “free”
          - i. “free woman” (Gal. 4:31)
          - ii “freedom” (Gal. 5:1)
          - iii “free” (Gal. 5:1)
    - d. idiomatic language - language which is usually cultural and language specific:
      - (1) This was the figurative use of “food” (John 4:31-34).
      - (2) This was the figurative use of “Temple” (John 2:19; Matt. 26:61).
      - (3) This was a Hebrew idiom of compassion, “hate” (Gen. 29:31; Deut. 21:15; Luke 14:36; John 12:25; Rom. 9:13).
      - (4) “All” versus “many.” Compare Isa. 53:6 (“all”) with 53:11 & 12 (“many”). The terms are synonymous as Rom. 5:18 and 19 show.
  5. The use of a full linguistic phrase instead of a single word. Example: “The Lord Jesus Christ.”
  6. The special use of *autos*
    - a. when with the article (attributive position) it was translated “same.”
    - b. when without the article (predicate position) it was translated as an intensive reflexive pronoun—“himself,” “herself,” or “itself.”
- E. The non-Greek reading Bible student can identify emphasis in several ways:
1. The use of an analytical lexicon and interlinear Greek/English text.
  2. The comparison of English translations, particularly from the differing theories of translations. Example: comparing a “word-for-word” translation (KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV) with a “dynamic equivalent” (Williams, NIV, NEB, REB, JB, NJB, TEV). A good help here would be *The Bible in Twenty-Six Translations* published by Baker.
  3. The use of *The Emphasized Bible* by Joseph Bryant Rotherham (Kregel, 1994).
  4. The use of a very literal translation
    - a. *The American Standard Version* of 1901
    - b. *Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible* by Robert Young (Guardian Press, 1976).

The study of grammar is tedious but necessary for proper interpretation. These brief definitions, comments, and examples are meant to encourage and equip non-Greek reading persons to use the grammatical notes provided in this volume. Surely these definitions are oversimplified. They should not

be used in a dogmatic, inflexible manner, but as stepping stones toward a greater understanding of New Testament syntax. Hopefully these definitions will also enable readers to understand the comments of other study aids such as technical commentaries on the New Testament.

We must be able to verify our interpretation based on items of information found in the texts of the Bible. Grammar is one of the most helpful of these items; other items would include historical setting, literary context, contemporary word usage, and parallel passages.

## SAMPLE WORK SHEET ON ROMANS 1-3

### I. First Reading

- A. The overarching purpose: How is man right with God, both initially and ongoing?
- B. The key theme: 1:16-17
- C. The literary genre: letter

### II. Second Reading

#### A. The major literary units

- 1. 1:1-17
- 2. 1:18-3:21
- 3. 4:1-5:21
- 4. 6:1-8:39
- 5. 9:1-11:36
- 6. 12:1-15:37
- 7. 16:1-27

#### B. Summary of the major literary units

- 1. Introduction and theme, 1:1-17
- 2. The lostness of all men, 1:18-3:21
- 3. Justification is a gift, 4:1-5:21
- 4. Justification is a lifestyle, 6:1-8:39
- 5. The Jews' relationship to justification, 9:1-11:36
- 6. How to live out justification in daily life, 12:1-15:37
- 7. Closing greetings and warnings, 16:1-27

### III. Third Reading

#### A. Internal information concerning the historical setting

- 1. Author
  - a. Paul, 1:1
  - b. Bond servant of Christ Jesus, 1:1
  - c. An Apostle, 1:1, 5
  - d. To Gentiles, 1:5, 14
- 2. Date
  - a. After Paul's conversion and call, 1:1.
  - b. After time of the start of the church in Rome and its influence to grow, 1:8.
- 3. Recipients
  - a. Saints, 1:7
  - b. At Rome, 1:7
- 4. Occasion
  - a. Their faith is well known, 1:8.
  - b. Paul prays often for them, 1:9-10.
  - c. Paul wants to personally meet them, 1:11.

- d. Paul wants to impart spiritual gift to them, 1:11, 15.
  - e. Their meeting would encourage both of them, 1:12
  - f. Paul prevented from coming, 1:13.
5. Historical Setting
- a. Written to the church in the capital of the Roman Empire.
  - b. Apparently Paul had never been there, 1:1-13.
  - c. Apparently the Roman Empire, and particularly Rome itself, was very immoral and idolatrous, 1:11ff.
    - (1) Idols, 1:21-23
    - (2) Homosexuality, 1:26-27
    - (3) Depraved mind, 1:28-31
  - d. Apparently there was a large Jewish population in Rome, 2:17-2:31; 9-11 (possibly a growing tension between believing Jews and believing Gentiles.)

B. Various Paragraph Divisions

<b>ASV</b> <u>(literal)</u>	<b>Jerusalem Bible</b> <u>(idiomatic)</u>	<b>Williams</b> <u>(idiomatic)</u>
<b>1st unit, 1:1-17</b>	<b>1st unit, 1:1-17</b>	<b>1st unit, 1:1-17</b>
1:1-7	1:1-2	1:1-7
1:8-15	1:3-7	1:8-15
1:16-17	1:8-15	
<b>2nd unit, 1:18-3:31</b>	<b>2nd unit, 1:16-3:31</b>	<b>2nd unit</b>
1:18-23	1:16-17	1:16-23
1:24-25	1:18-25	
1:26-27	1:26-27	<b>3rd unit</b>
1:28-32	1:28-32	1:24-32
2:1-16	2:1-11	
2:17-29	2:12-16	<b>4th unit</b>
3:1-8	2:17-24	2:1-16
3:9-18	2:25-29	2:1-11
3:19-20	3:1-8	2:12-26
3:21-30	3:9-18	
3:31	3:19-20	<b>5th unit</b>
	3:21-26	2:17-29
	3:27-31	2:17-24
		2:25-29
		<b>6th unit</b>
		3:1-18
		3:1-8
		3:9-18
		<b>7th unit</b>
		3:19-31
		3:19-20
		3:21-26
		3:27-31

### C. Content Outline with Summaries

1. Introduction and theme, 1:1-17
  - a. Introduction of author, 1:1-2
  - b. Introduction of recipients, 1:3-7
  - c. Introductory prayer, 1:8-15
  - d. The theme, 1:16-17
2. The lostness of all men, 1:18-3:21
  - a. Lostness of pagans seen in their acts, 1:18-32
  - b. Lostness of Jews seen in their acts, 2:1-11
  - c. Their national hope, 2:12-3:8
    - (1) Their Law will not deliver them, 2:12-24
    - (2) Their circumcision will not deliver them, 2:25-29
    - (3) Their heritage will not deliver them, 3:1-8
  - d. The lostness of all men, 3:9-20
  - e. The hope of all men, 3:21-31

### IV. Fourth Reading (sample, 1:1-3:21, focal text only)

#### A. Specialized list

1. (Although this sample is limited to 1:1-3:21 a good example of specialized lists is found in the term “therefore,” 2:1; 5:1; 8:1; 12:1, which is used as a way of summarizing the flow of Paul’s thought.)
2. Use of “gospel”
  - a. 1:1, set apart for the gospel of God
  - b. 2:9, the gospel of His Son
  - c. 1:15, to preach the gospel
  - d. 1:16, I am not ashamed of the gospel
  - e. 2:16, according to my gospel  
[From this list and context much about the gospel itself can be ascertained.]
3. References to God’s wrath and judgment
  - a. 1:18, wrath of God
  - b. 1:24, 26, 28, God gave them over
  - c. 2:1, the judgment of God falls upon those who practice such things
  - d. 2:3, the judgment of God
  - e. 2:5-6, (both verses)
  - f. 2:12, will perish
  - g. 2:16, the day. . .God will judge the secrets of men
  - h. 3:6, God judges the world

#### B. Key Words or Phrases (p. 35 D)

1. 1:1, apostle
2. 1:1, gospel of God
3. 1:4, Son of God
4. 1:5, grace. . .faith
5. 1:6, the called
6. 1:7, saints
7. 1:11, spiritual gift. . .some fruit (v. 13)
8. 1:16, salvation



9. 1:17, righteousness
10. 1:18, wrath of God. . . judgment of God (2:2)
11. 2:4, repentance
12. 2:7, immortality, eternal life
13. 2:12, the Law
14. 2:15, conscience
15. 3:4, justified
16. 3:24, redemption
17. 3:25, propitiation

#### C. Difficult Passages

1. Textual or translational
  - 1:4, “Spirit of holiness” or “spirit of holiness”
2. Is the proper translation of Hab. 2:4 found in Rom. 1:1-7?
3. Historical
  - 2:21-23, “you who preach that . . .” (when, how and where did the Jews do these things?)
4. Theological
  - a. 1:4, “. . . who was declared with power to be the Son of God. . .” (or was Jesus born divine?)
  - b. 2:14-15 (2:27), “Gentiles who do not have the law do instinctively the things of the law, are a law to themselves. . .” (What about those who never heard the law but perform some of it?)
  - c. 3:1, “What advantage has the Jew?”

#### D. Significant Parallels

1. Same book
  - 1:18-3:21 is one literary unit
2. Same author
  - The book of Galatians expounds the same doctrinal truths.
3. Same period - no direct parallels.
4. Same Testament - no direct parallels.
5. Entire Bible - Paul uses Hab. 1:4. (He will major on Old Testament characters in chapter 4.)

#### E. Theological Uniqueness

1. Natural revelation
  - a. In creation, 1:18-23
  - b. In inner moral consciousness, 2:14-16
2. All humankind is lost

#### V. Application (sample 1:1-3:21)

##### Detailed Content Outline

- A. Introduction and theme (1:1-17)
  1. Introduction of author, 1:1-2
  2. Introduction of recipients, 1:3-7

##### Application Points

- A. God’s free grace through Christ is the calling both Paul and the Romans have believed and received. This offer is open to all.

3. Introductory prayer, 1:8-15

4. The theme, 1:16-17

B. The lostness of all men, 1:18-3:21

1. lostness of pagans seen  
in their acts, 1:18-3:21

2. lostness of Jews seen in  
their acts, 2:1-11

3. Their national hope, 2:12-3:8

a. their Law will not deliver  
them, 2:12-24

b. their circumcision will  
not deliver them, 2:25-29

c. their heritage will not  
deliver them, 3:1-8

4. the lostness of all men,  
3:9-20

5. the hope of all men, 3:21-31

B. All men regardless of their outward religious  
life, or lack of it, need to be saved by trust in  
Christ's finished work, not their own.

The key summary passage of 1:18-3:31  
is 3:21-30.

## **SAMPLE WORK SHEET ON TITUS (a whole book)**

### **I. First Reading**

- A. The overarching purpose of this biblical book is:  
While in the process of establishing local churches with their elders, the continuing need for orthodoxy and orthopraxy is emphasized.
  
- B. The key theme:
  - 1. Establishing local churches and elders, 1:5.
  - 2. Emphasizing the need for:
    - a. orthodoxy - 1:9-11, 14; 2:1
    - b. orthopraxy - 1:16; 3:8
  
- C. The literary genre: letter
  - 1. Opening 1:1-4
  - 2. Closing 3:12-15

### **II. Second Reading**

- A. The major literary units or content divisions:
  - 1. 1:14
  - 2. 1:5-9
  - 3. 1:10-16
  - 4. 2:1-10a
  - 5. 2:10b-15
  - 6. 3:1-11
  - 7. 3:12-15
  
- B. Summary of the themes of the major literary units or content divisions.
  - 1. Traditional Christian introduction to the letter, 1:1-4
  - 2. Guidelines for elders, 1:5-9.
  - 3. Guidelines for determining false teachings, 1:10-16
  - 4. Guidelines for believers in general, 2:1-10a.
  - 5. Theological basis for the guidelines, 2:10b-15
  - 6. Guidelines for those who could cause problems, 3:1-11
  - 7. Traditional Christian close to the letter, 3:12-15

### **III. Third Reading**

- A. Internal information concerning the historical setting of the book:
  - 1. Author
    - a. Paul, 1:1
    - b. Bond-servant of God, 1:1
    - c. Apostle of Jesus Christ, 1:1
  - 2. Date
    - a. Written to Titus, 1:4
      - (1) He is not mentioned in Acts at all
      - (2) He was apparently converted and recruited on one of Paul's missionary journeys, Gal. 2:1.
      - (3) He was an uncircumcised Gentile, Gal. 2:3.

- (4) He became Paul's trouble shooter, II Cor. 2:13; II Tim. 4:10; Titus 1:4.
- b. Paul left him in Crete, 1:5
  - (1) Because the travel itinerary of the Pastoral Epistles does not fit into the chronology of Acts, this is probably Paul's fourth missionary journey.
  - (2) It is assumed that Paul was released from prison after the close of the book of Acts. However, he was rearrested and killed under Nero who died in A.D. 68.
- 3. Recipient: Paul's faithful co-worker, Titus, but also to be read to the local congregations.
- 4. Occasion: Continuing the ministry of establishing local churches on the Island of Crete.
  - a. Appointing elders, 1:5
  - b. Refuting false teachers, 1:9-11, 14-16; 3:9-11
  - c. Encouraging the faithful

B. Various paragraph divisions

1. Paragraph divisions

<u>Literal</u>		<u>Dynamic Equivalent</u>		
NASB	NRSV	Jer. Bible*	NIV*	Williams*
<b>1st Unit</b> 1:1-4	<b>1st Unit</b> 1:1-3 1:4	<b>1st Unit</b> 1:1-4	<b>1st Unit</b> 1:1-4	<b>1st Unit</b> 1:1-4 1:5-9 1:10-16
<b>2nd Unit</b> 1:5-9 1:10-16	<b>2nd Unit</b> 1:5-9 1:10-16	<b>2nd Unit</b> 1:5-9	<b>2nd Unit</b> 1:5-9 1:10-16	
<b>3rd Unit</b> 2:1-14 2:15	<b>3rd Unit</b> 2:1-2 2:3-5 2:6-8 2:9-10 2:11-14 2:15	<b>3rd Unit</b> 1:10-14 1:15-16 <b>4th Unit</b> 2:1-10	<b>3rd Unit</b> 2:1-2 2:3-5 2:6-8 2:9-10 2:11-14 2:15	<b>2nd Unit</b> 2:1-10 2:11-14 2:15
<b>4th Unit</b> 3:1-11	<b>4th Unit</b> 3:1-11	<b>6th Unit</b> 3:1-3 3:4-8a <b>7th Unit</b> 3:8b-11  <b>8th Unit</b> 3:12-14 3:15	<b>4th Unit</b> 3:1-2 3:3-8 3:9-11 <b>5th Unit</b> 3:12-14 3:15 3:12-14 3:15	<b>3rd Unit</b> 3:1-2 3:3-7 3:8-11 3:12 3:13-14 3:15 3:12-14 3:15

2. Various translations content summaries.
  - a. Jerusalem Bible
    - (1) 1st Unit, “address,” 1:1-4
    - (2) 2nd Unit, “the appointment of elders,” 1:5-9
    - (3) 3rd Unit, “opposing false teachers,” 1:10-14, 15, 16
    - (4) 4th Unit, “some specific moral instructions,” 2:1-10
    - (5) 5th Unit, “the basis of the Christian moral life,” 2:11-14
    - (6) 6th Unit, “general instructions for believers,” 3:1-3, 4-8a
    - (7) 7th Unit, “personal advise to Titus,” 3:8b-11
    - (8) 8th Unit, “practical recommendations, farewells and good wishes,” 3:12-14, 15
  - b. New International Version
    - (1) 1st Unit, salutation, 1:1-4
    - (2) 2nd Unit, “Titus’ task on Crete,” 1:5-9, 10-16
    - (3) 3rd Unit, “what must be taught to various groups,” 2:1-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-10, 11-14, 15
    - (4) 4th Unit, “doing what is good,” 3:1-2, 3-8, 9-11
    - (5) 5th Unit, “final remarks,” 3:12-14, 15
  - c. Williams Translation
    - (1) 1st Unit, “God’s people distinguished by actions,” 1:1-4, 5-9, 10-16
    - (2) 2nd Unit, “God’s people called to righteousness,” 2:1-10, 11-14, 15
    - (3) 3rd Unit, “believers are to do good,” 3:1-2, 3-7, 8-11, 12, 13-14, 15
- C. Summaries of paragraph divisions
  1. Traditional Christian introduction to the letter, 1:1-4
    - a. From whom, 1:1a
      - (1) Paul
      - (2) A slave of God
      - (3) An apostle of Jesus Christ
    - b. Why, 1:1b-3
      - (1) To stimulate faith
      - (2) To lead them to full knowledge
        - (a) In hope of eternal life which God promised
        - (b) At the proper time God made known
      - © By the message entrusted to Paul by God’s command
    - c. To whom, 1:4a
      - (1) To Titus
      - (2) My genuine child in the common faith
    - d. Prayer, 1:4b
      - (1) Spiritual blessing
      - (2) Peace
      - (3) From
        - (a) God our Father
        - (b) Christ Jesus our Savior
  2. Guide for elders, 1:5-9
    - a. Above reproach, 1:6, 7
    - b. One wife
    - c. Believing children
    - d. Not accused of reckless living
    - e. Not accused of disobedience

- f. Not stubborn
  - g. Not quick-tempered
  - h. Not addicted to strong drink
  - i. Not pugnacious
  - j. Not addicted to dishonest gain
  - k. Hospitable
  - l. Lover of goodness
  - m. Sensible
  - n. Upright
  - o. Pure life
  - p. Self-controlled
  - q. Continue to cling to the trustworthy message
  - r. Competent to encourage others with wholesome teaching
  - s. Convict those who oppose him (2:15)
3. Guidelines for determining false teaching, 1:10-16
- a. Insubordinate
  - b. Mere talkers with nothing to say
  - c. Deceivers of their own minds
  - d. Jewish elements
    - (1) Circumcision, 1:10
    - (2) Jewish myths, 1:14
    - (3) Pedigrees, 3:9
    - (4) Wrangles about the law, 3:9
  - e. Upset whole families' teaching what they ought not
  - f. For the sake of dishonest gain
  - g. Their minds and consciences are impure
  - h. Their actions disowns Him
  - i. Detestable
  - j. Disobedient
  - k. Useless for anything good
4. Guidelines for believers, 2:1-10a, 12
- a. For older men, 2:2
    - (1) Temperate
    - (2) Serious
    - (3) Sensible
    - (4) Healthy in faith
    - (5) Healthy in love
    - (6) Steadfast
  - b. For older women, 2:3
    - (1) Reverent in deportment
    - (2) Not slanderers
    - (3) Not slaves to heavy drinking
    - (4) Teachers of what is right
    - (5) Trainers of younger women
  - c. For younger women, 2:4-5
    - (1) Be affectionate wives
    - (2) Be affectionate mothers
    - (3) Serious

- (4) Pure
- (5) Homekeepers
- (6) Kind
- (7) Subordinate to their husbands
- d. For younger men, 2:6-8
  - (1) Sensible
  - (2) Set a worthy example of doing good
  - (3) Sincere
  - (4) Serious in your teaching
  - (5) Wholesome message
  - (6) Unobjectionable
- e. Believing slaves, 2:9-10
  - (1) Practice perfect submission to their masters
  - (2) Stop resisting them
  - (3) Stop stealing from them
- 5. Theological basis for the guidelines, 2:10b-15; 3:4-7
  - a. To adorn, in everything they do, the teaching of God our Savior, 2:10b.
  - b. The grace of God has appeared to all mankind, 2:11.
  - c. Waiting for the blessed hope (the second coming), 2:13
  - d. Jesus purchased a people to reveal God, 2:14
  - e. Goodness and loving-kindness of God has been revealed, 3:4
  - f. God saved us not based on our deeds, 3:5.
  - g. God saved us based on His mercy, 3:5.
    - (1) Through a bath of regeneration
    - (2) Renewal of the Holy Spirit
    - (3) Both given through Christ
    - (4) We have right standing with God
    - (5) We are heirs of eternal life
- 6. Guidelines for those who could cause problems, 3:1-11
  - a. Be subject to those in authority, 3:1-2.
    - (1) Ready for any good enterprise
    - (2) Stop abusing anyone
    - (3) Be peaceable
    - (4) Showing perfect gentleness to everyone
  - b. Be gentle toward all mankind because, 3:3-8
    - (1) Believers were once:
      - (a) Without understanding
      - (b) Disobedient
      - (c) Mised
      - (d) Habitual slaves to all sorts of passion
      - (e) Spending our lives in malice
      - (f) Spending our lives in envy
  - c. Beware of, 3:9-11
    - (1) Foolish controversies
    - (2) Pedigrees
    - (3) Strife
    - (4) Wrangles about the law

- (5) A man who is factious
  - (a) crooked
  - (b) sinful
  - (c) self-condemned
- 7. Traditional Christian closing to the letter, 3:12-15
  - a. Titus' replacement is coming, 3:12
    - (1) Artemas (or)
    - (2) Tychicus
  - b. Titus come and meet me at Nicopolis, 3:12
  - c. Encourage the believers to help, 3:13-14
    - (1) Zenos (and)
    - (2) Apollos
  - d. Final greetings and close, 3:15

D. List applicable application points: With this detailed outline on the far left of a page(s) write in possible application truths for every major literary unit and every paragraph division. State the application truth in one short declarative sentence. This outline will become the points of your sermon.

#### IV. Fourth Reading

- A. Significant parallels (other Pastoral Epistles)
  - 1. I Timothy (esp. chapter 3:1-13)
  - 2. II Timothy
- B. Specialized lists
  - 1. Use of the title "Savior"
    - a. God our Savior, 1:3; 2:10; 3:4
    - b. Christ our Savior, 1:4; 2:13; 3:6
  - 2. Doctrinal truths of the Gospel used as basis for our Christ-like lifestyle: (cf. III., c.5.)
    - a. 2:10b-14
    - b. 3:4-7
  - 3. List of qualifications for elders, 1:7-9 (cf. III., c.2. compare I Timothy 3:1ff)
  - 4. List of characteristics of false teachers: (cf. IV., c.3.)
    - a. 1:10-16
    - b. 3:9-11
- C. Difficult passages
  - 1. Textual - Does the phrase in 1:6b refer to the elder or his children?
    - a. Elder - NASB and NRSV
    - b. Children of elder - NIV and Williams
  - 2. Historical - Is there any biblical or historical evidence for a fourth missionary journey?
    - a. Biblical
      - (1) Paul wanted to go to Spain, Rom. 15:24, 28
      - (2) Paul's travel itinerary in the Pastoral Epistles does not fit his travel itinerary of the book of Acts.



- b. Historical
  - (1) Eusebius in his book, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2:22:2-3 implies that Paul was released from prison after the close of Acts.
  - (2) Other early church traditions that Paul took the Gospel to the far west of the Mediterranean Sea
    - (a) Clement of Rome
    - (b) Muratorian Fragment
- 3. Theological - is the doctrine of baptismal regeneration supported from 3:5?
- 4. Verses that cause confusion - elders not total abstainers, but “not addicted to much wine,” 1:7. The same thing expressed for older women, 2:3.

## GLOSSARY

**Adoptionism.** This was one of the early views of Jesus' relation to deity. It basically asserted that Jesus was a normal human in every way and was adopted in a special sense by God at his baptism (cf. Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11) or at His resurrection (cf. Rom. 1:4). Jesus lived such an exemplary life that God, at some point, (baptism, resurrection) adopted Him as His "son" (cf. Rom. 1:4; Phi. 2:9). This was an early church and eighth century minority view. Instead of God becoming a man (the Incarnation) it reverses this and now man becomes God!

It is difficult to verbalize how Jesus, God the Son, pre-existent deity, was rewarded or extolled for an exemplary life. If He was already God, how could He be rewarded? If He had pre-existent divine glory how could He be honored more? Although it is hard for us to comprehend, the Father somehow honored Jesus in a special sense for His perfect fulfillment of the Father's will.

**Alexandrian School.** This method of biblical interpretation was developed in Alexandria, Egypt in the second century A.D. It uses the basic interpretive principles of Philo, who was a follower of Plato. It is often called the allegorical method. It held sway in the church until the time of the Reformation. Its most able proponents were Origen and Augustine. See Moises Silva, *Has The Church Misread The Bible?* (Academic, 1987)

**Alexandrinus.** This fifth-century Greek manuscript from Alexandria, Egypt includes the Old Testament, Apocrypha, and most of the New Testament. It is one of our major witnesses to the entire Greek New Testament (except parts of Matthew, John, and II Corinthians). When this manuscript, which is designated "A," and the manuscript designated "B" (Vaticanus) agree on a reading, it is considered to be original by most textual scholars in most instances.

**Allegory.** This is a type of Biblical interpretation which originally developed within Alexandrian Judaism. It was popularized by Philo of Alexandria. Its basic thrust is the desire to make the Scripture relevant to one's culture or philosophical system by ignoring the Bible's historical setting and/or literary context. It seeks a hidden or spiritual meaning behind every text of Scripture. It must be admitted that Jesus, in Matthew 13, and Paul, in Galatians 4, used allegory to communicate truth. This, however, was in the form of typology, not strictly allegory.

**Analytical lexicon.** This is a type of research tool which allows one to identify every Greek form in the New Testament. It is a compilation, in Greek alphabetical order, of forms and basic definitions. In combination with an interlinear translation, it allows non-Greek reading believers to analyze New Testament Greek grammatical and syntactic forms.

**Analogy of Scripture.** This is the phrase used to describe the view that all of the Bible is inspired by God and is, therefore, not contradictory but complementary. This presuppositional affirmation is the basis for the use of parallel passages in interpreting a biblical text. The best interpreter of inspired Scripture is inspired Scripture!

**Ambiguity.** This refers to the uncertainty that results in a written document when there are two or more possible meanings or when two or more things are being referred to at the same time. It is possible that the Apostle John uses purposeful ambiguity (double entendres).

**Anthropomorphic.** Meaning “having characteristics associated with human beings,” this term is used to describe our religious language about God. It comes from the Greek term for mankind. It means that we speak about God as if He were a human. God is described in physical, sociological, and psychological terms which relate to human beings (cf. Gen. 3:8; I Kgs. 22:19-23). This, of course, is only an analogy. However, there are no categories or terms other than human ones for us to use. Therefore, our knowledge of God, though true, is limited.

**Antiochian School.** This method of biblical interpretation was developed in Antioch, Syria in the third century A.D. as a reaction to the allegorical method of Alexandria, Egypt. Its basic thrust was to focus on the historical meaning of the Bible (authorial intent, historical setting, literary context). It interpreted the Bible as normal, human literature. This school became involved in the controversy over whether Christ had two natures (Nestorianism) or one nature (fully God and fully man). It was labeled heretical by the Roman Catholic Church and relocated to Persia, but there it had little significance. Its basic hermeneutical principles later became interpretive principles of the Classical Protestant Reformers (Luther and Calvin).

**Antithetical.** This is one of three descriptive terms used to denote the relationship between lines of Hebrew poetry. It relates to lines of poetry which are opposite in meaning (cf. Prov. 10:1, 15:1).

**Apocalyptic literature.** This was predominantly, possibly even uniquely, a Jewish genre. It was a cryptic type of writing used in times of invasion and occupation of the Jews by foreign world powers. It assumes that a personal, redemptive God created and controls world events, and that Israel is of special interest and care to Him. This literature promises ultimate victory through God’s special effort.

It is highly symbolic and fanciful with many cryptic terms. It often expressed truth in colors, numbers, visions, dreams, angelic mediation, secret code words and often a sharp dualism between good and evil.

Some examples of this genre are (1) in the OT, Ezekiel (chapters 36-48), Daniel (chapters 7-12), Zechariah; and (2) in the NT, Matt.24; Mark 13; II Thess. 2 and Revelation.

**Apologist (Apologetics).** This is from the Greek root for “legal defense.” This is a specific discipline within theology which seeks to give evidence and rational arguments for the Christian faith.

**A priori.** This is basically synonymous with the term “presupposition.” It involves reasoning from previously accepted definitions, principles or positions which are assumed to be true. It is that which is accepted without examination or analysis.

**Arianism.** Arius was a presbyter in the church at Alexandria Egypt in the late third and early fourth century. He affirmed that Jesus was pre-existent but not divine (not of the same essence as the Father), possibly following Proverbs 8:22-31. He was challenged by the bishop of Alexandria, who started (A.D. 318) a controversy which lasted many years. Arianism became the official creed of the Eastern Church. The Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 condemned Arius and asserted the full equality and deity of the Son.

**Aristotle.** He was one of the philosophers of ancient Greece, a pupil of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. His influence, even today, reaches into many areas of modern studies.

This is because he emphasized knowledge through observation and classification. This is one of the tenets of the scientific method.

**Autographs.** This is the name given to the original writings of the Bible. These original, handwritten manuscripts have all been lost. Only copies of copies remain. This is the source of many of the textual variants in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and ancient versions.

**Bezae.** This is a Greek and Latin manuscript of the sixth century A.D. It is designated by “D.” It contains the Gospels and Acts and some of the General Epistles. It is characterized by numerous scribal additions. It forms the basis for the “Textus Receptus,” the major Greek manuscript tradition behind the King James Version.

**Bias.** This is the term used to describe a strong predisposition toward an object or point of view. It is the mindset in which impartiality is impossible regarding a particular object or point of view. It is a prejudiced position.

**Biblical Authority.** This term is used in a very specialized sense. It is defined as understanding what the original author said to his day and applying this truth to our day. Biblical authority is usually defined as viewing the Bible itself as our only authoritative guide. However, in light of current, improper interpretations, I have limited the concept to the Bible as interpreted by the tenets of the historical-grammatical method.

**Canon.** This is a term used to describe writings which are believed to be uniquely inspired. It is used regarding both the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

**Christocentric.** This is a term used to describe the centrality of Jesus. I use it in connection with the concept that Jesus is Lord of all the Bible. The Old Testament points toward Him and He is its fulfillment and goal (cf. Matt. 5:17-48).

**Commentary.** This is a specialized type of research book. It gives the general background of a Biblical book. It then tries to explain the meaning of each section of the book. Some focus on application, while others deal with the text in a more technical way. These books are helpful, but should be used after one has done his own preliminary study. The commentator’s interpretations should never be accepted uncritically. Comparing several commentaries from different theological perspectives is usually helpful.

**Concordance.** This is a type of research tool for Bible study. It lists every occurrence of every word in the Old and New Testaments. It helps in several ways: (1) determining the Hebrew or Greek word which lies behind any particular English word; (2) comparing passages where the same Hebrew or Greek word was used; (3) showing where two different Hebrew or Greek terms are translated by the same English word; (4) showing the frequency of the use of certain words in certain books or authors; and (5) helping one find a passage in the Bible (cf. Walter Clark’s *How to Use New Testament Greek Study Aids*, pp. 54-55).

**Dead Sea Scrolls.** This refers to a series of ancient texts written in Hebrew and Aramaic which were found near the Dead Sea in 1947. They were the religious libraries of sectarian Judaism of the first century. The pressure of Roman occupation and the zealot wars of the 60's caused them to conceal the scrolls in hermetically sealed pottery jars in caves or holes. They have

helped us understand the historical setting of first century Palestine and have confirmed the Masoretic Text as being very accurate, at least as far back as the early B.C. era. They are designated by the abbreviation “DSS.”

**Deductive.** This method of logic or reasoning moves from general principles to specific applications by means of reason. It is opposite from inductive reasoning, which reflects the scientific method by moving from observed specifics to general conclusions (theories).

**Dialectical.** This is the method of reasoning whereby that which seems contradictory or paradoxical is held together in a tension, seeking a unified answer which includes both sides of the paradox. Many biblical doctrines have dialectical pairs, predestination—free will; security—perseverance; faith—works; decision—discipleship; Christian freedom—Christian responsibility.

**Diaspora.** This is the technical Greek term used by Palestinian Jews to describe other Jews who live outside the geographical boundaries of the Promised Land.

**Dynamic equivalent.** This is a theory of Bible translation. Bible translation can be viewed as a continuum from “word to word” correspondence, where an English word must be supplied for every Hebrew or Greek word, to a “paraphrase” where only the thought is translated with less regard to the original wording or phrasing. In between these two theories is “the dynamic equivalent” which attempts to take the original text seriously, but translates it in modern grammatical forms and idioms. A really good discussion of these various theories of translations is found in Fee and Stuart’s *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, p. 35 and in Robert Bratcher’s Introduction to the TEV.

**Eclectic.** This term is used in connection with Textual Criticism. It refers to the practice of choosing readings from different Greek manuscripts in order to arrive at a text which is supposed to be close to the original autographs. It rejects the view that any one family of Greek manuscripts captures the originals.

**Eisegesis.** This is the opposite of exegesis. If exegesis is a “leading out” of the original author’s intent, this term implies a “leading in” of a foreign idea or opinion.

**Etymology.** This is an aspect of word study that tries to ascertain the original meaning of a word. From this root meaning, specialized usages are more easily identified. In interpretation, etymology is not the main focus, rather the contemporary meaning and usage of a word.

**Exegesis.** This is the technical term for the practice of interpreting a specific passage. It means “to lead out” (of the text) implying that our purpose is to understand the original author’s intent in light of historical setting, literary context, syntax and contemporary word meaning.

**Genre.** This is a French term that denotes different types of literature. The thrust of the term is the division of literary forms into categories which share common characteristics: historical narrative, poetry, proverb, apocalyptic and legislation.

**Gnosticism.** Most of our knowledge of this heresy comes from the gnostic writings of the second century. However, the incipient ideas were present in the first century (and before).

Some stated tenets of Valentinian and Cerinthian Gnosticism of the second century are: (1) matter and spirit were co-eternal (an ontological dualism). Matter is evil, spirit is good. God, who is spirit, cannot be directly involved with molding evil matter; (2) there are emanations (*eons* or angelic levels) between God and matter. The last or lowest one was YHWH of the OT, who formed the universe (*kosmos*); (3) Jesus was an emanation like YHWH but higher on the scale, closer to the true God. Some put Him as the highest but still less than God and certainly not incarnate Deity (cf. John 1:14). Since matter is evil, Jesus could not have a human body and still be Divine. He was a spiritual phantom (cf. I John 1:1-3; 4:1-6); and (4) salvation was obtained through faith in Jesus plus special knowledge, which is only known by special persons. Knowledge (passwords) was needed to pass through heavenly spheres. Jewish legalism was also required to reach God.

The gnostic false teachers advocated two opposite ethical systems: (1) for some, lifestyle was totally unrelated to salvation. For them, salvation and spirituality were encapsulated into secret knowledge (passwords) through the angelic spheres (*eons*); or (2) for others, lifestyle was crucial to salvation. They emphasized an ascetic lifestyle as evidence of true spirituality.

**Hermeneutics.** This is the technical term for the principles which guide exegesis. It is both a set of specific guidelines and an art/gift. Biblical, or sacred, hermeneutics is usually divided into two categories: general principles and special principles. These relate to the different types of literature found in the Bible. Each different type (genre) has its own unique guidelines but also shares some common assumptions and procedures of interpretation.

**Higher Criticism.** This is the procedure of biblical interpretation which focuses on the historical setting and literary structure of a particular biblical book.

**Idiom.** This word is used for the phrases found in different cultures which have specialized meaning not connected to the usual meaning of the individual terms. Some modern examples are: “that was awfully good,” or “you just kill me.” The Bible also contains these types of phrases.

**Illumination.** This is the name given to the concept that God has spoken to mankind. The full concept is usually expressed by three terms: (1) revelation—God has acted in human history; (2) inspiration—He has given the proper interpretation of His acts and their meaning to certain chosen men to record for mankind; and (3) illumination—He has given His Spirit to help mankind understand His self-disclosure.

**Inductive.** This is a method of logic or reasoning which moves from the particulars to the whole. It is the empirical method of modern science. This is basically the approach of Aristotle.

**Interlinear.** This is a type of research tool which allows those who do not read a biblical language to be able to analyze its meaning and structure. It places the English translation on a word for word level immediately under the original biblical language. This tool, combined with an “analytical lexicon,” will give the forms and basic definitions of Hebrew and Greek.

**Inspiration.** This is the concept that God has spoken to mankind by guiding the biblical authors to accurately and clearly record His revelation. The full concept is usually expressed by three terms: (1) revelation—God has acted in human history; (2) inspiration—He has given the proper interpretation of His acts and their meaning to certain chosen men to record for

mankind; and (3) illumination—He has given His Spirit to help mankind understand His self-disclosure

**Language of description.** This is used in connection with the idioms in which the Old Testament is written. It speaks of our world in terms of the way things appear to the five senses. It is not a scientific description, nor was it meant to be.

**Legalism.** This attitude is characterized by an over-emphasis on rules or ritual. It tends to rely on the human performance of regulations as a means of acceptance by God. It tends to depreciate relationship and elevates performance, both of which are important aspects of the covenantal relationship between a holy God and sinful humanity.

**Literal.** This is another name for the textually-focused and historical method of hermeneutics from Antioch. It means that interpretation involves the normal and obvious meaning of human language, although it still recognizes the presence of figurative language.

**Literary genre.** This refers to the distinct forms that human communication can take, such as poetry or historical narrative. Each type of literature has its own special hermeneutical procedures in addition to the general principles for all written literature.

**Literary unit.** This refers to the major thought divisions of a biblical book. It can be made up of a few verses, paragraphs or chapters. It is a self-contained unit with a central subject.

**Lower criticism.** See “textual criticism.”

**Manuscript.** This term relates to the different copies of the Greek New Testament. Usually they are divided into the different types by (1) material on which they are written (papyrus, leather), or (2) the form of the writing itself (all capitals or running script). It is abbreviated by “MS” (singular) or “MSS” (plural).

**Masoretic Text.** This refers to the ninth century A.D. Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament produced by generations of Jewish scholars which contain vowel points and other textual notes. It forms the basic text for our English Old Testament. Its text has been historically confirmed by the Hebrew MSS, especially Isaiah, known from the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is abbreviated by “MT.”

**Metonymy.** This is a figure of speech in which the name of one thing is used to represent something else associated with it. As an example, “the kettle is boiling” actually means “the water within the kettle is boiling.”

**Muratorian Fragments.** This is a list of the canonical books of the New Testament. It was written in Rome before A.D. 200. It gives the same twenty-seven books as the Protestant NT. This clearly shows the local churches in different parts of the Roman Empire had “practically” set the canon before the major church councils of the fourth century.

**Natural revelation.** This is one category of God’s self-disclosure to man. It involves the natural order (Rom. 1:19-20) and the moral consciousness (Rom. 2:14-15). It is spoken of in Ps. 19:1-6 and Romans 1-2. It is distinct from special revelation, which is God’s specific self-disclosure in the Bible and supremely in Jesus of Nazareth.

This theological category is being re-emphasized by the “old earth” movement among Christian scientists (e.g., the writings of Hugh Ross). They use this category to assert that all truth is God’s truth. Nature is an open door to knowledge about God; it is different from special revelation (the Bible). It allows modern science the freedom to research the natural order. In my opinion it is a wonderful new opportunity to witness to the modern scientific western world.

**Nestorianism.** Nestorius was the patriarch of Constantinople in the fifth century. He was trained in Antioch of Syria and affirmed that Jesus had two natures, one fully human and one fully divine. This view deviated from the orthodox one nature view of Alexandria. Nestorius’ main concern was the title “mother of God,” given to Mary. Nestorius was opposed by Cyril of Alexandria and, by implication, his own Antiochian training. Antioch was the headquarters of the historical-grammatical-textual approach to biblical interpretation, while Alexandria was the headquarters of the four-fold (allegorical) school of interpretation. Nestorius was ultimately removed from office and exiled.

**Original author.** This refers to the actual authors/writers of Scripture.

**Papyri.** This is a type of writing material from Egypt. It is made from river reeds. It is the material upon which our oldest copies of the Greek New Testament are written.

**Parallel passages.** They are part of the concept that all of the Bible is God-given and, therefore, is its own best interpreter and balancer of paradoxical truths. This is also helpful when one is attempting to interpret an unclear or ambiguous passage. They also help one find the clearest passage on a given subject as well as all other Scriptural aspects of a given subject.

**Paraphrase.** This is the name of a theory of Bible translation. Bible translation can be viewed as a continuum from “word to word” correspondence, where an English word must be supplied for every Hebrew or Greek word to a “paraphrase” where only the thought is translated with less regard to the original wording or phrasing. In between these two theories is “the dynamic equivalent” which attempts to take serious the original text but translates it in modern grammatical forms and idioms. A really good discussion of these various theories of translations is found in Fee and Stuart’s *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, p. 35.

**Paragraph.** This is the basic interpretive literary unit in prose. It contains one central thought and its development. If we stay with its major thrust we will not major on minors or miss the original author’s intent.

**Parochialism.** This relates to biases which are locked into a local theological/cultural setting. It does not recognize the transcultural nature of biblical truth or its application.

**Paradox.** This refers to those truths which seem to be contradictory, yet both are true, although in tension with each other. They frame truth by presenting it from opposite sides. Much biblical truth is presented in paradoxical (or dialectical) pairs. Biblical truths are not isolated stars, but are constellations made up of the pattern of stars.

**Plato.** He was one of the philosophers of ancient Greece. His philosophy greatly influenced the early church through the scholars of Alexandria, Egypt, and later, Augustine. He posited that



everything on earth was illusionary and a mere copy of a spiritual archetype. Theologians later equated Plato's "forms/ideas" with the spiritual realm.

**Presupposition.** This refers to our preconceived understanding of a matter. Often we form opinions or judgments about issues before we approach the Scriptures themselves. This predisposition is also known as a bias, an *a priori* position, an assumption or a preunderstanding.

**Proof-texting.** This is the practice of interpreting Scripture by quoting a verse without regard for its immediate context or larger context in its literary unit. This removes the verses from the original author's intent and usually involves the attempt to prove a personal opinion while asserting biblical authority.

**Rabbinical Judaism.** This stage of the life of the Jewish people began in Babylonian Exile (586-538 B.C.). As the influence of the Priests and the Temple was removed, local synagogues became the focus of Jewish life. These local centers of Jewish culture, fellowship, worship and Bible study became the focus of the national religious life. In Jesus' day this "religion of the scribes" was parallel to that of the priests. At the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the scribal form, dominated by the Pharisees, controlled the direction of Jewish religious life. It is characterized by a practical, legalistic interpretation of the Torah as explained in the oral tradition (Talmud).

**Revelation.** This is the name given to the concept that God has spoken to mankind. The full concept is usually expressed by three terms: (1) revelation—God has acted in human history; (2) inspiration—He has given the proper interpretation of His acts and their meaning to certain chosen men to record for mankind; and (3) illumination—He has given His Spirit to help mankind understand His self-disclosure.

**Semantic field.** This refers to the total range of meanings associated with a word. It is basically the different connotations a word has in different contexts.

**Septuagint.** This is the name given to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. Tradition says that it was written in seventy days by seventy Jewish scholars for the library of Alexandria, Egypt. The traditional date is around 250 B.C. (in reality it possibly took over one hundred years to complete). This translation is significant because (1) it gives us an ancient text to compare with the Masoretic Hebrew text; (2) it shows us the state of Jewish interpretation in the third and second century B.C.; (3) it gives us the Jewish Messianic understanding before the rejection of Jesus. Its abbreviation is "LXX."

**Sinaiticus.** This is a Greek manuscript of the fourth century A.D. It was found by the German scholar, Tischendorf, at St. Catherine's monastery on Jebel Musa, the traditional site of Mt. Sinai. This manuscript is designated by the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet called "*aleph*" [א]. It contains both the Old and the entire New Testaments. It is one of our most ancient uncial MSS.

**Spiritualizing.** This term is synonymous with allegorizing in the sense that it removes the historical and literary context of a passage and interprets it on the basis of other criteria.

**Synonymous.** This refers to terms with exact or very similar meanings (although in reality no two words have a complete semantic overlap). They are so closely related that they can replace each other in a sentence without loss of meaning. It is also used to designate one of the three forms of Hebrew poetic parallelism. In this sense it refers to two lines of poetry that express the same truth (cf. Ps. 103:3).

**Syntax.** This is a Greek term which refers to the structure of a sentence. It relates to the ways parts of a sentence are put together to make a complete thought.

**Synthetical.** This is one of the three terms that relates to types of Hebrew poetry. This term speaks of lines of poetry which build on one another in a cumulative sense, sometimes called “climatic” (cf. Ps. 19:7-9).

**Systematic theology.** This is a stage of interpretation which tries to relate the truths of the Bible in a unified and rational manner. It is a logical, rather than mere historical, presentation of Christian theology by categories (God, man, sin, salvation, etc.).

**Talmud.** This is the title for the codification of the Jewish Oral Tradition. The Jews believe it was given orally by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai. In reality it appears to be the collective wisdom of the Jewish teachers through the years. There are two different written versions of the Talmud: the Babylonian and the shorter, unfinished Palestinian.

**Textual criticism.** This is the study of the manuscripts of the Bible. Textual criticism is necessary because no originals exist and the copies differ from each other. It attempts to explain the variations and arrive (as close as possible) to the original wording of the autographs of the Old and New Testaments. It is often called “lower criticism.”

**Textus Receptus.** This designation developed into Elzevir’s edition of the Greek NT in 1633 AD. Basically it is a form of the Greek NT that was produced from a few late Greek manuscripts and Latin versions of Erasmus (1510-1535), Stephanus (1546-1559) and Elzevir (1624-1678). In *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 27, A. T. Robertson says “the Byzantine text is practically the Textus Receptus.” The Byzantine text is the least valuable of the three families of early Greek manuscripts (Western, Alexandrian and Byzantine). It contains the accumulation errors of centuries of hand-copied texts. However, A.T. Robertson also says “the Textus Receptus has preserved for us a substantially accurate text” (p. 21). This Greek manuscript tradition (especially Erasmus’ third edition of 1522) forms the basis of the King James Version of A.D. 1611 .

**Torah.** This is the Hebrew term for “teaching.” It came to be the official title for the writings of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy). It is, for the Jews, the most authoritative division of the Hebrew canon.

**Typological.** This is a specialized type of interpretation. Usually it involves New Testament truth found in Old Testament passages by means of an analogical symbol. This category of hermeneutics was a major element of the Alexandrian method. Because of the abuse of this type of interpretation, one should limit its use to specific examples recorded in the New Testament.

**Vaticanus.** This is the Greek manuscript of the fourth century A.D. It was found in the Vatican's library. It originally contained all the Old Testament, Apocrypha and New Testament. However, some parts were lost (Genesis, Psalms, Hebrews, the Pastorals, Philemon and Revelation). It is a very helpful manuscript in determining the original wording of the autographs. It is designated by a capital "B."

**Vulgate.** This is the name of Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible. It became the basic or "common" translation for the Roman Catholic Church. It was done in the A.D. 380's.

**Wisdom literature.** This was a genre of literature common in the ancient near east (and modern world). It basically was an attempt to instruct a new generation on guidelines for successful living through poetry, proverb, or essay. It was addressed more to the individual than to corporate society. It did not use allusions to history but was based on life experiences and observation. In the Bible, Job through Song of Songs assumed the presence and worship of YHWH, but this religious world view is not explicit in every human experience every time.

As a genre it stated general truths. However, this genre cannot be used in every specific situation. These are general statements that do not always apply to every individual situation.

These sages dared to ask the hard questions of life. Often they challenged traditional religious views (Job and Ecclesiastes). They form a balance and tension to the easy answers about life's tragedies.

**World picture and worldview.** These are companion terms. They are both philosophical concepts related to creation. The term "world picture" refers to "the how" of creation while "worldview" relates to "the Who." These terms are relevant to the interpretation that Gen. 1-2 deals primarily with the Who, not the how, of creation.

**YHWH.** This is the Covenant name for God in the Old Testament. It is defined in Exod. 3:14. It is the CAUSATIVE form of the Hebrew term "to be." The Jews were afraid to pronounce the name, lest they take it in vain; therefore, they substituted the Hebrew term *Adonai*, "lord." This is how this covenant name is translated in English.

# EPHESIANS 2

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

UBS <sup>4</sup>	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
From Death to Life	By Grace Through Faith	Christ's Benefits	From Death to Life	Salvation in Christ, a Free Gift
2:1-10	2:1-10	2:1-10	2:1-3 2:4-10	2:1-6  2:7-10
One in Christ	Brought Near by His Blood		One in Christ	Reconciliation of the Jews and the Pagans with Others and with God
2:11-13	2:11-13	2:11-22	2:11-12 2:13-18	2:11-18
2:14-22	2:14-22		2:19-22	2:19-22

### READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in the introductory section)

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS TO 2:1-22

- A. The Gnostic and Jewish emphasis on human works-oriented salvation is depreciated by Paul's emphasis on (1) God's election in chapter 1; (2) God's initiating grace in 2:1-10; and (3) the mystery of God's redemptive plan hidden from the ages (i.e., Jew and Gentile now are one in Christ) in 2:11-3:13. Paul emphasizes the three things in which humans have no part! Salvation is all of God (cf. 1:3-14; 2:4-7), but individuals must personally respond (cf. 2:8-9) and live in light of the New Covenant (2:10).

- B. There are three enemies of fallen humanity delineated in vv. 2-3 (cf. James 4:1,4,7): (1) the fallen world system, v. 2; (2) the angelic adversary, Satan, v. 2; and (3) mankind's fallen nature (Adamic nature), v. 3. Verses 1-3 show the hopelessness and helplessness of fallen mankind apart from and in rebellion to God (cf. Rom. 1:18-2:16).
- C. As verses 1-3 describe the pitiable state of humanity, verses 4-6 contrast the riches of God's love and mercy for fallen mankind. Human sin is bad, but God's love and mercy are greater (cf. Rom. 5:20)! What God did for Christ (cf. 1:20), Christ has now done for believers (cf. 2:5-6).
- D. There is real tension in the New Testament between the free grace of God and human effort. This tension can be expressed in paradoxical pairs: indicative (a statement) and imperative (a command); grace/faith objective (the content of the gospel) and subjective (one's experience of the gospel); won the race (in Christ) and run the race (for Christ). This tension is clearly seen in 2:8-9, which emphasizes grace, while 2:10 emphasizes good works. It is not an either/or but a both/and theological proposition. However, grace always comes first and is the foundation of a Christlike lifestyle. Verses 8-10 are a classical summary of the paradox of the Christian gospel—free, but it costs everything! Faith and works (cf. James 2:14-26)!
- E. A new topic is introduced in 2:11-3:13. It is the mystery, hidden from the beginning, that God desires the redemption of all mankind, Jew (cf. Ezek. 18:23,32) and Gentile (cf. I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9), through personal faith in the substitutionary atonement of the Messiah. This universal offer of salvation was predicted in Gen. 3:15 and 12:3. This radically free forgiveness (cf. Rom. 5:12-21) shocked the Jews and all religious elitists (gnostic false teachers, Judaizers) and all modern “works-righteousness” proponents.

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:1-10

<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup>in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. <sup>3</sup>Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. <sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup>and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; <sup>9</sup>not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

**2:1** Either verses 1-7 or 1-10 form one sentence in Greek, with the main verb in v. 5. It is one sustained argument. Paul's presentation includes (1) the hopelessness, helplessness, and spiritual lostness of all mankind, vv. 1-3; (2) the unmerited grace of God, vv. 4-7; and (3) the necessary human response, faith and life, vv. 8-10.

▣ **“you”** In Colossians and Ephesians this PLURAL PRONOUN always refers to believing Gentiles (cf. 1:13; 2:12).

▣ **“were dead”** This is a PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIPLE meaning “being dead.” This refers to spiritual death (cf. v. 5; Rom. 5:12-21; Col. 2:13). The Bible speaks of three stages of death: (1) spiritual death (cf. Gen. 2:17; 3; Isa. 59:2; Rom. 7:10-11; James 1:15); (2) physical death (cf. Gen. 5); and (3) eternal death, called “the second death” (cf. Rev. 2:11; 20:6,14; 21:8).

▣ **“trespasses”** This Greek term (*paraptōma*) means “falling to one side” (cf. 1:7). All Greek words for “sins” are related to the Hebrew concept of deviation from the standard of God’s righteousness. The term “right,” “just,” and their derivatives in Hebrew are from a construction metaphor for a measuring reed. God is the standard. All humans deviate from that standard (cf. Ps. 14:1-3; 5:9; 10:7; 36:1; 53:1-4; 140:3; Isa. 53:6; 59:7-8; Rom. 3:9-23; I Pet. 2:25).

▣ **“sins”** This Greek term (*hamartia*) means “missing the mark” (cf. 4:26). The two terms for sin in verse 1 are used as synonyms to illustrate mankind’s fallen, estranged condition (cf. Rom. 3:9,19,23; 11:32; Gal. 3:22).

**2:2 “in which you formerly walked”** “Walk” is a biblical metaphor for lifestyle (cf. 2:1,10; 4:1,17; 5:2,8,15).

▣  
**NASB, NKJV** “according to the course of this world”  
**NRSV** “following the course of this world”  
**TEV** “followed the world’s evil way”  
**NJB** “living by the principles of this world”

This current fallen world system (i.e., age) is personified as an enemy (cf. Gal. 1:4). It is fallen mankind attempting to meet all needs apart from God. In John’s writing it is called “the world” (cf. I John 2:2,15-17; 3:1,13,17; 4:1-17; 5:4,5,19) or “Babylon” (cf. Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2,10,21). In our modern terminology it is called “atheistic humanism.” See Special Topic: Paul’s Use of *Kosmos* at Col. 1:6.

▣  
**NASB, NKJV** “according to the prince of the power of the air”  
**NRSV** “following the rules of the power of the air”  
**TEV** “you obeyed the ruler of the spiritual powers in space”  
**NJB** “obeying the ruler who governs the air”

This is the second enemy of fallen mankind, Satan, the accuser. Mankind is subjected to a personal angelic tempter (cf. Gen. 3, Job. 1-2, Zech. 3). He is called the ruler or god of this world (cf. John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; II Cor. 4:4; I John 5:19).

In the NT the air is the realm of the demonic. The lower air (*aēr*) was seen by the Greeks to be impure and therefore the domain of evil spirits. Some see this use of “air” as referring to the immaterial nature of the spiritual realm. The concept of “the rapture of the church” comes from the Latin translation of I Thess. 4:17, “caught up.” Christians are going to meet the Lord in the midst of Satan’s kingdom, “the air,” to show its overthrow! See Special Topic following.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: PERSONAL EVIL

This is a very difficult subject for several reasons

1. The OT does not reveal an archenemy to good, but a servant of YHWH who offers mankind an alternative and accuses mankind of unrighteousness.
2. The concept of a personal archenemy of God developed in the inter-biblical (non-canonical) literature under the influence of Persian religion (*Zoroastrianism*). This, in turn, greatly influenced rabbinical Judaism.
3. The NT develops the OT themes in surprisingly stark, but selective, categories.

If one approaches the study of evil from the perspective of biblical theology (each book or author or genre studied and outlined separately), then very different views of evil are revealed.

If, however, one approaches the study of evil from a non-biblical or extra-biblical approach of world religions or eastern religions, then much of the NT development is foreshadowed in Persian dualism and Greco-Roman spiritism.

If one is presuppositionally committed to the divine authority of Scripture, then the NT development must be seen as progressive revelation. Christians must guard against allowing Jewish folk lore or western literature (i.e., Dante, Milton) to define the biblical concept. There is certainly mystery and ambiguity in this area of revelation. God has chosen not to reveal all aspects of evil, its origin, its purpose, but He has revealed its defeat!

In the OT the term Satan or accuser seems to relate to three separate groups

1. human accusers (I Sam. 29:4; II Sam. 19:22; I Kgs. 11:14,23,25; Ps. 109:6)
2. angelic accusers (Num. 22:22-23; Zech. 3:1)
3. demonic accusers (I Chr. 21:1; I Kgs. 22:21; Zech. 13:2)

Only later in the intertestamental period is the serpent of Gen. 3 identified with Satan (cf. Book of Wisdom 2:23-24; II Enoch 31:3), and not until even later does this become a rabbinical option (cf. *Sot* 9b and *Sanh.* 29a). The “sons of God” of Gen. 6 become angels in I Enoch 54:6. I mention this, not to assert its theological accuracy, but to show its development. In the NT these OT activities are attributed to angelic, personified evil (i.e., Satan) in II Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9.

The origin of personified evil is difficult or impossible (depending on your point of view) to determine from the OT. One reason for this is Israel’s strong monotheism (cf. I Kgs. 22:20-22; Eccl. 7:14; Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6). All causality was attributed to YHWH to demonstrate His uniqueness and primacy (cf. Isa. 43:11; 44:6,8,24; 45:5-6,14,18,21,22).

Sources of possible information focus on (1) Job 1-2 where Satan is one of the “sons of God” (i.e., angels) or (2) Isa. 14; Ezek. 28 where prideful near eastern kings (Babylon and Tyre) are used to illustrate the pride of Satan (cf. I Tim. 3:6). I have mixed emotions about this approach. Ezekiel uses Garden of Eden metaphors not only for the king of Tyre as Satan (cf. Ezek. 28:12-16), but also for the king of Egypt as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Ezek. 31). However, Isa. 14, particularly vv. 12-14, seems to describe an angelic revolt through pride. If God wanted to reveal to us the specific nature and origin of Satan this is a very oblique way and place to do it. We must guard against the trend of systematic theology of taking small, ambiguous parts of different testaments, authors, books, and genres and combining them as pieces of one divine puzzle.

Alfred Edersheim (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 2, appendices XIII [pp. 748-763] and XVI [pp. 770-776]) says that Rabbinical Judaism has been overly influenced by Persian dualism and demonic speculation. The rabbis are not a good source for truth in this area. Jesus radically diverges from the teachings of the Synagogue. I think that the rabbinical concept of angelic mediation and opposition in

the giving of the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai opened the door to the concept of an arch-angelic enemy of YHWH as well as mankind. There are two high gods of Iranian (Zoroastrian) dualism, *Ahkiman* and *Ormaza*, good and evil. This dualism developed into a Judaic limited dualism of YHWH and Satan.

There is surely progressive revelation in the NT as to the development of evil, but not as elaborate as the rabbis proclaim. A good example of this difference is the “war in heaven.” The fall of Satan is a logical necessity, but the specifics are not given. Even what is given is veiled in apocalyptic genre (cf. Rev. 12:4,7,12-13). Although Satan is defeated and exiled to earth, he still functions as a servant of YHWH (cf. Matt. 4:1; Luke 22:31-32; I Cor. 5:5; I Tim. 1:20).

We must curb our curiosity in this area. There is a personal force of temptation and evil, but there is still only one God and mankind is still responsible for his/her choices. There is a spiritual battle, both before and after salvation. Victory can only come and remain in and through the Triune God. Evil has been defeated and will be removed!



**NASB, NKJV** “in the sons of disobedience”  
**NRSV** “among those who are disobedient”  
**TEV** “the people who disobey God”  
**NJB** “in the rebellious”

This was a Hebrew idiom for rebellion and settled character (cf. 5:6).

**2:3 “we too all formerly lived”** In Ephesians “we” refers to the Jewish believers, in this case, Paul and his ministry team. The ending phrase “even as the rest,” makes it possible that this phrase refers to all of the OT chosen people, the Jews. This verb is an AORIST PASSIVE INDICATIVE. The PASSIVE VOICE would emphasize that fallen mankind was being manipulated by outside evil spiritual forces, like Satan or the demonic, mentioned in v. 2 and 3:10; 6:12.



**NASB, NKJV** “in the lusts of our flesh”  
**NRSV** “in the passions of our flesh”  
**TEV** “according to our natural desires”  
**NJB** “sensual lives”

This is the third enemy of fallen man. Although it is not listed in a grammatically parallel structure (“according to...”) with the two enemies in v. 2, it is a theological parallel. Mankind’s fallen, egocentric self (cf. Gen. 3) is its worst enemy (cf. Gal. 5:19-21). It twists and manipulates everything and everyone to one’s own self interest (cf. Rom. 7:14-25).

Paul uses the term “flesh” in two distinct ways. Only context can determine the distinction. In 2:11,14; 5:29,31; 6:5 and 12 it means “the human person,” not “the fallen sin nature” as here.



**NASB** “indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind”  
**NKJV** “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind”  
**NRSV** “following the desires of the flesh and senses”  
**TEV** “and did whatever suited the wishes of our own bodies and minds”  
**NJB** “ruled entirely by our own physical desires and our own ideas”



This is a PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIPLE which emphasizes continual, on-going, habitual action. The human body and the mind are not evil in and of themselves, but they are the battleground of temptation and sin (cf. 4:17-19; Rom. 6 & 7).

▣ **“by nature”** This refers to mankind’s fallen, Adamic propensities (cf. Gen. 3; Ps. 51:5; Job 14:4; Rom. 5:12-21; 7:14-25). It is surprising that the rabbis in general do not emphasize the fall of humanity in Gen. 3. They instead assert that mankind has two intents (*yetzers*), one good, one bad. Humans are dominated by their choices. There is a famous rabbinical proverb: “Every man has a black and a white dog in his heart. The one he feeds the most is the one that becomes the biggest.” However, the NT presents several theological reasons for mankind’s sin (1) the fall of Adam, (2) willful ignorance and (3) sinful choices.

▣ **“children of wrath”** “Children of. . .”, like “sons of. . .”, is an Hebraic idiomatic phrase for a person’s character. God is opposed to sin and rebellion in His creation. The wrath of God is both temporal (in time) and eschatological (at the end of time).

▣  
NASB                      **“even as the rest”**  
NKJV                      **“made us sit together”**  
NRSV, TEV              **“like everyone else”**  
NJB                        **“as the rest of the world”**

This refers to the lostness of all humans, both Jew and Gentile (cf. Rom. 1:18-3:21). Paul often uses the term “rest” to refer to the lost (cf. I Thess. 4:13; 5:6).

**2:4 “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us”** There is such a dramatic switch between the hopelessness and helplessness of vv. 1-3 and the marvelous grace and mercy of God in vv. 4-7.

What a great truth! God’s mercy and love are the keys to salvation (cf. v. 7). It is His merciful character (cf. 1:7,18; 2:7; 3:8,16), not mankind’s performance, that offers a way of righteousness. See note on “riches” at 1:7.

It is significant that this verse on God’s grace contains a PRESENT PARTICIPLE and an AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE. God has loved us in the past and continues to love us (cf. I John 4:10)!

**2:5 “even when we were dead in our transgressions,”** This phrase is parallel to v. 1a. Paul returns to his original thought after his parenthetical thought (cf. vv. 1-3) about the lostness of mankind. In the midst of our need, God acted in love (cf. Rom. 5:6,8).

▣ **“made us alive together with Christ”** This English phrase reflects one Greek word (*suzōpoieō*). This is the main verb of the sentence (AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE) which begins in v. 1. This is the first of three compound verbs with the Greek preposition, *syn*, which meant “joint participation with.” Jesus was raised from the dead in 1:20 and believers have been quickened to spiritual life through Him (cf. Col. 2:13). Believers are now truly alive with Christ.

▣ **2:5,8 “by grace you have been saved”** This is a PERFECT PASSIVE PERIPHRASTIC PARTICIPLE, repeated in v. 8 for emphasis. This meant that believers have been saved in the past, by an outside agent, with abiding results; “they have been and continue to be saved by God.” This same construction is repeated in v. 8 for emphasis. See Special Topic at Eph. 1:7.

This is one of the biblical passages which forms the basis for the doctrine of the security of the believer (cf. John 6:37, 39; 10:28; 17:2, 24; 18:9; Rom. 8:31-39). Like all biblical doctrines, it must be balanced (held in tension) with other truths and texts.

**2:6 “raised us with Him”** This is the second of the AORIST compounds with *syn*. Believers have already been raised with Christ. Believers were buried with Him in baptism (cf. Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-11) and raised with Him by the Father (cf. Col. 2:13; Rom. 6:4-5) who raised Jesus (raised by the Spirit in Rom. 8:11). These are special redemptive analogies. Believers spiritually participate in the major events of Jesus’ experience: crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and enthronement! Believers share His life and suffering; they will also share His glory (cf. Rom. 8:17)!



**NASB, NRSV**

**“seated us with Him”**

**NKJV**

**“made us sit together”**

**TEV**

**“to rule with him”**

**NJB**

**“gave us a place with him”**

This is the third of the AORIST compounds with *syn*. Our position in Him is one of present, as well as future, victory (cf. Rom. 8:37)! The concept of sitting down with Him meant reigning with Him. Jesus is the King of Kings sitting on the throne of God the Father and believers are even now co-reigning with Him (cf. Matt. 19:28; Rom. 5:17; Col. 3:1; II Tim. 2:12; Rev. 22:5).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: REIGNING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

The concept of reigning with Christ is part of the larger theological category called “the Kingdom of God.” This is a carry-over from the OT concept of God as the true king of Israel (cf. I Sam. 8:7). He symbolically reigned (I Sam. 8:7; 10:17-19) through a descendant from the tribe of Judah (cf. Gen. 49:10) and the family of Jesse (cf. II Sam. 7).

Jesus is the promised fulfillment of OT prophecy concerning the Messiah. He inaugurated the Kingdom of God with His incarnation at Bethlehem. The Kingdom of God became the central pillar of Jesus’ preaching. The Kingdom had fully come in Him (cf. Matt: 10:7; 11:12; 12:28; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9,11; 11:20; 16:16; 17:20-21).

However, the Kingdom was also future (eschatological). It was present but not consummated (cf. Matt. 6:10; 8:11; 16:28; 22:1-14; 26:29; Luke 9:27; 11:2; 13:29; 14:10-24; 22:16,18). Jesus came the first time as a suffering servant (cf. Isa. 52:13-53:12); as humble (cf. Zech. 9:9) but He will return as King of Kings (cf. Matt. 2:2; 21:5; 27:11-14). The concept of “reigning” is surely a part of this “kingdom” theology. God has given the kingdom to Jesus’ followers (see Luke 12:32).

The concept of reigning with Christ has several aspects and questions:

1. Do the passages which assert that God has given believers “the kingdom” through Christ refer to “reigning” (cf. Matt. 5:3,10; Luke 12:32)?
2. Do Jesus’ words to the original disciples in the first century Jewish context refer to all believers (cf. Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:28-30)?
3. Does Paul’s emphasis on reigning in this life now contrast or complement the above texts (cf. Rom. 5:17; I Cor. 4:8)?
4. How are suffering and reigning related (cf. Rom. 8:17; II Tim. 2:11-12; I Pet. 4:13; Rev. 1:9)?
5. The recurrent theme of Revelation is sharing the glorified Christ’s reign, but is it

- a. earthly, 5:10
- b. millennial, 20:5,6
- c. eternal, 2:26; 3:21; 22:5 and Dan. 7:14,18,27?



NASB, NKJV,

NRSV

“in the heavenly *places*”

TEV

“in the heavenly world”

NJB

“in heaven”

This LOCATIVE (of sphere) NEUTER PLURAL ADJECTIVE, “in the heavenly places,” is only used in Ephesians (cf. 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). From the context of all of its usages, it must mean the spiritual realm in which believers live here and now, not heaven.

**2:7 “in the ages to come”** The Jews believed in two ages, the current evil age (Gal. 1:4) and the coming righteous age (see Special Topic at 1:21). This New Age of righteousness would be inaugurated by the coming of the Messiah in the power of the Spirit. In 1:20 “age” is SINGULAR, here it is PLURAL (cf. I Cor 2:7; Heb. 1:2; 11:3). This implies that (1) there are at least two ages, or (2) the plural is used to accentuate and magnify the coming age—a rabbinical idiom called a “plural of majesty.” This use of the plural in a symbolic sense can be seen in the passages that refer to the past “ages” (cf. Rom. 10:25; I Cor. 10:11; II Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2).

Some scholars believe this was simply a metaphor for eternity because of the way the phrase was used in secular Koine Greek and in several places in the NT (cf. Luke 1:33, 55; John 12:34; Rom. 9:5; Gal. 1:5; I Tim. 1:17).

▣ **“He might show”** This is an AORIST MIDDLE SUBJUNCTIVE. God clearly manifested His own character (cf. 1:5-7). This term means “to publicly display” (cf. Rom. 9:17,22). God’s mercy and purpose in Christ are clearly manifested to the angels by His treatment of fallen mankind (cf. 3:10; I Cor. 4:9; I Pet. 1:12).

▣ **“surprising”** *Huperballō*. See Special Topic: Paul’s Use of *Huper* Compounds at 1:19.

**2:8 “For by grace”** Salvation is by the “grace” of God (cf. Eph. 1:3-14). The character of God is revealed through His mercy (cf. vv. 4-6). Believers are the trophies of His love. Grace is best defined as the unmerited, undeserved love of God. It flows from God’s nature through Christ and is irrespective of the worth or merit of the one loved.

▣ **“you have been saved”** This is a PERFECT PASSIVE PERIPHRASTIC PARTICIPLE which is parallel with v. 5. Its thrust is that “believers have been and continue to be” saved by God.

In the OT the term “save” spoke of “physical deliverance” (cf. James 5:15). In the NT this meaning has taken on a spiritual dimension. God delivers believers from the results of sin and gives them eternal life.

▣ **“through faith”** Faith receives God’s free gift in Christ (cf. Rom. 3:22,25; 4:5; 9:30; Gal. 2:16; I Pet. 1:5). Mankind must respond to God’s offer of grace and forgiveness in Christ (cf. John 1:12; 3:16-17,36; 6:40; 11:25-26; Rom. 10:9-13).

God deals with fallen mankind by means of a covenant. He always takes the initiative (cf. John 6:44, 65) and sets the agenda and the boundaries (cf. Mark 1:51; Acts 3:16,19; 20:21). He allows fallen mankind to participate in their own salvation by responding to His covenant offer. The mandated response is initial and continuing faith, repentance, obedience, service, worship, and perseverance.

The term “faith” in the OT is a metaphorical extension of a stable stance. It came to denote that which is sure, trustworthy, dependable and faithful. None of these describe even redeemed fallen mankind. It is not mankind’s trustworthiness, or faithfulness or dependability, but God’s. We trust in His trustworthy promises, not our trustworthiness! Covenant obedience flows from gratitude! The focus has always been on His faithfulness, not the believers’ faith! Faith cannot save anyone. Only grace saves, but it is received by faith. The focus is never on the amount of faith (cf. Matt. 17:20), but on its object (Jesus).

▣ **“and that”** This is the Greek DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN (*touto*), which is NEUTER in GENDER. The closest nouns, “grace” and “faith,” are both FEMININE in GENDER. Therefore, this must refer to the whole process of our salvation in the finished work of Christ.

There is another possibility based on a similar grammatical construction in Phil. 1:28. If this is the case then this adverbial phrase relates to faith, which is also a gift of God’s grace! Here is the mystery of God’s sovereignty and human free will.

▣ **“not of yourselves”** This is the first of three phrases which clearly show that salvation is not based on human performance: (1) “not of yourselves” v. 8; (2) “gift of God” v. 8; and (3) “not as a result of works” v. 9.

▣ **“the gift of God”** This is the essence of grace—love with no strings attached (cf. Rom. 3:24; 6:23). The paradox of salvation as both a free gift and a mandated covenant response are difficult to grasp. Yet both are true! Salvation is truly free, yet costs everything. Most biblical doctrines are presented as tension-filled pairs of truths (security vs. perseverance, faith vs. works, God’s sovereignty vs. human free will, predestination vs. human response and transcendence vs. immanence).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE FOR ONE’S SALVATION**

1. It is based on the character of the Father (cf. John 3:16), the work of the Son (cf. II Cor. 5:21), and the ministry of the Spirit (cf. Rom. 8:14-16), not on human performance, not wages due for obedience, not just a creed.
2. It is a gift (cf. Rom. 3:24; 6:23; Eph. 2:5,8-9).
3. It is a new life, a new world-view (cf. James and I John).
4. It is knowledge (the gospel), fellowship (faith in and with Jesus), and a new lifestyle (Spirit-led Christlikeness) all three, not just any one by itself.

**2:9 “not as a result of works,”** Salvation is not by merit (cf. Rom. 3:20, 27-28; 9:11, 16; Gal. 2:16; Phil 3:9; II Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5). This is in direct contrast to the false teachers.

▣ **“so that no one may boast”** Salvation is by God’s grace, not human effort, so there is no room for human glorying (cf. Rom. 3:27; 4:2). If believers boast, let them boast in Christ (cf. I Cor. 1:31, which is a quote from Jer. 9:23-24).

## SPECIAL TOPIC: BOASTING

These Greek terms *kauchaomai*, *kauchēma*, and *kauchēsis* are used about thirty-five times by Paul and only twice in the rest of the NT (both in James). Its predominate use is in I and II Corinthians.

There are two main truths connected to boasting.

1. no flesh shall glory/boast before God (cf. I Cor. 1:29; Eph. 2:9)
2. believers should glory in the Lord (cf. I Cor. 1:31; II Cor. 10:17, which is an allusion to Jer. 9:23-24)

Therefore, there is appropriate and inappropriate boasting/glorying (i.e., pride).

1. appropriate
  - a. in the hope of glory (cf. Rom. 4:2)
  - b. in God through the Lord Jesus (cf. Rom. 5:11)
  - c. in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (i.e., Paul's main theme, cf. I Cor. 1:17-18; Gal. 6:14)
  - d. Paul boasts in
    - (1) his ministry without compensation (cf. I Cor. 9:15,16; II Cor. 10:12)
    - (2) his authority from Christ (cf. II Cor. 10:8,12)
    - (3) his not boasting in other men's labor (as some at Corinth were, cf. II Cor. 10:15)
    - (4) his racial heritage (as others were doing at Corinth, cf. II Cor. 11:17; 12:1,5,6)
    - (5) his churches
      - (a) Corinth (II Cor. 7:4,14; 8:24; 9:2; 11:10)
      - (b) Thessalonika (cf. II Thess. 1:4)
    - (6) his confidence in God's comfort and deliverance (cf. II Cor. 1:12)
    - (7)
2. inappropriate
  - a. in relation to Jewish heritage (cf. Rom. 2:17,23; 3:27; Gal. 6:13)
  - b. some in the Corinthian church were boasting
    - (1) in men (cf. I Cor. 3:21)
    - (2) in wisdom (cf. I Cor. 4:7)
    - (3) in freedom (cf. I Cor. 5:6)
  - c. false teachers tried to boast in the church at Corinth (cf. II Cor. 11:12)

**2:10 “we are His workmanship,”** The English word “poem” comes from this Greek term (*poiama*). This word is only used two times in the NT, here and Rom. 1:20. This is the believers' position in grace. They are paradoxically His finished product which is still in process!

▣ **“created in Christ Jesus”** This is an AORIST PASSIVE PARTICIPLE. The Spirit forms believers through Christ's ministry by the will of the Father (cf. 1:3-14). This act of a new spiritual creation is described in the same terms used of the initial creation in Genesis (cf. 3:9; Col. 1:16).

▣ **“for good works”** Believers' lifestyles after they meet Christ are an evidence of their salvation (cf. James and I John). They are saved by grace through faith unto works! They are saved to serve! Faith without works is dead, as are works without faith (cf. Matt. 7:21-23 and James 2:14-26). The goal of the Father's choice is that believers be “holy and blameless” (cf. 1:4).

Paul was often attacked for his radically free gospel because it seemed to encourage godless living. A gospel so seemingly unconnected to moral performance must lead to abuse. Paul's gospel was free in the grace of God, but it also demanded an appropriate response, not only in initial repentance, but in ongoing repentance. Godly living is the result, not lawlessness. Good works are not the mechanism of salvation, but the result. This paradox of a completely free salvation and a cost-everything response is difficult to communicate, but the two must be held in a tension-filled balance.

American individualism has distorted the gospel. Humans are not saved because God loves them so much individually, but because God loves fallen mankind, mankind made in His image. He saves and changes individuals to reach more individuals. The ultimate focus of love is primarily corporate (cf. John 3:16), but it is received individually (cf. John 1:12; Rom. 10:9-13; I Cor. 15:1).

☐ **“which God prepared beforehand”** This strong term (*pro + hetoimos*, “to prepare before”) relates to the theological concept of predestination (cf. 1:4-5,11) and is used only here and in Rom. 9:23. God chose a people to reflect His character. Through Christ, the Father has restored His image in fallen mankind (cf. Gen. 1:26-27).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:11-22**

**<sup>11</sup>Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands—<sup>12</sup>remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, <sup>15</sup>by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. <sup>17</sup>AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; <sup>18</sup>for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, <sup>20</sup>having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup>in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.**

**2:11 “Therefore”** This could refer to (1) vv. 1-10, or (2) 1:3-2:10. Paul often uses this word to start a new literary unit by building on the combined truths of previous units (cf. Rom. 5:1; 8:1, 12:1).

This is the third major truth of Paul's doctrinal section (chapters 1-3). The first was God's eternal choice based on His gracious character, the second was the hopelessness of fallen humanity, saved by God's gracious acts through Christ which must be received and lived out by faith. Now the third, God's will has always been the salvation of all humans (cf. Gen. 3:15), both Jew and Gentile (cf. 2:11-3:13). No human intellect (i.e., Gnostics) understood these revealed truths.

☐ **“remember”** This is a PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE. These Gentiles are commanded to continue to remember their previous alienation from God, vv. 11-12.

▣ **“that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh”** This is literally “nations” (*ethnos*). It refers to all peoples who are not of the line of Jacob. In the OT the term “nations” (*go'im*) was a derogatory way of referring to all non-Jews.

▣ **“who are called Uncircumcision”** Even in the OT, this rite was an outward sign of inner faith (cf. Lev. 26:41-42; Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4). The “Judaizers” of Galatians claimed that this was still God’s will and was indispensable for salvation (cf. Acts 15:1ff; Gal. 2:11-12). Be careful not to confuse the symbol with the spiritual reality for which it stands (cf. Acts 2:38 for another example).

## 2:12

**NASB** “separate from Christ”

**NKJV, NRSV** “without Christ”

**TEV** “apart from Christ”

**NJB** “you had no Christ”

This is literally “on separate foundations.” These next few phrases (i.e., v. 12), like vv. 1-3, show the helplessness and hopelessness of the Gentiles without Christ.

## ▣

**NASB, NJB** “excluded”

**NKJV, NRSV** “being aliens”

**TEV** “foreigners”

This is a PERFECT PASSIVE PARTICIPLE meaning “have been and continued to be excluded.” In the OT this term referred to resident non-citizens with limited rights (aliens). The Gentiles had been and continued to be separated, alienated from the Covenant of YHWH.

▣ **“the commonwealth of Israel”** This is literally “citizenship” (*politeia*). This word came into English as “politics.” It refers to the chosen descendants of Abraham. Their benefits are enumerated in Romans 9:4-5.

▣ **“to the covenants of promise,”** The NT can refer to the OT as one covenant or as several covenants. This theological tension can be viewed as one faith covenant expressed in differing requirements. God confronted OT persons in different ways. His word to Adam was about things in the garden of Eden, to Noah about the ark, to Abraham about a son and a place to live, to Moses about leading the people, etc. But to all it was obedience to the word of God! Some groups (dispensationalists) focus on the differentness. Other groups (Calvinists) focus on the unifying faith aspect. Paul focused on the covenant of Abraham (cf. Rom. 4) as setting the pattern for all faith relationships.

The New Covenant is like the old covenants in their demand for obedience and personal faith in God’s revelation. It is different in content (cf. Jer. 31:31-34). The Mosaic covenant focused on human obedience and performance, while the NT focuses on the obedience and performance of Christ. This new covenant is God’s way of uniting Jews and Gentiles by faith in Christ (cf. 2:11-3:13).

The new covenant, like the old, is both unconditional (God’s promise) and conditional (human response). It reflects both the sovereignty of God (predestination) and the free choices of mankind (faith, repentance, obedience, perseverance).

## SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT

The OT term *berith*, covenant, is not easy to define. There is no matching VERB in Hebrew. All attempts to derive an etymological or cognate definition have proved unconvincing. However, the obvious centrality of the concept has forced scholars to examine the word usage in order to determine its functional meaning.

Covenant is the means by which the one true God deals with His human creation. The concept of covenant, treaty, or agreement is crucial in understanding the biblical revelation. The tension between God's sovereignty and human free-will are clearly seen in the concept of covenant. Some covenants are based completely on God's character, actions, and purposes.

1. creation itself (cf. Gen. 1-2)
2. the call of Abraham (cf. Gen. 12)
3. the covenant with Abraham (cf. Gen. 15)
4. the preservation and promise to Noah (cf. Gen. 6-9)

However, the very nature of covenant demands a response

1. by faith Adam must obey God and not eat of the tree in the midst of Eden (cf. Gen. 2)
2. by faith Abraham must leave his family, follow God, and believe in future descendants (cf. Gen. 12,15)
3. by faith Noah must build a huge boat far from water and gather the animals (cf. Gen. 6-9)
4. by faith Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt and received specific guidelines for religious and social life with promises of blessings and cursings (cf. Deut. 27-28)

This same tension involving God's relationship to humanity is addressed in the "new covenant." The tension can be clearly seen in comparing Ezek. 18 with Ezek. 36:27-37. Is the covenant based on God's gracious actions or mandated human response? This is the burning issue between the Old Covenant and the New. The goals of both are the same: (1) the restoration of fellowship lost in Gen. 3 and (2) the establishment of a righteous people who reflect God's character.

The new covenant of Jer. 31:31-34 solves the tension by removing human performance as the means of attaining acceptance. God's law becomes an internal desire instead of an external performance. The goal of a godly, righteous people remains the same, but the methodology changes. Fallen mankind proved themselves inadequate to be God's reflected image (cf. Rom. 3:9-18). The problem was not the covenant, but human sinfulness and weakness (cf. Rom. 7; Gal. 3).

The same tension between OT unconditional and conditional covenants remains in the NT. Salvation is absolutely free in the finished work of Jesus Christ, but it requires repentance and faith (both initially and continually). It is both a legal pronouncement and a call to Christlikeness, an indicative statement of acceptance and an imperative to holiness! Believers are not saved by their performance, but unto obedience (cf. Eph. 2:8-10). Godly living becomes the evidence of salvation, not the means of salvation. This tension is clearly seen in the NT books of James and I John.

▣ **"having no hope and without God in the world"** If there is truly one creator God and Israel was His chosen people, the Gentiles were cut off without any hope, lost in idolatry and paganism (cf. I Thess. 4:13 and Rom. 1:18-2:16).

**2:13 "But now"** There is a contrast between the hopeless past of the Gentiles, vv. 11-12, and their great hope in the gospel, vv. 13-22.



▣ **“you who formerly were far off have been brought near”** This same concept is repeated in v. 17, where Isa. 57:14-19 is quoted. In Isaiah this text referred to Jewish exiles but here in Ephesians it refers to Gentiles. This is one example of Paul’s typological use of OT passages. The NT Apostles have universalized the OT hope. As the exiled Jews were apart from God, so too, the Gentiles were alienated from God.

▣ **“by the blood of Christ.”** This referred to the vicarious, substitutionary atonement of Christ (cf. 1:7; Rom. 3:25; 5:6-10; II Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:14,28; I Pet. 1:19; Rev. 1:5). God’s family is no longer national, but spiritual (cf. Rom. 2:28-29; 4:16-25).

The blood of Christ was a sacrificial metaphor (cf. Lev. 1-2) for the death of the Messiah (cf. TEV). John the Baptist said of Jesus, “Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (cf. John 1:29). Jesus came to die (cf. Gen. 3:15; Isa. 53; Mark 15:53; 10:45).

**2:14** This verse has three verbals. The first is a PRESENT INDICATIVE. Jesus continues to be and to provide our peace. The second and third are AORIST ACTIVE PARTICIPLES; all that is necessary has been accomplished to unite Jews and Gentiles into one new entity (the church).

Peace between Jew and Gentile is the focus of this literary unit, 2:11-3:13. This was the mystery of the gospel hidden in ages past. The term “peace” refers to (1) peace between God and mankind (cf. John 14:27; 16:33; Rom. 5:1-11; Phil. 4:7,9) and (2) peace between Jew and Gentile, vv. 14, 15, 17 (cf. Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

▣ **“He Himself is our peace,”** “He Himself” (*autos*) is emphasized. The term “peace” means to “restore that which was broken” (reconciliation). Jesus the Messiah is called the Prince of Peace ( cf. Isa. 9:6 and Zech. 6:12-13). God’s peace in Christ has several aspects. See Special Topics: Peace and The Christian and Peace at Col. 1:20.

▣  
NASB           **“who made both *groups into one*”**  
NKJV           **“who has made both one”**  
NRSV           **“he has made both groups into one”**  
TEV             **“by making Jews and Gentiles one people”**  
NJB             **“has made the two into one”**

Believers are no longer Jew or Gentile, but Christian (cf. 1:15; 2:15; 4:4; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11). This was the mystery of God as revealed in Ephesians. This has always been God’s plan (Gen. 3:15). God chose Abraham to choose a people, to choose a world (Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5-6). This is the unifying theme of the Old and New Covenants (Testaments). See Special Topic: Racism at Col. 3:11.

▣  
NASB           **“the barrier of the dividing wall,”**  
NKJV           **“the middle wall of division”**  
NRSV           **“the dividing wall”**  
TEV             **“the wall that separated”**  
NJB             **“the barrier which used to keep them apart”**

This is literally “the middle wall of partition.” This was a rare term. In context it obviously refers to the Mosaic law (cf. v.15). Some commentators have asserted that it was an allusion to the wall in Herod’s Temple between the court of the Gentiles and the court of the Women which separated Jewish and Gentile worshippers. This same symbolism of the removal of barriers is seen in the veil of the Temple rent from top

to bottom at Jesus' death (cf. Matt. 27:51). Unity is now possible. Unity is now the will of God (cf. Eph. 4:1-10).

In Gnosticism this term referred to a barrier between heaven and earth which may be alluded to in Eph. 4:8-10.

## 2:15

**NASB** "abolishing"

**NKJV** "having abolished"

**NRSV** "has abolished"

**TEV** "abolished"

**NJB** "destroying"

The term "abolish" is a favorite of Paul's (cf. Rom. 3:31; 6:6; Col. 2:14). It literally means "to make null and void" or "to bring to no effect." It is an AORIST ACTIVE PARTICIPLE. Jesus has totally eliminated the death sentence of the OT Law (cf. v. 16; Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:13).

This does not mean to imply that the OT is not inspired and important revelation for the NT believer (cf. Matt. 5:17-19). It does mean that the Law is not the means of salvation (cf. Acts 15; Rom. 4; Gal. 3; Hebrews). The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-36) is based on a new heart and a new spirit, not human performance of a legal code. Believing Jews and believing Gentiles now have the same standing before God—the imputed righteousness of Christ.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: NULL AND VOID (*KATARGEŌ*)**

This (*katargeō*) was one of Paul's favorite words. He used it at least twenty-five times but it has a very wide semantic range.

A. It's basic etymological root is from *argos* which meant

1. inactive
2. idle
3. unused
4. useless
5. inoperative

B. The compound with *kata* was used to express

1. inactivity
2. uselessness
3. that which was cancelled
4. that which was done away with
5. that which was completely inoperative

C. It is used once in Luke to describe a fruitless, therefore useless, tree (cf. Luke 13:7).

D. Paul uses it in a figurative sense in two primary ways:

1. God making inoperative things which are hostile to mankind
  - a. mankind's sin nature - Rom. 6:6
  - b. the Mosaic law in relation to God's promise of "the seed" - Rom. 4:14; Gal. 3:17; 5:4,11; Eph. 2:15
  - c. spiritual forces - I Cor. 15:24
  - d. the "man of lawlessness" - II Thess. 2:8
  - e. physical death - I Cor. 15:26; II Tim. 1:16 (Heb. 2:14)

2. God replacing the old (covenant, age) for the new
  - a. things related to the Mosaic Law - Rom. 3:3,31; 4:14; II Cor. 3:7,11,13,14
  - b. analogy of marriage used of Law - Rom. 7:2,6
  - c. the things of this age - I Cor. 13:8,10,11
  - d. this body - I Cor. 6:13
  - e. leaders of this age - I Cor. 1:28; 2:6

This word is translated so many different ways but its main meaning is to make something useless, null and void, inoperative, powerless, but not necessarily non-existent, destroyed, or annihilated.



**NASB, NKJV**     **“in His flesh”**  
**NRSV (2:14)**    **“flesh”**  
**TEV (2:14)**     **“in his own body”**  
**NJB (2:14)**     **“in his own person”**

This emphasizes Jesus’ humanity (cf. Col. 1:22) as well as His Incarnational ministry (cf. Eph. 4:8-10). The false teachers would have denied both because of their ontological dualism between spirit, which they saw as good, and matter, which they saw as evil (cf. Gal. 4:4; Col. 1:22).

▣ **“the enmity”** The balanced structure equates “the enmity” (cf. v. 16) with “the Law of commandment contained in the ordinances.” The OT said “do and live,” but fallen mankind was unable to perform the Mosaic Law. Once broken, the OT laws became a curse (cf. Gal. 3:10); “the soul that sins will surely die” (cf. Ezek. 18:4,20). The New Covenant removed the enmity by giving humans a new heart and spirit (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26-27). Performance becomes the result, not the goal. Salvation is a gift, not a reward for work accomplished.



**NASB**            **“the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances,”**  
**NKJV**           **“the law of commandments *continued* in ordinances”**  
**NRSV**           **“the law with its commandments and ordinances”**  
**TEV**            **“the Jewish Law, with its commandments and rules”**  
**NJB**             **“the rules and decrees of the Law”**

This referred to the way of salvation which was thought to be found only through performance of the Law of Moses (cf. Rom. 9:30-32; Gal. 2:15-21).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: THE MOSAIC LAW AND THE CHRISTIAN**

- A. The Law is inspired Scripture and is eternal (cf. Matt. 5:17-19).
- B. The Law as a way of salvation is void and has always been, but mankind had to see that his/her own effort was futile (cf. Matt. 5:20, 48; Rom. 7:7-12; Gal. 3:1ff; James 2:10).
- C. The gospel of Christ is the only way to God (cf. John 14:6; Rom. 3:21; Gal. 2:15-21; Heb. 8:12).
- D. The Old Testament is still helpful to believers as God’s will for humans in society, but not as the way of salvation. The cultus of Israel (sacrificial system, holy days, civic and religious laws) has

passed away but God still speaks through the OT. The stipulations mentioned in Acts 15:20 refer only to fellowship issues, not to salvation.

▣ **“that in Himself He might make”** The PRONOUN “Himself” is emphatic. God’s eternal purpose of uniting all humans in salvation (cf. Gen. 3:15) and fellowship was accomplished exclusively through the performance of the person of the Messiah, not the Mosaic Law.

▣ **“one new man,”** This Greek term means “new” in kind, not time. The people of God are not Jews, not Gentiles, but Christians! The Church is a new entity, in and through and for Christ (cf. Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:16; Heb. 2:10).

▣ **“establishing peace”** This is a favorite term for Paul. It is used eleven times in Romans and seven times in Ephesians (cf. 1:2; 2:14,15,17; 4:3; 6:15,23). He uses it in three ways:

1. peace between God and mankind, Col. 1:20
2. subjective peace with God through Christ, John 14:27; 16:33; Phil. 4:27
3. peace between peoples, Eph. 2:11-3:13.

This is a PRESENT PASSIVE PARTICIPLE. Christ continues to make peace for those fallen children of Adam who will respond by repentance and faith. Christ’s peace is not automatic (AORIST SUBJUNCTIVE of v. 16) but it is available to all (cf. Rom. 5:12-21).

**2:16 “might reconcile”** The Greek term means to transfer someone from one state of being to another. It implies an exchange of contrasting positions (cf. Rom. 5:10-11; Col. 1:20,22; II Cor. 5:18,21). In a sense reconciliation is the removal of the curse of Genesis 3. God and mankind are restored to intimate fellowship even in this life, in this fallen world system. This reconciliation with God expresses itself in a new relationship with other humans and ultimately with nature (Isa. 11:6-9; 65:25; Rom. 8:18-23; Rev. 22:3). The reuniting of Jews and Gentiles is one beautiful example of God’s unifying work in our world.

▣ **“in one body”** This metaphor of unity is used in several different ways in Paul’s writings: (1) the physical body of Christ (cf. Col. 1:22) or the body of Christ, the church (cf. Col. 1:23; 4:12; 5:23,30); (2) the new humanity of both Jew and Gentile (cf. 2:16); or (3) a way of referring to the unity and diversity of spiritual gifts (cf. I Cor. 12:12-13,27). In a sense they are all related to #1.

▣ **“through the cross”** The Jewish leaders meant Christ’s cross to be a curse (cf. Deut. 21:23). God used it as a means of redemption (cf. Isa. 53). Jesus became “the curse” for us (cf. Gal. 3:13)! It became His victory chariot (cf. Col. 2:14-15), giving believers victory over (1) the OT curse, (2) the evil powers and (3) the enmity between Jew and Gentile.

▣  
NASB     **“by it having put to death the enmity”**  
NKJV     **“thereby putting to death the enmity”**  
NRSV     **“thus putting to death that hostility through it”**  
TEV       **“Christ destroyed the enmity”**  
NJB       **“in his own person he killed the hostility”**

The English translations show that this phrase can be understood in two ways. This is because the SINGULAR PRONOUN can be a DATIVE MASCULINE (TEV, NJB) or DATIVE NEUTER (NASB,

NRSV). In context either is possible. The emphasis of the larger context is on Christ's finished redemptive work.

**2:17** This is an allusion to Isa. 57:19 or possibly 52:7. The rabbis, going back to Isa. 56:6, used this phrase to refer to Gentile proselytes.

**2:18** The work of the Trinity is clearly stated in this book (cf. 1:3-14,17; 2:18; 4:4-6). Although the term "trinity" is not a biblical word, the concept surely is (cf. Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; John 14:26; Acts 2:33-34,38-39; Rom. 1:4-5; 5:1,5; 8:9-10; I Cor. 12:4-6; II Cor. 1:21-22; 13:14; Gal. 4:4-6; Eph. 1:3-14; 2:18; 3:14-17; 4:4-6; I Thess. 1:2-5; II Thess. 2:13; Titus 3:4-6; I Pet. 1:2; Jude 20-21). See Special Topic at 1:3.

▣ **"we both have our access"** This is a PRESENT ACTIVE INDICATIVE meaning "we continue to have access." This is the concept of Jesus personally bringing believers into the presence of God and giving them a personal introduction (cf. Rom. 5:2; it is also used in the sense of confidence in Heb. 4:16; 10:19,35).

▣ **"in one Spirit"** This is also emphasized in Ephesians 4:4. The false teachers were causing disunity, but the Spirit brought unity (not uniformity)!

**2:19** The Gentiles who were estranged (vv. 11-12) are now fully included. This is clearly stated by the use of four common biblical metaphors: (1) fellow citizens (city), (2) saints (holy nation set apart for God), (3) God's household (family members), and (4) a spiritual building (temple, vv. 20-22a).

▣ **"saints"** See Special Topic at Col. 1:2.

**2:20 "having been built upon"** This is an AORIST PASSIVE PARTICIPLE. The foundation of our faith has been fully, finally, and completely laid by the Triune God. God's good news was proclaimed by the Apostles and prophets (cf. 3:5).

▣ **"the foundation of the apostles and prophets"** Jesus laid the foundation of the gospel (cf. I Cor. 3:11). The OT prophesied the coming Kingdom of God, Jesus' Spirit-led life, death, and resurrection accomplished it, and the Apostles preached its reality. The only question is, to whom does the term "prophets" refer? Are they OT prophets or NT prophets (cf. 3:5; 4:1)? The order of the terms implies NT prophets (cf. vv. 3:5; 4:11), but the OT Messianic allusion to the "cornerstone" implies OT prophecy.

The reason for the distinction between OT and NT prophets is the issue of revelation. OT prophets wrote Scripture. They were God's instrument of inspired self-disclosure. However, prophecy is an ongoing gift in the NT (I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11). Does Scripture writing continue? There must be a distinction drawn between inspiration (Apostles and OT prophets) and illumination and spiritual giftedness (NT gifted believers).

▣ **"the cornerstone"** This is an OT Messianic metaphor (cf. Isa. 28:16; Ps. 118:22; I Pet. 2:4-8). In the OT God's stability, strength and perseverance are often visualized in "Rock" as a title (cf. Deut. 32:4, 15, 18, 30; Ps. 18:2, 31, 46; 28:1; 33:3; 42:9; 71:3; 78:15).

The metaphor of Jesus as a stone:

1. a rejected stone - Ps. 118:22
2. a building stone - Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16
3. a stone to stumble over - Isa. 8:14-15
4. an overcoming and conquering stone (kingdom) - Dan. 2:45

5. Jesus used these passages to describe Himself (cf. Matt. 21:40; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17)  
He was the key construction item who was ignored in OT ritualism and legalism (cf. Isa. 8:14).

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: CORNERSTONE**

### **I. OT Usages**

- A. The concept of a stone as a hard durable item which made a good foundation was used to describe YHWH (cf. Ps. 18:1).
- B. It then developed into a Messianic title (cf. Gen. 49:24; Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16).
- C. It came to represent a judgment from YHWH by the Messiah (cf. Isa. 8:14; Dan. 2:34-35,44-45).
- D. This developed into a building metaphor.
  - 1. a foundation stone, the first placed, which was secure and set the angles for the rest of the building, called “the cornerstone”
  - 2. it could also refer to the final stone put in place, which holds the walls together (cf. Zech. 4:7; Eph. 2:20,21), called “the capstone” from the Hebrew *rush* (i.e., head)
  - 3. it could refer to the “keystone,” which is in the center of the doorway arch and holds the weight of the entire wall

### **II. NT Usages**

- A. Jesus quoted Ps. 118 several times in reference to Himself (cf. Matt. 21:41-46; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17)
- B. Paul uses Ps. 118 in connection with YHWH’s rejection of faithless, rebellious Israel (cf. Rom. 9:33)
- C. Paul uses the concept of a “capstone” in Eph. 2:20-22 in reference to Christ
- D. Peter uses this concept of Jesus in I Pet. 2:1-10. Jesus is the cornerstone and believers are the living stones (i.e., believers as temples, cf. I Cor. 6:19), built on Him (i.e., Jesus is the new Temple, cf. Mark 14:58; Matt. 12:6; John 2:19-20).

The Jews rejected the very foundation of their hope when they rejected Jesus as Messiah.

### **III. Theological Statements**

- A. YHWH allowed David/Solomon to build a temple. He told them that if they kept the covenant He would bless them and be with them (cf. II Sam. 7), but if they did not the temple would be in ruins (cf. I Kgs. 9:1-9)!
- B. Rabbinical Judaism focused on form and ritual and neglected the personal aspect of faith (this is not a blanket statement; there were godly rabbis). God seeks a daily, personal, godly relationship with those created in His image (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). Luke 20:17-18 contains frightening words of judgment.
- C. Jesus used the concept of a temple to represent His physical body (cf. John 2:19-22). This continues and expands the concept of personal faith in Jesus as the Messiah as key to a relationship with YHWH.
- D. Salvation is meant to restore the image of God in human beings so that fellowship with God is possible. The goal of Christianity is Christlikeness now. Believers are to become living stones (i.e., little temples built on/patterned after Christ).

E. Jesus is the foundation of our faith and the capstone of our faith (i.e., the Alpha and Omega); yet also the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense. To miss Him is to miss everything. There can be no middle ground here!

**2:21-22** The collective or corporate idea of God's people seen in v. 19 (twice), 21 and 22 was expressed in the PLURAL "saints." To be saved is to be part of a family, a building, a body, a temple.

The concept of the church as a temple is expressed in I Cor. 3:16-17. This is an emphasis on the corporate nature of the church. The individual aspect was expressed in I Cor. 6:16. Both are true!

The verbs in vv. 21-22 also have a corporate focus. They have the compound *syn* which means "joint participation with." They are both PRESENT PASSIVE. God is continuing to build/add to His church.

There is a Greek manuscript problem connected with the phrase "the whole building." The ancient uncial manuscripts  $\aleph^*$ , B, D, F and G have no ARTICLE, while  $\aleph^c$ , A, C, and P do. The question is, was Paul referring to one large building (NASB, NKJV, NRSV, NIV, TEV, REB) or to several smaller buildings (ASV, NJB, Phillips) united in some way? The United Bible Society's 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Greek text gives a "B" rating to the ANARTHROUS construction, which indicates they are "almost certain" that it refers to one building. This one building is not finished. It is in the process of growing. The building metaphor alluded to the spiritual temple (the people of God).

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: EDIFY**

This term *oikodomeō* and its other forms are used often by Paul. Literally it means "to build a house" (cf. Matt. 7:24), but it came to be used metaphorically for:

1. Christ's body, the church, I Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:21; 4:16;
2. building up
  - a. weak brothers, Rom. 15:1
  - b. neighbors, Rom. 15:2
  - c. one another, Eph. 4:29; I Thess. 5:11
  - d. the saints for ministry, Eph. 4:11
3. we build up or edify by
  - a. love, I Cor. 8:1; Eph. 4:16
  - b. limiting personal freedoms, I Cor. 10:23-24
  - c. avoiding speculations, I Tim. 1:4
  - d. limiting speakers in worship services (singers, teachers, prophets, tongue speakers, and interpreters), I Cor. 14:3-4,12
4. all things should edify
  - a. Paul's authority, II Cor. 10:8; 12:19; 13:10
  - b. summary statements in Rom. 14:19 and I Cor. 14:26

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Are all humans really estranged from God?
2. Do humans have a significant part in their own salvation?
3. Why is the union of Jew and Gentile so significant?
4. How did Jesus make the Law “null and void”?
5. Is the Law of God eternal? How do Christians relate to the Mosaic Law and the entire Old Testament?
6. Why does Paul emphasize the building metaphor in vv. 19-23?



# ROMANS 5

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS				
UBS <sup>4</sup>	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	JB
Results of Justification	Faith Triumphs in Trouble	Consequences of Justification	Right With God	Faith Guarantees Salvation
5:1-11	5:1-5	5:1-5	5:1-5	5:1-11
	Christ in Our Place			
	5:6-11	5:6-11	5:6-11	
Adam and Christ	Death in Adam, Life in Christ	Adam and Christ; Analogy and Contrast	Adam and Christ	Adam and Jesus Christ
5:12-14	5:12-21	5:12-14	5:12-14b 5:14c-17	5:12-14
5:15-21		5:15-17 5:18-21	5:18-19 5:20-21	5:15-21

## READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii)

### *FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT THE PARAGRAPH LEVEL*

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

## CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Verses 1-11 are one sentence in Greek. They develop Paul's pivotal concept of "Justification by Faith" (cf. 3:21-4:25).

B. Possible outlines of vv. 1-11:

Verses 1-5	Verses 6-8	Verses 9-11
The Benefits of Salvation	The Basis for Salvation	The Future Certainty of Salvation
Subjective Experiences of Justification	Objective Facts of Justification	Future Certainty of Justification
Justification	Progressive Sanctification	Glorification
Anthropology	Theology	Eschatology

C. Verses 12-21 are a discussion of Jesus as the second Adam (cf. I Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49; Phil. 2:6-8). It gives emphasis to the theological concept of both individual sin and corporate guilt. Paul's development of mankind's (and creation's) fall in Adam was so unique and different from the rabbis, while his view of corporality was very much in line with rabbinical teaching. It showed Paul's ability under inspiration to use, or supplement, the truths he was taught during his training in Jerusalem under Gamaliel (cf. Acts 22:3).

The Reformed Evangelical doctrine of original sin from Gen. 3 was developed by Augustine and Calvin. It basically asserts that humans are born sinful (total depravity). Often Psalm 51:5; 58:3; and Job 15:14; 25:4 are used as OT proof-texts. The alternate theological position that humans are progressively morally and spiritually responsible for their own choices and destiny was developed by Pelagius and Arminius. There is some evidence for their view in Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:15; and Jonah 4:11; John 9:41; 15:22,24; Acts 17:30; Rom. 4:15. The thrust of this theological position would be that children are innocent until an age of moral responsibility (for the rabbis this was 13 years old for boys and 12 years old for girls).

There is a mediating position in which both an innate evil propensity and an age of moral responsibility are both true! Evil is not only corporate, but a developing evil of the individual self to sin (life progressively more and more apart from God). The wickedness of humanity is not the issue (cf. Gen. 6:5,11-12,13; Rom. 3:9-18,23), but the when, at birth or later in life?

D. There have been several theories about the implications of v. 12:

1. all people die because all people choose to sin (Pelagius),
2. Adam's sin affected the entire creation and, thereby, all die (vv. 18-19, Augustine),
3. in reality it is probably a combination of original sin and volitional sin.

E. Paul's comparison "just as" begun in v. 12 is not finished until v. 18. Verses 13-17 form a parenthesis which is so characteristic of Paul's writings.

F. Remember Paul's presentation of the gospel, 1:18-8:39 is one sustained argument. The whole must be seen in order to properly interpret and appreciate the parts.

G. Martin Luther has said of chapter 5, "In the whole Bible there is hardly another chapter which can equal this triumphant text."

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:1-5

**<sup>1</sup>Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; <sup>4</sup>and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

**5:1 “therefore”** This word often signaled (1) the summary of the theological argument up to this point; (2) the conclusions based on this theological presentation; and (3) the presentation of new truth (cf. 5:1; 8:1; 12:1).

▣ **“having been justified”** This is an AORIST PASSIVE PARTICIPLE; God has justified believers. This is placed first in the Greek sentence (vv. 1-2) for emphasis. There seems to be a time sequence in vv. 1-11: (1) vv. 1-5, our current experience of grace; (2) vv. 6-8, Christ’s finished work on our behalf; and (3) vv. 9-11, our future hope and assurance of salvation.

The OT background of the term “justified” (*dikaioō*) was a “straight edge” or “measuring reed.” It came to be used metaphorically of God Himself. God’s character, holiness, is the only standard of judgment (cf. LXX of Lev. 24:22; and theologically in Matt. 5:48). Because of Jesus’ sacrificial, substitutionary death, believers have a legal (forensic) positional standing before God (see note at 5:2). This does not imply the believer’s lack of guilt, but rather something like amnesty. Someone else has paid the penalty (cf. II Cor. 5:21). Believers have been declared forgiven (cf. vv. 8,10).

▣ **“by faith”** Faith is the hand that accepts the gift of God (cf. v. 2; Rom. 4:1ff). Faith does not focus on the degree or intensity of the believer’s commitment or resolve (cf. Matt. 17:20), but on the character and promises of God (cf. Eph. 2:8-9). The OT word for “faith” originally referred to one in a stable standing posture. It came to be used metaphorically for someone who was loyal, dependable and trustworthy. Faith does not focus on our faithfulness or trustworthiness, but on God’s.

▣ **“we have peace”** There is a Greek manuscript variant here. This VERB is either a PRESENT ACTIVE SUBJUNCTIVE (*echōmen*) or a PRESENT ACTIVE INDICATIVE (*echomen*). This same grammatical ambiguity is found in vv. 1, 2 & 3. The ancient Greek manuscripts seem to support the SUBJUNCTIVE (cf. MSS  $\aleph^*$ , A, B\*, C, D). If it is the SUBJUNCTIVE it would be translated “let us continue enjoying peace” or “keep on enjoying peace.” If it is the INDICATIVE then it would be translated “we have peace.” The context of vv. 1-11 is not exhortation, but declaration of what believers already are and have through Christ. Therefore, the VERB is probably PRESENT ACTIVE INDICATIVE, “we have peace.” The USB<sup>4</sup> gives this option an “A” rating (certain).

Many of our ancient Greek manuscripts were produced by one person reading a text and several others making copies. Words that were pronounced alike were often confused. Here is where context and sometimes the writing style and usual vocabulary of the author helps make the translation decision easier.

▣ **“peace”** See Special Topic below.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: PEACE**

This Greek term originally meant “binding together that which was broken” (cf. John 14:27; 16:33; Phil. 4:7). There are three ways the NT speaks of peace:

1. as objective aspect of our peace with God through Christ (cf. Col. 1:20)
2. as subjective aspect of our being right with God (cf. John 14:27; 16:33; Phil. 4:7)
3. that God has united into one new body, through Christ, both believing Jew and Gentile (cf. Eph. 2:14-17; Col. 3:15).

Newman and Nida, *A Translator’s Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, p. 92, has a good comment about “peace.”

“Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament the term peace has a wide range of meaning. Basically it describes the total well-being of a person’s life; it was even adopted among the Jews as a formula of greeting. This term had such a profound meaning that it could also be used by the Jews as a description of the Messianic salvation. Because of this fact, there are times when it is used almost synonymously with the term rendered ‘to be in a right relation with God.’ Here the term appears to be used as a description of the harmonious relation established between man and God on the basis of God’s having put man right with himself” (p. 92).

▣ **“with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”** Jesus is the agency which brings peace with God. Jesus is the only way to peace with God (cf. John 10:7-8; 14:6; Acts 4:12; I Tim. 2:5). For the terms in the title Jesus Christ see notes at 1:4.

**5:2 “we have obtained our introduction”** This is PERFECT ACTIVE INDICATIVE; it speaks of a past act which has been consummated and now results in a state of being. The term “introduction” literally meant “access” or “admission” (*prosagōge*, cf. Eph. 2:18; 3:12). It came to be used metaphorically for (1) being personally introduced to royalty or (2) being brought safely into a harbor.

This phrase contains a Greek manuscript variant. Some ancient manuscripts added “by faith” (cf.  $\aleph^{*2}$ , C as well as some old Latin, Vulgate, Syriac, and Coptic versions). Other manuscripts add a PREPOSITION to “by faith” (cf.  $\aleph^1$ , A, and some Vulgate versions). However, the uncial manuscripts B, D, F, and G omit it altogether. It seems that scribes simply filled out the parallelism of 5:1 and 4:16 (twice), 19, and 20. “By faith” is Paul’s recurrent theme!

▣ **“into this grace”** This term (*charis*) meant God’s undeserved, no-strings-attached, unmerited love (cf. Eph. 2:4-9). It is clearly seen in Christ’s death on behalf of sinful mankind (cf. v. 8).

▣ **“in which we stand”** This is another PERFECT ACTIVE INDICATIVE; literally “we stand and continue to stand.” This reflects believers’ theological position in Christ and their commitment to remain in the faith which combines the theological paradox of God’s sovereignty (cf. I Cor. 15:1) and human’s free will (cf. Eph. 6:11, 13,14).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: STAND (*HISTĒMI*)**

This common term is used in several theological senses in the New Testament

1. to establish
  - a. the OT Law, Rom. 3:31

- b. one's own righteousness, Rom. 10:3
- c. the new covenant, Heb. 10:9
- d. a charge, II Cor. 13:1
- e. God's truth, II Tim. 2:19
- 2. to resist spiritually
  - a. the devil, Eph. 6:11
  - b. the day of judgment, Rev. 6:17
- 3. to resist by standing one's ground
  - a. military metaphor, Eph. 6:14
  - b. civil metaphor, Rom. 14:4
- 4. a position in truth, John 8:44
- 5. a position in grace
  - a. Rom. 5:2
  - b. I Cor. 15:1
  - c. I Pet. 5:12
- 6. a position in faith
  - a. Rom. 11:20
  - b. I Cor. 7:37
  - c. I Cor. 15:1
  - d. II Cor. 1:24
- 7. a position of arrogance, I Cor. 10:12

This term expresses both the covenantal grace and mercy of a sovereign God and the fact that believers need to respond to it and cling to it by faith! Both are biblical truths. They must be held together!

▣ **“we exult”** This grammatical form can be understood as (1) a PRESENT MIDDLE (deponent) INDICATIVE, “we exult” or (2) a PRESENT MIDDLE (deponent) SUBJUNCTIVE, “let us exult.” Scholars are split on these options. If one takes “we have” in v. 1 as an INDICATIVE then the translation should be consistent through v. 3.

The root of the word “exult” is “boasting” (NRSV, JB). See Special Topic at 2:17. Believers do not exult in themselves (cf. 3:27), but in what the Lord has done for them (cf. Jer. 9:23-24). This same Greek root is repeated in vv. 3 and 11.

▣ **“in hope of”** Paul often used this term in several different but related senses. See note at 4:18. Often it was associated with the consummation of the believer's faith. This can be expressed as glory, eternal life, ultimate salvation, Second Coming, etc. The consummation is certain, but the time element is future and unknown. It was often associated with “faith” and “love” (cf. I Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:5-6; Eph. 4:2-5; I Thess. 1:3; 5:8). A partial list of some of Paul's uses are:

- 1. The Second Coming, Gal. 5:5; Eph. 1:18; Titus 2:13
- 2. Jesus is our hope, I Tim 1:1
- 3. The believer to be presented to God, Col. 1:22-23; I Thess. 2:19
- 4. Hope laid up in heaven, Col. 1:5
- 5. Ultimate salvation, I Thess. 4:13
- 6. The glory of God, Rom. 5:2; II Cor. 3:12; Col. 1:27

7. Assurance of salvation, I Thess. 5:8-9
8. Eternal life, Titus 1:2; 3:7
9. Results of Christian maturity, Rom. 5:2-5
10. Redemption of all creation, Rom. 8:20-22
11. A title for God, Rom. 15:13
12. Adoption's consummation, Rom. 8:23-25
13. OT as guide for NT believers, Rom. 15:4

▣ **“glory of God”** This referred to the believer's standing before God in the faith-righteousness provided by Jesus on Resurrection Day (cf. II Cor. 5:21). It is often called by the theological term “glorification” (cf. vv. 9-10; 8:30). Believers will share the likeness of Jesus (cf. I John 3:2; II Pet. 1:4). See Special Topic: Glory at 3:23.

### 5:3

**NASB** “and not only this, but”  
**NKJV** “and not only *that*, but”  
**NRSV** “and not only that, but”  
**TEV** –omit–  
**NJB** “not only that”

Paul uses this combination of terms several times (cf. 5:3,11; 8:23; 9:10, and II cor. 8:19).

### ▣

**NASB** “we also exult in our tribulations”  
**NKJV** “we also glory in tribulations”  
**NRSV** “we also boast in our sufferings”  
**TEV** “we also boast in our troubles”  
**NJB** “let us exult, too, in our hardships”

If the world hated Jesus, it will hate His followers (cf. Matt. 10:22; 24:9; John 15:18-21). Jesus was matured, humanly speaking, by the things He suffered (cf. Heb. 5:8). Suffering produces righteousness, which is the plan of God for every believer (cf. 8:17-19; Acts 14:22; James 1:2-4; I Pet. 4:12-19).

▣ **“knowing”** This is a PERFECT PARTICIPLE, of “*oida*.” It is PERFECT in form, but it functions as a PRESENT TENSE. Believers' understanding of the truths of the gospel as they relate to suffering allows them to face life with a joy and confidence which is not dependent on circumstances, even during persecution (cf. Phil. 4:4; I Thess. 5:16,18).

**5:3,4 “perseverance”** This term meant “voluntary,” “active,” “steadfast,” “endurance.” It was a term that related to both patience with people, as well as with circumstances. See Special Topic below.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: TRIBULATION**

There needs to be a theological distinction between Paul's use of this term (*thlipsis*) and John's:

1. Paul's usage (which reflects Jesus' usage)
  - a. problems, sufferings, evil involved in a fallen world
    - (1) Matt. 13:21
    - (2) Rom. 5:3
    - (3) I Cor. 7:28

- (4) II Cor. 7:4
- (5) Eph. 3:13
- b. problems, sufferings, evil caused by unbelievers
  - (1) Rom. 5:3; 8:35; 12:12
  - (2) II Cor. 1:4,8; 6:4; 7:4; 8:2,13
  - (3) Eph. 3:13
  - (4) Phil. 4:14
  - (5) I Thess. 1:6
  - (6) II Thess. 1:4
- c. problems, sufferings, evil of the end-time
  - (1) Matt. 24:21,29
  - (2) Mark 13:19,24
  - (3) II Thess. 1:6
- 2. John's usage
  - a. John makes a specific distinction between *thlipsis* and *orgē* or *thumos* (wrath) in Revelation. *Thlipsis* is what unbelievers do to believers and *orgē* is what God does to unbelievers
    - (1) *thlipsis* - Rev. 1:9; 2:9-10,22; 7:14
    - (2) *orgē* - Rev. 6:16-17; 11:18; 16:19; 19:15
    - (3) *thumos* - Rev. 12:12; 14:8,10,19; 15:2,7; 16:1; 18:3
  - b. John also uses the term in his Gospel to reflect problems believers face in every age - John 16:33.

#### 5:4

NASB	“proven character”
NKJV, NRSV	“character”
TEV	“God’s approval”
NJB	“tested character”

In the LXX of Gen. 23:16; I Kgs. 10:18; I Chr. 28:18 this term was used of testing metals for purity and genuineness (cf. II Cor. 2:9; 8:2; 9:13; 13:3; Phil. 2:22; II Tim. 2:15; James 1:12). God’s tests are always for strengthening (cf. Heb. 12:10-11)! See Special Topic: Testing at 2:18.

**5:5 “because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts”** This is a PERFECT PASSIVE INDICATIVE; literally, “God’s love has been and continues to be poured out.” This VERB was often used of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:17,18,33; 10:45 and Titus 3:6), which may reflect Joel 2:28-29.

The GENITIVE PHRASE, “the love of God” grammatically can refer to (1) our love for God; or (2) God’s love for us (cf. II Cor. 5:14). Number two is the only contextual option.

▣ **“the Holy Spirit that was given to us”** This is an AORIST PASSIVE PARTICIPLE. The PASSIVE VOICE is often used to express God’s agency. This implies that believers do not need more of the Spirit. They either have the Spirit or they are not Christians (cf. 8:9). The giving of the Spirit was the sign of the New Age (cf. Joel 2:28-29), the New Covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-32).

▣ Notice the presence of the three persons of the Trinity in this paragraph.

1. God, vv. 1,2,5,8,10
2. Jesus, vv. 1,6,8,9,10
3. the Spirit, v, 5

See Special Topic: The Trinity at 8:11.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:6-11**

**<sup>6</sup>For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. <sup>8</sup>But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. <sup>11</sup>And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.**

**5:6**

**NASB** “for while we were still helpless”  
**NKJV** “for when we were still without strength”  
**NRSV** “for while we were still weak”  
**TEV** “for when we were still helpless”  
**NJB** “when we were still helpless”

This VERB is a PRESENT PARTICIPLE. This referred to mankind’s fallen Adamic nature. Humans are powerless against sin. The pronoun “we” explains and parallels the descriptive NOUN in v. 6b “ungodly,” v. 8 “sinners,” and v. 10 “enemies.” Verses 6 and 8 are theologically and structurally parallel.

▣

**NASB, NRSV** “at the right time”  
**NKJV** “in due time”  
**TEV** “at the time that God chose”  
**JB** “at his appointed moment”

This could refer historically to (1) the Roman peace allowing free travel; (2) the Greek language allowing cross cultural communication; and (3) the demise of the Greek and Roman gods producing an expectant, spiritually hungry world (cf. Mark 1:15; Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:10; Titus 1:3). Theologically the incarnation was a planned, divine event (cf. Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; Eph. 1:11).

**5:6,8,10 “died for the ungodly”** This is an AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE. It viewed Jesus’ life and death as a unified event. “Jesus paid a debt He did not owe and we owed a debt we could not pay” (cf. Gal. 3:13; I John 4:10).

The death of Christ was a recurrent theme in Paul’s writings. He used several different terms and phrases to refer to Jesus’ substitutionary death:

1. “blood” (cf. 3:25; 5:9; I Cor. 11:25,27; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:20)
2. “gave Himself up” (cf. Eph. 5:2,25)
3. “delivered up” (cf. Rom. 4:25; 8:32)
4. “sacrifice” (cf. I Cor. 5:7)
5. “died” (cf. Rom. 5:6; 8:34; 14:9,15; I Cor. 8:11; 15:3; II Cor. 5:15; Gal. 5:21; I Thess. 4:14; 5:10)
6. “cross” (cf. I Cor. 1:17-18; Gal. 5:11; 6:12-14; Eph. 2:16; Phil. 2:8; Col. 1:20; 2:14)



7. “crucifixion” (cf. I Cor. 1:23; 2:2; II Cor. 13:4; Gal. 3:1)

Does the PREPOSITION *huper* in this context mean

1. representation, “on our behalf”
2. substitution, “in our place”

Normally the basic meaning of *huper* with the GENITIVE is “on behalf of” (Louw and Nida). It expresses some advantage that accrues to persons (*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 3, p. 1196). However, *huper* does have the sense of *anti*, which denotes “in the place of” thereby theologically referring to a vicarious substitutionary atonement (cf. Mark 10:45; John 11:50; 18:14; II Cor. 5:14; I Tim. 2:6). M. J. Harris (*NIDNTT*, vol. 3, p. 1197) says, “but why does Paul never say that Christ died *anti hēmōn* (I Tim. 2:6 is the nearest he comes—*antilytron hyper pantōn*)? Probably because the prep. *hyper*, unlike *anti*, could simultaneously express representation and substitution.”

M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies*, vol. 2, says

“It is much disputed whether *huper*, on behalf of, is ever equivalent to *anti*, instead of. The classical writers furnish instances where the meanings seem to be interchanged. . . The meaning of this passage, however, is so uncertain that it cannot fairly be cited in evidence. The preposition may have a local meaning, *over* the dead. None of these passages can be regarded as decisive. The most that can be said is that *huper* borders on the meaning of *anti*. *Instead of* is urged largely on dogmatic grounds. In the great majority of passages the sense is clearly *for the sake of, on behalf of*. The true explanation seems to be that, in the passages principally in question, those, namely, relating to Christ’s death, as here, Gal. 3:13; Rom. 14:15; I Pet. 3:18, *huper* characterizes the more indefinite and general proposition—Christ died on behalf of—leaving the peculiar sense of in behalf of undetermined, and to be settled by other passages. The meaning *instead of* may be included in it, but only inferentially” (p. 692).

**5:7** This verse shows human love while verse 8 shows God’s love!



NASB, NKJV,

TEV “for a righteous man”

NRSV “for a righteous person”

JB “for a good man”

This term was used in the same sense as Noah and Job were righteous or blameless men. They followed the religious requirements of their day. It does not imply sinlessness. See special topic at 1:17.

**5:8 “God demonstrates His own love”** This is a PRESENT ACTIVE INDICATIVE (cf. 3:5). The Father sent the Son (cf. 8:3,32; II Cor. 5:19). God’s love is not sentimental, but action-oriented (cf. John 3:16; I John 4:10) and constant.

**5:9 “much more”** This was one of Paul’s favorite expressions (cf. vv. 10,15,17). If God loved believers so much while they were yet sinners, how much more does He love them now that they are His children (cf. 5:10; 8:22).

▣ **“having now been justified”** This is an AORIST PASSIVE PARTICIPLE which emphasized justification as a completed act accomplished by God. Paul is repeating the truth of v. 1. Also note the parallelism between the terms “justified” (v. 9) and “reconciled” (vv. 10-11).

▣ **“by His blood”** This was a reference to Christ’s sacrificial death” (cf. 3:5; Mark 10:45; II Cor. 5:21). This concept of sacrifice, an innocent life given in place of a guilty life, goes back to Lev. 1-7 and possibly

Exod. 12 (the Passover lamb), and was theologically applied to Jesus in Isa. 53:4-6. It is developed in a Christological sense in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews in effect compares the Old and New Testament at a number of points.

▣ **“we shall be saved”** This is FUTURE PASSIVE INDICATIVE (cf. v. 10). This referred to our ultimate salvation, which is called “glorification” (cf. v. 2; 8:30, I John 3:2).

The NT describes salvation in all VERB tenses:

1. a completed act (AORIST), Acts 15:11; Rom. 8:24; II Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5
2. past act resulting in a present state (PERFECT), Eph. 2:5,8
3. progressive process (PRESENT), I Cor. 1:18; 15:2; II Cor. 2:15; I Thess. 4:14; I Pet. 3:21
4. future consummation (FUTURE), Rom. 5:9,10; 10:9.

See Special Topic at 10:13. Salvation starts with an initial decision but progresses into a relationship that will one day be consummated. This concept is often described by the three theological terms: justification, which means “being delivered from the penalty of sin”; sanctification, which means “being delivered from the power of sin”; and glorification, which means “being delivered from the presence of sin.”

It is worth noting that justification and sanctification are both gracious acts of God, given to the believer through faith in Christ. However the NT also speaks of sanctification as an ongoing process of Christlikeness. For this reason theologians speak of “positional sanctification” and “progressive sanctification.” This is the mystery of a free salvation linked to a godly life!

▣ **“from the wrath of God”** This is an eschatological context. The Bible tells of God’s great, undeserved, unmerited love, but also clearly tells of God’s settled opposition to sin and rebellion. God has provided a way of salvation and forgiveness through Christ but those who reject Him are under wrath (cf. 1:18-3:20). This is an anthropomorphic phrase, but it expresses a reality. It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of an angry God (Heb. 10:31).

**5:10 “if”** This is a FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which is assumed true from the writer’s perspective or for his literary purposes. Humanity, God’s ultimate creation, became enemies! Man (cf. Gen. 3:5) and Satan (cf. Isa. 14:14; Ezek. 28:2,12-17) had the same problem, a desire for independence, a desire for control, a desire to be gods.

▣ **“we were reconciled to God. . .having been reconciled”** This is both an AORIST PASSIVE INDICATIVE and an AORIST PASSIVE PARTICIPLE. The VERB “reconciled” originally meant “to exchange.” God has exchanged our sin for Jesus’ righteousness (cf. Isa. 53:4-6). Peace is restored (cf. v. 1)!

▣ **“through the death of His son”** The gospel of forgiveness is grounded in (1) the love of God; (2) the work of Christ; (3) the wooing of the Spirit, and (4) the faith/repentant response of an individual. There is no other way to be right with God (cf. John 14:6). Assurance of salvation is based on the character of the Triune God, not human performance! The paradox is that human performance after salvation is an evidence of a free salvation (cf. James and I John).

▣ **“we shall be saved”** The NT speaks of salvation as past, present, and future. Here the future referred to our ultimate, complete salvation at the Second Coming. See note at v. 9 and Special Topic at 10:13.

▣ **“by His life”** This Greek term for life is *zoa*. This term in John’s writings always referred to resurrection life, eternal life, or kingdom life. Paul also used it in this theological sense. The thrust of this

context is that since God paid such a high price for believers' forgiveness He will surely continue its effectiveness.

"Life" can refer to either (1) Jesus' resurrection (cf. 8:34; I Cor. 15); (2) Jesus' intercessory work (cf. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; I John 2:1); or (3) the Spirit forming Christ in us (cf. Rom. 8:29; Gal. 4:19). Paul asserted that Jesus' earthly life and death as well as His exalted life are the basis of our reconciliation.

**5:11 "And not only this, but"** See note at verse 3.

▣ **"we also exult"** See note at 5:2. This is the third use of "exult" (boast) in this context.

1. exult in the hope of glory, v. 2
2. exult in tribulation, v. 3
3. exult in reconciliation, v. 11

Negative boasting is seen in 2:17 and 23!

▣ **"we have now received the reconciliation"** This is an AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE, a completed act. Believers' reconciliation is also discussed in v. 10 and II Cor. 5:18-21; Eph. 2:16-22; Col. 1:19-23. In this context "reconciliation" is the theological synonym of "justification."

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:12-14**

**<sup>12</sup>Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— <sup>13</sup>for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.**

**5:12 "Therefore"** Romans has several strategically placed "therefores" (cf. 5:1; 8:1; 12:1). The interpretive question is to what they relate. They could be a way of referring to Paul's whole argument. For sure this one relates to Genesis and, therefore, probably back to Rom. 1:18-32.

▣ **"as through one man sin entered into the world"** All three verbs in v. 12 are AORIST TENSE. Adam's fall brought death (cf. I Cor. 15:22). The Bible does not dwell on the origin of sin. Sin also occurred in the angelic realm (cf. Gen. 3 and Rev. 12:7-9). How and when are uncertain (cf. Isa. 14:12-27; Ezek. 28:12-19; Job 4:18; Matt. 25:41; Luke 10:18; John 12:31; Rev. 12:7-9).

Adam's sin involved two aspects (1) disobedience to a specific commandment (cf. Gen. 2:16-17), and (2) self-oriented pride (cf. Gen. 3:5-6). This continues the allusion to Gen. 3 begun in Rom. 1:18-32.

It is the theology of sin that so clearly separates Paul from rabbinical thought. The rabbis did not focus on Gen. 3; they asserted instead, that there were two "intents" (*yetzers*) in every person. Their famous rabbinical saying "In every man's heart is a black and a white dog. The one you feed the most becomes the biggest." Paul saw sin as a major barrier between holy God and His creation. Paul was not a systematic theologian (cf. James Steward's *A Man in Christ*). He gave several origins of sin (1) Adam's fall, (2) satanic temptation, and (3) continuing human rebellion.

In the theological contrasts and parallels between Adam and Jesus two possible implications are present.

1. Adam was a real historical person.
2. Jesus was a real human being.

Both of these truths affirm the Bible in the face of false teaching. Notice the repeated use of "one man" or "the one." These two ways of referring to Adam and Jesus are used eleven times in this context.

▣ **“death through sin”** The Bible reveals three stages of death (1) spiritual death (cf. Gen. 2:17; 3:1-7; Eph. 2:1); (2) physical death (cf. Gen. 5); and (3) eternal death (cf. Rev. 2:11; 20:6,14; 21:8). The one spoken of in this passage is the spiritual death of Adam (cf. Gen. 3:14-19) that resulted in the physical death of the human race (cf. Gen. 5).

▣ **“death spread to all men”** The major thrust of this paragraph is the universality of sin (cf. vv. 16-19; I Cor. 15:22; Gal. 1:10) and death.

▣ **“because all sinned”** All humans sin in Adam corporately (i.e., inherited a sinful state and a sinful propensity.) Because of this each person chooses to sin personally and repeatedly. The Bible is emphatic that all humans are sinners both corporately and individually (cf. I Kgs. 8:46; II Chr. 6:36; Ps. 14:1-2; 130:3; 143:2; Prov. 20:9; Eccl. 7:20; Isa. 9:17; 53:6; Rom. 3:9-18,23; 5:18; 11:32; Gal. 3:22; I John 1:8-10).

Yet it must be said that the contextual emphasis (cf. vv. 15-19) is that one act caused death (Adam) and one act caused life (Jesus). However, God has so structured His relationship to humanity that human response is a significant aspect of “lostness” and “justification.” Humans are volitionally involved in their future destinies! They continue to choose sin or they choose Christ. They cannot affect these two choices, but they do volitionally show to which they belong!

The translation “because” is common, but its meaning is often disputed. Paul used *eph’ hō* in II Cor. 5:4; Phil. 3:12; and 4:10 in the sense of “because.” Thus each and every human chooses to personally participate in sin and rebellion against God. Some by rejecting special revelation, but all by rejecting natural revelation (cf. 1:18-3:20).

**5:13-14** This same truth is taught in Rom. 4:15 and Acts 17:30. God is fair. Humans are only responsible for what is available to them. This verse is speaking exclusively of special revelation (OT, Jesus, NT), not natural revelation (Ps. 19; Rom. 1:18-23; 2:11-16).

Notice that the NKJV sees the comparison of v. 12 as separated by a long parenthesis (cf. vv. 13-17) from its conclusion in vv. 18-10.

#### **5:14**

**NASB, NKJV,**

**JB**

**“death reigned”**

**NRSV**

**“death exercised dominion”**

**TEV**

**“death ruled”**

Death reigned as a King (cf. vv. 17 and 21). This personification of death and sin as tyrants is sustained throughout this chapter and chapter 6. The universal experience of death confirms the universal sin of mankind. In verses 17 and 21, grace is personified. Grace reigns! Humans have a choice (the two OT ways): death or life. Who reigns in your life?

▣ **“even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offence of Adam”** Adam violated a stated command of God, even Eve did not sin in this same way. She heard from Adam about the tree, not from God directly. Humans from Adam until Moses were affected by Adam’s rebellion! They did not violate a specific command from God, but 1:18-32, which is surely part of this theological context, expresses the truth that they did violate the light that they had from creation and are thereby responsible to God for rebellion/sin. Adam’s sinful propensity spread to all of his children.



NASB, NKJV,

NRSV

“who is a type of Him who was to come”

TEV

“Adam was a figure of the one who was to come”

JB

“Adam prefigured the One to come”

This expresses in a very concrete way the Adam–Christ typology (cf. I Cor. 15:21-22,45-49; Phil. 2:6-8). Both of them are seen as the first in a series, the origin of a race (cf. I Cor. 15:45-49). Adam is the only person from the OT specifically called a “type” by the NT. See Special Topic: Form (*Tupos*) at 6:17.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:15-17**

**<sup>15</sup>But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. <sup>16</sup>The gift is not like *that which came* through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment *arose* from one *transgression* resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift *arose* from many transgressions resulting in justification. <sup>17</sup>For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**

**5:15-19** This is a sustained argument using parallel phrases. The NASB, NRSV, and TEV divide the paragraph at verse 18. However UBS<sup>4</sup>, NKJV, and JB translate it as a unit. Remember the key to interpretation of the original author’s intent is one main truth per paragraph. Notice that the term “many,” vv. 15 & 19, is synonymous with “all” in vv. 12 and 18. This is also true in Isa. 53:11-12 and v. 6. No theological distinctions (Calvin’s elect versus non-elect) should be made based on these terms!

**5:15 “the free gift”** There are two different Greek words for “gift” used in this context—*charisma*, vv. 15,16 (6:23) and *dorea/dorama*, vv. 15, 16, 17 (see note at 3:24)—but they are synonymous. This is really the Good News about salvation. It is a free gift from God through Jesus Christ (cf. 3:24; 6:23; Eph. 2:8,9) to all who believe in Christ.

▣ **“if”** This is a FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which is assumed to be true from the author’s perspective or for his literary purposes. Adam’s sin brought death to all humans. This is paralleled in verse 17.

▣ **“abound”** See Special Topic at 15:13.

**5:16 “condemnation. . .justification”** Both of these are forensic, legal terms. Often the OT presented the prophet’s message as a court scene. Paul uses this form (cf. Rom. 8:1, 31-34).

**5:17 “if”** This is another FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which is assumed to be true from the author’s perspective or for his literary purposes. The transgression of Adam did result in the death of all humans.

▣ **“much more those who receive”** Verses 18-19 are not exactly theologically balanced. This phrase cannot be removed from the context of Romans 1-8 and used as a proof-text for universalism (that all will be saved eventually). Humans must receive (v. 17b) God’s offer in Christ. Salvation is available to all, but must be accepted individually (cf. John 1:12; 3:16; Rom. 10:9-13).

Adam's one act of rebellion issued in the total rebellion of all humans. The one sinful act is magnified! But in Christ one righteous sacrifice is magnified to cover the many individual sins as well as the corporate affect of sin. The "much more" of Christ's act is emphasized (cf. vv. 9,10,15,17). Grace abounds!

**5:17,18 "the gift of righteousness will reign in life. . justification of life"** Jesus is God's gift and provision for all of fallen mankind's spiritual needs (cf. I Cor. 1:30). These parallel phrases can mean (1) sinful mankind is given right standing with God through Christ's finished work which results in a "godly life" or (2) this phrase is synonymous to "eternal life." The context supports the first option. For a word study on righteousness see special topic at 1:17.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: REIGNING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

The concept of reigning with Christ is part of the larger theological category called "the Kingdom of God." This is a carry-over from the OT concept of God as the true king of Israel (cf. I Sam. 8:7). He symbolically reigned (I Sam. 8:7; 10:17-19) through a descendant from the tribe of Judah (cf. Gen. 49:10) and the family of Jesse (cf. II Sam. 7).

Jesus is the promised fulfillment of OT prophecy concerning the Messiah. He inaugurated the Kingdom of God with His incarnation at Bethlehem. The Kingdom of God became the central pillar of Jesus' preaching. The Kingdom had fully come in Him (cf. Matt: 10:7; 11:12; 12:28; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9,11; 11:20; 16:16; 17:20-21).

However, the Kingdom was also future (eschatological). It was present but not consummated (cf. Matt. 6:10; 8:11; 16:28; 22:1-14; 26:29; Luke 9:27; 11:2; 13:29; 14:10-24; 22:16,18). Jesus came the first time as a suffering servant (cf. Isa. 52:13-53:12); as humble (cf. Zech. 9:9) but He will return as King of Kings (cf. Matt. 2:2; 21:5; 27:11-14). The concept of "reigning" is surely a part of this "kingdom" theology. God has given the kingdom to Jesus' followers (see Luke 12:32).

The concept of reigning with Christ has several aspects and questions:

1. Do the passages which assert that God has given believers "the kingdom" through Christ refer to "reigning" (cf. Matt. 5:3,10; Luke 12:32)?
2. Do Jesus' words to the original disciples in the first century Jewish context refer to all believers (cf. Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:28-30)?
3. Does Paul's emphasis on reigning in this life now contrast or complement the above texts (cf. Rom. 5:17; I Cor. 4:8)?
4. How are suffering and reigning related (cf. Rom. 8:17; II Tim. 2:11-12; I Pet. 4:13; Rev. 1:9)?
5. The recurrent theme of Revelation is sharing the glorified Christ's reign
  - a. earthly, 5:10
  - b. millennial, 20:5,6
  - c. eternal, 2:26; 3:21; 22:5 and Dan. 7:14,18,27

### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:18-21**

**<sup>18</sup>So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. <sup>19</sup>For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup>The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup>so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**5:18**

**NASB** “even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men”  
**NKJV** “even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men”  
**NRSV** “so one man’s act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all”  
**TEV** “in the same way the one righteous act set all men free and gives them life”  
**JB** “so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified”

This is not saying that everyone will be saved (universalism). This verse can not be interpreted apart from the message of the book of Romans and the immediate context. This is referring to the potential salvation of all humans through Jesus’ life/death/resurrection. Mankind must respond to the gospel offer by repentance and faith (cf. Mark 1:15; Acts 3:16,19; 20:21). God always takes the initiative (cf. John 6:44,65), but He has chosen that each individual must respond personally (cf. Mark 1:15; John 1:12; and Rom. 10:9-13). His offer is universal (cf. I Tim. 2:4,6; II Pet. 3:9; I John 2:2), but the mystery of iniquity is that many say “no.”

The “act of righteousness” is either (1) Jesus’ entire life of obedience and revelation of the Father or (2) specifically His death on sinful mankind’s behalf. As one man’s life affected all (Jewish corporality, cf. Josh. 7), so too, one innocent life affected all. These two acts are parallel, but not equal. All are affected by Adam’s sin, but all are only potentially affected by Jesus’ life; only believers who receive the gift of justification. Jesus’ act also affects all human sin, for those who believe and receive, past, present, and future!

**5:18-19 “condemnation to all men. . . justification of life to all men. . . the many were made sinners. . . the many will be made righteous”** These are parallel phrases which show that the term “many” is not restrictive but inclusive. This same parallelism is found in Isa. 53:6 “all” and 53:11,12 “many.” The term “many” cannot be used in a restrictive sense to limit God’s offer of salvation to all mankind (Calvin’s elect versus non-elect).

Notice the **PASSIVE VOICE** of the two **VERBS**. They refer to the activity of God. Humans sin in relationship to God’s character and they are justified in relation to His character.

**5:19 “one man’s disobedience. . . the obedience of the One”** Paul was using the theological concept of Old Testament corporality. One person’s acts affected the whole community (cf. Achan in Josh. 7). Adam and Eve’s disobedience brought about the judgment of God on all creation (cf. Gen. 3). All creation has been affected by the consequences of Adam’s rebellion (cf. 8:18-25). The world is not the same. Humans are not the same. Death became the end of all earthly life (cf. Gen. 5). This is not the world that God intended it to be!

In this same corporate sense Jesus’ one act of obedience, Calvary, resulted in (1) a new age, (2) a new people, and (3) a new covenant. This representative theology is called “the Adam-Christ typology” (cf. Phil. 2:6). Jesus is the second Adam. He is the new beginning for the fallen human race.

▣ **“made righteous”** See Special Topic at 1:17.

**5:20**

**NASB** “And the Law came in that the transgression might increase”  
**NKJV** “Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound”  
**NRSV** “But law came in, with the result and the trespass multiplied”  
**TEV** “Law was introduced in order to increase wrongdoing”  
**JB** “When law came, it was to multiply the opportunities of falling”

The purpose of the Law was never to save mankind but to show fallen mankind's need and helplessness (cf. Eph. 2:1-3) and thereby bring them to Christ (cf. 3:20; 4:15; 7:5; Gal. 3:19, 23-26). The Law is good, but mankind is sinful!

▣ **“grace abounded all the more”** This was Paul's main thrust in this section. Sin is horrible and pervasive, but grace abounds and exceeds its deadly influence! This was a way to encourage the first century fledgling church. They were overcomers in Christ (cf. 5:9-11; 8:31-39; I John 5:4). This is not a license to sin more! See Special Topic: Paul's Use of *Huper* Compounds at 1:30.

**5:21** Both “sin” and “grace” are personified as kings. Sin reigned by the power of universal death (vv. 14, 17). Grace reigns through the power of imputed righteousness through the finished work of Jesus Christ and believers' personal faith and repentant response to the gospel.

As God's new people, as Christ's body, Christians also reign with Christ (cf. 5:17; II Tim. 2:12; Rev. 22:5). This can be seen as an earthly or millennial reign (cf. Rev. 5:9-10; 20). The Bible also speaks of the same truth by asserting that the Kingdom has been given to the saints (cf. Matt. 5:3,10; Luke 12:32; Eph. 2:5-6). See Special Topic at 5:17.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Define God's “righteousness.”
2. What is the theological distinction between “positional sanctification” and “progressive possession”?
3. Are we saved by grace or faith (cf. Eph. 2:8-9)?
4. Why do Christians suffer?
5. Are we saved or being saved or will be saved?
6. Are we sinners because we sin, or do we sin because we are sinners?
7. How are the terms “justified,” “saved” and “reconciled” related in this chapter?
8. Why does God hold me responsible for another man's sin who lived thousands of years ago (vv. 12-21)?
9. Why did everyone die between Adam and Moses if sin was not counted during this period (vv. 13-14)?
10. Are the terms “all” and “many” synonymous (vv. 18-19, Is. 53:6, 11-12)?



# ROMANS 6

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS				
UBS <sup>4</sup>	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	JB
Dead to Sin But Alive in Christ	Dead to Sin, Alive to God	Dying and Rising With Christ	Dead to Sin But Alive in Christ	Baptism
6:1-11	6:1-14	6:1-4 6:5-11	6:1-4 6:5-11	6:1-7  6:8-11 Holiness, Not Sin to be Master
6:12-14		6:12-14	6:12-14	6:12-14
Slaves of Righteousness	From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God	The Two Slaverys	Slaves of Righteousness	The Christian is Freed From the Slavery of Sin
6:15-23	6:15-23	6:15-19  6:20-23	6:15-19  6:20-23	6:15-19  The Reward of Sin and the Reward of Holiness 6:20-23

## READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii)

### *FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT THE PARAGRAPH LEVEL*

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

## CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Chapters 6:1-8:39 form a unit of thought (literary unit) that deals with the Christian's relationship to sin. This is a very important issue because the gospel is based on the free unmerited grace of God through Christ (3:21-5:21) so therefore, how does sin affect the believer? Chapter 6 is based on two supposed questions, vv. 1 and 15. Verse 1 relates to 5:20, while v. 15 relates to 6:14. The first is related to sin as a lifestyle (PRESENT TENSE), the second to individual acts of sin (AORIST

TENSE). It is obvious also that vv. 1-14 deal with believers' freedom from sin's domination, while vv. 15-23 deal with believers freedom to serve God as they previously served sin—totally, completely and whole-heartedly.

B. Sanctification is both:

1. a position (imputed like justification at salvation, 3:21-5:21)
2. a progressing Christlikeness
  - a. 6:1-8:39 express this truth theologically
  - b. 12:1-15:13 express it practically (See Special Topic at 6:4)

C. Often commentators must theologically split the subject of justification and sanctification to help grasp their biblical meanings. In reality they are simultaneous acts of grace (positional, I Cor. 1:30; 6:11). The mechanism for both is the same—God's grace demonstrated in Jesus' life and death which is received by faith (cf. Eph. 2:8-9).

D. This chapter teaches the potential full maturity (sinlessness, cf. I John 3:6,9; 5:18) of God's children in Christ. Chapter 7 and I John 1:8-2:1 show the reality of believers' continuing sinfulness.

Much of the conflict over Paul's view of forgiveness was related to the issue of morality. The Jews wanted to assure godly living by demanding that new converts conform to the Mosaic law. It must be admitted that some did and do use Paul's views as a license to sin (cf. vv. 1,15; II Pet. 3:15-16). Paul believed that the indwelling Spirit, not an external code, would produce godly Christlike followers. In reality this is the difference between the Old Covenant (cf. Deut. 27-28) and the New Covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26-27).

E. Baptism is simply a physical illustration of the spiritual reality of justification/sanctification. In Romans the twin doctrines of positional sanctification (justification) and experiential sanctification (Christlikeness) are both stressed. Being buried with Him (v. 4) is parallel with "be crucified with Him" (v. 6).

F. The keys to overcoming temptation and sin in the Christian's life are:

1. Know who you are in Christ. Know what He has done for you. You are free from sin! You are dead to sin!
2. Reckon/count your position in Christ into your daily life situations.
3. We are not our own! We must serve/obey our Master. We serve/obey out of gratitude and love to the One who loved us!
4. The Christian life is a supernatural life. It, like salvation, is a gift from God in Christ. He initiates it and provides its power. We must respond in repentance and faith, both initially and continually.
5. Don't play around with sin. Label it for what it is. Turn from it; flee from it. Don't put yourself into the place of temptation.
6. Sin is an addiction that can be broken, but it takes time, effort, and volition.

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:1-7

**<sup>1</sup>What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup>May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup>Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup>For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup>knowing this, that**

**our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; <sup>7</sup>for he who has died is freed from sin.**

**6:1**

**NASB** “Are we to continue to sin that grace might increase”

**NKJV** “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound”

**NRSV** “Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound”

**TEV** “That we should continue to live in sin so that God’s grace will increase”

**JB** “Does it follow that we should remain in sin so as to let grace have greater scope”

This is a PRESENT ACTIVE SUBJUNCTIVE. It literally asks the question, are Christians “to abide with” or “to embrace” sin? This question looks back to 5:20. Paul used a hypothetical objector (diatribe) to deal with the potential misuse of grace (cf. I John 3:6,9; 5:18). God’s grace and mercy are not meant to give a license for rebellious living.

Paul’s gospel of a free salvation as the gift of God’s grace through Christ (cf. 3:24; 5:15,17; 6:23) raised many questions about life style righteousness. How does a free gift produce moral uprightness? Justification and sanctification must not be separated (cf. Matt. 7:24-27; Luke 8:21; 11:28; John 13:17; Rom. 2:13; James 1:22-25; 2:14-26).

On this point let me quote F. F. Bruce in *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, “the baptism of Christians constituted the frontier between their old unregenerate existence and their new life in Christ: it marked their death to the old order, so that for a baptized Christian to go on in sin was as preposterous as it would be for an emancipated slave to remain in bondage to his former owner (cf. Rom. 6:1-4, 15-23) or for a widow to remain subject to ‘the law of her husband,’” pp. 281-82 (cf. Rom. 7:1-6).

In James S. Stewart’s book, *A Man in Christ*, he writes: “The *locus classicus* for all this side of the apostles’ thought is to be found in Rom. 6. There Paul, with magnificent vigor and effort, drives home to heart and conscience the lesson that to be united with Jesus in His death means for the believer a complete and drastic break with sin,” pp. 187-88.

**6:2 “may it never be”** This is a rare OPTATIVE form which was a grammatical mood or mode used of a wish or prayer. It was Paul’s stylistic way of answering a hypothetical objector. It expressed Paul’s shock and horror at unbelieving mankind’s misunderstanding and abuse of grace (cf. 3:4,6).

▣ **“we who died to sin”** This is an AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE, meaning “we have died.” The SINGULAR “sin” is used so often throughout this chapter. It seems to refer to our “sin nature” inherited from Adam (cf. Rom. 5:12-21; I Cor. 15:21-22). Paul often uses the concept of death as a metaphor to show the believer’s new relationship to Jesus. They are no longer subject to sin’s mastery.

▣ **“still live in it”** This is literally “walk.” This metaphor was used to stress either our lifestyle faith (cf. Eph. 4:1; 5:2,15) or lifestyle sin (cf. 4). Believers cannot be happy in sin!

**6:3-4 “have been baptized. . . have been buried”** These are both AORIST PASSIVE INDICATIVES. This grammatical form emphasized a completed act accomplished by an outside agent, here the Spirit. They are parallel in this context. See Special Topic following.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: BAPTISM

Curtis Vaughan, *Acts*, has an interesting footnote on p. 28.

“The Greek word for ‘baptized’ is a third person imperative; the word for ‘repent,’ a second person imperative. This change from the more direct second person command to the less direct third person of ‘baptized’ implies that Peter’s basic primary demand is for repentance.”

This follows the preaching emphasis of John the Baptist (cf. Matt. 3:2) and Jesus (cf. Matt. 4:17). Repentance seems to be a spiritual key and baptism is an outward expression of this spiritual change. The New Testament knew nothing of unbaptized believers! To the early church baptism was the public profession of faith. It is the occasion for the public confession of faith in Christ, not the mechanism for salvation! It needs to be remembered that baptism is not mentioned in Peter’s second sermon, though repentance is (cf. 3:19; Luke 24:17). Baptism was an example set by Jesus (cf. Matt. 3:13-18). Baptism was commanded by Jesus (cf. Matt. 28:19). The modern question of the necessity of baptism for salvation is not addressed in the New Testament; all believers are expected to be baptized. However, one must also guard against a sacramental mechanicalism! Salvation is a faith issue, not a right-place, right-words, right-ritual act issue!

▣ **“into Christ Jesus”** The use of *eis* (into) parallels the Great Commission of Matt. 28:19, where new believers are baptized *eis* (into) the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The PREPOSITION is also used to describe the believers being baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ in I Cor. 12:13. *Eis* in this context is synonymous with *en* (in Christ) in v. 11, which is Paul’s favorite way to denote believers. It is a LOCATIVE OF SPHERE. Believers live and move and have their being in Christ. These PREPOSITIONS express this intimate union, this sphere of fellowship, this vine and branch relationship. Believers identify with and join with Christ in His death, in His resurrection, in His obedience service to God, and in His Kingdom!

▣ **“into His death. . . we have been buried with Him”** Baptism by immersion illustrates death and burial (cf. v. 5 and Col. 2:12). Jesus used baptism as a metaphor for His own death (cf. Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50). The emphasis here is not a doctrine of baptism, but of the Christian’s new, intimate relationship to Christ’s death and burial. Believers identify with Christ’s baptism, with His character, with His sacrifice, with His mission. Sin has no power over believers!

**6:4 “we have been buried with Him through baptism into death”** In this chapter, as is characteristic of all of Paul’s writing, he uses many *sun* (with) compounds (e.g. Eph. 2:5-6).

1. *sun* + *thaptō* = co-buried, v. 4; Col. 2:12; also note v. 8
2. *sun* + *stauroō* = co-planted, v. 5
3. *sun* + *azō* = co-exist, v. 8; II Tim. 2:11 (also has co-died and co-reign)

▣ **“so we too might walk in newness of life”** This is an AORIST ACTIVE SUBJUNCTIVE. The expected result of salvation is sanctification. Because believers know God’s grace through Christ, their lives must be different. Our new life does not bring us salvation, but it is the result of salvation (cf. vv. 16, 19; and Eph. 2:8-9,10; James 2:14-26). This is not an either/or question, faith or works, but there is a sequential order. See Special Topic following.

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: SANCTIFICATION**

The NT asserts that when sinners turn to Jesus in repentance and faith, they are instantaneously justified and sanctified. This is their new position in Christ. His righteousness has been imputed to them (Rom. 4). They are declared right and holy (a forensic act of God).

But the NT also urges believers on to holiness or sanctification. It is both a theological position in the finished work of Jesus Christ and a call to be Christlike in attitude and actions in daily life. As salvation is a free gift and a cost-everything lifestyle, so too, is sanctification.

### **Initial Response**

Acts 20:23; 26:18

Romans 15:16

I Corinthians 1:2-3; 6:11

II Thessalonians 2:13

Hebrews 2:11; 10:10,14; 13:12

I Peter 1:1

### **A Progressive Christlikeness**

Romans 6:19

II Corinthians 7:1

I Thessalonians 3:13; 4:3-4,7; 5:23

I Timothy 2:15

II Timothy 2:21

Hebrews 12:14

I Peter 1:15-16

▣ **“Christ was raised”** In this context the Father’s acceptance and approval of the Son’s words and works are expressed in two great events.

1. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead
2. Jesus’ ascension to the Father’s right hand

▣ **“the glory of the Father”** For “glory” see Special Topic at 3:23. For “Father” see Special Topic at 1:7.

**6:5 “if”** This is a **FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE**, which is assumed to be true from the writer’s perspective or for his literary purposes. Paul assumed his readers were believers.

▣ **“we have become united with *Him*”** This is a **PERFECT ACTIVE INDICATIVE** which could be translated, “have been and continue to be joined together,” or “have been or continue to be planted together with.” This truth is theologically analogous to “abiding” in John 15. If believers have been identified with Jesus’ death (cf. Gal. 2:19-20; Col. 2:20; 3:3-5), theologically they should be identified with His resurrection life (cf. v. 10).

This metaphorical aspect of baptism as death was meant to show (1) we have died to the old life, the old covenant, (2) we are alive to the Spirit, the new covenant. Christian baptism is, therefore, not the same as the baptism of John the Baptist, who was the last OT prophet. Baptism was the early church’s opportunity for the new believer’s public profession of faith. The earliest baptismal formula, to be repeated by the candidate, was “I believe Jesus is Lord” (cf. Rom. 10:9-13). This public declaration was a formal, ritual act of what had happened previously in experience. Baptism was not the mechanism of forgiveness, salvation or the coming of the Spirit, but the occasion for their public profession and confession (cf. Acts 2:38). However, it also was not optional. Jesus commanded it (cf. Matt. 28:19-20), and exemplified it, (cf. Matt. 3; Mark 1; Thess. 3). It became part of the Apostolic sermons and procedures of Acts.

### **6:6**

**NASB**

**“knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him”**

**NKJV**

**“knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him”**

**NRSV**

**“We know that our old self was crucified with him”**

**TEV**

**“And we know this: our old being has been put to death with Christ on his cross”**

**JB** “We must realize that our former selves have been crucified with him”

This is an AORIST PASSIVE INDICATIVE meaning “our old self has been once for all crucified by the Spirit.” This truth is crucial to victorious Christian living. Believers must realize their new relationship to sin (cf. Gal. 2:20; 6:14). Mankind’s old fallen self (Adamic nature) has died with Christ (cf. v. 7; Eph. 4:22 and Col. 3:9). As believers we now have a choice about sin as Adam originally did.



**NASB, NKJV** “that our body of sin might be done away with”

**NRSV** “so that the body of sin might be destroyed”

**TEV** “in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed”

**JB** “to destroy the sinful body”

Paul uses the word “body” (*soma*) with several GENITIVE phrases.

1. body of (the) sin, Rom. 6:6
2. body of this death, Rom. 7:24
3. body of the flesh, Col. 2:11

Paul is speaking of the physical life of this age of sin and rebellion. Jesus’ new resurrection body is the body of the new age of righteousness (cf. II Cor. 5:17). Physicalness is not the problem (Greek philosophy), but sin and rebellion. The body is not evil. Christianity affirms the belief in a physical body in eternity (cf. I Cor. 15). However, the physical body is the battle ground of temptation, sin, and self.

This is an AORIST PASSIVE SUBJUNCTIVE. The phrase “done away with” meant “made inoperative,” “made powerless,” or “made unproductive,” not “destroyed.” This was a favorite word with Paul, used over twenty-five times. See special topic at 3:3. Our physical body is morally neutral, but it is also the battleground for the continuing spiritual conflict (cf. vv. 12-13; 5:12-21; 12:1-2).

**6:7 “he who has died is freed from sin”** This is an AORIST ACTIVE PARTICIPLE and a PERFECT PASSIVE INDICATIVE meaning “he who has died has been and continues to be free from sin.” Because believers are new creations in Christ they have been and continue to be set free from the slavery of sin and self inherited from Adam’s fall (cf. 7:1-6).

The Greek term translated here as “freed” is the term translated elsewhere in the opening chapters as “justified” (ASV). In this context “freed” makes much more sense (similar to its use in acts 13:38). Remember, context determines word meaning, not a dictionary or preset technical definition. Words only have meaning in sentences and sentences only have meaning in paragraphs.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:8-11**

**<sup>8</sup>Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, <sup>9</sup>knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. <sup>10</sup>For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup>Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.**

**6:8 “If”** This is a FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which is assumed to be true from the writer’s perspective or for his literary purposes. Believer’s baptism visually exemplifies one’s death with Christ.

▣ **“we shall also live with Him”** This context demands a “here and now” orientation (cf. I John 1:7), not an exclusively future setting. Verse 5 speaks of our sharing Christ’s death, while verse 8 speaks of our sharing His life. This is the same tension inherent in the biblical concept of the Kingdom of God. It is both here and now, yet future. Free grace must produce self-control, not license.

**6:9 “having been raised from the dead”** This is an AORIST PASSIVE PARTICIPLE (see 6:4, AORIST PASSIVE INDICATIVE).

The NT affirms that all three persons of the Trinity were active in Jesus’ resurrection: (1) the Spirit (cf. Rom. 8:11); (2) the Son (cf. John 2:19-22; 10:17-18); and most frequently (3) the Father (cf. Acts 2:24,32; 3:15,26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30,33,34,37; 17:31; Rom. 6:4,9). The Father’s actions were confirmation of His acceptance of Jesus’ life, death, and teachings. This was a major aspect of the early preaching of the Apostles. See Special Topic: The *Kerygma* at 2:14.



**NASB** “death no longer is master over Him”  
**NKJV, NRSV** “Death no longer has dominion over Him”  
**TEV** “death will no longer rule over him”  
**NJB** “Death has no power over him anymore”

The VERB *kurieuō* is from the term *kurios*, which means “owner,” “master,” “husband,” or “lord,” Jesus is now lord over death (cf. Rev. 1:18). Jesus is the first to break the power of death (cf. I Cor. 15)!

**6:10 “for the death that He died, He died to sin”** Jesus lived in a sinful world and although He never sinned, the sinful world crucified Him (cf. Heb. 10:10). Jesus’ substitutionary death on mankind’s behalf canceled the Law’s requirements and consequences over them (cf. Gal. 3:13; Col 2:13-14).

▣ **“once for all”** In this context Paul is emphasizing the crucifixion of Jesus. His one-time death for sin has affected His followers’ death to sin.

The book of Hebrews also emphasizes the ultimacy of Jesus’ once-given sacrificial death. This once-done salvation and forgiveness are forever accomplished (cf. “once” [*ephapax*], 7:27; 9:12; 10:10 and “once for all” [*hapax*], 6:4; 9:7,26,27,28; 10:2; 12:26,27). This is the recurrent accomplished sacrificial affirmation.

▣ **“but the life that He lives, He lives to God”** The two AORISTS of v. 10a are contrasted with two PRESENT ACTIVE INDICATIVES in v. 10b. Believers died with Christ; believers live to God, through Christ. The goal of the gospel is not forgiveness only (justification ) but service to God (sanctification). Believers are saved to serve.

**6:11 “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin,”** This is a PRESENT MIDDLE (deponent) IMPERATIVE. This is an ongoing, habitual command for believers. Christians’ knowledge of Christ’s work on their behalf is crucial for daily life. The term “consider” (cf. 4:4,9), was an accounting term that meant “carefully add it up” and then act on that knowledge. Verses 1-11 acknowledged one’s position in Christ (positional sanctification) while 12-13 emphasized walking in Him (progressive sanctification). See Special Topic at v. 4.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:12-14**

**<sup>12</sup>Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, <sup>13</sup>and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. <sup>14</sup>For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

**6:12 “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body”** This is a PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE with the NEGATIVE PARTICLE, which usually meant to stop an act already in process.

The term “reign” relates to 5:17-21 and 6:23. Paul personifies several theological concepts: (1) death reigned as king (cf. 5:14,17; 6:23); (2) grace reigned as king (cf. 5:21); and (3) sin reigned as king (cf. 6:12,14). The real question is who is reigning in your life? The believer has the power in Christ to choose! The tragedy for the individual, the local church, and the Kingdom of God is when believers choose self and sin, even while claiming grace!

**6:13 “do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin”** This is a PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE with the NEGATIVE PARTICLE which usually meant to stop an act already in process. This shows the potential for sin in the lives of believers (cf. 7:1ff; I John 1:8-2:1). But the necessity of sin has been eliminated in the believer’s relationship with Christ, vv. 1-11.

▣ **“as instruments”** This term referred to “a soldier’s weapons.” Our physical body is the battleground for temptation (cf. vv. 12-13; 12:1-2; I Cor. 6:20; Phil. 1:20). Our lives publicly display the gospel.

▣ **“but present yourselves to God”** This is an AORIST ACTIVE IMPERATIVE which was a call for a decisive act. Believers do this at salvation by faith but they must continue to do this throughout their lives.

Notice the parallelism of this verse.

1. same VERB and both IMPERATIVES
2. battle metaphors
  - a. weapons of unrighteousness
  - b. weapons of righteousness
3. believers can present their bodies to sin or themselves to God

Remember, this verse is referring to believers—the choice continues; the battle continues!

**6:14 “For sin shall not be master over you”** This is a FUTURE ACTIVE INDICATIVE (cf. Ps. 19:13) functioning as an IMPERATIVE, “sin must not be master over you!” Sin is not master over believers because it is not master over Christ, (cf. v. 9; John 16:33).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:15-19**

**<sup>15</sup>What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? <sup>17</sup>But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, <sup>18</sup>and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup>I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.**

**6:15** This second supposed question (diatribe) is much like 6:1. Both answer different questions about the Christian’s relation to sin. Verse 1 deals with grace not being used as a license to sin while v. 15 deals with the Christian’s need to fight, or resist, individual acts of sin. Also, at the same time the believer must serve God now with the same enthusiasm with which he previously served sin (cf. 6:14).





NASB, NKJV,

TEV

“Shall we sin”

NRSV

“Should we sin”

JB

“that we are free to sin”

The Williams and Phillips translations both translate this AORIST ACTIVE SUBJUNCTIVE as a PRESENT ACTIVE SUBJUNCTIVE similar to v. 1. This is not the proper focus. Notice the alternate translations (1) KJV, ASV, NIV - “shall we sin?”; (2) The Centenary Translation - “Shall we commit an act of sin?”; (3) RSV - “are we to sin?” This question is emphatic in Greek and expected a “yes” answer. This was Paul’s diatribe method of communicating truth. This verse expresses false theology! Paul answered this by his characteristic “May it never be.” Paul’s gospel of the radical free grace of God was misunderstood and abused by many false teachers.

**6:16** The question expects a “yes” response. Humans serve something or someone. Who reigns in your life, sin or God? Who humans obey shows who they serve (cf. Gal. 6:7-8).

**6:17 “But thanks be to God”** Paul often breaks out into praise to God. His writings flow from his prayers and his prayers from his knowledge of the gospel. See Special Topic: Paul’s Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgiving to God at 7:25.

▣ **“you were. . .you became”** This is the IMPERFECT TENSE of the VERB, “to be,” which described their state of being in the past (slaves of sin) followed by an AORIST TENSE which asserts that their state of rebellion has ceased.

▣ **“You became obedient from your heart to that form of teaching”** In context, this refers to their justification by faith, which must lead to daily Christlikeness. The term “teaching” referred to Apostolic teaching or the gospel.

▣ **“heart”** See Special Topic: Heart at 1:24.



NASB

“that form of teaching to which you were committed”

NKJV

“that form of doctrine to which you were delivered”

NRSV, NIV

“to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted”

TEV

“the truth found in the teaching you received”

NJB

“to the pattern of teaching to which you were introduced”

**SPECIAL TOPIC: FORM (TUPOS)**

The problem is the word *tupos*, which has a variety of uses.

1. Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, p. 645
  - a. pattern
  - b. plan
  - c. form or manner of writing
  - d. decree or rescript
  - e. sentence or decision
  - f. model of human body as votive offerings to the healing god

- g. verb used in the sense of enforcing the precepts of the law
- 2. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 249
  - a. scar (cf. John 20:25)
  - b. image (cf. Acts 7:43)
  - c. model (cf. Heb. 8:5)
  - d. example (cf. I Cor. 10:6; Phil. 3:17)
  - e. archetype (cf. Rom. 5:14)
  - f. kind (cf. Acts 23:25)
  - g. contents (cf. Acts 23:25)
- 3. Harold K. Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*, p. 411
  - a. a blow, an impression, a mark (cf. John 20:25)
  - b. a delineation
  - c. an image (cf. Acts 7:43)
  - d. a formula, scheme (cf. Rom. 6:17)
  - e. form, purport (cf. Acts 23:25)
  - f. a figure, counterpart (cf. I Cor. 10:6)
  - g. an anticipative figure, type (cf. Rom. 5:14; I Cor. 10:11)
  - h. a model pattern (cf. Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5)
  - i. a moral pattern (cf. Phil. 3:17; I Thess. 1:7; II Thess. 3:9; I Tim. 4:12; I Pet. 5:3)

In this context # I above seems best. The gospel has both doctrine and lifestyle implications. The free gift of salvation in Christ also demands a life like Christ!

**6:18 “having been freed from sin”** This is an AORIST PASSIVE PARTICIPLE. The gospel has freed believers by the agency of the Spirit through the work of Christ. Believers have been freed both from the penalty of sin (justification) and the tyranny of sin (sanctification, cf. vv. 7 and 22).

▣ **“you became the slaves of righteousness”** This is an AORIST PASSIVE INDICATIVE, “you became enslaved to righteousness.” See special topic at 1:17. Believers are freed from sin to serve God (cf. vv. 14,19,22; 7:4; 8:2)! The goal of free grace is a godly life. Justification is both a legal pronouncement and an impetus for personal righteousness. God wants to save us and change us so as to reach others! Grace does not stop with us!

**6:19 “I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh”** Paul is addressing the believers at Rome. Is he addressing a local problem he had heard about (jealousy among Jewish believers and Gentile believers) or is he asserting a truth about all believers? Paul used this phrase earlier in Rom. 3:5, as he does in Gal. 3:15.

Verse 19 is parallel to v. 16. Paul repeats his theological points for emphasis.

Some would say this phrase means that Paul was apologizing for using a slave metaphor. However, “because of the weakness of your flesh” does not fit this interpretation. Slavery was not viewed as an evil by first century society, especially in Rome. It was simply the culture of its day.

▣ **“flesh”** See Special Topic at 1:3.

▣ **“resulting in sanctification”** This is the goal of justification (cf. v. 22). The NT used this term in two theological senses related to salvation (1) positional sanctification, which is the gift of God (objective aspect) given at salvation along with justification through faith in Christ (cf. Acts 26:18; I Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Eph. 5:26-27; I Thess. 5:23; II Thess. 2:13; Heb. 10:10; 13:12; I Pet. 1:2) and (2) progressive sanctification which is also the work of God through the Holy Spirit whereby the believer’s life is transformed into the image and maturity of Christ (subjective aspect, cf. II Cor. 7:1; I Thess. 4:3,7; I Tim. 2:15; II Tim. 2:21; Heb. 12:10,14). See Special Topic at 6:4.

It is both a gift and a command! It is a position (objective) and an activity (subjective)! It is an INDICATIVE (a statement) and an IMPERATIVE (a command)! It comes at the beginning, but does not mature until the end (cf. Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:20-23**

**<sup>20</sup>For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup>Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. <sup>22</sup>But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. <sup>23</sup>For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**6:20-21** This is simply stating the opposite of vv. 18 and 19. Believers can only serve one master (cf. Thess. 16:13).

**6:22-23** These verses form a logical progression of the wages paid by whom one serves. Thank God this discussion of sin and the believer ends on a grace focus! First is the gift of salvation through our cooperation, and then the gift of the Christian life, also through our cooperation. Both are received gifts through faith and repentance.

**6:22** **“you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life”** The term “benefit,” literally “fruit” is used in v. 21 to speak of the consequences of sin, but in v. 22 it speaks of the consequences of serving God. The immediate benefit is the believer’s Christlikeness. The ultimate benefit is being with Him and like Him eternally (cf. I John 3:2). If there is no immediate result (changed life, cf. James 2) the ultimate result can be legitimately questioned (eternal life, cf. Matt. 7). “No fruit, no root!”

**6:23** This is the summary of the entire chapter. Paul painted the choice in black and white. The choice is ours—sin and death or free grace through Christ and eternal life. It is very similar to the “two ways” of OT wisdom literature (Ps. 1; Prov. 4; 10-19; Matt. 7:13-14).

▣ **“the wages of sin”** Sin is personified as (1) a slave owner, (2) a military general, or (3) a king who pays wages (cf. 3:9; 5:21; 6:9,14,17).

▣ **“the free gift of God is eternal life”** This word, translated “free gift” (*charisma*) was from the root for grace (*charis*, cf. 3:24; 5:15, 16, 17; Eph. 2:8-9). See note at 3:24.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How are good works related to salvation (cf. Eph. 2:8-9,10)?
2. How is continual sin in the life of the believer related to salvation (cf. I John 3:6,9)?
3. Does the chapter teach “sinless perfection?”
4. How is chapter 6 related to chapters 5 and 7?
5. Why is baptism discussed here?
6. Do Christians retain their old nature? Why?
7. What is the implication of PRESENT TENSE verbals dominating v. 1-14 and AORIST TENSE verbals in 15-23?

# **A BRIEF SUMMARY OF HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES**

1. **ALWAYS PRAY FIRST** (The Spirit is essential. God wants you to understand.)
2. **ESTABLISH THE ORIGINAL TEXT**
  - a. Check the notes in the margin of your study Bible for Greek manuscript variants.
  - b. Do not build a doctrine on a disputed text, look for a clear parallel passage.
3. **UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT**
  - a. Read the entire context (literary context is crucial). Check the outline in a study Bible or commentary to determine the literary unit.
  - b. Never try to interpret less than a paragraph. Try to outline the main truths of the paragraphs in the literary unit. This way we can follow the original author's thoughts and their development.
  - c. Read the paragraph in several translations which use different translation theories.
  - d. Consult good commentaries and other Bible study aids only after you have studied the text first (remember the Bible, the Spirit, and you are priority in biblical interpretation).
4. **UNDERSTANDING THE WORDS**
  - a. The NT writers were Hebrew thinkers, writing in Koine (street) Greek.
  - b. We must find the contemporary meaning and connotations, not modern English definitions (see Septuagint and Egyptian papyri).
  - c. Words have meaning only in sentences. Sentences have meaning only in paragraphs. Paragraphs have meaning only in literary units. Check the semantic field (i.e., various meanings of words).
5. **USE PARALLEL PASSAGES**
  - a. The Bible is the best interpreter of the Bible. It has only one author, the Holy Spirit.
  - b. Look for the clearest teaching text on the truth of your paragraph (reference Bible or concordance).
  - c. Look for the paradoxical truths (tension-filled pairs of eastern literature).
6. **APPLICATION**
  - a. You cannot apply the Bible to your day until you understand what the inspired author was saying to his/her day (historical context is crucial).
  - b. Be careful of personal biases, theological systems, or agendas. Let the Bible speak for itself!
  - c. Be careful of principlizing every verse. Not all texts have universal relevance. Not all texts apply to modern individuals.
  - d. Respond immediately to new truth or insight. Bible knowledge is meant to produce daily Christlikeness and Kingdom service.

# DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

I do not particularly care for statements of faith or creeds. I prefer to affirm the Bible itself. However, I realize that a statement of faith will provide those who are unfamiliar with me a way to evaluate my doctrinal perspective. In our day of so much theological error and deception, the following brief summary of my theology is offered.

1. The Bible, both the Old and New Testament, is the inspired, infallible, authoritative, eternal Word of God. It is the self-revelation of God recorded by men under supernatural leadership. It is our only source of clear truth about God and His purposes. It is also the only source of faith and practice for His church.

2. There is only one eternal, creator, redeemer God. He is the creator of all things, visible and invisible. He has revealed Himself as loving and caring although He is also fair and just. He has revealed Himself in three distinct persons: Father, Son and Spirit; truly separate and yet the same.

3. God is actively in control of His world. There is both an eternal plan for His creation that is unalterable and an individually focused one that allows human free will. Nothing happens without God's knowledge and permission, yet He allows individual choices both among angels and humans. Jesus is the Father's Elect Man and all are potentially elect in Him. God's foreknowledge of events does not reduce humans to a determined pre-written script. All of us are responsible for our thoughts and deeds.

4. Mankind, though created in God's image and free from sin, chose to rebel against God. Although tempted by a supernatural agent Adam and Eve were responsible for their willful, self-centeredness. Their rebellion has affected humanity and creation. We are all in need of God's mercy and grace both for our corporate condition in Adam and our individual volitional rebellion.

5. God has provided a means of forgiveness and restoration for fallen humanity. Jesus Christ, God's unique son, became a man, lived a sinless life and by means of his substitutionary death, paid the penalty of mankind's sin. He is the only way to restoration and fellowship with God. There is no other means of salvation except through faith in His finished work.

6. Each of us must personally receive God's offer of forgiveness and restoration in Jesus. This is accomplished by means of volitional trust in God's promises through Jesus and a willful turning from known sin.

7. All of us are fully forgiven and restored based upon our trust in Christ and repentance from sin. However, the evidence for this new relationship is seen in a changed, and changing, life. The goal of God for humanity is not only heaven someday, but Christlikeness now. Those who are truly redeemed, though occasionally sinning, will continue in faith and repentance throughout their lives.

8. The Holy Spirit is "the other Jesus." He is present in the world to lead the lost to Christ and develop Christlikeness in the saved. The gifts of the Spirit are given at salvation. They are, in reality, the life and ministry of Jesus divided among His body, the Church. The gifts which are basically the attitudes and motives of Jesus need to be motivated by the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit is active in our day as He was in the biblical times.

9. The resurrected Jesus Christ has been made the Judge of all things by the Father. He will return to earth to judge all mankind. Those who have trusted Jesus and whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will receive their eternal glorified bodies at His return. They will be with Him forever. However, those who have refused to respond to God's truth will be separated eternally from the joys of fellowship with the Triune God. They will be condemned along with the Devil and his angels.

This is surely not complete or thorough but I hope it will give you the theological flavor of my heart. I like the statement:

“In essentials—unity, In peripherals—freedom, In all things—love.”

IT CANNOT MEAN WHAT IT NEVER MEANT  
I'VE ETCHED THAT ON MY BRAIN  
AND WHEN I STUDY SCRIPTURE  
I ECHO THAT REFRAIN  
I'VE STUDIED HERMENEUTICS AND EXEGESIS TOO  
SO, AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THIS  
I'VE SOMEWHAT CHANGED MY VIEW  
I'VE LEARNED SOME NOMENCLATURE  
TOO LENGTHY TO DEFINE  
LIKE CULTURAL RELATIVITY AND TEXTUAL DESIGN  
THERE IS SO MUCH I WANT TO KNOW  
HOW TO FERRET OUT THE TRUTH  
I HOPE SOMEDAY THAT I'LL BECOME  
A BIBLE READING SLEUTH  
A NEW RESPECT HAS TAKEN ME,  
FOR GOD'S OWN HOLY WORD  
INSPIRING ME TO KNOW THE TRUTH,  
TO HEAR AS IT WAS HEARD  
BUT I KNOW I MUST REMEMBER,  
I STEPPED THROUGH AN OPEN DOOR  
AND NEVER CAN RETURN AGAIN TO WHERE I WAS BEFORE

PAT BERGERON

11/27/91