

How to Study The Bible

*Introduction to Biblical
Hermeneutics*

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Chapter 1

Why Study the Bible?

Background

Probably one of the single most devastating weaknesses in the Church today is the lack of proper understanding of the Bible. The attitude of many Christians is "let the pastor do the study" or "the study of the Bible is for people of intelligence, not me." Sadly to say, this is a very inaccurate statement. Before studying Biblical Hermeneutics, the science and art of Biblical interpretation, some foundational stones must be laid.

1. The Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God in its entirety. It does not contain the Word of God or become the Word of God, it is the Word of God.
2. The Bible was written to non-intellectual readers and can be understood by anyone passing God's qualifications including salvation, holy living, and diligence.
3. There is one correct interpretation of each passage of scripture although there are many applications.
4. Seeming contradictions in the Bible do not imply errancy, instead they are the result of incomplete knowledge or unbridged gaps in understanding.
5. God desires that his people know and understand the Bible. His truths are not hidden and reluctantly given out.
6. We need to come to grips with the understanding that we need to be able to "cut it straight" regarding Biblical interpretation. We are responsible to know and understand God's word. We cannot continue to allow our theological doctrines to be dictated by other men.

With these opening statements, let us start in learning how to understand and interpret the Bible.

Why Study the Bible?

Before starting the study of Biblical Hermeneutics, it is important to establish some foundational truths. The first of these is "Why Study the Bible?" Unless the Bible is worth studying, it is not too important whether we interpret it correctly or not. Therefore, we will look at some general issues regarding this question prior to embarking on our main subject. The following outlines are taken from the study guide *How to Study the Bible* by John MacArthur, notes are mine.

A. The Bible is the Source of Truth

People are constantly looking for "truth." In fact, the three main questions facing every human on planet earth is 1) Where did I come from?, 2) why am I here?, and 3) where am I going?

The only real source of answers to this question is found in the Bible, God's guidebook to life.

In John 17:17 Jesus prays for us and makes this specific request:

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.

We are purified, that is, we are set apart unto God by knowing the truth and the source of that truth is God himself. We can only know what God requires of us by understanding what is contained in the Bible.

John 8:31-32 (31) If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. (32) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

This is a great promise from Jesus. First, the mark of a true disciple of Jesus is that they continue in his word. A parallel passage to this is found in John 14:21-24. The second part of this promise is that his disciples 1) know his truth and 2) are freed by it. Freed from what?

Romans 6:22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

We have true freedom in Jesus by knowing the truth. We are freed from sin and the bondage of the law to serve Christ out of a heart of love, not obligation.

B. The Bible is the Source of Happiness

The Bible is the source of happiness and joy in our lives. The reason for this is that true joy in our hearts is inextricably bound up in our obedience to God. Our obedience is predicated on our knowledge of his requirements. Only when we exist in the sphere of obedience can we fully experience the joy and happiness God has for us.

Psalms 19:8a The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

1 John 1:4 And these things write we unto you that your joy might be full.

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Revelation 1:3a Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy.

Luke 11:28 Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

A point that needs to be made at this time is that we must not only hear the word of God, but we must OBEY it as well. Further, this obedience must not be the legalistic obedience that characterized the Pharisees and hypocrites of Jesus' day, but the gracious obedience that comes from a heart of love. In fact, if our obedience is not

from a heart of love, we serve out of the wrong motives and our good deeds are only wood, hay, and stubble.

C. The Bible is the Source of Victory

The Bible is our only source of victory over our enemies. Simply stated these three enemies are the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. The World (Gk. *kosmos*), is the world system. It is the collection of values and mindsets prevalent in any society. It is also controlled by Satan who is called the "prince of the power of the air." The Flesh is us, our base desires and appetites. The Devil is a real enemy and foe.

We must realize that we are basically helpless against these enemies without divine help. Satan, the flesh, and the world will defeat us every time if we try to confront them on our own.

What are our offensive and defensive weapons? Paul lists them in Ephesians 6:11-18:

1. Loins girt about with the belt of truth.
2. Feet shod with the good news of peace.
3. Breastplate of righteousness.
4. Shield of faith.
5. Helmet of Salvation.
6. Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.
7. Energized by prayer.

Note our offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit. The Greek word used does not denote the large broadsword we may imagine, but is actually *makairos* which is like a little dagger. The word for the large broadsword is *romphaia*.

Note also that the first three pieces of the armor are described as "having" and "having on" while the last three pieces are described by "take." We are to ALWAYS have the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, and the shoes of the gospel of peace. We only take up the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit when there is a battle.

Ephesians 6:13-18 (13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. (14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness. (15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: (16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God: (18) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit; and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

D. The Bible is the Source of Growth

Nothing is more sad than an adult who has never been able to grow up. However, it is often the case in the body of Christ that there are many babies that have never grown up in the Lord. It is not sufficient to just "get saved" and then coast on into heaven. Time and time again the Bible calls us to maturity and growth.

1 Peter 2:2 As newborn babes desire (verb) the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.

Ephesians 5:15 But speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

In Hebrews 5, the writer of the book gives a scathing rebuke to the readers. He says that they should have reached the point where they were teachers, but they need someone to teach them. In his illustration, he divides spiritual matters into two categories, milk and meat.

Hebrews 5:12-14 (12) For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. (13) For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. (14) But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

We should never expect newborn Christians to exhibit the behavior of seasoned Christians, but after a period of time growth should occur. There are three basic foundational truths that must be practiced if growth is to occur.

1. Sanctification

For spiritual growth to occur we must deal with sin in our lives. This is where most Christians get hung up. They want to continue in their practice of sin while experiencing God's blessing. This will never happen. In 1 Peter 2:1, the verse immediately preceding the one about desiring the "sincere milk of the word", we find that we must first purify ourselves.

1 Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice and all guile, and hypocrisies and envyings, and all evil speakings;

2. Study

Study is a dirty word to many people. They stand in awe of pastors and biblical scholars, but never attempt to understand much of the scripture for themselves. This is like having someone else eat your meals for you; it does you little good. Spiritual growth is hard work. Don't let anyone fool you. Those who become close to God have to study his word to find out what is expected of them.

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

The word translated "rightly dividing" actually means to "cut it straight." Paul was a tentmaker. In those days tents were usually made out of animal skins. Since no single animal skin was in itself large enough for a tent, several skins had to be pieced together. The craftsman had to "cut them straight."

When we study the Bible and begin to understand it, we can "cut it straight." The pieces will begin to fit together in our minds resulting in spiritual growth and maturity.

3. Practice

The final requirement for spiritual growth is practice. We must understand that only when we begin to put into operation those principles we learn from the scripture will we begin to experience real growth in our lives.

This is the second major area many Christians fall down in. They want to be spiritually mature and knowledgeable, but rarely do they want to pay the necessary price.

Hebrews 5:14 (14) But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

E. The Bible is the Source of Power

In addition to the Bible being the source of Victory and the source of Growth, it is also the source of Power. It is comforting to know that God did not save us and then tell us to "hang on." Instead he gave us sufficient power to be super-conquerors, *hupernika*.

Romans 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors to him that loved us.

The Bible is the source of our power. The Greek word used for power throughout the New Testament is *dunamis*, from which we get the words dynamic, dynamo, and dynamite. The Word of God is powerful in several areas:

1. The Word of God convicts of sin

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Someone once said that reading the Bible should be like wiring a house with the electricity on.

2. The Word of God brings salvation

Romans 1:16-17 (16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (17) For therein is the righteousness of

God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith.

3. The Word of God brings transformation

Romans 12:1-2 (1) I beseech ye therefore brethren, by the mercies of the Lord, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. (2) And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

Ephesians 4:22-24 (23) That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; (23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; (24) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

F. The Bible is the Source of Guidance

The Bible is the answer to man's three basic questions: Where did I come from?, Why am I here?, and Where am I going?

The Bible gives us the answers. However, much more than just being the answer to our basic questions, the Bible is concerned with answers to the questions of our everyday lives. How do we know what is right and wrong? How do we make godly decisions? How do we know the will of God? All is contained in the Bible.

Psalms 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Chapter 2

Who Can Study the Bible?

Who Can Study the Bible?

Before spending time on how to study the Bible, we need to examine the question "Who can study and understand the Bible."

In looking at this question, we must be careful to make the distinction between studying and understanding. The world is full of people today who study the Bible, but who do not understand it in the least. They treat the Bible as just another ancient book full of myths, mistakes, and a continuing evolution of religion. They treat the Bible the same as works of Plato or Egyptian hieroglyphics. The real question then becomes "Who can study AND understand the Bible."

A. Those Who are Believers

This is the starting point of Biblical understanding. Why? Because the Holy Spirit, who indwells believers only, is the true source of Biblical understanding. This is clearly seen in the following passages:

1 Corinthians 2:9-14 (9) But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (10) But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (11) For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. (13) Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (14) But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because the are spiritually discerned.

1 John 2:20, 27 But ye have an unction (anointing) from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

We need to really grasp hold of this idea. It is NOT our intellectual abilities that enable us to understand the Bible, it is the resident truth-teacher, the Holy Spirit.

Also, we need to note that Biblical knowledge is NOT directly proportional to Spiritual maturity. Sometimes those who know the most about the Bible are least able to apply it. We need to strive for BOTH knowledge and application.

Knowledge without application is the epitome of foolish living. Everything we know we will be accountable for to God.

Another prime example of this idea is found in the answer to this question "how can we acknowledge Jesus is the Christ?." If we look at Peter's confession in Matthew 16:13-20, we find out that when Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, he was told that his confession was revealed by the Father. Peter did not just happen to get in a lucky guess, he got his information straight from God.

What does this tell us? It tells us that if we see someone who does not confess Jesus is the Christ, it is because it has not been revealed to them from God. 1 John 4:1-3 says that we are to "try the spirits." Instead of seeing these people as ignorant, we need to feel compassion for them because they do not have the inward Spirit of God to give them the revelation that Jesus is the Christ.

B. Those Who are Diligent

Another requirement for understanding the Bible is that we need to be diligent. What does this mean? It means that we need to be willing to spend the necessary time in uncovering its truths and bridging the gaps. We will never truly understand the Bible by spending 5 minutes a day in *Our Daily Bread*. We need to pore over the scripture, put it into our memory, and meditate on it. Only then will some of the truths of the Bible come to light.

It is to our great shame that people today will spend hours every day training for Olympics or some other great sports event, but will spend little time digging into the things of God. Bodily exercise profiteth little, spiritual exercise profiteth much.

Why is diligence necessary? I think it is necessary for two major reasons:

1. It shows God that we really want to know him. In any good marriage, much time must be spent getting to know one another. In a good friendship, time must be spent getting to know one another. In our spiritual relationship with God, we must spend time getting to know him.
2. We need to overcome some gaps. This is where the science and art of hermeneutics comes in. We need to be able to overcome the culture, language, geographical, and historical gaps to understand the true meaning of any passage of scripture. This is where most of the work is expended. Once we overcome these gaps, the true meaning of the passage often is self-evident.

2 Peter is a good book to see this idea of diligence explained. In this short epistle of three chapters Peter constantly invokes his readers to diligence. Diligence is translated from the Greek word *spouday* which means "to earnestly have a great zeal for." This certainly goes beyond a 5 or 10 minute quickie-devotional. Peter uses this word three times in his epistle, 2 Peter 1:10, 1:15, and 3:14. Paul uses this word in 2 Timothy 2:15.

In the first instance, Peter calls for diligence to add knowledge to virtue. Now that we are believers, we need to grow and mature.

In the second, Peter calls for diligence as a verifying mark of our salvation. Those who are Christians are the ones diligently learning the scriptures. Someone who

claims spirituality and has no thirst or desire for scriptural knowledge is probably not a Christian no matter what they say.

In the third and last instance Peter calls for diligence to rightly interpret the scriptures. He uses Paul's epistles as an example of that which requires diligent study to understand.

2 Peter 1:5-8 (5) And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge; (6) And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; (7) And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. (8) For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

2 Peter 3:14 Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.

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

C. Those Who Have a Great Desire

Only those who have a great desire will put forth the amount of effort required to know God and his word. Those who know God have spent hours in getting to know him.

1 Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.

Job 23:12b NASB I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.

Remember the Apostle Paul's great desire in Philippians 3:10:

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable to his death.

How can we know God? How can we get to know what he is like and what he requires? Only if we have a great desire to do so.

Jeremiah 29:13 Ye shall seek me, and ye shall find me, when ye search for me with all your heart.

D. Those Who are Holy

This is so obvious it is self-evident. However, it is probably the one area many Christians fail in. We cannot approach God with a lot of garbage and sin in our lives. Matthew 5:8 says **Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.** Unfortunately, many Christians live a life of sin and then wonder why they do not get a whole lot out of their Bible study. The key thought here is OBEDIENCE. Only as we live in obedience to those things we know will God teach us more.

A good passage that sheds light on this issue is 1 Peter 2:1-2.

1 Peter 2:1-2 (1) Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies and envyings, and all evil speakings (2) As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.

Note that we do not desire the milk of the word until we sanctify our hearts. We cannot live with unconfessed, known sin in our lives and experience the desire of the word. It will never happen. Christ emphasizes this element of obedience in John 14:23-24. In this passage we find him answering the question put to him by Judas, not Iscariot, "How is it that you will manifest yourself unto us and not unto the world?" Jesus' simple answer is "He that loveth me and KEEPS my words will have the inward manifestation of the Father and the Son."

John 14:23-24 (23) Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world? (24) Jesus answered him and said unto him, If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.

E. Those Who are Spirit-Controlled

This goes along with the first requirement, that of being a believer. We need to understand that the SOURCE, and the only SOURCE, of spiritual understanding in our life is the Holy Spirit. Without his leading and guidance we cannot understand the things of the word.

One of the most insidious and dangerous heresies to invade the early church was that of gnosticism. Although gnosticism was not fully developed until late in the New Testament era, its beginnings are clearly seen in Colossians and 1 John.

Basically, gnosticism said that salvation is accomplished by obtaining "secret knowledge" known only to the initiates of the cult. Jesus Christ is not enough, the Spirit is not enough, the word is not enough; one must have the secret knowledge.

John strikes a blow at this heresy by writing the following:

1 John 2:20, 27 But ye have an unction (anointing) from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

What is John saying? He is saying that since we have an unction, i.e. Holy Spirit, we know all things. We do not need secret knowledge, just the Holy Spirit.

Jesus says this same thing in John 16:13 to his disciples, and indirectly to us:

John 16:13-14 (13) Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. (14) He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Although the context of the above passage refers directly to the eleven true disciples, Jesus is saying that their understanding of the truth will be made known to them by the Spirit.

The last passage we may want to look at again is 1 Corinthians 2:9-14:

1 Corinthians 2:9-14 (9) But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (10) But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (11) For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. (13) Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (14) But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because the are spiritually discerned.

F. Those Who are Prayerful

This is the glue that holds the other five requirements together. We must always approach the study of the Word in an attitude of prayer realizing that we depend on the Holy Spirit to enable us to see.

This is evident throughout Paul's writings because he was always praying that the recipients of his letters might grow in grace and knowledge and spiritual understanding. A few samples will suffice:

Philippians 1:9-11 (9) And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; (10) That ye may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; (11) Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Colossians 1:9-11 (9) For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (10) That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; (11) Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

Other examples are Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-21.

Chapter 3

The Foundations of Biblical Interpretation

The Foundations of Biblical Interpretation

A. The Attributes of the Bible

1. Infallibility

By infallibility we affirm that the Bible, in its original autographs, contained no error. Since the Bible is a divine book authored by an infallible God, it must be infallible as well.

Psalms 19:7a The law of the Lord is perfect

2. Inerrant

Not only is the Bible infallible, but it is inerrant as well. This means that the Bible contains absolute truth unmixed with any error. This concept goes hand in hand with infallibility.

Why must the Bible be infallible?

- a. The Bible is authored by God. Since God is absolute truth, the Bible must be absolute truth as well or else God lied to us.
- b. The Bible is our basis for salvation. If the Bible contains error, how do we know that the parts in error do or do not have anything to do with salvation? We cannot.
- c. If the Bible is not inerrant, then we have no basis for ultimate truth. Truth becomes one opinion pitted against another.

3. Complete

This is the crux of Biblical hermeneutics. We do NOT need to add anything to the Bible. God's revelation to man is complete and it is obtained in the Bible. When we allow for extra-biblical revelation, we have opened Pandora's box. The foundation for every modern cult using the Bible as a basis is one of two things a) improper hermeneutics or b) additional revelation.

Christian Science says God's revelation is the writings of Mary Baker Patterson Glover Eddy and the Bible. Mormons state that God's revelation is the Book of Mormon, the Pearl of Great Price, the Doctrines and the Covenants and the Bible.

We must understand that the Bible is complete. There is no room for added revelation. At the end of the book of Revelation we find these verses:

Revelation 22:18-19 (18) For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: (19) And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

The immediate reference to these two verses is Revelation. However, we find in Revelations chapter 22 the epilogue to the Bible. So these words apply in an immediate context to Revelation, and in a wider context to the rest of the scriptures.

4. Authoritative

By this we mean that the Bible has authority over our lives, conduct, and eternal destiny.

We may argue and debate particular passages and their meanings, but we can never argue whether the Bible has authority over our lives or not. Some verses will clarify this issue.

John 8:30b-31 Many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed.

Galatians 3:10 Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

5. Sufficient

The Bible is sufficient for our needs.

a. Salvation

2 Timothy 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ.

b. Perfection (maturity)

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

Note:

doctrine - what we know; the basic truths
reproof - how to tell we are blowing it
correction - what to do to correct our path
instruction - how to not blow it again

c. Hope

Romans 15:4 For whatever things were written in earlier times were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.

d. Blessing

James 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

6. Effective

The Bible is effective. It never beats the air or wastes blows.

Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I have sent it.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

7. Determinative

Every living person's eternal destiny hinges on whether they believe the Bible or not.

John 8:47 He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye, therefore, hear them not because ye are not of God.

1 Corinthians 2:9-14 (9) But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (10) But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (11) For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. (13) Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (14) But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because the are spiritually discerned.

B. Authenticity of the Bible

How do we know that the Bible is really authentic? What proofs are there for it's reality?

1. Science

Science proves the scripture. By this we mean that although the Bible is not a scientific book, when it does address the issues of science, it is correct. Some examples:

1 Corinthians 15:41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.

Jeremiah 31:35-36 Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night . . . If this fixed order departs from before Me, declares the Lord, then the offspring of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before me forever.

Jeremiah 33:22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the seed of David, My Servant.

Ecclesiastes 1:6-7a The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to its circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full.

Isaiah 40:22 It is He who sitteth upon the circle (sphere) of the earth.

Job 38:14 It (the earth) is turned like clay to the seal . . .

Leviticus 11:17a The life of the flesh is in the blood.

2. Experience

Although this is not a definitive proof of the authenticity of the Bible, it is one. I know that the Bible is true because I did what it says and have experienced the truth of it. It tells me how to have joy, and it works. It tells us of salvation, and it changes lives.

One of the greatest proofs of scripture is that lives have been changed when its principles have been followed.

3. Christ

Contrary to liberal opinions, Christ believed and trusted the Bible, (the Old Testament Scriptures). Therefore, the Old Testament must be true. If it is not we have two options, 1) Christ knew them to be false and presented them as true, in which case he is a liar, or 2) Christ did not know them to be true. In both cases Christ would be less than omniscient God and therefore not God at all.

Matthew 5:18 Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand:)

Matthew 22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

John 5:46-47 (46) For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. **(47)** But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

4. Miracles

Another proof of authenticity is the presence of miracles in the Bible. In every case where a miracle is mentioned, there is no great buildup to it, nor is the reader prepared for the miracle. Balaam's ass spoke to him and is treated as a non-extraordinary event. Christ feeds 5,000 people without a big fanfare. Water is turned to wine without claps of thunder.

If the Bible were of human origin, miracles would have played a much greater role, or else would have been explained in some manner. The fact that the Bible treats a miracle no differently than any other event shows that it must be a divine book. A miracle to God is no different than the routine events of life.

Also, take the miracle of the resurrection of Christ. The fact of Christ's resurrection is unrefutable.

- a. If he did not rise from the dead, and it was a big hoax, why did all of the disciples die horrible deaths rather than confess the resurrection as a big joke.
- b. All the religious rulers had to do to kill Christianity at it's birth was to produce the body of Christ. Unfortunately, there was no body to produce.
- c. Christ appeared, and ate, with upwards 500 people after his resurrection.
- d. The disciples DID NOT EVEN BELIEVE CHRIST was going to rise again. Thomas did not believe. Peter went back to fishing. This is hardly the scenario for the disciples stealing the body.
- e. The tomb was sealed and guarded by professional soldiers. There wasn't any way for the motley band of disciples to steal Christ's body away.

Christ arose! The biggest miracle of them all.

5. Prophecy

A fifth, and most convincing, proof of the authenticity of the Bible is the record of fulfilled prophecy. Approximately 25% of the Bible is prophecy. Note the following facts:

Cyrus the Persian is mentioned by NAME more than 150 years before his birth.

Christ fulfilled many prophecies TO THE LETTER during his earthly ministry.

The dispersion and destruction of the nation of Israel was predicted hundreds of years before the event.

Daniel is essentially a textbook on history from the Babylonian Empire to the Roman. When Daniel mentions the Greek Empire, they were shepherds in Macedonia, hardly stock for future world leaders.

The destruction of Babylon, Tyre, Sidon, Jerusalem, Jericho, Nineveh, Capernaum, Chorazin, and many other historical places were all predicted many years prior to the events and all occurred exactly as predicted.

For someone to read the Bible and not come away in awe of the prophetic record is for them to deny the reality of the words they read.

Chapter 4

Difficulties in Biblical Interpretation

Difficulties in Biblical Interpretation

Before beginning a study of principles of interpretation, we need to take a brief look at some of the gaps we need to overcome in order to rightly divide the Word. Although this session treats these as somewhat disconnected from one another, they are in actuality very much connected, and as a total form what we could call the context of any Biblical passage.

A. Language Gap

The first of the primary gaps to be bridged in Biblical Interpretation is that of language. The original manuscripts of the Bible were written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

Hebrew and Aramaic

The majority of the Old Testament, in fact all but a few scattered passages, is written in Hebrew. Hebrew is a simple language without many abstractions read from right to left. Hebrew is a very "down-to-earth" language. Aramaic, for all intents and purposes, is very much like Hebrew. Aramaic was the spoken language in the days of Christ and is probably the language he used most often.

By the time of Christ, Hebrew as a spoken language was pretty much limited to the Pharisees and Scribes. In fact, when the first contingent of Jews returned to Jerusalem in the time of Ezra, circa 400 B.C., Ezra had to read the Hebrew scriptures and interpret them to the people since they did not know Hebrew themselves. You could compare this to the use of Latin in the Catholic Church today.

Greek

The entire New Testament was written in Greek. Greek is a very complex language consisting of many abstractions. One of the major difficulties in translating Greek into English is that the Greek language has many verb forms that have no English equivalents. This makes the translator's task extremely difficult and counts for, in many cases, differences in the modern translations.

Another major problem regarding languages is the many different Biblical texts that have survived. There are literally thousands of fragments of the New Testament in existence today. It is the job of the Textual Critic to digest these many different fragments and determine the original content of the various parts of the New Testament.

This study, that of textual criticism, is important in that it allows the reconstruction of the actual text of the New Testament within an accuracy of over 99.99%. Some people have a problem in understanding that the accuracy

can be this high when there are literally thousands of extant manuscripts. These people think that since there are so many manuscripts that vary in content, some significantly, that there is no way to reconstruct the original text. In actuality, the opposite is true. Because there are so many manuscripts they can be carefully compared with one another. Those manuscripts that are evidently corrupt can be excluded with the result that the rest of the manuscripts agree with one another very well. It is safe to say that the Bible we hold is translated from a Greek text that is over 99.99% percent accurate.

Several points need to be made here:

1. IN NO WAY does any foundational doctrine of the Christian faith rest on the omission or inclusion of ANY questioned text in the New Testament.
2. IT IS NOT correct to say that the Bible we have today contains gross error due to the problems of textual criticism. In fact, 90% of the textual differences discovered have to do with spelling.
3. IT IS NOT correct to say that the King James Version is the most accurate translation today, or for that matter, it is not correct to say that any version is perfect. WHENEVER TRANSLATION FROM ONE LANGUAGE TO ANOTHER OCCURS, SOMETHING IS LOST!
4. IT IS NOT correct to label as liberal or satanic people who exclude questioned verses and fragments of verses. As an example look at 1 John 5:7. There is strong evidence to show that this verse is omitted in many early manuscripts of the New Testament and is therefore not included in many modern translations such as the New International Version. However, the doctrine of the trinity does not rise and fall on this verse. The doctrine of the trinity is contained throughout the Bible.
5. The job of the textual critic is to determine, to the best of their ability, the original content of the New Testament. This can be done with near perfect accuracy using the manuscripts available today. In fact, it is safe to say that well over 99% of the Bible is translated from manuscripts that are identical to the originals.

The manuscripts of the New Testament fall into 4 major types within 4 major families. These are:

Types:

The Papyri - papyrus fragments containing many varied passages in the NT there are 85 papyrus fragments

The Uncials - vellum (parchment) also contains codices (books) most famous Siniaticus and Vaticanus we have about 268 of these

The Minuscules - vellum manuscripts written in cursive text there are 2,792 of these

Lectonaries - daily devotionals there are 2,193 of these

Families:

Alexandrian - These originated in Alexandria Egypt. They have the earliest known manuscripts available and are considered by some to be superior in quality to the other texts. They form the basis of all translations other than the King James and New King James. These texts are known as the "neutral text" by Westcott and Hort.

Western - Originated in the Western part of the Roman Empire.

Byzantine - Also called majority texts since 80% of manuscripts fall into this category.

Cesarean - Origins with Origen?

B. Culture Gap

The second major gap to be bridged in Biblical interpretation is that of culture. In fact, it is safe to say that this is the major gap to be bridged if proper understanding and application of the Bible is to be made.

What do we mean by culture? We mean that we need to understand the customs of Biblical times in order to understand the meaning of the Bible when it was written.

For example, how are we to interpret 1 Corinthians 12-14? It is not possible unless we have an understanding of the city of Corinth, an understanding of the problems faced by the church, and an understanding of the cultural setting of the mystery religions which are alluded to throughout these three chapters. How about Genesis? It cannot be understood without a knowledge of the culture of that time. Some examples: Why did Abraham have a child by Hagar?, What is the meaning of Abraham's sleep and God passing through the dead animals?, What is the meaning of the blessing on the firstborn?. All these questions, and more, depend on a proper understanding of the culture of that day.

Another element of culture is the material aspect. It helps to know what the various items are that are mentioned throughout the Bible. For example, What is a phylactery?, what are the horns of the altar?, what did a Jewish house look like?, what did a chariot look like?

C. History Gap

This is another essential chasm that must be bridged before proper understanding of the Bible can occur. We must be able to understand the historical and contextual background of every portion of scripture.

A prime example is the discourse between the Jewish rulers and Pilate. By understanding some of the history of the tensions between Pilate and the Jews, it is easy to see why he was coerced into crucifying Christ.

This gap must also be bridged for each book in the Bible. Why were the books of Colossians and 1 John written? What is the historical context of Hebrews and Philemon. Once these questions are asked and the answers found, the purpose and content of the passages involved make much more sense.

It is a good idea to obtain a general knowledge of world history as it relates to the Bible. What was going on in nations around Israel in the Old Testament era? What happened between the Old and New Testaments? What was life like in the Old and New Testament times? Once an understanding of these issues is obtained, many obscure parts of the Old and New Testaments make sense.

D. Geography

A minor, but helpful, gap that must be closed is that of geography. A sense of distances, directions, and proportions is very helpful in understanding various portions of scripture.

For example, what does it mean to "go down to Jericho from Jerusalem?." By knowing that Jerusalem is at an elevation of about 5,000 feet above sea level, and Jericho is at 1,000 feet below sea level, and the distance between them is only a few miles, it is easy to see why it says "down to Jericho."

How far was Emmaus from Jerusalem? Where was Mount Carmel? Where was Mount Sinai? Where was the Decapolis? All of these geographical tidbits are essential to a proper reconstruction of the time and land of the Bible.

E. Literature

The final gap that must be bridged in Biblical interpretation is that of literature. The Bible is a literary work and must be understood in its literary context.

For example, one must be able to identify the various figures of speech throughout the Bible; similes, metaphors, personification, antimony, parable, poetry, and many other literary forms. Many problems arise when one takes poetical parts of the Bible and treats them as historical narrative.

Special cases in this area are Parables and Prophetic imagery. There are rules that can be followed to lead one to correct interpretation of these "extended figures of speech."

Chapter 5

Context in Biblical Interpretation

Context in Biblical Interpretation

Probably no other single element of Biblical Interpretation is disregarded more than this. More theological baloney and false systems of religion have grown out of passages lifted from context than any other source of Biblical misinterpretation.

Context is a broad issue as it involves not only understanding the historical setting, geographical setting, culture, and language, but many other elements such as events, human setting, and the purpose of the passage. (history, geography, culture, and language will be discussed later)

The basic statement that underlies this element of Biblical interpretation is:

Each passage in the Bible is correctly understood only when the historical setting, cultural setting, geographical setting, literary style, space-time events, and its purpose is known.

Basically, the above statement says that recorded Biblical passages are only understood when put into their original context.

For example, in John 8:12-20 we find Christ's discourse in the Temple treasury where he states "I am the light of the world." This statement can only be understood by discovering that the location of this statement is in the Temple treasury during the feast of dedication. The feast of dedication originated around 165 B.C. to commemorate the supposed discovery of holy oil which lasted 7 days instead of 1 during the restoration and cleansing of the temple after the successful Maccabean revolt. During the week prior to Christ's statement, a giant menorah poured light out all over Jerusalem from the treasury area. It is in this context Christ offers himself as the true light.

A. Elements of Context

1. Audience

One of the first questions the Bible interpreter needs to ask about any passage is "Who is it talking to?" Many errors are propagated when passages dealing with one group of people are interpreted as talking to another. A prime example of this is the Book of Hebrews. Throughout Hebrews, there are three audiences being spoken to at different times, believers, unbelievers, and Jews who are intellectually convinced of the truth of scripture but are sitting on the fence and reluctant to make a commitment to Christ. The problem passages of Hebrews 5 and 6 can only be properly interpreted by understanding that the writer of Hebrews is changing his audience from one group to another throughout the passage.

Another prime example of this element being disregarded is the kingdom blessings to Israel throughout the Old Testament prophetic books such as

Isaiah. Many Bible teachers have taken the stance that these passage refer to the Church, not Israel. This has all kinds of nasty implications such as:

- 1). The kingdom blessings to Israel have been voided.
- 2). If the Church is the recipient of these blessings, what do we do about the curses?
- 3). The eschatology of the books of Daniel and Revelation become unintelligible.
- 4). God is a liar.

2. Time

This is another element of context that is disregarded by many so-called Bible scholars. One of the prime proofs of Biblical Inspiration is fulfilled prophecy. How do modern liberal eggheads deny this? They postdate all prophetic passages to a time period after the events had occurred. For example:

Daniel was written by a writer around 165 B.C., years after the events recorded in Daniel occurred.

Isaiah was written by at least two, possibly three authors. Isaiah 1-40 is called First Isaiah, Isaiah 41-66 is called Second Isaiah and was written by a pious scribe years after the prophet Isaiah was dead.

Moses did not write the Pentateuch. It was really written by at least four authors and edited many times taking it's final form sometime around 700 B.C.

Not only have the prophetic books suffered when time is disregarded, but many other odd things arise as well. For example, many scholars in the past asserted that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch since it was too advanced for his time. Others have postdated many books of the Bible years and centuries after the books themselves state. This throws the whole flow of scripture off.

Although it is not usually possible to exactly pinpoint the exact year of many books of the Bible, most notably Job, it is possible to get the time of their origin down to only a few years.

3. Author

This is of less importance than the previous two elements but should not be disregarded. Knowing the author of a passage is very helpful sometimes in understanding it's setting and meaning. Although many of the books of the Bible can be pretty much ascribed to known writers, there are some that we cannot accurately assign. Hebrews is a good example. Many would say that Paul wrote it, but the terms and language used are very definitely non-Pauline.

4. Problem at hand

Some of the books of the Bible were written to counteract specific problems or heresies in the early church. For example:

Jude was written to defend the once-delivered-to-the-saints faith and to counteract apostasy.

Hebrews was written to encourage fence-sitters to make a commitment to Christ before it was too late.

Colossians was written to counteract the beginning forms of gnosticism which put emphasis on experience, angel worship, and the teaching that Christ is not sufficient.

Luke and Acts were written as historical records of the events of Christ's life and the history of the early Church.

Philemon was written to encourage Philemon to take back Onesimus, a runaway slave, instead of killing him.

5. Subject of Passage

This is another essential element of context we need to know. This includes the audience, time, setting, and purpose as well as any other tangible or intangible factors.

For example, we cannot understand the kingdom parables of Christ in Matthew 13 without understanding their subject, the form of the interim Kingdom of God, i.e. the Church. Once we figure this out, the interpretation of these is made much easier.

6. Location

This element of context is not nearly as essential as the others although a knowledge of the location of a book or passage will sometimes aid its interpretation. For example, in knowing that the book of 2 Timothy was written by Paul when he was in a dank dungeon awaiting his imminent execution puts a whole new light in understanding that book. Many of the Psalms are correctly understood only when the location of their writing is known.

B. Circles of Context

In further examining context as it relates to Biblical interpretation, let's look at the various circles of context. These can be thought of as ever-decreasing circles which ultimately focus on the real meaning of each Biblical passage.

1. Scripture

The first circle is scripture, specifically, what is the context of the Bible as a whole. **THIS IS THE STARTING POINT AND WILL DETERMINE THE WAY YOU VIEW AND ULTIMATELY INTERPRET EVERY PASSAGE IN THE BIBLE.**

We believe that the Bible is God's revelation to man. In it we find specific instructions for our lives now as well as guidelines and requirements for the life to come. On the other hand, liberals treat the Bible as just another piece of ancient literature. In doing so, they rob the Bible of its timeless relevance and authority over our lives. They study the Bible as a scientist would study a flower and miss the creator.

2. Book

The next circle of context is the book. The question here is, How does this book fit into the overall scheme of scripture? What would I miss if this book was not here? Attention is paid at this point to the various categorizations of books in the Bible.

Old Testament

Pentateuch	- Genesis through Deuteronomy
History	- Joshua through Esther
Poetry and Wisdom	- Job through Song of Solomon
Major Prophets	- Isaiah through Daniel
Minor Prophets	- Hosea through Malachi

New Testament

History	- Matthew through Acts
Pauline Epistles	- Romans through Hebrews?
Pastoral Epistles	- 1 Thessalonians through Titus
General Epistles	- James through Jude
Apocalypse	- Revelations

Another point to consider here is that the books of the Bible do not necessarily appear in chronological order. For example, the book of Esther occurs near the end of the Old Testament period although it appears in the middle of the Old Testament.

3. Passage

The term passage is more appropriate here than chapter. Although the organizers of our Bible did a fairly good job at breaking it into chapters, there are instances where the chapter divisions actually occur in the middle of paragraphs and passages. Sometimes we need to examine the preceding and following chapters to determine if the chapter break is good or not.

An example is Hebrews 6 where the real chapter break should be 5:20.

4. Paragraph

Passages are made up of paragraphs each of which has a unique thought and purpose. Again, we need to examine preceding and following paragraphs to understand the real purpose of any paragraph in the Bible.

5. Sentence

What does each sentence say and why?

Also, note that sentences are an artificial help. The original manuscripts of the Bible did not have word or sentence breaks. Because of this, sometimes we find sentence breaks where there should not be any, and vice versa.

A good example of this is Psalm 121:1-2.

Chapter 6

History, Culture, Geography

History, Culture, Geography

A. History

History is an essential facet of context that cannot be neglected if one is to correctly understand the Bible. Many reasons exist for this.

1. The vast majority of the Bible, over 40%, consists of a literary form called historical narrative. This literary form is characterized by descriptions of historical events and people similar to newspaper articles. Historical narrative gives the history of God's dealings with man as well as forms the basis for our faith.
2. All major Bible doctrines find their origin in historical events. The origin of sin, ministry of Christ, giving of the law to Moses, crucifixion of Christ, resurrection of Christ, birth of the church, and many other doctrines all find their basis in historical events. It is not possible to separate these doctrines from the event without doing violence to the Bible. For example, many liberal scholars say that the origin of sin is only pictured in Genesis 3. There was not a real Adam, real Eve, real serpent, real tree, real event! They say that the story of man's fall is parabolic, not factual. However, to deny the fall as an historical event exactly the way Genesis pictures it is to invalidate the claims of Paul who used this event as the origin and basis of sin. See Romans 5 and 2 Corinthians 11:3.
3. In expanding the point above, our faith and salvation is based in the historical fact of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. To say that Christ only "spiritually" rose again is to deny the very basis of Christianity. 1 Corinthians 15 was written to the Corinthians to clarify the true importance and essential fact of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.
4. History is important in that it shows God's faithfulness to those who obey his commandments and his judgment on those who are disobedient. Throughout the Old Testament we see this time and time again. In fact, Paul states in 1 Corinthians 10 that all of the things that were written about Israel are written for our instruction and learning. Therefore, although the events depicted are historical, they show us how God has dealt with men in the past and how he will deal with men in the future.
5. A knowledge of history is important if any sense at all is to be made of the Old Testament prophetic books. It is not possible to understand the visions of Daniel without an understanding of world history. Daniel's prophecies encompass the world history from his period to the time of the Messiah, omit the Church age, and pick up again during the Tribulation and continue through the Millennium. His prophecies deal with historical events which MUST be known if one wishes to understand Daniel. The same holds true of Zechariah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. Additionally, the prophetic

books of the Old Testament were written at a specific historical time for a specific historical reason. To exclude history in one's consideration of these books is to destroy the only basis for truly understanding their significance and ultimate meaning.

6. Finally, removing the Bible from its historical foundations removes any hope in understanding the real meaning of scripture. That is essentially what is being said in the five points above. We have an historical faith based on historical facts, not a spiritual faith based on spiritualized facts.

In order to analyze the importance of history let us look at two historical events which cannot be understood without examining the historical background.

1. Pilate's Condemnation of Christ

Why did Pilate condemn Christ, whom he knew to be completely innocent of any crime, to death? When the historical background is examined we find that Pilate had very bad relations with the Jewish people. When he first took power, he marched into Jerusalem with army standards topped with golden eagles. This started a riot because the Jews considered these idolatrous. His second mistake was to take money from the temple to construct a new aqueduct to the city. This incensed the Jewish people resulting in a riot which caused the death of many Jews. His third screw-up was to put the Emperor's image on the shields of his soldiers. This resulted in a reprimand from the Emperor Tiberius himself.

Now it is easy to understand how Pilate was coerced into killing Jesus, his job (and head) were on the line. When the leaders told him "if you let him go, you are not Caesar's friend" he got the point. The last thing he needed was a riot. Because he was fearful of losing his job, he lost his soul.

2. Why were the Jewish leaders so vehement in their hatred of Christ? Why did they crucify their Messiah?

By examining the background of Jewish sectarianism, we find two major religious sects, the Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees were the interpreters of the law. They were the ones who argued what it meant to work on the Sabbath, what it meant to keep the law, and any other matters related to interpreting the law.

On the other hand, the Sadducees were the ones who ran the temple. They were the aristocracy. When Christ threw the money changers out of the temple he hit the Sadducees right in their pocketbooks. Additionally, the Sadducees were worried since Christ appeared to be the perpetrator of a bid for Jewish political autonomy from Rome. That is the last thing the Sadducees wanted since they made a lot of money under the Romans and were perfectly happy not to have someone upset the apple cart.

So we see that the Pharisees hated Christ because he went against all of their teachings and exposed them as the false spiritual leaders they were. The Sadducees hated Christ since he hit them in the wallet and threatened to destroy the political order that made them very rich. For intellectual pride the Pharisees sold their souls, for wealth and power the Sadducees sold theirs.

B. Culture

If history is the setting, culture is the coloring. In discussing culture we are basically dealing with two aspects: material and non-material.

Material culture consists of the things used by the society of that day. Included in this are farm tools, weapons, housewares, and any other physical item. It is important to understand what each item mentioned in the Bible is and what its purpose was. For example, what is a phylactery, what does a sword look like?, what does a scroll look like?, what did the temple furniture look like? The answers to these questions have a bearing on proper interpretation of the Bible.

Non-material culture consists of three components. The cognitive component consists of knowledge and beliefs, the normative component consists of values and norms (expected behavior), and the symbolic component consists of signs and language.

1. Cognitive component.

The cognitive component consists of the various form and extent of knowledge and beliefs. It is important to remember this when dealing with the Bible. It is easy for us as twentieth century sophisticates to read our knowledge and beliefs back into Biblical times. It is essential for us to interpret the Bible in light of what people knew and believed at the time it was written.

An example of this is Nicodemus. When Christ told Nicodemus that he needed to be born of the water and the spirit many Bible commentators say that what Christ is saying is that a man must be born physically (of water) and spiritually (of God). However, to give this passage that interpretation reads modern medical knowledge back into a period before that was understood. This obscures the true meaning of the passage. What Christ is really saying is that Nicodemus must be born of the water of the word and then of the Spirit. This is what Ezekiel said in Ezekiel 36:25. Paul also refers to this in Titus 3:5.

A further example of this is Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We need to understand that the idea of Christ's death and resurrection DID NOT COMPUTE with the disciples. From the time they were old enough to understand, they were taught that the Messiah would bring political freedom. They were not looking for a savior, they were looking for a King. When Christ told them of his death they were flabbergasted. In fact, the reason Judas betrayed Christ was that Judas expected to be a powerful person in the kingdom. When Christ told them of his death Judas decided to bail out. This concept is the key to unraveling the prophecies of Matthew 24, 25, and 26.

2. Normative component

The normative component of culture refers to the values, what is and is not important, and norms, what is expected, of a society. This means that the Bible interpreter must ask himself, "What values were important to a person living in the time of the passage I am interpreting?", and "What was expected of members of the society in the time of the passage I am interpreting?."

For example, it is not an important value for people to have children today. However, in Bible times it was a scandal and often was interpreted as some kind of judgment from God. This idea helps us to understand the anxiety faced by Abraham and Sarah, Rachel, and Hannah.

The marriage at Cana is another example. In those days wedding feasts lasted as long as a week. It was the event of one's life to be a participant in a wedding. Because of this, it was very important to have enough food and wine. When we understand that the number one scandal in a wedding is to run out of wine we can clearly see the concern of the wedding participants.

Norms are the other facet of the normative component. Norms can be best understood as the various customs and expectations of members of society. The parable of the Ten Virgins is incomprehensible to someone who does not have an understanding of Jewish wedding customs. Paul uses several words borrowed from the Roman legal system to describe foundational doctrines such as adoption, justification, redemption. The covenant God made with Abraham and the splitting of the animals is not understandable without a knowledge of the customs of that time.

In conclusion, we must be very careful not to read our values and customs back into Biblical accounts. To do so makes it impossible to get at the true meaning.

3. Symbolic component

The symbolic component of culture refers to the signs and language used by members of a society to communicate with one another. Since the language aspect of this was covered under the discussion on the gaps we need to overcome in Biblical understanding, we will look only at the symbolic part of this component.

Symbols are important since much of the prophetic parts of scripture use symbolic language extensively. One good thing about the Bible is that a symbol usually retains its meaning throughout the scriptures. This is very helpful when faced with a symbol which needs definition.

For example, in many prophetic passages we read of "horns." By comparing the use of this symbol throughout the Bible we find that the horn refers to strength. This is easily understood when considering that the animals bred by the people of Bible times fought using their horns, e.g. rams and goats. Therefore, when we read of the horn of Greece being broken we easily understand that referring to the loss of power, more specifically, the death of Alexander the Great.

Another example is leaven. Many Bible commentators say that leaven is a picture of sin. This is not true. Leaven is a picture of influence. To say that leaven is a picture of sin is to say the Kingdom of Heaven referred to in Matthew 13 is evil.

A third example is oil. Many times oil speaks of the anointing of the Holy Spirit in symbolic literature. In the parable of the Ten Virgins, the oil seems to represent the presence of God in the form of the Holy Spirit.

Other examples are eyes representing intelligence or wisdom, a white horse symbolizing victory, a red horse symbolizing war and bloodshed, the right hand symbolizing the place of blessing and honor, and white symbolizing purity.

Another facet of symbolic language is names. Many times the names ascribed to Biblical characters have a great bearing in understanding them. Abraham means "the father of many." Ichabod means "the glory has departed." Immanuel means "God with us." In fact, just about every Old Testament name has a meaning which helps in interpreting passages dealing with that person.

C. Geography

A final facet of context is geography. The Biblical student needs to become familiar with places, distances, and geographic locations if proper understanding of the Bible is to be reached.

For example, whenever the prophets refer to Jerusalem being attacked, they always refer to the armies coming out of the north. When the invasion of Babylon is predicted, it is said that the invasion will come from the north. Why is that since Babylon is actually east of Jerusalem? Well, when one examines the terrain around Jerusalem, it is discovered that the only possible invasion route is from the north. To the south is the Idumean desert, to the east is mountains, to the west is mountains, but to the north is a good invasion route.

A knowledge of geography is essential in understanding prophetic passages such as Ezekiel 38 and 39. Who is Gomer, Togarmah, Gog, Magog, Meshech, Tubal, and Rosh? Who is Phut? The answer to all of these has direct implications on the correct interpretation of that prophetic passage.

Knowledge of where the tribes of Israel were located, the extent of the land God promised Abraham, the journeys of Christ, and the journeys of Paul all need resolution before many parts of the Bible become understandable.

Chapter 7

Literary Style

Literary Style

Literary style refers to the various figures of speech and literary forms that are used to convey thought. The underlying thesis of this section on Hermeneutics is as follows:

The Bible is a literary work and must be understood in its intended literary context. This includes the various figures of speech, both short and extended, as well as various literary forms such as prophetic and historical narrative.

As important as literary style is, though, there is a problem. That problem is the correct interpretation and identification of the various literary forms. When a passage containing historical narrative is treated as a fable, all kinds of hermeneutical problems arise. Because of this difficulty, we need to spend some time describing the various literary forms found in scripture so that we can correctly identify and interpret various passages. However, we must also keep in mind that some passages are difficult to label in regards to literary form and as a result cannot be treated as dogmatically as others.

A. Short Figures of Speech

1. Simile

A simile is a figure of speech that compares two objects using LIKE or AS. This is a very common figure of speech throughout the Bible. Some examples of this are:

Jeremiah 23:29 Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

Luke 10:3 Go your ways: Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.

Matthew 24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

2. Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech very much like the simile except that the comparison is direct, not indirect. This figure of speech needs careful analysis because it is the misinterpretation of this figure of speech that has caused some significant theological differences of interpretation. Let us examine a few examples:

John 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Luke 8:21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren, are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

Jeremiah 2:13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

From the above examples we see that metaphors directly compare two objects.

One metaphor that has been misinterpreted by many people is the metaphor Christ used when instituting the Lord's supper.

Luke 22:17-20 (17) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: (18) For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. (19) And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. (20) Likewise also the cup after supper saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

This metaphor, that of the wine representing Christ's blood and the bread symbolizing his body, is taken by some as referring the actual body and blood of Christ. However, there is no evidence to support this. Christ is metaphorically depicting his sacrifice for our sins. We must be careful not to attribute fact to metaphors or else we will have problems correctly interpreting scriptures.

3. Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which the name of one thing is substituted for another because the two things are frequently associated together. An example would be "the crown" when referring to the king or "the White House" when referring to the president.

Luke 16:29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.

Genesis 42:38b ...then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Other examples of this figure of speech are circumcision used to refer to Israel and uncircumcision to refer to Gentiles, Greeks to refer to the wise, and Sheol to refer to the grave.

4. Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which part of something is used to refer to the whole. Some examples of this are:

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 Peter 3:20b ...wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water.

This same figure of speech is used throughout prophetic literature in which Jerusalem is used to refer to all of Israel, and Samaria is used to refer to northern Israel.

5. Personification

Personification is a figure of speech in which human attributes are given to inanimate objects.

Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the heavens and the earth fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Matthew 8:27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now.

6. Apostrophe

Apostrophe is a figure of speech in which words are addressed to something regarded as a person, or to a person themselves.

1 Corinthians 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

2 Samuel 18:33 O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.

Psalms 104:24 O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

7. Ellipsis

Ellipsis refers to an idea that is not fully presented grammatically but requires the addition of words by the reader to make sense. This is illustrated by the following example:

Romans 11:22 Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God, if you continue in the sphere of God's goodness; for otherwise [if you do not continue in the sphere of God's goodness], you also will be cut off.

8. Euphemism

A euphemism is a word or phrase that is substituted for another because the more appropriate word would be distasteful or inappropriate.

Acts 1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

Leviticus 18:6 None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness, I am the Lord.

Genesis 4:25 And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew.

9. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a conscious exaggeration by a writer to intensify a thought.

John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

Numbers 13:33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

Matthew 16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

B. Extended Figures of Speech

1. Fables

A fable is an extended figure of speech that uses animals or plants in a story to convey moral truths. Aesop's fables are excellent examples of this.

When examining fables in the scripture, we must be careful to correctly identify them. Many Bible scholars today say that the book of Jonah and Baalam's ass are fables, not historical events. However, by looking at some of the fables in the Bible we find that a fable is readily identified as such.

Jotham's Fable against political tyranny - Judges 9:1-21

Jehoash's Fable against pride - 2 Kings 14:9

Ezekiel's fable against an alliance with Egypt - Ezekiel 17

Some rules that can guide us in interpreting fables are:

1. Understand the contemporary setting which caused the speaker to use a fable.

2. Is the fable trying to teach one, or many points.
3. See what influence the fable had on the hearers.
4. Determine why the point of the fable is important and what bearing it has on us.

2. Parables

A parable can be considered an extended simile that is used to express divine truth. Jesus used parables extensively in his teaching ministry to make divine truths understandable. Contrary to many modern interpretations, parables in and of themselves are simple comparisons. Mistakes in interpretation are made when parables are extended far beyond their original purpose and used to teach truths they have no bearing on.

For example, the parable of the Ten Virgins is NOT a parable teaching the rapture of the church. It is a parable to teach the imminent and unexpected return of Christ at the second coming. The entire context of the passage in which the parable appears is the second coming, not the rapture.

Some rules for interpreting parables:

1. Identify the earthly details of the parable. Remember that the parable refers to common, everyday events and objects as opposed to rare and obscure events.
2. Identify important and unimportant elements of the parable. Not all elements of the parable contribute to its interpretation and meaning. Sometimes details are inserted to lend color to its setting.
3. Identify the spiritual attitude and mind-set of the original hearers.
4. Identify the reason for the parable. The parables regarding the kingdom of God in Matthew 13 are meant to show the interim form of the kingdom of God.
5. Identify the main point of the parable.
6. If details or symbols in the parable are explained by the parable, seek no other definitions.
7. Identify the impact of the parable on the hearers.

3. Allegories

An allegory is an extended metaphor in which all of the details of the allegory refer directly to the original object or event.

There are NO allegories in scripture with the possible exception of the allegory in Galatians 3. Allegories were used extensively in the early period of the church with sometimes detrimental results. Whenever allegories are

applied, original historical events and settings lose their importance. That is, the truthfulness of the original historical event is not relevant since the allegorized meaning is what is emphasized. For example, the fall of man as an historical event is not relevant, but the moral teaching of the story is. The event of Jonah being swallowed by a whale is not important, but the moral lesson being taught is.

Chapter 8

Types, Symbols, Human Perspective

Types, Symbols, and Human Perspective

A. Typology

A type is defined as the relationship between a person, event, or thing in the Old Testament with a person, event, or thing in the New Testament. The person, event, or thing in the Old Testament is defined as the type and the person, event, or thing in the New Testament is defined as the archetype.

Many entities are considered as types in the Bible and are directly treated as such. However, one must be careful not to over-type people, events, or things, especially when the correspondence between the two things is weak or nonexistent.

Types are used in the Bible to prefigure or provide a picture of something or someone that will be more fully explained and understood in the fullness of his revelation. For example, the tabernacle given to Moses in the book of Leviticus is a type or shadow of the heavenly tabernacle that exists in heaven right now. God used types to give a shadow or picture before he was ready to fully reveal the archetype.

Some examples of types and archetypes will help to solidify this concept.

1. Passover and Christ

The fact that the passover is a type of Christ is hardly debatable. When the passover was instituted in the Old Testament, specific rules and regulations were given regarding the event and the passover lamb. The passover lamb had to be without blemish (Leviticus 12:5). Christ was sacrificed for us as a lamb without spot or blemish (1 Peter 1:18). Christ's crucifixion occurred at the precise moment the national passover lamb was being sacrificed in the temple, 3:00 in the afternoon. John the Baptist calls Christ "the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The bulk of Hebrews 9 and 10 picture Christ as the final sacrifice for all time, the fulfillment of all of the pictures of the Old Testament.

2. Bronze Serpent and Christ

When the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness they murmured against the provision of God. God, in his righteous anger, sent serpents among the camp to kill those who grumbled. To stop the judgment of God, Moses was instructed to make a serpent of bronze and put it on a pole. All who looked at the serpent would be cured of the snakebite. Christ, in John 3:14-15, states:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

3. Adam and Christ

Adam is depicted as a type of Christ in the New Testament inasmuch as Adam was our federal head to sin and death, but Christ is our federal head to righteousness and life. This is outlined in Romans 5. Paul shows that just as all men were condemned through Adam's transgression, even so all men can be redeemed through Christ's sacrifice. This type is expanded in 1 Corinthians 15:22 where we read:

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

4. Melchizedek and Christ

In Hebrews 7 we find references to Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem (Jerusalem). The writer of Hebrews goes to great lengths to show that Melchizedek is a type of Christ in that:

- a. Melchizedek had neither beginning nor end of days (no one knows when he was born or when he died).
- b. Melchizedek was both priest and king, something that did not exist under the Mosaic law.
- c. Melchizedek foreshadowed an everlasting priesthood.

Rules for Interpreting Types

1. Do not treat something as a type unless the New Testament specifically identifies it as a type.
2. Identify the common characteristics of the type and the antitype.
3. Do not extend the comparison between the type and antitype beyond the clearly common characteristics. To do so invalidates the type and invites error.
4. Do not teach doctrine from types. Only use types to clarify a doctrine taught elsewhere in scripture.

B. Symbols

Symbols, like words, form an essential part of language and literature. Symbols are found throughout the Bible and are used to clarify, not muddy, the revelation of God.

Symbols have three distinct characteristics:

1. The symbol itself is a literal object.
2. The symbol is used to convey some lesson or truth.

3. The connection between the literal object and the lesson or truth it teaches becomes clearer when we learn what the one who used the symbol meant to convey by it.

Symbols fall into several distinct classes.

1. Miraculous symbols

Miraculous symbols are somewhat rare in scripture but convey powerfully some truth regarding God. For example, the flaming sword at the entrance to the garden of Eden graphically portrayed the rupture between man and God. The pillar of fire and cloud in the wilderness showed God's presence. The shekinah glory in the temple and tabernacle was a symbol of God's presence.

2. Visional symbols

Visional symbols form one of the basic methods of God's revelation of truth to his prophets. The symbol of the basket of summer fruit in Amos 8:1-12 is a picture of God's speedy judgment of Israel. Just as a basket of fruit late in the summer had to be eaten or it would spoil, so God will no longer hesitate to judge the sin of Israel. Other visional symbols are the candlesticks and olive trees in Zechariah, the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel, the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, and the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.

3. Material symbols

These symbols are used to directly compare two entities because the relationship between them is so evident. For example, blood throughout the Bible is a symbol of life. Leaven is a symbol of influence. The sword is a symbol of war. Other examples abound.

4. Numbers, Names, Colors, and Metals

Numbers:

7 is the number of God and perfection
6 is the number of man

Names:

Immanuel = God with us
Jesus = savior
Ichabod = the glory has departed
Jezreel = scattered
Stephen = victorious
Abraham = blessed father of many
Isaac = laughter

Colors:

White = purity or victory
Red = war
Black = sin

Metals:

Gold	= value
Bronze	= judgment
Iron	= strength

5. Actions

Sometimes actions are used to symbolically depict truths. For example, the acts of Ezekiel and John in eating scrolls symbolically depict the reception of God's revelation. Furthermore, for John the act of eating the scroll resulted in bitterness in the stomach, a symbol that although God's truths are sweet, there is a bitterness to them if they are unheeded. One of the major ways prophets depicted God's revelation was through symbolical actions. Ezekiel built a walled city. Jeremiah went to the house of the potter. Jeremiah redeemed his nephews property. Hosea married and redeemed a prostitute. All of these symbolically portray divine truths.

C. Human Perspective

When we speak of the Bible being written from the human perspective we mean that the Bible was written from the viewpoint of men. This results in anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism.

1. Anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism refers to the assignment of human qualities to God. For example, the Bible often speaks of the "arm of the Lord", the "eyes of God", "the ears of God", and "the feet of God." We know from the teaching of the Bible that God is a Spirit. He has qualities that we cannot understand or even comprehend. For God to relate to us, he must relate in human terms. For God to say he is "treeptotic" and "clyfortic" means nothing if we do not understand those terms. Because of this, the Bible often assigns human characteristics to God to aid the reader in understanding God's attributes and characteristics.

2. Anthropocentrism

Anthropocentrism refers to the human viewpoint. For example, the Bible speaks of sunset and sunrise, not earth revolving. This is because the Bible is speaking from the human viewpoint, not a purely scientific one. When the Bible says the sun stood still, it is not saying the sun stopped, it is saying the earth stopped revolving. However, to the men on the battlefield it looked exactly as though the sun stopped. For the Bible to use anthropocentrism in no way detracts from it's truthfulness any more than a scientific textbook does when it uses the human viewpoint.

Appendix A

Study Helps

Basic

Bible Commentaries

Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old and New Testament
Wycliff's Bible Commentary

Bible Concordances

Cruden's Concordance

One of the Following

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
Young's Analytical Concordance

Atlases/Dictionaries

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words
Today's Dictionary of the Bible
Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary
Oxford Bible Atlas

Advanced Helps

Greek Lexicons

Thayers
Zondervan Analytical Greek Lexicon
Moulton/Milligan

Greek/Hebrew Parallel Bible

Greek Text

Nestles
Textus Receptus
Westcott/Hort

Septuagint

Englishman's Greek Concordance

Englishman's Hebrew Concordance

Appendix B

Errors to Avoid in Biblical Interpretation

The following notes are taken from a series of articles in Moody Monthly from October 1984 to May 1985 called "Cutting it Straight" by Richard Mayhue.

1. Prooftexting

Prooftexting is when one takes a passage out of context to "prove" a pet doctrine or idea.

Examples:

1. Name-it-and-claim-it from John 14:14
2. "Guaranteed healing" from 1 Peter 2:24
3. Homosexuality from David and Jonathan (1 Sam 19:1)

2. Isolationism

Isolationism is when a passage is isolated from all immediate contexts which are needed to understand it.

Examples:

1. "Two or more gathered" in relation to prayer (Matthew 18:19-20)

3. Spiritualizing

Spiritualizing is when one reads a spiritual or historical truth into scripture rather than extracting it. This is called "eisegesis" rather than "exegesis."

Examples:

1. Church in the Old Testament
2. "Fleeces"

4. Nationalizing

Nationalizing is when one claims promises for our nation when they clearly refer to another.

Examples:

1. 2 Chronicles 7:14
2. British-Israelism
3. Armstrongism (America and Britain = Israel in the OT)

5. **Embellishing**

Embellishing is when one reads current thinking into the scriptures.

Examples:

1. Theistic evolution
2. Psychological self-esteem
3. Hyperdispensationalism

6. **Methodologizing**

Methodologizing is when one interprets scripture on an "assumed" theory of evolutionary development.

Examples:

1. Origin of Daniel
2. Documentary Hypothesis

7. **Accomodation**

Accomodation is when one views scripture through human vision. This twists the meaning of scripture to accommodate current views on issues.

Examples:

1. Sexual promiscuity
2. Abortion
3. Situation ethics

8. **Culturalizing**

Culturalizing is when one twists scripture to conform to their cultural viewpoint by relegating scripture as outdated.

Examples:

1. Feminine revolution
2. Healing

9. **Redefining**

Redefining is when one gives biblical words new meanings.

Examples:

1. Schuller and self-esteem
2. Abortion

10. Anglicizing

Anglicizing is when one interprets biblical words in light of modern meanings as opposed to the original meanings.

Examples:

1. Conversation = lifestyle
2. Confession = say the same thing as

11. Mysticizing

Mysticizing is when one finds hidden meanings in scripture by reinterpreting words and finding secret codes.

Examples:

1. 88 Reasons Why the Rapture ...
2. Hidden Prophecies in the Psalms
3. Name of the Antichrist

12. Letterism

Letterism is when one interprets scripture without considering normal figures of speech.

Examples:

1. Transubstantiation
2. Anthropomorphism

13. Legalizing

Legalizing is when one overemphasizes the letter of the scripture without considering love.

Examples:

1. Pharisees
2. Home church movement

14. Generalizing

Generalizing is when one applies scripture to all men at all times without regarding historical, individual, or time constraints.

Examples:

1. Tongues
2. Charismata
3. Healings

15. **Experientializing**

Experientializing is when one interprets scripture in light of their experience, not their experience in light of scripture.

Examples:

1. Tongues
2. Miracles

16. **Dogmatizing**

Dogmatizing is when one uses preconceived ideas or beliefs to interpret the Bible thus proving his preconceived ideas (circular reasoning).

Examples:

1. Bible Prophecy
2. Tithing

17. **Dispensationalizing**

Dispensationalizing is when scripture is rigidly interpreted as applying to one, and only one, dispensation. God's unchanging character is underemphasized while God's different methods of dealing with men are overemphasized.

Examples:

1. Mixup of Law and Grace
2. Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven

Appendix C

The Question of the Apocrypha

The Apocrypha was not included in the Bible until the Council of Trent in the 1540's. It was included by the Catholic Church as a reaction against the Protestant Reformation.

The Apocrypha is used to substantiate errant doctrines, such as prayers for the dead, the worship of angels, the veneration of saints, purgatory, and the sale of indulgences.

List of Apocryphal Books

Book	Genre	Description
Additions to Esther	Additions	Various additions to Esther
Baruch	Pseudipigrapha	Supposed writings of Baruch
Bel and the Dragon	Legend	Story regarding Daniel and Idolatry
Esdras 1	Additions	Additions to Nehemiah and Ezra
Esdras 2	Apocalyptic	Visions given by an angel Uriel
Judith	Legend	Story of Holophernes demise
Letter of Jeremiah	Pseudipigrapha	Supposed letter of Jeremiah
Maccabees 1	History	Intertestamental history
Maccabees 2	History	Intertestamental history
Maccabees 3	History	History of Jews in Egypt
Maccabees 4	Morality	Greek philosophy of religion
Prayer of Manasseh	Additions	Supposed prayer of Manasseh
Ecclesiasticus	Wisdom	Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach
Song of 3 Young Men	Additions	Additions to Daniel
Susanna	Additions	Story of Daniel's Wisdom
Tobit	Legend	Story of love and intrigue
Wisdom of Solomon	Additions	Additions to Proverbs

Why the Apocrypha is Rejected

1. The Jews Rejected the Apocrypha
2. Christ and the Apostles never quoted from it
3. It is obviously not inspired due to historical blunders and contradictions regarding doctrinal teachings taught elsewhere in the Bible
4. Its inspiration is denied by ancient and modern authorities
5. It was not accepted by the early church
6. It was only included in recent times and even then very reluctantly
7. It was not written by any recognized prophet.
8. It was written in the intertestamental times after the Old Testament canon was closed.

Appendix D

Issues Regarding Bible Versions

Some Foundational Statements

No single doctrine, minor or major, hinges on the acceptance or rejection of any questioned passage, verse, or word.

The vast majority of textual variations--points at which texts disagree--are issues of spelling or issues of obvious scribal error.

Only a very small percentage of textual variations are actually controversial, much less that one half of one percent.

Textual Variations and Their Causes

1. **Haplography:** accidental omission of repeated words or letters
2. **Dittography:** accidental duplication of words or letters
3. **Metathesis:** accidental reversal of letters or words
4. **Fusion:** accidental combining of two words into one
5. **Fission:** accidental separation of one word into two
6. **Homophony:** accidental substitution of like-sounding words
7. Misreading of similar letters, i.e. RESH and DALETH
8. **Homoeoteleuton:** accidental omission of intervening words between two lines which end in the same words or letters
9. **Homoeoarkton:** accidental omission of intervening words between two lines which begin with the same words or letters
10. Accidental omission of words

Note that by comparing several different manuscripts, most of these errors become obvious and do not pose any problem in uncovering the original text.

Note also that the vast majority of textual variations are variations of this sort.

Why Have Another Version?

1. Since language does not stagnate but evolves over time, so literary works must be sometimes updated to remain understandable with regard to vocabulary, spelling, and style.

2. New discoveries in the Middle East, especially those relating to ancient texts in Hebrew and other cognate languages, shed new light on vocabulary. This necessitates the updating of translations which depend on an older or incomplete understanding of word meanings and etymology.
3. Some wish to have a translation depend more on one set of manuscripts than another. For example, the King James and New King James are based on the Byzantine Family whereas the NIV, RSV, and NASB are based on the Alexandrian Family.
4. A new translation is desired to speak to a particular group of people in their own language. This is the basic reason behind the NIV translation.

Questions to Ask Regarding Bible Versions

1. Who are the translators? Are they men of God who are committed to the inerrancy of the scriptures, or are they liberal scholars who treat the Bible as they would any other ancient piece of literature?
2. What text is used? Is it the Byzantine, Alexandrian, or some "eclectic" text?
3. What methodology was employed to translate the text? Is it a very literal translation, such as the NASB, or is it a very free translation, such as some of the amplified Bibles?
4. Does the version slant the basic tenets of Christian theology? Is there evidence of overt tampering with particular passages without any textual reason given?
5. What type and style of language is used? Is it very reverent, or is it very bold and sharp?
6. What is the background of the reader? What translation is most easily understood?

A Ranking of Modern Versions

What follows is a subjective rating of several modern translations.

<u>Version</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Vocabulary</u>	<u>Readability</u>	<u>Translators</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Rating</u>
NKJV	Modern	Modern	VeryHigh	Evangelical	Eclectic	99
NASB	Modern	Modern	Good	Average	Alex	95
KJV	Early	Early	Good	Evangelical	Byz	90
NIV	Modern	Modern	VeryHigh	Liberal	Alex	85
RSV	Modern	Modern	Good	Liberal	Alex	65
BERK	Modern	Modern	Good	Liberal	Alex	55
DOUAY	Early	Early	Good	Catholic	Latin	50
JER	Modern	Modern	Good	Catholic	Eclectic	50
NRSV	Modern	Modern	Good	Liberal	Alex	50
NWT	Modern	Modern	Good	Cultic	Alex	0

Appendix E

The King James Version Debate

D.A. Carson

Defense of the Byzantine Text Type¹

Some major arguments put forth by defenders of the Byzantine Text type are:

1. The textual-critical theories of B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort are both bad theology and bad textual criticism.
 - Westcott/Hort said the Byzantine text was a conflate text from the mid-fourth century A.D. The Alexandrian texts were earlier and therefore preferred.
 - Westcott/Hort defined a “neutral” text outside of the Alexandrian type which consisted of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. This was their preferred text in determining which variant to use. Both Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are now considered to be part of the Alexandrian Text type.
2. The Byzantine text stands closer to the original than any other text type.
3. The other text types were rejected by the early church.
4. The other text types omitted material as a result of the desire to promote some heretical teachings.
5. Modern versions dependent on the Alexandrian Text type deny the inspiration of Scripture as they are omitting parts of God’s word.
6. The Alexandrian texts survived because no one was using them whereas the Byzantine texts were worn out through their constant use.

Fourteen Thesis²

1. *There is no unambiguous evidence that the Byzantine text-type was known before the middle of the fourth century, i.e. the mature Byzantine text-type appears nowhere before the fourth century.*

In answer to the assertion that the Byzantine texts wore out through use:

- a. Although this theory may explain why the autographs disappeared, it cannot explain why there are *no* extant copies of manuscripts of the Byzantine text-type prior to the fourth century A.D.
- b. The ante-Nicene fathers unambiguously cited every text type *except* the Byzantine.

¹ D.A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate, A Plea for Realism*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986), pp. 39-42.

² *Ibid*, pp. 43-78.

- c. **If the Byzantine texts were being wore out, who was wearing them out? Certainly not the ante-Nicene fathers.**
2. *The argument that defends the Byzantine tradition by appealing to the fact that most extant manuscripts of the Greek New Testament attest to this Byzantine text-type, is logically fallacious and historically naive.*
- a. **The number of manuscripts that support a reading is not nearly as important as the number of text-types.**
 - b. **Although most early non-Byzantine manuscripts have been found in Egypt, it is naive to postulate that the textual tradition they represent is restricted only to that area.**
 - c. **The hot, dry climate of Egypt is more conducive to the preservation of manuscripts for a longer period of time than Asia Minor.**
 - d. **The Byzantine textual tradition is preserved in the only area in the world where the Greek language was still used extensively, the eastern part of the Roman empire.**
3. *The Byzantine text-type is demonstrably a secondary text.*
- Harmonizations are much more common in the Byzantine text type than in other text types.**
4. *The Alexandrian text-type has better credentials than any other text-type now available.*
- a. **The Alexandrian text-type is quoted by the Ante-Nicene fathers.**
 - b. **The Alexandrian text-type all appear in papyri dating from the second and third centuries, e.g. p⁷⁵.**
5. *The argument to the effect that what the majority of believers in the history of the church have believed is true, is ambiguous at best and theologically dangerous at worst; and as applied to textual criticism, the argument proves nothing very helpful anyway.*
6. *The argument that defends the Byzantine text by appealing to the providence of God is logically and theologically fallacious.*
- a. **God has also providentially preserved the other text-types.**
 - b. **Most Christians in the world are depending on translations based on other than the Byzantine text-type. What about them?**
7. *The argument that appeals to fourth-century writing practices to deny the possibility that the Byzantine text is a conflation, is fallacious.*
8. *Textual arguments that depend on adopting the TR and comparing other text-types with it are guilty, methodologically speaking, of begging the issue; and in any case they present less than the whole truth.*

The idea here is that many assume the TR to be the choice text before the prove it.

9. *The charge that the non-Byzantine text-types are theologically aberrant is fallacious.*
10. *The KJV was not accepted without a struggle, and some outstanding believers soon wanted to replace it.*
11. *The Byzantine text-type must not be thought to be the precise equivalent of the TR.*
12. *The argument that ties the adoption of the TR to verbal inspiration is logically and theologically fallacious.*
 - a. **No two manuscripts in the Byzantine tradition agree perfectly.**
 - b. **The TR itself has some major problems to overcome:**
 - 1). **Revelation has several verses translated from the Latin back into Greek. These verses have NO Greek mss evidence for their readings.**
 - 2). **Acts 9:5-6 have NO Greek mss evidence for their existence.**
 - 3). **1 John 5:7 has four mss supporting the text, and all of these are very late originating in the sixteenth century.**
13. *Arguments that attempt to draw textual conclusions from a prejudicial selection of not immediately relevant data, or from a slanted use of terms, or by a slurring appeal to guilt by association, or by repeated appeal to false evidence, are not only misleading, but ought to be categorically rejected by Christians who, above all others, profess both to love truth and to love their brothers in Christ.*
14. *Adoption of the TR should not be made a criterion of orthodoxy.*

Appendix F English Versions

Old English Versions

John Wycliffe

1. John Wycliffe (1320-1384 A.D.) is known as the “morning star” of the Reformation.
2. Directed the Lollards, a group of itinerant preachers who went around the countryside preaching the gospel.
3. Translated the N.T. into English in 1380 in order to help the Lollards in their task. The O.T. was completed in 1388 after his death.
4. Translated from the Latin Vulgate, hence it is rightfully a second-generation translation.
5. Wycliffe died in peace in 1384. His bones were dug up by papal edict some years later and burned. The ashes were thrown into the River Swift and from there to the oceans of the world.
6. John Purvey (1354-1428) produced a revision of the Wycliffe Bible. He replaced many of the Latinate constructions with normal English idioms.

William Tyndale

1. William Tyndale (1492-1536 A.D.) produced the second major English translation.
2. The work was completed on the continent and shipped back to England in flour sacks.
3. Tyndale, on the run most of his life, was finally captured and tried in 1536.
4. Tyndale's last words as he was being burned at the stake on October 6, 1536, was “Lord, open the King of England's eyes.”

Miles Coverdale

1. Miles Coverdale (1488-1569 A.D.) was William Tyndale's assistant. He produced the first complete English Bible in 1535.
2. Coverdale introduced chapter summaries and separated the apocrypha from the rest of the O.T.
3. The Coverdale Bible was reprinted twice in 1537, again in 1550, and lastly in 1553.

Matthew's Bible

1. Thomas Matthew (1500-1555) was the pen name of John Rogers, the first martyr under Bloody Mary.
2. Matthews published a Bible in 1537 that was a combination of the O.T. texts of Tyndale and Coverdale with the N.T. text of Tyndale.
3. The Matthew's Bible contained copious notes and references.
4. His 1537 edition was approved by Henry VIII.

The Great Bible

1. Instigated by those who wanted a translation without any notes or references.
2. Produced by Coverdale in 1538.
3. Due to its size and cost, it was chained to the pulpits to prevent theft.
4. The Great Bible was actually a revision of a revision.

The Geneva Bible

1. Produced in Geneva by Miles Coverdale and John Knox who had fled to the continent to escape the persecutions of Mary Tudor.
2. The N.T. was first printed in Geneva in 1557.
3. First English Bible to have chapter divisions and verses.
4. In 1560 the complete Bible was produced. By 1644 it had gone through 140 editions and served as the basis for the KJV Bible.
5. The Geneva Bible was the Bible of the puritans and Shakespeare.

The Bishop's Bible

1. Produced by a group of scholars including eight bishops.
2. Although it was meant to be merely a revision of the Great Bible, the scholars went beyond their instructions and extensively updated the N.T.
3. The Convocation of 1571 instructed that a copy of this Bible be in every church for public access and reading.

The Rheims-Douay Bible

1. Instigated by the Roman Catholic church to be a translation of the Latin Vulgate.
2. The N.T. was completed in 1582 with many notations.
3. Originally intended to counteract the protestant translations. As a result it is very polemical in nature.

4. The Old Testament was printed in 1600.
5. The Rheims-Douay Bible never became a serious contender for any of the Protestant translations.

King James Version

1. Produced in 1611 under the sponsorship of James I of England.
2. James I authorized its translation as a way to end strife between the Puritans and the Church of England.
3. The translation was the work of a large number of scholars unlike many of the previous versions that were the products of one or two men.
4. The KJV translation is based on Erasmus' Greek Text of 1516 and 1522 thus ignoring many of the twelfth to fourteenth century texts.
5. The original 1611 version contained the apocrypha, although later revisions removed it.
6. The KJV is the most popular book ever printed and had gone through several revisions since its first publication in 1611.

Modern English Versions

English Revised Version (ERV)

1. First version based on a Greek manuscript family other than the ones underlying the KJV.
2. Two prominent translators were B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort.
3. Based on two major manuscripts, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.
4. Based on Westcott and Hort's canons of textual criticism:
 - a. The Syrian text type (Byzantine) was a revision of an earlier text which was found in Sinaiticus and Vaticanus (which WH said was a "neutral" text).
 - b. When Alexandrian and Western texts agree with the "neutral" text, that reading is preferred.
 - c. The Byzantine text family can be disregarded since it is a conflation of the "neutral" text. This goes along with point a).
 - d. The "neutral" text is to be preferred over all others.
5. Intended to be a revision of the Authorized Version (KJV) although it turned out to be much more than that.

American Standard Version (ASV)

1. The “Americanized” version of the ERV.
2. First published in 1901.

Revised Standard Version (RSV)

1. Started in the 1930’s as a scholarly work to use the best scholarship of that day to produce a Bible designed for public and private worship.
2. The O.T. was completed in 1952, the N.T. in 1946.
3. The translators did not attempt a new version, but rather a revision of the ASV of 1901.
4. Conforms a great deal to the wording and general pattern of Tyndale’s work.
5. Received a lot of flak from fundamentalists who attacked its use of “young woman” in Isaiah 7:14.

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

1. First appeared in 1963 with the entire Bible available in 1971.
2. It is basically a revision and modernization of the ASV of 1901.
3. The NASB is a “literal” translation which makes it hard to understand in some places.
4. All translators had to subscribe to the conservative theological statement of the Lockman Foundation.

New King James Bible (NKJV)

1. Sponsored by Thomas Nelson publishers as a revision of the KJV.
2. The N.T. was first published in 1979 with the O.T. following in 1982.
3. The translators were drawn from many denominational backgrounds.

New International Version (NIV)

1. Produced by the New York Bible Society to produce an evangelical translation for all modern English readers.
2. N.T. was published in 1973 with the whole Bible in 1979.
3. The goal of this work was to provide a translation to replace the KJV.
4. Much criticism is leveled against the NIV since many translators did not hold to a strictly conservative theological position.

Choosing a Translation - Some Questions to Ask

1. Who were the translators? Were they theologically conservative or liberal? Do they believe in the verbal-plenary view of inspiration or are they merely translating some ancient textual work.
2. What text is used? Is it an eclectic text based on all mss evidence or does it favor only a handful of mss or a single textual family.
3. What method of translation was used? Is the translation more of a paraphrase (dynamic equivalence) or is it truer to the text (formal equivalence)?
4. What was the theological persuasion of the translators when it comes to the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, the resurrection, the substitutionary atonement, and other fundamental doctrines of the faith?
5. What style of language is used? Is the translation done with archaic word forms or is modern language used?
6. What is the general background of the reader? If a person is a relatively new Christian a newer translation may be preferred while someone who has grown up with a particular version may have trouble switching.

Appendix G

Translations and Versions

Notes on Translations and Versions

Some Definitions

1. A **translation** is the rendering of a given literary work from one language to another.
2. A **literal translation** is the rendering of a given literary work from one language to another in a rigid word-for-word manner.
3. A **transliteration** is the rendering of one languages letters to the letters of another.
4. A **version** is a translation from an original language to any other language, e.g. NEB.
5. A **revision** or **revised version** is a translation that has been critically examined and reviewed to correct errors or to make other necessary emendations, e.g. KJV, RSV.
6. A **recension** is a critical and systematic revision of a text, e.g. NASB.
7. A **paraphrase** is a free or loose translation. It attempts to translate thoughts and ideas rather than actual words. Examples are *Phillips New Testament in Modern English*, TEV, and the Living Bible.
8. A commentary is an explanation of Scripture, e.g. *Weust's Expanded Translation of the New Testament*.

Periods of Translations

Ancient Translations

1. Appeared prior to the church councils of A.D. 350.
2. Generally consisted of the Old Testament only although some had portions of the New Testament.
3. Include such versions as the Samaritan Pentateuch, LXX, Aramaic Targums, Talmud, Midrash, and Origin's Hexapla.

Medieval Translations

1. Generally contained both the Old and New Testaments.
2. Completed from A.D. 350-1400.
3. The major translation during this time was the Latin Vulgate.

Modern Translations

1. Came following Wycliffe and others.
2. Include the many translations of today.

Aramaic, Syriac, and Related Translations

The Samaritan Pentateuch

1. May date back to the time of Nehemiah - 450 B.C.
2. Contains the five books of Moses and is independent of the Masoretic text.
3. Claims Mt. Gerizim rather than Zion as the center of worship.
4. It's 6,000 variants from the Masoretic text are insignificant.
5. Whenever the Samaritan Pentateuch and LXX agree, scholars consider it to be the original text.

The Aramaic Targums

1. Targums are oral paraphrases of the Old Testament Scriptures used in public worship.
2. Date from around A.D. 200.
3. The targums are not important in regards to textual criticism, but they do lend insight into how the ancient Jewish rabbis interpreted the Old Testament.

The Talmud and Midrash

1. Originated from A.D. 100 to A.D. 500 as a formal body of scribal teachings on the law.
2. The Talmud consists of two parts, the Mishnah (a digest of all oral laws) and the Gemara, and expanded commentary on the Mishnah.
3. The Midrash was a formal doctrinal study on the Hebrew scriptures written in Hebrew and Aramaic.

Syriac Translations

1. The Syriac Peshitta.
 - a. Comparable to the Latin Vulgate.
 - b. The Old Testament text used to translate the Peshitta dates to the mid-second or early-third century.

- c. The New Testament text dates to somewhere around the middle of the fifth century A.D.
 - d. Denoted in UBS as syr^p
2. The Syro-Hexaplaric Version
- a. A Syriac translation of Origin's fifth column in his Hexapla, which is no longer extant.
 - b. It's fairly literal rendering makes it possible to determine the original text of the Hexapla.
3. The *Diatesseron* of Tatian
- a. Tatian wrote a "cut and paste" harmony of the four gospels.
 - b. No copies of the *Diatesseron* exist today as they were all destroyed by the Bishop of Cyrrhus in 423.
4. The Old Syriac
- a. Contain the Gospels only.
 - b. Exist in two manuscripts, the Curetonian Syriac and the Sinaitic Syriac.
 - c. Denoted in UBS as syr^c and syr^s respectively.
 - d. Both represent a text dating to the late second or early third century A.D.
5. Other Syriac Versions
- a. In 508 a new Syriac version was completed which included the books omitted by the Peshitta (2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation).
 - b. Thomas of Harkel reissued this text adding some marginal notes. This is known as the Harklean version or syr^h.
 - c. The Palestinian Syriac, syr^{pal}, exists in fragmentary form only.

Greek and Related Translations

The Septuagint LXX

1. Completed sometime during the second century B.C.
2. Produced by the Jews in Alexandria Egypt.
3. Most likely it was authorized by Ptolemy for inclusion into the library at Alexandria.
4. The translation is not consistent. It is very accurate in the Torah but then almost becomes a paraphrase in the Writings.

5. Provides us with a third major witness of the Old Testament text along with the Masoretic text and the Samaritan Pentateuch.
6. All in all, the LXX is very consistent with the Masoretic text, the exceptions being rare.
7. The LXX is quoted extensively by the writers of the New Testament, the most notable example being the writer of Hebrews.

Other Greek Translations

1. The reasons for additional Greek translations were:
 - a. The Jews were reacting against the use of the LXX by the Christians to support their teachings.
 - b. A new text of the Hebrew Old Testament became available around A.D. 100.
2. Aquila's Version - A.D. 130-150
 - a. Became the official Greek text of used by non-Christian Jews.
 - b. Survived today only in quotes and fragments.
 - c. Supposedly written by Aquila, a Jewish proselyte.
3. Theodotian's Revision - A.D. 150-185.
4. Symmachus' Revision - A.D. 185-200
5. Origen's Hexapla - A.D. 240-250.
 - a. Really a recension as opposed to a translation or revision.
 - b. Corrected textual errors in a "corrupted" LXX which differed from the Hebrew text.
 - c. Contained six columns in order: Hebrew, Greek transliteration, literal translation of Aquila, Symmachus, Origen's version of the LXX, Theodotian's Revision.
 - d. Origen's work was a real attempt at comparative textual criticism including notes and annotations.
 - e. The difference, however, was Origen's goal was to produce as accurate an LXX translation as possible with the Hebrew text, not to determine the correctness of the Hebrew text.

Translations of the Greek Text

1. Coptic - ancient form of Egyptian.
 - a. Sahiditic - denoted by cop^{sa}. Originated in upper Egypt.
 - b. Boharic - denoted by cop^{bo}. Originated in lower Egypt.

- 1). Closely related to the Alexandrian text type.
 - 2). Sheds light on John 5:3b-4 and John 7:53-8:11.
 - c. Other texts include Fayumic, Achmimic, and sub-Achmimic, denoted by cop^{fay} , cop^{ach} , and $\text{cop}^{\text{ach}2}$ respectively.
2. Ethiopic
 - a. Done sometime during the fifth to seventh century A.D.
 - b. About 100 mss have survived, none later than the thirteenth century.
 - c. Denoted by eth^{ro} , eth^{pp} , and eth^{ms} for the Ethiopic Rome, Ethiopic Pell Platt and Praetorius, and Ethiopic Paris mss respectively.
3. Gothic
 - a. From the area of the Germanic tribes between the Rhine and Danube.
 - b. Dates from the fourth century A.D.
 - c. First known literary monument in the Germanic dialect.
 - d. Adheres closely to the Byzantine text type.
 - e. Six fragmentary manuscripts have survived to today.
 - f. Denoted by *goth* in textual critical works.
4. Armenian
 - a. Date to the fifth century A.D.
 - b. Armenia was most likely evangelized by the Syrian Christians ca. A.D. 420.
 - c. Most likely translated from the Syriac.
 - d. Denoted textually by *arm*.
 - e. Oldest text dates to the ninth century.
5. Georgian (Iberian)
 - a. Dates to the middle of the fifth century A.D.
 - b. Translated from the Armenian version.
 - c. Denoted textually by *geo*.

Latin and Related Translations

Old Latin - italia

1. Composed prior to A.D. 200 from the LXX.
2. The O.T. translation was used extensively in North Africa and does not exist today outside of a few fragments.
3. The N.T. translation exists today in the form of 27 mss from the gospels, 6 mss from Acts, and six mss. from Paul.
4. Date from the fourth to thirteenth centuries A.D.
5. Among the oldest witnesses to the N.T. text in the west.
6. Basically exists in two flavors: Bobensius (it^k) and Vercellensis (it^b).

Latin Vulgate

1. Translated by Jerome starting in A.D. 382, finished in A.D. 405.
2. Was needed because of the many divergent texts written by heretical groups such as the Marcionites and Arians.
3. The apocrypha was included more as an afterthought rather than being carefully translated and included.
4. In reality, the Vulgate N.T. was more a revision of the Old Latin text than an actual translation. The O.T. Vulgate, however, has great importance as it is really a translation of the Hebrew text available to Jerome at that time.
5. The Vulgate became corrupted in the middle ages due to careless copying practices. An authentic copy was commissioned by the Catholic Church only to never really succeed.
6. Two major editions are available today, Wordsworth and White, and Clementine, denoted by vg^{ww}, and vg^{cl} respectively.
7. Became the dominate translation in the Church during the middle ages.

Appendix H Textual Criticism

Higher and Lower Criticism

Higher Criticism

1. Deals with the authorship, genuineness, and unity of a book.
2. Deals with matters of interpretation and purpose for writing.
3. Deals with the date and location of a book.

Lower Criticism

1. Deals with the manuscript evidence for a book.
2. Deals with the recovery of the original text of a book.

The Historical Development of Textual Criticism

The Period of Reduplication (to A.D. 325)

1. Copies of the autographs - to A.D. 150
2. Copies of the copies of the autographs - from A.D. 150 to A.D. 325.
 - a. Many mss were made hastily because of widespread persecution.
 - b. High quality mss were expensive and rare.
 - c. Some early attempts were made to perform textual criticism on the rising number of variants. Some notable examples are:
 - 1). Origin's *Hexapla*.
 - 2). Lucian Recension
 - 3). Theodore of Mopsuestia's Song of Songs.

The Period of Standardization - A.D. 325 to A.D. 1500

1. Introduction of higher quality vellum and parchment mss.
2. Uncials were replaced by miniscules.
3. The Biblical text remained relatively unchanged throughout this period as mss were carefully prepared.

The Period of Crystallization - A.D. 1500 to A.D. 1648

1. The text was standardized for mass printing.
2. The Old Testament used a standardized text from the Masoretes under the editorship of Jacob Ben Chayyim.
3. **Cardinal Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros** (1437-1517) printed the first Greek text in 1502.
4. **Disideris Erasmus** (1466-1536) edited the first Greek New Testament to be published in March 1516. It later became the basis for the Textus Receptus and according to scholars was not reliably edited, not based on early mss, and hence not completely trustworthy. All of Erasmus' work was based on late Byzantine texts.
5. **Robert Estienne** published a Greek text in 1546, 1549, 1550, and 1551. This work, based on Erasmus, became the foundation of the Textus Receptus.
6. **Theodore de Beze** (1519-1605) succeeded Calvin in Geneva and produced numerous editions. Beza's text omitted D and D² since they differed from Erasmus' text.
7. **Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir** (1583-1652 and 1592-1652) produced the Textus Receptus which was very close to that of Stephanus' text, the basis of the KJV translation.

The Period of Criticism and Revision - A.D. 1648 to the present

1. The Period of Preparation - A.D. 1648 to A.D. 1831.
 - a. Characterized by the collection of textual mss.
 - b. Three recensions, or families, of New Testament texts were identified, Alexandrian, Eastern (Byzantine), and Western, by Salamo Semler.
2. The Period of Progression - A.D. 1831 - A.D. 1881
 - a. The "critical" text was introduced during this time. This text was constructed by a careful analysis of all available mss.
 - b. F. J. A. Hort and B. F. Westcott produced a two volume work called *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (1881-1882) which was the basis for the English Revised Version (ERV).
 - c. Westcott and Hort saw four families, Syrian, Western, Neutral, and Alexandrian. They favored the neutral text over the other families much to the criticism of others. This resulted in a very low view of the Textus Receptus.
 - d. The seeds of the Alexandrian vs. Byzantine text type wars started at this time.

3. The Period of Purification - A.D. 1881 to present.
 - a. Westcott and Hort's theories have been examined and altered to a large degree.
 - b. The rise of the UBS Greek Text occurred at this time. Mss were favored in the order Alexandrian, Caesarean, Western, and Byzantine.

The Purpose of Textual Criticism³

To Determine the Original Text

1. The original autographs were inerrant, copies are not.
2. God inspired the original text but did not inspire copies or translations.

To Discover and Correct Transmission Errors

1. Intentional Alterations
 - a. Updating spelling or syntax.
 - b. Eliminate apparent discrepancies.
 - c. Harmonize one Gospel with another.
 - d. Attempt to correct a supposed error in a manuscript.
 - e. Addition of extra details.
2. Unintentional Alterations
 - a. Mistaking one Greek letter for another.
 - b. Misspelling homonyms.
 - c. Skipping lines due to same word endings in the original manuscript.
 - d. Inverting words or letters.
 - e. Writing a passage from memory as opposed to copying it.
3. Types of Variants
 - a. **Haplography** - the writing of a word or letter only once when it should have been written more than once.
 - b. **Dittography** - the writing of a word or letter twice when it should have been written once - Ezekiel 48:16 reads five five hundred instead of the correct five hundred.
 - c. **Metathesis** - switching the order of two letters or words - Ezekiel 42:16 has five cubits reeds instead of five hundred reeds (a switched letter).

³ James Borland, *A General Introduction to the New Testament*, (Lynchburg: University Book House, 1986), pp. 144-145.

- d. **Fusion** - the combining of two separate words into one.
 - e. **Fission** - the dividing up of a single word into two words.
 - f. **Homophony** - the substitution of one homonym for another - Isaiah 9:3 substitutes not for him.
 - g. Misreading of similar letters - dalet and resh resemble each other very closely. The Dodanim of Genesis 10:4 appear as Rodanim in 1 Chronicles 1:7.
 - h. **Homoeoteleuton** - the accidental omission of an intervening passage because the ending of lines appeared identical.
 - i. **Homoeoarkton** - the accidental omission of an intervening passage because the beginning of two lines were similar.
 - j. Accidental omissions of words in situations where no repetition is involved.
 - k. Misreading vowel letters as consonants
4. Principles of Textual Criticism
- a. The older reading is preferred.
 - b. The more difficult reading is preferred - the tendency is to clarify rather than complicate a passage.
 - c. The shorter reading is preferred.
 - d. The reading which best explains all variants is to be preferred.
 - e. The reading with the widest geographical support is to be preferred.
 - f. The reading which most conforms to the style and diction of the author is to be preferred.
 - g. The reading which reflects no doctrinal bias is to be preferred.

Appendix I

The Old Testament Canon

The Development of the Old Testament Canon

Three Basic Steps in Canonization

1. **Inspiration** by God.
2. **Recognition** by Man.
3. **Collection and Preservation** by God's people.

Two Important Notes

1. There is a difference between canonical and noncanonical texts. Noncanonical texts may be important and even helpful, but they do not have binding authority on the believer.
2. There is a difference between the sections of the Old Testament (law, prophets, writing) and the stages of canonization. One does not necessarily infer the other.

The Two-Fold Canon of the Old Testament

There is evidence from the earliest times that the Old Testament was considered to be composed of the law and the prophets.

In the New Testament, the phrase "law and the prophets" refers to the entire Old Testament (Luke 24:27, Matthew 22:40, Acts 13:15, etc.).

The Development of the Old Testament Canon

1. There is evidence of a progressive collection of books which were considered to be scripture (Deuteronomy 31:24-26, 2 Kings 22:8, Joshua 24:26).
2. There is evidence of a prophetic continuity in the Old Testament. That is, each successive prophet linked his ministry and message to the prophets that went before him.
3. There is evidence that the Old Testament was completed with the last of the prophets. There are no spurious writings to be considered scripture after the last of the prophets, Malachi. That is, there is not a third division of the Old Testament, the "writings"⁴ which were considered Scripture.

⁴ The idea here is that some would like to have a third section of the Old Testament, called the writings, which would consist of those books considered to be the writings in the TANAKH as well as the apocryphal and pseudipigraphal writings of the inter-testamental times.

- a. The Council of Jamnia (A.D. 90) did not recognize any scripture other than the law and the prophets.
- b. The Book of Daniel is often listed by critics as belonging to the writings, but was considered to be prophetic by Josephus and others.
- c. The New Testament affirms all of the books of the Old Testament including those considered to be the “writings”.
- d. Psalms is considered to be part of the prophets by Christ (Luke 24:27, 44; John 10:34-35).
- e. According to Josephus and the Talmud, the last of the prophets was Malachi.

The Extent of the Old Testament Canon

The Books Accepted by All - *Homologoumena*

This comprises 34 of the 39 books of the Old Testament. Excluded are the Song of Solomon, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Ezekiel, and Proverbs.

The Books Rejected by All - *Pseudipigrapha*

The Pseudipigraph contains fanciful stories and legends which in some cases is harmless but in other cases contain theological and historical errors.

Literary Genre	Book
Legendary	The Book of Jubilees The Letter of Aristeas The Book of Adam and Eve The Martyrdom of Isaiah
Apocalyptic	1 Enoch The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs The Sibylline Oracle The Assumption of Moses 2 Enoch or the Book of the Secrets of Enoch 2 Baruch of the Syria Apocalypse of Baruch 3 Baruch or the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch
Didactical	3 Maccabees 4 Maccabees Pirke Aboth The Story of Ahikar
Poetical	The Psalms of Solomon Psalm 151
Historical	The Fragment of a Zadokite Work

The Books Disputed by Some - *Antilogoumena*

The Antilogoumena were disputed books, accepted by some as Scripture and rejected by others.

The **Song of Solomon** was considered to sensual.

Ecclesiastes was considered to skeptical about life.

Esther omits the name of God although God's providential care permeates the book.

Ezekiel appears to be anti-Mosaic in places.

Proverbs was thought to contain contradictions in itself, that is, some proverbs appear to contradict others.

The Books Accepted by Some - Apocrypha

The Apocrypha was accepted by some as being canonical and rejected by others. To this day, there are some in Christianity that treats these disputed books as Scripture and others that reject them totally.

Literary Genre	Book
Didactic	The Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus
Religious	Tobit
Romance	Judith
Historic	1 Esdras 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees
Prophetic	Baruch Letter to Jeremiah 2 Esdras
Legendary	Additions to Esther Prayer of Azariah Susanna Bel and the Dragon Prayer of Manasseh

Arguments for the Apocrypha

1. New Testament allusions (Jude 14-15, 2 Timothy 3:8).
2. The earliest complete manuscripts of the Bible include them.
3. Early Christian art depicts some scenes from the apocrypha.
4. Some of the early church fathers accepted the apocrypha.
5. Augustine included them as canonical books.
6. The Council of Trent in 1546 proclaimed the apocrypha as canonical.
7. New Testament usages of the LXX (which included the apocrypha).
8. Non-Catholic denominations include the apocrypha as canonical scripture, e.g. Anglicans.

9. Some of the Apocrypha was found among the texts of the Dead Sea community at Qumran.

Arguments against the Apocrypha

1. The New Testament never cites an apocryphal book as Canonical.
2. The LXX may have contained the apocrypha, but that does not mean that it was considered canonical (since the LXX was commissioned not as a translation).
3. Although the apocrypha was contained in early translations of the Bible, that does not mean that it was considered canonical by the first-century Christians or by the entire church.
4. Art is a bad means of determining canonicity.
5. Many early church fathers did not accept the apocrypha.
6. Augustine wavered on the canonicity of the apocrypha and considered them at times to be deuterocanonical.
7. The Council of Trent was in response to the Protestant Reformation, and as such the apocrypha was declared canonical to support errant teachings of Catholicism.
8. The use of the apocrypha among non-Catholic churches is uneven.
9. Many non-canonical books were discovered among the remains of the Dead Sea community.

Summary Arguments Regarding the Apocrypha

1. The apocrypha was never accepted by the Jewish community.
2. The apocrypha was not accepted by Christ or the early church.
3. Most early church fathers rejected the apocrypha.
4. No church council accepted the apocrypha's canonicity until the fourth century.
5. Jerome rejected the apocrypha.
6. Many Roman Catholic scholars reject the apocrypha.
7. Many protestant denominations reject the apocrypha.
8. The apocrypha does not claim inspiration.
9. The apocrypha lacks the authority of God.
10. The apocrypha contains historical errors.
11. The apocrypha repeats material elsewhere in canonical writings.

12. There is no prophecy in the apocrypha.
13. Nothing is added regarding Messianic truth from the apocrypha.
14. The apocrypha was not received as scripture by the vast majority of Jews and Christians.

Appendix J

The New Testament Canon

The Development of the New Testament Canon

The Stimuli for the Development of the New Testament Canon

1. **Ecclesiastical.** There was a need to define the canon of the New Testament so as to know those books that were to be publicly read and those that were not.
2. **Theological.** There was a need to determine what books were to be studied and considered binding and authoritative.
3. **Political.** Rome ordered the destruction of the Christian scriptures. Which books deserved preservation and which did not.

The Development of the New Testament Canon

1. The *selection* of authentic books. Luke hints at the existence of non-authentic books in his prologue to Luke and the Thessalonians believers were warned about false epistles.
2. The *reading* of authentic books. Scripture reading was an integral part of New Testament worship and as a result many non-authentic books were discarded over time as the church began to recognize what was and was not Scripture.
3. The *circulation and collection* of authentic books. In Colossians Paul instructs that the letter be read in Laodicea and vice-versa.
4. The *recognition* of authentic books. For example, Peter quotes Paul as being Scripture.

The Confirmation of the New Testament Canon

1. The early church fathers taken collectively all quote the current 27 books as canonical although some may have disputed one or more books.
2. Early translations include many of the current 27 books. Taken together, they include them all.
3. There are several early lists of the canon of the New Testament, e.g. the Muratorian Fragment and Marcion.
4. Early church councils establish the current 27 books of the New Testament as Scripture.

The Extent of the New Testament Canon

The Books Accepted by All - *Homologoumena*

This comprises 20 of the 27 books of the New Testament. Excluded Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.

The Books Rejected by All - Pseudipigrapha

The Pseudipigraph contains fanciful stories and legends which in some cases is harmless but in other cases contain theological and historical errors. Some of the more prominent ones are listed below.

Literary Genre	Book
Gospels	The Gospel of Thomas The Gospel of the Ebionites The Gospel of Peter Protoevangelium of James
Acts	The Acts of Peter The Acts of John The Acts of Andrew The Acts of Paul
Epistles	The Lost Epistle to the Corinthians The Epistle to the Laodiceans
Apocalypses	The Apocalypse of Peter The Apocalypse of Paul The Apocalypse of Thomas
Others	Secret Book of John Traditions of Matthias Dialogue of the Saviour

The Books Disputed by Some - Antilogoumena

The Antilogoumena were disputed books, accepted by some as Scripture and rejected by others.

Hebrews was disputed over the uncertainty of its authorship.

James was disputed over its authorship as well as apparent contraction with the teachings of Paul regarding justification by faith.

Second Peter was considered to not be genuine.

2 and 3 John were not considered to be genuine epistles of John.

Jude was questioned regarding its use of extrabiblical books such as the Assumption of Moses.

Revelation was considered non-canonical because of its authenticity and doctrine of Millennialism

The Books Accepted by Some - Apocrypha

The New Testament Apocrypha enjoyed only temporary and local acceptance as Scripture.

Literary Genre	Book
Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas	Considered Scripture by Clement of Alexandria and Origen.
The Epistle to the Corinthians	Written by Clement of Rome. Uses many quotes from the Book of Wisdom (Ecclesiasticus).
Ancient Homily	Supposedly the Second Epistle of Clement. No evidence exists that it was considered canonical.
Shepherd of Hermas	The most popular noncanonical book. Considered canonical by Irenaus and Origen.
The Didache	Held in high regard by the early church, but again, not considered as canonical.
The Apocalypse of Peter	Origin of Dante's Inferno. Widely circulated and accepted by some as canonical.
The Acts of Paul	Quoted by Origen. Contains the account of the conversion of Thecla, an Iconian woman.
The Epistle to the Laodiceans	A forgery containing various quotes by Paul strung out in no apparent order.
The Gospel According to the Hebrews	Survived only in fragments.
Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians	Polycarp did not claim inspiration but only that he quoted material he learned from the apostles.

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