

KNOWING THE SCRIPTURES:

How to Read and Understand the Bible

“So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

Nehemiah 8:8

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures."

Matthew 22:29

Dedication

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Romans 11:33-36

Prayer

And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

I Kings 3:7-9

Purpose

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

John 20:31

Preparation

Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Isaiah 66:1-2

Promise

Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

Psalms 119:98-100

Secondary Dedication

These pages are dedicated to all young men who are and want to be strong, who have and want the Word of God abiding in them, and who have and want to overcome the wicked one, and who greatly desire to have the confidence and wisdom of Elihu in giving the sense of Holy Scripture.

Read I John 2:14.

1. It is possible for young men to be strong, and to be recognized as such by an apostle (2:13-14).
2. It is possible for young men to have Scripture abiding in them with conquering strength (2:14).
3. It is possible for young men to overcome the wicked one, even the old devil himself (2:14).

Read Job 32:1-22.

1. Elihu the son of Barachel is a role model for all young men seeking to be spiritual conquerors.
2. He had something to say when four of the wisest men on earth had spent themselves (32:1).
3. He had holy anger at Job for his self-righteousness and justification of himself over God (32:2).
4. He had holy anger at Job's three friends for their ignorance of truth and false charges (32:3).
5. He showed holy decorum by patiently waiting while the older men traded foolishness (32:4).
6. He had holy anger at their ignorance, especially their inability to defend and justify God (32:5).
7. He explained he had waited and not jumped on their ignorance earlier due to their age (32:6).
8. He was not truly afraid of them, but he believed older men should be wiser than he (32:6-7).
9. He had confidence that God was able to give inspiration and wisdom above mere age (32:8).
10. He learned that the general rule of wisdom growing with age has many exceptions to it (32:9).
11. He told them to listen to him and he would give them his opinion from God on things (32:10).
12. He had waited respectfully for their answers, but none of them rightly honored God (32:11-13).
13. He said that he had listened well and waited to see if maybe they did have answers (32:11-12).
14. He denied their erroneous conclusion that God was independently judging Job for sin (32:13).
15. He knew he was an outsider to both sides of their exchange, but he had the answers (32:14).
16. These four wise men had nothing to say at the confidence of their young friend (32:15-16).
17. He told them that it was now his turn to give his part and his opinion on the situation (32:17).
18. He admitted that listening to their folly had filled him with great urgency to speak (32:18-20).
19. He told of his internal spiritual man forcing and compelling him to answer with truth (32:18).
20. He stated his courage that truth should be presented without regard of the hearers (32:21-22).
21. He stated his strong conviction that flattering titles were sinful and God hated them (32:21-22).

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Assumptions

1. God is.
2. God gave Scripture.
3. God preserved Scripture.
4. Scripture is absolute truth.
5. Scripture is internally complete.
6. The King James Version is Scripture.
7. Faith is necessary to know Scripture and truth.
8. Human wisdom is a hindrance to Scripture and truth.
9. Satan is at war against God, His Scripture, and truth.
10. God will reward diligent seekers.

Introduction

It is possible to know the Bible well and yet not understand it, as Jesus told the Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers, and scribes of His day. These religious leaders had great technical knowledge and fanatical adoration of the text of the Bible above all other men, but they did not understand its spirit or meaning.

“But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”

Matthew 9:13

“But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.”

Matthew 12:7

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”

Matthew 22:29

He boldly rebuked these ministerial leaders by asking, “Have you never read?” (Matthew 12:3,5; 19:4; 21:42; 22:31). They had read these places many times, but they did not understand them. They knew the passages well, but they did not know their meaning. And so they had the Word of God, they read and studied it diligently, but they did not understand its message. It is this paradox we must avoid.

It is still common today to know the Bible and not understand it, as we live in the perilous times of carnal Christianity, where a form of godliness and love of pleasures are exalted over God’s authority and loving Him (II Tim 3:1-13). Modern Christians are constantly learning from seminars, guest speakers, Bible studies, videoconferences, tape ministries, television specials, and radio programs; but they never come to the knowledge of the truth. And how should the sons of God oppose these effeminate preachers and their popular fables? Hold fast to the inspired Scriptures (II Tim 3:14 – 4:4)!

It is a practice today in most religious circles to quote the Bible without truly knowing the meaning of what is quoted. The words are used as sound bites rather than sober statements of holy importance from God. The sound of words is more important today than the sense of words, just as in our Lord’s day. Even conservative preachers will take an obscure phrase from the Old Testament, Charles Spurgeon was famous for it, and proceed to develop a pretty talk from the text, though there is little connection.

Do you believe the Bible? What do you believe about it? How can you believe what you do not understand? Do you mean you believe it to be the Word of God? We want more than this. We want to understand exactly and fully what God has communicated to us in the Bible. Nothing else will do.

So help us, Lord.

The Means of Understanding

The Holy Spirit tells us exactly how to understand the meaning of Jehovah's Scriptures. Let us read and understand this inspired verse with thankful hearts to our gracious God; for most Bible students have never read this verse, as they are instead slowly choked to death on two dead languages, Spurgeon's sermons, a liberal arts education, and memorizing sermon illustrations.

“So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

Nehemiah 8:8

Ezra read the law of God carefully, distinguishing the individual words; he interpreted the reading by giving the sentences their proper sense or meaning; and by this simple process he caused the people to understand what he had read to them. If the Pharisees of Jesus' day had used this sound approach, they would not have erred by being so ignorant of the meaning of Scripture.

Let us consider what Ezra did not do, and let us illustrate it by corrupting our text to reflect the current trend in using the Bible in seeker sensitive churches.

“So they determined what was politically correct and popular with carnal Christians and worldly unbelievers, and they computer-searched twenty different versions of the Bible looking for sound bites to support fleshly ideas of worldly success, and they caused everyone to believe the Bible was a flexible book allowing modern interpretations that anyone can read and generally understand with little effort.”

Let us again consider what Ezra did not do, and let us also illustrate it by corrupting our text to reflect the monastic approach to Bible study.

“So they read in the book in the law of God with sacramental and transcendental piety, and gave the most obscure and mystical sense they could imagine, and they caused their hearers to believe they had never heard anything so deep and beautiful in all their lives.”

Let us again consider what Ezra did not do, and let us also illustrate it by corrupting our text to reflect a radical approach to Bible study once taught to the author.

“So they read in the book in the law of God one word at a time, and gave the one and only primary definition for each word, and caused them to understand the meaning of words they had known from childhood to arrive at a mechanical, literal interpretation.”

All such instructional foolishness aside (II Cor 11:23), let us consider the principal words of this priceless text for exactly what it declares to us. And give God the glory!

- I. Consider the sense of these words, which is clearly obvious to all but the willfully ignorant.
 - A. **Read.** Perusing written matter to decipher marks of language into words and sentences.
 - B. **Distinctly.** Reading carefully to separate and differentiate the individual words clearly.
 - C. **Gave.** Interpreting and expressing to the hearers by clear verbal communication.
 - D. **Sense.** The precise, singular meaning intended by the Author in the specific reading.
 - E. **Cause.** Producing a desired effect by careful and calculated procedures to that end.
 - F. **Understand.** To fully comprehend, apprehend, and grasp the meaning and import.

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- II. Consider what we need to accomplish this process of understanding for ourselves and others.
 - A. We need the written revelation of God in a language we can read. We have it!
 - B. We need the ability to read written words (or it must be read to us). We can do it!
 - C. We need to read distinctly to identify all the words in a given passage. We can do it!
 - D. We need spiritual ability and the right process of finding the sense. We have them both!
 - E. We need to explain the sense well enough to cause understanding. We will learn it!

- III. Consider what Ezra did not do and what we do not want to do in perverting this godly process.
 - A. Ezra did not read and interpret Scripture without worshipping the Author (Neh 8:6).
 - B. Ezra did not read the law of God in another version with different and contrary words.
 - C. Ezra did not read the law of God in a dead language neither he nor anyone else knew.
 - D. Ezra did not follow loose spiritualizing for a mystical sense they had to take by faith.
 - E. Ezra did not follow a literal hermeneutic by using every word in a strict, literal sense.
 - F. Ezra did not read the law of God and then give primary definitions of the words he read.
 - 1. Primary definitions of a current language are those meanings known by all men.
 - 2. Even the illiterate know primary definitions, as they have heard them since birth.
 - 3. We will deal with this heresy at length later in the study, so think about truth.

- IV. Consider what Ezra did and how it matches perfectly with Scripture's ministerial instructions.
 - A. Ezra gave the interpretation that would not contradict any other Scripture (II Pet 1:20).
 - B. Ezra gave the spiritual sense that cannot be found comparing natural words (I Cor 2:13).
 - C. Ezra rightly divided the word of truth by giving words secondary senses (II Tim 2:15).
 - D. Ezra gave the relative sense whenever internal contradictions appeared (II Chr 19:8-11).
 - E. Ezra interpreted the meaning that would have been lost by dark sayings (Proverbs 1:6).
 - F. Ezra opened up parables, which are unintelligible by their mere words (Matt 13:10-15).
 - G. Ezra gave the spiritual sense the Pharisees could not see (Matt 9:13; 12:1-7; Mark 2:27).
 - H. Ezra gave the spiritual application only a man of God can truly perceive (I Cor 9:9-10).
 - I. Ezra gave the interpretation that average readers might easily have missed (II Pet 3:16).

What Is Reading?

Is this question a joke? No; pitifully, it is not. Some think the Bible can be understood simply by reading it. Others think it can be easily understood with a dictionary. And yet others think that a dictionary and lexicon (dictionary of a dead foreign language) will easily get the job done.

Reading is the action of perusing written material to recognize the marks of your language that indicate specific words and combinations of those words forming written communication. The full idea and import of the words and their combinations are dependent on interpretation, which is the action of determining the sense, or meaning, of a reading. We will consider interpretation separately.

Reading is simply and only the means to identify the words used to convey meaning, while interpretation must determine the proper meaning of those words. Reading gives us the sound of words, but interpretation gives us the sense of words. Rules of interpretation should not be confused with reading. Young children can read the simple words of *Proverbs*, but few can understand the sense and meaning of Solomon's writings. Proverbs need interpretation, just as the Holy Spirit told us when introducing the book (Prov 1:6), and just as Jesus explained to His disciples (John 16:25,29).

Words are important, since they are the basis for communicating with language. Every language and writing assumes that words will be understood in their common usage and meaning, which is a word's primary definition. In a current language, even the illiterate understand these meanings, for it is the common verbal and written use of words that establishes their primary definitions. We only move to secondary meanings of words when one or more of the following reasons exist:

1. We are reading a work clearly spiritual, prophetic, poetic, and/or figurative in nature.
2. We are reading a work beyond the third-grade level where secondary senses add appeal.
3. We are told or shown in the larger or smaller context that secondary meanings are needed.
4. Primary definitions would create an internal contradiction with what is written elsewhere.
5. Primary definitions would create an obvious absurdity, logically or naturally or factually.

This matter of primary definitions is not a rule of interpretation, since it is a basic assumption of reading any writing in any language. Reading cannot be done with even elementary comprehension without starting from this beginning point, which we have all assumed since about the first grade. When we read that Spot was a "dog," we did not think hotdog, slow car, ugly girl, sodomite, or cat.

Reading is the first step in understanding the Bible, as we see clearly in the wonderful example of Ezra (Neh 8:8); but it does not get us far. Reading gives us the sound of words, but interpretation gives us the sense, or meaning, of words. The Pharisees and other Jews read the Bible, but they did not understand what they read. Reading is only the means to identify the words used to convey the sense.

We read Scripture carefully with full identification of each word before we begin any interpretation.

1. Some answers and explanations will be in the words carefully considered (John 8:58; 10:35; Galatians 3:16; Matthew 22:31-33; Daniel 9:2; Matthew 24:15).
2. Trying to interpret words that have been confused is merely compounding a previous error.

We reject as ridiculous and dangerous any trust in number schemes, hidden meanings, word patterns, and so forth, which deranged heretics use to prove anything from the Bible (II Cor 1:13). And with the advent of the personal computer, there are such schemes proliferating as sound Bible interpretation.

What Is Understanding?

- I. It is not enough to read the Bible. As children in elementary school, we learned that reading was not enough. We had to learn to read with comprehension, with understanding. Deciphering the letters and words on a page and reciting them to yourself or to another was not enough. We had to learn to gather and absorb the situation, actions, qualities, and ideas being conveyed by the letters and words. It is the same in reading the Bible. We must understand the meaning, importance, and implications of what God is stating by the letters and words.
- II. Let us look at the word “understand.” **Understand.** To comprehend; to apprehend the meaning or import of; to grasp the idea of.
- III. Let us look at understanding in the Bible. Reading or hearing is different from and far inferior to understanding. We do not recite the Bible, as Muslims do the Koran, thinking there is some mysterious spiritual value in the sound and noise of the recitative chanting. We want to gather from the words the ideas that we can grasp to increase our knowledge of God and truth.
 - A. Paul judged Jews at Rome for seeing and hearing without understanding (Ac 28:23-28).
 1. He spent a day expounding and persuading about Jesus from their Scriptures.
 2. He concluded they fulfilled God’s prophecy of no understanding (Isaiah 6:9-10).
 3. We learn that seeing, hearing, and reading are not the same as understanding.
 4. He explained that understanding was to hearing what perception was to seeing.
 5. **Perceive.** To take in or apprehend with the mind or senses. To apprehend with the mind; to become aware or conscious of; to observe, understand. To take in fully or adequately; to grasp the meaning of, comprehend, understand.
 6. Though they knew the Scriptures and understood primary definitions as some of Rome’s most educated men, they could not understand the sense of the words.
 - B. Other Jews at Jerusalem fulfilled their very own Scriptures in crucifying Jesus, because they did not know, or understand, the Scriptures that were read to them (Acts 13:27).
 - C. Jesus spoke in parables to the Jews, so they would hear but not understand (Luke 8:10).
 - D. If we do not hear carefully and obediently, we will lose our understanding (Luke 8:18).
 - E. Jesus frankly warned His hearers not to read Daniel without understanding (Mat 24:15).
 - F. He damned the Jews for being unable to hear words with understanding (John 8:43-47).
- IV. The religion of Jesus Christ is based on understanding. We read the Bible in order to discover and comprehend the meaningful instruction God placed there for us. We are not content without understanding, and the emphasis on our use of the Bible is to obtain understanding.
 - A. A great celebration in Nehemiah was because they understood the reading (Neh 8:1-12).
 - B. Luke wrote a treatise to Theophilus to give him certain understanding (Luke 1:1-4).
 - C. The eunuch did not understand the reading, so Philip explained it to him (Acts 8:30-35).
 - D. Paul rejected an open use of tongues, for they brought no understanding (I Cor 14:1-20).
 - E. It is a high ministerial ambition is to be easily understood (II Cor 3:12; 4:2; Col 4:4).
- V. Understanding is necessary for the Bible to affect a life; for it is only by knowing the God of the Bible, His glorious salvation in Christ, and His will for our lives that will bring change.
 - A. Conversion requires understanding, which greatly promotes it (Matt 13:15; Acts 28:27).
 - B. If we do not understand the preached word of God, Satan can take it away (Matt 13:19).
 - C. Being without understanding is a sin, for God has made it easily available (Rom 1:31).

What Is Interpretation?

- I. Reading gives us words. But the words must come together in a meaningful way for us to understand and know the message of the words. Interpretation is the process that gives us the sense or meaning of the words. Interpretation is the work of producing understanding from the reading of words, whether this is with your self or in explaining a reading to others.
- II. Let us look at the word “interpret.” **Interpret.** To expound the meaning of (something abstruse or mysterious); to render (words, writings, an author, etc.) clear or explicit; to elucidate; to explain. **Expound.** To set forth, declare, state in detail. To explain, interpret.
- III. Let us look at the word “hermeneutics.” **Hermeneutics.** The art or science of interpretation, *esp.* of Scripture. Commonly distinguished from *exegesis* or practical exposition. **Exposition.** The action of expounding or explaining; interpretation, explanation.
- IV. We must steer between extremes of interpretation being a mystical art or a mechanical science.
 - A. The personal qualifications required to understand the Bible make interpretation of Scripture more an art than a science, for the Lord must bless the student to see anything.
 - B. No matter how well the rules of hermeneutics are learned and applied, God’s blessings are upon those who personally qualify (Matthew 11:25-27; I Corinthians 3:18-20).
 - C. Yet assuming God to directly inspire your understanding is to tempt Him against the commandment to search and study the Scriptures (Acts 17:11; II Timothy 2:15).
 - D. If God blesses men to understand His Word, then hermeneutics cannot be used with any great degree of profit apart from this blessing (Job 32:8; Ps 119:18).
- V. The Scriptures sometimes provide their own interpretation for our benefit without any labor.
 - A. Some words from dead languages the Lord chose to keep are defined for us (Matt 1:23; 27:46; Mark 7:11; 15:22; John 1:38,41-42; 20:16; Hebrews 7:1-2). This is properly the work of translation, not interpretation; and we are thankful He translated them for us.
 - B. Some expressions we might or certainly would miss are explained for us (Mark 7:2; Hebrews 9:11; I Samuel 17:40; II Kings 10:29; Ezekiel 13:16; Esther 2:12).
 - C. From these two examples, we learn about interpretation – the work of explaining words.
- VI. Interpretation is necessary for understanding and knowledge, or words remain mere sounds.
 - A. Israel’s fathers were to explain the meaning of Moses’ law to their sons (Deut 6:20).
 - B. Solomon taught knowledge by proverbs with interpretation (Eccl 12:9-10 cp Prov 1:6).
 - C. The disciples knew the words of Malachi 4, but they did not see John (Matthew 11:14).
 - D. If Jesus had not explained His parables, not a man would have understood (Matt 13:18).
 - E. Jesus opened the Scriptures – gave the sense to words that could not be otherwise known – to men who had read and preached it without understanding (Luke 24:27-32).
 - F. He had to give understanding to know the Bible: reading was not enough (Luke 24:45).
 - G. It takes a workman in the Word of God to explain Joel in light of Pentecost (Acts 2:16).
 - H. Paul had to interpret and explain the meaning of his preaching to the most intelligent and educated men in the world, as primary definitions certainly failed (Acts 17:16-22).
 - I. Paul sat the Jews down and expounded – gave the sense or interpretation – their Scriptures to them, though they had read them thoroughly all their lives (Acts 28:23).

- VII. The Bible emphasizes the right interpretation, or explanation, as being key to its understanding.
- A. A minister must rightly divide Scripture to avoid shame and rejection (II Timothy 2:15).
 - 1. Unless there are differences in Scripture, there would be no command to divide.
 - 2. To divide something is to separate it into different categories of their own kind.
 - 3. The Bible is full of words and concepts with varying meanings and applications.
 - a. Many pacifists reject capital punishment because of Exodus 20:13.
 - b. Many compromisers condemn all judgment because of Matthew 7:1.
 - c. Just try to understand salvation or Israel without doing serious dividing.
 - B. Jehoshaphat appointed priests, Levites, and chiefs of Israel for settling controversies, and some of these controversies were within the law of God itself (II Chronicles 19:10).
 - C. Peter interpreted Psalm 16:8-11 by using logic, comparisons, and deductive reasoning to prove that David's personal pronouns referred to Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22-36).
 - D. Our more sure word of prophecy needs the right interpretation to profit (II Pet 1:19-21).
 - E. Paul interpreted the O.T. by showing its fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 17:2-3).
 - 1. There is no place in the O.T. where Jesus of Nazareth is identified by words.
 - 2. He opened (introduced arguments) and alleged (proved arguments) the truth by distinctly reading their Scriptures and giving the glorious fulfillment in Christ.
 - 3. The Jews did not and would not have figured this news out by merely reading.
 - 4. Paul caused them to understand their own Scriptures by interpreting the prophetic and highly figurative passages in light of recent history about Jesus.
 - F. If the eunuch had not met Philip to interpret and give him the sense of Isaiah 53, he would have gone back to Ethiopia with a sincere but ignorant heart (Acts 8:26-35).
 - G. Paul explained that ordinary reading of words naturally would not get the truth communicated, as the spiritual things of God were expressed spiritually (I Cor 2:13).
 - H. Who would figure out God's care for oxen in Deuteronomy 25:4 applied to the ministry without Paul interpreting the passage for us in I Corinthians 9:8-10?
 - I. Nicodemus did not believe in interpretation; he loved primary definitions; so he asked our dear Lord how he could get back in his mother's womb as an old man (John 3:4).
 - J. The gospel contains many mysteries, which are only learned by God blessing ministers to make these hidden, spiritual facts plain (I Cor 2:7; Col 4:2-4; Rom 16:25-27).
 - K. Paul wrote things hard to be understood, especially for simple readers, who wrested the words to their own destruction; his epistles need careful interpretation (II Peter 3:16).
 - L. How can the Word of God be corrupted, as it was by many during Paul's time, if it only requires reading and primary definitions (II Cor 2:17; 4:2)? Who could be deceived?
 - M. Did Paul exaggerate the difficulty of things about Melchisedec and Jesus, since all they had to do was read and know them by primary definitions (Hebrews 5:10-11)? Shame!

Understanding the Bible - Example #1

Ezra and Nehemiah led a great day of understanding Scripture in Israel (Neh 8:1-12).

1. The people came together in unity and peace without self-defeating division and strife (8:1).
2. Their own personal desire to hear and learn Scripture is indicated by their request for it (8:1).
3. They chose Scripture reading rather than popular fables or entertainment for itching ears (8:1).
4. They chose Ezra the scribe to read and teach rather than a famous or charismatic preacher (8:1).
5. Ezra was a ready scribe in the law of God and did not need time to respond to the request (8:2).
6. The women and all those who could hear with understanding were included, indicating God's endorsement of family worship rather than Sunday Schools and other juvenile inventions (8:2).
7. They stood and heard the reading for at least three hours - from morning until midday (8:3).
8. The people were attentive and focused to the reading rather than sleeping or dreaming (8:3).
9. Ezra read the Scriptures to them - he did not tell stories about his childhood, slay anyone in the Spirit, use canned illustrations, crack jokes, use anecdotes, or even make a chalk drawing (8:3).
10. He used a pulpit to elevate himself above the crowd for this public and solemn reading (8:4).
11. Since he was visibly above the people, they could easily see him open the book to read (8:5).
12. All the people stood up in solemn and fervent reverence when he opened the book to read (8:5).
13. Observe the reverential worship of God that accompanies proper reading of Scripture (8:6).
14. The people themselves participated reverently in this glorious worship of God with Ezra (8:6).
15. Ezra's assistants helped him instruct the people rather than provide them entertainment (8:7).
16. They read in the book of the law of God rather than some novel of Christian experience (8:8).
17. They read distinctly so all the people could easily distinguish the words of the reading (8:8).
18. They gave the sense - the meaning or interpretation - of what they read to the people (8:8).
19. They rightly divided the word of truth as faithful ministers in applying secondary senses (8:8).
20. They did not give primary definitions of words, as all the people already knew them well (8:8).
21. Distinct reading and sound interpretation are the means by which the people understood (8:8).
22. Though there was true reason to mourn, understanding Scripture calls rather for holy joy (8:9).
23. Their leaders called for a time of celebration and feasting for understanding Scripture (8:10).
24. Mourning is not always appropriate, especially when there is reason for holy rejoicing (8:11).
25. The celebration and attendant mirth of the people was in appreciation for understanding (8:12).
26. They had more than individual sound bites declared, for they understood the message (8:12).
27. One day of hearing God's law expounded was not enough, so they came together again (8:13).
28. We can see the leaders of the people coming to learn more so as to understand and teach (8:13).
29. They learned by hearing and understanding that they had forsaken the feast of booths (8:14).
30. When a people come willing to hear and learn, the Lord will reveal His will for them (8:15).
31. These willing hearers did not resist a new commandment but rather obeyed it quickly (8:16).
32. This feast had been neglected for over 1000 years, but they did not excuse themselves (8:17).
33. And their spirit was not a begrudging reluctance to obey but rather a very great gladness (8:17).
34. They didn't waste a single day without hearing the book of the law of God read to them (8:18).
35. They kept the feast for the full duration and solemnly according to the specified manner (8:18).

Understanding the Bible – Example #2

Jesus judged Pharisees for accusing His disciples in Scriptural ignorance (Matt 12:1-8).

1. The context is a situation where the disciples plucked and ate corn on the Sabbath day (12:1).
2. The disciples were hungry enough that it was disruptive to their use of the Sabbath day (12:1).
3. We know our Lord did not do this by mere chance or coincidence, but sought occasion (12:1).
4. The Pharisees were the straightest, or most conservative, of the Jewish religious sects (12:2).
5. The Pharisees, just like their successors today, judged by the appearance and letter only (12:2).
6. Pharisees knew the law – but only the strict, literal law of words and primary definitions (12:2).
7. Jesus rebukes their literal charge by asking if they had read about David and his hunger (12:3).
8. He knew they had read about David many times; but He knew they missed the meaning (12:3).
9. So He rebukes their ignorance in the law by not rightly dividing between two passages (12:4).
10. Jesus teaches us glorious wisdom here that understanding requires secondary senses (12:4).
11. Our Lord indirectly commends David for his hermeneutic in eating forbidden bread (12:4).
12. He then rebukes their literal sense by asking if they had read about the Levites' duties (12:5).
13. Of course they had read *Leviticus*, but our Lord needed to crush their false hermeneutic (12:5).
14. Jesus points out that there is an implied sense of the Sabbath law not applying to priests (12:5).
15. He showed by two examples that a literal sense of words by primary definitions flunks (12:5).
16. He announces to these unbelieving scribes and disputers that He is the temple's LORD (12:6).
17. Their problem was misunderstanding the spiritual sense of the words they worshipped (12:7).
18. They knew the words from Hosea 6:6, but they did not know the sense by interpretation (12:7).
19. Jesus had already exposed their false hermeneutic by this same verse in Matthew 9:13 (12:7).
20. Primary definitions and a literal hermeneutic will destroy this and most other verses (12:7).
21. Their application of the law and consequently their actions were therefore wickedness (12:7).
22. Judging righteous judgment, rather than by appearance, requires a spiritual hermeneutic (12:7).
23. Our glorious Lord makes a further spiritual interpretation from this event in Mark 2:27 (12:7).
24. Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath and gives true spiritual understanding to His saints (12:8)

Understanding the Bible - Example #3

Jesus condemned the Sadducees for their ignorance of the Scriptures (Matt 22:23-33).

1. The Sadducees were a heretical Jewish sect that denied the resurrection of the dead (22:23).
2. They came to ask Him, but their intent was neither truth nor proof, for they were sure (22:23).
3. The foolish question of dying brothers was to confound Jesus, as they had Pharisees (22:24).
4. They raised Scripture to establish their premise, as any good heretic or Satan will do (22:24).
5. Sadducees knew the Scriptures well, but were trying to use them against the Author (22:24).
6. The hypothetical case was created as a rhetorical device to refute the resurrection (22:25-27).
7. Their faulty minor premise was assuming that resurrected saints are given in marriage (22:28).
8. Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection at all, but they assumed it to ridicule Him (22:28).
9. Our Lord denied their heresy on two counts – ignorance of Scripture and God's power (22:29).
10. Doctrinal error is still created the same way – ignorance of Scripture and God's power (22:29).
11. Our Lord destroys their entire argument by showing the faulty minor premise in error (22:30).
12. Then He shows their further ignorance of the Scripture by using Scripture against them (22:31).
13. Notice His ridicule of their ignorance of one of the most popular Jewish passages ever (22:31).
14. He authoritatively starts right out that God had taught them the resurrection directly (22:31).
15. What a marvelous sense He draws from words we read with little regard for doctrine (22:32)!
16. Here we have the Lord Jesus Christ arguing important doctrine from only verb tenses (22:32).
17. He further argues that death and annihilation would preclude a relationship with God (22:32).
18. He astonished the multitude by His doctrinal method in shaming Sadducees publicly (22:33)!
19. Luke records that the scribes praised His wonderful answer they had not heard before (20:39).
20. Luke records they didn't dare ask any more foolish and unlearned questions for fear (20:40).

Understanding the Bible – Example #4

Paul condemned the Jews for ignorance of the Scriptures regarding Christ (Acts 13:27).

1. Jews dwelling in the capital city of Jerusalem fulfilled the Scriptures by killing Jesus the Christ.
2. Even the rulers of the Jews were no wiser in the Scriptures, for they executed the great crime.
3. The Jews were able to do such a thing by neither knowing God nor His inspired Scriptures.
4. The voices of the prophets were read every Sabbath day, but they still fulfilled them wickedly.
5. Children of the promises, they ignorantly fulfilled their own Scriptures by the dastardly deed.
6. This is incredible ignorance, even though they had a great technical knowledge of the words.

The Need for Understanding

- A. We need to understand the Bible, because there are great benefits we obtain by knowing it.
1. Whether we understand it or not, the Bible is the only criterion for truth in the world, without which we are totally lost (Psalm 119:128; Isaiah 8:20; II Timothy 3:16-17).
 2. Our religion is entirely dependent on the Bible, for the revelation in creation does not tell us of our need of a Saviour, the identity of that Saviour, or our duties to Him.
 - a. We do not believe the Bible because we are Christians; we are Christians because we believe the Bible; for Jesus Christ is revealed in the Bible only.
 - b. Personal duties and the nature of His church and ordinances are by the Bible.
 3. We search the Scriptures to learn of Jesus Christ, for He is the end all of all things.
 - a. The Jews revered Scripture, but they missed the Person of them (John 5:39).
 - b. God forbid, if we study Scripture for reasons outside Him (Gal 6:14; I Cor 2:2).
 - c. We must come with the passionate desire of Mary (Luke 10:38-42; John 20:31).
 4. We can only be sure of eternal life by learning Bible evidence (I John 5:13; II Pet 1:10).
 5. We do not have visual aids and special revelations as before (Num 16:30; Dan 10:14).
 6. The Scriptures are a great heritage from God (Deu 4:5-10; 6:20-25; 32:46-47; Ps 119).
 7. There is great reward in learning the Scriptures (Psalm 19:11; Prov 16:16; 19:8; 21:16).
 8. Learning the Scriptures - even the O.T. - will bring greater hope to us (Romans 15:4).
 9. Zeal is good, but zeal must be directed properly by knowledge (Gal 4:18; Rom 10:2).
- B. We need to understand the Bible, because many different religious groups claim to use it only.
1. The Jews knew Scripture, but did not understand (Mat 9:13; 12:7; 22:23-33; Act 13:27).
 2. In Paul's day there were many that wrested and corrupted Scripture (II Cor 2:17; 4:2).
 3. Paul wrote of understanding declining further (II Tim 3:1-13; 4:1-5; I Tim 1:5-7; 6:3-5).
 4. Ignorance is a judgment of God upon those who reject Him (Rom 1:31; II Thess 2:11).
 5. Many people have given up on the Bible. They reason: if many learned men cannot agree on the meaning of Scripture, then I will never be able to find the truth for sure.
- C. We need to understand the Bible, because God wrote it in a way to require much interpretation.
- A. The Bible is not a Boy Scout handbook, with easy-reference chapters thoroughly covering specific points and written on a third-grade level in short, simple sentences.
 - B. The Bible is an exalted book, therefore it must be studied with an elevated approach not known to carnal men who are feeling about in life by fleshly senses (Ps 138:2; Is 66:2).
 - C. The Bible is a spiritual book, therefore it must be studied spiritually outside the ordinary word methods used by natural men to understand their own carnal writings (I Cor 2:13).
 - D. The Bible is a prophetic book, therefore it must be studied with great care deciphering the similitudes, signs, and figures used by prophets (Hos 12:10; I Peter 1:11; Rev 1:1).
 - E. The Bible is a poetic book, therefore it must be studied with the caution that literary form requires, lest its alliterative, metaphorical, and figurative features are lost (Pr 1:6).
 - F. The Bible is a broad book, therefore it must be studied with the patience and effort to find all that its Author intended for us in any given text or passage (Ps 119:96).
 - G. The Bible is a blended book, therefore it must be studied with much effort at dividing its terms and concepts to provide a proper understanding (II Tim 2:15).
 - H. The Bible is a rigged book, therefore it must be studied with much vigilance and honesty to avoid the traps and snares designed into it (Matt 13:10-13; II Pet 3:16).

- D. We need to understand the Bible, because it is written with beautiful challenges for the wise and righteous and difficulties to mislead and trip the ignorant and rebellious.
1. Scripture is easy to them that understand (Prov 8:9), but hard to others (Isaiah 28:9-13).
 2. Peter said Paul wrote things that were hard to understand (II Pet 3:16), and ignorant persons attempting to interpret those things would wrest them to their destruction.
 3. God even reserves things for those with great wisdom and understanding (Rev 13:18).
 4. Our Lord told the Jews to search the Scriptures and find Himself in them (John 5:39).
- E. Ministers need to understand the Bible, because their usefulness to men depends upon it.
1. Proper understanding is necessary for a minister to serve God and men (II Tim 2:15).
 2. A minister who understands his Bible well is like a wise householder (Matthew 13:52).
 3. Dedication to reading and doctrine can save minister and hearers (I Timothy 4:13-16).
 4. For all the information needed for a minister to be perfect is in it (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Personal Qualifications for Understanding

WARNING

Do not neglect or underestimate this section. The Bible is a spiritual book, written by the eternal Spirit, Who demands we use it on His terms. While the flesh, the world, Satan, and most Bible students ignore or despise these points, they are more important than any rules of hermeneutics. Young man, crush your impatience, and wait upon the Lord for the liberal wisdom and understanding that only He can give. Lord, help us.

- I. **QUALIFICATION #1:** Men must be regenerated with spiritual life to understand the Bible.
- A. As a result of Adam's fall in Eden, all men ever since have been born dead to knowing or loving God (Genesis 2:17; Psalm 14:1-4; John 8:42-47; Ephesians 2:1-3; Titus 3:3).
 - B. Natural intelligence remains, but he never even thinks about God (Ps 10:4; Rom 3:11).
 - C. A man without faith is simply unreasonable and cannot learn (II Thess 3:2; Prov 9:10).
 - D. He will always reject truth for lies, and he cannot deliver himself (John 8:45; Is 44:20).
 - E. God blinds such men against the truth (Romans 1:21-22; Eph 4:17-19; II Thess 2:9-12).
 - F. The natural man cannot know the things of God (John 3:6; Romans 8:5-8; I Cor 2:14).
 - G. The gospel – very good news – is foolishness to such persons (I Cor 1:18; II Cor 4:3-4).
 - H. The ability to see, hear, and understand is of God (Proverbs 20:12; John 8:43-47; 17:2-3; Romans 3:11; II Corinthians 4:6; Philippians 2:13; I John 5:20).
 - I. Before being born again, he cannot see God's kingdom, even in person (John 3:1-8).
 - J. The mind of Christ – the spiritual mind of discernment – belongs to us (I Cor 2:6-16).
 - K. Regeneration gives internal knowledge of the truth in the new man (Jeremiah 24:7; John 6:45; Romans 10:8; Ephesians 4:17-24; I Thess 4:9; Hebrews 8:10-11; II Peter 1:1-4).
 - L. Preaching is verbal instruction from Scripture directed to the consciences of God's elect only, who may hear, understand, and obey the truth (II Cor 2:14-17; 4:1-6; II Tim 2:10).
 - M. Many Bible students and preachers are not born again, so their ignorance of God and His Word should not surprise us (Matt 7:21-23; 12:1-4; 23:33; Acts 20:29-30; I Cor 11:19; II Cor 11:13-15; I Tim 4:1-3; II Tim 3:6-9; II Peter 2:1-17; I John 2:18-19; 4:1).
 - N. The Bible, the spiritual book of the Spirit of God, is closed to natural men, regardless of their intelligence, knowledge of hermeneutics, or efforts put into finding spiritual truth.
- II. **QUALIFICATION #2:** A regenerate man must be illuminated by the Spirit to understand.
- A. Though a man is born again, he still has a flesh nature that makes war against the Spirit and the law of his mind (Romans 7:22-24; 8:5-8; Galatians 5:17; Colossians 3:9-11).
 - B. The apostles, though born again earlier, received the Spirit to understand (Luke 24:45).
 - C. Paul prayed for God to give the Spirit for understanding (Eph 1:17-18; II Timothy 2:7).
 - D. Knowing Christ's love by faith in all dimensions is by the Spirit's might (Eph 3:14-19).
 - E. The candle of the Lord in every born again person can teach us the truth (Prov 20:27).

- F. If the Spirit is quenched or grieved (I Thess 5:19; Eph 4:30), He may remove ability to understand, or even cause deception (Job 12:20; Is 63:10; Eze 14:6-11; John 12:37-41).
- G. God may assist our understanding by special communication (Job 32:8; 33:14-18).
- H. However, God has chosen more than inspiration for learning (Ep 4:11-14; II Tim 2:15).
- I. We have an unction from God that teaches us all things regarding Jesus Christ, which is internal knowledge in our hearts brought by teaching to our minds (I John 2:20,27).
- J. God must open the minds of men for them to understand His Word (Isaiah 29:11-12).

III. **QUALIFICATION #3:** A man must fear God to even begin understanding Scriptural truth.

- A. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Pr 1:7; 9:10; 15:33).
 - 1. The foundation for all learning must begin with a deep comprehension of God.
 - 2. Without a solid foundation, man's mind has no limit to foolish imaginations.
 - 3. Ignoring the Creator, the Governor, and the Judge of the universe is pure folly.
 - 4. Learning how God thinks and behaves gives a pattern for our understanding.
 - 5. Acceptable worship of God requires we do it with godly fear (Heb 12:28-29).
 - 6. Reasoning requires a starting point, worldview, or First Cause; if this starting point is not the Creator God, no matter how logical and consistent the reasoning, any conclusions are insane; just as mathematical operations on zero are zero.
- B. The fear of God is to hate and depart from evil, which is the conceited folly of transgressing the laws of infinite Wisdom (Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Prov 8:13; 16:6).
 - 1. A man coming to the Bible without fear of disobedience is arrogant (Is 66:1-2).
 - 2. The nature of God is to hate evil, so understanding Him without it is impossible.
- C. The fear of man - family, friends, church, denomination - brings a snare (Prov 29:25).
 - 1. Great men are not always wise, so do not be intimidated by them (Job 32:9).
 - 2. Compromise due to the fear of man can put you in a bad stead (John 12:42-43).
 - 3. If you are worried about what others will think of your doctrine or your actions, then you have revealed an idol in your heart – the opinions of foolish men.
 - 4. The jealous God will not allow any such idolater to have even a small blessing.
- D. God Himself will instruct and reveal things to those that fear Him (Psalm 25:12-14).
- E. An insincere or ritualistic fear of God may bring confusion of mind (Is 29:13-14).
- F. Carnal Christians cannot handle the full interpretation of Scripture (I Corinthians 3:1-2).

IV. **QUALIFICATION #4:** A man must delight in the Lord to obtain understanding from God.

- A. Note the relation of worshipping God and learning Scripture under Ezra (Neh 8:6).
- B. God's favor and blessing is upon those who delight in Him (Psalm 37:4; Acts 13:22).
- C. The value of God's personal favor cannot be emphasized too highly (Daniel 9:23; II Samuel 12:24), and surely there is no better means for it than delighting in Him.
- D. While this point could be considered part of the fear of God above, it is different enough for separate treatment: fear of the Lord is negative; delight is very positive.
- E. God is looking for men who will glory in Him rather than anything else (Jer 9:23-24).
- F. Is your meditation on the Lord a sweet thing giving gladness to your soul (Ps 104:34)?

V. **QUALIFICATION #5:** A man must obey and apply his learning if he is to learn more.

- A. David knew more than the ancients, because he kept God's precepts (Psalm 119:100).
- B. Daniel understood the need to turn from iniquities to understand truth (Daniel 9:13).
- C. Doing the will of God is the condition for sure knowledge of doctrine (John 7:17).
- D. Disobedience will bring a loss of understanding previously had (Job 36:12; Luke 8:18).
 - 1. God cannot stand scorers, and He will judge them (Prov 15:10; 21:16; 29:1).
 - 2. Disregard of His instruction will bring blindness in judgment (II Thess 2:10-12).

- E. Greater knowledge brings greater responsibility (Luke 12:47-48; James 4:17).
- F. God's light that shines on our path unto the perfect day follows two laws (Pr 4:18).
 1. It is for the just, therefore obedience to the law of God is necessary for light.
 2. It shines more and more as we proceed. We must walk forward in obedience with the light given. To expect an entire path to be lit at once is foolish.
- G. Jesus Christ taught that taking his yoke and learning go hand in hand (Matt 11:29).
- H. Scripture shows the importance of growth in understanding, which is achieved by, among other things, the exercise and application of knowledge (Is 28:9; Heb 5:12-14).

VI. QUALIFICATION #6: A man must ask in prayer for wisdom to increase his knowledge.

- A. God has purposed to operate in certain areas by request only (Matt 7:7 cp James 4:2).
- B. God specifically tells us that wisdom is something we are to ask God for (James 1:5).
- C. We must ask in faith, or we should plan on receiving nothing (James 1:6-7; Heb 11:6).
- D. God offered and gave wisdom to Solomon, and He offers us the same (II Chr 1:10-12).
- E. Daniel prayed for wisdom and knowledge and received it (Da 2:16-19; 9:13; 10:10-14).
- F. Consider the proper motives for requesting wisdom (Psalm 119:26-27,34,73,125).
- G. Appreciate the psalmist's prayer for God to open his eyes in His law (Psalm 119:18).
- H. We must tremble before the LORD, lest He judge us also with blindness (John 9:39).
- I. Paul prayed for the Ephesian saints to acquire wisdom by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:17-18).

VII. QUALIFICATION #7: A man must seek understanding and knowledge in order to get it.

- A. You must apply yourself as Solomon describes in Proverbs 2:1-9 to learn the truth.
 1. You must "receive" God's words: do not reject knowledge offered (Hos 4:6).
 2. You must "hide" God's words: retain what you learn (Heb 2:1-3; I Cor 15:2).
 3. You must "incline" your ear to wisdom: be ready to hear submissively (Pr 1:5).
 4. You must "apply thine heart" to it: give it your all (Ec 1:13; Pr 18:1; Da 10:12).
 5. You must "cry" for it loudly: beg God to show you the truth (Psalm 119:18).
 6. You must "search" for it diligently: let nothing deter your efforts (Jer 29:13).
 7. By using these rules for learning, you will find knowledge and every good path.
- B. You should approach it similar to a minister's diligence (I Tim 4:13-16; II Tim 2:15).
- C. You must love and seek wisdom (Pro 2:1-9; 8:17; 15:14; 28:5; Jer 29:13; Ac 17:11-12).
- D. Jesus compared it to the efforts of finding a treasure or great pearl (Matthew 13:44-46).

VIII. QUALIFICATION #8: A man must be able to take reproof, correction, and instruction.

- A. The Scriptures were given for profit through reproof and correction (II Timothy 3:16).
- B. The ability to receive and profit from reproof is essential to learning (Proverbs 1:5; 6:23; 9:7-9; 10:17; 12:1; 13:1; 14:6; 15:5,10,31-32; 17:10; 19:25; Psalm 141:5).
- C. Progress means change; change means correction; and this applies well to learning.
- D. He must be willing to open doors to his strongholds and embrace truth (II Cor 10:4-6).
- E. He cannot despise prophesyings – or Bible preaching, as Paul warns (I Thess 5:20).
- F. A man must have the humility necessary to forsake his own wisdom and learning.
 1. Humility is the grace that God will reward (Matt 11:25; James 4:6; I Pet 5:5-6).
 2. Man's wisdom caused God to design the gospel against it (I Cor 1:17-29).
 3. If you think yourself wise, you tempt God to blind you (I Cor 3:18-19; Ro 1:22).
 4. The LORD will look upon the man who is poor, of a contrite spirit, and trembles at His word (Isaiah 66:1-2; Psalm 51:17; Matthew 5:3; I Kings 3:7).
 5. David told the Lord plainly of his humility regarding high matters (Ps 131:1).

- IX. **QUALIFICATION #9:** A man must have godly and noble motives for learning Scripture.
- A. Such as knowing God and how He operates in the earth (Jeremiah 9:23-24; Ps 37:4).
 - B. Such as seeking to know the Jesus (Luke 10:38-42; John 5:39; 12:21; 20:31; Gal 6:14).
 - C. Such as learning the law of God in order to keep it (Psalm 1:1-2; 19:7-14; 119:11,34).
 - D. Such as being able to teach others (Psalm 71:17; 119:27; I Peter 3:15; Prov 22:17-21).
 - E. Such as searching the Scriptures to confirm teachers (Ps 17:11; I Thes 5:21; I Jn 4:1-6).
 - F. Such as agree with the high standard of love and charity (I Corinthians 8:1-2; 13:1-3).
 - G. We do not approach Scripture looking for God's endorsement of our thoughts (Pr 18:2).
- X. **QUALIFICATION #10:** Use your God-given teacher as much as possible to learn more.
- A. God has given gifts to men for the New Testament ministry (Psalm 68:18; Eph 4:8-13).
 1. Even under the Old Testament, men were to seek to such men (Malachi 2:7).
 2. He promised to give pastors to teach knowledge and understanding (Jer 3:15).
 3. With the Scriptures, the man of God can be perfect for you (II Tim 3:16-17).
 4. See how God called Bezaleel to his job of building the tabernacle, for he had the existing ability to excel at the hard task (Ex 31:1-11; 35:30-35; 36:1-3; 38:22).
 5. If God does not give special ability to understand and teach the Scriptures, what do the qualifications and gifts of the ministry mean (Romans 12:6-8; I Tim 3:2; 4:5,14; II Timothy 1:6; Titus 1:9; I Peter 4:10-11)?
 6. If a minister does not have a greater measure of the Spirit than his hearers, he doesn't belong in the office (II Timothy 1:7; 2:7; I Corinthians 2:4; Micah 3:8; Zech 4:6; Acts 6:3; II Kings 2:9-12; Numbers 11:17-30; 27:15-23; Deut 34:9).
 7. They spend their time and energy in reading and studying the Word of Truth, while their hearers labor in carnal things, which ought to put them far ahead when it comes to understanding the Bible (I Timothy 4:13-16; II Tim 2:2-4,15).
 8. Therefore, they must be highly esteemed for their work for you (I Thes 5:12-13).
 - B. Consider carefully that the providence of God is sufficient to bring the right teacher at the right time to the right hearers for maximum understanding (Acts 8:26-31).
 1. Here is the fundamental application of God's sovereign omniscience to every aspect of our lives – there are no mistakes or chance events without His wisdom.
 2. There are no coincidences in the works of God; there are only providences!
 3. God prepared a widow for Elijah, and He prepared him for her (I Kgs 17:8-24).
 4. Elihu wasn't with Job and three friends by chance; God sent him (Job 32:1-22).
 5. Philip didn't chance upon the eunuch without special providence (Acts 8:26-40).
 6. If you believe God called your pastor, then God called him specifically for you; and if God called him for you, then even his present line of teaching is for you.
 7. You should consider his leading in Scripture to direct your thoughts and reading, for the Lord is leading his mind and studies in the Scriptures for your benefit.
 8. You are called to obey and remember him and follow his faith, by considering the purpose of his ministry and God's ultimate enforcement (Hebrews 13:7,17).

RULE #1: There are no contradictions in the Bible.

- I. No part of the Bible is to be separated from or against the Bible's overall teaching (II Pet 1:20).
 - A. This rather plain and very direct text is a great blessing from God, yet rarely expounded.
 - B. **Prophecy.** An inspired utterance flowing from the revelation and impulse of the Spirit.
 - C. **Private.** Separate, alone, individual, personal, peculiar, particular, or special.
 - D. No portion of the Holy Spirit's revelation in Scripture can be separated from the rest to stand alone for some individual, personal, peculiar, particular, or special interpretation.
 - E. Our interpretation of the text is proven clearly by the immediate context (II Peter 1:21).
 1. There are no personal or peculiar interpretations of Scripture, because the singular Holy Spirit and not the wills of plural writers gave what was written.
 2. All Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16), even though it may have been written by a number of men. Since the Holy Spirit is the singular Author of the Bible, then it cannot and does not disagree internally.
 - F. No writer intended a personal or private interpretation, and no reader should find one.
 - G. Though God the Holy Spirit used all sorts of men with various backgrounds writing with different styles by various literary forms, there is only one Author and one constant, certain, absolute form of doctrine taught from beginning to end of the Bible.
- II. This is easily the first and chief rule to follow when interpreting Scripture. Start with it always.
 - A. We are expressly told to know this *first* when heeding the more sure word (II Pet 1:20).
 - B. The study of any text should always be limited to those possible solutions remaining after excluding all impossible solutions failing this rule.
 1. We don't create truth from any text. We enter the text with truth established.
 2. Regardless of the difficulty of the words, we exclude all ideas contrary to truth.
 3. If the impression from reading the words is some new or false doctrine, reject it!
 - C. The single greatest restraint on misinterpretation of Scripture is this rule to make every individual passage agree in doctrine with the overall teaching of the Bible.
 - D. If any other rule of interpretation is placed before this one, we run into severe problems.
 1. We contradict the Holy Spirit's instruction that this rule is to be applied first.
 2. We open ourselves up to every possible interpretation with new and crazy ideas.
 3. We destroy the value of the lesser rules, which must be subordinate to this one.
 - E. This rule properly applied will force you to seek other rules to determine the positive sense of a text; for by itself, it only rejects interpretations that cannot possibly be true.
- III. If this rule is not followed, it is possible to teach anything from the Bible, as many have done.
 - A. Sodomites find David describing Jonathan's love as exceeding that of women and have spasms rushing to make these two heroes of the faith faggot lovers (II Samuel 1:26).
 - B. British Israelites find Jesus calling Jews the children of the devil and have spasms concocting an anti-Semitic fantasy that Eve had Cain by sex with Satan (John 8:44).
 - C. The Temperance Movement and its Pharisaical descendants had spasms of joy over finding a few texts they could pervert to condemn all alcohol (De 29:6; Pr 20:1; 23:31).
- IV. The application of the rule should be considered carefully to understand its proper use.
 - A. All texts pertaining to a subject must be reconciled to determine the proper sense by which they all should be interpreted individually. Rather than emphasize one group of passages to the neglect of another group, it is our duty to reconcile the passages to where

they both fit overall Bible doctrine and each other. Neither can we question the authenticity of a passage by its apparent disagreement with passages assumed to be genuine. We must reconcile them. Martin Luther hated and rejected James, because it didn't fit his interpretation of justification by faith taken privately from Romans.

- B. This results in a two-step approach to Bible study. First, rule out impossible interpretations by comparison with the rest of Scripture: any interpretation that contradicts other passages must be rejected. Prove what a text cannot mean before trying to determine what it does mean. Second, assume any interpretation that is left, and subject it to the remaining rules. The other rules are applied only after narrowing down the possible interpretations by their complete agreement with the rest of the Bible.
- C. This rule requires diligent labor by honest men to carefully consider all texts on a given subject to determine the overall teaching of the Bible. It is far easier to choose those texts that fit one's presuppositions and ignore the rest. But it is this fatal choice that leads straight to heresy. And it is this fatal choice that guides most men in the Bible.
- D. We strictly deny that Scripture contains any froward or perverse contradictions in it, otherwise God the Holy Spirit, the singular Author, is a confused Inspirer (Prov 8:8-9).
 1. The context of our first rule teaches that it is the *more sure* word (II Pet 1:19).
 2. Our KJV Bibles are perfect and cannot be broken with lies (Jn 10:35; I Jn 2:21).
 3. If there appears to be a contradiction, the problem is with us, not the Bible.
 4. The thorniest difficulties can and have been solved by careful, believing study.
 5. We believe God wrote a perfect Bible, or our whole ambition is insanely absurd.
 6. Do not forget the importance of our assumptions at the beginning of the study.

V. The illustration of this rule gives examples of popular texts not possibly teaching what many want them to teach and use them to teach.

- A. Genesis 15:18-21 cannot teach that God must still fulfill promises to the Jews of literal land in the Middle East (Joshua 21:43-45; Acts 7:5; Hebrews 11:8-16).
- B. II Kings 8:26 and II Chronicles 22:2 cannot teach two different ages for Ahaziah at the same event (II Kings 24:8 cp II Chron 36:9; I Kings 16:7-8 cp II Chr 16:1).
- C. Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; and Acts 22:16 cannot teach baptismal regeneration (John 1:13; Ephesians 2:1-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 3:21; etc.).
- D. Luke 2:48 and John 6:42 cannot teach Joseph was Jesus' father, though Christ rejecters would love to use them that way (Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:34-35).
- E. I Corinthians 4:15 cannot teach gospel regeneration, though it may sound like it to a novice (Romans 9:16; I John 5:1; John 1:13; 3:8).
- F. I Corinthians 15:29 cannot teach the Mormon doctrine of baptism for physically dead relatives (Psalm 49:6-9; John 1:13; Hebrews 9:27; I Peter 3:21; etc.).
- G. Galatians 3:28 cannot teach sexual equality in practical relationships (Gen 3:16; I Corinthians 11:3-16; 14:34-35; Ephesians 5:22-33; I Peter 3:1-7).
- H. Galatians 5:4 cannot teach losing one's salvation, though Campbellites quote it dogmatically (Psalm 89:29-37; Rom 8:29-39; 11:29; John 6:39).
- I. Ephesians 3:9 and Hebrews 1:2 cannot teach eternal sonship, even if they sound like Jesus was the Creator (Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3).
- J. II Peter 2:1 cannot teach universal redemption (Ps 89:29-37; John 6:39; Rom 8:28-39).
- K. I John 2:27 cannot teach that teachers are vain (Eph 4:11-16; II Timothy 2:2; Heb 5:12).

VI. The abuse of this rule occurs when a private interpretation is assumed for a text and the resulting false premise is used to wrest contradicting passages of Scripture into agreement. An attempt is made at reconciliation, but it is based and furthered on a false premise.

- A. Those who teach baptismal regeneration as shown above will argue that "filth of the flesh" in I Peter 3:21 means "dirt of the body." They are trying to reconcile this text by forcing a foolishly literal interpretation of its words, for they must get rid of its easily understood sense. It and others sound the death knell for Alexander Campbell's heresy.
 - B. Those who teach that water baptism causes church membership from a private interpretation of Acts 2:41 will assume authoritatively against all evidence that the Ethiopian eunuch became a member at Jerusalem or Samaria by his baptism.
 - C. Those obsessed with God's love of all men from a private interpretation of John 3:16 will modify Romans 9:13 to mean that God just didn't love Esau as much as Jacob.
 - D. If all texts pertaining to any of these subjects were considered, the truth is easily found.
- VII. Some observe that this rule requires strong presuppositions about the rest of Scripture in order for the rule to work. This is true - honest Bible study does indeed require knowledge of all of Scripture. The concern over these presuppositions is answered with several considerations.
- A. Most presuppositions are the inheritance we receive from parents and previous religious training i.e. children born and raised Methodists are likely to remain Methodists and children born and raised Buddhists are likely to remain Buddhists.
 - 1. What can we say? God's sovereign choices carry enormous consequences, which should lead us to cry out with humble thanksgiving for His great mercy.
 - 2. The importance of parental training is seen here (Deut 6:1-9; Psalm 78:1-8; Joel 1:1-3; Ephesians 6:4; II Timothy 3:15).
 - 3. The importance of ministerial faithfulness can hardly be emphasized too much (I Timothy 4:13-16; II Timothy 2:2; 4:1-5; Titus 1:5-11).
 - 4. The implication of election in families is also seen here. As Israel only had the truth under the Old Testament, and much of the world is blind under the New.
 - B. Much of our faith is built on presuppositions that are assumed by faith. We believe the existence of God, the canon of sixty-six books, the King James Version, and the creation of all things by a combination of internal faith and circular reasoning (Psalm 119:128; Romans 4:18-21; Hebrews 11:1-6).
 - C. There are sufficient obstacles in Scripture to destroy false presuppositions, if the reader constantly observes this primary rule of interpretation and maintains a mind submissive to learning. By identifying, considering, and comparing all the texts related to a subject, an honest student will find defining doctrine that will save him from false assumptions.
 - D. God's providence, the foundation for our lives and sanity, will provide sincere seekers of truth with a teacher or other source of guidance for the proper presuppositions (Job 32:8; Psalm 25:14; 119:18; Jeremiah 29:13; Acts 8:26-35; 10:1-6; I Timothy 1:12).
 - 1. Were the personal qualifications given above stressed too much? God forbid!
 - 2. Those rare men who are willing to maintain the spirit of "I do not know what to do" will be delivered with a supernatural deliverance (II Chronicles 20:12-17).
- VIII. While this rule eliminates most false interpretations and creates limitations for all possible interpretations, the following rules are necessary to help identify the true interpretation from among the approved possibilities. This rule by itself negatively determines what a text cannot mean, and the following rules help to positively identify what a text does mean.

RULE #2: Interpretations must agree with their context.

- I. Remember this law: **A text used out of context is a pretext.** Don't violate it; learn to spot it.
 - A. *A text* is a word, clause, verse, paragraph, chapter, or book you are seeking to interpret.
 - B. *Context* is the surrounding information, which shows the author's meaning by the text.
 - C. *Out of context* is using words and their sound contrary to the surrounding information.
 - D. *A pretext* is a false and incorrect impression designed to hide or disguise the real intent.
 - E. Using a verse contrary to its context gives a misleading and deceitful sound of words to teach something the author did not intend and/or is not true. Hate this abuse of words!
 - F. You have had your words used out of context before, and you hated the corruption of your intent and meaning. Make sure you never do it with the precious Word of God.
 - G. This rule applies to all writings and conversations of every sort, and so context is well understood by most people. Contracts, court records, novels, promises, and poetry are all understood in context, or surrounding information, to truly understand their meaning.
 - H. Even single words are meaningless without a context, which is why you asked your teacher to use them in a sentence before you would try to spell them in a spelling bee!
 - I. Even if you use a verse to teach a true point, make sure you still honor its context. For using the wrong verse to teach the right point is the first subtle step to heresy. Mark it!
 - J. If we think carefully, we will see that the first rule was truly a rule of overall context!

- II. What is context? Let us make sure we understand exactly what we mean by context.
 - A. **Context.** The whole structure of a connected passage regarded in its bearing upon any of the parts which constitute it; the parts which immediately precede or follow any particular passage or 'text' and determine its meaning. [OED]
 - B. Context is the surrounding information that tells us what an author means by individual words, sentences, or paragraphs within a passage. Without grasping the author's viewpoint and intent, we will face many words and turns of phrase that we will not properly understand. By missing the author's perspective, we will be confused and misinterpret particular and individual words, sentences, and paragraphs of the work.
 - C. Context means the weaving together of words and sentences. We must determine the sense of Scripture and not just its sound. We do this by carefully considering the connection that each word, sentence, and section have to those around it.
 - D. Every word in the Bible is part of a verse, every verse part of a paragraph, every paragraph part of a chapter, every chapter part of a book, and every book is part of the whole Bible. How in the world can we presume to isolate single words and sentences?
 - E. Context includes the varying literary genres used in the Bible. There is historical (Acts), dramatic (Job, Song of Solomon), poetic (Psalms), wise sayings (Proverbs), argumentative (Romans, Hebrews), and apocalyptic (Daniel, Revelation) among others.
 - F. We may have connections of words or thoughts based on a historical, a doctrinal, a logical, a rhythmic, a musical, or a psychological connection among many others. We learn this by talking and reading.
 - G. Again, remember when your own words have been used out of context. A single word, sentence, paragraph, speech, or document was singled out and given a meaning that did not agree with all the words, expressions, tones, circumstances, audience, acts, or facts surrounding it. You were rightly offended, and so is the Lord when we abuse His word!
 - H. Isolating individual words or verses is like giving an impression of a Rembrandt from looking at one square inch of it or of Handel's "Messiah" by listening to a few bars!

- I. One has said “text determines context,” and then he used Proverbs 25:11 to “prove” it!
 1. How in the world can one word determine the intent of a 40-page document?
 2. If you hear me say, “I beat my wife last night,” please inquire further than the word “beat” and this one sentence to find out what I actually did to her! We played monopoly!
 3. This disdain for context is the result of unbounded arrogance coupled with bondage to a literal, mechanical system of interpretation.
 4. Verses can then take on meanings never imagined by the Holy Spirit or any other human reader in the history of the world. As in the case of Proverbs 25:11.

- III. Context is clearly the first positive rule of interpretation in identifying the sense God intended.
 - A. After proving what a verse cannot mean (#1), we start here to find what it does mean.
 - B. By connecting mere words or sentences without reference to their context, we can prove anything. It is a shame that so much preaching is done today with words and verses used as mottoes and sound bites with little or no regard to their connection. Consider:
 1. The Bible says, Judas “went and hanged himself” (Matthew 27:5).
 2. The Bible says that Jesus said, “Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37).
 3. The Bible says that Jesus said, “That thou doest, do quickly”(John 13:27).
 4. Should we take these Bible verses and quickly go out and hang ourselves?
 - C. Let us consider another example of how connecting unrelated words will confound us!
 1. Russellites quote the Bible, “The life of the flesh is in the blood” (Lev 17:11).
 2. Russellites quote the Bible, “Thou shalt not eat the blood thereof” (Deut 22:23).
 3. They take these verses and jump to the conclusion blood transfusions are wrong!
 - D. Simply consider the meaning and importance of "therefore." When finding this word, we should ask, "What is the "therefore" there for?" It is a word crying for its context.
 1. The word itself indicates a conclusion drawn from what has been said before. Consider II Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 2:1; and 4:9 among 1237 occurrences.
 2. And don't forget "for this cause" (26), "wherefore" (348), "because" (1209), "so" (1689), "then" (2168), "for" (8986), etc.
 - E. Considering context means asking who? whom? why? what? when? where? etc.
 1. Ask **who**? To identify the speaker or writer i.e. Daniel 3:25; Paul's internal conflict in Romans 7; Job and his friends in Job 32:1-3; and Moses in Psalm 90.
 2. Ask **whom**? To identify the hearer or reader i.e. Leviticus 10:9; Mark 16:15-18; John 8:7; I Timothy 5:22; II Timothy 4:5; James 1:21; 5:20; II Peter 3:9; Revelation 3:20.
 3. Ask **why**? To identify the reason for the text i.e. Joshua 24:15; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 7:1; Luke 10:29-37; 15:3-32; John 9:3; I Corinthians 7:26; II Cor 6:13; Galatians 1:15.
 4. Ask **when**? To identify the timing of the text i.e. Matthew 23:1-3; Acts 2:20,40; 15:20; Revelation 17:18.
 5. Ask **what**? To identify the nature of the text i.e. Song of Solomon; Luke 16:1-8; Daniel and Revelation.
 6. Ask **where**? To identify the location of writer or audience i.e. Acts 15:1-2.

- IV. The illustration of this rule gives examples of popular texts used out of context by teachers.
 - A. The Old Testament prophets must be carefully studied in context as to the timing and object of their writings, for many leap thousands of years into the future without right.
 1. When Isaiah 43:4-7 speaks of God regathering Israel together, we should not think of modern Zionism and other Jewish fables. Isaiah prophesied 2500 years ago about God's recovery of Judah from the Babylonian captivity. Compare Isaiah 43:14-17; 44:21-28; 45:1-4. It was future to them, not us.

2. When Haggai 2:6-7 speaks of God shaking the heavens and earth and filling His house with glory, we need not send funds to Tel Aviv for a construction loan. We must reject the fanciful speculations of the Jew C.I. Scofield and other modern Pharisees. Jesus Christ, the Desire of all nations, has already come and filled that house with glory. Paul confirms it as ancient history (Heb 12:25-29).
- B. Many have used the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) to teach that Jesus taught a higher and gentler system of religion than the Law. This is heresy and misses His message.
 1. We rather understand Jesus correcting the abuses of the Law made by the Pharisees. Consider His words, "Ye have heard that it hath been said." He did not say, "It is written." He redefined the law of Moses as God had intended.
 2. His stated purpose was to justify and fulfill the Law of God given to Moses and others (Matt 5:17-20). And He condemned any teacher that might minimize it.
 3. When we read, "Resist not evil" (Matt 5:39), we understand from the context that Jesus is condemning personal revenge for minor offences. He was not modifying, even in the slightest degree, legitimate revenge by parental authority, church discipline, or civil judgment. An "eye for an eye" was still right, civilly!
 - C. When the book of Hebrews is understood as a warning of severe and irremediable judgment to Jewish Christians tempted to return to Moses, it loses many of its difficulties and takes on a fresh, Christ-honoring, practical value. Where many sincere saints have quaked at Hebrews 2:1-3; 6:4-6; and 10:26-31; there has been no sound reason for such fear given the intent of this book and these "Hebrew" passages.
 - D. Since baptism for the dead cannot be taught in I Corinthians 15:29 as the Mormons teach it (rule #1), the context of bodily resurrection indicates Paul's practical appeal to the figurative aspects of death and resurrection in immersion.
 - E. Since Galatians 5:4 cannot teach the loss of legal salvation, we look at the context and see men justified by the law there also. Clearly, Paul is dealing with the doctrinal position of those who had confidence in the law. The fall from grace is set equal to justification by the law; and since one is in the understanding only, the other is as well.
 - F. While we know I John 2:2 cannot teach universal redemption (rule #1), knowing the who and whom indicates John writing to Jews regarding Gentile atonement (Gal 2:9).
 - G. The temple of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians 3:16-17 is the church at Corinth, and the works that could be burned up are ministerial works (3:12-15). All we must do to ascertain this is to consider the context of builders (I Cor 3:1-11). The temple of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians 6:19 is another temple by its very different context.
- V. Context can also give added value and significance to the understanding and glory of a text.
 - A. The words "more sure" of II Peter 1:19 take on special significance, when they are understood in light of God's voice from heaven described in 1:16-18.
 - B. Charity means much more to us in I Corinthians 13, when we understand its superiority to the greatest gifts in the New Testament church (I Corinthians 12:28-31).
 - C. The practical exhortations of Romans 12:1-2 and Ephesians 4:1 mean much more to us, when we consider the "therefore" with the preceding "Amen."
- VI. Context must include even the simple analysis of pronouns and their antecedents.
 - A. For example, the "them" of Psalm 105:37 must refer backward to Israel (105:23) or forward to the enemies of Egypt (105:38).
 - B. Did Baasha kill Jeroboam (I Kings 16:7)? Or did he kill Nadab (I Kings 15:25-28)?
 - C. Did the commandments of God persecute David (Ps 119:86)? Or did the proud?
 - D. Did the centurion or his sick servant send for Jesus (Luke 7:1-3)? Read ahead.

- VII. Context must also include the proper identification of persons or places under different names.
- A. Hebrews 4:12 must be speaking of the living Word of God, the Second Person in the Trinity, due to the personal reference to Jesus Christ that follows. Using this text to teach characteristics of the written Scriptures violates the context horribly, detracts from the glory of Jesus Christ, and ascribes power to the Bible that it does not have.
 - B. What did Jesus bring in with Israel's fathers into the land of the Gentiles (Acts 7:45)?
 - C. Why didn't Jesus give His people rest, and why did He speak of another day (Heb 4:8)?
 - D. Where is the city of Ariel (Isaiah 29:1-2,7)? What but context helps us in such places?
 - E. When will David rule Israel again (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hos 3:5)?
 - F. When did you last pray to Jacob with an exclamatory prayer (Psalm 24:6)?
- VIII. By asking who and when of Old Testament prophecies quoted by New Testament writers, we may identify "prophetic perspective" and determine the true fulfillment of prophecies.
1. When prophecies are quoted later, consider the future tense very carefully.
 2. Peter said of God in Acts 2:17-21, "I will pour out of my Spirit . . . and I will shew wonders in heaven." But Joel wrote those words many years earlier about Pentecost (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16). Consider Charismatic emphasis on this text for today.
 3. James said of God in Acts 15:16-17, "I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David." But Amos wrote these words earlier about the conversion of the Gentiles (Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:13-15). Consider the Premillennialists.
 4. Paul said of the Jews in Romans 11:26-27, "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer." But Isaiah wrote these words many years earlier about the coming of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 59:20; Acts 3:25-26). Consider the Premillennialists.
 5. Paul said of God in Hebrews 8:8-12, "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel." But Jeremiah wrote these words many years earlier about the new covenant in Jesus Christ (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:13; 9:1; 12:24). The new covenant is old!
 6. Paul said of God in Hebrews 12:26, "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." But Haggai wrote these words many years earlier about the end of the law economy (Haggai 2:6-7; Hebrews 8:13; 9:10; 12:25-29). Things have been shaken!
- IX. Context determines grammar: though this thought horribly crushes the narrow minds of many.
1. Remember, the context of a word determines which definition and spelling we need. It is usually about the second or third grade when you need words used in sentences.
 2. Consider the difference between subjective-genitive and objective-genitive phrases.
 - a. Does Haggai 2:7 teach that God will bring someone who desires all nations?
 - b. Does Daniel 11:37 teach that the enemy king of Israel would be celibate?
 - c. Does James 2:1 teach that our brethren were justified by Jesus Christ's faith?
 - d. Does Luke 11:42 teach us not to neglect the preaching of God's love for us?
 - e. Does I Timothy 3:6 warn of the danger of novices being rebuked by the devil?
 - f. We will consider more grammatical constructions under that specific rule.
 3. Consider the necessity of seeing figures of speech where the context requires them.
 - a. Does Matthew 14:19 teach that Jesus gave the disciples to the multitude?
 - b. Does Proverbs 20:16 teach that wise men should make loans to strange women?
 - c. Does Malachi 1:9 teach that rebel sinners ought to pray for God's grace?
 - d. Does Joshua 24:19 teach that some people just cannot worship the true God?
 - e. Does I Corinthians 11:24 teach that the communion bread is the body of Jesus?
 - f. We will consider many more figures of speech under that specific rule of study.

- X. For further learning, practice, and spiritual entertainment, consider these popular false pretexts!
1. Does Genesis 4:1 teach that Adam did not get to know Eve until after the fall? How do you come to the right sense of the word “know” without context?
 2. Does Deuteronomy 23:18 teach Christians not to sell dogs and tithe the income?
 3. Does Proverbs 23:29 condemn strange women? Fighting? Football? Or wine?
 4. Does Proverbs 23:31 condemn looking at wine? What if the next table orders some?
 5. Does Proverbs 20:30 teach the importance of a “six-pack stomach” for good health?
 6. Does Job 31:1 condemn thinking about female employees? What about raises?
 7. Did the Jews in Malachi 3:1 truly “seek” and “delight” in the Lord and His Messenger?
 8. Does Daniel 3:25 teach the doctrine of the eternal sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ?
 9. Does I Corinthians 6:19-20 condemn smoking? Drinking alcohol? Too much candy?
 10. Does I Corinthians 7:8 condemn marriage or commend singles? Find the context.
 11. Does Psalm 150:4 justify the use of organs in worshipping God?
 12. Does Revelation 14:2 justify the use of harps in worshipping God?
 13. Does II Peter 3:9 teach that God is not willing that any should perish?
 14. Did Paul truly want to see all of Israel saved with a fervent heart (Romans 10:1)?
 15. Does Romans 13:1-7 teach ministerial authority and giving to the pastor?
 16. Does Acts 2:38 teach that the gift of the Holy Ghost is church membership from Him?
 17. Does Revelation 3:20 teach that Jesus stands and begs at unregenerate men’s hearts?
 18. When will the Day of the Lord in Isaiah 13:6 take place? Before or after the rapture?
 19. When will the Day of the Lord in Ezekiel 30:3 take place? Before or after the rapture?
 20. When will the Day of the Lord in Joel 2:31 take place? Before or after the antichrist?
 21. When will the Day of the Lord in Zephaniah 1:7 take place? Before or after the rapture?
 22. When will the Day of the Lord in Malachi 4:1 take place? Before or after the rapture?
 23. Does John 1:12 teach that we are born again by believing on the name of Jesus?
 24. Does Ephesians 1:3 teach that the spiritual blessings in Christ are accessed by baptism?
 25. Does James 4:4 teach that the beloved brethren of the Jews were all adulterers?
 26. Does Luke 21:33 teach the doctrine of the preservation of Scripture?
 27. Does Matthew 24:13 teach the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints?

RULE #3: Compare Scripture with Scripture.

- I. The Holy Spirit revealed the things of God by His own use of words and concepts (I Cor 2:13).
 - A. It is important to read the whole context of this spiritual revelation of God's hidden mysteries to men (2:6-16). See the sermon outline "Mysteries of Hidden Wisdom."
 - B. Man's natural ideas of both words and concepts are highly dangerous in the Scriptures.
 - C. It is a spiritual book by a spiritual Author, and only spiritual men will comprehend it.
 - D. God has purified His words completely, and every one is very important (Psalm 12:6).
 - E. Every one of them is necessary for the right interpretation (Proverbs 30:5; Luke 4:4).
 - F. We must argue for every one of them. See the sermon outline "Every Word of God."

- II. We compare things in Scripture by words (verbal comparisons) or concepts (real comparisons).
 - A. For example, the word "quicken" in Ephesians 2:1 may be compared in I Peter 3:18, and by doing this we are able to learn that quicken means to resurrect or make alive.
 - B. For example, this concept of being made alive may be compared to equivalent concepts.
 1. Being born again is an equivalent concept found in John 3:3,7 and I Peter 1:23.
 2. Being begotten again is equivalent in I Peter 1:3; James 1:18; and I John 5:1.
 3. Being resurrected to life from death is equivalent in John 5:25-29 and Rev 20:6.
 4. Being regenerated is an equivalent concept by Titus 3:5 and Matthew 19:28.
 - C. A concordance has every occurrence of every word for word (verbal) comparisons.
 - D. Both the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge and Nave's Topical Bible compare concepts.

- III. This rule assumes the Scripture itself to be internally superior to any outside interpretative help.
 - A. The Holy Spirit's connections of words and concepts exceed all men's opinions.
 - B. So the Bible is superior and rules over commentaries, dictionaries, and encyclopedias.
 - C. We boldly conclude that the Bible itself is the best commentary on the Bible.
 - D. We reject Ptolemy's and Usher's chronologies as corrupting Persia's kings by 80 years.
 - E. We reconcile all "contradictions" by comparing for God's key of wisdom elsewhere.
 - F. But we still allow the careful use of commentaries to quickly find Bible comparisons.

- IV. Words should be understood in their Scriptural and spiritual sense rather than dictionary sense.
 - A. Word meanings change over time and are formed by sinful men, so we use caution.
 - B. God chose to communicate with words, but we want His meanings, not foolish man's.
 - C. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Dictionaries are but fallible works of men.
 - D. The two previous rules are first to force us to limit words by the Bible and the context.
 - E. "Cleave" in Genesis 2:24 may be understood internally (Job 38:38; Ps 137:6; Jer 13:11).
 - F. "Dog" is only understood by analyzing the context. It means sodomite (Deut 23:17-18).
 - G. "Know" in Matthew 7:23 is best understood by comparing Genesis 4:1 and Amos 3:2.
 - H. "Easter" in Acts 12:4 is best understood by considering the context (Acts 12:3). It clearly means the Passover rather than Astarte Day, or our Easter Bunny Day.
 - I. "Instant" in II Timothy 4:2 is best understood by comparing Luke 7:4; 23:23; Acts 26:7; and Romans 12:12. Speaking at a moment's notice anywhere is interpretational folly.
 - J. "Flesh" in I Peter 3:21 is best understood by Rom 7:18; II Cor 7:1; and Gal 5:16-24. We understand it to mean the sinful propensities that are part of our bodies and old man.
 - K. "Baptist" in Matthew 3:1 is best understood by Matt 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38-39; Rom 6:3-5; I Cor 15:29; and I Pet 3:21. If you read one-tenth of the linguistic debates over man's opinions of this word in English and Greek, you would soon be an agnostic!

- V. The illustration of this rule gives popular texts that are corrupted and other texts simply misunderstood by not comparing the Scriptural usage of the words or concepts.
- A. Teetotalers teach that wine is sometimes grape juice and sometimes an alcoholic drink.
1. They pervert language in order to promote a social agenda to condemn all wine.
 2. Many lengthy books have been written to “prove” this point from many angles.
 3. The linguistic and scientific arguments on both sides are nothing but “Babel.”
 4. Of course, it is grape juice when commended and alcoholic when condemned!
 5. But Melchizedek used the same wine as Noah and Lot (Gen 9:21; 14:18; 19:33).
 6. Our Lord Jesus and Timothy used the very same wine Paul feared (John 2:1-11; I Tim 5:23; Rom 14:21; Eph 5:18). Such teetotalers are plainly liars.
 7. Strong’s Concordance confirms the same Hebrew and Greek words are used.
 8. They will argue loud that “new wine” is definitely and certainly not alcoholic.
 - a. New wine causes drunkenness also (Hos 4:11; Joel 1:5; Acts 2:12-15).
 - b. Haven’t these liars ever heard of a new or recent vintage? New wine!
 - c. All wines are classified by kind, vineyard, location, and/or vintage year!
- B. Mark and Luke reject divorce and remarriage altogether (Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18).
1. But Matthew twice records an exception for fornication (Matthew 5:32; 19:9).
 2. And Paul adds a clear exception for desertion (I Corinthians 7:12-16,27-28).
 3. Though “not under bondage” is also understood by comparison (15 cp 27-28).
 4. And further comparison yields other examples (Gen 21:9-13; Ezra 10:1-44; Jer 3:8-11) and principles (Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28) ignored by Pharisees.
- C. Peter certainly writes like he did not believe in limited atonement (II Pet 2:1). Do you?
1. The conclusion appears unavoidable – wicked, God-denying reprobates, whom He would swiftly destroy, were bought by the Lord: Jesus died for them as well.
 2. We know this cannot be true by using our first rule, but what does Peter mean?
 3. By comparing Scripture, we know Peter was an apostle to the Jews (Gal 2:9).
 4. By comparing Scripture, we find Peter using Moses’ warning (Deut 32:5-6).
 5. By further comparison, we learn “bought” describes God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Deut 4:34-35; 7:8; 15:15; 24:18; Psalm 106:21-22; Isaiah 43:3-4).
 6. Peter warns of false teachers so wicked they would deny the very God that had delivered their nation, thus magnifying their profane character as Moses had.
- D. The Campbellites with their fantasy of Acts 2:38 cannot prove baptismal regeneration.
1. We know they cannot be right by using our first rule; but what does Peter mean?
 2. These stepdaughters of Rome must force “for” to mean *in order to obtain*.
 3. So the Lord Jesus gave us Mark 1:40-44, where it means *in testimony of*!
 4. Which agrees perfectly by comparison with the fullest baptism text, I Peter 3:21.
 5. Which agrees perfectly by comparison with another baptism text, I Cor 15:29.
 6. Our .66 magnum just blew their “axe and two .38s” to smithereens (Jer 23:29)!
 7. We don’t use invalid word games of altering “Christ” to *the one anointed*.
 - a. The preposition *for* is modifying *baptized*, not *Christ*, as in Luke 3:3.
 - b. We are not going to cave in and give Alexander’s sons their definition.
- E. We can prove a clear case for regeneration before faith in I John 5:1 from the English.
1. We already know regeneration precedes faith by our first rule (John 3:3; 8:47).
 2. Comparing similar constructions by John, we see the order (I John 4:7 cp 3:14).
 3. Further comparisons reject righteousness before regeneration also (I John 2:29).
 4. Then we find a further clincher of John’s to set the order straight (I John 4:15).
 5. We can do this without appealing to the Greek aorist tense, which vindicates us; as a simple reading of a Greek interlinear will prove our verb interpretation.

- F. Jesus Christ is not the propitiation for all the sins of all men by virtue of our first rule.
 1. Therefore, I John 2:2 must be using the “whole world” in some limited sense.
 2. Just a little comparison shows “world” as very limited (Luke 2:1; John 12:19).
 3. Furthermore, we remember that John was a minister to the Jews (Galatians 2:9).
 4. He used “world” to indicate redeemed among the Gentiles also (Rom 11:12,15).
 - G. We do not care for the narrow minds that say, “*All* means all, and that’s all *all* means!”
 1. They are hoping “all” might lead them to universal redemption (I Timothy 2:4).
 2. But we already know that universal redemption is heresy by our first rule.
 3. And we cannot accept Paul was a practicing sodomite by three *alls* (I Cor 9:22).
 4. Neither do we think loving money causes men to use prostitutes (I Tim 6:10).
 5. We understand this word by its context, often meaning *of all sort* (I Tim 2:1-2).
 - H. The “abomination of desolation” of Matthew 24:15 is no great mystery if we compare.
 1. It is not a Starbucks Coffee shop opened in the foyer of a rebuilt Jewish temple!
 2. Jesus told us to read Daniel to understand it, thus teaching us Bible comparison.
 3. And we find, in Daniel 9:26-27, this is a foreign army making them desolate!
 4. Luke tells us clearly by comparing his version of the prophecy (Luke 21:20)!
 5. What foolish and ridiculous speculation could have been avoided by comparing!
 6. The abomination of desolation is a foreign army desolating the city in 70 A.D.!
 - I. Some speak very often of Jesus being slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8).
 1. And we agree that He was foreordained to come and die for us (I Peter 1:20).
 2. But we disagree strongly that this point is taught in Revelation 13:8 at all.
 3. “From the foundation of the world” is a prepositional phrase modifying the writing of our names in the Book of Life, as seen clearly in Revelation 17:8.
 - J. When Jesus said, "Drink ye all of it," He was not worried about leftovers (Matt 26:27).
 1. He was condemning the Catholic heresy of restricting the wine from the laity.
 2. A Southerner might figure this out by reading the verse, “Drink ya’ll of it.”
 3. But the rest must compare Scripture to understand it (Luke 22:17; Mark 14:23).
 - K. How do the violent take the kingdom by force (Matt 11:12)? By pressing in (Lu 16:16).
 - L. When Revelation describes two resurrections and deaths (20:6), we read John (5:25-29).
 - M. By comparing Luke 14:26 and Matthew 10:37 we properly understand that hating our relatives means not letting our affection for them compete with Christ.
 - N. Since I Corinthians 4:15 cannot possibly teach gospel regeneration, we give this verse the same sense as Paul's statements in Galatians 4:19 and Titus 1:4.
 - O. Since Luke 2:48 and John 6:42 cannot teach that Joseph was Jesus' biological father (rule #1), we find two other senses in which he was His father (Matt 1:16; Luke 3:23).
 - P. By comparing the figurative language of fulfilled prophecies (Is 13), we can accept the powerful similitudes and hyperbole used by the prophets in other places (Hos 12:10).
- VI. Comparing Scriptures can be abused easily and result in severe wresting of God’s intentions.
- A. We must compare Scriptures only where the comparison and connection are valid.
 - B. A popular illustration we used earlier illustrates the danger of poor connections.
 1. We may read in one place that Judas went out and hanged himself (Matt 27:5).
 2. We read in another place that Jesus told a man to go and do likewise (Lu 10:37).
 3. Then we find Jesus saying elsewhere, “That thou doest, do quickly” (Jn 13:27).
 4. Should we all rush out impetuously and hang ourselves to obey the connections?
 - C. Consider the issue of footwashing as practiced by a few Baptists and Mennonites.
 1. They get all excited about our Lord washing the disciples’ feet in John 13:1-17.
 2. Using their concordances, they think they have witness two in I Timothy 5:8.

3. But the text there proves that footwashing was not a public ordinance for all.
 4. Their connection, by which they “prove” their practice, marks them as heretics.
 5. And they do not dare compare too far, or they must pray and kiss differently!
- D. Some teach church membership by baptism by connecting Rom 6:4 and Hebrews 10:25.
1. They greatly err by connecting Rom 6:4 and Heb 10:20 as obvious parallels.
 2. But to then move to a connection of Rom 6:4 and Heb 10:25 is totally absurd.
- E. Some try to calculate the number of the redeemed by comparing Rev 7:9 and Gen 5:27).

RULE #4: Rightly Divide Scripture.

- I. Scripture's words and concepts require frequent division into different senses (II Tim 2:15).
 - A. The Bible must be divided for right understanding, or this instruction would not be here.
 1. Unless the Bible has divisions and needs divisions, this rule would not be given.
 2. God has made the divisions, so the man of God must find them for His approval.
 3. Resentment of dividing and distinguishing of verses is ignorance or rebellion.
 4. Ministers must study as workmen – diligent labor – to divide the word rightly, for the classification of the same or similar words or concepts into different categories and meanings requires diligent and serious study.
 5. God will only approve a minister who studies hard to rightly divide the word.
 6. Ministers will be shamed in ignorance and confusion by not rightly dividing, for without right distinctions they will easily be seen to contradict other sections.
 7. The Bible is written with this degree of difficulty to confuse the proud and lost.
 - B. **Divide.** To separate (a thing) into parts, or (a number or collective body) into smaller groups; to split up, cleave; to break or cut asunder. To separate into branches; to cause to ramify. To separate or mark out (a continuous whole) into parts (in fact, or in thought); to make to consist of parts, or to distinguish the parts of. To separate into classes; to distinguish the kinds of; to class, classify. Formerly, in scholastic use, To draw distinctions with regard to; also *absolutely*: = [**Distinguish**. To make a distinction in or with respect to; *esp.*, in scholastic use, to draw distinctions between various meanings of (a word or statement); hence, to do *away*, or *out of*, bring *into* (something) by making subtle distinctions. To make or draw a distinction; to perceive or note the difference between things; to exercise discernment; to discriminate.] To make separation or distinction (*between*). To make distinctions, as in logic.
- II. Consider other scriptural instructions of this dividing of words and concepts being practiced.
 - A. The law of God provided for priests or judges to resolve controversies (Deut 17:8-13).
 - B. Jehoshaphat warned his judges to be prepared for such divisions (II Chron 19:8-11).
 - C. When Ezra and the Levites taught the Scriptures, they gave the sense that was not easily identified by mere reading and hearing (Neh 8:8).
 1. Deuteronomy 22:5 does not prohibit a woman wearing pants, but it does prohibit the cross-dressing of perverts, transvestism, lascivious sexual experimentation, and gender twisting parties and role playing (Lev 18:22-30; I Cor 6:9).
 2. Deuteronomy 24:5 does not require a one year honeymoon at home without working, but it does require a husband to avoid business or military trips away from his new bride, who was often the fearful result of an arranged marriage.
 3. Proverbs 23:13 does not teach that beating a child has no risk of death or will give the child eternal life. You can save him from practical death (10:2; 11:4).
 4. Proverbs 23:14 does not teach beating will save a child from the Lake of Fire.
 - D. When Jesus was on earth, he used many words and concepts in secondary senses.
 1. John 2:17-22 uses “temple” to refer to His body, not to their house of worship.
 2. John 4:4-15 does not teach a fountain of youth by “living water,” but eternal life.
 3. John 9:2-3 does not teach the blind man and his parents had not sinned, but it rather teaches their sins were not the cause of his blindness.
 4. John 11:11-14 shows dividing the senses of “sleep” of rest and “sleep” of death.

5. These examples could be multiplied indefinitely, once again showing the literal hermeneutic of dictionary worship to be contrary to Scripture and dangerous.

III. The application of this rule must consider its value, its limitations, and its possible abuses.

- A. The Bible often uses the same word or concept with more than one sense, and it is our duty to find those several different senses and classify all the related verses accordingly.
- B. If the same word or concept in different places seems to contradict one another, then cultivate the habit of classification of these verses into a reconciled system of divisions.
- C. When identical or similar statements or concepts confront the student in different contexts, an instinctive desire to consider different senses must be nurtured and applied.
- D. Every occurrence of a word or statement or concept should be considered, since an obvious different sense will encourage and help define the needed division(s).
- E. This rule teaches the importance of defining terms, which is essential to all knowledge.
- F. Restrain impulsive haste to make unnecessary divisions, but do not be afraid to divide.

IV. The illustration of this rule shows how it works to save us from heresy, confusion, and shame.

- A. Salvation must be divided into five phases or we end up in horrible, doctrinal confusion.
 1. Was Paul saved before the world began in God's purpose (II Timothy 1:9)?
 2. Or could he save himself by taking heed to himself and doctrine (I Tim 4:16)?
 3. Or was he saved by the washing of the Holy Spirit's regeneration (Titus 3:5)?
 4. Or was he saved when Christ Jesus came into the world in A.D. 30 (I Tim 1:15)?
 5. Or will he be saved when God glorifies him body, soul, and spirit (Rom 13:11)?
 6. Can we lose our salvation if we forget things we have been taught (I Cor 15:2)?
 7. These five distinctions can be multiplied indefinitely when classifying salvation.
 8. These five divisions are necessary for understanding the components of salvation i.e. adoption, sanctification, justification, regeneration, conversion, etc.
 9. The understanding or confusion, depending on whether you divide salvation or not, is enormous. We cannot rightly know our salvation without dividing it.
- B. We divide Jesus Christ in two senses by the union of His two natures in One Person.
 1. Some verses refer to His humanity (Luke 2:52; 4:1-2; John 19:26,28; Acts 20:28; Gal 2:20; I Cor 15:28).
 2. Some verses refer to His divinity (John 3:13; 6:62; 8:56-58; Eph 3:9; Heb 1:2).
 3. Is Jesus Christ the Son of God by His incarnation or eternal generation? The difference is that between a begotten god and The Mighty God!
- C. We divide "Israel" into at least three senses to discover God's changing dispensation.
 1. Some verses use Israel for physical Jews (Romans 9:27,31; 10:19,21).
 2. Some verses use Israel for spiritual Jews (Romans 10:1; Galatians 6:16).
 3. Some verses use Israel for elect Gentiles as spiritual Jews (Acts 15:14-18).
 4. This division is easier than some, since Scripture divides it (Rom 2:28-29; 9:6).
- D. We divide temptation into at least two senses to avoid the obvious contradiction.
 1. God tempted Abraham by asking him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen 22:1).
 2. Yet, God denied being tempted with evil or tempting any man (James 1:13).
 3. We must divide between the lust for evil of our own hearts (James 1:14-16), and the opportunity or occasion for that lust to act (Gen 22:2; I Cor 10:13).
- E. We must divide the contradictory senses of justification spoken of by Paul and James.
 1. Martin Luther, by not studying enough, scorned James and cut it from his Bible; many others have thought of doing it, or they consciously ignore James.
 2. Paul is writing of our legal justification by Christ's righteousness (Romans 4:2).

3. James is writing of practical justification, or the evidence of righteousness and the proof of faith by our own works (James 2:21).
- F. We divide the marital recommendations of Paul for virgins and widows.
1. The general rule is marriage's value (Gen 2:18; Ruth 3:1; Pr 18:22; I Tim 5:14).
 2. However, the distress at Corinth recommended against it (I Cor 7:25-26).
 3. If a widow could contain her fleshly desires and chose to serve God, she should do so in a single life dedicated to God (I Corinthians 7:39-40; I Timothy 5:9).
- G. We divide the carefulness required and condemned in the saints of God.
1. There is a carefulness that involves distraction and worry, which we are to carefully avoid (Luke 10:41; I Corinthians 7:32; Philippians 4:6).
 2. There is a carefulness that involves watchfulness and taking of pains in the performing of our duties, which we are to cultivate (I Cor 12:25; II Cor 7:11,12).
- H. We distinguish the worshipful fear of God of saints and the slavish fear of His enemies.
1. Fear seeking to please our glorious God is commended (Phil 2:12; Psalm 130:4).
 2. Fear that is servile terror of judgment is condemned (Gen 3:9-10; James 2:19).
- I. We must divide the will of God we are to trust and that which we are to obey.
1. God's secret will is His eternal purpose, which is certain (Rom 9:19; Jas 4:15).
 2. God's revealed will is His written instructions for our conduct (I Thes 4:3; 5:18).
 3. We have assistance with this division by the good words of Moses (Deut 29:29).
- J. The Bible condemns swearing, yet the Lord and Paul both swore. We divide swearing.
1. The Bible says anything beyond yes and no is wrong (Matt 5:33-37; Jas 5:12).
 2. The Lord, Paul, and an angel swore (Heb 6:13; 7:21; Rev 10:5-6; II Cor 1:23).
 3. The Mennonites, JW's, and other denominations are confused and ashamed here.
 4. God condemns frivolous swearing by wrong objects (Matt 23:16-22; Jer 4:2).
- K. Romans 11 gives several fascinating and valuable divisions; consider just two of them.
1. In Romans 11:11, we must divide **fall** into falling entirely without recovery and falling temporarily with recovery. Here are two different senses in one verse!
 2. We must divide **casting away** into two similar senses between 11:1-2 and 11:15!
- L. We divide the two testaments, as they are two different covenants governing worship.
1. The use of musical instruments in the Old does not justify them in the New.
 2. The use of incense and mitres in the Old does not justify them in the New.
 3. Civil authority to enforce doctrine in the Old does not justify it in the New.
- M. Is God the author of confusion? Yes (Gen 11:1-9), and no (I Cor 14:33)!
- N. Does baptism wash away sins? Yes (Acts 22:16), and no (I Pet 3:21; Tit 3:5)! Baptism only washes away sins figuratively and symbolically to our consciences by immersion.
- O. Does "water" in John 3:5 teach baptismal regeneration? No (John 4:14; 7:39; Tit 3:5)!
- P. Paul implies three divisions in using wine – members, deacons, bishops (I Tim 3:3,8), which is a different way of using the Bible than presumptuously condemning any at all.
- Q. Paul circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3), but he would not circumcise Titus (Gal 2:1-5); he soothed the Jews with the former and condemned the Judaizers with the latter.
- R. Paul allowed Jewish holy days as a liberty, but not Christmas and Easter (Rom 14:5-6).
- S. We apply the day-year principle in Daniel 7:25; we do not apply it in Daniel 8:14; we do apply it in Daniel 9:24; because the timeframes of the prophecies determine this division for us, by hindsight, when the prophecies assume their full value!
- T. Did the Galatians actually fall from grace, as Campbellites teach (Gal 5:4)? Or did they fall from the proper understanding of grace, in the way they were justified by the law?
- U. Does baptism cause church membership? Is it the door to the church? Of course not.
1. We know the natures of the things are different (I Pet 3:21; Ac 9:26; I Cor 5:13).
 2. And we can read that Pentecostal baptisms did not cause membership (Ac 2:41).

- V. A few divisions made by men where God has no division will illustrate the abuse of this rule.
- A. Scofield and his followers chop human history into seven dispensations, when God only has three dispensations (Romans 5:14; Luke 16:16). This man wrote a book, Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.
 - B. Scofield and his followers separate the kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God, when the two are identical, the kingdom of the God of heaven (Dan 2:44; Matt 19:23-24)!
 - C. Scofield and his followers divide the coming of Christ (for his saints) from the coming of the Lord (with his saints), to avoid the damnation of II Thess 2:1-3, when the Bible does not even hint at such a distinction (I Thess 4:13-17; II Thess 1:7-10; 2:1-3).
 - D. Billy Sunday and his followers, which are Legion, divide the Hebrew, Greek, and English words for wine in this way: if the passage commends it, then it must be unfermented grape juice; if the passage condemns it, then it must be alcoholic wine.
 1. Isn't that the most pitiful piece of circular reasoning and begging the question you have ever imagined? And these "touch not, taste not, handle not" Pharisees are often from the best schools, and they love to talk about their Semitic studies and expertise in two dead languages. Incredible!
 2. "Wine" has always and only meant fermented juice of the grape as an alcoholic beverage. See The Oxford English Dictionary!
 3. And the Bible does not allow such a division anywhere, for the same Hebrew and Greek words commended in one place make men drunk in other verses!
 - E. Stuart Custer and his Greek-worshipping followers, which are Legion, make a creative play on the English word "lovest" between Jesus and Peter (John 21:15-17).
 1. *Agape* and *phileo* are synonyms! Compare Heb 12:6 (*a*) and Rev 3:19 (*p*); John 3:35 (*a*) and 5:20 (*p*); I Cor 16:22 (*p*) and II Cor 5:14 (*a*); John 11:5 (*a*) and John 11:36 (*p*); and John 20:2 (*p*) and John 21:7 (*a*). Let God be true! Love = love!
 2. Jesus gently chastised Peter for three denials with His three questions (John 21:15-17; Matt 26:34; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:61; John 18:15-27).
 3. Peter felt the three questions, not the use of a word indicating a lesser form of love or affection, as is stated rather clearly (John 21:17).
 4. Why the harshness here? These Bible-denying scribes and disputers use this "illustration" to cast doubt on the English scriptures of zealous young converts.

Rule #5: Obey the Rules of Grammar.

- I. God has chosen to communicate with written language, so we must learn the rules of language.
 - A. **Grammar.** That department of the study of a language which deals with its inflexional forms or other means of indicating the relations of words in the sentence, and with the rules for employing these in accordance with established usage. The science which analyzes those distinctions in thought, which it is the purpose of grammatical forms more or less completely to render in expression. [OED]
 - B. If you never learn to read, then you will be at a great disadvantage to know Scripture.
 - C. If you never learn elementary grammar, you will also find it harder to understand well.
 - D. However, it is important to also remember that we understand the things we read and hear with hardly any conscious thought about grammar. Even if you do not know the proper terms for various grammatical constructions or how to diagram sentences, you are probably still able to hear and understand. Teaching and defending demand more.
 - E. As noted earlier about reading, grammar hardly qualifies as a rule of interpretation, since it is fundamental to understanding writing from any source in any language.
 1. But since Scripture clearly uses grammatical constructions in proving doctrinal points, it will be considered here as a rule of interpretation.
 2. Neither grammar nor justification of print on a page is taught in II Timothy 1:13.
 3. The “form of sound words” in II Timothy 1:13 is using words of a wholesome character or nature, as Paul did and taught elsewhere (I Tim 6:3; Titus 2:1,8).
 - F. Experience shows few Bible readers and preachers pay close attention to the language and grammar of Scripture any longer, and there are reasons for their carelessness.
 1. Once you get in the habit of changing God’s words on a regular basis, then the individual words and their tight relation to the sentence lose importance.
 2. Once in the habit of modifying the message and program to cater to carnal and unregenerate members, you emphasize the sound of words over their sense.
 - G. You will be accused of a nit-picking, old-fashioned method of interpretation, unless you can remember and explain the Holy Spirit’s examples of grammatical arguments.
 - H. It would serve serious students well to own at least one handbook of English grammar.
 - I. This study of Bible grammar is not exhaustive, but it should provoke careful study.
- II. Remember arguments where the Holy Spirit appeals to grammar in Scripture to prove points.
 - A. Paul built a significant argument for salvation on the mere number of a noun (Gal 3:16).
 1. Were God’s promises to Abraham and his “seed”? Or Abraham and his “seeds”?
 2. The difference here is the great contrast between Jesus Christ and antichrist Jews. Which of these two was the object of God’s promises in Abraham?
 3. Paul appeals to the Old Testament and argues from the fact that every promise to Abraham and his seed were to a singular “seed” (from Gen 12:7 to Gen 24:7).
 4. The true fulfillment of the promises to Abraham and his seed are in Jesus Christ and His spiritual children, identified through faith (Gal 3:16 cp Gal 3:29).
 5. Salvation is by grace, not race or law, from the grammar in the Old Testament.
 6. It is gratifying to see modern translations of the Bible foolishly pervert this point by using indefinite (NIV) or plural (NASV) nouns in the promises to Abraham recorded in Genesis. Even the New King James Version makes this corruption.
 - B. Paul makes a fine switch from the active voice to the passive voice (Galatians 4:9).
 1. Arminian theology makes your salvation dependent on your knowledge of God.

2. God's theology makes your salvation dependent on His knowledge of you.
3. God knowing us is the key (Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:6; II Tim 2:19; Matt 7:23).
4. Paul reasons, if your salvation is by God's knowledge of you, why chase laws?
- C. Jesus argued an important doctrine from the tense of a verb (Matthew 22:32).
 1. The Sadducees, pseudo-masters of the Bible, denied the resurrection of the dead.
 2. Jesus proved the resurrection of the dead by the present tense in "I am the God of Abraham," since He is God of the living, not the dead, and Abram was dead.
 3. Moses wrote this 400 years after Abraham and used the present tense (Ex 3:6).
 4. And Jesus argued His point from the only italicized word in Exodus 3:6! Glory!
- D. Jesus argued another important doctrine with merely the tense of a verb (John 8:58).
 1. Limited by the Jews to 50 years, Jesus claimed the eternal nature of Jehovah.
 2. Comparing Himself to Abraham, He did not say, "Before Abraham was, I was."
 3. He said, "Before Abraham was, I am," using the sacred present tense (Ex 3:14).
 4. The Jews obviously understood the implications, for they tried to stone Him.
- E. Paul argued an apparent verb tense error contained advanced revelation (Romans 4:17).
 1. God told Abraham, "I have made you a father of many nations," when he was the father only of Ishmael, who would provide but one nation (Gen 17:5,20).
 2. God had purposed many nations through Isaac, and God's purpose is so certain that we can use past tense verbs for actions not yet done (Gen 17:4,16).

III. Consider these grammatical constructions and the doctrinal implications from true analysis.

- A. Our Lord Jesus declared His Deity to Nicodemus by His use of a verb tense (John 3:13).
 1. He began by telling Nicodemus that He had come down from heaven.
 2. He added that He was still in heaven, even while they were talking on earth!
 3. Modern translations profanely delete this glorious little phrase from the verse.
 4. An angel or saint could come down, but only Jehovah God is omnipresent!
- B. John's verb tenses in John 1:12 and context teach that regeneration is by God's power.
 1. Those who "believe" (present tense) "were born" (past tense) of God.
 2. Only this construction and understanding agrees with the facts of John 1:13.
 3. "Received him" is past tense only to continue from 1:11 in historical mode.
 4. John quickly brings this past tense to the present, by his explanatory "even."
- C. Paul used verb tenses to show the gospel only benefits those already saved (I Cor 1:18).
 1. Only those who "are saved" (perfect tense, passive voice) profit from the gospel.
 2. Those perishing do not profit by the gospel; it is foolishness to them (II Cor 4:3).
 3. The language is clear – a perfect tense *are* and present tense *is* – indicating salvation occurred prior to the gospel being received as the power of God.
 4. God must call a man in order for the gospel to make sense (I Cor 1:22-24).
- D. John proves the priority of regeneration to faith by verb tenses (John 5:24; I John 5:1).
 1. The hearing and believing man "is passed" (perfect tense, passive voice).
 2. We can prove this grammar by comparing I John 3:14 and I John 4:7.
 3. We can prove this grammar by honest men who want to check the Greek verbs.
- E. Paul teaches that our salvation is dependent on being accepted, not accepting (Eph 1:6).
 1. Here we are dealing with the voice of the verb – are we active or passive?
 2. The religious world is clamoring, buying, and seducing sinners to accept Christ.
 3. God declare our adoption to be the result of being made acceptable (Acts 10:35).
- F. John proves God dwells in a person before that person will confess Christ (I John 4:15).
 1. The act of faith, in confessing Jesus as Son, is the future tense, "shall confess."
 2. The result of regeneration, indwelling by God, is present tense, "God dwelleth."

3. Learn the basic but important rule that the tenses of verbs in a sentence are more important than their order in the sentence.
- G. Paul proves all foolish talking and jesting are sins by the number of a verb (Eph 5:4).
1. Some have taken the liberty to justify “convenient jesting,” by limiting the condemnation of this text to only jesting, which, they say, *is* not convenient.
 2. But the plural “are” covers all three sins: filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting, which requires all three to be inconvenient, or some filthiness to be convenient.
- H. Paul argued we are already glorified by the use of the past tense of the verb (Rom 8:30).
1. We believe sure enough we are foreknown, predestinated, called, and justified.
 2. But the text declares we are also glorified, which we view in light of Rom 4:17.
- I. Paul argued that justification precedes faith in a good text on justification (Acts 13:39).
1. All that believe (plural, present tense) are justified (plural, perfect tense). Glory!
 2. Paul further confirms the fact by ascribing justification “by him,” that is Christ!
- J. Peter explained to Cornelius God had already accepted him and his family (Acts 10:35).
1. He that feareth him (singular, present tense) is accepted with Him (singular, perfect tense), just as we know from Romans 3:18.
 2. He that worketh righteousness (singular, present tense) is accepted with Him (singular, perfect tense), just as we know from I John 2:29; 3:7,10.
 3. Being accepted with God through Jesus Christ is the key to salvation (Eph 1:6).
- K. Be thankful for the particularly precise language of the King James Version English.
1. *Thee, thou, thy, and thine* are always singular. You can count on it absolutely.
 2. *Ye, your, and you* are always plural. Again, you can count on it absolutely.
 3. Matthew 26:64 addresses Caiaphas directly, then promises a view for the group!
 4. Luke 22:31-32 says Satan wanted all of them, but Jesus prayed for each of them.
 5. John 3:7 shows Jesus spoke to Nicodemus alone, but He taught a universal rule.
 6. Don’t let modern illiterates tell you we don’t want “thee” or “thou” in the Bible.
 7. Why did Paul end his epistles to Timothy differently (I Tim 6:21; II Tim 4:22)?
 8. The *thee* and *thou* of the KJV are superior to any English version without them.
- L. The right location of a comma defies the damnable doctrine of soul sleep (Luke 23:43).
1. Jesus told the thief they would be together that very day in Paradise by saying, “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”
 2. Russellites and Adventists read, “Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise,” allowing the thief’s soul to sleep until some future time (NWT).
- M. Jesus was in the tomb two Sabbath days, based on the timing of the purchase of spices.
1. Mark 16:1 indicates the women had bought the spices after a Sabbath day.
 2. Luke 23:56 indicates they had prepared those spices before a Sabbath day.
 3. The first Sabbath was Passover Sabbath; the next was the weekly (John 19:31).
 4. The women bought and prepared their spices on a day between these Sabbaths.
 5. Here is circumstantial evidence for our Lord’s “three days and three nights.”
- N. Ignoring the italicized words both condemns Jesus Christ and violates the true grammar.
1. Arthur Pink suggested much light might be found by ignoring italicized words!
 2. Jesus argued from italicized words (Ex 3:6 cp Matt 22:32; Deut 8:3 cp Mat 4:4).
 3. Peter also argued doctrine from italicized words (Psalm 16:8 cp Acts 2:25).
 4. Can Mr. Pink discover how David and Elhanan killed Goliath (II Sam 21:19)?
- O. Jesus presently has His rod of iron rule by believing a verb tense (Revelation 2:26-27).
1. He received such a throne and authority already, by the past tense “received.”
 2. We are not looking for some Jewish millennium in the future for Jesus to reign.

- P. God counted Paul faithful before conversion, by virtue of verb tenses in I Timothy 1:12.
1. The coordinating conjunction “for” gives Paul’s faithfulness as a factor in God enabling him for the ministry.
 2. God measured Paul by his knowledge, which was unbelief (1:13; I Kings 15:14).
- Q. Matthew used a different verb to lay a trap for higher and textual critics (Matthew 27:9).
1. We condemn all the modern translations for crediting Isaiah with Mark 1:2.
 2. Zechariah wrote what Jeremiah spoke! Zechariah tells us so (1:4; 7:7,12).
- R. Verb tenses must be understood carefully in cases of quoted prophecies, for the prophet’s perspective was future, but the application by the apostle is present or past.
1. Acts 2:17-21 was future to Joel, but not to Peter. It was fulfilled at Pentecost.
 2. Acts 15:16-17 was future to Amos, but not to James. It was fulfilled with Paul.
 3. Romans 11:26-27 was future to Isaiah, but not Paul. It was fulfilled with Christ.
 4. Hebrews 8:8-12 was future to Jeremiah, but not Paul. It was fulfilled in Christ.
 5. Hebrews 12:26 was future to Haggai, but not to Paul. It was fulfilled in Christ.
- S. Some have used Acts 2:41 to teach that baptism and church membership are simultaneous events, both of which are results of Peter’s preaching in Acts 2:40.
1. “Then” is a conjunctive adverb that connects the independent clause of Acts 2:40 and the first independent clause in Acts 2:41. It does not affect the second independent clause of Acts 2:41, because conjunctive adverbs do not connect more than two such clauses.
 2. The two independent clauses of Acts 2:41 have two distinct and different time frames for their actions. The baptism of the first clause occurred after Peter’s preaching by virtue of “then” which means “at that time.” The addition of three thousand souls simply occurred sometime during that day.
 3. The two independent clauses of Acts 2:41 have two distinct and different subjects. The subject of the first clause is “they that gladly received his word,” and the subject of the second clause is “about three thousand souls.”
 4. A colon separates the two clauses, which is second only to the period in disconnecting clauses with independent and discontinuous grammatical constructions.
 5. The “and,” which serves as a coordinating conjunction in Acts 2:41, does not require addition to the church to be simultaneous with baptism any more than the following six clauses coordinated by “and.”

- IV. Grammar follows context and the preceding rules, because context determines grammar.
- A. Prepositional phrases must often be judged to be either subjective-genitive or objective-genitive. Is the object of the preposition the subject or object of the genitive case?
1. A subjective-genitive construction makes the object of the preposition the subject of the genitive phrase. The object of the preposition performs the verb.
 - a. In I John 3:16, God’s love for us caused Him to lay down His life for us.
 - b. In Haggai 2:7, the “desire of all nations” is a prophecy of Jesus Christ, Who is desired by all nations. There is no one desiring nations. Consider this difference long enough to fully understand it.
 - c. In Daniel 11:37, Herod did not forsake desiring women, for he had ten wives; but he did forsake women’s desire, for he killed their babies.
 - d. In James 2:4, we allow evil thoughts to be the basis for our judgments. We are certainly to judge evil thoughts, but that is not taught here!
 - e. In II Corinthians 5:14, Christ’s love for Paul constrained him to zeal, which is the great love he prayed for all men to perceive (Eph 3:14-19).

2. An objective-genitive construction makes the object of the preposition the object of the genitive phrase. The subject of the preposition performs the verb.
 - a. In Luke 11:42, the Pharisees were passing over their love of God, which they ought to have done. They were not neglecting God's love of them.
 - b. In I Timothy 6:10, the temptation is loving money, not money loving us.
 - c. In Acts 13:34, the sure mercies are God's in raising David's Son, Jesus.
 - d. In I Timothy 3:6, novices might be condemned for pride like the devil.
 - e. In Jude 1:21, we keep ourselves loving God, for God loves us forever.
 3. We argue that such a construction is to be subjective-genitive in Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:16,20; 3:22; and Philemon 3:9 where righteousness and justification come by Christ's faith and not our own. Consider that all modern Bible translations change this phrase to "faith in Christ" in all of these places.
 4. We deny the travesty of Scripture when some have argued that "the gift of the Holy Ghost" in Acts 2:38 is the Holy Spirit giving church membership through water baptism. The giving here is by God, and the gift is the Holy Ghost. Simply consider Acts 2:33 and John 7:39 and Ephesians 1:13.
 5. These grammatical constructions are interpreted by following the rules that have come before. Simply looking at the words and grammar will not give a hint.
- B. Long and complicated sentences must be diagrammed according to the rest of Scripture.
1. I Pet 3:18-20 describes Noah preaching by Christ's Spirit, while he was building the ark, to his disobedient generation, who were in prison when Peter wrote.
 - a. Jesus did not descend into hell and preach to the spirits in prison, as the Catholics want us to believe. He went to Paradise with the thief.
 - b. He commended His spirit to His Father's hands, not the prison warden!
 2. Revelation 13:8 is short, but five consecutive prepositions modify "written"!
 - a. Men wax eloquent about a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world!
 - b. But the word "slain" is a participial adjective simply modifying the lamb.
 - c. The preposition "from," as prepositions do, tells us at what time the names were not "written" in the book.
 - d. We confirm our choice by Christ's death in time (Gal 4:4) and Rev 17:8.
 - e. Jesus is described here as a Lamb slain for us to see a connection to 5:6.
- C. Long distance or complex relations of pronouns and antecedents must be Scriptural.
1. In Psalm 105:36, the antecedent of "their" must be Egypt or the land of Ham.
 2. In Psalm 105:37, the pronoun "them" must be Israel from way back in 105:23.
 3. In Psalm 105:28, the pronoun "they" could be plagues, Moses/Aaron, or Egypt.
 4. Daniel 11 has very intriguing pronouns clarified only by context and history.
- V. Corruptions of Scripture's grammar could be multiplied indefinitely with little profit for most.
- A. Galatians 1:15-16 does not teach Paul was regenerated in his mother's womb or at birth.
1. The two parenthetical elements are unrelated to one other in a grammatical way.
 2. Both simply describe God's calling of Paul to the ministry (Jer 1:5; Rom 1:1).
- B. Acts 2:38 will not allow substitution of other parts of grammar for "Christ" in the verse.
1. Wanting to thwart the Campbellite doctrine of baptismal regeneration, it has been suggested that "anointed" be substituted for "Christ" in this text, for it to read, "baptized in the name of Jesus, anointed for the remission of sins."
 2. Since "Jesus Christ" is a noun in this verse, it is invalid to substitute the participial adjective "anointed" in its place grammatically.
 3. Since the preposition "for" modifies the verb "baptized," it is invalid to move its connection to an inserted participial adjective not in the original sentence.

4. Such gymnastics and violation of grammar are perversely wrong and give the enemies of the cross the type of ammunition for ridicule they do not deserve.
5. We know that the preposition “for” in this context means “in testimony of,” as proven by I Peter 3:21, and indicated by Mark 1:40-44.

RULE #6: Reason by Proper Rules of Logic.

- I. The Bible is reasonable. Logical thinking will help interpret, understand, and prove the Bible.
 - A. **Reason.** n. A statement of some fact (real or alleged) employed as an argument to justify or condemn some act, prove or disprove some assertion, idea, or belief.
 - B. **Reason.** n. That intellectual power or faculty which is ordinarily employed in adapting thought or action to some end; the guiding principle of the human mind in the process of thinking.
 - C. **Reason.** v. To employ reasoning or argument with a person, in order to influence his conduct or opinions.
 - D. **Reason.** v. To think in a connected, sensible, or logical manner; to employ the faculty of reason in forming conclusions.
 - E. **Logic.** The branch of philosophy that treats of the forms of thinking in general, and more especially of inference and of scientific method. The art of reasoning and that system of rules for convincing or confounding an opponent by argument.
 - F. **Logic.** The rules governing right reasoning; the study of the methods and principles to distinguish good (correct) reasoning from false (incorrect).
 - G. You have heard of the “three R’s,” which are reading, writing, and arithmetic. But you also need rhetoric, which used to be taught, but doesn’t suit the MTV generation.
 - H. **Rhetoric.** The art of using language so as to persuade or influence others; the body of rules to be observed by a speaker or writer in order to express himself with eloquence.
 - I. Scripture does not use “logic” or “rhetoric,” but it does use “reason” in the senses above (I Sam 12:7; Job 9:14; 13:3,6; 15:3; 32:11; Pr 26:16; Eccl 7:25; Is 1:18; 41:21; Dan 4:36; Matt 16:7-8; 21:25; Mark 2:6,8; 8:16-17; 11:31; 12:28; Luke 5:21-22; 9:46; 20:5,14-15; 24:15; Acts 6:2; 17:2; 18:4,14,19; 24:25; 28:29; Rom 12:1; I Pet 3:15).
 - J. And it uses other terms to indicate reasoning, logic, and rhetoric (I Sam 24:15; 25:39; Job 23:4; Ps 35:1; 43:1; 74:22; 119:154; Pr 22:23; 23:11; 25:9,15; 31:9; Is 1:17; 3:13; 43:26; Jer 2:35; 12:1; Matt 27:20; Mark 9:33-34; Luke 1:1-4; 16:31; Acts 6:10; 9:29; 13:43; 17:3,11,17; 18:4,24,28; 19:8-9,26; 28:23; Rom 1:29; 4:21; 8:38; 14:5,14; I Cor 14:24; Eph 5:15; Phil 1:7,17; Col 4:6; I Thess 5:21; II Tim 1:12; 2:23,25; Tit 1:9-11; Heb 11:13; I John 4:1-6; Jude 1:3,15).
- II. Faith and the gospel are reasonable, and they must be believed, taught, and defended logically.
 - A. Logic and reasoning are not contradictory to faith and the Holy Spirit, as we shall see.
 1. It is wrong to make faith and reason mutually exclusive, though humanists do.
 2. True science is not the enemy of truth, but a servant. The false sciences today, like evolution, psychology, sociology, and many others, are based on nothing but the crazed speculations of God-hating atheists (I Tim 6:20-21).
 3. We do not have to prove the existence of God or the validity of the Bible, for these are givens to our faith. Their “scientific” speculations deserve and need no more refuting than the child crying out that the emperor is naked! Any believer can see that he has no clothes! And that he has had a frontal lobotomy!
 4. We know God exists by these three categories of proof: the natural creation, the declaration of the Bible, and the Spirit’s internal witness.
 5. Christians begin reasoning from God’s existence, and everything is reasoned by logic from that starting point. Neither Jesus nor the apostles would waste a second on a man denying God’s existence (Gen 1:1; Acts 17:24; Heb 1:1).

6. The humanist is insane by our faith, and as far as reasoning is concerned, for his foundational premises are Godless fantasies! He can reason in circles around Karl Sagan, the big bang, and his monkey ancestors for an eternity in hell.
 7. Christians also generally assume the truth of the Scriptures as a starting point (Ps 119:128; Is 8:20; Matt 22:29; Acts 17:2). We only seek to prove its validity as the revelation of the only God for the pleasure of our believing souls.
 8. We can prove the validity of the Bible by many internal proofs, as we did in the extensive study, "Why I Believe the Bible."
 9. God is truth (Deut 32:4). His word is truth (John 17:17). Anything else is false.
 10. If the whole world were to unite against us with their puny threat of death, we would laugh at them, as all the martyrs have done for the last 2000 years. Glory!
- B. God is reasonable and logical. He Himself dares men to reason and dispute with Him!
1. God is truth (Deut 32:4). $2+2=4$ for sane men, and $2+2=4$ for God as well. He didn't have any problem counting his way through the six days of creation!
 2. His ways are always equal; our ways are often unequal (Ezek 18:29; Is 55:8-9).
 3. He dares men to bring their best arguments to debate Him (Isaiah 1:18; 41:21).
 4. He mocks the lies of foolish men who put their trust in themselves (Is 44:20).
 5. He is the invisible, indivisible, eternal, independent I AM THAT I AM. He is not proven by syllogisms; He is self-existing, self-evident, and self-proving.
 6. He is the Source of all evidence, and before or outside Him there is no evidence!
 7. Pitiful man is not going to validate His glorious existence by symbolic logic!
 8. We prove He exists to those with faith, and the proof is only a servant of faith.
- C. It is the man without faith who is unreasonable, for all his arguments begin from faithless insanity and can reach no higher, regardless of their validity (II Thess 3:2).
1. Remember. Zero multiplied by any number is still zero. Denying the First Premise of truth and reality results in circular reasoning from the hallucinations of foolish men, who are creatures that begin and end soiling themselves!
 2. Consider. Humanists require more "faith" to believe the universe came from a big bang of cosmic gases and evolutionary processes than we do in believing it came from an infinitely wise Creator.
 3. We reason from the First Cause of all things (Acts 17:24), and they reason from the No Clue About Anything (Is 8:20; I Tim 6:3-5)! They are inherently insane!
 4. Satan, as the father of lies and false reasoning, is irrational (John 8:44). His arguments are always false, though subtly so! Men under his control are miserably deranged and oppose themselves (Mark 5:1-20; II Tim 2:25-26).
- D. There is a violent reaction today, from Eastern and Satanic influence, against objective knowledge and absolute truth. For the pagans of India, China, and Japan have no truth.
- E. The Bible is logical in its content, provides examples of godly men reasoning, has doctrine established by logical extension, and confutes error by logical refutation.
1. Christians should learn logic, for they are the rules of thinking, persuading, and defending. Faith is based in logic, for it comes from rightly understanding the Bible, which produces the practice of faith (Rom 10:17; II Pet 1:5).
 2. It is a contradiction to say, "Your argument is logical, but it isn't Scriptural."
 3. We should not let the pagans hold their illogical positions without some pain!
- F. We call the period when Roman Catholicism dominated Europe the Dark Ages. They separated faith and science. Nations with a majority of Catholics are still dark.
1. If you convince a nation the dissolving wafer in their mouth is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ, you have created an irrational vulnerability to sentimental superstition. Here comes Mother Superior to blind and enslave you!

2. The Catholic churches of Europe claimed more pieces of Christ's cross than needed to rebuild the ark! More forefingers than John the Baptist had fingers! Numerous foreskins of Jesus! And hairs from Mary of four different colors!
 3. Faith to these rejecters of Scripture is sentimental superstition. They do not about faith in God and faith in the doctrine and promises of His Word.
- G. Christians should never apologize or shrink in their faith toward God and His Word.
1. We have the perfect source of knowledge for all issues of life and eternity.
 2. Bible believers are the world's greatest philosophers, with the answers for man's purpose, man's past, man's future, and the ethics for successful living and joy.
 3. We know the world, and all of its glory, will soon be melted with fervent heat.
- H. Paul taught the ministerial work of destroying false ideas and thinking (II Cor 10:4-5).
1. Which was the same work given to the prophets before him (Isaiah 54:17).
 2. For the Word of God in the right hands is a hammer and fire (Jer 23:28-29).
- III. The rules of logic are as basic as mathematics and thinking. Do not be intimidated by them.
- A. You learned the elementary rules of logic in basic mathematics, algebra, and geometry.
- B. This study cannot go very far in the study of logic, for that is a large subject of its own. But wise men will learn the rudiments of sound reasoning and logical fallacies.
- C. The first rule of logic is the law of identity. In a certain specific context (set of facts and circumstances), a proposition (thing or situation) has only one single meaning. $A=A$. If any statement is true, then it is true. Here is where we must carefully define our terms, which is the beginning of all thought and communication. The Bible uses the law of identity (Ex 3:14; Is 46:9; Matt 22:43; John 10:35; Gal 3:16; Heb 8:13).
- D. The second rule of logic is the law of contradiction. You cannot know anything without the use of this law. No statement can be both true and false at the same time, in the same sense. Jesus is the Christ is either a true or false statement; it cannot be both. This law establishes the basis of truth or error. We call violating this rule talking out of both sides of your mouth. Or we say we caught him coming and going. In extended and complicated reasoning, this rule is often broken, depending on the need or subtlety of the one arguing. Contradictions are patently false. Our generation seeks to overthrow this law to steal absolute knowledge and truth. God and the Bible use the law of contradiction, or noncontradiction (Prov 8:8; II Tim 2:13; Tit 1:2; I John 2:21).
- E. The third rule of logic is the law of excluded middle. Any statement must be either true or false; it cannot be something other than true or false. There are not three options regarding a statement. There is not a vague middle ground where something is sort of true and sort of false. We must determine any statement to be either true or false. Our generation seeks to find a neutral ground between true and false to allow every sort of idea and opinion as valid or true. But this law demands a statement to be true or false. The Bible uses the law of excluded middle (Judges 24:15; I Kings 18:21; Matt 6:24; 12:30; II Cor 6:16).
- F. The fourth rule of logic is the law of logical inference. If $A=B$, and $B=C$, then $A=C$. Any argument by analogy uses this law. It is a very common form of reasoning, and a necessary form once we leave pure axioms. This law assumes the identify law for B. The Bible uses the law of logical inference (Matt 12:1-8; 22:15-22; Mark 2:23-28).
- G. Deductive reasoning, arguing from general propositions to particular facts, is the most powerful and certain form of reasoning, for it begins with axioms of truth and applies them to individual cases. It is generally the method of Bible interpretation. The syllogism is a common way of showing deductive reasoning, which can also include Venn diagrams and other symbolic representations.

1. As the identify theory in math states, if $A = B$ and $B = C$, then $A = C$.
 2. Spot is a dog; dogs cannot talk; therefore, Spot cannot talk.
 3. Baseball players are rich; John Doe plays baseball; therefore, John Doe is rich.
 4. However, consider this variation. Baseball players are rich; John Doe is rich; therefore, John Doe plays baseball. This is illogical and false. John is a doctor!
 5. God created all things (John 1:3); I am thing (Acts 17:26); God created me.
 6. The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23); I have sinned (3:23); I have earned death.
 7. Jesus died for sinners, and Judas Iscariot was a sinner, but it does not necessarily follow that Jesus died for Judas, since it was not stated that Jesus died for every sinner without exception. The major premise was too vague.
- H. Inductive reasoning, arguing from particular facts to general propositions, is a weaker form of reasoning. Its conclusions are not as authoritative or certain, for that would require complete knowledge of the case, which is generally not possible.
1. Do saints sin after conversion? By looking at the lives of many saints in both Testaments, and seeing that they sinned, we may conclude that no man can live perfectly after conversion. But we run into at least two quick problems. There are Bible characters without sins mentioned. Do we consider them? And, we have not absolutely proved our point, for we have not examined every saint.
 2. On the other hand, we can settle the issue certainly by deductively reasoning from I John 1:8-10 that all saints will continue to sin after conversion.
 3. Great caution must be exercised with inductive reasoning in the Bible, especially in the absence of a general proposition covering the case. For how do you know you have “sampled” the Bible adequately? Properly interpreted the sample? And correctly drawn the right conclusion? And identified all the exceptions? Beware!
 4. Men love inductive reasoning in the Bible to find verses that support the opinions they have already formed. They go to the Bible, not to find what God has declared, but to find Bible support for what they have chosen to believe.
 5. The only safe method of using inductive reasoning with the Bible is to not begin with a hypothesis already formed, unless it is based on an axiom of Scripture.

- IV. Consider the Scriptural examples of reasoning by God, Jesus, and His prophets and apostles; and let anyone who thinks truth is found any other way be confounded by these examples.
- A. See the numerous references provided above, in two categories, under the first point.
 - B. God requested Israel to reason with Him about mercy and judgment (Isaiah 1:16-20).
 - C. God called skeptics to bring forth their best arguments for idols (Isaiah 41:1,21-29).
 - D. Paul shows his method of reasoning from the Scriptures at Thessalonica (Acts 17:2-3).
 1. This passage is very important. Here the greatest apostle of the Christian faith shows us his standard methods in persuading men to accept the truth of Jesus.
 2. Reasoning was not exceptional for Paul, but rather very typical and common.
 3. He reasoned – he employed logical argumentation to convince his hearers.
 4. He reasoned out of the Scriptures – he assumed them as totally true and valid.
 5. He opened – brought forward assertions and conclusions to present his case.
 6. He alleged – brought forth evidence to prove his assertions and conclusions.
 7. These two expressions – opening and alleging – are legal terms for pleading a case in court, with opening remarks and presenting the supporting evidence.
 8. He did not expect them to believe his testimony, even with eyewitness accounts of seeing Him after His resurrection and the miraculous power to heal the sick!
 9. He proved from the Bible that Jesus “must needs” have suffered and risen from the dead. He inductively established the necessity, then provided the fulfillment!

10. True gospel preaching is reasoning out of the Scriptures, not a chalk talk! Not a sob story! Not an art form! Not a sentimental appeal! Not personal testimony!
 11. Paul looked for an audience that feared God, for all other audiences are insane.
 12. He had results by convincing men that Jesus was truly the Christ of God.
- E. Paul disputed in Athens' synagogue and market with several parties (Acts 17:17).
- F. Paul took on the best wisdom of the Greeks, especially the Epicurean and Stoick philosophers, at Mars' hill, otherwise known as the Areopagus (Acts 17:18-34).
1. Here were disciples of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek philosophers.
 2. Here was the most intellectual audience to ever hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 3. He opened by accusing them of superstition and ignorance, which was very true!
 4. He assumed the existence of a single, personal, Creator God, an immense Spirit.
 5. He presumed the wise and total sovereignty of God in His providence over men.
 6. He rejected all the Greek manmade idols, temples, and worship as poppycock.
 7. He rejected any thoughts of Greek superiority by lumping all mankind together.
 8. He quoted a minor Greek poet, but no Bible, when it served his argument.
 9. He condemned the ignorance of all men about this in the past and present.
 10. He gave an "invitation" of the coming judgment of the world by Jesus Christ.
 11. He introduced the resurrection of Christ as the proof of His coming judgment.
 12. The particular tools of logic that he used would make an interesting study.
 13. Most of the hearers rejected and mocked him, but some believed and are named.
 14. But Paul could not be answered! They had to mock him! Let this stir your soul!
 15. With Jews, he presumed Scripture; with philosophers, he presumed God.
- G. Paul reasoned in the synagogue and persuaded two classes of hearers (Acts 18:4).
- H. Apollos used eloquence and might in the Scriptures to convince Jews (Acts 18:24,28).
- I. Paul reasoned, disputed, and persuaded at Ephesus in two different places (Acts 19:8-9).
- J. Paul reasoned of several matters that left Felix the governor trembling (Acts 24:25).
- K. Paul expounded and persuaded regarding God's kingdom to the Jews (Acts 28:23).
- L. Peter told every believer to be ready to give a reason of their hope to men (I Peter 3:15).
- M. Solomon wrote excellent things in truth for words of certainty in answers (Pr 22:17-21).
- N. Elihu patiently considered the false reasoning of Job and his three friends, before cutting loose with his own opinion to confound their fallacious reasoning (Job 32:1-22).
- O. Luke wrote Theophilus to add further evidence to what he had been taught, so he would be established in the certainty of the Christian religion (Luke 1:1-4).
- P. Nobility in God's mind is searching and proving things before believing them, which leaves feelings in the realm of the simple and base (Acts 17:11-12).
- Q. Reasoning is not an option; it is a command for us to prove all things, which is to reason about the validity of the arguments and evidence of things (I Thess 5:21).
- R. Jesus was the Master logician and rhetorician of all time, when it came to Scripture and logical defense of truth; it would be a great and extensive study to review His glorious use of Scripture and reason to teach truth and confound enemies (Matt 7:28-29; 12:7; 21:27,45; 22:46; Mark 2:27; 12:34; Luke 2:46-47; 13:17; 14:6; 20:39-40; 21:14-15; 24:32,45; John 8:7-9).
- V. Consider the examples of Scriptural reasoning to declare and prove a doctrinal argument.
- A. Consider how often the prophets reasoned by analogy with Israel to aggravate their offences (Isaiah 1:3; Jeremiah 3:1; Ezekiel 16; 23; Malachi 1:6).
 - B. Jesus argued from the lesser to the greater with grass and men (Matt 6:28-30), evil fathers and God the Father (Matt 7:9-11), and sparrows and men (Matt 10:29-31).

- C. Paul argued from the lesser to the greater with condemnation and righteousness and temporal and permanent (II Cor 3:9,11), the blood of animals and that of Christ (Heb 9:13-14), and a voice on earth and a voice from heaven (Heb 12:25).
 - D. Jesus argued from the greater to the lesser with masters and servants (Matt 10:24-25).
 - E. Paul argued from the greater to the lesser with judgment of angels and men (I Cor 6:3).
 - F. Jesus argued deductively that Christ would have to be more than David's Son, since David by inspiration called Him Lord (Matthew 22:41-46).
 - G. Jesus argued about the rank of miracles - forgiving sins or healing (Matthew 9:1-7).
 - H. Jesus used logical arguing when defending against a Pharisees' charge (Matt 12:24-30).
 - 1. He began by arguing from analogy, with kingdoms, houses, and nations (25-26).
 - 2. Then He used the law of rational inference to apply the analogy to Satan (26).
 - 3. And He brought his first powerful conclusion by *reductio ad absurdum* (25-26).
 - 4. He raised another argument from analogy, by comparing to their gypsies (27).
 - 5. He made use again of rational inference of God's kingdom by power (28-29).
 - 6. He made use of another analogy of a strong man's house and taking it (29).
 - 7. He used the law of contradiction to condemn any hypocritical position (30).
 - 8. He used the law of excluded middle to condemn any position of neutrality (30).
 - I. Peter argued inductively (from particular facts to a general proposition) that Jesus Christ was indeed risen from the dead (Acts 2:22-32). These particulars were (1) David said he would never see corruption, (2) David is dead and corrupted, (3) David was a prophet, and (4) God had promised a Son of David that would sit on his throne as the Christ of God. Therefore, David told a long time ago of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which we have witnessed and declare unto you.
 - J. Paul used a similar line of reasoning in Acts 13:32-39 about Jesus Christ's resurrection.
 - K. Paul reasoned extensively in the book of Hebrews. It may well be the strongest piece of persuasive literature ever written. Consider how he established a rest for the New Testament saints (Heb 4:1-9). Consider how he used analogies for the greater burden of the New Testament (Heb 2:1-3; 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:25-29). Consider "therefore" (16 times), "wherefore" (13 times), "if" and "then" (3 times).
 - L. Paul argued deductively (from general propositions to particular cases) that God has changed His covenant dealings with Israel (Heb 8:7-13). He argued that (1) "new" means what is replaced is old, (2) what is old is no longer of value or service, and (3) therefore the new covenant had put away the former covenant.
 - M. Paul used the occasion of "ascended" in Psalm 68:18 to briefly reason a proof of the incarnation and humiliation of Jesus Christ in this world (Ephesians 4:9-10).
 - N. Paul reasoned deductively regarding the priesthood of Jesus Christ and Moses' law in such a way that the conclusion was a "necessity" (Hebrews 7:11-14).
 - O. This very short list of examples could be multiplied greatly, as the Bible is full of them.
- VI. Consider some applications of Bible reasoning that help us interpret God's revealed will for us.
- A. Let us consider divorce and remarriage inductively. Jesus taught plainly the principle of mercy (Matt 12:7) and the principle of intent (Mark 2:27), when justifying the breaking of the Sabbath. The Sabbath and marriage are very similar institutions, by virtue of their inclusion in the Ten Commandments, their heavy emphasis in Scripture, and their typical fulfillments in the New Testament. Breaking the Sabbath was justified by Christ, even for activities not expressly permitted by Scripture: the principles of mercy and intent were sufficient. David even ate the shewbread by these principles (Matt 12:3-4). Therefore, we conclude that marriages may deteriorate to the point where they no longer serve their purpose and should be broken. The fact that Christ allowed only one

exception for fornication (in Matthew) does not overthrow this reasoning. He allowed no exceptions at all in Mark 10:11 and Luke 16:18; Paul added the exception of desertion specifically by inspiration; and He used the same type of absolute language when condemning improper swearing (Matthew 5:33-37) and establishing the Sabbath commandment in the beginning (Exodus 20:8-11). While such a use of inductive reasoning must be applied with great care and wisdom, the Scriptures nevertheless justify it plainly.

- B. Let us consider Moses' marriage to the Ethiopian deductively. God divided the three races (Gen 9:27-27; 10:32), the world's language groups (Gen 11:8-9), and the nations (Gen 10:32; Acts 17:26-27). God divided the earth (Gen 10:25; Deut 32:8). God sometimes allowed things that He did not intend or consider as ideal. He allowed polygamy (II Sam 12:8), and He allowed Israel to have a king (I Sam 8:6-22). God is merciful in situations where human nature is stressed (Exodus 22:2; I Sam 21:1-6). Therefore, we conclude in the case of Moses that we have an exception to God's plan for marriage, and it should not be used as an example of what we can do lightly.
- C. Some have taken Christ's example of humility and service by washing the disciples' feet as a mandate for churches of the New Testament to have foot-washing services (John 13:1-17). Since washing the saints' feet is also mentioned in I Timothy 5:10, they falsely assume this text further proves it is an ordinance of the gospel. However, by elementary reasoning, we can easily deduce that this latter passage rather precludes foot washing from being a public ordinance of the church. Paul in I Timothy 5:9-10 gave the conditions necessary to qualify widows as widows indeed for support by the church. Since these requirements identify exceptional widows from unqualified widows, the marks themselves must not be true of the entire congregation. The list of qualifications does not contain any general requirements true of all church widows, since such qualifications would serve no purpose of identifying special widows. Therefore, we conclude that foot washing was definitely not an ordinance of public worship in New Testament churches.

VII. Fallacies of reasoning are an excellent way to be a critical thinker and learn practical logic.

- A. Again, this section could be multiplied indefinitely. It is up to the serious student to pursue the study of logical fallacies further than the few examples given here.
- B. God is eternal. Jesus is God. Therefore Jesus is eternal. Where is the error? The error is assuming that Jesus is simply or only God: He is the Godman, and as such He is not eternal, for His humanity had a definite beginning with Mary.
- C. Jesus died for sinners. Judas was a sinner. Then Jesus died for Judas. Where is the error? The error is assuming that Jesus died for all sinners without exception.
- D. Since God loves the world, He loves you. What is the faulty premise slipped in? The faulty premise is "the world" means everyone without exception.
- E. Learn how to identify *non-sequiturs*, or arguments not in sequence, which are arguments without logical connections and not making any sense.
 - 1. Get a load of Matthew 28:19-20 used to teach baptismal-membership. Some argue that baptism must cause church membership or baptized disciples could not keep Christ's commandments that pertain to church membership. Consider such folly carefully. Obviously each baptized convert is responsible only for those commandments that apply to his situation. If this argument did prove their point, it would also prove that baptism caused marriage, so that all baptized converts could keep the commandments pertaining to marriage.

2. Get a load of Acts 2:47 used to teach baptismal-membership. Some argue that if church membership results in salvation, then it must have resulted from baptism, which also results in salvation (Mark 16:16). If this connection proves baptismal membership, then by connecting Matthew 24:13 we can also teach that baptism causes guaranteed perseverance.
 3. False reasoning can either be (1) very crafty in its design to avoid detection or (2) so foolish as to eliminate any reasonable starting point. Do not be discouraged with initial perplexity at a given argument. One of the best and simplest books on fallacies of reasoning is Don't You Believe It by A.J. Hoover.
- F. Any reasoning from Scripture must agree with Scripture, so don't get waylaid.
1. There are no contradictions in the Bible, so remember rule #1.
 2. There is no substitute for knowing the whole Bible. Then you can easily compose inductive reasoning, and you can easily think of exceptions that overthrow the false reasoning of others.
- G. The fallacy of "faulty dilemma" wrongly assumes only two possibilities, when in reality there are one or more possibilities between the two extremes.
1. The Sadducees, attempting a *reductio ad absurdum*, created a faulty dilemma, which Jesus neatly crushed (Matt 22:30).
 2. Some ridicule election by reducing salvation to freewill or living any way you want, not recognizing the need for evidence.
 3. The error in a faulty dilemma is in the word "or," when they are more options.
- H. The fallacy of "begging the question" is reasoning in a circle by assuming the conclusion as a premise. It is saying A=B, without evidence. Look for assumptions without proof.
1. Seventh-Day Adventists will reject your use of Colossians 2:16, since obviously those must be special feast day Sabbaths! Why? Because God would not treat weekly Sabbaths as a matter of liberty. Don't let these heretics do that to you!
 2. Obviously, the wine in Psalm 104:14-15 must be non-alcoholic; otherwise God could not commend its use! Don't you love them!
- I. The fallacy of "argumentum ad hominem," against the man, attacks a man's character.
1. When all else fails, some reason, just attack your opponent's personal life.
 2. It has been truly said, "You can prove I'm the Devil's brother, and you still haven't answered my argument."
 3. Festus condemned Paul's speech to Agrippa by calling him mad (Acts 26:24).
 4. The Jews said Jesus was a Samaritan, a winebibber, and had a devil, as character assassinations, for they could not answer Him (John 7:20; 8:48; Matt 11:18-19).
- J. The fallacy of "poisoning the well" is tainting the source of an argument.
1. It is a little different from attacking a man's character, as in *ad hominem*.
 2. Nathanael was guilty of initially rejecting Jesus merely by His origin from Nazareth (John 1:46). Hearing the unpopular town he didn't like, he rebuffed Philip's enthusiasm. He didn't even ask for further evidence!
 3. A common fallacy today against independent churches is to poison the well by using the inflammatory and condemnatory slur of cult, which has such a moving definition as to be of no force at all. But it is used over and over by scorners.
- K. The fallacy of *argumentum ad baculum*, appeal to force, is "argument of the club."
1. It is a Muslim specialty. Instead of persuading us infidels to convert, they grew their cult by the point and edge of a scimitar.
 2. The Roman Catholic Inquisition was based on this form of "reasoning." Either deny all you believe and have written or be burned at the stake!

- L. The *argumentum ad verecundiam*, an “argument to revered authority,” means nothing to us, unless it appeals to the authority of Holy Scripture! We revere only Jesus Christ!
1. Scripture blasts the opinions of any or all men (Job 32:21-22; Ps 119:99-100,128; Is 8:20; Rom 3:4; I Tim 6:3-5). They mean nothing to us.
 2. We reject Rome’s church “fathers,” who collectively can be reduced to absurdity easily, given their many differences, as so much blither and blather, twiddle and twaddle. It is a shame that Protestants nurse at their breasts as well.
 3. We don’t care what “good and godly men of the past” think about our theology or practice any more than what doctors thought would “cure” our first president.
 4. All creeds, confessions, counsels, conferences, and confabs do not compare to Scripture. They are meaningless mumbo-jumbo of men who need the security of large groups to take a stand, within the group, of course!

- VIII. Consider a few miscellaneous aspects of logical reasoning to conclude our study of this subject.
- A. What do Luke 16:31 and II Tim 2:25-26 teach about logic? God must grant repentance for men to be recovered from Satan and opposing themselves. We can only do so much.
 - B. How do you get men to ask a reason of your hope (I Peter 3:15)? Live a holy life!

For further reading and study:

1. [Simple introduction to logic via FAQs](#)
2. [Why learn logic?](#)
3. [Introduction to inductive and deductive reasoning.](#)
4. [The Bible and logic.](#)
5. [God and logic.](#)
6. [Bible-based apologetics \(defending the faith\).](#)
7. [Examples of fallacies in reasoning.](#)
8. [More fallacies in reasoning \(by unbeliever\).](#)
9. [More fallacies in reasoning \(by unbeliever\).](#)
10. [More fallacies in reasoning.](#)
11. [Logical fallacies in interpretation.](#)
12. [Logical fallacies of the Muslims.](#)
13. [A collection of logic links with descriptions.](#)

RULE #7: Distinguish relative or absolute texts.

- I. It is not unusual to emphasize important points by stating relative differences in absolute terms.
 - A. Consider how Jews described Paul's influence to stir up others against him (Act 21:28).
 - B. Paul's influence was relatively small, but the Jews were stressing his danger to Judaism.
 - C. Be certain of this: the Bible is absolute truth, even when declaring a relative principle!

- II. When Scripture deals with an important subject, it may use absolute statements with relative force to drive the point home more strongly, given a context of hearers needing just one side.
 - A. This is neither exaggerating nor lying – it is stressing a point by ignoring exceptions.
 - B. The lack of modifiers requires our diligent study and easily confuses God's enemies.
 - C. James condemned worldly friends (James 4:4), but Paul allowed them (I Cor 10:27).
 - D. Jesus condemned planning (Mat 6:31-34), but Solomon taught it (Proverbs 6:6-8; 22:3).
 - E. James condemned swearing (Jas 5:12), but Paul himself swore (Rom 9:1; II Cor 1:23).
 - F. Does Scripture prohibit curling hair, gold jewelry, and clothing on women (I Pet 3:3-4)?
 - G. Does Scripture prohibit resisting any evil that might come our way in life (Matt 5:39)?

- III. Such a distinction is necessary to study Proverbs - short pithy statements conveying maxims of experience and inspiration.
 - A. Proverbs are general rules needing some caution before making specific applications.
 - B. The results of slothfulness and diligence are not always apparent (Proverbs 10:4; 13:4).
 - C. There are incorrigible children that cannot be trained (Proverbs 22:6 cp Deut 21:18-21).
 - D. Diligence definitely pays off, but not all diligent men end up with kings (Prov 22:29).
 - E. Excellent speech is wonderful, but don't expect kisses from every man (Proverbs 24:26).
 - F. Sometimes you can cheer up a man with a word, but sometimes you cannot (Pr 12:25).
 - G. Wisdom allows a caveat, "All other things being equal," which applies to Proverbs.

- IV. Analyze general statements for limitations. Watch universal words closely. Identify exceptions.
 - A. Rules 1-4 are very helpful here, for they help determining what is absolute or relative.
 - B. "All" is understood with very definite limitations in passages such as Acts 2:44; I Corinthians 6:12; and 9:22. Context and Scripture dictate the extent of the limitation.
 - C. "World" is understood with definite limitations in places like Luke 2:1 and John 12:19.
 - D. These statements can be synecdoche of the genus: universal words used for particulars.
 1. Universal words are put for a great part (Hos 7:4; Mat 3:5; Mk 1:33; Rev 13:3).
 2. Universal words are put for all kinds (Joel 2:28; Jn 12:32; I Tim 6:10; He 13:4).
 3. Universal negatives do not deny particulars (Matthew 5:34; John 3:32; 18:20).
 4. Universal positives do not affirm particularly (Mark 16:20; Lu 18:1; I Cor 4:17).
 5. Eph 1:22 and Heb 2:8 have all things under Christ, but what of I Cor 15:27.
 - E. Consider the following examples of texts where universal statements are often abused.
 1. The "all men" God will have to be saved are all sorts of men (I Timothy 2:4).
 2. The "every man" Jesus tasted death for was every one of His brethren (Heb 2:9).
 3. The "whole world" Jesus atoned for were Gentiles as well as Jews (I John 2:2).
 - F. Learn a few choice examples of universal expressions to force opponents to more study.
 1. They love "all" and "world," but they hate the combination (Luke 2:1; Col 1:6).
 2. They love "not willing that any should perish," but they ignore "all which he hath given me I should lose nothing."

RULE #8: Learn the Basic Figures of Speech.

- I. The Bible has many figures of speech, which requires learning or reviewing the various forms.
- A. What is a figure of speech? A use of words in other than their ordinary sense, place, manner, or arrangement, and intending other than their straightforward, literal meaning. A figure of speech is a designed and legitimate departure from the laws of language, in order to emphasize what is said.
 - B. Why use figures of speech? They add beauty, variety, and force to a composition. They are for the purpose of emphasis. Therefore, we cannot ignore or neglect them.
 - C. The real sense and truth are found in the figure, not in the bare, literal word meanings.
 - D. Ignoring figures of speech has led to great errors, as some take the literal figuratively and others take the figurative literally. It is absolutely important that we understand these figures and learn to recognize and understand them. Lord, open our eyes to see.
 - E. The Holy Spirit chose the words we read in the Bible, so we are wickedly foolish to despise or minimize the figures He chose for our learning (I Cor 2:13; II Pet 1:21).
 - F. So much for those who swear devotion to the Buddha of literalism and primary definitions, while kneeling over the trapdoor of false interpretations and heresy. C.I. Scofield and his slavish followers are dead in the water with much of the Bible.
 - G. We should have a simple approach to identifying and interpreting figures of speech.
 - 1. We conclude we have a figure when a literal approach results in absurdity.
 - 2. We then must determine which figure is being used and the proper sense of it.
 - 3. We determine what the Spirit's sense in the text is by His use of the figure.
 - 4. We then convert the figure into literal language to identify the precise meaning.
- II. **Simile** is a figure of speech that draws comparison by correspondence or resemblance.
- A. It is most always identified by the use of the comparative words "like" or "as."
 - B. It is hardly a figure of speech (see above), since its words are to be taken quite literally.
 - C. Your objective is to determine what aspect of the comparison makes the intended point.
 - D. Similes state a resemblance directly; metaphors actually transfer the representation.
 - E. "He is like a bull in a china shop," "He is as mad as a hornet," "He is as proud as a peacock," and "He moves like a snail" are common examples of similes.
 - F. Consider – the bull is not being referenced for strength, weight, appetite, or lust. What?
 - G. Simple Bible examples can be found in Psalm 17:8; 102:6; 131:2; Isaiah 1:9; 53:6; Matthew 7:24-27; 9:36; 10:16; 23:27; I Peter 1:24; 2:25.
 - H. Consider an extended simile – similitude – Jesus used describing hearers (Mat 7:24-27).
 - I. The word "like" occurs 581 times and "as" 2872 times, so there are very many similes.
 - J. Intelligent communication is the ability to make comparisons that educate the hearer.
- III. **Metaphor** is a figure of speech that makes a comparison by actual representation.
- A. It is clearly a figure of speech, since the comparison is not stated directly, but implied.
 - B. The comparison is transferred from the comparative objective to the subject object.
 - C. A metaphor boldly declares one thing IS another thing, even though it is not that thing.
 - D. "He is like a clumsy ox" is a simile. But "He is a clumsy ox" is a metaphor.
 - E. "I am a rock; I am an island" are two simple metaphors from Paul Simon's famous song.
 - F. Extended metaphors can be called parables, allegories, or apologues (Gal 4:21-31).
 - G. Bible examples are Deut 4:20; Ps 23:1; 84:11; Mat 5:13-14; John 6:35; 8:12; 10:9; 15:5.

- H. Consider the great heresies by missing the metaphor in the words, "This is my body."
- IV. **Hypocatastasis** is a figure of speech where the comparison is by implication; it is only implied.
- "You are like a beast" is a simile; "You are a beast" is a metaphor; but "Beast!" is a hypocatastasis, since the subject of the comparison is only implied.
 - Bible examples are Psalm 22:16; Matthew 15:13; 15:26; 16:6; John 2:19; Acts 20:29.
 - Consider the force and propriety of the hypocatastasis Jesus used in Matthew 16:23. From a blessing of revelation to a satanic thought, Peter was totally dependent on Jesus.
- V. **Metonymy** is a figure of speech where an attribute or something closely related is substituted for the thing itself.
- It is the substitution of one noun for another based on a relationship the two have.
 - When we say "step on the gas," we are substituting the substance controlled by the accelerator for the accelerator itself. We do not intend anyone to stand on a gas can.
 - When we say, "He really used his head," we are substituting the location of his brain for his brain itself. We are not intending anyone to understand the literal use of his skull.
 - "Wine is a mocker," "the rod gives wisdom," and "the tongue is a fire" are examples of the cause substituted for the effect (Prov 20:1; 29:15; James 3:6). Missing the figure has caused many to presume falsely that wine itself is a mocker, when only its abuse mocks.
 - Consider also Lev 19:32; Deut 17:6; II King 4:40; Prov 12:15,18,19; 15:3; Isaiah 2:4; Amos 4:6; Matt 16:19; Luke 16:29; Rom 13:4; I Cor 10:21.
- VI. **Synecdoche** is a figure of speech where a part is substituted for the whole or the whole is substituted for a part. It is a figure of substitution.
- What do we mean when we say, "All hands on deck"? "I like your wheels"?
 - There are many different types of synecdoche, and the Bible has a very large number of them; but we shall limit our survey here to a few examples.
 - Bible examples are Gen 12:5; Psalm 7:16; Pro 20:30; Luke 11:42; Phil 3:19; I Tim 6:10.
 - Consider a text like Genesis 4:4. Some have waxed eloquent about Abel and the fat of animals used under Moses' law, but it should not take much to see the synecdoche here for the fattest of his flock. Abel brought some of the fattest and best of his firstlings to the Lord. Read Genesis 45:18 in this same sense.
- VII. **Hyperbole** is a figure of speech consisting in exaggerated or extravagant speech used to create a strong impression and not intended to be understood literally.
- When we say, "You scared me to death," we exaggerate our fright. "I could eat a horse," "You're as slow as a snail," and "That is as old as the hills," are further examples of hyperbole. The exaggeration is obvious enough that wise readers are not confused.
 - The cities of Canaan were not literally "walled up to heaven" (Deut 1:28), and the Amalekites and Midianites did not have numberless camels (Judges 7:12).
 - David did not literally make his bed swim with tears (Ps 6:6). Do you believe it?
 - "The world itself could not contain the books" exaggerates the amount of material John humbly admits he did not include in his gospel (John 21:25).
 - Revelation 7:9 should not be used to calculate the minimum number of the redeemed by calculating the counting ability of Methusaleh.
 - Consider also Genesis 13:16; Joshua 11:4; II Samuel 1:23; I Kings 18:10; Psalm 107:26; 119:136; Jeremiah 15:8; Matthew 7:3-5; John 3:26; John 12:19.

- VIII. **Irony** is a figure of speech using words to express something other than, and especially the opposite of, the literal meaning.
- A. When a parent says to a drunken teenager, "Go ahead and ruin your life with alcohol," he is actually expressing very strong opposition to such a thing.
 - B. I wonder how much the primary definitions of the words in an irony mean?
 - C. Consider several examples that are easy to detect (Judges 10:14; II Samuel 6:20; I Kings 18:27; 22:15; Job 12:1-2; Ezekiel 20:39; Matthew 22:16; 26:45; 27:29; I Cor 4:8,10; II Cor 12:13).
 - D. Consider several examples less well known (Gen 3:22; Eccl 11:9; I Corinthians 6:3-4).
- IX. **Ellipsis** is the intentional omission of words to add beauty, brevity, and force to sentences.
- A. The missing words are supplied from the context or the nature of the subject considered.
 - B. The missing words are not left out by accident, nor does their omission cause confusion.
 - C. Find the ellipsis: Sherri loves music more than I. Does Sherri love music more than she loves me? Or does Sherri love music more than I love music?
 - D. Bible examples include "God of" (Ps 24:6), "good" (Pr 18:22), "rich" (Pr 19:1), "that is surety" (Pr 20:16), "it is a snare" (Pr 20:25), "is ... to be chosen" (Pr 22:1), "ordinary food ... wine" (Matt 11:18-19), "gave the loaves" (Matt 14:19), "to Jerusalem ... at Jerusalem" (Acts 18:22), "do mind" (Rom 8:5), "in the faith ... only" (Rom 14:2), "in order to be saved" (Gal 5:2), "at a time" (I Tim 3:2).
 - E. Galatians 5:4 is a very controversial passage, as many use it to teach losing your salvation. But it contains several ellipses. "Christ is become of no SAVING effect unto you, whosoever of you FALSELY THINK YOU are justified by the law; ye are fallen from THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF grace."
 - F. Galatians 5:17 is not teaching the inability of the regenerate man to do good. It is teaching the constant conflict that makes obedience a struggle. Note the ellipsis to help the sense. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would OTHERWISE DO OR DO EASILY WITHOUT CONFLICT."
 - G. A very controversial passage, I Corinthians 15:29, is solved with an ellipsis in both the first and third phrases of the verse. The Mormons take this single text for their manmade doctrine of baptism by proxy for dead relatives. "Else what shall they do which are baptized for THE RESURRECTION OF the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for THE RESURRECTION OF the dead?"
 1. We know that the context of the text is absolutely and strongly the resurrection.
 2. We know baptism is a figure of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (I Peter 3:21).
 3. We know Paul's practical argument here, so we supply the words for the sense.
 4. The middle clause demands that the outer clauses be implying the resurrection.
 5. Scripture is silent of teaching or implying baptism for the souls of the dead.
 6. We know that ellipsis is a figure of speech in the Bible by numerous examples.
- X. **Euphemism** is the use of good or acceptable words for bad or offensive things or subjects.
- A. We use them all the time i.e. "collateral damage" for killing civilians, "sanitation engineer" for trash collector, "revenue enhancement" for tax increase, and so forth.
 - B. They are chosen to be less shocking and more acceptable, especially in intimate matters.
 - C. But we should never use them to lessen or whitewash sin, as is common today i.e. "an affair" for adultery, "abortion" for baby murder or infanticide, "partying" for fornication, "euthanasia" for parent murder or patricide, "gay" for sodomite, "hyperactive kid" for disobedient child, or "independent thinker" for a froward scorer.

- D. Bible examples include Genesis 4:1; 15:15; 18:11; 24:2; 26:8; 31:35; Exodus 21:10; Numbers 5:22; Deut 21:14; 23:13; 25:11; Judges 3:24; I Samuel 5:9; 24:3; II Samuel 16:21-22; 18:32; I Kings 2:6; Psalm 78:66; Eccl 12:5; Isaiah 3:17; 7:20; Ezekiel 16:25-26; 23:20; Daniel 5:6; Matt 1:25; I Cor 7:1-5; 11:30; I Tim 5:17; Heb 13:4; Jude 1:7.
- XI. **Dysphemism** (opposite of euphemism) uses harsh/offensive words for pleasant or acceptable.
- A. This is crude speech expressing passion or vulgarity or used to make a strong argument.
 - B. Compare “water closet” or “crap-house” for toilet – euphemism or dysphemism.
 - C. Bible examples include I Sam 25:22; II Kings 18:27; Psalm 50:22; 58:6; Prov 30:17; Ezek 23:3; Mal 2:3; Matt 5:29-30; Phil 3:8 (contrast Deut 23:13).
- XII. **Anthropomorphisms** give physical attributes to God, which graphically present His character.
- A. These are metaphors, but they are special comparisons teaching us God’s nature.
 - B. Psalm 17:8 describes God hiding us under His wings, as a mother hen cares for chicks.
 - C. Other Bible examples, among many, are II Chron 16:9; Job 4:9; Ps 36:7; 91:4; Is 62:8.
- XIII. **Personification** is where an abstraction or spiritual concept or thing is given personal traits.
- A. Solomon creates Lady Wisdom in Proverbs to compete with the strange woman.
 1. He follows this plan for chapters (1:20-33; 2:4; 3:15-18; 4:5-13; 8:1-36; 9:1-5).
 2. Missing the personification causes many to hallucinate about eternal sonship from the language of Proverbs 8:22-31, where abstract wisdom only is found.
 - B. Rome and the Catholic Church are personified as a woman, as is the church elsewhere.
- XIV. **Parable** is an extended simile or metaphor with the comparison vague enough to make it dark.
- A. Parables are not earthly stories with heavenly meanings for the simple to learn the truth.
 - B. Parables are metaphors hiding truth from all but the wise (Ps 49:4; 78:2; Matt 13:1-23).
 - C. The key in a parable is to identify the object of the lesson and avoid confusing details.
 1. The Good Samaritan simply answered the question, “Who is my neighbor?”
 2. It is not an allegorical presentation of the gospel i.e. the two pence are not the Old and New Testaments provided for the recovered sinner at the local church!
 3. It is not a lesson on how to pick up hitchhikers on the interstate for witnessing.
 4. The Prodigal Son simply condemned the self-righteousness of the Pharisees.
 5. It is not a lesson on how parents ought to go running to take back rebel children.
 6. The lesson is in the attitude of the older son, not the profligacy of the younger.
 7. The Parable of the Sower told hearers of three careless and one noble response.
 8. It is not a lesson for how to plow your fields and rid them of noxious hindrances.
 9. Nor is it a lesson on which grounds are regenerate and which are unregenerate.
 10. The Parable of the Unjust Steward exhorted for spiritual goals above natural.
 11. It is not a lesson that stealing, fraud, and embezzlement are approved at times.
 12. It is not a lesson for ministers to be financially adept in case they lose a church.
- XV. Consider the importance of finding the figure of speech in the crucial words “This is my body.”
- A. These words, from I Corinthians 11:24, have been wrested by various denominations to justify their interpretation of the doctrine there.
 - B. Remember that millions have given their lives based on how they interpreted this text.
 - C. The Catholics are literalists. They deny any figure of speech here. When the magical words "This is my body" are spoken ("hoc est corpus meum" in Latin), the bread actually becomes the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ through the damnable heresy of transubstantiation.

- D. The Lutherans see synecdoche. The figure of speech is in the word "body." It is part of the body and bread combination that exists in the consecrated wafer by the damnable heresy of consubstantiation.
- E. The Presbyterians see metonymy. The figure of speech is in the word "body." Christ's use of "body" is to be associated with the real offer of Himself spiritually and really and indeed in the sacrament.
- F. The truth is a metaphor. The figure of speech is not in the word "body" but in the word "is." It is a comparison by representation. The bread represents the body of Jesus Christ.

For further study:

1. [Bible figures of speech \(217\) in E.W. Bullinger's, "Figures of Speech Used in the Bible."](#)
2. [List of figures.](#)
3. [List of euphemisms.](#)

RULE #9: The Argument from Silence Is Invalid.

- I. God may (1) command things, (2) prohibit things, or (3) leave things to our judgment.
 - A. If God commands something, we do exactly what is commanded without modification.
 - B. If God prohibits something, we strictly avoid anything related to the prohibited matter.
 - C. If God leaves something to our choice, we neither require nor prohibit that thing.
 - D. Some call this the regulative principle, for governing religious and personal actions.
 - E. A positive command from the Bible is enough: it condemns any other alternatives.
 - F. The Word of God provides a complete system of truth by itself (II Timothy 3:16-17).

- II. The argument from silence is not valid, and it leads to any and every heresy imaginable.
 - A. What is the argument from silence? It is the opposite of what has been stated above.
 - B. They reason, If God has not specifically condemned a thing, we may do it on the grounds of His silence about it; we can do whatever He has not specifically condemned.
 - C. This is the logical fallacy of “burden of proof” or “appeal to ignorance.” It goes like this: since you cannot show me God specifically condemns a thing, then it is allowed.
 1. Really? God did not condemn Coke and chips at communion. Should we try it?
 2. Really? Baptism involves water, and He did not condemn squirt gun fights for baptism. Would a squirt gun fight be good enough, as long as everyone is wet?
 3. There is no end to these absurdities, once you start down this false road.
 - D. They reason, If God commands something, we may alter it short of breaking any other.
 - E. They reason, If God prohibits something, we only have to avoid the specific matter.
 - F. They reason, We may add to God’s Word, if we at least include what He commanded.
 - G. They reason, If God is silent about a matter, it is our choice to require or prohibit it.
 - H. For example, He did not condemn Christian flags, so we say the Christian pledge to it.

- III. The LORD God has clearly stated His opposition to the argument from silence in the Bible.
 - A. God teaches this rule by way of specific precept (Deut 4:2; 5:32; 12:32; Matt 28:20).
 - B. God teaches this rule by way of argument twice in Scripture (Heb 7:13-14; Mat 12:3-4).
 1. How did God condemn men from Judah being priests of God? Think about it.
 2. How did God condemn David from eating the shewbread? Think about it.
 3. God does not condemn all options; a positive command is obeyed exclusively.
 - C. God teaches it by way of example in the lives of several men recorded in Scripture.
 1. Cain brought an offering at the right time to the right place to the LORD, but God did not respect his sacrifice regardless of his intentions (Genesis 4:3-5). How did God prohibit bringing the fruit of the ground?
 2. Nadab and Abihu, the right men, brought incense at the right time to the right place to the LORD, but God did not respect their service (Lev 10:1-7). How had God told them that He didn’t like their new and innovative incense?
 3. Moses smote the right rock at the right time with the Lord’s rod at the Lord’s command with good results, but he did not speak to it as God had commanded him (Num 20:7-13). How had God told Moses he could not smite the rock?
 4. Saul preserved the best of the Amalekites’ spoil for sacrifice, which seems noble enough; but God seeks obedience rather than sacrifice (I Samuel 15:13-23). How had God told Saul not to save the best of the spoil for sacrifice to Him?

5. David rejoiced to bring the ark back to Jerusalem, and he even used a new cart to transport it; but God wanted the due order (II Samuel 6:1-9; I Chron 15:13). How had God condemned the use of a new ox cart in transporting the ark?
 6. Uzziah loved the Lord, and God had blessed him much, so he wanted to offer incense himself, but God gave him leprosy until he died (II Chron 26:16-21). How had God made it clear that Uzziah could not offer incense himself?
- IV. It is the duty of study to distinguish between aids and additions to keeping God's commands.
- A. It is called the doctrine of circumstances: it divides circumstances from commandments.
 - B. An "aid" facilitates keeping God's commandments without modifying the precept at all.
 - C. An "addition" is a modifying change to the essential substance of His commandments.
 - D. Consider the result of what is done. Has anything been added? Has anything been deleted? Has the law simply been made easier to obey? Is it merely circumstances?
 - E. Noah was told to build an ark of gopher wood (Genesis 6:14). While a hammer would simply be an aid to this commandment, using spruce or cedar would be an addition. How do we know spruce and cedar were condemned? Because He commanded gopher!
 - F. The Jews were told to use a lamb or kid in the Passover supper. While a fork and plate would be aids, a young pig would be an addition. How did God prohibit pigs? He never wrote that they could not use a pig. Does He have something against a pretty little pig? After all, He made pigs also, and they have blood, and it is red, and they can die, right?
 - G. We are to take bread in the Lord's Supper. Consider the difference of passing the bread on a plate and using turkey sandwiches. How did He condemn turkey sandwiches?
 - H. The beverage used in Corinth for the Lord's Supper caused drunkenness (I Cor 11:1). Paul did not correct the beverage, but the manners. While small disposable cups assist in keeping apostolic tradition, using grape juice violates it. How did God require wine?
 - I. We are told to sing in the New Testament. Consider the difference between using a hymnal to assist our singing and an orchestra to accompany our singing. The one is simply an aid to promote singing; the other is playing to make a very different product.
 - J. We are told to take a collection. Consider the difference between a collection plate and fees to participate in the communion service, like the Catholics have invented.
- V. We are limited to what God has commanded or prohibited in regulating the church or our lives.
- A. Some condemn the use of wine or beer, but God did not condemn their use. He did condemn drunkenness, but that is where we must stop. We do not have the right to think we are helping the Lord by taking a stricter, more conservative, or safer approach.
 - B. Some condemn the use of tobacco, but God did not condemn its use. He did condemn being brought under the power of anything, but that is where we must stop. We do not have the right to think we are helping the Lord by taking a stricter, more conservative, more healthful, or safer approach to the matter.

Rule #10: The Prophets Used Similitudes

- I. Prophetic language is usually symbolic. Avoid literalism carefully. Look for figurative words.
 - A. Scripture plainly teaches prophecies were generally given by signs or figures, not literal or express statements easily known (Hos 12:10; Rev 1:1; John 12:33; 21:19; I Pet 1:11).
 1. **Similitude**. A person or thing resembling, or having the likeness of, some other person or thing. The form, likeness, or image of some person or thing. A sign or symbol; the symbolic representation of something.
 2. A similitude is from **simile**, a comparison of one thing with another in rhetoric.
 3. **Signify**. To be a sign or symbol of; to represent, betoken, mean.
 4. To signify is from **sign**, something to convey an intimation or communicate some idea. When you signify something, you are not stating it expressly.
 5. These five references are of great importance in our prophetic hermeneutic.
 6. Metaphors are multiplied in prophetic language; we should expect and see them.
 - B. Consider the first prophecy in Scripture. God warned Satan of enmity between him and the woman, and between their seeds (Gen 3:15). Consider the symbolic language used to create a word picture of a nuisance versus a mortal wound, requiring interpretation.
 - C. Consider the prophecies about the land to Abraham and their various fulfillments.
 1. The land of promise was never literally inherited by Abraham, but by his family.
 2. The land of promise was understood by Abraham as heaven (Hebrews 11:8-16).
 - D. Consider a land flowing with milk and honey promised to Israel in Egypt (Exodus 3:8).
 1. Should we do a chemical analysis of milk and honey to look for hidden truth?
 2. Should we back up the food chain from honey to bees and see a fearful place?
 3. Or should we take the metaphor as a word picture of a delightful land?
 - E. An emphasis on the literal interpretation of prophecy, such as by Dispensationalists and Scofield Fundamentalists and Futurists, is patently foolish in light of these Scriptures.
 1. Lions and lambs in Isaiah 11 are assumed to be a new animal kingdom! Even when clearly describing the gospel dispensation of peace brought by our Lord.
 2. Shaking heavens and earth in Haggai must be a literal vibration of the universe!
 3. When they read Elijah in Malachi 4:5, they can only think of the hairy prophet!
 4. "Great and dreadful day of the Lord," also Mal 4:5, must be the final judgment!
 5. The thousand years in Revelation 20:2 must be exactly one thousand years!
 - F. Cataclysmic events in a social, political, or religious realm will be shown by a description of such events in the natural realm.
 1. Apocalyptic language is more figurative and metaphorical than most prophecies.
 2. Consider Isaiah 13. The "day of the Lord" considered here is God's judgment upon Babylon by the Medes and Persians. This is the political overthrow of the greatest empire in the history of the world, and so the prophet describes it in spectacular fashion as the overthrow of the natural universe. Consider the "stars of heaven" (v.10), the "sun" (v.10), the "moon" (v.10), the "world" (v.11), the "heavens" (v.13), and the "earth" (v.13). Consider also the absolute and spectacular expressions used to describe the force, pain, consternation, and irremediable judgment of the kingdom.
 3. Consider several passages that refer to the sun, moon, and stars with figurative and symbolic senses pertaining to His saints (Eccl 12:1-2; Is 5:3,30; 58:8-11; 59:9-10; 60:15-20; Jer 4:23-28; Amos 5:18-20; 8:9; Micah 3:6-12; Zep 1:14-15).

4. Consider several passages that refer to the sun, moon, and stars with figurative and symbolic senses pertaining to pagan nations (Isaiah 34:1-6; Ezek 32:7-8).
 5. Consider Acts 2. The "day of the Lord" was the coming destruction of Israel and Jerusalem by Roman armies. But prior to this event God was going to begin the overthrow of Old Testament worship and replace it with New Testament worship. A significant event included here was the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon men. The prophet Joel described this tremendous religious upheaval by using "heaven" (v.19), "earth" (v.19), "blood, fire, and vapour of smoke" (v.19), "sun" (v.20), "moon" (v.20), and "blood" (v.20). Peter expressly tells us these terms described the day of Pentecost and what followed (2:16).
- II. Use older prophecies to gain understanding for interpreting more recent or future prophecies.
- A. Many older prophecies have their fulfillments described in Scripture, so that we can readily ascertain the proper interpretation of various symbols. By studying Daniel in light of the fulfillment of its prophecies, we have a great head start on understanding Revelation. To even attempt Revelation without a good understanding of Daniel is folly.
 - B. Many older prophecies have their fulfillments described in secular history, as Josephus so well shows the fulfillment of prophecies pertaining to the destruction of Jerusalem. By studying these prophecies and their fulfillments, we can learn more about the proper interpretation of prophetic symbols.
- III. Remember that the purpose of prophecy is to confirm or reprove us when the event occurs, rather than give us a vehicle for speculation (Is 48:5; John 13:19; 14:29; 16:4).
- A. The Futurists have created a blight on Christianity for their wild and fanciful schemes of coming events from obscure passages of the Old Testament and the book of Revelation.
 - B. William Miller of the Adventists disgraced Christianity with his "Great Disappointment" in 1844, when he had promised the coming of the Lord.
 - C. The speculations about the number of the Beast and the date of Christ's coming are Legion, with the Russellites leading the way with the most false predictions of all.
 - D. A wise Bible student will love the purpose of prophecy to glorify God (Is 14:24-27; 41:21-26; 42:8-12; 43:8-13; 44:6-9; 46:5-13; 48:1-8).
- IV. We only accept double-fulfillments where the Scriptures plainly declare them or justify them.
- A. Abraham's seed includes his descendants, but Jesus Christ is the chief aim (Gal 3:16).
 1. Note the plural pronouns referring to the singular seed (Genesis 15:13-16).
 2. It is our duty to see both descendants and Christ by reading wisely (Gen 22:17).
 - B. David's seed includes both Solomon and the Lord Jesus Christ (II Samuel 7:12-17).
 1. David knew that his seed included prophecies of the Messiah (Acts 2:30).
 2. But we also see a seed that was established before his very eyes, Solomon.
 - C. If we allow or promote double-fulfillments, then why not encourage triple-fulfillments?
 - D. If we allow or promote double-fulfillments, then we can create any fulfillment we wish.
 - E. If we allow or promote double-fulfillments, the intent of the prophecy will be neglected.
- V. What about Matthew 24:27-31 and the graphic expressions contained in our Lord's prophecy?
- A. Many divide this prophecy at varied places to speak of 70 A.D. and the second coming.
 - B. But, our Lord limited the fulfillment of His remarks to that generation (Matt 24:32-35).
 - C. But, the symbols used can be found in other prophecies pertaining to similar judgments.
 - D. But, Joel and Peter used similar language to describe the same events (Acts 2:16-21).
 - E. But, limiting it to Jerusalem's end fits other similar prophecies by Jesus (Matt 16:28).

Rule #11: Use Parables and Proverbs Cautiously

- I. Scripture admits that parables and proverbs are difficult to understand and confuse hearers.
 - A. These are dark sayings needing skill to understand (Pr 1:5-6; John 16:25,29; Ezek 17:2).
 - B. The Lord and His disciples knew parables confused their hearers (Matthew 13:10-13).
 - C. Men who preach much from parables can preach anything they wish with impunity.

- II. Consider the intent of proverbs and parables. Do not read more into them than what God intended.
 - A. “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Pr 29:18), may make a great slogan for a fund raising campaign for a new building; but the text has nothing to do with such carnal thinking.
 - B. The Good Samaritan was given to define a man's neighbor (Luke 10:29-37). Finding some spiritual application for each detail usually indicates hallucination rather than inspiration. The wounded Jew does not represent men dead in trespasses and sins; the Samaritan does not represent a gospel preacher; the wine does not represent the gospel; the oil does not represent the Spirit; the two pence do not represent the two testaments; the inn does not represent the church; and so forth.
 - C. The prodigal son was given to rebuke the Pharisees and comfort sinners with the priority that Jesus Christ put upon sinners in His ministry (Luke 15:1-2). The rebuke is observed by considering the "neglect" of the ninety-nine sheep, the nine coins, and the faithful brother of the prodigal. The comfort is observed by considering the joyful celebration of recovering the one sheep, the one coin, and the prodigal son.
 - D. The sower was given to us to exhort us to give careful attention to how we respond to the word of God (Luke 8:18). It was not given for us to speculate whether each type of ground was regenerate or unregenerate. This parable was not given for theological speculation or instruction but rather practical warning.
 - E. The unjust steward is an obscure parable teaching the importance of setting our affection and attention on heavenly things, for we will need that security in the day of our death (Luke 16:1-15). This is not a lesson in wise financial management and how to have other jobs available when you are fired from your present job for malfeasance.
 - F. Do not let the details of a parable corrupt your understanding. Emphasize the intent and overall context of the parable. While leaven is the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees in one place (Matt 16:6) and malice and wickedness in another place (I Cor 5:7-8), it is the kingdom of God itself in Matthew 13:33. The lesson here is not how sin can infect and corrupt the kingdom of God, but rather how the kingdom of God can affect the world around it (Matt 13:31-32).

- III. Proceed carefully with difficult words and obscure figures of speech when studying individual proverbs.
 - A. Consider Proverbs 1:17. Is it vain for the fowler to spread his net in the sight of a bird, because that bird will not come near the obvious trap? Or is it vain for the bird to watch a fowler set a snare in his sight, since his birdbrain will take him straight to the bait? The context indicates that foolish young men will hasten to their destruction, regardless of the clear evidence of judgment before them.
 - B. Consider Proverbs 5:16. Though water has just been used in the previous proverb to refer to lawful sexual pleasure with one's wife, the wise man here uses it to describe the lawful

- children resulting from that pleasure with his wife. Many lawful children and their influence on behalf of the family is a further reason to avoid the strange woman and delight in the wife of your youth, who is the means of this family blessing.
- C. Considers Proverbs 8:30. Solomon is not teaching the eternal sonship of Jesus Christ, as many presume and teach. He is in the midst of an extensive personification of wisdom, which was and is an integral part of God's very nature. The personification is not a real person, but a powerful literary tool and figure of speech to exalt an abstract thing.
- D. Consider Proverbs 9:17. Stolen waters are not truly sweet; and bread eaten in secret is not truly pleasant. These are the lying words of the whore, which we determine from the context. One of the lies of a whore is the excitement created by the sin of the liaison.
- E. Consider Proverbs 11:24. What kind of scattering leads to increase, and what kind of saving leads to poverty? Solomon in this place is promoting generosity in financial obligations such as tithes, charity, and business transactions; and he is condemning stinginess in these same situations. God will make up the difference for a generous man.
- F. Consider Proverbs 15:15. The afflicted man here is more troubled by his negative attitude than he is any set of circumstances, for the man enjoying a continual feast is doing so by the power of a merry heart! Happiness and joy are choices of the human spirit, by the grace of God. But the evil life of a depressed man is also a choice, for he chooses a negative outlook on everything. Circumstances do not make a person happy, but contentment and joy will do so.
- G. Consider Proverbs 17:23. Magistrates and men in positions of authority will face attempts to buy their favors, but only wicked rulers will take such gifts. The proverb condemns the taker of the gift, rather than the payer, as the rest of Scripture emphasizes. It is natural to try to buy one's liberty or judgment in a court case, but only wicked magistrates would every consider bribery.
- H. Consider Proverbs 20:1. When Solomon speaks of wine being a mocker and strong drink being raging, he is using metonymy of cause for effect. Wine can be the source of mocking, and strong drink can be the source of raging; however, neither wine nor strong drink have mocked or raged. It is their deceitful influence upon men to abuse them that leads to such poor results.
- I. Consider Proverbs 20:25. Here is one of the most obscure proverbs. There are two main possible interpretations. Is the sin here consuming something you gave to the Lord and later vows to check into it? Or are there two sins here, consuming things given to the Lord and looking for escape after making presumptuous vows? We choose the latter with an ellipsis.
- J. Consider Proverbs 20:30. Solomon speaks of wounds (27:6) and stripes (19:29) being the affect of proper discipline. Solomon also speaks of the belly by a figure being our internal decision-making apparatus (20:27). Experience teaches us that wounds have a blue color (and black) and that the rod leaves stripes. Therefore, we conclude that Solomon's proverb teaches that the wounds and stripes of reproof and corporal punishment cleanse us from faults of the heart. And this agrees with other proverbs (Prov 22:15; 23:14; 29:15).
- K. Consider Proverbs 22:28. You will need a little knowledge of historical real estate markings to fully appreciate this proverb. The warning is against business innovations or shady dealings that are not perfectly honest and true. Good and wise men will never defraud another person in a business transaction, especially by subtle means. They will provide things openly honest.
- L. Consider Proverbs 25:11. One has wildly imagined that this proverb describes the ancient gold-silver ratio and proves that word definitions are more important than the context of

words. But the wise man never dreamed of such a thing, for he is praising the beauty of appropriate speech.

- M. Proverbs 29:24. The cursing in this proverb is the oath of the magistrate to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me, God. This lying accomplice will not betray the thief, even when under oath. He must hate his own soul, for judgment is surely coming.

Rule #12: Observe the Emphasis of Scripture.

- I. The Bible may state an emphasis expressly by comparing one thing as superior to other things.
 - A. Some things are more important than others, and we want to follow God's priorities.
 - B. Some things are more important than others by God's inspired statements of priority.
 - 1. Private holiness is more important than public worship (Isaiah 1:10-17; 58:1-7).
 - 2. Mercy in emergencies is more important than rigid sacrifice (Matthew 12:7).
 - 3. Judgment, mercy, and faith are more valuable than tithing (Matthew 23:23).
 - 4. Charity is more important than faith and hope, according to Paul (I Cor 13:13).
 - 5. Proverbs is chock full of comparative statements using "better" (Pr 3:14; 15:16).
 - 6. Just a study of comparative words like "better" and "more" can be profitable.

- II. The Bible may show an emphasis of some thing over other things by more extensive treatment.
 - A. If the Spirit inspired three times more about one thing than another, we should notice.
 - B. The death and resurrection of our Lord are emphasized more than his birth and youth.
 - C. The teaching ministry in the church is emphasized far more than the singing ministry.
 - D. Submission to authority is emphasized far above exceptions teaching holy rebellion.

- III. Some subjects are treated more extensively in certain passages. Use those passages heavily.
 - A. If you are studying the resurrection of the body, you must read I Corinthians 15.
 - B. If you are studying faith, you must read and study Hebrews 11; Romans 4; and James 2.
 - C. If you are studying church judgment, you must read and study I Corinthians 5.
 - D. If you are studying election and salvation, you must read and study Romans 9.

Other Minor Rules

- I. Divide between proof texts and reference texts, lest you try to prove something you cannot.
 - A. A proof text proves a point of doctrine; a reference text only refers to that doctrine.
 1. Every text proves something; you must identify what it does or does not prove.
 2. Determining this difference requires the careful use of the rules already given.
 - B. For example, “God is love,” according to I John 4:16, which is quoted often and freely.
 1. These words prove that God is capable of love and does love, but not much else.
 2. These words do not prove for certain whom or what He loves or for how long.
 3. These words do not prove that He is only love or always loves or loves you.
 4. These words do not disprove that He hates, what He hates, or whom He hates.
 5. The words prove a little about the love of God, but the rest is proven elsewhere.
 - C. For example, Acts 2:41 does not prove the 3000 became church members by baptism.
 1. It proves that all those who gladly heard Peter, some number, were all baptized.
 2. It proves that about 3000 joined the Jerusalem church that very day.
 3. It does not prove baptism was the means of membership or simultaneous with it.
 4. It does not disprove that 5000 were baptized, with 2000 leaving for other places.
 5. It does not disprove that 3,120 actually joined the Jerusalem church that day.
 - D. Does II Corinthians 9:7 prove tithing? If it does not prove tithing, what does it prove?
 - E. Does Proverbs 23:31 prove you cannot look at red wine? What does it prove?
- II. Avoid interpretations with only one textual witness, lest you wander into heresy by a one verse.
 - A. It is wise to remember the Bible rule that two or three witnesses give safety from error!
 - B. The Mormons could have been saved, but they leaped into darkness with I Cor 15:29.
 - C. If anyone argues there is only one witness for the Trinity (I John 5:7), give him a few more (Gen 1:26; Isaiah 48:16; Luke 3:22; John 1:29-34; 14:26; Acts 2:33; II Cor 13:14). A discreet man will recognize that not all of these are proof texts!
- III. Observe the progression of God’s revelation, as more knowledge and truth are given in time.
 - A. Abraham only knew our Creator as God Almighty, but Moses as Jehovah (Exodus 6:3).
 - B. Many prophets and righteous men only saw Jesus darkly (Mat 13:17,35; I Pet 1:10-12).
 - C. Paul understood many things that had been kept hidden from the beginning (Ep 3:1-12).
 - D. Therefore, we Gentiles follow Paul, as he followed Christ (Romans 11:13; I Cor 11:2).
- IV. Scripture is learned gradually by process, do not expect to leap to the level of expert overnight.
 - A. Both disciples and ministers progress in stages of learning (Matt 28:18-20; II Tim 2:15).
 - B. Several of the first rules require extensive Bible knowledge, which takes much reading.
 - C. Bible knowledge is a building process from simple to more advanced things (Is 28:9).
 - D. The goal is growth, but the recipe is much milk before meat (I Peter 2:2; Heb 5:12-14).
- V. Choose the simplest solution among alternatives, rather than enjoying the esoteric and complex.
 - A. False teachers often use complexity (I Cor 1:19-21; 3:18-20; Col 2:8; I Tim 6:20-21).
 - B. Simplicity is a general rule (Prov 8:9; 14:6; II Cor 2:17; 3:12; 4:2; 11:3; Heb 13:9).

Obstacles to Understanding

- I. Slavish literalism is one of the easiest and surest ways to heresy in interpreting the Scriptures.
 - A. Many have made wooden literalism either their chief rule or only rule of interpretation.
 - B. Literalism is advertised and promoted with various good words to deceive the simple.
 1. Some say, "The Bible means what it says and says what it means."
 2. Some say, "Make sure you know what the Bible says before you try to find out what the Bible means."
 3. Some say, "If we don't use primary definitions for each word, we could end up with 14,356,692,381,404 permutations and combinations of interpretation."
 4. Some say, "We speak when the Bible speaks, and we are silent when the Bible is silent."
 5. While these statements may have some little merit if carefully defined and qualified, there is a dangerous conceit and naiveté about them that disdains recognizing context, Scriptural divisions, figures of speech, etc.
 6. C.I. Scofield was a great master of this heretical school of Bible interpretation, and many of the adherents of the literal school are his disciples, directly or indirectly. Obviously, he needed a literal hermeneutic to promote Jewish fables of a latter day restoration of Israel and forecast the details of World War III. He was capable of dividing kingdom of God and kingdom of heaven; and he also divided the day of Christ and the day of the Lord. Believe it!
 - C. Those who make a great ballyhoo over primary definitions often modify their slavery to such meanings by several exceptions, as they know the method is fraught with danger.
 1. Do not use primary definitions when ... the text says to use a secondary sense.
 2. Do not use primary definitions when ... they will create a contradiction.
 3. Do not use primary definitions when ... they will create an absurdity.
 4. Consider this reasoning carefully. Though they cry loudly that primary definitions are the chief rule, or the only rule, of hermeneutics, their own definition of the rule implies that at least our first three rules are more important than their chief one. For it is impossible to determine whether the three exceptions apply or not to a passage without first ...
 - a. Reconciling it to the rest of the Bible,
 - b. Considering its context, and
 - c. Comparing it with related passages.
 - d. These three restrictions are the first rules of interpretation in this study.
 - D. Most of you learned by the second grade it was wise to ask for a word to be used in a sentence before spelling it. We understood then that context determines words and their definitions. Consider the word "board." Context dictates whether it means a piece of wood, daily meal provision, a group of persons having managerial powers, a device for posting notices, a flat surface for playing games, getting on a boat or ship, the hard cover of a book, etc., etc.
 - E. The primary definitions of words like "salvation," which means to be delivered, is of exceeding little help, since the sense of the deliverance is determined by other rules.
 - F. The emphasis of reading and using "primary definitions" is to quit before interpretation. With undue emphasis on the dictionary, we are precluded or discouraged from using the other rules that truly help us find the sense of words rather than their mere sound.

- G. The Bible often uses secondary senses of words or concepts – knowing the difference is crucial to understanding (Matt 9:24; 16:12; 26:61). When we say often, we mean it. The Bible is a spiritual book and therefore uses physical words like "flesh," "death," "life," and others to communicate spiritual information. It most likely has more secondary senses than any other book written except for manifestly esoteric writings.
- H. The Bible assumes readers know common meanings (Matt 22:45; Heb 8:13; 12:26-27).
- I. To read the primary definitions of a dictionary into Nehemiah 8:8 due to the words "the sense," is at best pitiful, and at worst damnable.
1. "Primary definitions" (as some call them) are commonly understood meanings of words. Dictionaries do not determine these meanings: common people using words determine their meanings, which is why dictionaries are always obsolete. Language is always changing. If primary definitions are commonly understood by common people, and the people heard the reading (8:3), then they had no need for any priest or Levite to give them word definitions. Every one of them had known that "sense" of the reading since childhood.
 2. It is entertaining to think of Ezra reading and giving "the sense" in such a way to Deuteronomy 23:18. They think he would have said, "Now the primary definition of dog is 'The simple word.'" If he was a little more honest than most of them, he would have added, "A quadruped of the genus Canis, of which wild species or forms are found in various parts of the world, and numerous races or breeds, varying greatly in size, shape, and colour, occur in a domesticated or semi-domesticated state in almost all countries." What a stupid waste of time! The actual sense of this word is determined by context (23:17), which shows that it intends a male sex pervert, or a sodomite. And such a definition is not even in the O.E.D., the most exhaustive source on the English language.
 3. If Scripture is a collection of words that simply requires a dictionary to interpret it, then the gift of the ministry (Rom 12:6-7), the work of the Spirit (Eph 1:17-18), the blessing of wisdom (James 1:5), the work of Ezra (Ezra 7:6), the prayer of David (Ps 119:18), the division of concepts (II Tim 2:15), and every other help of interpretation prescribed in the Bible is superfluous and vain. Instead of seeking knowledge at the lips of ministers, the saints of God simply need to buy a dictionary. With their two holy books, knowledge is easily available for all.
 4. Scripture teaches us that divisions must be made in arriving at "the sense" of the Bible (II Chron 19:10; II Tim 2:15). And if ministers do not rightly divide beyond "primary definitions," then they shall be shamed by their ridiculous interpretations of verses. Consider the foolish interpretations of such men in the explanations already given of II Cor 6:13; II Tim 1:13; 4:2; Rev 7:9; etc.
 5. Once the dictionary is exalted to a position equal or above the context and other proper determinants of meaning, we enter a whole new field of controversy. Which dictionary is the best? the most spiritual? the most reliable? the most dependable to give the interpretation we want? the most complex to let us choose whatever etymology or definition we need? What actually is a "primary definition"? What emphasis should we give the ancestral Egyptian etymology of a word? Is the American spelling as spiritual as the British spelling? Would we fellowship a minister who only used a Webster's? Why not substitute the word's definition in the inspired text, even if it does violate the grammar?
 6. Those who worship at the altar of "primary definitions" will squeal long and loud, if you ever press them with their own rule. Ask them to kiss their congregation (Rom 16:16). Ask them to pray as the Lord commanded (Luke 11:1-4). Ask

them what instrument they use to beat their children, and where do they apply it (Prov 10:13; 22:15; 26:3; etc.). Ask them what definition number they have to go to for "primary meanings" as a definition of "sense" (Neh 8:8). Ask them to interpret Ecclesiastes 10:4 with primary definitions. Ask them how highly they should emphasize the rule of interpretation found in II Peter 1:20.

- II. Idolatrous worship of the “originals” is another popular and destructive obstacle to learning.
- A. This heresy claims – read it in almost any confession of “faith” – that only the “original manuscripts” are inspired by God and to be consulted for determining true faith and practice. It takes only a little thinking to realize that such men have effectively neutered any opposition, since no one, not even an apostle, ever saw the originals.
- B. Beyond the issues of manuscript evidence, original inspiration, textual criticism, and other diversions, many argue that knowledge of Hebrew and Greek can shed profound light on the Scriptures. This claim is purely the hocus-pocus of a trade group (textual critics and seminary professors) attempting to justify its existence with a science falsely so called. Consider their two most well known claims:
1. These liars claim: The word “wine” in the King James Version is inaccurate, as any passage approving its use is speaking of unfermented grape juice, which is easily seen in the Hebrew or Greek.
 - a. This argument is the drivel and twaddle of teetotalers, who, finding the Bible full of commendations for wine, must corrupt the Scriptures.
 - b. Since "wine" has never meant grape juice in English, we must wonder why the translators used the specific word for the alcoholic beverage.
 - c. When we consider their claim directly, we find that each use of "wine" with a context indicates an intoxicating beverage i.e. Gen 9:21; 19:33; Jer 23:9; Luke 10:34; Eph 5:18; I Tim 5:23; Titus 1:7; 2:3; I Pet 4:3.
 - d. We also find that the same Hebrew or Greek word is used for both passages commending its usage and passages condemning its usage. Consider that Melchizedek's wine (Gen 14:18) was the same as Noah's (Gen 9:21) and Lot's (Gen 19:33). Consider that David (II Sam 6:19) and Esther (Esther 5:6) used the wine not to be seen (Prov 23:31). Consider that Solomon urged (Ecc 9:7) and Abigail gave (I Sam 25:18) the wine that mocks (Prov 20:1). And the Lord Christ (John 2:3) and Timothy (I Tim 5:23) used the wine Paul avoided (Rom 14:21).
 2. These liars also claim: A profound and significant exchange occurred between Jesus and Peter in John 21:15-17, based on the difference between the two Greek words Jesus used for love - agape and phileo, which English readers miss.
 - a. While moving sermons have been preached from this text and these words, it is no evidence or proof that Jesus or Peter understood any difference in these words.
 - b. Without resorting to classical Greek literature to compare the usage of the two words, it is difficult to see any great difference in their meaning by the Spirit's use – they both mean love and affection.
 - c. Compare the following verses and see if they are not actually synonyms: Heb 12:6 and Rev 3:19; John 3:35 and John 5:20; I Cor 16:22 and II Cor 5:14; John 11:5 and John 11:36; John 20:2 and John 21:7.
- C. It is impossible to use the “original manuscripts” with any degree of integrity.
1. Those who place such confidence in the "original manuscripts" deny that God providentially preserves translations, but they simultaneously assume that God

does providentially preserve copies. The best we have in any Greek New Testament is a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy. . . . The "originals" were never put in a book at any time in any place, contrary to naive worshippers, who crawl to the altars of manuscript evidence and textual criticism to light candles.

2. While the "original manuscripts" are always spoken of as a singular source of unbiased truth straight from the finger of God, the truth is that every such dreamer must choose from at least 27 different Greek New Testaments existing today. Is that improvement? Is the Textus Receptus or Nestle's the "original"? Or is it Tischendorf's third edition (he made eight different attempts at least)? Erasmus's second edition? Or Stephen's fourth? Or the New World Greek text?
3. Once you flip a penny enough times to figure out which Hebrew or Greek text you will use, then you must start flipping all over again to determine which lexicons you will use to guess at the word meanings of two dead languages.
4. While these devotees of Greek and Hebrew accuse us of blind faith in believing God can providentially preserve translations, they themselves must exercise at least as much faith to believe we have God's canon in sixty-six books, without any assistance from them or their professors. Give God the glory!
5. Since none of these men really know much about the Greek of Paul's generation, they must waste incredible amounts of time reading Greek classical literature in order to try and determine word meanings in a dead language. This becomes painfully inconsistent with their knowledge that the N.T. was written in koine Greek rather than classical Greek.
6. Using Greek or Hebrew to try to understand our English Bible is like an American trying to assist his understanding of an English repair manual for his Toyota by studying one written in Japanese, when he doesn't have much more than a clue about the Japanese language. It is actually worse, since the Hebrew and Greek the Scriptures were written in have no existing standard.
7. In this matter of the "originals," believers must place their faith in one of two beings – either a man dedicated to the wisdom of this world who believes it his right to question and alter the Word of God . . . or God Himself as the Preserver of His Scriptures in the English language, substantiated by accuracy and fruit.
8. This heresy is nothing more than a restoration of the priest craft of the Dark Ages, when the priests of Rome (until the 1960s) performed all Masses in Latin and forbid the people to read the Bible. Today it is pastors and professors, who tell their people that without knowledge of Hebrew and Greek they cannot know the Scriptures with confidence. God forbid!
9. This whole matter of manuscript evidence and textual criticism is science falsely so called and the profitless vanity of those God will destroy (I Cor 1:18-20; 3:18-20; I Tim 6:20). Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer (textual critic)?
10. No man in the Bible ever read from the originals, referred to the originals, or recommended the originals for other saints to rely on. When men read and studied the Scriptures, they studied copies of copies, translations of copies, and copies of translations (Acts 8:27-28; 17:11; II Tim 3:15).

- III. Some few – an obvious one or two – have tried to give II Timothy 1:13 a hermeneutical value.
 - A. One has claimed that the "form of sound words" refers to the arrangement of words on a printed page i.e. left and right justified printing; and another has claimed that they emphasize the grammatical construction of the words together in sentences.

B. While neither view gives much meaning to the text and should hardly bother a true student of the Scriptures, it is just such travesties of interpretation that this study is designed to eliminate.

1. We should first interpret sound words. **Sound.** In full accordance with fact, reason, or good sense; founded on true or well-established grounds; free from error, fallacy, or logical defect; good, strong, valid.
 - a. Sound words are good, strong, valid, true, right, proven, established, honest, etc.
 - b. Scripture uses "sound" for doctrine (I Tim 1:10; Tit 1:9; 2:1; II Tim 4:3).
 - c. Scripture uses "sound" for the godly speech of another minister (Tit 2:8).
 - d. Other verses use "good" (I Tim 4:6) and "wholesome" (I Tim 6:3) as synonyms.
2. We should next interpret the form of a thing. The form of a thing intends (1) its shape and appearance, (2) its likeness or resemblance, (3) its particular character or nature, or (4) its orderly arrangement of parts.
 - a. Consider "another form" (Mark 16:12), the form of God and of a servant (Phil 2:6-7), the form of knowledge (Rom 2:20), the form of doctrine (Rom 6:17), and the form of godliness (II Tim 3:5). The use in Mark must be given definition one; the uses in Philippians 2:7 and II Timothy 3:5 definition two; and the other New Testament references definition three.
 - b. When definition three is used, you should be able to delete "form" from the sentence and not change the meaning. For instance, Romans 2:20 would read, "which hast knowledge and truth in the law."
 - c. The word "form" in this context must be a word of emphasis meaning the particular character, nature, structure, or constitution of sound words. Paul could have said, "Hold fast sound words," but he didn't want Timothy to repeat or mimic him verbatim! The inspired text emphasizes Timothy's consideration of the nature and character of sound words that he had heard from Paul, which kind of words he was to use himself.
 - d. This text is the same ministerial advice as I Timothy 6:3 and Titus 2:1,8.

IV. Some have tried to give Romans 12:6 a hermeneutical role. They claim that this verse teaches the interpretation of Scripture must be (1) in proportion with the rest of Scripture or (2) in agreement with "the analogy of the faith" or the complete Divine revelation.

- A. While the point of agreement may be true (rule #1), it is not taught in this place.
- B. In order to make this interpretation, they must change "proportion" to "analogy" and "faith" to "the faith." With these changes made, they propose that the gift of prophecy was the duty of interpretation or teaching the Scriptures. Therefore, when interpreting Scripture the Bible teacher should interpret according to the analogy of the faith, or in other words, his interpretation of any particular passage should reconcile with the whole. We agree with the point, but we deny the interpretation.
- C. The supernatural gift of prophecy in this passage should be distinguished from the natural gift of teaching (12:7). The gift of prophecy involved inspiration (I Cor 12:10; 13:2), while the gift of teaching involved study (I Tim 4:13-16; II Tim 2:15).
- D. The context is of spiritual gifts and not rules of interpretation (Romans 12:3-8).
- E. Since the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets (I Cor 14:32), Paul was here exhorting those with the gift of prophecy to use it to the extent of their faith.
- F. Compare this interpretation and application with Peter's exhortation (I Pet 4:10-11).

- V. Some suggest ignoring the italics of the King James Version to promote understanding.
- A. The King James translators used italics to indicate every word they inserted as a result of the interpolation process of translation. Since no two languages are capable of word for word translation, they honestly indicated where they inserted English words to complete the sense of the passage translated.
 - B. Since there is no translation without many interpolated words, there must be either italics in all translations or men hiding their interpolated words while railing on the KJV.
 - C. An important passage to consider under this point is II Samuel 21:19. Since there is not an "original" or translation around with the proper words in this text, we can thank God for providentially adding "the brother of" in the King James Version. God used the translators knowledge of I Chronicles 20:5 to properly translate this text.
 - D. The Lord Jesus Christ argued important doctrine from a single, two-letter italicized word from the Old Testament of the King James Version.
 1. Jesus argued doctrine from the present tense verb *to be*, am, in Matthew 22:31-33.
 2. If you check out the source word of this argument, it is in italics (Exodus 3:6).
 3. The English of a King James Bible is superior to modern English or Greek texts.
- VI. Some form a definition of a word, and then substitute it for that word in Scripture.
- A. In an effort to thwart the Campbellites in Acts 2:38, some have substituted "the One Anointed" for "Christ" in this verse. With a convenient transposition of these words, they then teach that baptism is in the name of Jesus Who is the One anointed for the remission of sins. Thus they preserve the "in order to obtain" sense of "for" in this text, and they neatly avoid the arguments of the Church of Christ.
 1. Why give the Campbellites their usage of "for" when we have Mark 1:40-44?
 2. Since "Jesus Christ" is a noun in this verse, it is invalid to substitute the participial adjective "anointed" in its place grammatically. God inspired the verse to have "for" modify the baptism as taught plainly elsewhere (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3) and not the noun Jesus Christ.
 - B. In an effort to embellish Romans 2:29, some have substituted "Jewishness" for the word "praise," since according to them the word Judah means praise (Genesis 49:8).
 1. It appears that this fudging of words is due to the difficulty of accepting the use of the preposition "of" in a sense other than subjective-genitive.
 2. God's regeneration apart from race gives us great cause for the praise of God.

Bible Study Tools

Word-based

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

This reference tool contains every occurrence of each word in the Bible. Organized alphabetically, it is the best tool to find a verse from a word and/or to find all the occurrences of a word. It also contains the Hebrew and Greek words behind each English word, and their definitions. Strong's is the best, for it is exhaustive with several helpful features and the Hebrew and Greek. Young's has phrases, allowing precise searches. A concordance is word based – here is its value and its limitations.

Verse-based

Treasury of Scripture Knowledge

This reference tool contains over 500,000 cross references to the verses in the Bible. Organized Scripturally, it provides verses helping explain the text under study. The verses were drawn from numerous conservative and Protestant commentaries before 1900. Within a verse, it lists its cross-references according to phrases within the verse. It is the best tool for finding explanatory verses that may not contain the key words of your subject text. The Treasury is verse based – here is its value and its limitations.

Concept-based

Nave's Topical Bible

This topical handbook organizes Bible verses and passages by well-known topics. By using key verses more than once, it contains over 100,000 references in over 20,000 topics. The Scriptures are fully printed, so you do not need your Bible to read the text. It also features a reverse lookup that allows you to find the topics where a verse has been used, in order to find other related verses by that topical classification. It is topic based.

Bible Dictionary

Organized alphabetically, it contains most every word in the Bible with a definition, illustration, description, historical reference, explanation, and/or cross-references. By its nature, it may include the author's bias. It is word based. Useful dictionaries include Davis, Smith, Easton, ISBE, and others.

Bible Commentaries

Organized Scripturally, they provide the authors' interpretations for each verse in the Bible. Due to its organization, you may quickly obtain an opinion on the interpretation of any verse, often with cross-references. It is verse based. Useful commentaries include Poole, Henry, Barnes, Gill, and Clarke.

Systematic Theology

A handbook organized according to the author's outline of theology with the author's opinion and references providing the material under each heading. It is topic based. Useful theologies include Gill, Dagg, Boyce, Berkhof, and Dabney. There are many more, but few add much.

All these tools are readily available with the Online Bible program and/or access to the Internet. We are blessed to have such tools, and therefore we will be held accountable to know our Bibles better.