

HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics-Homiletics WO Questions 11-2023.doc

Notes for this class are quoted or paraphrased from the book, **“Hermeneutics, Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation”** by Henry A. Virkler. It is published by: Baker Book House Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, copyright 1981, and used by permission.

Some of the material on Hermeneutics was prepared by Viv Penfold of England ; also used with his kind permission.

In March of 2012 the material was revised with some material being removed and other new material added. This was done to put greater emphasis on those things that were more important, and to add additional credit to the course allowing for more preaching practice.

In **May of 2012** some spacing problems were corrected, and the addition of the definition for “Irony” was added to the section on “Figures of Speech”.

In July of 2012 I added an explanation to the section on Homiletics I.A. 7.

HERMENEUTICS

Prepared in part by Viv Penfold (England)

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HERMENEUTICS

I. Introduction

- A. The term “Hermeneutics” is believed to have come from the name of the Greek god, Hermes, who supposedly served as a messenger for the gods. It was his job to deliver the communications of the gods to their recipients.
- B. Hermeneutics concerns the rules which are used in the interpretation of scripture. As there are no original manuscripts of the Bible (only copies of them which have variations among them) there are individuals who are involved in what is called, textual criticism, the attempt to determine the correct original wording of the text. Additionally, there are those who study the historical circumstances surrounding the writings which are vital to a clear understanding of its meaning.

Bible scholars believe a biblical text must be interpreted according to the language in which it was written, its historical context, the identity and purpose of the author, its literary nature, and the situation to which it was originally addressed.

- C. After having accepted the authority of the canon (those writings accepted as inspired by God), studying textual criticism, and historical criticism, we are ready to do exegesis which is the application of the principles of hermeneutics to arrive at a correct understanding of the text.
- D. The Inspiration, the Infallibility, and the Inerrancy of the Word of God are fundamental beliefs within Christianity. The Word of God is not judged by anything else or by anyone else. To reject this is to reject God Himself.
 - 1. Our view of inspiration is also very important to our understanding of the importance of hermeneutics. Our belief that God worked through each individual’s own personality, intellect, and background to produce what is literally, “God-breathed” is fundamental to our acceptance of Biblical truth.

When we say the Bible is inspired, we do not mean that God dictated the words and men simply wrote them down. The Bible includes direct statements of God, but it also includes historical records, human observations, statements of ungodly people—even the words of the Devil. Instead, we mean that God used the language and understanding of the writers, but He so guided them in choosing what they recorded, that everything written there is exactly what God wants to be there.

(2 Pet 1:21 KJV) For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

(2 Tim 3:16 KJV) All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

The Bible says that “all scripture is inspired by God” (2 Tim. 3:16) which indicates that the very words themselves were inspired not just the writers. Thus the application of hermeneutics enables us to discover more accurately the truth of scripture.

2. The Infallibility of the Word of God means:

a. The Word of God infallibility achieves its end purpose.

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

b. It gives us reliable testimony about salvation through Christ. Peter and John in speaking of Jesus the Christ before the Sanhedrin said,

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

c. It provides us with an authoritative standard of faith and conduct.

(I) Orthodoxy meaning [the accepted view or understanding]

(II) Orthopraxy meaning [the accepted practice or action]

d. It means that God speaks without error through the Word of God.

3. The Inerrancy of Scripture—it is trustworthy and dependable

The Bible is fully truthful in all that it affirms in the context of which it is written. Inerrancy means:

a. The report that was given was truthful.

b. The Bible is without error in regard to its context and culture.

c. Difficult texts are not proof that the Word of God contains error but reflect man’s lack of understanding.

1 Corinthians 2:1-16 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. ² For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of

man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: ⁵ That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. ⁶ Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: ⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: ⁸ Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. ¹⁰ But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. ¹⁶ For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Evangelicals are divided into two camps over the issue of inerrancy:

- **Conservative evangelicals** are those who believe that Scripture is totally without error.
- **Liberal evangelicals** are those who believe Scripture is without error whenever it speaks on matters of salvation and faith, but that it may possess errors in historical fact or other detail.

The problem with such belief is that when we begin to doubt or question one area of Biblical truth it leads to questioning in all areas. This is also reflected in how we apply hermeneutics to the study of interpreting scripture. If we believe the scripture may have errors, then we are more likely to accept differences between manuscripts. However, if we believe that scripture is without error then we are more motivated to search for the defining truth when differences between manuscripts occur.

- E.** When we keep in mind that centuries have passed since the scriptures were written and that the culture of the writers differed tremendously from that of today, we gain a deeper appreciation for the importance of applying proper hermeneutics to our study of the scriptures.
- F.** One important aspect of scripture study is the need to determine what God was trying to say rather than what I think it means to me. If we accept a passage on the basis of what

it means to me, then we will have as many differing views of the true meaning as we have readers.

G. An issue which must be addressed in the examination of scripture is that of whether the scripture is to be understood literally, figuratively, or symbolically. This can be seen in the following example of the use of the term “crown”:

Quoted from the text:

1. **Literal:** A crown, sparkling with jewels, was placed on the king’s head.
2. **Figurative:** (Angry father to his son) “If you do that one more time, I’ll crown you!”
3. **Symbolic:** “A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head” (Rev. 12:1).

II. The Unity And Diversity Of The Word Of God

A. The Bible has a central theme [Unity] & a variety of subjects [Diversity] which relate to the central theme or themes.

1. There is but one primary author, God, not the recorder-man
2. Jesus Christ is the one who binds the OT & NT together.

Col 1:13-17 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

3. The Spirit testifies to this:

John 14:24-26 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. 25 "All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 15:26 "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

John 16:12-14 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will

speaking only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

4. Progressive character of God's Revelation: Themes from the OT carrying into the New Testament. Paul quotes from several OT scriptures relating to the church of the New Testament. **Romans 3: 9-18** Many OT scriptures are used

B. Diversity in the Bible: The OT promises the Messiah, the NT fulfills the promise.

1. The OT had prophecies that needed to be fulfilled; the NT completes many of the prophecies. Especially the prophecies concerning Christ's birth, ministry, death, and resurrection.
2. The OT was written in Hebrew while the NT in Aramaic & Hellenistic Greek [common language]
3. There are facts that are recorded in the historical contexts. There are teachings that are not historic but practical, for example: The Sermon on the Mount.

C. God intended that in the diversity and unity there should be but one true interpretation. God says what he means and means what he says.

1. There are no two opposite meanings in the Word of God.
2. But because man is finite sometimes things are hard to understand.
3. God chose to relate to us in a human language therefore He wanted us to know His mysteries.

D. Five methods we use to understand the Bible. We ask these questions.

1. Who was the writer and who was he writing to
2. What was the cultural-historical settings of the writer
3. What was the meaning of the words in the writer's day
4. What was the intended meaning of the author and what was he trying to say
5. How does this relate to us today

E. Spiritual qualifications of those who interpret the Bible

1. The interpreter must be born again: 1 Cor 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
2. They must have a passion for the Word of God: Psalm 1
3. They must have a reverence for God: Prov. 2:5
4. They must have complete dependence upon the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them into the truth of God's holy word.

F. Six steps in interpretation of biblical text (quoted from the text pg. 76-77)

- 1. Historical—cultural analysis:** considers the historical—cultural background in which the author wrote, in order to understand his allusions, references, and purpose. **Contextual analysis** considers the relationship of a given passage to the whole body of an author’s writing, for better understanding results from a knowledge of the overall thought.
- 2. Lexical—syntactical analysis:** develops an understanding of the definitions of words (lexicology) and their relationship to one another (syntax) in order to understand more accurately the meaning the author intended to convey.
- 3. Theological analysis:** studies the level of theological understanding at the time a revelation was given in order to ascertain the meaning of the text for its original recipients. Thus it considers related Scriptures, whether given before or after the passage being studied.
- 4. Literary analysis:** identifies the literary form or method used in a given passage for various forms such as historical narrative, letters, doctrinal exposition, poetry, and apocalyptic. Each has their unique methods of expression and interpretation.
- 5. Comparison with other interpreters:** compares the tentative interpretation derived from the four steps above with the work of other interpreters.
- 6. Application:** is the important step of translating the meaning a biblical text had for its original hearers into the meaning it has for believers in a different time and culture.

G. Historical—Cultural and Contextual Analysis

1. The meaning of a text cannot be interpreted with any degree of certainty without historical—cultural and contextual analysis. For example:

Proverbs 22:28 commands “Remove not the ancient landmark which your fathers have set,” (Revised Standard Version). Does this mean:

- Do not make changes to the way we have always done things.
- Do not steal.
- Do not move the guideposts that direct travelers from town to town.
- None of the above.
- All of the above.

The answer is (2). If you answered either 1 or 3 it is likely that you came to the text subconsciously asking, “What does this mean to me?” The important question however, is “What did this text mean to the original writer and his audience?”

2. Historical—cultural and contextual analysis can be done by answering three basic questions:

- a. What is the general historical background in which the writer speaks?
- b. What is the specific historical—cultural context and purpose of this book?
- c. What is the immediate context of the passage under consideration?

3. We must consider the general historical situation facing the author and his audience. What was the political, social, and economic situation? What other factors may be important to an understanding of the background surrounding the writing?

4. What manners and customs of the time and culture may shed additional understanding on the author’s meaning. One example from our textbook pg. 80:

The familiar parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) was designed to impress on its hearers the importance of careful, as opposed to careless, preparation for the coming of the Lord. The carelessness of the ten foolish virgins is even more pointed when we become aware that the bridegroom watches generally took several hours, and that the lamps often used in these watches were tiny (several could be held in the palm of one’s hand simultaneously). The foolishness of coming to a bridegroom watch with such a small lamp and no extra oil (vs. 3) made Christ’s point effective.

III. BACKGROUND OF INTERPRETATION

DEFINITION: Greek *hermenuo* means “to interpret, explain.” Hermeneutics is the quest to find the meaning of the author to the first readers and to transmit the meaning to modern readers.

A. THE NEED FOR INTERPRETATION

All ancient (as well as current) documents need interpretation because the thought and intent of the author is not always clear.

1. For example: He may have assumed a knowledge in the reader that present readers don't have, such as the identity of a person or place or the use of a word. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:5-6 as an example.)
2. For example: the Supreme Court's function is to interpret the U.S. Constitution, that is to try to determine what they meant by what they said so as to apply it to a current problem.

2 Timothy 2:15 is a call to rightly handle, that is use or interpret the Word of God. It means literally "cutting a straight path or guiding the word of truth along a straight path."

B. THE BACKGROUND OF THE INTERPRETER INFLUENCES THE RESULT.

Christian preconceptions:

1. The Bible is God's word. (But what does that really mean?)
2. The Bible can be adequately understood, even in translation.
3. The Bible is a unity.
4. The Bible is its own best interpreter.
5. The Bible language is mainly normal human language, not some obscure code or mystical utterances.
6. Understanding comes to an open, willing heart.
7. The Holy Spirit's teaching is necessary for full understanding. (John 14:26; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Corinthians 3:14-17.)

C. Non-Christian preconceptions:

1. The Bible is man's work, about man's concepts of God.
2. A basic disbelief in the supernatural and miraculous. (For example, Isaiah couldn't have written the book that bears his name because it speaks of things that didn't happen until later.)
3. The Bible is only understood in a historical or cultural setting. For many scholars, however, the history in the Bible is doubted also. Some even say Abraham, David and Solomon never really existed.

IV. A BRIEF HISTORY OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

A. **JEWISH - Rabbis:** Legalistic and rigid, with much logic. Substituting letters, forming new words, numerism (looking for hidden meanings in numbers) and other fanciful means. For Example: **Genesis 2:7** "**God formed** (Hebrew *iytzer*) **man.**" But *yetzer* (impulse) is from the same root. Since *iytzer* (formed) has two "y's" they would conjecture that man was formed with two impulses, good and bad. They looked for deeper, hidden meanings. Most often never intended.

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

In John 5:39 Jesus refers to how they searched the scriptures. Three writings that expound on the scriptures are:

1. The *midrash* was a running commentary on the O.T.
2. The *mishna* was a topical commentary citing 150 authorities. Later they even interpreted the authorities.
3. The *talmud* was (is) a *mishna* on the *mishna*. Each sentence of the *mishna* was examined and explained.

B. ALEXANDRIAN JUDAISM before 250 B.C. developed allegorical method: not what the writer wanted to say, but what the interpreter wants it to say. (For example: they said that the chewing of the cud in the clean animals meant meditation.) Philo tried to make Judaism compatible with Greek philosophy by the allegorical method. For example, if a statement seems unworthy of God, we explain it allegorically or exclude it. Words are explained apart from their context, minor words are given great significance.

C. PATRISTIC PERIOD (the early church fathers): Used both exegesis (getting out the real meaning using grammar and other tools) and allegory. Much of it today has no value at all.

D. MIDDLE AGES: The church was seen as the authoritative interpreter. The Fathers' sayings were used to support tradition, which has equal weight with the Bible. Philosophy and logic were also important.

E. REFORMATION PERIOD:

1. **Martin Luther** sought the plain sense of scripture, believed it should be read and understood by everyone, and balanced literal or grammatical understanding with the spiritual depth by Holy Spirit illumination.
2. **John Calvin** used historical and grammatical methods. For example, **Psalms 2** refers to David taking the kingship.

3. **17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES:** The age of reason and Rationalism.

- a. The Bible is true where it agrees with human reason. Therefore miracles are not an accurate record.
- b. God did not act in history.
- c. God did not communicate to men.
- d. The Bible is a human book.
- e. Use of isolated texts to prove theology but explained away evidence that seemed contrary.

F. MODERN PERIOD: An extension of Rationalism, theologians doubt the truth of the Bible, see it as a human book, mostly an invention to try to validate the beliefs of the Jews and later the Christians.

V. THE BIBLE AS A BOOK

A. THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN BY ABOUT 40 AUTHORS OVER A PERIOD OF ABOUT 1600 YEARS, in many countries and in three languages, and yet has but one doctrinal system moral standard and plan of salvation. It takes us from eternity past through creation to the consummation of all things, and on into eternity.

B. THE BIBLE HAS SURVIVED DESPITE CONCERTED EFFORTS TO DESTROY IT OR DISCREDIT ITS AUTHORITY:

- 1. DIOCLETIAN** in AD 303 tried to destroy all bibles. He had a medal made which said, “The Christian religion is destroyed, and the worship of the gods restored.”
- 2. IN THE DARK AGES** (1073_1294) the Bible was not allowed to be read by laymen. The Reformation period was known for a return to the Bible, translation, and publication in common languages.
- 3. IN ENGLAND** an act was passed forbidding use of the Tyndale translation of the Bible and making it a crime to read the Scripture in meetings without a royal license. The Church burned all of those copies, and of 18,000 copies only 2 fragments remain today.
- 4. VOLTAIRE**, a French unbeliever, predicted that Christianity would be extinct within 100 years. Twenty-five years after his death the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed and printed Bibles on the same presses Voltaire had used.
- 5. COMMUNIST COUNTRIES** have tried to prevent the printing and reading of the Bible, but great revivals have continued in those countries.
- 6. BUT THE BIBLE** is now available in over 1,000 languages, more than any book, and is consistently the best seller.
- 7. CURRENT EFFORTS**, even in Christian circles, there are efforts to discredit the Bible by saying it is just myth and error, a product of man’s own thinking.

C. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE

1. Derivation of the word “Bible”:

THE BYBLOS REED
was made into
PAPYRUS
from which were made
ANCIENT BOOKS OR SCROLLS
which came to be called
BYBLOS
which was adapted as the Greed word for “books”
BIBLIA
which came to be thmene English word

BIBLE

2. Meaning of words:

- a. Within the Bible, itself, the Bible is referred to as “THE SCRIPTURES” (Matt. 21:42; Rom. 15:4) which means THE WRITINGS.
- b. The term “The word” or “The word of God,” as used in the Bible, do not necessarily refer to the Bible, itself, but to a specific statement made by or about God (or occasionally by someone else.” Compare: Rom. 10:17; Eph. 5:28; Titus 2:5
- c. The Old Testament is called “the Law,” “the Law and the prophets,” or “the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.” (Luke 24:44)
- d. The terms “Old Testament” and “New Testament” came into use about AD 200 to designate Jewish and Christian Scriptures.
- e. “Testament” mean covenant, so the old Testament is the Old Covenant made with Moses, and the New Testament concerns the New Covenant made by the blood of Jesus.

3. The Old testament was written mainly in Hebrew.

The New Testament was written in Greek.

4. The word *canon* indicates those books accepted as a part of the Bible.

The Catholic canon includes the APOCRAPHA, a collection of 15 books written primarily during the inter-testamental period and not accepted as inspired by Protestant Christianity.

5. How the Protestant Canon was decided.

- a. Besides the present books of the bible, many were written which also claimed a place in the Bible.

APOCRAPHA (The “hidden books” of the Catholic Bible.)

PSEUDEPIGRAPHA (Other “gospels” and stories of the period.)

- b. Tests for canonicity:

(I). Apostolic authorship

(II). Spiritual character

(III). Universally received by the church

(IV). Evidence of inspiration

- c. Calendar of canonization:

(I). Apostles, themselves, claim inspiration and authority.

1 Thes. 5:27; Rev. 22:18; 2 Pet. 3:15_16

(II). Apostolic Fathers (AD 70_120) cited all but Jude, 2 Peter, 2&3 John, and possibly 1&2 Thes., Col., Titus, and Philemon.

(III). Apologists (120_170) recognize all four gospels.

(IV). Church Fathers (170_350) identify four gospels, Acts, 1 Pet., 1 John, 13 Epistles of Paul and Revelation.

(V). Under persecution of Diocletian (303_397) Council of Carthage ratified the new Testament as we have it today.

(VI). Parts of the church have doubted Hebrews or Revelation. Even in Reformation time some questioned Heb., Jude, James, Rev., 2 Pet. and 2&3 John.

6. For convenience, the Bible has been divided into chapters and verses.

These are not authoritative, and often do not seem to be well done. They may even be confused by dividing sentences and paragraphs.

7. Hebrew had no vowels, capitalization nor punctuation. Greek had no capitalization nor punctuation, nor even spaces between words. Therefore these conventions are not necessarily correct nor authoritative.

D. TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

Because the Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek, it must be translated into other languages in order to be understood. The Bible was being translated into other languages from the very earliest times. In fact, the Bible the church used in the first century was a Greek translation of the Old Testament called the SEPTUAGINT.

In English, the Bible has been translated many times. One of the oldest is called the King James Version, because King James of England authorized the translation. This was done in 1611, when the English language was very different than today. Scholars are regularly making new translations in modern English so people can better understand the bible.

However, all translations are somewhat interpretive, and we must still take care to make our own decision as to the meaning of a text, rather than rely completely on one translator's opinion. One way to do this is to compare several translations.

The so-called Living Bible is not a translation, but a paraphrase, which means that the author—Kenneth Taylor—rewrote the Bible in His own words rather than giving an exact translation. The Message is another example of this. The New International Version is also somewhat free in its use of paraphrase. The Amplified Bible seeks to give a complete view of various words by presenting many different terms. The New American Standard is fairly literal, giving alternate or literal readings in the margins.

VI. BACKGROUND OF INTERPRETATION

A. 2 Timothy 2:15 Scripture needs to be “rightly divided.”

B. All ancient documents need interpretation, because the thought and intent of the author is not always clear.

1. For example: the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution.

2. Or the use of transcripts of meetings to determine the original intent of a document.

C. The background of the interpreter influences the result.

1. Christian preconceptions:

- a. The Bible is God's word.
 - b. The Bible can be adequately understood, even in translation.
 - c. The bible is a unity.
 - d. The Bible is its own best interpreter.
 - e. The Bible language is mainly normal human language.
 - f. Understanding comes best to an open, willing heart.
 - g. The Holy Spirit's guidance is necessary for full understanding.
(John 14:26; 2 Peter 1:20_21; 2 Corinthians 3:14_17)
2. Non-Christian preconceptions:
- a. The Bible is man's work, about man's concepts of God.
 - b. The supernatural and miraculous do not occur.
 - c. The Bible is to be understood only in a historical cultural setting, and our interpretation is therefore subject to change with changing culture and scientific knowledge.

D. A brief history of Biblical interpretation.

1. Jewish

- a. **Ezra** (Nehemiah 8:7-8) read and interpreted into Aramaic and commented on the Scripture.
- b. **Qumran community** interpreted prophecy in terms of themselves. This was an ancient settlement in what is now the West Bank area of Israel. It is known especially for its caves and the area where the Dead Sea Scrolls were hidden. (see photo of caves)



- c. **Rabbis** were legalistic and rigid, with much logic, seeking mystic meaning in letters, relationship between words, numbers, etc.
 - d. **Alexandrian Judaism** before 250 B.C. developed allegorical method. By giving symbolic meaning to everything they could make the text say what they wanted it to say.
2. **Patristic period** (early church fathers) used both exegesis (getting out the real meaning) and allegory.
3. In **the Middle Ages** the church was seen as the authoritative interpreter. Tradition was given equal weight with the Bible. Philosophy and logic also were important.

4. In the **Reformation period**, Martin Luther sought the plain sense of Scripture, said that it should be read and understood by anyone, and balanced the literal or grammatical with the spiritual depth by Holy Spirit illumination.
5. In the **17th and 18th centuries**—the Age of Reason and Rationalism—the bible had to agree with human reason. Therefore records of miracles were not true. God did not act in history nor communicate with men. The Bible was seen as a human book. Isolated texts were used to prove theology, but contrary texts were explained away.
6. In the **19th and 20th centuries** there has been much scholarly research resulting in better manuscripts and translations. Modernism dismissed the Bible as a purely human book, but evangelicalism stood with the precept of inspiration and sought to take the Bible literally in most senses. Many streams of interpretation have produced multitudes of denominations and great disagreement between true believers. Philosophic concepts such as Dispensationalism and Inerrancy became battle cries and individual “spiritual” understandings produced great conflict.

VII. HOW THE BIBLE INTERPRETS ITSELF

A. The interpretation of any text must be consistent with the whole of Scripture on the subject. No text, reported activity or statement, may be taken to be absolutely complete in itself, since Scripture writers did selective recording. This invalidates “proof texting.”

Because each author wrote selectively, that is, he tailored his discussion to deal with the issue at hand, the report of events, the advice, commandments, or arguments are usually not comprehensive in nature. That is, since the author or speaker may only deal with one aspect of the truth, it is important that we explore the rest of the Bible’s discussion regarding a specific topic to get a complete picture.

1. In Acts 16:30 the jailer asks Paul, “What must I do to be saved?” What is Paul’s answer in the following verse? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved”
2. But is this answer a complete description of how people are to be saved? All of the following texts address the same issue. If we were to take each one in isolation, what would we say is necessary in order to be saved?
 - a. Romans 10:9-10 Confess Jesus as Lord; believe in His resurrection.
 - b. John 3:3 Be born again.
 - c. John 3:5 Be born of water and spirit. (Baptized? Regenerated?)
 - d. Mark 16:16 Believe and be baptized.
 - e. Hebrews 3:14 Hold fast our assurance till the end.
 - f. Matthew 5:20 Exceed the Pharisees in righteousness.
 - g. Acts 2:38 Repent and be baptized.
 - h. John 20:31 Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 - i. Titus 3:5 Washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.
 - j. 1 Cor. 15:1-4 By receiving the gospel of Jesus death, burial, and resurrection.

3. Taking all of the references together, how would you explain the issue to someone who asked you the same question?

To be saved it is necessary to be born again by the Spirit of God and to subsequently obey God in a righteous life. Being born again means to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and that He died for our sins and was resurrected, and subsequently repent of sin and be baptized, confessing Jesus as Lord.

B. The lesser must be explained against the greater. For example, a specific command (“Thus says the Lord!”) may be understood better by a narrative description, but the command has more weight than the example. Further, a single statement must be understood in the light of all the rest that is said on a subject.

1. Consider the following texts and consider how we would deal with them in answering the question, “In what name must I be baptized? **Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12,16; Acts 19:5; Acts 22:16** The specific command of Jesus says to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Subsequent descriptions cannot annul that command. We must instead look for reasons why the Acts references do not mention the Father and the Holy Spirit. Some possibilities include:

- a. The Acts references may be understood in connection with the fact of Romans 6 that we are being baptized into the death and burial of Jesus. The preposition used is usually “baptized into” the name.
- b. In Jesus’ command, He indicates that He is speaking on behalf of the Father, Himself and the Holy Spirit, and that new believers are entering into communion with all three. When the apostles baptized individuals, they may have indicated that the new believers were now contrasting allegiance to Satan with the Lordship of Jesus, understanding that He is the way to the Father and dispenser of the Holy Spirit. In baptism it is probably that the new believer confessed his sin and confessed the Lordship of Jesus. In this sense they were being baptized into the name of Jesus as Lord.
- c. There is no indication that the Acts references involved a formula spoken by the one baptizing. “In the name of” means also “unto” that named individual, so the Israelites were baptized into (unto) Moses (1 Cor. 10:2), meaning they became his followers, just as Paul insisted that his converts were not baptized into his name, to become his disciples rather than Christ’s.
- d. The only early records we have outside the Bible indicate that believers were baptized using the statement “the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” In fact, they were often immersed three times, once in each name.

2. In 1 Corinthians 1:17, Paul says “Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel. . .” Some have taken this to mean that Paul did not consider baptism important. Consider the surrounding verses of this text, compare it with the following texts, and then indicate how you would respond to this position.

Acts 2:38; Acts 2:41; Acts 9:17-18; Acts 16:33; Acts 19:5; Romans 6:3-5

It is evident that all Paul's converts were baptized. He simply means that he did not personally perform the act except in a certain few cases. His clear discussion in Romans 6 shows that he valued baptism and assumed that every believer had been baptized.

- C. Not every word in the Bible is God's specific word, nor is it necessarily literal truth.** Consideration must be given to who makes a statement in Scripture and the manner of speech employed. The lie of an ungodly person, something spoken as irony or the recorded statement of someone without knowledge may be untrue and cannot be quoted as "the word of God." For example, some people quote words spoken by Job's "comforters" as though they were all truth, but God, Himself, called them a bunch of windbags who didn't know what they were talking about. Or consider Acts 15:2. The statement is made that "unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." Why do we not accept this as a divine mandate? Because these are false apostles trying to bring the Gentiles under Jewish ritual which was not a part of salvation.

VIII. CONTEXT

A. DEFINITION

1. Etymology: Latin *con + textus* meaning "woven together."

2. Meaning: The parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning. The interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs. In Scripture it signifies the textual background of the portion in question.

B. USE OF CONTEXT IN INTERPRETATION

To properly interpret Scripture, it is essential that we consider the context of the portion under investigation. "A text without a context is a pretext." (?) The context may include the immediate, the nearby, or the distant. Thus it may be the VERSE, the PASSAGE (sentence or paragraph), the ENTIRE BOOK or the ENTIRE BIBLE (parallel passages in other parts of the Bible, or a prior point of reference.)

C. EXAMPLES

1. 1 Corinthians 1:18 "The preaching of the cross is foolishness." Note how this phrase takes on an entirely different meaning when taken out of the context of the whole verse. **Isaiah 58:11** promises guidance, satisfaction of desire, strength, and blessing. However, the context begins in the middle of verse 9, and specifies specific conditions. When taken apart from its context the promise may be misapplied.

2. John 9:3 Jesus said of the blind man, "*It was* neither this man *that* sinned, nor his parents." (Note that in this version the words *it was* and *that* are italicized to indicate

they are not part of the original but were added to provide meaning.) This could be taken to mean that man and his parents never sinned. But the context in verse 2 indicates that the question being answered was not “Have they sinned?” but “Whose sin caused the blindness?” The answer meant only that blindness was not a result of the man’s sins nor his parents’.

3. 1 Corinthians 10:23 says that “all things are lawful.” Does that mean that Paul believed that nothing is sinful? Note that the context is the entire section starting back at Chapter 8. It concerns “eating things sacrificed to idols.” The immediate context makes this clear in verses 19_33. Paul’s statement must relate to that context, not to any and every issue. It says that there is no law restricting what we eat, but we must be prudent in deciding what to eat, considering such things as how it will affect others.

4. Matthew 10:9-10 Is this a mandate for all Christian mission? Consider the context. To what specific group of people are the apostles here sent? Is there anything in that fact which might explain why Jesus could give them this order? Compare the parallel passage of Luke 22:35_36. What difference might there be here? (Note that this latter statement is at the end of Jesus’ ministry and consider His commission in Matthew 28:19.)

In the first case the Apostles were sent to Israel, where they would find a tradition of receiving itinerant teachers. In the second case they would now go to the Gentile world also, where there would be no such receptivity.

IX. Figurative Language

Defined: The use of words that are used with a meaning other than their common literal sense: Example: **1 Samuel 17:43** And the Philistine said unto David, *Am I a dog*, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

2 Peter 2:22 But it happened unto them according to the true proverb, **The dog is turned to his own vomit again**; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

A. Why The Bible Contains Figurative Language

1. Figurative language is used because we all humans speak from time to time in this manner. Person is “going ape” “rocks in the head”
2. Figurative language is used to make a point: Luke 13:32
3. Figurative language is used to bring a person to action: Rev. 3:20
4. Figurative language can be used to help us remember an important thought: Matthew 5:13-16
5. Figurative language may be used as to contain a hidden message only revealed to those who truly have a desire to understand its truth: Luke 7:31-35

6. Figurative language can be useful in clarifying: Isa. 54:4-5

B. Two Guidelines For Interpreting Figurative Language

1. We must identify the scripture as figurative

a. If it is obvious and absurd to be taken literally it is most likely to be taken as a figure of speech: John: 10:7 compared to something to be taken literal: John 14: 6

b. If the scripture seems to contradict itself as compared to other scripture, we must look for a clearer understanding: Luke 14:26

2. We must remain true to the author's original intent to which the figurative language is implied and not rely on our own perception. Jesus said we are to be the salt of the earth.... We must not, if at all possible, refrain from making more out of it than written. What did Jesus have in mind in this statement?

X. TYPES, SYMBOLS, ALLEGORIES, PARABLES, and FIGURES OF SPEECH

TYPES, SYMBOLS, ALLEGORIES, PARABLES AND FIGURES OF SPEECH

All have something in common. They are all representative of something else and must be understood in terms other than what they seem to be. They all have some measure of reality in themselves but have some interpretation or fulfillment beyond their apparent meaning or reality.

A. SYMBOLS: Words, objects, concepts, etc. which suggest or stand for a meaning other than the ordinary one.

1. A symbol is also a metaphor, or at least a part of a metaphor.

a. John 1:29 "Behold, the lamb of God, who take away the sin of the world." *Lamb* is part of the metaphor, "Jesus is like a lamb." The point of comparison is His sin bearing, tying Him to the sacrificial lamb.

b. Revelation 5:6 pictures Jesus as "a lamb standing as if slain." The characteristic pictured here is that of the meekness of a lamb, willingness to be led to slaughter.

c. Isaiah 53:7 "As a lamb before his shearers is dumb" is an entirely different metaphor, not looking at sacrifice, but Jesus' willingness to suffer abuse.

2. Symbols are rarely interpreted for us, nor even shown to be symbolic, and therefore must be interpreted with great care.

a. Matthew 5:13 states that believers are "the salt of the earth." Salt is known for its flavoring, its preservative quality, its economic value in some societies, its use in sacrifices, its contrast to fresh water, and as a necessity of physical life. Interpreters often choose one or more of these. In this case its taste is the main element in view, but its interpretation is quite different. Jesus is not saying that Christians are like any

of these things, but only that if Christians lose their basic purpose and distinguishing characteristics, they are of no value at all.

b. Water can be both cleansing and destructive. It is destructive to that which is bad, but cleansing to what remains. Can you provide an example of each?

The same water that saved the Jews and Noah also destroyed their enemies and the unrighteous.

c. Colors may be used in many ways:

(I) Look up RED in these scriptures and identify its significance:

Isaiah 63:2 **Judgment**

Isaiah 1:18 **Sin.**

Matthew 16:2 **A weather sign**

Proverbs 23:31 **Wine**

(II) Contrast WHITE in these two texts:

Revelation 7:14 **Righteousness, martyrdom**

Leviticus 13:3 **Leprosy, uncleanness**

d. Numbers seem to have symbolic meaning, but nothing in the text ever verifies that. Some interpreters have considered that 3 represented deity, 4 the fullness of earth or physical creation, 7 completion or perfection, 12 as groups of God's people and 40 as testing and judgment. However, numbers, like all symbols, can never be used to **establish** or **prove** any truth, since there is no way to say for sure what they might represent in different texts.

B. TYPES

- 1.** A type is a divinely purposed Old Testament foreshadowing of a New Testament spiritual reality.
 - a.** It is always something real, an actual fact in history or an object with substance.
 - b.** It may consist of persons, events, objects, institutions, places, or offices.
 - c.** A type is different from a parable or an allegory, in that the type is real, while the parable/allegory is fictional. Also, parables are interpreted in their own time, while types are prophetically fulfilled at a later time.
- 2.** There are about 30 types identified in the New Testament. It is an open question whether or not we may find others by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
 - a.** Does Daniel 12:9_10 offer that promise?
 - b.** Luke 24:27 indicates that Jesus used another Scripture to explain Himself. Is it possible that we might find those same references, many of which are types?
- 3.** Consider how the New Testament interprets types, by comparing the following. In each case look for the central point of comparison, don't press to insignificant details unless they are obvious and true, and look only for the natural parallel, not that which is arbitrary or fanciful. (For example, Leviticus 11:4_6 describes the difference between clean and unclean animals. It is not proper to make an application of clean animals and clean living by saying that chewing the cud is a type of talking right, and the cloven hoof is a type of walking right.)
 - a.** Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:14-15.

- b. Exodus 12:3-13 and 1 Corinthians 5:7-8
- c. Galatians 4:21-31

C. PARABLES

1. **Etymology:** Greek *para-ballo* , meaning to lay beside, therefore, to make a comparison.
2. Matthew, Mark, and Luke recorded thirty parables, John none.
3. A parable may be only a wise saying (like a proverb).
Compare: Luke 6:39 “Can the blind lead the blind?” Luke 4:23 “Physician, heal yourself.”
4. A parable is usually an example used to illustrate a point, an instructive saying involving some likeness or comparison. It is actually an extended simile.
5. A parable reveals or conceals truth.
 - a. It may be an illustration but does not prove anything since it is based on fiction. It only uses a story to give strength to the argument by making it more understandable.
 - (I) Mark 4:26_29 is an analogy of growth. It also adds delight and interest to the teaching.
 - (II) The parable conceals truth to the one who lacks the background or spiritual insight to understand. Cf. Matthew 13:10_16
6. To interpret parables:
 - a. Look first for the one main purpose. Go back to the context. Ask what the situation is that prompted it, and what statements were already made.
 - b. Find any secondary analogies, that is, individual elements in the story which also have an application. See for example Jesus’ own interpretation of the parable of the sower beginning in Mark 4:14 and Matthew 13:18.
 - c. Analogies must be real, not arbitrary, coming from the natural meaning.
 - d. Look for the Bible’s own interpretation.
 - e. A parable may never be used to establish doctrine.

D. FIGURES OF SPEECH

FIGURES OF SPEECH are words which are used to express ideas other than their literal meaning. Their meaning is determined by the generally accepted usage within a given culture. Since the Bible is written in common human language, it also uses a great number of figures of speech.

1. **METAPHOR:** An implied comparison between two things that are basically unlike. It means that one thing is like another thing in some specific characteristic, but not the same or identical in every characteristic. Read each of the following metaphors, and then rewrite it according to your understanding of its meaning.

a. **Psalm 22:6** “**I am a worm.**” I am like a worm in the sense that I am not valued but treated as something to be crushed under foot.

b. **Joshua 1:8** “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth.” You shall not stop speaking the things written in the law. You shall keep repeating it.

c. **John 15:1** “**I am the true vine.**”

I am like a vine in that you are connected to me, so I am the source of supply for your life.

d. **Matthew 26:26** “**This is my body.**”

This bread is like my body in that it is being broken for your good.

2. SIMILE: An expressed comparison between two things. Again, the comparison is limited to the specific characteristic mentioned, and does not mean the two things are alike in other ways.

a. The following two scriptures each utilize a different characteristic of DEW to get across a point. Note the characteristic in each, and whether it is used in a positive or negative manner.

(I). **Hosea 6:4** Dew is ephemeral; it vanishes when the sun comes up. Their loyalty is unstable and doesn't last.

(II). **Hosea 14:5** Dew is a blessing from God which waters the earth.

God is like that; He will so nourish Israel that it will grow and prosper.

b. In **1 Peter 2:2**, Christians are to DESIRE MILK as NEWBORN BABES. What similarity between Christians and babies is referred to?

Babies need to be nourished so they can grow. New Christians also need spiritual nourishment so they can grow. Nothing negative is meant.

How is this different from Paul's use of MILK and BABES in 1 Corinthians 3:1? **Here there is a somewhat more negative overtone: babies are immature, and Paul has had to deal with the Corinthians in their fleshly immaturity and lack of spiritual maturity.**

E. PERSONIFICATION: The writer speaks about a non-personal or non-living thing as though it were a person.

1. In Isaiah 44:23, what five things are personified?

Heavens-lower parts of the earth-mountains-forest-every tree

2. What was Isaiah's objective in doing this?

To point out the great joy that should accompany redemption, that even inanimate things would rejoice. Recall that Jesus spoke of the rocks praising Him in this same way.

F. HYPERBOLE: A deliberate exaggeration for emphasis.

1. Is John using hyperbole in John 21:25?

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

2. How might Acts 17:6 have been stated without hyperbole?

Acts 17:6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

G. INTERROGATION/RHETORICAL QUESTION: A question which can have only one answer, and need not be answered because theanswer is obvious. Such questions can be understood by rephrasing themas positive statements.

1. What is really being said in Exodus 15:11?

There are no other gods like Jehovah.

2. And in Jeremiah 32:27?

There is nothing too difficult for Me.

H. IRONY: A pretense of ignorance and of willingness to learn, in order to make the other's false conceptions conspicuous, expressing the opposite of what is really meant, or an obvious incongruity.

In the following, what is really meant by the ironic statement?

1. **I Samuel 6:20** The king of Israel debased himself today.

2. **I Corinthians 4:8** You think you are filled, rich, kings, etc.

I. ANTHROPOMORPHISM: Attributing human characteristics to God (or to other non-human or non-personal entities.)

1. In **Psalms 60:8**, what is meant by the anthropomorphisms?

Edom and Moab are related to God in the way a washbowl is, or in the way that one could throw his shoe over them. It doesn't mean God needs to wash or that he wears shoes or has a physical body as Dake says in his commentary.

2. In 2 Chronicles 16:9, what is the meaning? God is constantly searching through the earth for those who love Him so He can minister to them.

XI. DOING A WORD STUDY

The purpose of a word study is to discover all we can regarding one specific word in Scripture. It is different from a *subject* study, in that a subject study will consider many different words related to one particular theme. For example, to study the theme or subject of

spiritual gifts we would not only look at places where that word or phrase is used, but at possible examples of their use, and various arguments as to their current validity.

To complete a word study it is important to look at *every* occurrence of the word in Scripture. In order to do that, it may be necessary to look at the word in the original language, since the same word in Greek or Hebrew may be translated various ways in English, and even differently in different versions of the Bible. We may then *categorize* and *analyze* the uses of the word. Some of the questions we may ask are:

1. How is the word used differently in the Old and New Testaments?
2. How is it used differently by different authors?
3. What is its meaning in its particular context?
4. What is its etymology? (Root meanings, derivation.)

We can also check reference books to see how the word was used in the secular society of that time.

To practice, we will do a study of the word *save*. **You will need a good Greek to English (or your native language) Concordance to examine** every occurrence of the word *sozo* in the New Testament (**the *New Englishman's Greek--English Concordance* that I used had 106 occurrences**). You will notice that it is not always translated *save*. The question we are to answer is, "What does the word *save* mean in the New Testament?" To do this we will have to examine each occurrence, then categorize them, and finally analyze their use. You will find a number of references with the same or similar meanings which can be grouped together. When you have done this, you will need to ask yourself what other information you can derive. For example, does it tell us *how* to be saved? Is one saved once and for all, or is it a process? Is it a spiritual event, or is it related to our natural condition? Who does the saving? What is the result? Who can be saved? You may think of other questions as you examine the references.

You may organize your study in many different ways. One way is to discuss the various groupings, and then analyze specific references within each group. You may propose questions and answer them, give different possibilities, or even show that no specific answer is possible. Of course, to do a complete study, we would want to look at Old Testament references, as well as related words, such as *salvation*, but that would increase our study too much for now. Try to write at least a two-page summary of your findings.

XII. ASSIGNMENT ON A WORD STUDY - SAVE (SAVED) - SOZO

- A. There are 106 occurrences in the New Testament of the Greek verb *sozo*, meaning "to save."
- B. Of these, at least 23 speak of a physical deliverance or rescue from danger:

1. In Matthew 8:25, the disciples cry out to be saved from being swamped and drowned due to a storm.
2. In several parallel scriptures (Matthew 27:40,42,49; Mark 15:30-31; Luke 23:35,37,39) Jesus is taunted to save himself from death on the cross.
3. In Matthew 14:30, Peter cries out to be saved from drowning
4. In Matthew 24:22 and Mark 13:20, Jesus speaks of saving lives during the upheavals of a great tribulation
5. In Mark 3:4 and Luke 6:9 Jesus asks whether it is right “to save a life or destroy it.” He refers to the issue of healing a man
6. In Luke 9:56, the use is somewhat questionable. James and John’s suggest that they call down fire on some people, and Jesus says He came to save men’s lives, not destroy them. This goes to the whole question of what we mean by “being saved,” and perhaps suggests a connection between what we consider spiritual salvation and the preservation of life
7. Acts 27:30-31 concern being saved from shipwreck
8. Matthew 16:25, Mark 8:35 and Luke 9:24; 17:38 raise the same question. Here Jesus challenges his disciples with following him, which requires that they “lose” their lives for his sake. Since he speaks of the cross, he could mean the willingness to actually die, but it seems also to imply giving up the kind of life of comfort and self satisfaction that people seek, in order to serve him. To save one’s life (or soul, as the actual text reads) would be to continue to enjoy the normal physical life, and to lose it would be to surrender oneself to a higher purpose. The fact that in the next verse it speaks of losing one’s soul (or “himself”) implies there is also something more than this current life involved
9. In John 12:27, Jesus questions whether he should ask the Father to save him from death on the cross and decides he shouldn’t.
10. Jude 5 recalls that God saved His people out of Egypt, a physical deliverance, but allegorically speaking also of saving them from the sinful world system.

C. Another 15 references speak of being saved in terms of physical healing

1. Matthew 9:21-22, Mark 5:28,34 and Luke 8:48 use the word for the healing of the woman who touched Jesus’ robe
2. Mark 6:56 speaks of healing for all who touched Jesus
3. Mark 10:52 and Luke 18:42 refer to the healing of a blind man.
4. Mark 5:23 and Luke 8:50 speak of the healing of Jairus’s daughter.
5. John 11:12 refers to the healing of Lazarus
6. Luke 17:19 refers to the healing of a leper
7. Acts 4:9 speak of the healing of the lame man in the temple
8. Acts 14:9 speak of another lame man healed at Paul’s hands
9. James 5:15 uses the word to speak of healing after prayer by the elders.

D. Luke 8:36 equates deliverance from demons as being saved.

E. The remaining 67 verses speak of being saved in other terms. In most cases, this relates to what we think of as a spiritual salvation, that is, the event of being converted, born again, or becoming a Christian. We generally equate this with the concept of the salvation of our soul, or the ideas of redemption, justification, and the receiving of eternal life. For the purpose of the rest of this study we will generally accept those concepts, because all evangelical Christians understand and relate to them as our understanding of what we mean by saying one is “saved.” What we will do is look at what these texts tell us about that event or process.

- 1. Several scriptures tell us that Jesus purpose in coming into the world was to save us.**
 - a.** Matthew 18:11 says that Jesus came to save what was *lost*. Lost means to have gone astray or to be unable to find one’s way to where he ought to be. [Other scriptures would tell us more about the meaning of lost.] At the very least, this gives us one reason why we need to be saved. Luke 19:10 adds that Jesus actually *sought* out the lost, indicating that God takes the initiative in finding us. □
 - b.** John 3:47 emphasizes Jesus’ saving purpose by contrasting it with judgment. In the record of Jesus’ life we see this illustrated in the way he dealt with sinners by reaching out to them in love and not condemnation. □
 - c.** 1 Timothy 1:15 says Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This puts emphasis on the reason why we needed to be saved. □
 - d.** James 5:20 also says that when one is saved their many sins are covered or forgiven.
- 2. Another group indicates what we are saved (rescued) from**
 - a.** Matthew 1:21—Jesus came to save us from our sins, that is, deliver us from our captivity to sinning, so that we should now live without sinning.
 - b.** Acts 2:40 exhorts us to be saved from this evil generation, that is, from the evil world system of living that corrupts us with sin.
 - c.** Romans 5:9 says we will be saved from wrath, that is, from the wrath to be revealed in the future judgment.
 - d.** James 5:20 says a sinner will be saved from death. We will need to inquire if that means physical death or the second death.
- 3. Others indicate by what means we may be saved.**
 - a.** John 3:17; 10:9—we are saved through Jesus.
 - b.** Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13—those who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Acts 4:12—we are saved through the name of Jesus.
 - c.** Acts 11:14—the words (message) that Peter preached would save the house of Cornelius.
 - d.** Luke 8:12, Acts 16:31 and 1 Corinthians 1:21—believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - e.** Romans 5:10—we will be saved by Jesus continuing life.

- f. Romans 8:24—we are saved by hope [a positive expectation].
- g. Romans 10:9-10—we are saved by confessing Jesus as Lord and believing in his resurrection.
- h. 1 Corinthians 1:18—the preaching of the cross is the power of God unto salvation.
- i. 1 Corinthians 15:2—the Gospel saves us if we hold it fast.
- j. Ephesians 2:5,8; Acts 15:11 and Luke 7:50;—we are saved by grace through faith.
- k. Titus 3:5—we are saved because of his mercy. □
- l. James 1:21—the engrafted word is able to save our souls.
- m. Mark 16:16 and 1 Peter 3:21 connect baptism with being saved.
- n. Matthew 10:22;24:13, Mark 13:13 and 1 Timothy 4:16 indicate that enduring to the end is a part of being saved.
- o. James 2:14 indicates that good works (righteousness) plays a part in being saved, by demonstrating the reality of our faith. That is, unless one lives righteously, it is doubtful that real faith exists or that the person is really saved.
- p. In Matthew 19:25 and Mark 10:26, the context relates being saved with entering the Kingdom of God.

F. Many of the remaining verses do not fit easily into these categories but raise other questions. In Luke 13:23 the disciples ask if only a few will be saved. Jesus' answer indicates that this may be true, for the way is narrow and those who enter must be willing to do all that is asked of them.

1. Acts 2:47 says that it is the Lord who adds the saved to the church.
2. In Acts 15:1, the Jewish Christians were insisting on circumcision for new believers, but in verse 11 it is decided that all must be saved by grace.
3. Romans 9:27, 11:14 and 11:26 speak about Israel's being saved. A remnant of Israel would, indeed, be saved, but it must be on the same basis of faith by which Gentiles are saved. Paul hoped the Jews would "envy" the Gentiles and some of them be saved, but ultimately all Israel will be saved as they are grafted back into the stump into which the Gentiles were grafted.
4. 1 Corinthians 5:5 indicates that the action of turning a sinning brother over to the power of Satan would harm him in some ways but might ultimately work to save his spirit. This is the only place saving the spirit is mentioned. In other places it speaks of saving the soul, but the soul is often another term for life, while the spirit speaks of the eternal part of humans. □
5. 1 Corinthians 7:16 indicates that a spouse may not necessarily save the other spouse.
6. 1 Timothy 2:4 states clearly that God's will is that all will be saved.
7. 1 Timothy 2:15 speaks of a woman being saved in childbearing. This is very unclear as to its meaning. Does it mean they will be preserved in childbearing? Or does it mean that the act of childbearing will save them?

8. 1 Corinthians 15:2 indicates a present reality to salvation—"you are saved." This contrasts with Romans 5:10 which says we shall be saved (from the wrath of God, and Romans 8:24 which speaks of being saved as something which took place in the past. [Note: The KJV says "are saved" but the Greek tense is present perfect, something which has already taken place.] Thus, there are three times involved in being saved: past, present, and future. In the past we were saved, in the present we are being saved, and in the future, we will be saved.

SUMMARY: The secular uses of *saved* indicate that its basic meaning is "to rescue from some danger or difficulty." This same definition seems to apply in the spiritual use of the word. We are saved from several things which threaten us, our sins, the wrath of God, eternal death and this present evil culture. This indicates that being saved looks first to the past, in forgiving us sins already committed, then to the present, in delivering us from the present power of sin, and then to the future, in delivering us from the wrath of God which will be poured out on all who continue in sin, and from the second death, which is the lake of fire. These texts indicate also the means of being saved. One is saved by grace and the mercy of God through the Gospel message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It is necessary to have faith in those events, but the process involves believing in Him, repenting of sin, being baptized, confessing Jesus as Lord, and continuing faithfully in a life of righteousness and good works. One is not saved by doing the works of the Law, but only by faith in Jesus. The Jews who continue to trust in their works to save them will not be saved, but if they turn to Jesus in faith they will be included. It is God's intention ultimately to save the nation of Israel through the same means by which we are saved. Being saved may also include rescue from disease and demon powers. It is God's will that all be saved, and it is He who adds the newly saved to the church of Jesus Christ.

XIII. OUTLINING

By outlining a book before we attempt to study or teach it, we see the overall message of the book. This gives us a background against which we may better understand the individual parts.

A. An outline divides the material into logical sections. The most common method is to first find the major divisions, which are labeled with Roman numerals, then subdivide those sections with upper case letters, then subdivide those with Arabic numerals, then lower case letters, and, if necessary, subdivide those with lower case Roman numerals. An outline of the book of Titus might look like this:

I. Salutation (1-3)

II. The problems of the church as an organization (1:5-16)

A. Qualifications of elders (1:5-9)

- 1.
 2.
 - a. [Other detail]
 - b.
 - (I)
 - (II)
 - B. Necessity for a strong stand against false teachers. (1:12-16)
- III. The problems of pastoral teaching and preaching.** (2:1-3:11)
- A. Inculcating duties and domestic relations. (2:1-10)
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - B. Motivating true Christian living. (2:11-15)
 - C. Teaching concerning Christian citizenship. (3:1,2)
 - D. Inspiring godly living. (3:3-8)
 - E. Dealing with heretics. (3:9-11)
- IV. Conclusion** (3:12-15)

In this assignment we will outline the book of 1 John.

B. ANALYZING THE BOOK OF 1 JOHN

By outlining a book before we attempt to study or teach it, we see the overall message of the book. This gives us a background against which we may better understand the individual parts.

An outline divides the material into logical sections. The most common method is to first find the major divisions, which are labeled with Roman numerals, then subdivide those sections with upper case letters, then subdivide those with Arabic numerals, then lower case letters, and, if necessary, subdivide those with lower case Roman numerals. A simple outline of the book of 1 John might look like this:

- I. Introduction 1:1-4**
 - A.[Here we would give more detail of each verse.]
 - 1.[Other detail]
 - 2.[Etc.]
 - B.[Etc.]
- II.** The message 1:5-10
- III.**The purpose of the letter 2:1-14
- IV.**The call to avoid the deceiving spirit of the world. 2:15-29
- V.** What it means to be a child of God. 3:1-24

- VI. Testing the Spirits 4:1-6
- VII. The priority of love. 4:7-21
- VIII. What it means to be born of God. 5:1-20
- IX. Concluding word. 5:21

C. SUMMARIZE THE BOOK OF 1 JOHN

Now that we have outlined the book of 1 John, we must seek to understand its overall message. To do this, we look for several things:

1. What is the primary purpose of the book, as expressed within the book itself?
2. Look for **key words, phrases or concepts** which would indicate the general message of the book. Using a complete concordance, check the number of times key words are used. Ask yourself how these words relate to one another and to the general theme. For example, John warns about being deceived. In what way do you think they were in danger of being deceived?

PURPOSE:

John's purpose seems to be to correct some erroneous doctrine. He speaks about the antichrist spirit which is trying to deceive them. Sixteen times he uses the words *truth* and *true*, and thirty-six times the word *know*, referring to things they either do know or should know. The two concepts he deals most with are *love* (used forty-six times) and *sin* (used twenty-six times).

The introduction sets the tone, declaring that the message preached is that "God is light, and in Him there is no darkness." Therefore, if we truly walk with God, we must also walk in light, which has to do with confession and cleansing from sin. Chapter 2, verse 1 makes the message clear: "I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Thereafter, John continues to deal with the issue of believers who continue to sin, presenting the complete contradiction of such behavior. Apparently, there were those who were teaching a doctrine—deceiving them—that led Christians to believe they could go on sinning and still be all right with God. There are several tests of the sincere believer. For one, he confesses that Jesus has come in the flesh, obviously counteracting a doctrine which said that he had come only in some spiritual form. He also confesses that Jesus is the Son of God or is born of God. Genuine love for one another was also a mark of the true believer, but genuine godly love will be demonstrated in keeping God's commandments and overcoming the world. The true believer loves God exclusively, rather than loving the present world system.

(If you can, find the meaning of Gnosticism. You might use a dictionary, encyclopedia or even the internet. Note its precepts and time in history.)

3. Consider how the theme is developed. Is there a progression in the argument? Are there a number of subcategories? Is the progression straight line, or does the author double back at times?
4. Using your outline, write a summary of the main points of the book, relating everything to the general theme. This will be a general retelling of the message in your own words, as though you were explaining it in some detail to someone else.

XIV. SCRIPTURE DISTORTION

One danger to every new believer is that of being taught false doctrine by members of religious cults who are very sincere in their belief no matter how misguided they are. We must not mistake sincerity as truth. Thus prior to closing this discipleship study by examining 12 ways to study the bible, lets examine why some people may be involved in false cults and what separates them from mainline Christianity.

“ As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned, and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. (2 Peter 3:16-17)

A. INTRODUCTION

How do people in various religious movements, especially those involved with the occult or the cults, interpret Scripture? Many cults claim to have a big regard for it. Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example, claim the Bible as their sole authority. The Mormons place it first in their list of scriptures. The Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon also gives it an authoritative position, as does Mary Baker Eddy the founder of Christian Science. Even the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founder of “transcendental meditation”, and other writers in the eastern traditions quote favorably from the Bible. If traditional Christianity affirms the Bible as its sole authority, how can these very different religions claim the Scripture in their practices?

Of course, not all doctrines held by some traditional Christians have as equally a firm biblical base. There is always some room for disagreement between

Christians regarding theology, perceptions, and interpretations of non-essential views. For example, such non-essential views that should not cause a division between believers are the time and length of the rapture, baptism, grammatical interpretations of Scripture (literal, metaphorical, liturgical), (pre/mid/post) tribulations, prayer, etc.. There are primarily three clear marks for division when deciding the difference between orthodox Christianity and every cult, doctrine, and religion on earth. **First**, when the deity of Jesus Christ is compromised and denigrated as one who is not fully God. **Second**, when the Holy Spirit is not considered part of the triune Godhead or not fully God. **Finally**, when salvation is found by any other means than Christ ALONE.

B. World View / Confusion View Defined

- 1.** World View is a set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or unconsciously) about the basic make up of our world. In its general essence, this view suggests that every person carries in his head a mental model of the world, a subjective representation of external reality. In other words, every person has their own personal perception of the world, no matter whether it is right or wrong.
- 2.** World Confusion occurs whenever a reader of Scripture fails to interpret the Bible within the broadly cultural framework and the true essence of the context of the passage instead of a foreign frame of reference. For example, in Acts 14:8-18, Paul and Barnabas were speaking, a crippled man, was among the attentive listeners. When Paul asked him to stand, the man jumped up and started to walk around. Immediately they exclaimed, “the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” the people mistook Barnabas for Zeus and Paul they called Hermes (another ancient god) because he was the chief speaker.
- 3.** The people had made a simple but crucial error. They had interpreted Paul’s message and his healing in the framework of their own Greek religion and mythology. Paul and Barnabas were so staggered by this confusion that they took dramatic action to remedy this situation. They tore their garments to show that they were just plain ordinary flesh and blood men. Both men explicitly challenged the “world view” perception or the frame of reference of these Greek people. God is not who they had taken Him to be, (a pantheon of gods), but the One Living Creator and Lord of the Universe.
- 4.** Swami Satchitanada, for example, interprets Jesus’ beatitude out of context. **The correct Scripture reads, “ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they**

shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). The Swami **incorrectly** reads it, “Blessed are those who purify their consciences, for they shall see themselves as God.”

Jesus in the context of his own teaching implies a clear distinction between God and any person, even the “pure in heart.” The pure in heart, though finite, are blessed by seeing the pure and righteous, infinite God. Furthermore, they are blessed by coming into a personal relationship with Him.

On the other hand, Swami Satchitananda, **incorrectly** assumes a world view in which there is no ultimate distinction between God and people. Each person is essentially divine. His **false teaching**, therefore, is that if we “purify our consciousness,” we will come to experientially realize who we are, we will grasp the fact that our soul is really the soul of the universe; that is, that each of us is God.

5. We must be aware, that now **due to his incorrect interpretation** the very definition of the word “god” has changed. Swami Satahitanandas’ god is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but rather the impersonal essence of the universe itself.

C. **A Brief Definition Of 16 Reading Errors that may be the partial cause of false religious teachings.**

1. **Inaccurate Quotation:** A biblical text is referred to but is either not quoted in the way the text appears in any standard translation or is wrongly attributed.
2. **Twisted Translation:** This occurs when the biblical text is retranslated, not in accordance with sound Greek or Hebrew scholarship, to fit the preconceived teachings of a cult. For example: the Jehovah’s Witnesses translate John 1:1 as “in the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was **a god.**” This incorrect rendering makes Jesus to be less than God.
3. **The Biblical Hook:** A text of Scripture is quoted primarily as a device to grasp the attention of readers or listeners and then followed by teaching which is so non-biblical that it would appear far more dubious to most people had it not been preceded by a reference to Scripture. For example: Mormon missionaries quote James 1:5 which promises God’s wisdom to those who ask him and follow this by explaining that when Joseph Smith did this, he was

given a revelation from which he developed all his erroneous teachings that are actually contrary to the Bible.

4. **Ignoring The Immediate Context:** A text of Scripture is quoted but removed from the surrounding verses which form the immediate framework for its meaning. For example: Alan Watts quotes the first half of John 5:39 (“You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life.”), claiming that Jesus was challenging his listeners’ over emphasis of the Old testament, but the remainder of the immediate context reads, “and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.” This is a passage of Scripture that actually shows Jesus upholding the value of the Old Testament as a testimony to himself.
5. **Collapsing Contexts:** Two or more verses which have little or nothing to do with each other are put together as if one were a commentary on the other(s). For example: the Mormons associate Jeremiah 1:5 with John 1:2, 14 and thus imply that both verses talk about the pre-mortal existence of all human beings; Jeremiah 1:5, however, speaks of God’s foreknowledge of Jeremiah (not his pre-mortal existence) and John 1:2 refers to the pre-existence of God the Son and not to human beings in general.
6. **Over-specification:** A more detailed or specific conclusion than is legitimate is drawn from a biblical text. For example: the Mormon missionary manual quotes the parable of the virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) to document the concept that “mortality is a probationary period during which we prepare to meet God.” But the parable of the virgins could (and most probably does) mean something far less specific, for example, that human beings should be prepared at any time to meet God or to witness the Second Coming of Christ.
7. **Word Play:** A word or phrase from a biblical translation is examined and interpreted as if the revelation had been given in that language. For example: Mary Baker Eddy says the name Adam consists of two syllables, A dam, which means an obstruction, in which case **she falsely teaches that** Adam signifies “the obstacle which the serpent, sin, would impose between man and his Creator.”
8. **The Figurative Fallacy:** This happens by either (1) mistaking literal language for figurative language or (2) mistaking figurative language for literal language.

- a. Example of (1): Mary Baker Eddy interprets “evening” as “mistiness of moral thought; weariness of mortal mind; obscured views; peace and rest.”
 - b. Example of (2) : the Mormon theologian James Talmage interprets the prophecy that “thou shalt be brought down and speak out of the ground” to mean that God’s word would come to people from the Book of Mormon which was taken out of the ground at the hill of Cumorah.
 - c. Obviously, to any orthodox Christian, the above statements and beliefs are totally contradicting the Word of God.
9. **Speculative Readings of Predictive Prophecy:** A predictive prophecy is too readily explained by the occurrence of specific events, despite the fact that equally committed biblical scholars consider the interpretation highly dubious. For example: the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph in Ezekiel 37:15-23 are interpreted by the Mormons to mean the Bible and the book of Mormon.
10. **Saying but Not Citing:** A writer says that the Bible says such and such but does not cite the specific text (which often indicates that there may be no such text at all). For example: someone says, “The Bible says, “God helps those who help themselves.” This phrase or saying is not in the Bible.
11. **Selective Citing:** To substantiate a given argument, only a limited number of texts is quoted: the total teaching of Scripture on that subject would lead to a conclusion different from that of the writer. For example: the Jehovah’s Witness critique the traditional Christian notion of the trinity without considering the full set of texts available to substantiate the concept.
12. **Inadequate Evidence:** A hasty generalization is drawn from too little evidence. For example: the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that blood transfusion is non-biblical, but they fail to cite sufficient biblical texts either to speak directly to the issue or to adequately substantiate their teaching.
13. **Confused Definition:** This occurs when a biblical term is misunderstood in such a way that an essential biblical doctrine is distorted or rejected. For example: one of Edgar Cayce’s followers confuses the Eastern doctrine of reincarnation with the biblical doctrine of being born again.
14. **Ignoring Alternative Explanations:** A specific interpretation is given to a biblical text or sets of texts which could well be, and often have been, interpreted in quite a different fashion, but these alternatives are not

considered. For example: critics espousing to this philosophy ask why in Genesis 1:26 does God speak in the plural “us,” suggesting that this is a reference to God being one of many gods and therefore failing to consider other possible explanations.

15. Virtue by association: This happens when:

- a. A cult writer associates his or her teaching with those of figures accepted as authoritatively traditional Christians. For example: Rick Chapman lists twenty-one gurus, including Jesus Christ, St. Francis, and Mother Teresa, that “you can’t go wrong with.”
- b. Cult writings are likened to the Bible. For example: Juan Mascaro in his introduction to the **Buddhist** Upanishads cites the New Testament, the Gospels, Ecclesiastes, and the Psalms, from which he quotes passages supposedly paralleling the Upanishads.
- c. Cult literature imitates the form of Bible writing such that it sounds like the Bible. For example: the Mormon Doctrine and Covenants 93 interweaves phrases from the Gospel of John and maintains a superficial similarity to the Gospel such that it seems to be like the Bible.

16. Supplemental Biblical Authority: New revelation from post-biblical prophets either replaces or is added to the Bible as authority. For example: the Mormons supplement the bible with the “Book of Mormon,” the “Doctrine of Covenants,” and the “Pearl of Great Price.”

From the brief discussion we have just had you should be even more convinced of the need to carefully study what the scriptures say for yourself. When we learn to properly handle the truth the false will be much easier to recognize.

HOMILETICS

The first part of this outline is from material submitted by Pastor Bob Stegemann. Beginning with Roman Numeral **II. The Message** the material was compiled and written by Pastor Don Husted with additions by RevC. It is presented here to provide a general introduction upon which the rest of the study builds. Finally the material from Roman Numeral **III.** on is from “**How to Prepare Bible Messages**” copyright 1969, 1981 by James Braga used by permission of Multnomah Publishers Inc. with some added comments by RevC.

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7. The Preacher Is Loved By God: Jude 1:1; Jedidiah 2 Sam. 12:24-25 [Solomon (meaning: peace)] was the name given to him by David & Bathsheba, but God also gave him a second name [Jedidiah (meaning: Loved by the Lord)] through the prophet Nathan.

B. Definition Of The Preacher: is one who brings good tidings, to cry out, to proclaim, to tell, to announce, it is one who conveys the official message of the king, prince or commander.

C. The Message Of The Preacher: It is the sharing of the good news of Jesus urgently appealing for the hearers to respond positively to the will of God.

D. Importance Of The Preacher

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2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

1. Do Your Best
2. Present Yourself To God As One Approved
3. A Workman
4. Who Does Not Need To Be Ashamed
5. Who Correctly Handles The Word Of Truth

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Psalm 119

9 How can a young man keep his way pure? *By living according to your word.*

11 I have hidden *your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

16 I delight in your decrees; *I will not neglect your word.*

17 Do good to your servant, and I will live; *I will obey your word.*

25 I am laid low in the dust; *preserve my life according to your word.*

28 My soul is weary with sorrow; *strengthen me according to your word.*

41-42 May your unfailing love come to me, O LORD, your salvation according to your promise; then I will answer the one who taunts me, for *I trust in your word.*

74 May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, *for I have put my hope in your word.*

89 *Your word, O LORD, is eternal*; it stands firm in the heavens.

105 *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*

172 *May my tongue sing of your word*, for all your commands are righteous.

3. **Be A Person Who Is Pure:** Psalm 139:23-24, Psalm 51:10-13, 1 John 1:9

II. The Message

A. Choosing your text or subject:

1. Never get up to speak without having something definite in your mind to speak about. Either have something definite in mind to speak or keep silent. There are times when you may be called on suddenly to speak, and if so, you must look to God concerning for subject material and manner of speaking.
2. **There are times** when even though you have made full preparation, but it becomes evident to you that God has something very different for you to talk about. In such times you must follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.
3. **How do we determine our text or subject?**
 - a. First, seek God for what is in His heart for you to share. The best texts and topics are those which we find on our knees in prayer. We should never prepare a message without going to God in prayer.
 - b. Keep a textbook. By this we mean a small pocket notebook where you keep a record of inspired topics, subjects, and texts you receive as you study your Bible, listen to other teachers, or impress upon you as you speak with other people.
 - c. Expound on a book of the Bible going through it chapter by chapter. As a matter of practice this is dangerous because if you are not fresh in word it may come across very dry. Many pastors who have a mid week and Sunday morning service will conduct their systematic Bible study during their midweek service and leave Sunday morning for more expository style of preaching.

- d. Get into the word and read until you come across a text that speaks to your spirit. Many men begin with prayer asking God to speak to them through His word and then proceed to read until a text inspires their heart to action.

B. Finding your points

1. **Look for your points within your text**, or if you're preaching on a topic find them in various texts in the Bible that bear upon that topic. This is a good reason to keep a topical notebook as you read and study the Bible. When you read a text that impresses something to your spirit make note of it in your topical notebook. Thus when it comes time for you to share on a topic you will already have valuable points available to strengthen your presentation.
 - a. We must remember that we are ambassadors for Christ with a message. Our message is in the Word of God, and we have no right to prepare our own message without seeking the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. We must learn to carefully analyze the text. Write down each point revealed to you in the text by the Holy Spirit. For example, if your text was Acts 13: 38-39 you might see the following points by careful analysis of the text:

(Acts 13:38-39 KJV) Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

(I). Forgiveness is preached to us.

(II). This may be known. (It is not something we have to **guess about or hope for.**)

(III). It is known by the resurrection of Christ. This we understand from reading verses 30-37 where it speaks of Christ being resurrected. Verse 38 says: **therefore**, (because we can trust His word to us as He demonstrated by raising from the dead as He promised) in the same manner we can know we have forgiveness of our sins by the word of Christ to us. Forgiveness is not a mere hope, but a certainty for those who have trusted in Christ. The speaker here had seen the risen Christ and thus knew His word to be true.

(IV). This forgiveness is through Jesus Christ. In developing this point, the question: “How is forgiveness through Jesus Christ received?” should be answered.

(V). Everyone who believes in and receives Jesus is forgiven. Under this point you can add at least four special points:

(A). The moment we believe we **are** forgiven, and not some future possibility.

(B). Forgiveness is a promise of placing our faith in Christ. Everyone who believes is forgiven.

(C). We are forgiven for **all** things. The blood of Christ is able to atone for all of my sin. He did not merely atone for my acts of sin, but His atonement paid the price for my **sinful nature**, the very root of my problem.

(D). What it means to be justified by faith. **“Just as if I never sinned!”**

(VI). By the time you have expounded on each of the above points, you are ready to close your message with a brief review of your main points and give an invitation for the hearers to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

2. Asking questions about the text is another good approach. For example if **Matthew 11:28** was your text, you might ask the following questions and provide in-depth answers:

(Mat 11:28 KJV) Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

- a. Who is invited?
 - b. What is the invitation?
 - c. What will be the result of accepting the invitation?
 - d. What will be the result of rejecting the invitation?
3. **Select your points.** After listing several possible points, the next step is to select the points you will use as your main emphasis. Though it is wise to have a sufficient amount of material to share, we must be aware of the attention span of our listeners. We want to make sure we cover our main points in a reasonable amount of time and be prepared to leave some lesser comments out should time become a factor.
4. **Arrange your points.** The arrangement of our points is key to a successful presentation. Often, we may have good material, but if presented in the wrong order it will suffer. The points must build on each other. Keep in mind that what may be the right order at one time may not be on another occasion. The following are a few helpful suggestions:
- a. Make your points in logical order. Put those first that come first in thought. There are many exceptions to this rule. If our primary purpose in preaching is not to preach a good sermon but to win souls, a point will oftentimes be more powerful and produce a greater effect out of its logical order than in it.
 - b. Avoid making your strongest points first and then tapering down to your weakest. If some points are weaker than others, it is best to build on your points with the stronger toward the climax. If you have little confidence in the point, it is better to leave the point out altogether.
 - c. Put the point last that leads to the important decision that you have in mind for your message. It may not be the strongest point but should be one that leads people to action. By putting it last it is less likely to be forgotten by the time you are ready to invite the listeners to actively respond.
 - d. Present your points in such a way that the first leads to the second, and the second to the third, etc. This is of great importance especially if you're speaking without the aid of your written notes.

When you have selected your points and written them down ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in the arrangement of your points so that they naturally flow from one to the other.

C. Planning your introduction

1. **An effective introduction is vital to capturing the attention and interest of your listeners.** In fact, though the middle points are important, the introduction and conclusion are thought to be the most important.
2. **In the introduction we get the attention of the listener, and in the conclusion, we get the decisive results.** Thus we should be most careful in the construction of these.

D. Illustrate your points

Illustrate every point in the message if at all possible. This is what leaves a lasting impression and makes the connection to the people. It brings it home and applying it to their lives.

E. Arrange your conclusion

1. **The conclusion should summarize what you have been saying** and show how it applies to our lives. It should also bring the listeners to a point of decision. Never end a message without giving people the opportunity to decide. We always want to seize every opportunity to provide people the privilege of receiving Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.
2. **In addition, you may have other decision points** in your message that can be presented after giving people the opportunity to receive Christ. This can be done in many ways such as:
 - a. Inviting people who wish to respond to raise their hands or stand to their feet while others remain in an attitude of prayer.
 - b. Remaining for prayer after others are dismissed
 - c. Inviting people to come to the altar for a time of rededication.
 - d. Having the elders of the church come forward as a point of contact and to stand in agreement with those who wish special prayer.

F. Write your message out.

1. **Most speakers find that it is of tremendous help to write out what they plan to say in advance.** This allows us to see how the message fits together, and permits us to practice the presentation to see if our written thoughts translate as well when we speak to them.
2. **This will also enable you to build confidence in your presentation** and make changes that the Holy Spirit impresses on your heart.
3. **Give the presentation to the control of the Holy Spirit.** Once you have the message in your spirit the Holy Spirit can quicken things to your heart and mind that you did not plan to say. Personal experience has taught me that most often these changes are the most powerful as He knows best what the people need to hear.

G. Some Message Pointers

1. **Know your scriptures in the context they are used and the historical surroundings**
2. **Make sure the points are outlined**
3. **Try to avoid using personal pronouns such as “I” or “we”.**
4. **Do make use of the personal pronoun “you”.** When properly used it ties the message to the hearer. Jesus was very effective at this.
5. **Remember that you are the mouthpiece of God** for this moment in time, you are God’s authority, God has placed you in this position and desires to work through you so act like it!

From this point on the material presented is excerpted from “**How to Prepare Bible Messages**” copyright 1969, 1981 by James Braga used by permission of Multnomah Publishers Inc. Some additional comments by RevC.

III. There are three main types of Bible messages

A. Topical

1. “A topical sermon is one in which the main divisions are derived from the topic, independently of the text.”
 - a. Therefore the message is dependent on the topic for its points and not the text.
 - b. The text is therefore not the source of the points which shall be presented.

Because we want the message to be a Biblical presentation we would begin with Biblical subject or topic.

2. Some examples of topical messages include (sample outline on points “c” & “h”):
 - a. The Christ Centered Life
 - b. The Christian Family
 - c. Jesus
 - (I) The love of Jesus
 - (II) The face of Jesus
 - (III) The hands of Jesus
 - (IV) The tears of Jesus
 - (V) The cross of Jesus
 - (VI) The blood of Jesus
 - (VII) The name of Jesus
 - d. The Blood of Christ
 - e. The Flesh vs. The Spirit
 - f. The Word of God
 - g. The Person of God
 - h. The Ability of God
 - (I) He is able to save, Hebrews 7:25
 - (II) He is able to keep, Jude 24
 - (III) He is able to help, Hebrews 2:18
 - (IV) He is able to subdue, Philippians 3:21
 - (V) He is able to give grace, 2 Corinthians 9:8
 - (VI) He is able to do beyond what we ask or think, Ephesians 3:20
3. Another way to do a topical message is to find a significant word or phrase that is repeated in the New Testament and develop a message centered on that word or phrase.

B. Textual

1. “A textual sermon is one in which the main divisions are derived from a text consisting of a brief portion of Scripture. Each of these divisions is then used as a line of suggestion, and the text provides the theme of the message.”

“The main divisions suggest the features to be discussed in the message...The main divisions in a textual outline must come out of the text itself, but further development may come either from the text or from other portions of Scripture.”

2. Other basic principles of textual outlines:

a. “The textual outline should be centered around one main thought in the text and the main divisions must be derived from the text so as to amplify or develop that one theme.”

b. “The main divisions may consist of the truths or principles suggested by the text... but only one subject should be developed in an outline.”

c. “The main divisions should be logical or chronological in sequence.”

d. “The very words of the text may form the main divisions of the outline, provided that these divisions are gathered around one main theme.” For example:

“Title: The only approach to God
It is through Jesus, the way.
It is through Jesus, the truth.
It is through Jesus, the life.”

6. “Some texts contain comparisons or contrasts which can be treated best by pointing out their purposeful similarities or differences. For example: Note the triple contrasts in Proverbs 14:11

(Prov 14:11 KJV) The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.

There is evidently a purposeful choice of words in the text in order to emphasize the difference between the wicked and the upright, the house and the tabernacle (tent), and the overthrow of that which would seem to be the stronger structure of the wicked in contrast to the endurance of the lighter structure of the upright.”

7. Some examples of textual sermons:

- a. “The secret of discipleship, based on Matthew 19:21”
- b. “The secret of satisfaction, based on John 7:37”
- c. “Jesus the friend of sinners, based on Luke 15:2”
- d. “Jesus the worker of miracles, based on John 11:47”

C. Expository

- 1. “An expository message is one in which a more or less extended portion of Scripture is interpreted in relation to one theme or subject. The bulk of the material for the sermon is drawn directly from the passage and the outline consists of a series of progressive ideas centered around that one main idea.”
- 2. In this case the message may be drawn from several verses within a chapter or the complete chapter or more all surrounding the central theme or subject of the message.
- 3. In the case of an expository message the main divisions and supportive scriptures are found almost entirely within the main text. In other words few if any other scriptures will be used.

4. An example of an expository message outline:

“Title: The Good Fight of Faith--Ephesians 6

Subject: Features relating to the believer’s spiritual warfare

Outline:

- I.** The Christian’s morale, vs. 10-14a
 - A.** It should be high, vs. 10
 - B.** It should be steadfast, vs. 11-14a
- II.** The Christian’s armor, vs. 14-17
 - A.** It should be defensive in character, vs. 14-17a
 - B.** It should also be offensive in character, vs. 17b
- III.** The Christian’s prayer life, vs. 18
 - A.** It should be persistent, vs. 18
 - B.** It should be intercessory, vs. 18b

5. Some additional points:

- a. “Examine the historical and cultural background of the passage, whenever possible. Many portions of the Bible cannot be properly understood apart from their historical and cultural background....This rule affects principally the major and minor prophets in their connection with the historical books of the O.T. and

the epistles of Paul in their relation to the Book of Acts.”

“Take, for example, the book of Jonah. The message of this little book cannot be grasped without reference to 1 & 2 Kings, particularly chapter 14 of 2 Kings, from which we learn of the tragic condition of apostasy in the land of Israel in the days of Jonah. The book of Jonah is then seen to be a call to the Northern Kingdom to repent, as Nineveh repented, and also a warning to God’s people of the terrible judgment to come upon them if they continued in their obstinate rebellion against God.”

b. “The truths contained in the text must be related to the present day.” It is vital regardless of the type of message you deliver, to connect the Biblical truth with the situations and circumstances facing people today. In other words we must be sure our message is culturally relevant today.

IV. Message Construction

The following format for message construction is presented in the text, “How to prepare Bible Messages” by James Bragga.

Title _____

Text _____

Introduction:

1. _____

2. _____

Proposition _____

Interrogative sentence _____

Transitional sentence _____

First main division _____

First subdivision _____

Discussion

Second subdivision _____

Discussion

Transition _____

Second main division _____

First subdivision _____

Discussion

Second subdivision _____

Discussion

Third subdivision _____

Discussion

Transition _____

Application

Conclusion

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

V. Now we shall examine the preceding form for message construction.

- A. **The title:** it is important that the title fits the subject or main theme of the message. It is generally believed that the title should be short and interesting. In other words it grabs our attention and provokes the desire to investigate further.
- B. **The introduction:** should be brief and to the point. It should center on the subject and, like the title capture our interest. The text gives the following example of an introduction:

“The following outline, is drawn from the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-24, and exemplifies the manner in which the introduction should move rapidly and directly toward the theme:

Title: Lost and Found

Introduction:

- At the World’s Fair in Chicago, in order to assist parents to locate their children who had strayed on the grounds, the authorities established a ‘lost and found department’ for children.
- Luke 15 is the ‘Lost and Found Department’ of the Bible. Here Jesus tells of three things that were lost and found—a sheep, a silver coin, and a son.
- The story of the son who was lost and found illustrates the history of a repentant sinner who is ‘lost and found.’

Subject: Steps in the history of a repentant sinner.

- The sinner's guilt, vs. 11-13
- The sinner's misery, vs. 14-16
- The sinner's repentance, vs. 17-20a
- The sinner's restoration, vs. 20b-24"

C. The proposition

1. "The proposition is a simple declaration of the subject which the preacher proposes to discuss, develop, prove, or explain in the discourse...It serves as the foundation of the message and indicates to the congregation the course of the message."

2. The following example comes from the text:

Title: The Life of Dependence

Introduction

Proposition: The Christian life is a life of constant dependence.

Interrogative sentence: Why is the Christian life a life of constant dependence?

Transitional sentence: There are several reasons why the Christian life may be said to be a life of constant dependence.

Main divisions:

- We are dependent upon Christ for salvation, Titus 3:5
- We are dependent upon the Word of God for spiritual growth, 1 Peter 2:2
- We are dependent upon prayer for spiritual power, James 5:15
- We are dependent upon fellowship for mutual encouragement, 1 John 1:3

D. The interrogative sentence: "One of the five interrogative adverbs is commonly used to connect the proposition to the main points of the discourse. These interrogatives are: **why, how, what, when, and where.** For example using the previous proposition: 'The Christian life is a life of constant dependence.' Is then followed by the interrogative question: "Why is the Christian life one of constant dependence?"

"The interrogative sentence leads to the transitional sentence, which ties the proposition and the main points of the message together and provides a smooth passage from the proposition to the main divisions." When we look at the flow of the proposition, interrogative, and transitional sentences we should have a clear indication of how the message will be developed.

E. The transitional sentence: “The transitional sentence always contains a key word which classifies or defines the character of the main headings of the outline. Using the example of the ‘Life of Dependence,’ we may state the transitional sentence in the following manner: **There are several reasons why the Christian life may be said to be a life of constant dependence.**’ Obviously, the word ‘reasons’ relates the proposition to the main points of the discourse, with each main division expressing one of the reasons why the Christian life is said to be a life of constant dependence.”

“The key word is a useful homiletical device which makes it possible to characterize or classify within the transitional sentence the main divisions of the outline. There must, of course, be structural unity in the outline. Without structural unity there cannot be a key word to connect the transitional sentence to each main division and the main divisions to each other. Therefore, a good test of structural unity in an outline is to see if the same key word can be applied to each of the main divisions.”

F. “The main divisions: should grow out of the proposition, with each division contributing to the development or elaboration of the proposition.” In other words the divisions explain the proposition and thus flow from the proposition. “It is also important that the main divisions be distinct from each other. In other words there should be no overlapping of the divisions.”

1. The following example comes from the text:

Title: The Christian’s Ideal

Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Proposition: Love is the ideal by which the Christian life is measured.

Interrogative sentence: What can we learn from this chapter about this ideal by which our lives are measured?

Transitional sentence: There are three main facts about love, which we may learn from 1 Corinthians 13.

Main Divisions:

- The pre-eminence of love, vs. 1-3
- The characteristics of love, vs. 4-7
- The permanence of love, vs. 8-13

2. “The divisions should be arranged in some form of progression.” The text gives the following example:

Title: The abundant life

Text: Romans 15:13

Proposition: An abundant life in Christ is available to every believer.

Interrogative sentence: What does the text reveal about this abundant life?

Transitional sentence: Several features are disclosed in Romans 15:13 concerning this abundant life which is available to every believer.

Main divisions:

- Where does it come from? “May the “God of hope fill you.”
- What does it consist of? “Fill you with all joy and peace.”
- How can we obtain it? “As you trust in him.”
- Why should we possess it? “So that you may overflow with hope.”
- How can we live it? “By the power of the Holy Spirit.”

3. “Each main division should contain a single basic idea.” The following four divisions from Joshua 1:1-9 provide a good example of main divisions which present a single basic thought:

Title: Essentials of Spiritual Leadership

Text: Joshua 1:1-9

Proposition: A man who is a spiritual leader must possess the proper qualifications.

Interrogative sentence: What are those qualifications?

Transitional sentence: A study of Joshua 1:1-9 reveals some of the essentials of spiritual leadership.

Main divisions:

- Confidence in the power of God, vs. 1-2
- Appropriation of the promises of God, vs. 3-4
- Dependence upon the presence of God, vs. 5,6, and 9
- Obedience to the Word of God, vs. 7-8

G. The subdivisions: “The primary function of a subdivision is to develop the thought contained in the main division.” Therefore, they must deal with the explanation of the division from which they come. The following are examples from Psalm 23:

Main Division 1: The sheep’s Shepherd, vs. 1

Subdivisions: a. A divine Shepherd, vs. 1
 b. A personal Shepherd, vs. 1

Main Division 2: The sheep’s provision, vs. 2-5

a. Rest, vs. 2
b. Guidance, vs. 3
c. Comfort, vs. 4
d. Abundance, vs. 5

Main Division 3: The sheep’s prospect, vs. 6

a. A bright prospect for this life, vs. 6
b. A blessed prospect for the hereafter, vs. 6

H. The Discussion: “The discussion is the proper unfolding of the ideas contained in the divisions.” This is where the speaker must put some “meat” on the skeleton. In the discussion you explain, enlarge, and unfold those things that God has impressed on your heart. It is important here to say what needs to be said without unnecessary repetition or saying things that only take additional time but add nothing of value to the message.

Material for this section can be found in the Bible, as we find stories or passages that further illustrate our point. It may arise from personal experience, or the experiences of others of whom we have knowledge. Another source is the information we gain through the reading and study of what others have written or spoken. When this is done you should be sure to give proper recognition to the material you use.

I. The Illustrations: “The word ‘illustrate’ means to make clear by means of an example or examples.’ Thus an illustration is a means of throwing light upon a sermon by the use of an example.”

1. “An illustration may take any one of several forms. It may consist of a parable, an analogy, an allegory, a story, an account of personal experience, an event in history, or an incident from biography. An illustration can also be invented or constructed out of a person’s own imagination.”
2. One example of an illustration taken from the text:

A man traveling through a foreign country discovered that his destination lay at the end of a rugged mountain trail. The journey was dangerous, and he would need a qualified guide to make it there safely.

One guide offered to make the journey with the man. Before hiring him, the traveler asked, "Have you ever been to the village to which I am going?"

The guide answered, "No, but I have been halfway, and have heard many of my friends describe the rest of the way."

"Well," replied the traveler, "you will not do as a guide."

The traveler interviews another guide. Again he asked, "Have you ever been to the village to which I wish to go?"

This guide answered, "No, but I have seen the village from the top of the mountain."

"You will not do for a guide, either" the traveler replied.

A third guide offered his services to the traveler. The traveler asked him the same question he had asked the other two guides.

"Sir," replied the third guide, "that village is my home."

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

J. The Application: "We define application as the rhetorical process by which truth is brought to bear directly and personally upon individuals in order to persuade them to respond properly to it." This would apply to both the speaker and hearers.

This is the point at which the speaker wants to engage his audience in personal examination which will lead to a response. The speaker must apply the spiritual truth they have sought to expound to the everyday life of the hearer in a way that will encourage a change or re-evaluation of their lifestyle.

One example given in the text: Applied to John 15:1-11

"Look at verse 5. Jesus says, 'Apart from me ye can do nothing.' My Christian friend, tell me, have you been working and struggling hard for years to do something, and have achieved nothing? Is it true that there is no fruitfulness in your life; no effectiveness in your life, no real joyfulness, in your life? Are you still irritable? Provoked by your children? Attacked by temper? Defeated in moments of

loneliness? Has another week gone by, and you can't say with joy, 'Thank God, I have been the instrument of bringing yet another soul to Christ? ... If you cannot say that, but instead, you are filled with a sense of futility, and defeat, then you don't know what it is to abide in Christ. 'Without me,' declared Christ, 'ye can do nothing.'"

This statement could be made at the end of a main division in conclusion of the division, or it could be made at the end of the message to lead into a conclusion.

K. The conclusion: "The conclusion is the climax of the whole message in which the preacher's one constant aim reaches its goal in the form of a forceful impression."

"As the message draws to a close, it should cause the individuals in the congregation to ask themselves, what has this truth to do with me, with my relationships, my church, my business, and in my everyday life and conduct? For this reason the speaker should end his message with a direct application or appeal in which he makes a call for a response to the truths delivered in the message."

To the application example in point 10 above you might add the following conclusion appeal to bring the hearer to a renewed dedication to abide in Christ.

If any of these questions describe your situation of heart let me encourage you at this moment to get out of your seat and come join with me at this altar where we can present ourselves together before God and experience His forgiveness, His cleansing, and His filling of the Holy Spirit. If you need a fresh touch of the Holy Spirit today to strengthen you as you abide in Christ, then I want to invite you to join me and those who are already coming as we receive what God has for us today.

VI. In Conclusion

If God has called you to preach or teach His word, then do so whole heartedly as unto the Lord knowing He will be with you. However, we should never take this calling lightly or enter into it without preparation of both mind and spirit. Undoubtedly the best messages ever shared have been birthed in prayer and study of God's word as the speaker surrenders his heart to God's guidance. Our reliance should be on the Holy Spirit who leads us to know God's truth.

As we speak, we represent God and do so humbly with boldness rising from the strength of knowing it is God's truth that we speak. Let me encourage you who are beginning to be used in this manner to take the time to apply the principles you have been instructed in. Practice will help you to develop your God given abilities. Seize every opportunity presented to allow you to develop. Seek criticism of others whom you respect to sharpen your abilities. Be careful not to take offence at negative responses, but rather learn from

them to better your skill at communication. What's important is not your sense of personal success as a speaker, but your desire to improve your ability in order to become more effective for God.

May God bless and encourage you as you present yourself to His service.

Remember, if you are completing the CTC program through the online study method, each student must prepare and preach or teach two messages using the outline format presented in lesson 14 of this material to friends, family, or other groups. You must then attest to having done so to the local director who enrolled you in the CTC course. This assignment is necessary to graduate and receive your diploma. Congratulations on completing this part of your preparation to serve in the Kingdom of God.

Remember that the Holy Spirit is always working around you, look for where the opportunities are to join Him in the work He is doing, and then do it in faith!

Blessings, from RevC and the many people who have contributed to the CTC program.