

HOW TO STUDY THE HOLY BIBLE

- I. THERE ARE AT LEAST “TEN PREPARATIONS” THAT ARE NEEDED BEFORE STUDYING THE BIBLE.
- A. One must Be Prepared to Be Taught by God (Psa 119:18).
 - B. One must Be Prepared to Ask God for Understanding (Jer 33:3).
 - C. One must Be Prepared to Accept what Is Written in the Bible (the Scriptures) as One’s Final Authority (Acts 17:11; Gal 4:30a).
 - D. One must Be Prepared to Be Led by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:13-14).
 - E. One must Be Prepared to Grow Spiritually (1 Cor 13:11; Heb 5:12 to 6:3).
 - F. One must Be Prepared to Accept the Bible as the Word of God and not the Word of Man (1 Thes 2:13; John 5:46-47; 2 Tim 3:16).
 - G. One must Be Prepared to Study the Bible God’s Way.
 - 1. Read it over and over (Isa 28:9-10).
 - 2. Rightly divide it (2 Tim 2:15).
 - 3. Compare Scripture with Scripture (1 Cor 2:13).
 - H. One must Be Prepared to Depend on God for Wisdom and Understanding (Dan 5:11-12; 2:27-28; 1 Cor 2:14; Pro 3:5).
 - I. One must Be Prepared to Place all Bible Study Material (commentaries, handbooks, dictionaries, teachers, etc.) Secondary in Authority to the Scriptures Themselves (Acts 17:11; Gal 4:30a).
 - J. One must Be Prepared to Accept the Bible literally (as fact) and not allegorically (as fiction).
- II. THERE ARE THINGS THAT SHOULD NEVER BE FORGOTTEN WHILE STUDYING THE BIBLE.
- A. Never Forget that One Is not Just Studying Facts or Information about God and His Plans in the Bible, but that God Is Revealing Himself and His Plans to Man through the Bible (1 Sam 3:21).
 - B. Never Forget that every Verse in the Bible Can Be Looked at in three Ways:

1. Every verse can be looked at Historically (or prophetically). It is about something that takes place either in the present (in the here and now), in the past (history), or in the future (prophecy) (cf. Isa 61:1-2 with Luke 4:14-21).
 2. Every verse can be looked at Doctrinally. It is about a required teaching that is to be obeyed by someone (1 Cor 10:32).
 - a. Genesis 17:9-14 is to be obeyed by the Jews.
 - b. Galatians 5:1-6 is to be obeyed by the Christians (the Church of God).
 - c. Romans 1:16 to 2:16 is to be obeyed by the Gentiles.
 3. Every verse can be looked at Practically (or devotionally). It is about applying the verse to one's everyday life (Mat 4:4).
 - a. All Scripture is not written to the Christian, but all Scripture is written for the Christian (Rom 15:4).
 - b. All Scripture is profitable for a Christian in his everyday life to equip him for service and spiritual growth (2 Tim 3:15-17).
 - c. There are three instances when a practical (or devotional) application of Scripture is not allowed:
 - 1) When it results in making a doctrinal truth unclear.
 - 2) When it teaches a lie.
 - 3) When it contradicts other Scripture.
- C. Never Forget that a Verse should not Be Taken out of Its Context.
1. Do not remove a verse from the verses before and after it. Do not remove Luke 12:19 from Luke 12:16-21.
 2. Do not remove a verse from the chapter in which it is found. Do not remove Leviticus 11:12 from Leviticus 11:1-47, which is addressed to the Children of Israel (Lev 11:2).
 3. Do not remove a verse from the Book in which it is found. Do not remove James 2:20 from the Book of James, which is addressed to the Twelve Tribes of Israel (Jas 1:1).
- D. Never Forget that an unclear Verse in the Bible should not Be Used in Place of a clear Verse to Establish (base) a Doctrine. Do not Use Matthew 16:18 (an unclear verse) in Place of 1st Corinthians 10:4 (a clear verse) to Determine on which "Rock" the Christian Church Is Founded.
- In Matthew 16:18 it is unclear just who or what the *rock* represents.
 In 1st Corinthians 10:4 it is real clear that Jesus Christ is the *rock*.
 In John 1:40-42 Jesus Christ states that Peter is **a stone**, not *a rock*.
- E. Never Forget that a Single Verse in the Bible should not Be Used to Contradict several other Verses on the same Subject.
1. In Acts 2:38 it appears that water baptism in the name of Jesus is necessary for salvation.
 2. There is no mention of water baptism being needed for salvation in Acts 10:44-48, 15:7-11, 16:30-31, Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 1:13, 2:8-9, or 1st Corinthians 15:1-4 (cf. 1 Cor 1:14-18; Gal 1:8-9).

- F. Never Forget that One should not Look for an allegorical (symbolical) Meaning in the Bible when the literal (actual) Meaning Makes good Sense.
1. Some Bible teachers claim that the length of time in Revelation 20:1-7 that Jesus Christ will rule and reign on the earth is not a literal one thousand-year period of time. They teach that the term “a thousand years” is symbolical of an undetermined amount of time.
 2. The Bible plainly states six times in Revelation 20:1-7 that the length of Christ’s rule and reign is a thousand years.
- G. Never Forget that a Verse in the Bible should not Be Made to Mean what It Does not Say.
1. Some Bible teachers claim that the water in John 3:5 means water baptism.
 2. In John 3:5 there are only two possible meanings for the word “water”:
 - a. The amniotic fluid of natural physical birth, which is mentioned in John 3:4 and 6.
 - b. The word of God, which is mentioned in 1st Peter 1:23.
 3. The context of John 3:5 is that of John 3:1-21, and nowhere in the passage is *water* baptism ever mentioned.
- H. Never Forget that Someone Can Teach false Doctrine from the Bible by Saying that It Means Something that It Does not Say.
1. Believing what the Bible says, where it says it, is the hard part while studying (Mat 22:41-46; Gal 4:30a).
 2. Sometimes 1st Timothy 5:23 is used to prove that the drinking of alcoholic beverages by a Christian is permitted. However, the verse says that a little wine (alcohol) is to be used only for medicinal purposes (as a medicine).
- I. Never Forget that every Heresy that Is Based on a Bible Passage Is a Truth that Belongs in another Dispensation.
1. The heresy that a Christian in the Church Age must keep his faith in Jesus Christ and continue doing good works until he dies in order to keep his salvation is taught from Matthew 24:12-14.
 2. Matthew 24:12-14 is written to Jews who must endure to the end of the Tribulation Period (Mat 24:3, 29), just before the Second Coming of Christ (Mat 24:30) and the setting up of the millennial kingdom (Luke 1:30-33). It is not written to Christians in the present Church Age.
- J. Never Forget that the Old Testament mainly Deals with Nations (Jer 1:5-10; Psa 9:17; Isa 2:4) and the New Testament mainly Deals with Individuals (Acts 16:30; Rom 14:12; Rev 20:11-15).

- K. Never Forget that although the whole Bible Was Written **for** Christians (2 Tim 3:15-17), It Is not all Written **to** Christians (Luke 5:12-14), nor Is It all Written **about** Christians (1 Cor 10:1-11).
1. Second Timothy 3:15-17 states that the whole Bible is applicable for Christians for salvation, for doctrine (indoctrination), for reproof (admonition), for correction, for instruction, and for preparation.
 2. Luke 5:12-14 is not written to Christians.
 - a. Jesus Christ healed a Jewish leper and commanded him to go to a priest and offer the sacrifice required by the Old Testament Law (Lev 14:1-32).
 - b. Nowhere in the New Testament is a Christian commanded to go to a priest and offer a sacrifice for his healing. The only sacrifices that a Christian is to offer can be found in Hebrews 13:12-16.
 3. First Corinthians 10:1-11 is written about Jews and not about Christians.
- L. Never Forget that the Old Testament and the New Testament Make up one inter-related Book and Are not sixty-six separate Books.
1. Fulfilled prophecy shows the inter-relationship between the Old and the New Testaments (cf. Isa 7:14 with Mat 1:22-23).
 2. Some Old Testament prophecies are only partially fulfilled in the Gospels. However, the New Testament often gives the future fulfillment of those parts that are not fulfilled in the Gospels (Isa 61:1-2; Luke 4:17-21; 2 Thes 1:7-9).
 - a. The Old Testament prophecy in Isaiah 61:1-2 is only partially fulfilled in the Luke's Gospel (Luke 4:17-21), which leaves out "the day of vengeance of our God."
 - b. The unfulfilled part of the prophecy (the part left out) in Isaiah 61:2 will be fulfilled in the future according to 2nd Thessalonians 1:7-9.
 - c. This shows the inter-relationship of the Old and New Testament Books of the Bible.
- M. Never Forget that most of the Time the Bible Interprets Itself (1 Cor 2:13). A good Bible Concordance should Be Used to Find Verses where the same Word Occurs to Help Interpret a Word's meaning.
1. The Bible interprets itself by using a word and then defining that word in the same verse. The Bible uses the word "epistle" and then defines it as "letter" in 2nd Corinthians 3:1.
 2. The Bible interprets itself by using a word in one place and then defines that same word in another place. The Bible uses the word "scrip" in Matthew 10:5-10 and also defines scrip as "a shepherd's bag" in 1st Samuel 17:40.
 3. The Bible interprets itself by using other verses to identify people, places or things. The Bible identifies the person in the wilderness mentioned in Isaiah 40:3 as being John the Baptist in John 1:19-23.

4. The Bible interprets itself by using parallel verses (verses in different Books of the Bible that describe the same event) to get a complete description of what is going on in a passage. The Bible uses the parallel passages in Matthew 27:37, Mark 15:26, Luke 23:38 and John 19:19 to describe (give) the complete accusation (superscription) that was written and placed on the cross, “This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.”
 5. The Bible interprets itself by using many verses on the same subject to explain its meaning. Compare Acts 16:30-31; Romans 10:9-10, 13; Titus 3:5; John 3:17; Acts 4:10-12; 1st Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 2:8-9; 2nd Timothy 1:8-9 and Romans 5:9-10 to clarify the Bible meaning of the word “saved.”
- N. Never Forget that Nothing Is to Be Placed above the Word of God (the Bible) (Acts 17:10-11; Gal 4:30a).
1. Never place one’s Opinion above the Bible (Gen 3:1-6).
 2. Never place Tradition above the Bible (Mark 7:1-9).
 3. Never place one’s Interpretation above the Bible (Mat 22:41-46; 2 Pet 1:19-21).
 4. Never place Prophecy above the Bible (Jer 14:13-16).
 5. Never place Science and Education above the Bible (1 Tim 6:20-21).
 6. Never place Philosophy above the Bible (Col 2:8).
 7. Never place Church Authority above the Bible (Acts 4:5-6, 18-20; 5:17, 29; 11:1-19; 3 John vs.9-10).
- O. Never Forget that One should not **Add to** (Pro 30:5-6) or **Take away from** (Rev 22:19; Jer 26:2) any Verse in the Bible.
1. Do not add the word “water” to Romans 6:3 to teach that *water* baptism puts one into Jesus Christ (saves him). Compare 1st Corinthians 12:13 and Ephesians 4:5 with Romans 6:3.
 2. Do not take away the word “now” from John 18:36 (like most new Bibles do) to teach that Christ’s kingdom is only spiritual and not also physical.
- P. Never Forget that One should not **Change the Wording** of any Bible Verse.
1. Do not *change* what someone actually said to teach a lie.
 2. In Matthew 26:61 two false witnesses changed what Jesus said in John 2:18-21 to teach a lie.
 3. Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19).
 4. The two witnesses said, “This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days” (Mat 26:61).
 5. Jesus Christ never said that He was able to, or would, destroy the Temple of God (in Jerusalem), or rebuild it.
- Q. Never Forget that One should not **Distort** (change) **the Context** of any Verse in the Bible.

1. Do not *distort* the context of a verse to prove that a Christian can lose his salvation.
 2. In John 5:14 Jesus Christ said, “Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”
 3. The context of this verse is found in John 5:10-16 and has nothing to do with losing one’s salvation.
 4. Christ was warning the man that was healed not to sin again or something worse would happen to him physically.
- R. Never Forget that Scholarship (Bible Commentaries) or a Bible Teacher should not Be Used as One’s final Authority (Gal 4:30a) when Studying the Bible.
1. Do not look to commentaries for an interpretation of a passage when the Bible has already clearly explained the passage.
 2. The term “do not kill” in Mark 10:18-19 is defined in Matthew 19:16-18 as “thou shalt do no murder.”
- S. Never Forget that the Bible should not Be Corrected because It Does not Agree with the so-called “Historic Christian Position.”
1. The *Historic Christian Position* is what Christian scholars (both past and present) generally believe.
 2. The “Historic Position” of the Sadducees, one group of scholars in Christ’s day, was that there is no resurrection of the dead (Mat 22:23-28).
 3. In Matthew 22:29-33, Jesus Christ corrects the *Historic Position* of the Sadducees with the word of God (the Bible) by showing that there is a resurrection of the dead.
- T. Never Forget that Events in the Bible Are not always Written in chronological Order (in the order that they take place).
1. In the Book of Daniel, chapters 7 and 8 take place historically before chapter 5.
 2. Daniel 5:30 states that Belshazzar was killed. However, Daniel 7:1 refers to the first year of Belshazzar’s reign as king and Daniel 8:1 refers to the third year of his reign.
- U. Never Forget that a Word in the Bible Can Have more than one Meaning.
1. The word “god” has at least three different meanings in the Bible:
 - a. It is used to refer to idols (statues) in Psalm 96:5 and Isaiah 42:17.
 - b. It is used to refer to false gods in 2nd Kings 1:6.
 - c. It is used to refer to the Devil in 2nd Corinthians 4:4.
 2. The word “angel” has at least five different meanings in the Bible:
 - a. It is used to refer to spirits as in Hebrews 1:7, 13-14 (Luke 24:36-39).
 - b. It is used to refer to a child’s representative as in Matthew 18:10.
 - c. It is used to refer to a Church representative as in Revelation 1:20 and 2:1.

- d. It is used to refer to a prophet of God as in Revelation 22:8-9.
- e. It is used to refer to a national leader's representative as in Daniel 10:12-13.

III. THERE ARE POINTS TO REMEMBER WHILE STUDYING THE BIBLE.

- A. Remember that there Are “the Three Main Subjects, or Themes, of the Bible”: **(1)** the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, **(2)** the Lord Jesus Christ and **(3)** the Devil. There Are more Verses in the Bible on any one of These three main Subjects than any other two other Subjects Combined.
 - 1. *The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth*, to be set up at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, is the main subject of the Bible (Isa 9:6-7; Mat 4:17; Rev 11:15; 20:4).
 - 2. *The Lord Jesus Christ*, the King of the Kingdom of Heaven, is the main person of the Bible (Luke 24:15, 25-27; John 5:19, 39).
 - a. His kingship is found in Matthew 2:1-6, Luke 1:30-33 and Revelation 17:14 (cf. John 1:29).
 - b. His First Coming is predicted in Zechariah 9:9.
 - c. His Second Coming is predicted in Acts 1:9-11.
 - 3. *The Devil*, “the god of this world (2 Cor 4:4)”, is the second main person of the Bible. He is found throughout the Bible (Gen 3:1; 1 Chr 21:1; Job 1:6; Isa 14:12; Eze 28:13; Zec 3:1; Luke 4:1-3; 1 John 3:8; Jude v.9; Rev 20:2, 10).
- B. Remember that there Are “Seven Keys” that will Open (unlock) One's Understanding of the Bible:
 - 1. The **First Key** is to use the literal approach to the Bible to correctly interpret it.
 - a. Every word is given the same, exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary or customary usage.
 - b. Whenever symbolical (allegorical), figurative or typical words are used, look for the literal truth that they are expressing (trying to get across).
 - 2. The **Second Key** is to realize that the First and Second Comings (Advents) of Jesus Christ are acted out over and over in the English Bible (Ecc 1:9; 3:15).
 - a. The First and Second Comings of Christ are found twice in Psalm 2.
 - b. They appear the first time in verses 1-6.
 - 1) The 1st Coming of Christ is located in verses 1-3 (cf. Acts 4:23-28).
 - 2) The 2nd Coming of Christ is located in verses 4-6 (cf. Rev 20:1-6).
 - c. They appear the second time in Psalm 2:7-9.
 - 1) The 1st Coming of Christ is located in verse 7 (cf. John 3:16; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:1-6).

- 2) The 2nd Coming of Christ is located in verses 8-9 (cf. John 1:29; Rev 17:14; 19:11-16).
 3. The **Third Key** is to determine (find out) whether the First or Second Coming of Jesus Christ is being spoken about by finding out what is happening to the Jews.
 - a. In Isaiah 9:6-16 it is determined that the First Coming of Christ is being spoken about because Christ is rejected by the Jews (vs.13-16) and the Lord God is punishing them for doing it.
 - b. In Zechariah 12:1-10 it is determined that the Second Coming of Christ is being spoken about because the Lord is blessing and protecting the Jews by destroying the Gentile Nations (Rev 19:11-15).
 4. The **Fourth Key** is to check the context and determine whether the Scripture that is being read is aimed at the Jews, the Gentiles or the Church of God (Christians) (1 Cor 10:32). This opens the doctrinal application of the Whole Bible.
 5. The **Fifth Key** is to realize that the New Testament either fulfills or gives more details of Old Testament predictions or statements. This key opens the meaning of many Old Testament passages.
 - a. The prediction in Isaiah 61:1-2 is partially fulfilled in Luke 4:14-21 and completely fulfilled in 2nd Thessalonians 1:7-9 (cf. Rev 19:11-21).
 - b. The two olive trees of Zechariah 4:11-14 have more details given about them in Luke 9:28-31 and Revelation 11:3-6.
 - 1) The blood and plagues fit the wonders of Moses in Exodus 7:19-20 and 9:13-14.
 - 2) The rain and fire fit the wonders of Elijah in 1st Kings 17:1, 18:36-38 and 2nd Kings 1:9-10.
 6. The **Sixth Key** is to realize that the New Testament does not begin in Matthew 1:1, but it actually begins at the death of Jesus Christ (the testator) in Matthew 27:50 (cf. Heb 9:14-18). This opens many passages in the Gospels and other New Testament Books.
 7. The **Seventh Key** is to take note of how Jesus Christ interprets parables (Mark 4:10-13). This opens the interpretation of all parables.
 - a. In Matthew 13:1-3 the parable of the sower is given.
 - b. In Matthew 13:18-23 the parable of the sower is explained in detail.
- C. Remember that there Are “Four Keys” that Open the Book of Revelation:
1. The **First Key**, the Key of Date, is to know that the Book was written about A.D. 100, after the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).
 - a. The Book was written **after** the Roman Emperor Domitian (A.D. 51-96) exiled the Apostle John to the Isle of Patmos (Rev 1:9).
 - b. Twenty Early Church Fathers (including Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus and Eusebius) date the writing of the Book near the end of Domitian’s reign (A.D. 81 to 96).
 2. The **Second Key**, the Key of Chronology, is to know that the Book is not written in the order that it takes place. The reader is carried through the

Tribulation Period four separate times: (1) chapters 6 & 7; (2) chapters 8-9 & 11; (3) chapters 12-14 and (4) chapters 15-16 & 19.

3. The **Third Key**, the Key of Perspective (point of view), is to know that the term “the Lord’s Day” of Revelation 1:10 is not a reference to Sunday, but a reference to the Second Coming of Christ.
 - a. The *Lord’s Day* is called “the day of the Lord” in both the Old and New Testaments (see Zep 1:14-18; 1 Thes 5:1-4 & cf. Jer 26:10).
 - b. The Apostle John is **not** looking at the events found in the Book from the standpoint of the date of its writing, but **is** looking at them from the standpoint of the Second Coming of Christ.
4. The **Fourth Key**, the Key of Scope, is to know that in Revelation 1:19 the Apostle John is writing about three things from the standpoint of the Second Advent of Christ: (1) the past, which is the Church Age and the Tribulation Period, (2) the present, which is the Second Coming of Christ, and (3) the future, which is the Millennium and Eternity Future.

D. Remember that when the Wording of a Verse or Passage in the Bible Does not Agree with Your Belief (2 Pet 1:20-21), Adjust Your Belief to Match the Bible (Mat 22:29; Gal 4:30a).

E. Remember that there Can Be a doctrinal Application for Christians in any Verse in the Bible only when the same Doctrine Is Found in the Books Written by the Apostle Paul that Are Aimed at Christians (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11; Rom 11:13; 1 Cor 11:1-2; 2 Thes 2:13-15).

IV. THERE ARE RULES TO FOLLOW WHILE STUDYING THE BIBLE.

- A. Watch for “Key Words” in the Bible.
 1. *Therefore* and *So Then*. These words mean, “that which follows is the result of, or the reason for, something just stated.”
 - a. In Luke 14:20 the word “therefore” indicates that *the result of* the man getting married is that he could not come.
 - b. In Romans 10:17 the words “so then” indicate that faith is *the result of* hearing the word of God preached.
 2. *So*. This word usually means, “that which follows is done in the same way.” In Matthew 5:15-16 the word “so” indicates that a person’s light should shine *in the same way* a candle does on a candlestick rather than under a bushel.
 3. *For*. This word has four basic meanings:
 - a. It means, “because” as in Matthew 2:2.
 - b. It means, “because of” as in Luke 5:14 and Acts 2:38.
 - c. It means, “in order to” as in Matthew 11:8.
 - d. It means, “on behalf of” as in Matthew 10:18.
 4. *But*. This word has three main meanings:
 - a. It means, “however (on the other hand)” as in Matthew 5:28.

- b. It means, “only” as in Matthew 9:21.
 - c. It means, “except (with the exception of)” as in Matthew 5:13 (*but to be cast out*).
5. *Wherefore*. This word has two main uses:
- a. It is used to ask the question “why?” as in Matthew 26:50.
 - b. It is used to mean “on these grounds” as in Acts 26:3.
6. *Of*. This word has five main meanings:
- a. It means, “from” as in Matthew 27:57.
 - b. It means, “about” as in Matthew 1:1.
 - c. It means, “belonging to” as in Matthew 4:3.
 - d. It means, “having” as in Matthew 13:46.
 - e. It means, “by” or “given by” as in Revelation 1:1.
7. *All, Whole and Every*. These three words can mean either “without exception” or “without distinction.”
- a. The word “All” *without exception* means, “every single one” as in Romans 3:23.
 - b. The word “All” *without distinction* means, “not every single one but every type, class or group” as in Matthew 10:22 and John 3:26.
 - c. The word “Whole” *without exception* means, “complete, total or entire” as in Matthew 16:26 and 1st John 2:2.
 - d. The word “Whole” *without distinction* means, “not every single one but every type, class or group” as in Romans 1:8 and Revelation 12:9.
 - e. The word “Every” *without exception* means, “every single one” as in Genesis 1:28, 31 and Matthew 4:4.
 - f. The word “Every” *without distinction* means, “not every single one but every type, class or group” as in Matthew 9:35 (cf. Mark 6:5).
- B. Watch for “Paragraph Markings” (¶) and “Chapter Divisions” in the Bible, which usually Mean that there Is a Change in Thought or Context.
- 1. The *paragraph marking* in Matthew 5:17 shows a complete change of thought and context from verses 13 and 16.
 - 2. The *chapter division* between Romans 8:38-39 and Romans 9:1-5 clearly shows a complete change of thought and context.
- C. Watch for “Punctuation Marks” which sometime Separate Events in the Bible by thousands of Years. The Comma after the Word “LORD” in Isaiah 61:2 Separates the First and Second Comings of Jesus Christ (Luke 4:14-21).
- D. Watch for “the Developing of a Subject” as the Bible Gives more Information about that *Subject* each Time that It Is Mentioned.
- 1. The subject of *the Messiah* is first mentioned in the Old Testament in Daniel 9:25-26.
 - 2. In the New Testament, the subject of *the Messiah* (Messias) is only found in the Gospel of John.
 - a. In John 1:41 and 4:25, the term “the Messias” is said to have the same meaning as the term “the Christ.”

- b. Jesus Christ is called both “the Messiah” and “the Christ” in John 1:41.
 - c. Jesus claims to be “the Messiah” in John 4:25-26 and “the Christ” in Mark 14:61-62.
 - d. Further details about the Messiah (Messias) can be found in the New Testament by looking in a Bible concordance under the words “Christ” and “Jesus.”
- E. Watch for “The Law of First Mention.” The first Time that a Subject or Word Shows up in the Bible usually Gives the main Meaning of that Subject or Word. The Word “LORD” Is first Found in Genesis 2:4 and Has the Meaning of “God and Creator” throughout the rest of the Bible.
- F. Watch for “The Law of Cause and Effect” (“What goes around, comes around” – Gal 6:7).
- 1. When studying the Bible and something is read that is not fully understood, first look in a concordance for all the Bible references on that subject and then look them up to find out why it happened.
 - 2. In Numbers 31:8, Baalim is killed by the Israelites (the effect) after he had blessed them in Numbers 24:10-13 and 25. There is no reason given for his death other than what is said in Numbers 31:16.
 - 3. The trespass mentioned in Numbers 31:16 and the error mentioned in Jude v.11 are explained in Revelation 2:14, which shows the reasons (the causes) that Baalim was killed. He showed Balak how he could make the Israelites sin by tempting them to sacrifice to idols and to commit fornication.
- G. Watch for “The Law of Emphasis” (to draw attention to something in the Bible to stress Its importance).
- 1. The first way of drawing attention to something is by repeating a word or phrase.
 - a. In John 3:3 and 3:5 the word “verily” is repeated to emphasize the importance of being born again.
 - b. In Isaiah 21:9 and Revelation 14:8, the phrase “Is Fallen” is repeated to emphasize the complete destruction of a wicked city.
 - 2. The second way of drawing attention to something is by using parallelism (something that is so much like something else that it appears to be the same or nearly the same).
 - a. In 1st Peter 5:8 the actions of the devil are said to be “as” the actions of a roaring lion.
 - b. In Matthew 23:27 the Scribes and Pharisees are said to be “like” whitewashed tombs.
- H. Watch and Be Sure to Use common Sense when Reading the Bible.
- 1. In John 1:29 Jesus Christ is called “the Lamb of God” by John the Baptist. Common sense tells you that John is not saying that Jesus Christ is a literal animal (a real lamb).

2. In John 10:9 Jesus calls Himself a “door.” Common sense tells you that He is not claiming to be a literal door.
- I. Notice that general (everyday) Statements in the Bible Have Limitations (exceptions).
 1. In Proverbs 18:22 the general statement is, “If a man finds a wife, he will find a good thing.”
 2. A limitation to Proverbs 18:22 is found in Ezekiel 16:32 where a man’s wife commits adultery, which is not a good thing (Exo 20:14).
 - J. Notice that different Statements in the Bible Are sometimes Used to either Compare or Contrast Things that Are not alike, such as Physical and Spiritual Things.
 1. In John 6:27 Jesus Christ compares physical food (the meat which perisheth) with spiritual food (the meat which endureth unto everlasting life).
 2. In Matthew 6:19-20 Christ contrasts earthly treasures that can be lost with heavenly treasures that cannot be lost.
 - K. Notice that the Bible sometimes Asks a Question instead of Making a Statement where the only logical Answer Is either “yes” or “no.”
 1. In Genesis 18:25 Abraham’s question to God has only one logical answer, “yes.”
 2. In 1st Corinthians 12:29-30 the logical answer to each question is, “no.”
 - L. Notice that a Statement in the Bible sometimes Suggests the Opposite of what Has Been Said.
 1. Philippians 4:13 suggests that nothing spiritual can be done without Christ.
 2. In John 15:5 the statement “for without me ye can do nothing” suggests that with Jesus Christ all spiritual things can be done.
 - M. Determine (find out) the Reason why the Old Testament Is Being Quoted in the New Testament.
 1. Genesis 12:3 is quoted in Galatians 3:6-8 to teach that the Gentiles are made righteous by faith alone, just like Abraham was made righteous. In Galatians 3:6-8 the Apostle Paul is making a *doctrinal* application of Genesis 12:3.
 2. Deuteronomy 25:4 is quoted in 1st Corinthians 9:9-14 to teach that preachers should be paid for doing the Lord’s work. In 1st Corinthians 9:9-14 the Apostle Paul is making a *practical* application of Deuteronomy 25:4.
 - N. Always Turn to Scripture where there Is a more detailed Account of what Is Being Said to Determine the Meaning of a Statement.

1. In Matthew 27:11 Christ's words "Thou sayest" are only a brief answer to Pilot's question. However, in John 18:33-39 a more detailed answer is given.
 2. In 2nd Kings 21:1-18 the sinful acts of King Manasseh are given and there is no mention of his ever getting right with God. However, in 2nd Chronicles 33:10-20 the good acts of King Manasseh and his getting right with God are given, which were not mentioned in 2nd Kings 21.
- O. Become Familiar with Bible Customs and Expressions to better Understand the Scriptures.
1. In John 19:38-40 the Jews, according to their custom (manner), wrapped the dead body of Jesus Christ in linen clothes and spices before they buried Him and did not embalm Him.
 2. In Matthew 8:18-22 Christ uses the expression "let the dead bury the dead." This expression is better understood by comparing it with 1st Timothy 5:1-6.
 - a. In Matthew 8 the dead (those who are doing the burying) is a reference to people who are alive physically, but dead concerning spiritual matters. The context of Matthew 8 is a call to discipleship (v.21) and not salvation.
 - b. In 1st Timothy 5 the widow (she) of verse 6 is saved, but backslidden and considered dead concerning spiritual matters. The context of 1st Timothy 5 is that of taking care of true Christian widows and not salvation.
- P. Take the Following Three Steps while Reading Scriptures on a certain Subject or Incident:
1. Take the First Step of Association. Look for things that *are* the same in the different accounts of the same subject or incident.
 2. Take the Second Step of Contrast. Look for things that are *not* the same in different accounts of the same subject or incident.
 3. Take the Third Step of Repetition. Go over the notes taken during the steps of *association* and *contrast* until the subject is understood (Isa 28:9-10).
 4. The incident of what was written on the cross at Calvary can be better understood by using the steps of "*association*," "*contrast*" and "*repetition*."
 - a. The Step of *Association* is taken when one reads the four accounts of this incident in the Gospels (Mat 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19) to find the words that are the same, "The King of the Jews." Mark's account only has these five words.
 - b. The Step of *Contrast* is taken when one reads the four accounts of this incident in the Gospels to find the words that are not the same:
 - 1) Luke's account adds the words, "This is."
 - 2) Matthew's account adds the words, "This is Jesus."
 - 3) John's account adds the words, "Jesus of Nazareth."

- c. The Step of *Repetition* is taken by going over the notes on the four accounts to find that the words that were written on the cross were, “This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”
- Q. There Are “Five Determinations” to Make (things to find out) while Reading a Bible Passage.
1. The First Determination is to find out what the boundaries or limits of the passage are.
 - a. Find out whether the passage takes place during the Old or New Testament (Heb 9:15-17).
 - b. Find out whether the Book is written to the Jews, the Gentiles or the Church of God (Christians) (1 Cor 10:32).
The Book of James is mainly written to the Twelve Tribes of Israel (Jews) (Jas 1:1).
The Book of Jeremiah is mainly written to the nations (Gentiles) (Jer 1:4-5).
The Book of Ephesians is mainly written to the saints at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ (the Church of God) (Eph 1:1).
 2. The Second Determination is to find out what the immediate context of the passage is (for example Luke 14:1-6).
 - a. Find out **who** is speaking. Verse 3 identifies the speaker as being the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. Find out to **whom** the speaker is talking. Verse 3 identifies those being spoken to as the Lawyers and Pharisees.
 - c. Find out **what** is being spoken about. Verse 3 reveals that Christ is speaking about whether or not it is lawful (legal) to heal on the Sabbath day.
 - d. Find out **when** what was spoken actually took place, whether in the past, in the present or in the future. In this passage Jesus is not speaking about some past or future time but about the keeping of the Law of Moses at that time.
 - e. Find out **why** the passage was spoken or written. This passage was written to show that it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day (Luke 14:1-6; Mat 12:1-13).
 3. The Third Determination is to find out what the doctrinal application of the passage is.
 - a. Find out into which dispensation the passage falls (2 Tim 2:15). Luke 14:1-6 falls into the time when the Kingdom was being offered to the Jews (Luke 16:16), before the New Testament began (Mat 27:50; Heb 9:16-17).
 - b. Find out the doctrinal command that is to be obeyed. Even though it was not lawful (legal) to do any work on the Sabbath day (Exo 31:15), it is lawful to heal or do well (Mat 12:11-12).
 4. The Fourth Determination is to find the practical applications of the passage.

- a. The Jews (the Children of Israel) are commanded to keep the Sabbath forever according to Exodus 31:13 & 16-17.
 - b. Church Age Believers (Christians) are not required to keep the Sabbath according to Colossians 2:16.
 - c. Christians have the liberty (the freedom) to help others by doing well on Church meeting days (Gal 2:4; Eph 2:10).
5. The **Fifth Determination** is to find what God's position is in the passage (Luke 14:1-6). God the Father's position of healing on the Sabbath is the same as that of Jesus Christ (John 5:30; 14:10, 24).

V. THERE ARE "SEVEN STEPS" TO BE TAKEN WHEN STUDYING THE PARABLES AND THE PROPHECIES OF THE BIBLE:

A. Seven Steps to Take when Studying the Parables:

1. **Step One** is to know the meaning of the word "parable."
 - a. A parable is a short simple story in which people, things and events have another meaning from which a moral lesson may be learned or taught.
 - b. A parable may have either a physical lesson (Judg 9:6-21) or a spiritual lesson (Luke 18:1), and sometimes both (Luke 15:1-7).
2. **Step Two** is to understand that a parable often places one thing beside another for the purpose of comparison.
 - a. Look for the key words "like," "likened," "so" and "as."
 - b. The word *like* is used for comparison in Matthew 13:33, the word *likened* is used for comparison in Matthew 13:24, the word *so* is used for comparison in John 3:14, and the word *as* is used for comparison in Matthew 25:14.
3. **Step Three** is to determine the central truth that is being taught in the parable.
 - a. Look for the central truth that the speaker himself gives for the parable, as in Luke 18:1 and 18:9.
 - b. When the speaker does not give the central truth for the parable, it is determined by looking at the context of the parable.
 - c. In Luke 15 the Scribes and Pharisees murmured because Jesus Christ received and ate with sinners (vs.1-2).
 - d. Christ gave three parables in Luke 15 to show that the Scribes and Pharisees should have been happy that sinners had come to repentance (vs.5-7, 10, 23 & 32).
4. **Step Four** is to determine what Jesus Christ said about interpreting parables (Mark 4:10-13).
 - a. In Matthew 13:1-8 the parable of the sower is given.
 - b. In Matthew 13:18-23 the parable of the sower is explained by defining items in it.
 - c. When an item is not defined in a parable, look for the definition that the rest of the Bible gives for the item.

- d. In Matthew 13:6 the “root” is not defined.
- e. In Revelation 22:16 the *root* is defined as Jesus Christ.
- 5. **Step Five** is to determine to whom the parable is written or spoken so that one will know whether the doctrinal application is for a Christian, a Jew or a Gentile (1 Cor 10:32).
- 6. **Step Six** is to determine the practical application of the parable for a Christian (2 Tim 3:15-17).
- 7. **Step Seven** is to realize that fools are not able to interpret parables correctly (Pro 26:7, 9).

B. Seven Steps to Take when Studying the Prophecies:

- 1. **Step One** is to remember that prophecy is pre-recorded history.
- 2. **Step Two** is to give the same meaning of every word in a prophecy that is given in the words of an historical account.
- 3. **Step Three** is to not look for hidden (symbolic) meanings.
- 4. **Step Four** is to remember that prophecy does not have to be fulfilled to be understood.
- 5. **Step Five** is to not re-interpret what God gives or interprets plainly.
- 6. **Step Six** is to take all prophecy literally unless it is clearly not literal. If it cannot be taken literally, then look for the literal truth given in the symbolic or figurative language.
- 7. **Step Seven** is to allow the Bible to interpret itself, comparing Scripture with Scripture (1 Cor 2:13).

VI. THERE ARE MANY PRINCIPLES (RULES) THAT HELP YOU WHILE STUDYING THE BIBLE.

A. There Is **the Predictive** (prophetic) **Principle**.

- 1. When studying prophetic (future) events, always let the Bible interpret itself (2 Pet 1:20; 1 Cor 2:12-14).
- 2. In Daniel 2:36-45 a stone is mentioned but not interpreted.
- 3. In Acts 4:10-11 the Bible interprets itself by defining the stone as being Jesus Christ.

B. There Is **the Dispensational Principle**.

- 1. When studying the Bible, keep in mind that God deals differently with man in different ages of history (periods of time; dispensations) (Col 1:25-26; Eph 1:10).
- 2. In the Dispensation of Law, an animal sacrifice was required for the forgiveness of sins, but in the present Dispensation of the Church Age, animal sacrifices are no longer required (Heb 1:1-2; 10:1-14).

C. There Is **the Covenant Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, notice that God makes covenants, both conditional and unconditional agreements, with different people so that they can have a special relationship with Him.
2. A “conditional covenant” is dependent upon man’s keeping the covenant’s requirements to remain in effect (Deu 28:1-6, 15-20). Conditional covenants usually begin with the words “If ye will” as in Exodus 19:5.
3. An “unconditional covenant” is dependent upon God’s faithfulness in keeping the covenant (2 Tim 2:13). Unconditional covenants *usually* begin with the words “I will” as in Genesis 9:8-15.

D. There Is **the Ethnic Division Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, notice that God is a respecter of people of different nations (Jews, Spaniards, Ugandans, Japanese, Americans, etc.) or ethnic groups (Latinos, Africans, Anglos, Orientals).
 - a. God has set the Jews apart from all of the other nations (Deu 26:15-19; Rom 11:25-29).
 - b. God wants the Jews to remain separate from the other nations by not intermarrying with them (Deu 7:1-3; Neh 13:1-3, 23-30).
2. Even though God is a respecter of nations, He is not a respecter of individual people when it concerns salvation (Acts 10:34-35).

E. There Is **the Discrimination Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, notice that God discriminates (chooses or favors one thing over another).
 - a. God discriminates between clean and unclean animals (Gen 7:1-2).
 - b. God discriminates between clean and unclean foods (Lev 11:1-23).
 - c. God discriminates between cities (Psa 132:13; 87:2-6).
2. In the New Testament, God discriminates between believers and unbelievers (2 Cor 6:14-16) and between the Children of God and the Children of the Devil (Gal 3:26; John 8:39-44).

F. There Is **the Application Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, remember that every verse has three applications: **(1)** doctrinal, **(2)** historical (or prophetic), and **(3)** practical (devotional; spiritual).
 - a. First Corinthians 9:9 is a “doctrinal” command applied to the Jews under the Law of Moses and not a *doctrinal* command for Christians (Rom 6:14-15).
 - b. First Corinthians 9:9 is an “historical” reference to something that was spoken to the Jews present in Deuteronomy 12:1.
 - c. First Corinthians 9:9-14 is a “practical” application, made by the Apostle Paul, of an Old Testament Commandment (Deu 25:4), to instruct Christians to financially support those who are ministering to them in spiritual matters.

2. The *doctrinal* application **must** be made first before the *historical* (prophetical) and the *practical*_(devotional) applications are made (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11; 2 Tim 3:15-17).

G. There Is the Revelation Principle.

1. When studying the Bible, keep in mind that God reveals the meaning of Bible mysteries only to believers by the Holy Spirit (Mat 13:10-11; 1 Cor 2:7-14).
2. A Bible mystery is a truth which was previously unknown and then revealed by God to man (Rom 16:25-26).

H. There Is the Consequence Principle.

1. When studying the Bible, notice that there is always a consequence (result; effect; outcome) for every action (Gal 6:7).
2. In the Bible, God uses either the word “therefore” or “wherefore” to explain the consequence for an action.
 - a. In Luke 14:20 the action, “I have married a wife” is followed by the word **therefore** and the consequence, “I cannot come”.
 - b. In Acts 26:3 the action, “...I know thee to be expert...” is followed by the word **wherefore** and the consequence, “I beseech thee to hear me patiently.”

I. There Is the Exhortation Principle.

1. When studying the Bible, notice that God exhorts people (urges, pleads or encourages them strongly) to do something that is important and leads to their benefit (advantage).
2. God’s exhortations usually begin with the word “come” as in Genesis 7:1, Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 55:1, Matthew 11:28-30 and Revelation 22:17.

J. There Is the Illumination Principle.

1. When studying the Bible, remember that God does not give understanding to everyone, but only to those who are sincerely looking for the truth (Jer 29:13; 2 Tim 4:3-4).
2. God will give further illumination (understanding) to those who are willing to act upon the truth that has already been given by the Holy Spirit (Heb 5:12 to 6:3; Jas 1:22-23).

K. There Is the Illustrative Principle.

1. When studying the Bible, keep in mind that God often illustrates (explains) His feelings on a subject.
2. In Jude vs.3-8 God illustrates His displeasure for sin by referring to the destruction of unbelievers after the exodus from Egypt (v.5), the imprisonment (incarceration) of fallen angels (v.6), and of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (v.7).
3. In Hebrews 11:5 God illustrates His pleasure in fellowship with man by referring to His relationship with Enoch.

L. There Is **the Mention Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, remember that God explains a subject, a word or an event in one of four principle ways: **(1) First Mention, (2) Progressive Mention, (3) Full Mention, and (4) Subsequent Mention.**
2. The First Mention Principle occurs when a subject, word or event first appears in the Bible and gives the key to its basic meaning.
 - a. This principle is shown in Genesis 4:7 where the basic meaning of the word “sin” is given as, “If thou doest not well” (an offense against what is right).
 - b. This basic meaning of sin is found in Deuteronomy 24:16, 1st Kings 15:34, Proverbs 21:4, Hosea 12:8, Micah 3:8, Romans 14:23, James 4:17 and 1st John 5:17a.
3. The Progressive Mention Principle occurs when a subject, word or event is given and then made clearer each time it appears until its final mention.
 - a. The Progressive Mention Principle is shown in the subject of “Being Born of God.”
 - b. The subject of *Being Born of God* is first mentioned in John 1:12-13.
 - c. The subject of *Being Born of God* is next mentioned in John 3:3 where it is defined as “Being Born Again.”
 - d. *Being born again* is further defined as “Being Born of the Spirit” in John 3:5.
 - e. *Being Born of the Spirit* is not a physical rebirth (not being born of the flesh again) according to John 3:4-6.
 - f. A man is “Born Again by the Spirit” through incorruptible seed, the word of God, according to 1st Peter 1:23.
 - g. A man who is *born of God* cannot sin because God’s seed remains in him forever according to 1st John 3:9.
 - h. A man who is *born of God* should love other believers according to 1st John 4:7.
 - i. A man is *born of God* because he believes that Jesus is the Christ according to 1st John 5:1.
 - j. A man who is *born of God* overcomes the world according to 1st John 5:4.
 - k. A man who is *born of God* is begotten of (fathered, procreated, produced or brought into being by) God and protected from the Wicked One (the devil) according to 1st John 5:18.
4. The Full Mention Principle occurs when a subject, word or event is given in such detail that God’s complete thoughts are given in one statement.
 - a. This principle is shown in the subject of “Studying the Bible.”
 - b. The only place in the Bible (the word of truth – John 17:17) where believers are commanded to study the Bible is in 2nd Timothy 2:15.
 - 1) The reason given in this verse for *studying the Bible* is to be approved (accepted) by God.
 - 2) Believers are told in this verse that they will have to be like workers and not just readers when *studying the Bible*.

- 3) Believers are told in this verse that there is nothing to be ashamed of by *studying the Bible*.
- 4) Believers are told in this verse that the correct way of *studying the Bible* is by rightly dividing (correctly separating) the word of God.
5. The Subsequent Mention Principle occurs when a subject, word or event is given and then later on in the Bible other details are added that were not given before.
 - a. This principle is shown in the events of Saul's vision (the Apostle Paul's – Acts 13:9) of the Lord Jesus Christ before he was saved.
 - b. This vision is mentioned in Acts 9:1-9, Acts 22:4-11 and Acts 26:12-15.
 - 1) In Acts 9:7 the men with Saul are said to have stood speechless, heard a voice but did not see Jesus.
 - 2) In Acts 22:9 the men with Saul are said to have seen a light, were afraid but did not hear the voice of Jesus.
 - 3) In Acts 26:14 Saul and the men with him are said to have fallen down, but only Saul heard the voice of Jesus speaking in Hebrew.
 - c. The added details given to Acts 9:7 in the subsequent accounts in Acts 22:9 and Acts 26:14 show the following five facts: **(1)** both Saul and the group of men with him fell to the ground before they stood speechless, **(2)** they all saw a light, **(3)** they all were afraid, **(4)** they all heard the sound of a voice, **(5)** but only Saul understood what Jesus said in the Hebrew language.
 - d. Another example where a voice was heard and everyone did not understand what was actually spoken occurred in John 12:27-29.

M. There Is **the Context Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, knowing what is going on in the passage (the context) helps to determine the meaning of what is being studied.
2. There are six steps in determining the context of a passage:
 - a. *Step One* is to find out, "who is speaking."
 - b. *Step Two* is to find out, "who is being spoken to" (1 Cor 10:32).
 - c. *Step Three* is to find out, "what is being spoken about" (Luke 18:1-8, 9-14).
 - d. *Step Four* is to find out, "why it was written or spoken" (the reason or purpose) (Luke 18:1; John 5:13).
 - e. *Step Five* is to find out, "when the events of the passage took place" (whether on Old Testament or on New Testament grounds) (Heb 9:16-17; Mat 27:50).
 - f. *Step Six* is to find out, "what God's position is in the passage" (whether He is for or against what is going on).

N. There Is **the Clarity Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, never take an unclear or hard to understand verse or passage in place of one or more clear verses or passages on the same subject.

2. When studying the subject of “Church Age Salvation for Gentiles,” never take Acts 2:38 instead of Acts 16:30-31, Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 2:8-9, 1st Corinthians 1:17-18, or 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

O. There Is **the Agreement Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, keep in mind that God does not contradict Himself by giving an account or statement in one place and then saying the opposite in another place (1 Cor 14:33).
2. First Kings 7:23 & 26 appears to contradict 2nd Chronicles 4:2 & 5 concerning the amount of water in the molten sea (basin).
 - a. First Kings 7 states that the sea “contained” 2,000 baths of water.
 - b. Second Chronicles 4 states that it “held” 3,000 baths of water.
 - c. There is no contradiction. First Kings 7 gives the amount of water that was to be *contained* in the sea (how much was to be kept in it), while 2nd Chronicles 4 gives the total amount of water that the sea could *hold* if it were filled to the very top (to the brim).

P. There Is **the Direct Statement Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, remember that God usually says what He means and means what He says. The locusts described in Revelation 9:1-10 are real and are not said to represent anything else, even though they are not normal locusts (vs.7-10).
2. The times when God does not actually mean what He says, God explains what He means.
 - a. The candlesticks of Revelation 1:12 are said to be Churches in verse 20.
 - b. The stars of Revelation 1:16 are said to be Angels in verse 20.

Q. There Is **the Repetition Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, keep in mind that God often repeats something already given, either for emphasis (to give special attention to) or for warning.
2. God the Father repeats a whole verse to emphasize the fact that man’s ways end in death (Pro 14:12 & 16:25).
3. God the Son repeats the phrase, “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites!” seven times in one chapter to warn the religious leaders during His earthly ministry (Mat 23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27 & 29).

R. There Is **the Gap Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, remember that God often ignores certain periods of time in Jewish history, sometimes leaping over centuries without comment.
2. God ignores nearly 400 years of Jewish history from the end of the Old Testament to the Beginning of the New Testament time (between Malachi and Matthew).

3. God ignores nearly 2,000 years of Jewish history from the 1st Coming of Jesus Christ to the 2nd Coming of Christ (Isa 61:1-2; Luke 4:14-21; Rev 19:11-16).

S. There Is **the Election Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, keep in mind that God often elects (chooses) to set aside the preeminence of the first (the place of first importance) to establish the second.
 - a. Election is God's choosing of one person, place or thing over another (John 15:19; Acts 9:10-15).
 - b. Predestination is God's choosing beforehand (ahead of time) the final position (or condition) of a person, place or thing (Eph 1:3-7).
 - c. Foreknowledge is God's knowing beforehand what will happen to a person, place or thing, and knowing what a person will think, say or do (Rom 8:28-30; 1 Pet 1:1-2).
2. The *Election Principle* is illustrated in Romans 9:7-13.
 - a. Isaac, the second son of Abraham, is chosen over Ishmael, the first born son of Abraham (vs.7-9).
 - b. Jacob, the second son of Isaac, is chosen over Esau, the first born son of Isaac (vs.10-13).
 - c. God's election, like predestination, is based on His foreknowledge (Rom 8:28-30, 33).

T. There Is **the Numerical Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, remember that God gives a meaning to many numbers used in the Bible.
2. The number three (3) is the number of completion of a person, place or thing.
 - a. God is complete (one) in *three* personalities (Eph 4:6; 1 John 5:7).
 - 1) The Father is called both Lord and God (Exo 6:7; Mat 11:25).
 - 2) The Son is called both Lord and God (Acts 2:36; Rom 10:9; John 20:26-28).
 - 3) The Holy Spirit is called both Lord and God (2 Cor 3:17; Acts 5:3-4).
 - b. A man is complete with *three* parts: a spirit, a soul, and a body (1 Thes 5:23).
 - c. Time is complete with *three* periods: past, present, and future (Rev 1:19).
 - d. All objects are complete with three dimensions: length, width, and height.
3. The number five (5) is the number of death.
 - a. The first time the word "died" (death) appears in the Bible is in Genesis 5:5 (cf. Acts 5:5).
 - b. In the Old Testament, men were often killed by being stabbed under the *fifth* rib (2 Sam 2:23; 3:27; 4:6 & 20:10).

U. There Is **the Double Reference Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, keep in mind that a statement may have a double application.
2. Sometimes one person is spoken to, but the statement is also aimed at someone else as in Matthew 16:22-23. Even though Jesus Christ is speaking directly to the Apostle Peter, Christ is also speaking indirectly to Satan, the one who put the thought in Peter's mind just as he did to Ananias in Acts 5:3-4.
3. Sometimes a statement is given that applies both to the past and to the future as in Hosea 11:1, which was written in 785 B.C.
 - a. Hosea 11:1 applies to the past when God brought His Son, the nation of Israel (Exo 4:22), out of Egypt in Exodus 18:1, which took place in 1491 B.C.
 - b. When Hosea 11:1 was written it was also a prophesy that applied to the future when God would bring His Son Jesus Christ (2 Pet 1:16-17; Mat 3:17) out of Egypt in Matthew 2:13-15, which took place about A.D. 4.
4. Sometimes a prophecy is given that applies to both the "near" and "distant" future.
 - a. The prophecy that the kings of the earth will gather together against the Lord in Psalm 2:1-2 was written about 1000 B.C.
 - b. This prophecy was fulfilled in the *near* future at the trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Luke 23:1-13; Acts 4:25-27).
 - c. This prophecy will also be fulfilled in the *distant* future at the Second Coming of Christ (Rev 19:11-19).

V. There Is **the Typical Principle**.

1. When studying the Bible, remember that God often uses a symbol or type to represent a truth or a person.
 - a. A symbol is something or someone that stands for (represents) something or someone else.
 - b. A Type is something or someone that represents or symbolizes another person, place or thing that is to come.
2. In Genesis 9:8-17 God uses the symbol (token) of the bow (rainbow) in the cloud in verse 13 to represent His covenant not to destroy all flesh with another flood.
3. In Genesis chapters 37 through 50, there are more than fifty details in the life of Jacob's son Joseph that are similar to the details in the life of Jesus Christ, which makes Joseph one of the greatest types of Christ in the Bible. The following are only a few examples of the many similar details:
 - a. Both Joseph and Christ **were envied** by their brethren (cf. Gen 37:5-11 with Matt 27:17-18).
 - b. Both Joseph and Christ **were sold for pieces of silver** (cf. Gen 37:28 with Mat 26:14-15).
 - c. Both Joseph and Christ **were falsely accused** (cf. Gen 39:11-20 with Mat 26:59).

- d. Both Joseph and Christ **were not recognized** by their brethren (cf. Gen 42:8; 45:1 with Luke 24:15-16, 31; Mat 12:46-49).

VII. HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT TEXTS WHILE STUDYING THE BIBLE.

- A. Keep in Mind that most difficult Texts (verses or passages that seem to contradict each other) Are usually not as Hard to Understand as They Appear. A thorough Reading of the Texts Involved Will usually Clear up the Difficulty.
- B. Remember that many Difficulties Are Caused by the Reader not Having all the Facts, or Having a wrong Understanding of the Facts, in the Texts Involved.
- C. Keep in Mind that even though *You* Are Unable to Solve the Difficulty (problem), this Does not Mean that the Difficulty Can not Be Cleared up.
- D. Remember that You should always Assume that there Is no Contradiction between the Texts, Giving God the Benefit of the Doubt (Mat 22:29).
- E. There Are “Ten Steps” to Take when Dealing with difficult Texts:
1. The First Step is to pray that God will give you an explanation for the difficulty.
 2. The Second Step is to check all parallel passages (different accounts of the same subject) to get a complete description of what is going on in the difficult texts.
 3. The Third Step is to use a good concordance to see how God uses every word of the difficult text in other verses.
 - a. Acts 2:38 is a difficult text because the word “for” in this verse is commonly believed to mean, “in order to receive” something.
 - b. The word *for* in Acts 2:38 means “because of” just as it does in Luke 5:12-14, Matthew 26:28, Mark 1:4 and Romans 3:25.
 - c. The word *for* in Acts 2:38 cannot mean “in order to receive,” but must mean “because of” since sins were remitted (forgiven) by the blood of Jesus Christ (Heb 9:22; John 20:23; Acts 10:43; Col 1:14).
 4. The Fourth Step is to look in other parts of the Bible to define any word(s) not understood in the difficult text(s).
 - a. In Matthew 11:19 Jesus Christ is accused of being a “gluttonous” person and a “winebibber.”
 - b. The words **glutton** and **winebibber** are defined in Proverbs 23:20-21. The word *glutton* is defined as “a riotous eater of flesh” and the word *winebibber* is defined as “a drunkard.”
 5. The Fifth Step is to use a good English dictionary to look up the meaning of any word not understood in the difficult text(s) that is not defined anywhere else in the Bible.

6. The Sixth Step is to check all good conservative commentaries available to see how they view the difficult text.
7. The Seventh Step is to check with other Bible believing Christians for insights that they may have on the difficult text(s).
8. The Eighth Step is to use a Greek or Hebrew lexicon (dictionary) for the meaning of any word still not understood in the difficult text(s).
9. The Ninth Step is to pray over all the information gathered in steps one through eight above in order to determine the correct meaning of the difficult text(s).
10. The Tenth Step is to leave the text as it is (Deu 4:2; Pro 30:5-6; Rev 22:18-19; Gal 4:30a).

VIII. HOW TO DEAL WITH FIGURES OF SPEECH WHILE STUDYING THE BIBLE.

- A. “Figures of Speech” Are Expressions (groups of words) that Are Used to Get across a Meaning that Is Unfamiliar to the Reader by Comparing or Identifying one Thing with another Thing that Has a Meaning Familiar to the Reader.
- B. The following *Figures of Speech* Are Found in the Bible:
 1. An Allegory is a story where people, places, things or events (happenings) have another meaning or represent something else and is used to teach or explain something.
 - a. Galatians 4:22-26 speaks about the two sons of Abraham (Isaac and Ishmael - Gen 17:15-22), who represent two separate covenants of God.
 - b. Ishmael the son of Abraham by his wife Sarah’s bondmaid (slave; concubine) Hagar represents the Old Covenant between God and the Nation of Israel, which is symbolized by earthly Jerusalem (Gal 4:25).
 - c. Isaac the son of Abraham’s freewoman (wife) Sarah represents the New Covenant that is symbolized by New Jerusalem (Gal 4:26; Rev 21:2).
 2. An Anti-Personification is used where non-living things, living things or ideas represent people. In 2nd Samuel 16:5-9 a dead dog represents the man Shimei.
 3. An Apostrophe is used where someone turns away from those he is speaking to and speaks to another person, place or thing that is not physically present. In 2nd Samuel 18:31-33 King David is speaking to Cush, turns away from him and then speaks to his dead son Absalom.
 4. A Fable is a short story where animals, plants or objects speak and act like human beings (people). In Judges 9:1-21 Jotham uses a fable where trees and vines are spoken of as though they were people.

5. A Hendiady is used when two nouns, usually connected by the word “and,” are used instead of a noun (a person, place, thing or idea) and an adjective (a word that helps to describe a noun).
 - a. In Ephesians 4:11 the two nouns “pastors” and “teachers” are a reference to the same people.
 - b. Pastors (noun) and teachers (noun) are used instead of teaching (adjective) pastors (noun) (Acts 3:14, Tit 2:13; Jas 1:27).
6. A Hyperbole is used where a person, place or thing is exaggerated (spoken of as being greater than it actually is) for the purpose of emphasis. In 1st Samuel 18:6-8 David is said to have killed ten thousands when in fact he had only killed the Philistine Goliath (1 Sam 17:50-52).
7. A Metaphor is used when a person, place or thing replaces another person place or thing to suggest a likeness between them. In Psalm 18:2 God is said to be a “rock,” a “fortress,” a “buckler” and a “high tower.”
8. A Metonymy is used where a person, place or thing is substituted by something closely connected to it. In John 1:29 Jesus Christ is substituted by a lamb because He is closely connected with a lamb in Isaiah 53:7, 1st Peter 1:19 and Revelation 17:14.
9. A Personification is used when a thing or idea is represented as a person or having the characteristics of a person (being able to do what a person does).
 - a. In Proverbs 1:20-23 *wisdom* is given the characteristics of a person.
 - b. In Proverbs 1:20 *wisdom* is given the characteristics of a person when it is referred to as “her” and is said to cry (shout).
 - c. In Proverbs 1:21-23 *wisdom* is said to utter “her words.”
10. A Riddle is used when a puzzling or confusing question is given as a problem to be solved. In Judges 14:10-18 Samson used a riddle to puzzle his wedding companions.
11. A Simile is used when two different things are compared to one another by using the word “as” or “like” (Hos 12:10).
 - a. In 1st Peter 5:8 the devil and a roaring lion, which are two different things, are compared to one another by the word “as.”
 - b. In Matthew 13:33 the Kingdom of Heaven and leaven (yeast), which are two different things, are compared to each other by the word “like.”
12. A Synecdoche is used in four ways: **(1)** where a part is used for a whole, **(2)** where a whole is used for a part, **(3)** where an individual is used for a group, and **(4)** where a group is used for an individual.
 - a. *A part is used for a whole* in Romans 3:15 where the feet of a man represent the man’s whole body.
 - b. *A whole is used for a part* in Matthew 8:34 where “the whole city” represents only the part that came out to meet Jesus, and not all the men, women, children and animals in the city.
 - c. *An individual is used for a group* in Genesis 3:16 where the individual woman Eve represents all women as a group.

- d. *A group is used for an individual* in Acts 8:1-3 and 9:1-5 where the persecuted group of Christian men and women (the Church – Acts 8:3) represent the individual person Jesus Christ, who is said to be persecuted in Acts 9:4-5.

IX. HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE BY BOOK AND CHAPTER.

- A. There Are 4 Determinations to Make when studying a Book of the Bible:
 - 1. Determine the Book's writer and date of writing.
 - 2. Determine the Book's purpose, why it was written (cf. John 20:30-31).
 - 3. Determine the Book's main contents and general outline by reading it several times.
 - 4. Determine the Book's doctrinal application (1 Cor 10:32).

- B. There Are 9 Determinations to Be Made when Studying a Chapter of a Bible Book:
 - 1. Determine the chapter's theme, the main topic or subject, sometimes there is more than one.
 - 2. Determine the chapter's context (who, whom, what, when, where & why).
 - 3. Determine the most important, or key, verse that supports the chapter's theme, sometimes there is more than one.
 - 4. Determine the important word in the chapter that occurs the most (Mat 24:35; Gal 3:16), sometimes there is more than one.
 - 5. Determine the chapter's teaching about Jesus Christ (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).
 - 6. Determine the chapter's doctrinal application to Christians (1 Cor 10:32).
 - 7. Determine if there are any commands to be obeyed in the chapter by a Christian (Rom 2:13; Jas 1:22).
 - 8. Determine if there are any promises in the chapter to be claimed by a Christian (2 Cor 1:20; 7:1).
 - 9. Determine if there are any practical or devotional applications in the chapter that can be made by a Christian (Rom 4:23-24; 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11; 2 Tim 3:15-17).

- C. When Someone Approaches the Bible humbly in the Fear of God [Pro 1:7; 9:10], Believing that It Is God's Word [1 Thes 2:13], Submitting Himself to Its Authority [Jas 1:22], and Accepting It above one's Church or Denomination [Mark 7:1-9], then that Person can Compare Scripture with Scripture [1 Cor 2:13] and Obtain the Truth without Interpreting Anything [Gal 4:30a]. (adapted from Dr. Peter S. Ruckman)