

How To Study The Bible

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HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

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SECTION ONE

HOW TO APPROACH AND STUDY THE BIBLE

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION:

Coming To Read The Bible

There are many folk who would like to read the Bible. Some of these have never yet read it. It is a mystery to them. To some it seems to be a difficult book. Who could possibly understand it? Because it has always been around, most of us have opened its pages at one time or another. Some of us have tried to read. Baffled we have closed it up and put it aside.

Some have read the Bible for many years. Whilst it has not been unintelligible, it has also not been easy to grasp. To read from the first book, Genesis to the last book, Revelation has been, for some, a painful task. The Bible has 66 books bound in its one cover. Thirty-nine of these are said to be Old Testament books, and twenty-seven are called New Testament books. This we will explain later.

To get back to the matter of reading the Bible: everyone should seek to read it, sooner or later. Sooner if possible. This is not only because it has been the greatest seller of any book in all time, and not only because it continues to be in the top sales-level every year, but because it has so much to offer. What it offers will be discovered when one reads it.

How then shall one read it? The writer seeks to give answers to that question.

Motivation for Reading

Why should one read the Bible? Many answers could be given. Some have read it as fine literature.

Most agree that the *King James Version*, published early in the seventeenth century has exquisite English. Others read it because they want to find God. God is a mystery to them. They would like to come to know Him. Others are interested in history as it is portrayed in the Old Testament books. Some are fascinated by the people of Israel. Others have a bent for prophecy, so they read the prophetic writings in both the Old and New Testaments. Some have a delight in poetry, and they read the Psalms and similar books. Yet others are deeply interested in morals, and they scan the laws in both Testaments. Some are curious about the man Jesus and his life. Some seek to understand his sayings. Others are intrigued by the acts and miracles of his ministry. Many seek to understand the man, and enquire whether he were also, God.

Doubtless there are other interests. Without question the Bible is the most remarkable bringing-together of many books to form one volume, ie. a volume which has a basic unity. The time of writing of the books contained in the Bible has been assessed at about 1,500 years. Doubtless the source-materials for writing some of the first books are much more ancient. Certain it is that there is a wealth of information, history, prophecy, teaching and exhortation. No single person could ever exhaust it. It is without doubt the most remarkable document that has come into man's hands.

This being so, everyone ought to read it. Generally speaking, most new readers pick it up either because they believe they have come to know God, or because, in some strange way, they wish to know God. Within its pages it promises to give man an understanding of God, creation, this life, and the life beyond. Not all agree that its teachings are adequate or understandable. Not all accept the teachings or the offer of eternal life given in its pages. Even so, most agree that it is a fascinating

book. Those who claim to understand it see it as entrancing. They cannot leave it alone. Doubtless hundreds of thousands read it daily, and still find fresh things. Down through the ages it has been the most read book of all.

It seems there is motivation enough for most of us to read it.

The Different Kinds of Readers

Some, as we have suggested, read it because they are curious or intrigued. Others read it in order to discover God, or to know Him better. Many read it in order to come to know its teachings and its text. Teachers, evangelists and preachers wish to know it well so that they may skilfully communicate its truths. So then a variety of persons may pick up this little book about the Bible, wondering how it may help them.

There are many Christians who have never grasped the basics of the Bible. They know very little, and yet live amongst other Christians who know much about the Bible, or at least appear to do so. So they feel inferior in regard to the book. They would like to learn the basics.

There are Christians who have read the Bible for years, and know certain parts of it very well. Other sections they rarely read, either because they do not feel they are relevant, or because they are not attracted to them. They too may have a wish to be more familiar with these sections.

There are other readers who are happy to read the Scriptures but live with the uneasy feeling that they are not reliable. They have an idea that much which was written for previous times does not have relevance or value for today. Some see a conflict between faith and science, perhaps on issues such as creation and evolution. Others wonder at the authenticity of the writings. Were they edited, corrected, changed? Did writers have a certain point

to make and were they always truthful? And so on. For uneasy readers we have added some material which should be helpful in this regard. Also the Bibliography makes recommendations of books which cover these points.

Whatever the nature or kind of reader, it does not greatly matter. Anyone is free to pick up this Bible or to put it down, to read it or to neglect it. What is certain is that when a person gives himself to reading it then it is surely going to make some impression upon him.

CHAPTER TWO

HOW THE BIBLE IS STRUCTURED

When you pick up a Bible and open its first pages you discover an index. This is in two sections, Old Testament, and New Testament. Roughly speaking the O .T. deals with the agreement God made with the people of Israel. It has a lead-up to that agreement, namely the first eleven chapters of Genesis. In chapter twelve the story is told of God meeting Abraham, and making a covenant (or, agreement) with him. This covenant is also called 'a testament'. From chapter twelve to the end of the fifth book (Deuteronomy) we see this covenant being worked out in Abraham and his descendants. The second book of the Bible, Exodus, tells of God caring for the descendants of Abraham's grandson, Jacob. They are now called the people of Israel. He liberates them from the ruling powers of Egypt, and proceeds to bring them to the land He had promised to Abraham, called Canaan, or, in later term, Palestine. The books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy tell of the wanderings of the people of Israel in the Sinai Desert until they came to invade Canaan. The books also cover the laws God gave to His people. Some of these related to hygiene and sanitation, some to ritual sacrifices, and some to moral living.

The .book of Joshua which follows tells of the places and manner in which the 12 tribes of Israel settled in Canaan. The book of Judges which follows it tells of the turbulent times the Israelites went through because of internal disunity, and attacks from outside invaders. A book called Ruth is inserted at this point, being a beautiful story of

loyalty and love. It is followed by six books called I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, and I and II Chronicles. These books tell the story of Israel from the time of the Judges until the time when finally Israel as a nation was broken, and its people taken into exile. If read as history then the last four books are complicated, but they are not primarily to be read as history. As we will see, later, they are to be read as prophecy. This goes also for the two books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These latter two books describe the return of a portion of the people to Palestine, and their re-establishment as a nation.

This section which covers the story of Israel is followed by what are called 'the writings' or 'the holy writings'. The names of the books are Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. They are a fine collection of quite human writings, some of them including the wisdom taught in their days. They are very human books, easily understood. The wisdom of course is as relevant now to us as it was to the people of those days.

Following these writings are the prophecies of four great prophets known as 'the major prophets'. They are Isaiah, Jeremiah (who also wrote a book called Lamentations), Ezekiel and Daniel. The books are large, and quite significant. Then follow twelve books called the books of 'the minor prophets'. These books are extremely significant. Each prophecy was related to the times in which it was given. Some prophecies were made before the fall of the nation Israel, some whilst it was in exile, and some after it returned. Many of the prophecies refer to future events, such as we see happen in the New Testament.

The books of the New Testament also have their divisions. However, we have to recognise that some 400 years passed between the writing of the last book of the O.T. (Malachi), and the events described in the first books of the N.T. (the Gospels).

The first three books of the N.T. (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are called 'the Synoptic Gospels'. The reason for calling them this does not matter, but they seem to use, roughly speaking, the same material and perhaps the same sources. The fourth Gospel, called John, is written from a special viewpoint. Nevertheless its material covers the same period as do the other three, namely the period of Jesus' ministry.

These Gospels are followed by the book of Acts. This tells what the apostles (the specially appointed followers of Jesus) and the early church did. It is not so much a history, as a telling of what the early Christians said and did, and how and why churches came into being. Following the Acts there are twenty-one letters written by the apostles and other leaders and teachers. These letters were written to churches, and are quite important. They were written to teach, to correct error, to stimulate to true living, holiness of life, and to encourage members of the churches to share the message of God and Christ with those outside the churches. Also they spoke of things which would happen at the end of time, exhorting readers to live in hope, and order their lives accordingly.

The last book of the Bible is called The Revelation. Written by a follower of Jesus called John, it is the recording of a series of visions this man received when exiled (because of his faith) to the Island of Patmos. This book attempts some powerful themes, especially as to why and how good and evil are in the world, and the conflict which is going on between them, and will go on to the end of time. It shows that evil will be defeated, and the whole creation (the heavens and the earth) will be renewed.

So that we can see this all in a bird's eye view, we have set out the following table :-

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

<i>Genesis</i>	The Book of Beginnings. Beginning of Creation & Covenant	Called the books of the Law.
<i>Exodus</i>	Israel goes out of Egypt.	
<i>Leviticus</i>	Israel is given laws by which to live.	
<i>Number</i>	Israel's wanderings in Sinai Desert, & more laws	
<i>Deuteronomy</i>	The teachings of Moses & God for the New Land	
<i>Joshua</i>	Settling in the land.	
<i>Judges</i>	Conflict in the New Land. Victories & defeats under leaders.	Called the former prophets
<i>Ruth</i>	A story of love & family loyalty	
<i>I Samuel &</i>	Samuel leads Israel as a prophet & a priest.	
<i>II Samuel</i>	Israel selects a king. Rise of the monarchy. Kings Saul & David.	
<i>I Kings & II Kings</i>	The story of Israel from David to the Exile. Written prophetically to show God's judgement on evil & idolatry.	
<i>I Chronicles & II Chronicles</i>	Written from a priestly point of view, prophetically showing the attitude of Israel to the law.	
<i>Ezra</i> <i>Nehemiah</i>	Describing the return of Israel, & the problems in rebuilding the walls & the temple at Jerusalem	

<i>Esther</i>	Contain human experiences, experiences with God, and deal with the wisdom of God and man.	Called The Holy Writings
<i>Job</i>		
<i>Psalms</i>		
<i>Proverbs</i>		
<i>Ecclesiastes</i>		
<i>Song of Sol.</i>	Prophecies concerning the destruction of Israel, its rehabilitation & its new coming Kingdom, Messiah & Suffering Servant.	Called the Major Prophets
<i>Isaiah</i>		
<i>Jeremiah</i> <i>Lamentations</i>	'The prophet who warned against the fall of the nation.	Called the Major Prophets
<i>Ezekiel</i>	Some prophecies partly prior to the ultimate exile, but mainly during the exile.	
<i>Daniel</i>	Written in the exile about Babylon, predicting the end times also.	
<i>Hosea</i> <i>Joel</i> <i>Amos</i> <i>Obadiah</i> <i>Jonah</i> <i>Micah</i> <i>Nahum</i> <i>Habakkuk</i> <i>Zephaniah</i> <i>Haggai</i> <i>Zechariah</i> <i>Malachi</i>	Prophets prophesying prior to the exile, and in post-exilic times. Hosea to Zephaniah are pre-exilic, and Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are postexilic. They (ie. Hosea to Zephaniah) were concerned with the idolatry and rebellion of Israel, as also the lack of social justice and moral goodness, predicting God's judgements upon His people, but also pointing to a new day. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are concerned with the rebuilding of the temple and the covenant people.	Called the Minor Prophets

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

<i>Matthew</i>	The four Gospels, telling the good news of Jesus Christ, including something of his birth, but mainly of his ministry, death, resurrection and ascension.	
<i>Mark</i>		
<i>Luke</i>		
<i>John</i>		
<i>Act</i>	The apostles and the early church in action. The spreading of the Gospel throughout the world.	
<i>Romans</i>	Letters of Paul to the churches bearing these names. The Letters were to encourage, correct doctrine, practice of life, and to teaching the truth positively.	
<i>I Corinthians</i>		
<i>II Corinthians</i>		
<i>Galatians</i>		
<i>Ephesians</i>		
<i>Philippians</i>		
<i>Colossians</i>		
<i>I Thessalonians</i>		
<i>II Thessalonians</i>		
<i>I Timothy</i>		'Letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus to help them in their pastoral and teaching ministries.
<i>II Timothy</i>		
<i>Titus</i>		
<i>Philemon</i>	A letter of Paul to a man whose slave had escaped.	
<i>Hebrews</i>	A letter by an unnamed writer, who writes to Hebrews who have heard the gospel. He is showing that the gospel is greater than all that has happened before. His readers must grasp the new, and live according to it. To go back would be disastrous and dangerous.	
<i>James</i>	A letter to the churches in general. Relating to the practice of Christian life.	

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

<i>I Peter</i>	First letter is to the churches in general. Helpful teaching on suffering. ‘
<i>II Peter</i>	Second letter speaks of the dangers of the last time, and the need to live consistent with the Gospel.
<i>I John</i> <i>II John</i> <i>III John</i>	Three letters of John written to churches in regard to the living of the Christian life
<i>Jude</i>	A warning against heresy, and helpful words on living as God’s true people.
<i>Revelation</i>	A book to exhort churches, and to describe the events of history, particularly with a view to seeing that God is in control of all history.

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If we continually look at this table we can see what the Bible is all about and select our areas of reading. At least we know what books cover the story of Israel, the prophecies, the coming of Jesus, his life, death, resurrection and ascension, and then the work of the early church, the writings which helped them, and the final prophecy which relates to the past, present and future of the world. Should we wish to understand the personal experiences of men and women, we can read the Psalms, Job, and the Song of Solomon. They cover everything from birth to death, family life, human love, and human sorrows. Books such as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes tell us much of the wisdom we would like to know.

CHAPTER THREE

A PERSONAL APPROACH TO READING THE BIBLE

As we have suggested, we will be reading the Bible according to our particular motives. Even so it is best to have some method when we attempt this experience. We can of course toy with the reading, flipping over pages until our eye is caught by something. We can enjoy the warm-life stories of various heroes, or potter around in the psalms. We can try to understand some of the prophets, or some of the letters of the New Testament. Nevertheless ordered reading is very helpful. Some of the following suggestions may be considered.

(i) Select the Kind of Bible Which Appeals to You

There are numerous translations available. They divide, roughly, into two groups :-

- (a) *Actual Translations*. By this we mean that they translated from the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, and the Greek text of the New Testament, and can be relied upon as having faithfully rendered in English that which is written in the Hebrew and Greek. We name a few of these translations:- *King James Bible, Revised Version, American Standard Revised, New American Standard Bible, Revised Standard Version*. All of these are in the one block. With them are other careful translations such as the *Berkeley Edition, Goodspeed's Translation, The New English Bible, The Good News Bible, and The New International Version*.
- (b) *Paraphrased Translations*. The best known is the *Living Bible* which is also under other names, according to its area of distribution. Many find this

very simple, and some of its insights are good. However it must not be used as though it were a careful translation. An older translation is *Moffat's*. but this has verses situated according to the translator's ideas. There are paraphrased translations of the NT, *Phillip's* and *Way's* being the best.

For those who have just come into the faith, or are moving that way, the *Good News* version is simple and helpful. *The New International Version* is excellent, and easily readable. So is *Berkeley's Edition*. However, the intending reader should browse through these from some library, or even in a bookshop, before deciding on the version he will continually read.

(ii) Think of the Bible You May Eventually Use

The time may come when even the simplest reader will want to study the Bible. In this case it is good to get a Bible which is easily readable in size of print, and which will wear well, having good paper, good binding, and even with a pure leather cover. If possible get a Bible with wide margins, where notes can be written. Most necessary is a reference column. Such columns can easily be understood. The number of the verse is written, and small letters indicate which part of the verse is referred to another section of the Bible. An expanded reference system can be found in *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Bagster, London, or Revell, New Jersey, 1971). Having this separate volume can be very helpful.

A Bible such as this may be costly, but will outwear many cheaper bindings, and will be one with which the reader can become familiar.

There are also Bibles called Study Bibles (see pages 54-55). These have notes and explanations, and are helpful. Some Bibles contain a concordance which is a form of reference under the word used. Larger concordances will eventually be needed for

the interested student. Many Bibles contain historical and geographical maps. Bible Atlases can also be purchased separately.

(iii) Helps to Reading the Bible

The Bible is a book which has been wholly written in the East. It has also been written over a long period of time. Cultures and customs within it differ greatly from those in the West. Hence aids to reading are not to be spurned. A concordance, a reference book, an atlas, and a Bible Dictionary can all be helpful. Doubtless it is best at first to proceed without these. Even difficult passages can be left for the time being. A general scan of the Scriptures is all that is really necessary in the first stages of reading. Later the aids mentioned here will be helpful. These too, can be selected from the Bibliography.

Voice-cassettes of the Bible are also procurable. That is the Bible is read out on cassettes. It is easier for certain persons to listen rather than to read. Cassettes can even be supplementary to one's own reading. A good reader is able to bring out the message of the text.

(iv) Times for Reading

The time of reading can be very important. Some like to rise early in the morning before the noise and responsibility of the day are upon them. Some - particularly mothers with children - like to wait until the family has left the house. Others prefer to read at lunchtime, especially at work. Yet others leave it until the evening, and often just before sleeping.

Some like a regular daily reading. Others prefer to read at longer intervals, and even in the week-ends. It is best to read when one is fresh, has few interruptions, and is able best to concentrate.

It is a fact of life that some do not come to clear consciousness early in the day and become more alert at night. It does not matter, so long as one reads the Book.

(v) Places for Reading

Some read best where there is background music, noise or action. Others prefer total quietness. Some relax best in bed. Others doze in this situation. Libraries are a good place to read. Some gain most by reading when travelling. One then must select the best time, place, and situation.

(vi) The Amount One Reads

Some are avid readers from the beginning, especially if the truth of the Scripture has made an impact. Such persons will read rapidly, and through great areas of the Bible. If the Bible is compared with other books it can be seen that the Bible is no more in size than a large novel. It need take only days to read it through. For others this is an impossible task. For this reason some limit themselves to a chapter a day, or regulate their reading to what they can reasonably understand within a certain period of time. Perhaps they will read only a few verses. It does not really matter. Each person must work that out for himself. A chart for covering the whole Bible in one year is given at the rear of this volume, but then such readings may suit only a few.

The fact is that some parts of the Bible appeal differently to various readers. Some stories make us read on, and some other passages seem dry and unrelated. They can be given a miss without having to feel guilty. Later they may prove to be interesting. So then whether it is one verse one reads, and upon which one meditates, or whether it be a book or books, the amount does not matter. Patterns and

habits of reading can easily change.

Attitudes in Reading

These cannot be prescribed. However if one is tired or preoccupied with many things then probably little interest will be shown. Sceptics will read the Bible in one way and devotees in another. Peasants and scholars may take different approaches. However what all need is sincerity. A negative spirit will not allow a person to read genuinely. Likewise those who come with certain presuppositions, whether good or bad, will not really be reading the Scriptures. They will see only what they want to see. Every book demands an unbiased, unprejudiced reading.

Christians will always approach the Scriptures with a reverent mind, but then not a gullible one. They will pray for understanding, and allow the Spirit of God to help them. Non-Christians may also do this, and benefit greatly from a reasonable and humble attitude.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODS OF READING & STUDYING THE BIBLE

Introduction: Trying to Understand the Bible

It is clear that our motive or purpose for reading the Bible will help to determine the method we use in studying it. We need then to understand the purpose of the Scriptures, that is if they possess such. Sceptics see the Bible merely as a medley of books and ideas. Reasonable readers sense some unity about this collection of books. Christians claim that the Bible has a strong, basic unity. Those of the Jewish faith are quick to explain the nature of the Hebrew Scriptures, ie. the Old Testament. Christians are quick to explain the nature of the NT., and they see it as thoroughly consistent with the writings of the Old Testament.

Two things are generally claimed for the Bible, (a) That it is God's revelation of Himself, and (b) That it has the uniting and integrating theme of salvation history. It is best for the reader to recognise these two elements even if he cannot agree with them, or accept the claim that this is what the Scriptures are about. The Biblical story is that God created man for some great purpose. Man decided to go his own way - without God - and as this was against the nature of things, caused himself and his universe to suffer. God, instead of hiding Himself from man, has endeavoured in many ways to reveal Himself. Supremely he has sought to take away that which divides man from Him, namely man's guilt and shame. This He has done in Christ. He seeks in His Son to give man a sight of Himself which will disarm rebellious man and bring him home to Himself.

There are of course many side-themes to this grand plot, but they are not the primary ones.

If the reader has this clue to the Bible then he may first read those portions and passages which directly relate to the primary theme. On the other hand he may wish to read all so that he can discover the message and messages for himself - if indeed they are there!

Methods of Bible Study

(i) Overall, Constant Reading.

This reading begins at Genesis (the first book) and reads through to Revelation (the last book). It is a long process, but not an impossible one. In fact it can be done in a matter of days where a person has the time and application. Then it could be done again and again until the subject becomes plain to the reader.

An amended reading is suggested. The first eleven chapters of Genesis should be read thoroughly, as a preliminary to understanding the covenant God made with Abraham. The reader could catch the main facts of God's selection of Isaac, Abraham's son, and Jacob his grandson, and so pick up the story of Joseph (the son of Jacob) and thus understand why Israel is found to be in captivity in the book of Exodus. He could quickly browse through this book, and even omit Leviticus, and flip through Numbers, reading something of the last chapters of Deuteronomy. This would give him the sense of God's people in their land. He could then select chapters here and there in Joshua and Judges, just enough to see the nature of the story of the people. I and II Samuel are interesting reading, telling him of the people's desire for a monarchy. If he desired he could read I and II Kings *or* I and II Chronicles, but not both sets of books since they cover much of the same material. He could skip Isaiah and read Jeremiah, skip Lamen-

tations and read Daniel. Then he could double back to the second half of Isaiah (chapters 40-66) and try to understand some of the prophetic predictions for Israel. Then he could read Ezra and Nehemiah, and the three minor prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

This would give him enough background to read the New Testament. He could read one of the first three Gospels, and with it the Gospel of John. Then Acts should be read. The letter to the Romans would be an excellent letter to follow, and perhaps the first letter of John. He could then read the book of the Revelation.

Having done all this he could decide to read more closely, but this would depend upon the effects his reading had produced, and the affect the Bible had had upon him.

There are some who have read the Scriptures through many times. Others prefer selective reading.

(ii) Selective Reading.

Strictly speaking the method suggested above is a form of selective reading. Nevertheless selectivity can be further reduced.

In this method it is sometimes suggested that the reader commence with the New Testament.

He could commence with the teaching of the book of Romans. Some have even started with Hebrews. A reading of Romans would give a fairly full body of Biblical doctrine. Following that, or even preceding it, the first three chapters of Genesis should be read. Perhaps that could be then extended to the first twelve chapters. Then a Gospel could be read, either a Synoptic Gospel (Matthew, Mark or Luke) or the Gospel of John. Such reading should not be hurried, but thoughtful.

Following this the book of Acts could be read, especially the passages where the early Christian message was proclaimed (Acts chapters 1-10). Fur-

ther to this a reading of Genesis and Exodus could be undertaken, and the book of Deuteronomy thoughtfully perused. The section of Isaiah 40-66 could then be read. Then there could be a return to the N .T . to epistles such as those to the Galatians, the Thessalonians, and the epistle of John. I Peter could follow this, and finally, a reading of the book of the Revelation.

This would prove to be a reasonable introduction to the substance of Scripture.

(iii) Sectional Reading.

This could cover any given section, ie. the law in the first 5 books (Genesis to Deuteronomy), especially if the reference columns were used to support this reading. Another sectional reading could be that of the former or the latter prophets; in other words, prophetic reading. Some who are devotionally minded might spend a long time in the Psalms. The reference column would reveal that many psalms are quoted in the N .T. and to great purpose. Others may prefer a book such as Proverbs or Ecclesiastes. Some may wish to use the four Gospels, time and again, until the message of this section is grasped. Others may seek to study the beginnings of the church in Acts. Yet others may seek to deduce early Christian teaching and practice from the epistles.

(iv) Detailed Reading.

This is really an expansion of sectional reading. In fact it goes beyond simple reading to detailed study. The person who undertakes this ought to have read the Bible, and by use of reference columns, and even other Bible aids, he may become strongly acquainted with just one book, such as Genesis, or John, or Romans.

Detailed reading can involve exegesis, that is to say, the endeavour to find out what the text is really saying. In this case detailed reading may not

only be of a book, but of a chapter, and then of a verse, so that study is undertaken, verse by verse. Such study can involve the use of the reading of commentaries, the taking of notes, the examination of the use of words in other contexts. Such reading will help the reader to become closely familiar with the text of the passage he is studying.

(v) Thematic or Topical Study.

Thematic study is taking a theme in Scripture such as sin, repentance, holiness or salvation, and seeking it out from Genesis through to Revelation. This is made easier by using chain-reference Bibles. One famous chain reference volume is *Thompson's*. The use of a word concordance can help in such study. One looks up the relevant word, eg. covenant, and then all the references given under that word. The method is open to problems, especially if a word has various meanings in the Bible, eg. the word 'flesh'. Nevertheless it is a good method.

Topical and thematic studies are almost identical. A topic may need to draw in other words than the primary one used. An excellent aid to topics is *Nave's Topical Bible*. There are also topical concordances.

We are now moving from direct study of the text to its themes and its theology. At this point the reader may wish to use a Bible Dictionary which not only covers person and place names and information, but also themes and topics of the Scriptures. The student needs to use them sparingly, and best of all when he has made his own study and deductions, otherwise he will become dependent upon them, and discover little for himself.

(vi) Verse Study and Thematic Study.

These two easily combine. When the reader is studying a verse of Scripture he may find various theme words in the one passage or verse. If he constantly pursues the meaning of these words, then he

will develop his understanding of them both as to their localised meaning, and their general meaning and importance.

In other words he will gradually come to understand the thrust of the passages he is reading, and see them in the light of other passages which deal with the same themes. This kind of study is the beginning of theological learning.

(vii) Devotional Reading.

All reading should be devotional. If study becomes wholly intellectual, or is pursued as a technique, or is seen as a hobby, then the reader may find himself subjecting Scripture to his analysis, understanding, and judgement. This would be a pity. His mind ought always to retain reverence, simplicity, and submission. He need not be gullible, or wholly credulous, but he does need to let the Scripture talk to him. He needs to come under the scrutiny of Scripture, rather than simply scrutinise it. We will later discuss the humility of Christ in his approach to the Scriptures. He himself saw them as the Word of God, and accepted them for that.

Devotional study may use any of the methods suggested above. On the other hand it may be minutely selective, ie. may search out those scriptures which seem to talk personally to the reader, and which make him feel he is more personally in touch with God. There is surely nothing wrong in this. Nevertheless such readers should always have the original purpose of the verse or passage in their minds. Any principle set out in Scripture may apply to any person at any point of time, but the reader must beware of forcing a local and personal application.

Devotional reading seeks to see more and more of God, and to understand Him more deeply, and relate to Him more closely. It seeks to hear what God is saying through the reading of His Word.

We conclude then that there are many ways of

reading and studying the Bible. Teachers and lecturers over many years have shaped up methods and courses. We have now to turn our thoughts to materials which are available through them.

CHAPTER FIVE

COURSES IN BIBLE STUDY

1. Resources Available

The Bibliography appended indicates that there are many courses available for Bible Study. Roughly speaking these are available in the following ways :-

- (i) Bible studies done in home or church groups, available through a local church.
- (ii) Bible studies conducted centrally by any given denomination, such as Lay Training Courses.
- (iii) Bible studies conducted within or by Bible Colleges and Seminaries.
- (iv) Bible studies conducted by special Para-Church groups.
- (v) Bible studies conducted by Correspondence from (ii), (iii), and (iv) above.
- (vi) Bible Study Courses set out in printed materials. Information concerning some of these is appended.

(i) Bible Studies in Local Church Groups.

These can be in homes, or at the church premises. They may be conducted by the ministerial staff, or by competent layfolk. They may be held during the day or in the evening. They may be women's study groups, men's study groups, youth study groups, or mixed study groups. The modes of study may vary from teaching being given by one person, to study being shared by leaders or by all.

The advantage of such groups is that they live where one lives, so that sharing the reality and practicality of the Scriptures may be a very rich exercise. On the other hand poor leadership, and ignorant participation may keep study at a low level.

(ii) Bible Studies Conducted Centrally by a Denomination.

These generally are conducted by competent teachers. They may lack somewhat in intimacy and sharing, but this may not necessarily be a bad thing. Sometimes such studies may tend to the intellectual and not the personal. Sometimes they may be overly academic. Even so they can be a valuable way of learning.

(iii) Bible Studies Given by Bible Colleges and Seminaries.

These, of course, could come under the comments given for '(ii)'. They could be heavy, academic and personally unrelated. However this need not be the case. Usefulness would depend on leadership, modes of teaching and learning, and those attending the classes. Such studies have played a significant part in the life of the churches for many years.

(iv) Bible Studies Conducted by Para-Church Groups.

Bible Colleges and seminaries have the support of churches, generally speaking, and so are safe to attend. Para-church groups may include those who slant their teaching heavily in one direction. This may not necessarily be the case. Sometimes excellent teachers are supported by groups who wish to use their gifts to good advantage. Sometimes a freer study can be shared where the study is not confined to denominational thinking.

(v) Correspondence Courses.

These generally emanate from colleges and seminaries and can be quite valuable. Diploma courses are sometimes offered. The advantages are that study can be done at home, and personal research can be pursued. Having materials to study certainly structures one's reading. Disadvantages can be that courses are not sufficiently personal and dynamic. Best Bible study is done where the study is shared personally, and where interchange is available. Personal leadership is generally an advantage.

(vi) Printed Courses for Personal Study. .

These can be very useful, especially where memorisation of Scriptures is required. The same advantages and disadvantages obtain as for Correspondence Courses, with the exception that no tutor is available.

A general observation is that when it comes to the teaching of Scripture a teacher is better than a course. There may be a teacher who teaches a course, but he may have to impart information which he has read, but which is not part of the fibre of his own person. If the teacher has shaped his own course then his teaching will be personal and living. Christ taught not simply by giving information, but by his life and his actions. Teaching that is only cerebral and lacks the visceral is lacking in substance, life and depth. Teaching that is only intellectualistic may impart facts but not life. The Bible is not a mere textbook to be taught, but life to be communicated. Hence one may finish a course without learning other than given facts. Of course teaching must also occupy the mind and not only the heart.

2. Learning by Teaching

The instruction of Paul to Timothy is pertinent. In II Timothy 2:1-2 he says, 'You then, my son, be

strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.' True learning comes not merely through the printed page, but through the life that truth conveys. Learning is often only filled out when we begin to teach it. That puts us to the test both as to the facts, and the practice of the facts.

To have to teach is itself a rich incentive to learn, and learn even more than one intended. In order to teach one must be given to thorough study. Yet study alone is not enough if one wishes to teach. One must be taught by the very Word itself, and we believe, through the Author of that Word, God Himself, and in particular, the Holy Spirit.

This, then, involves the principle of truly hearing. Christ amplified this in Luke 8: 4-21. He first told the story of the sower, the point being that the only one who truly heard was the one who accepted the Word, held it fast in *an honest and good heart*, and so became fruitful. He went on to show that *hearing is acting upon what one hears*, ie. showing the light to others, that light which has come first to oneself. He concluded by saying, 'My mother and my brothers are those who *hear* the word of God and do it.' {n other words true learning is hearing, and then doing, by which means one possesses the Word one has truly heard. Otherwise one loses what one *thinks* he possesses.

We conclude then that to learn in order to teach is no small matter but a matter of the entire will. Good minds may be able to produce the *form* of sound words, but not necessarily the *substance* of them, for as Jesus said of his own words, 'They are spirit, and they are life' (John 6: 63).

CHAPTER SIX

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN READING

1. The entire Scriptures were written by men. Therefore the writings are very human. They were not dictated mechanically. Men knew the words they were writing.
2. These men, however, were led by God. His Spirit inspired them to write what they did. II Peter 1:20-21, 'First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.'
3. Man unaided cannot understand the Scriptures, eg. 'The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit.' 'Except a man be begotten from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God' (I Cor. 2:14, John 3:3, cf. Isa. 55:8-9). That is man needs new birth by the Spirit in order to come to the Scriptures. Yet he needs the Scriptures to come to new birth.
4. God reveals deep things to the simple, whilst the brilliant ones often miss them (Matt. 18:1-3, 11:25-26).
5. The Scriptures tell us things we do not normally think or believe. This is because as sinners we refused the knowledge of God, and so of creation and man (cf. Gen. 3:1-6, Rom. 1:19, 25, 28, 3:11-12). The Scriptures are, therefore, revelation. To know the truth we need to read them.
6. The way of man is not in himself (Jer. 10: 23).

He needs to be shown light and truth.

7. The words of man may be very penetrating, and even brilliant but they cannot, of themselves, bring life and light. The Scriptures claim to bring both (Psa. 119:105, John 6:63).
8. The Scriptures, though written down by man, are really the words of God. Hence this Word is very powerful. Read Jeremiah 23:29, 'Is not My word like fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces?' And Hebrews 4:12-13, 'For the word of God is living, and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before Him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.'
9. The Scriptures are definite in what they set about to do. II Timothy 3:14-17 outlines this plainly, 'But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.'
10. The Scriptures are not difficult to understand, *if the will is open to receive* them. Jesus said, many times, 'He who has an ear to hear, let him hear.' Cf. Isaiah 6:9-10, Luke 8:10, Acts 13: 41, 28:26-28, Romans 10:16.
11. Scripture should be understood in its original sense, ie. insofar as we can understand what it intended to say, at the time of saying. It

must be understood in its natural sense, ie. nothing must be read *into* it in order to make it say something else. Scripture must be understood in its plain sense. It must be understood in the light of the whole Scriptures. No weight should be laid upon any verse, passage, chapter or book which conflicts with the plain meaning of all Scripture.

12. God has written the Scriptures in order to reveal Himself to man. The Scriptures themselves tell us how God has revealed Himself, ie. by the words He has uttered, the creation He has brought into being, the prophets He has sent, the visions He has given, the angels He has sent to man, the law and the Word that He has given. Supremely He has sent His Son to reveal His true image, and then has sent His Spirit so that we can understand Him, and the truth.
13. The subject of all the Scriptures is God Himself. This means that we come to know Him as our Father, the King of the Kingdom, and the Creator of all creation. We come to know His Son to whom the Father has drawn us. Yet we would know neither Father nor Son were it not for the Spirit who brings the Word of truth and enlightens us. This means that when we read the Bible we are not simply finding out about God, but we are finding Him, coming to know Him more deeply and dearly.
14. Down through the ages God's people have come to know Him, first in Israel, and then in Christ. Hence the Scriptures have been dear to such people, and they have come to certain basic truths from them. We ought to keep to their findings rather than seek to find strange and unusual matters. Those in the sects have diverged from these main findings. We should always make sure that our teachers hold to the basic truths.

CONCLUSION TO SECTION ONE

We conclude then that the reading of Scripture can be a very simple matter. The secret things belong to God, but the things' which He has revealed belong to us, to do them (Deut. 29:29). We expect God wishes us to understand them, and so they will surely be simple. If we are motivated enough then we will gladly read them.

It does not greatly matter how we read them, but that we read them. We can read them as persons not yet knowing God but wishing to do so, or we can read them as people having come to God, and received His great gift of salvation. There are many methods of reading available, and many sources and resources. These 'we should use as we find them helpful.

What we must keep clearly in mind is that God will aid us in coming to the Scriptures, in reading, and in understanding them. The forces of evil will certainly not aid us, but seek to prevent us. It is best then to press on with reading and reject feelings and thoughts which would prevent us doing so.

SECTION TWO

SOME THINGS ABOUT THE BIBLE

CHAPTER ONE

HOW THE BIBLE CAME TOGETHER

We might as well accept the fact that many scholars differ as to how and when the books of the Bible were written. For example some see the first five books often known as 'The Books of Moses' as being written only a few hundred years B.C. At least they see them as having been edited and re-edited by this time.

Some see the first five books as an interpretation, rather than writings completed within the time of Moses. They have a theory which was once known as the Documentary Hypothesis. It had various documents which were put together and edited. The sources are known as J.E.P.D., meaning that each letter represents a document written from that person's vantage point. The matter is strongly argued by scholars, and certainly this theory has been modified from its original form.

Other scholars see the Genesis account, especially before the time of Joseph, as coming from available written sources such as cylinders of baked clay or similar tablets. Later 'of course papyrus parchments were used. It is claimed that families often had written histories, whilst some had oral traditions which were passed down, and for that matter almost word perfect.

Whatever the theories we have the books: We can understand that Joshua must have written the note concerning Moses at the end of Deuteronomy, ie. if the book was of his day. We do not know who wrote Joshua, but it was written. It is thought that Samuel may have written the book of the Judges. So we could go on surmising in regard to authorship.

What we do know is that there was a Jewish Canon formed.

By 'canon' we mean that the books accepted were subjected to certain tests as to their quality. Whilst we have none of the original texts of any book of the Bible, yet we have many copies of each, and we have Jewish history and documents to verify the acceptance of the canonical books. One starting point for the latter is a statement in a Talmudic treatise, 'Baba Bathra', which was written in the second century B.C. It contains a list much the same as we have, now, of the O.T. Christians accepted only those books which the Jews accepted as canonical.

The question of the authorship of books of the N.T. is also interesting. There was debate over the first few centuries as to what books were inspired, and by the fourth century we see the Canon accepted. One of the books which had earlier been in doubt was the book of the Revelation.

Since the vexed question of authorship cannot be fully resolved, there is no need to question the authority of the books. The facts are that we have the Book, the Church has accepted its 66 books as inspired, and in fact this Book proves to be a great practical value for life.

What we need to understand is that we have many manuscripts of most of the books of the Bible. This means that critics can put these different manuscripts together, have the age of the MS. in mind, and can classify most manuscripts down to certain families or groups. Textual criticism is not just a critical approach to what the text says, but to its composition. Comparing many MSS. can assist in getting to what was originally written.

It may be noted in passing that many leading scholars have stated that there is no divergence in the text which would affect a major or basic doctrine of the faith.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES

(i) Authority in General

In the Scriptures we are taught of the Lordship of God. He created the world. He is in full authority over it. We see there are also hierarchies of other powers, living creatures, elders, angels, and then on earth there are human authorities. These can be the elders of the clans or tribes, or they can be the parents of the family, masters of servants, and so on.

Today the debate continues as to whether the church is the authority man must obey, under God. Others say that Scripture is the true authority. Some claim the church gave the Scriptures and so is paramount. Others say the Word brought the church to birth. It is clear that the Lord is the Authority. Paul says (I Cor. 8:5-6), 'For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords" yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.' This must mean God is the true authority and Jesus is Lord under the Fatherhood of God.

At the same time the Holy Spirit is depicted in the Acts and Epistles as leading the church. He then must be the authority. It is He who gives truth to the church (John 16:1-5, I Cor. 2:10-14). He has given the written Word, and He will also interpret that to the church, and to members of it. In fact truth in the N.T. is called 'the apostolic doctrine

or teaching'. This apparently crystallised on the Day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:42, Rom. 1:1, 5, I Peter 1: 12, etc.).

(ii) The Authority of the Scriptures

What then of the authority of Scripture? The answer can be given in three sections, as below:

(a) What Does the Bible Say About Itself?

If the Bible did not claim its truthfulness (authenticity) itself then we would not need to see if it were true. If it did not claim its own truthfulness, then we would not be relying upon it, especially as a book for moral things, and moral living. In fact the Bible says a lot of things about itself. In II Timothy 3:16, 'All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.' 'Inspired' here means 'breathed out by God.' II Peter 1:20-21 says, '...no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.' If we looked at all the prophecy in the Old and New Testaments we would see what God had moved men to say, truthfully.

The following references will establish the claim of the Bible to be the Word of God. In Exodus 24 Moses writes and in verse 7 these words are described as 'all that the Lord hath said.' So see Exodus 34: 27. This Word is to be read (Deut. 31: 9f, cf. Joshua 1:7-8). So the OT writers declare 'Thus saith the Lord', 'the Word of the Lord', etc (cf. II Sam. 23:1f, Isa. 34:16). Thus they are the 'oracles' (Rom. 3:2), they 'speak' (Rom. 4:3, 10:11, James 2:23), 'foresee' (Gal. 3:8) and through the prophets God speaks (Heb. 1:1) for they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21).

The Bible proves true in its use. When we read that 'the Scriptures are able to make you wise to

salvation' (II Tim. 3:15), and this happens, then we know the Scriptures are true. For thousands of years this has been so. Men and women have not only come into salvation, but they have been built up in their faith by these Scriptures. The Scriptures show them the way to life and the way of life. See Psalm 119:105 and James 1:25. If the Bible were false then the experience it tells about would prove false. Jesus said, 'You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me' (John 5: 39). Without the Scriptures we would not have the true Word about Jesus and his Father.

(b) What View Did Jesus Take of the Bible?

Probably the best way of seeing how true the Bible is, would be to apply the following test:(i) Who was Jesus? (ii) Was he the Son of God? (iii) Did he come into this world with knowledge and truth? (iv) If so then his view will be trustworthy. In fact when you read the Gospels you see that Jesus had a high view of the Old Testament. We have put at the end of this section, a sub-section to show just what Jesus' attitude was to the Scriptures. He believed them, and was humbly obedient to them.

If he believed the Old Testament Scriptures, and on rising from the dead (see Luke 24:25-27, 44-47) showed that his mind was still the same - it had not changed on these things - then they must be true.

Jesus' View of Scripture

Jesus' view of the Old Testament. It was (i) Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35, Matt. 5:17-19, cf. Acts 13:29), (ii) He believes in its inspiration by the Holy Spirit since the time of Adam (Matt. 19: 5), (iii) He believes in the creation of God, the existence of the first couple (Matt. 19: 4), Cain and Abel (Luke 11:51), Noah, the flood, etc.

(Matt. 24:37-39), the destruction of Sodom and Lot's wife (Luke 17:28-30, 32), Moses (Matt. 5:3-4) and his inspired writings (John 5:46), the manna (John 6: 31f), the miracle of the healing of those bitten by snakes (John 3:14), the miracle of the widow of Sarepta (Luke 4: 26), in Jonah and the miracle (Matt. 12:40). (iv) He has a humble reverence for and obedience to the Scripture (cf. Matt. 12:17-21, 13: 35, 21:4, 26:24 - 'The Son of man goes as it is written of him'). (v) He has a view of Scripture that his contemporaries badly lacked, eg. in regard to the Sabbath (Matt. 12:2, John 5:16-17), to the law (Matt. 9:10-13), to vows (Matt. 15:3-7), to marriage (Matt. 19:3-9), *to the resurrection* (Matt. 22:23-28). (vi) All the Scriptures concern him (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47, John 5:39-47. (vii) As risen Messiah his view of Scripture is unaltered - see Acts 1:3f.

Jesus' View of His Own Words and Actions

Without doubt Jesus had a high view of his own utterances - see John 6:63, Mark 13:31. He was assured he had a grasp of the essence of the Old Testament which his enemies did not and thus he was in the stream of the Old Testament fully. He thus claims to be speaking and acting in conformity with the Old Testament and what he says is regarded as Scripture (cf. John 12: 32, 18: 32, etc.).

(c) What Did the NT Writers Think of Their Own Writing?

Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit would lead them into all truths as well as give them understanding and remembrance of what he had said (John 14: 26, 16:12-13). Paul said he had done this (I Cor. 2:10, 12). Apostolic authority and veracity were identical, thus it is the apostles' doctrine which is truth for the church - so Acts 2:42. John claims the truth - John 21:4, cf. 20:30-31. They believed they were reporting (in the Gospels) the words which would judge in the last day, of that Prophet

(John 12:48, Deut. 18:15f, cf. Acts 3:22). What the prophets foretold they tell (I Pet. 1:10-12) through the Holy Spirit (see Heb. 2:3-4), and the words of Paul are equated with Scripture (II Pet. 3: 15-16). Paul has direct *revelation* (Gal. 1: 12) and can call his words the word of God (I Thess. 2:13, 1: 5-6). In the Acts 40 times their message is called the word 'of life', 'of the Lord', 'of God', 'of grace'. The apostles are stewards of the mysteries of God (I Cor. 4:1), they speak the wisdom of God in a mystery (I Cor. 2: 7), they have 'the mind of Christ' (I Cor. 2:16), they write what God has revealed to them (I John 1: 5).

(iii) Conclusion on the Matter of Authority

We conclude, then, that the Father is in authority over His world. His Son is the Lord of creation, and the Holy Spirit the authoritative Teacher. The Scriptures, being the Word of God, issue from Him, and are innately authoritative. When they are used by the Spirit to affect man, and to speak to him, then they come with authority, even though they are often used by other humans who may well be weak, of themselves, and even (perhaps) faulty in their delivery and teaching.

We conclude from Jesus' teaching that he who does not obey the word of God is rebelling against the very authority of God. This further urges us to read and obey, and to be humble in the presence of the Scriptures and their truths.

CHAPTER THREE

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

(i) Introduction

We have said that one should read and reread Scripture until one has a good broad sense of it. This general reading is essential. We get, so to speak, the *feel* of Scripture. I John 2:21 and 27 suggests that persons born of God, and anointed by the Holy Spirit have a good sense of what is true or not true. John says he writes what he writes not because his readers do not know, but because they do! He means they are having made explicit to them what they somehow already know.

When Jesus said, 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!' then at least his hearers had read the prophets. So we need to read widely, and as wisely as possible. We should have (n) A panoramic reading, and a general sense of Scripture, and (b) A close look at the immediate text, learning to know and understand it. We now set out some principles by which we can do this.

(ii) Knowing Our Way Around the Bible

We start, of course, with the index. We get to know where the books are. Then we try to know what they are. In order to do this we need helps in the form of atlases, Bible dictionaries, word studies, concordances, lexicons, and the like. Some of us will never feel any need of such aids. Some of us will be grateful that such helps exist and we will certainly use them.

- (a) We will be greatly helped by knowing the *geography* of the Bible. Most Bibles have an atlas appended which is sufficient for general needs. The list of towns, villages, places, rivers, lakes and seas helps us to know where certain actions take place. Geography can also give us knowledge of climate, temperature, weather conditions, etc.
- (b) We need to know something of the historical background of the Old and New Testaments. Historical atlases tell us the places in which events took place long ago. Some of them trace the journeys of early mankind, the covenant people of God, the places of their exile, and compare maps of O.T.N.T., and modern times. In regard to the history of the Bible, its chronology is most important. It prevents us being confused as to when persons lived and events took place.

We have already spoken of history and salvation history. The first is simply knowing when, where and how the events took place, and the second is knowing what those events are or were about. We have said that to know God as Creator is to know He cares for His universe, and that history is the unfolding of His plan and action. The salvation of man is linked with God as love, His grace towards sinners, and His determination to destroy evil, liberate believing man, and have His family completed by the end of this time's history. We need then to understand *what* has happened in history, and something of *why* it has happened.

(iii) Knowing How to Study the Text of Scripture

We have already set out a few general principles of study, but now we need to be more specific, especially for those who are serious about Bible study, and who will wish to proclaim the message it carries, and the things it teaches.

Some Principles of Exegesis.

Exegesis is declaring what the text really says. Exposition is exegesis plus application, that is it is communicating the truth as it relates to the reader or listener. Exegesis has a number of elements which need to be noted and followed. They relate to:-

Context. The old saying is, 'Any text quoted out of context is only a pretext', ie. for the preacher's pet idea. Context is *immediate*, ie. the place of a sentence or verse in its local surrounding. Then there can be a chapter context, a book context, a Testament context, and the whole context of the Bible. The context (say in the NT epistles) can be said to be Pauline or Petrine. It can be said to be Jewish or Gentile. It can even be said to be grace or law. We can see then, that we need to have both a panoramic and an immediate view of Scripture.

Syntax. This is simply the relationship of words. In other words, straight grammar can help us a lot. If we know the nature of nouns, verbs, verbal nouns, adjectives, and so on, then we can understand the sense of words within their grammatical setting.

Words. We need to understand the meaning of words, and then these words in their local context. We have said that the word *flesh* has different meanings in different contexts. Words have focal or peripheral meanings. To confuse one with the other can be disastrous. There are word studies (see Bibliography) which can be helpful. The plain sense of the passage is generally reliable, but words absorb meaning from their local contexts. (Someone has said that a dictionary is a series of guesses: word values depend greatly on their contexts.) Some words exist in the N .T. which are not in the Old, eg. the word *conscience*. This is because the idea of conscience is primarily Greek and not Jewish.

This means that if we wish to truly understand words we need to know the *original languages*. No one need be alarmed by this. We have splendid translations and generally speaking do not need to do intricate word studies. At the same time the study of words is helpful. It can also be a problem, especially when concepts are built around the occasional use of a particular word.

Synonyms. Words often differ in degree of meanings, even when synonyms. The context will generally decide the value of any particular synonym. *Care* must be taken with the use and interpretation of them.

Literary Devices. The Psalms abound in parallelisms. One verse may be repeating its first statement in its second. Without understanding that the two statements are virtually synonymous we may receive a wrong impression. Hence we need to examine similes, metaphors, hyperbole, and a host of literary devices. We need to see when words are more actional (verbs) than, say, abstract ideas (nouns of certain kinds). Again we do not need to be dismayed by these niceties of speech or writing, but they may nevertheless help us to know more of Scripture.

Elements of Language. For the most part the Bible is written plainly. Sometimes, when it is related to the prophetic, it uses language which is symbolical, figurative and apocalyptic. We have to read quietly and thoughtfully to discover the kind of language the writer is using. Hence in Daniel, Zechariah and the book of the Revelation we have language which is intended to convey *figuratively* certain events or principles which happen in history. Enormous confusion results when we literalise symbols, or take as merely symbolical that which is literal. Most weird interpretations of prophecy have resulted from this curious form of mixing the symbolical and the literal. For example in the Revelation there are 404 verses, and they contain 518 O .T.

references, although there are few direct quotations. To understand the Revelation we need to understand the OT

Parables, Allegories. These are devices used in the Bible. They were used for certain purposes. A parable is generally intended to carry one basic idea through the form of story. Sadly some readers have attributed complexes of meanings, none of which can really be sustained. Allegory is used very little in Scripture, although it was a favourite Rabbinic way of reasoning. In fact it cannot be taken as a form of proof, but rather as a means of illustration of a principle.

Typology. This subject needs careful study. Some readers see types in almost every person and happening. In Romans 5:12ff, Paul says Adam is a type of Christ. In I Corinthians 10:11 Paul says that what happened to Israel in different disasters was a warning to them, but instruction for us. He does not mean that Israel's history is a type for us. Otherwise we would think we *had* to wander in some wilderness - and so on! It is best not to stress types as such where the Scriptures do not indicate their typological nature. Nevertheless there is nothing to prevent us indulging or revelling in sanctified imagination, provided we do not then call it *the truth.*'

References. We have already mentioned these. They too need to be used with caution. Mere *word* reference may prove to be misleading. As we have said, words carry different values in different contexts. To link such words can quickly lead us into deficient interpretations.

Prophecy. It is essential that we understand the nature of prophecy. It has been described as both forth-telling and fore-telling. Indeed the predictive is with a view to the element of exhortation. Some readers have a highly developed sense of curiosity and are only interested in the literal event, rather than what God is about in the event.

The language of prophecy is sometimes literalised when it is symbolical (or apocalyptic, ie. unveiling a principle), and also symbolised when it is literal. Prophecy then calls for sane study.

Culture. Hebrew, Roman and Greek culture should be understood to the degree that it aids our understanding of the text of Scripture. Hebrew and Greek languages vary in the meanings of like words. The culture of a people is sensed in its language. Even if we cannot learn the languages we can be helped to know something of the cultures indicated in the Scriptures. Certain turns of phrase, patterns and mores of morality, attitudes and so on can assist us in really understanding the Scriptures. Often we read back our own culture into the Scriptures and so come to deficient interpretation of events, teaching, and even words.

We see then that words, cultures, history, locality, race and a whole host of elements determine our understanding (or misunderstanding) of Scripture. Whilst it is true that the general or plain sense is never far from us when we read the Bible, yet there are times when we can miss the point and thrust of certain passages, verses and words. We need to work at better understandings.

(iv) Conclusion as to the Study of the Text

At the Reformation three principles were adduced for the study of Scripture. The first was the grammatical or philological principle. The second was the principle that the Holy Spirit alone can give man understanding, the natural man not being able to accept the things of the Spirit. The third was that what we call the supernatural is part of Scripture. The second and last principles are not acceptable to some modern readers and scholars who work on the basis of the authority of human reason.

These three principles are helpful for us today. At the same time we can study Scripture in the

light of its own great themes such as God as Creator, God as Father, God as King, God as Redeemer. The understanding of the Trinitarian nature of the Godhead, of the Kingdom of God, and of covenant, all help us in the broader sense to get to grips with Scripture. The doctrines of creation, redemption, and the ultimate renewal of all things aid us, too, in grasping Scripture. The grand theme of the people of God relates both to Covenant and the Kingdom of God, and further assists us in our understanding.

When, then, we seek to interpret the text, these elements will increasingly be with us. Our own personal knowledge of God will be necessary for the text to be alive to us. We are reading concerning One we know, or better still, One Who knows us. We are also part of His people, the true community, and in the context of the community, ie. the church, the Scriptures shed their light and life to us.

So we may become true readers, students and even scholars of the Word.

CHAPTER FOUR

EQUIPMENT FOR STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES

In Section I we have examined some of the needs we have when we come to study the Bible. The following are recommended:

(i) Concordances

R. Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*.

J. Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance to the Bible*.

A. Cruden, *Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments*.

M.C. Hazard, *A Complete Concordance to the American Standard Version of the Holy Bible*.

J.W. Ellison, *Nelson's Complete Concordance of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible*.

Bruce M. and Isobel M. Metzger, *The Oxford Concise Concordance to the Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible*.

(ii) Bible Dictionaries

J. Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*.

G. Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*.

F.C. Grant and H.H. Rowley, eds., *New Revised Hasting's Dictionary*.

J.D. Douglas, ed., *The New Bible Dictionary*.

H.G. Gehmann, ed., *The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*.

Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (5 vols.)*

James Orr, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (5 vols.)*.

(iii) Bible Atlases

G.E. Wright & F.V. Filson, *The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible*.

L.H. Grollenber (eds.) Joyce Reid & H.H. Rowley, *Atlas to the Bible*.

C.F. Pfeiffer, *Baker's Bible Atlas*.

H.G. May, ed., *Oxford Bible Atlas*.

(iv) Bible Commentaries**(a) Single Volumes.**

D. Guthrie, J. Motyset, A. Stibbs, D. Wiseman, eds., *The New Bible Commentary Revised*.

Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible in One Volume*.

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

C.F. Pfeiffer, E.F. Harrison, eds., *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*.

(b) Full Sets.

G.E. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Bible*. (12 vols.).

C.J. Ellicott, ed., *A Bible Commentary for Bible Students*, (8 vols.).

Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (6 vols.).

Tyndale Commentary Series - various authors and volumes.

(v) Theological Dictionaries

C. Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, (3 vols.).

E.F. Harrison, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*.

J.J. von Allmen, ed., *Vocabulary of the Bible*.

(vi) Word Studies

W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament*

Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (4 vols.). .
Kenneth S. Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* (3 vols.).

(vii) Biblical Exposition

Carl F. Henry, ed., *The Biblical Expositor*. An excellent book to take the reader book by book, chapter by Chapter through the Bible.

(viii) Bible Studies

Schaeffer, Francis A., *Twenty-Five Basic Bible Studies*. (Paradigmatic for others.)

Home, neighbourhood, group, personal studies available in a large range, e.g. *Search the Scriptures* (IVF).

Lists available from publishers. .

(ix) General

Albright, W.F., *The Archeology of Palestine* (Penguin, 1956).

Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands (Funk & Wagnall, 1955).

Archibald, R.T., *The Spirit's Sword*, (London: S.U., n.d.).

Barclay, William, *The Making of the Bible*—Bible Guides No. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1961).

Berkhof, Louis, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1950).

Brooks, K.L., *The Summarized Bible* (Baker Rapids: Baker Books, 1975).

Bruce, F.F., *The Books and the Parchments* (Picketing & Inglis, 1950).

The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable? (IVF, 5th ed., 1960)

Church, J.E., *Every Man a Bible Student* (London: S .U., n.d.).

- Clark, Gordon H., *Religion, Reason, and Revelation* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1961).
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Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament, 9th ed. (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1903).
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- Horn, Robert M., *The Book that Speaks for Itself* (London: IVP, 1969).
- Hunter A.M., *Interpreting the New Testament: 1900-1950* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951).
- Johnson, Douglas, *The Christian and His Bible* (London: IVP, 1960).
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- Keck, L.E., *Taking the Bible Seriously* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962).
- Lloyd-Jones, D.M., *Authority* (IVF, 1958). Manley, G.T., ed., *The New Bible Handbook* (IVF, 3rd ed., 1950).

- Mayer, H.T., *Interpreting the Holy Scriptures* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing Hse, 1969).
- Mickelsen, A. Berkeley, *Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963). (IVF, 3rd ed., 1950).
- Neil, William, *The Interpretation of the New Testament* (N.Y.: Oxford Uni. Press, 1964).
- The Plain Man Looks at the Bible* (G.B.: Collins/Fontana, 1967).
- The Rediscovery of the Bible* (N.Y.:Harper & Bros., 1954). Olsson, Karl A., *Find Your Self in the Bible* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974).
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- Revelation and Inspiration* (Duckworth, 1910). Packer, J.I., 'Fundamentalism' and the Word of God (IVF, 1958).
- Parker, Margaret, *Your Turn to Lead* (London: S.U., 1973). Pink, Arthur W., *Interpretation of the Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1972).
- Quartbeck, Philip A., *When God Speaks* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968).
- Richards, Lawrence O., *Creative Bible Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971).
- Creative Bible Teaching* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975).
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 Stott, John R.W., *Understanding the Bible* (G.B.: S.U., 1977).
 Tasker, R.V.G., *Our Lord's Use of the Old Testament* (Westminster Chapel Bookroom, 1953).
 Terry, Milton S., *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974).
 Van Til, Cornelius, *The New Hermeneutic* (Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974).
 Warfield, B.B., *The Inspiration & Authority of the Bible* (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1951).
 Watts, Newman, *The Incomparable Book* (Surrey: Uplift Books, 1946).
 Wood, James D., *The Interpretation of the Bible* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1958).

(x) N.C.P.I. Materials

Bible studies, theme studies, background materials, etc., as follows:

Bingham, Geoffrey, *Salvation History., Living Faith Studies 1-50.* (1975-1980). A series of studies on various Biblical themes.

Nicols, Peter, Old Testament History; New Testament History. Historical and geographical backgrounds. Introduction to the Old Testament. Introduction to the New Testament. Doctrinal theme studies (*Christian Basic 1-4; The Person & Work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; The Knowledge of God; The Church: Life & Relationships; etc.*).

(xi) Study, Bibles

Harper Study Bible, R.S.V. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

- The Thompson Chain Reference Bible*, A.V., (Indianapolis: B.B. Kirkbride Co. Inc., 1964).
The Ryrie Study Bible, A.V. or N.A.S.B. (Chicago: Moody, 1978).

**PLAN FOR READING
THE BIBLE
IN ONE YEAR**

JANUARY**Date Scripture References**

1st	Genesis 1,	2	Matthew	1
2nd	"	3, 4	"	2
3rd	"	5 - 7	"	3
4th	"	8 - 10	"	4
5th	"	11, 12	"	5
6th	"	13, 14	"	6
7th	"	15, 16	"	7
8th	"	17, 18	"	8
9th	"	19, 20	"	9
10th	"	21, 22	"	10
11th	"	23, 24	"	11
12th	"	25, 26	"	12
13th	"	27, 28	"	13
14th	"	29, 30	"	14
15th	"	31, 32	"	15
16th	"	33, 34	"	16
17th	"	35, 36	"	17
18th	"	37, 38	"	18
19th	"	39, 40	"	19
20th	"	41, 42	"	20
21st	"	43, 44	"	21
22nd	"	45, 46	"	22
23rd	"	47, 48	"	23
24th	"	49, 50	"	24
25th	Exodus	1, 2	"	25
26th	"	3, 4	"	26
27th	"	5, 6	"	27
28th	"	7, 8	"	28
29th	"	9, 10	Mark	1
30th	"	11, 12	"	2
31st	"	13, 14	"	3

FEBRUARY

Date	Scripture	References
1st	Exodus	15,16 Mark 4
2nd	"	17,18 " 5
3rd	"	19,20 " 6
4th	"	21,22 " 7
5th	"	23,24 " 8
6th	"	25,26 " 9
7th	"	27,28 " 10
8th	"	29,30 " 11
9th	"	31,32 " 12
10th	"	33,34 " 13
11th	"	35,36 " 14
12th	"	37,38 " 15
13th	"	39,40 " 16
14th	Leviticus	1 - 3 Luke 1:1- 38
15th	"	4, 5 " 1:39-80
16th	"	6, 7 " 2
17th	"	8, 9 " 3
18th	"	10,11 " 4
19th	"	12,13 " 2
20th	"	14,15 " 6
21st	"	16,17 " 7
22nd	"	18,19 " 8
23rd	"	20,21 " 9
24th	"	22,23 " 10
25th	"	24,25 " 11
26th	"	26,27 " 12
27th	Numbers	1, 2 " 13
28th	"	3, 4 " 14

MARCH

Date	Scripture	References		
1st	Numbers	5, 6	Luke	15
2nd	"	7, 8	"	16
3rd	"	9, 10	"	17
4th	"	11, 12	"	18
5th	"	13, 14	"	19
6th	"	15, 16	"	20
7th	"	17, 18	"	21
8th	"	19, 20	"	22
9th	"	21, 22	"	23
10th	"	23, 24	"	24
11th	"	25, 26	John	1
12th	"	27, 28	"	2
13th	"	29, 30	"	3
14th	"	31, 32	"	4
15th	"	33, 34	"	5
16th	"	35, 36	"	6
17th	Deuteronomy	1, 2	"	7
18th	"	3, 4	"	8
19th	"	5, 6	"	9
20th	"	7, 8	"	10
21st	"	9, 10	"	11
22nd	"	11, 12	"	12
23rd	"	13, 14	"	13
24th	"	15, 16	"	14
25th	"	17, 18	"	15
26th	"	19, 20	"	16
27th	"	21, 22	"	17
28th	"	23, 24	"	18
29th	"	25, 26	"	19
30th	"	27, 28	"	20
31st	"	29, 30	"	21

APRIL

Date	Scripture	References		
1st	Deuteronomy	31, 32	Acts	1
2nd	"	33, 34	"	2
3rd	Joshua	1 - 3	"	3
4th	"	4 - 6	"	4
5th	"	7, 8	"	5
6th	"	9, 10	"	6
7th	"	11, 12	"	7
8th	"	13, 14	"	8
9th	"	15, 16	"	9
10th	"	17, 18	"	10
11th	"	19, 20	"	11
12th	"	21, 22	"	12
13th	"	23, 24	"	13
14th	Judges	1, 2	"	14
15th	"	3, 4	"	15
16th	"	5, 6	"	16
17th	"	7, 8	"	17
18th	"	9, 10	"	18
19th	"	11, 12	"	19
20th	"	13 - 15	"	20
21st	"	16, 17	"	21
22nd	"	18, 19	"	22
23rd	"	20, 21	"	23
24th	Ruth	1, 2	"	24
25th	"	3, 4	"	25
26th	I Samuel	1, 2	"	26
27th	"	3 - 5	"	27
28th	"	6 - 8	"	28
29th	"	9, 10	Romans	1
30th	"	11, 12	"	2

May

Date	Scripture References			
1st	I Samuel	13,14	Romans	3
2nd	"	15, 16	"	4
3rd	"	17, 18	"	5
4th	"	19, 20	"	6
5th	"	21, 22	"	7
6th	"	23, 24	"	8
7th	"	25, 26	"	9
8th	"	27 - 29	"	10
9th	"	30, 31	"	11
10th	II Samuel	1, 2	"	12
11th	"	3, 4	"	13
12th	"	5 - 7	"	14
13th	"	8 - 10	"	15
14th	"	11, 12	"	16
15th	"	13, 14	I Corinthians	1
16th	"	15, 16	"	2
17th	"	17, 18	"	3
18th	"	19, 20	"	4
19th	"	21, 22	"	5
20th	"	23, 24	"	6
21st	I Kings	1, 2	"	7
22nd	"	3, 4	"	8
23rd	"	5, 6	"	9
24th	"	7, 8	"	10
25th	"	9, 10	"	11
26th	"	11, 12	"	12
27th	"	13, 14	"	13
28th	"	15, 16	"	14
29th	"	17, 18	"	15
30th	"	19, 20	"	16
31st	"	21, 22	II Corinthians	1

June

Date	Scripture References			
1st	II Kings	1,2	I Corinthians	2
2nd	"	3,4	"	3
3rd	"	5,6	"	4
4th	"	7,8	"	5
5th	"	9,10	"	6
6th	"	11 - 13	"	7
7th	"	14, 15	"	8
8th	"	16, 17	"	9
9th	"	18, 19	"	10
10th	"	20, 21	"	11
11th	"	22, 23	"	12
12th	"	24, 25	"	13
13th	I Chronicles	1, 2	Galatians	1
14th	"	3 - 5	"	2
15th	"	6, 7	"	3
16th	"	8 - 10	"	4
17th	"	11, 12	"	5
18th	"	13 - 15	"	6
19th	"	16, 17	Ephesians	1
20th	"	18 - 20	"	2
21st	"	21, 22	"	3
22nd	"	23 - 25	"	4
23rd	"	26, 27	"	5
24th	"	28, 29	"	6
25th	II Chronicles	1, 2	Philippians	1
26th	"	3 - 5	"	2
27th	"	6, 7	"	3
28th	"	8, 9	"	4
29th	"	10 - 12	Colossians	1
30th	"	13 15	"	2

July

Date	Scripture	References
1st	II Chronicles 16 - 18	Colossians 3
2nd	" 19, 20	" 4
3rd	" 21, 22	I Thessalonians 1
4th	" 23, 24	" 2
5th	" 25, 26	" 3
6th	" 27, 28	" 4
7th	" 29, 30	" 5
8th	" 31, 32	I Thessalonians 1
9th	" 33, 34	" 2
10th	" 35, 36	" 3
11th	E zra 1, 2	I Timothy 1
12th	" 3, 4	" 2
13th	" 5, 6	" 3
14th	" 7, 8	" 4
15th	" 9, 10	" 5
16th	Nehemiah 1 -3	" 6
17th	" 4, 5	II Timothy 1
18th	" 6, 7	" 2
19th	" 8, 9	" 3
20th	" 10, 11	" 4
21st	" 12, 13	Titus 1
22nd	Esther 1, 2	" 2
23rd	" 3 - 5	" 3
24th	" 6 - 8	Philemon 1
25th	" 9, 10	Hebrews 1
26th	Job 1 - 3	" 2
27th	" 4, 5	" 3
28th	" 6, 7	" 4
29th	" 8 - 10	" 5
30th	" 11, 12	" 6
31st	" 13, 14	" 7

August

Date	Scripture	References
1st	Job 15 - 17	Hebrews 8
2nd	" 18, 19	" 9
3rd	" 20, 21	" 10
4th	" 22 - 24	" 11
5th	" 25, 26	" 12
6th	" 27, 28	" 13
7th	" 29 - 31	James 1
8th	" 32, 33	" 2
9th	" 34, 35	" 3
10th	" 36, 37	" 4
11th	" 38, 39	" 5
12th	" 40 - 42	I Peter 1
13th	Proverb s 1, 2	" 2
14th	" 3, 4	" 3
15th	" 5, 6	" 4
16th	" 7 - 9	" 5
17th	" 10, 11	II Peter 1
18th	" 12, 13	" 2
19th	" 14, 15	" 3
20th	" 16, 17	I John 1
21st	" 18, 19	" 2
22nd	" 20, 21	" 3
23rd	" 22, 23	" 4
24th	" 24, 25	" 5
25th	" 26, 27	II John 1
26th	" 28, 29	III John 1
27th	" 30, 31	Jude 1
28th	Ecclesiastes 1 - 3	Revelation 1
29th	" 4 - 6	" 2
30th	" 7 - 9	" 3
31st	" 10- 12	" 4

SEPTEMBER

Date	Scripture References	
1st	Song of Sol. 1, 2	Revelation 5
2nd	3 - 5	" 6
3rd	" 6 - 8	" 7
4th	Isaiah 1, 2	" 8
5th	" 3 - 5 ..	" 9
6th	" 6 - 8	" 10
7th	" 9, 10	" 11
8th	" 11, 12	" 12
9th	" 13, 14	" 13
10th	" 15, 16	" 14
11th	" 17, 18	" 15
12th	" 19, 20	" 16
13th	" 21, 22	" 17
14th	" 23, 24	" 18
15th	" 25, 26	" 19
16th	" 27, 28	" 20
17th	" 29, 30	" 21
18th	" 31, 32	" 22
19th	" 33, 34	Psalms 1, 2
20th	" 35, 36	" 3, 4
21st	" 37, 38	" 5, 6
22nd	" 39, 40	" 7, 8
23rd	" 41, 42	" 9
24th	" 43, 44	" 10
25th	" 45, 46	" 11, 12
26th	" 47, 48	" 13, 14
27th	" 49, 50	" 15, 16
28th	" 51, 52	" 17
29th	" 53, 54	" 18
30th	" 55, 56	" 19

OCTOBER

Date	Scripture References	
1st	Isaiah 57, 58	Psalms 20, 21
2nd	" 59, 60	" 22
3rd	" 61, 62	" 23, 24
4th	" 63, 64	" 25
5th	" 65, 66	" 26, 27
6th	Jeremiah 1, 2	" 28, 29
7th	" 3, 4	" 30
8th	" 5, 6	" 31
9th	" 7, 8	" 32
10th	" 9, 10	" 33
11th	" 11, 12	" 34
12th	" 13, 14	" 35
13th	" 15, 16	" 36
14th	" 17, 18	" 37
15th	" 19, 20	" 38
16th	" 21, 22	" 39
17th	" 23, 24	" 40, 41
18th	" 25, 26	" 42, 43
19th	" 27, 28	" 44
20th	" 29, 30	" 45
21st	" 31, 32	" 46, 47
22nd	" 33, 34	" 48
23rd	" 35, 36	" 49
24th	" 37, 38	" 50
25th	" 39, 40	" 51
26th	" 41, 42	" 52 - 54
27th	" 43, 44	" 55
28th	" 45, 46	" 56, 57
29th	" 47, 48	" 58, 59
30th	" 49, 50	" 60, 61
31st	" 51, 52	" 62, 63

NOVEMBER

Date	Scripture References	
1st	Lamentations 1, 2	Psalms 64, 65
2nd	" 3 - 5	" 66, 67
3rd	Ezekiel 1, 2	" 68
4th	" 3, 4	" 69
5th	" 5, 6	" 70, 71
6th	" 7, 8	" 72
7th	" 9, 10	" 73
8th	" 11, 12	" 74
10th	" 15, 16	" 75, 76
11th	" 17, 18	" 78:1-37
13th	" 21, 22	" 78:38-72
14th	" 23, 24	" 80
15th	" 27, 28	" 81, 82
18th	" 31, 32	" 86, 87
21st	" 37, 38	" 90
22nd	" 39, 40	" 91
23rd	" 41, 42	" 92 - 93
24th	" 43, 44	" 94
25th	" 45, 46	" 95, 96
26th	" 47, 48	" 97, 98
27th	Daniel 1, 2	" 99 -101
28th	" 3, 4	" 102
29th	" 5, 6	" 103
30th	" 7, 8	" 104

DECEMBER

Date	Scripture References	
1st	Daniel 9, 10	Psalms 105
2nd	" 11, 12	" 106
3rd	Hosea 1, 2	" 107
4th	" 3 - 5	" 108,109
5th	" 6 - 8	" 110,111
6th	" 9 - 11	" 112,113
7th	" 12 - 14	" 114,115
8th	Joel 1 - 3	" 116
9th	Amos 1, 2	" 117,118
10th	" 3, 4	" 119:1-24
11th	" 5, 6	" 119:25-48
12th	" 7 - 9	" 119:49-72
13th	Obadiah 1	" 119:73-96
14th	Jonah 1, 2	" 119:97-120
15th	" 3, 4	" 119: 121-144
16th	Micah 1, 2	" 119:145-176
17th	" 3 - 5	" 120,122
18th	" 6, 7	" 123-125
19th	Nahum 1 - 3	" 126-128
20th	Habakkuk 1 - 3	" 129-131
21st	Zephaniah 1 - 3	" 132-134
22nd	Haggai 1, 2	" 135,136
23rd	Zechariah 1, 2	" 137,138
24th	" 3, 4	" 139
25th	" 5, 6	" 140,141
26th	" 7, 8	" 142,143
27th	" 9, 10	" 144
28th	" 11, 12	" 145
29th	" 13, 14	" 146,147
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