

Getting to Know the Bible

A Concise Introduction and Study Guide

Kevin L. Moore

Published by
J.C. Choate Publishing

Winona/Singapore/New Delhi/Cebu City/Jakarta/Cape Town/New Plymouth.

Copyright © 2002 by
Kevin L. Moore and
World Literature Publications

Cover Design: Betty Burton Choate
Layout: Rachael O'Donnell and Kevin L. Moore

First Printing USA
Second Printing USA, 2010

OrderFrom:
J.C. Choate Publications

P O Box 72
Winona, MS 38967
Phone: 662-283-1192
Fax: 662-283-1191
E-Mail: choate@worldangelism.org

Dedication

This book is dedicated to three men who continue to be an inspiration and example to me in the Lord's work: Rod Kyle, for his evangelistic zeal and expertise, Rex Banks, for his gentle spirit and depth of Bible knowledge, Todd O'Donnell, for his boundless energy in the service of God, and all three for not only knowing the Bible and its Author, but for living it day by day. Since a good woman is behind just about every good man, I must also mention Gay, Sally, and Jeana for the love and support enabling their husbands to continue in the right direction.

Acknowledgements

The material presented in this book contains little original information. Over the years I have been influenced by countless people, sermons, lectures, classes, books, articles, and discussions, all of which have contributed to the contents of this book. A number of sources are listed in the Bibliography, but no doubt several have been inadvertently omitted. Among those at whose feet I have been privileged to sit and learn more about the Book of books are Glenn E. Moore (my dad), Earl Edwards, Bill Nicks, Rod Rutherford, David Lipe, George Goldman, Jerry Dyer, Edwin Jones, Clyde Woods, Dowell Flatt, James Tollerson, Guy N. Woods, and Wayne Jackson. While I may not totally agree with everything these men have taught, I have certainly learned something from each one. At the same time, however, the conclusions presented in this book are based on my own personal study and I am, therefore, solely accountable.

Rod Kyle is responsible for proposing this work, offering useful suggestions for improvements and added material, and organizing the printing. Kent and Rachael O'Donnell deserve special recognition for their invaluable assistance with maps, charts, format, and graphics. These contributions have been indispensable.

Thanks to Sam Dilbeck and Alumni of the East Tennessee School of Preaching & Missions for their Computer Software recommendations (see Appendix 3).

Except for some quotations, spelling is in accordance with New Zealand English as per *The New Zealand Oxford School Dictionary*. 2nd edition. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1995.

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the *New King James Version*. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The Publisher's Statement

I have known Kevin Moore for several years. I have been impressed by his ability, the books he has written, and his dedication in spreading the Lord's cause throughout the world.

He has gotten his education for the most part here in the States, has preached here, and has been a missionary in residence at Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, TN, U.S.A. Kevin has served as a missionary in New Zealand both while single and after marriage. He and his family now live and work in Wanganui, New Zealand.

I am especially excited about Kevin's new book, **Getting to Know the Bible**. This book is filled with information that will build one's faith in the Bible as being the inspired word of God, supplies answers to the many questions that are often asked about the scriptures, and provides information that will help readers to better understand God's word.

I want to thank Kevin for writing this book, and thanks to Rod Kyle in New Plymouth, New Zealand for his follow-up work on it and for sending it to me for printing. This printing will serve both New Zealand and the U.S.A., and copies will be further circulated throughout the world. We also hope to print the book later in India.

To recipients, please read these lessons, study them along with your Bible, and share them with your friends. They will help you and bless you as you apply them to your life.

J. C. Choate
Winona, MS, U.S.A.
Oct. 9, 2002

Abbreviations

AD	<i>Anno Domini</i> = in the year of the Lord
<i>Adv. Haer.</i>	<i>Adversus Haereses</i> or <i>Against Heresies</i> by Irenaeus
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antiquities of the Jews</i> by Flavius Josephus
ASV	American Standard Version of the Bible
BAGD	Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich & Danker, <i>Greek Lexicon</i>
BC	Before Christ
BCE	Before the Common Era
<i>ca.</i> or <i>c.</i>	<i>circa</i> = approximately
CE	the Common Era
cf.	<i>confer</i> = compare
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> = for example
et al.	<i>et alibi</i> = and elsewhere; or <i>et alii</i> = and others
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> = and others; and the rest; and so forth
f.	following (line, verse, page, etc.)
ff.	following (lines, verses, pages, etc.)
i.e.	<i>id est</i> = that is (to say)
IVP	InterVarsity Press
KJV	King James Version of the Bible
LXX	the Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT)
NASB	New American Standard Bible
N.B.	<i>nota bene</i> = note well
NIV	New International Version of the Bible
NKJV	New King James Version of the Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version of the Bible
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
p.	page
pp.	pages
RSV	Revised Standard Version of the Bible
v.	verse
vol/s.	volume/s
vs.	verses

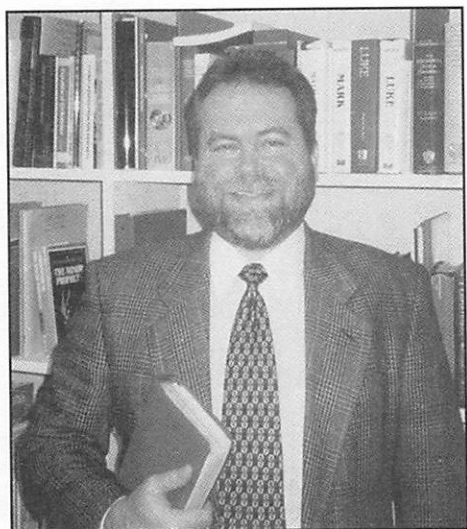
Table of Contents

<i>Dedication</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>About the Author</i>	<i>viii</i>
1 General Introduction to the Bible	1
2 Inspiration of the Bible	9
3 The Canon of Scripture	14
4 The Old and New Covenants	22
5 Bible Chronology	29
6 The Heart of Bible Study	35
7 The Biblical Pattern	40
8 Ascertaining the Lord's Will	45
9 The Importance of Context	51
10 Bible Study Aids	57
11 Notable Distinctions	63
12 Divine Regulations and Cultural Conventions	69
13 Figurative Language	74
14 Practical Application of the Bible	79
<i>Appendix 1 A Brief Synopsis of Each Bible Book</i>	<i>86</i>
<i>Appendix 2 New Testament Chronology</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>Appendix 3 Recommended Study Aids</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Appendix 4 A Sample Study: Acts 18:18</i>	<i>102</i>
<i>Appendix 5 Charts and Maps</i>	
<i>A Map of Significant OT Locations</i>	<i>106</i>
<i>B Map of NT Palestine</i>	<i>107</i>
<i>C Map of the NT Mediterranean World</i>	<i>108</i>
<i>D Authorship and Approximate Dating</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>E, F Ancient Testimonies of the NT Canon</i>	<i>111</i>
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>113</i>

Additional Charts

1	<i>The Books of the Bible</i>	2
2	<i>Major Biblical Manuscripts</i>	7
3	<i>English Translations of the Bible</i>	8
4	<i>Hebrew Canon of the OT</i>	17
5	<i>Apocryphal Books</i>	18
6	<i>The Two Covenants</i>	28
7	<i>Brief Overview of Bible History</i>	34

About the author



Kevin L. Moore is a dual citizen of the USA and New Zealand. He has been preaching the gospel since 1981 and doing evangelistic work in N.Z. since 1987. He is a graduate of East Tennessee School of Preaching & Missions, holds BS and MA degrees from Freed Hardeman University, and is doing postgraduate studies towards a PhD through Victoria University of Wellington, N.Z.

Kevin has served as a pulpit preacher for *churches of Christ* in Sweetwater and Bells, Tennessee, and as evangelist for congregations in Wellington and Wanganui, N.Z. He has taught Bible and Missions courses at Freed Hardeman University and participated in campaigns, outreach efforts, lectureships, seminars, and gospel meetings in 13 countries.

He has written two other books, numerous tracts and articles, and developed the *Personal Bible Study* series for non-Christians and additional Bible study lessons for New Christians. He also serves as editor for *The Exhorter* and staff writer for *The Voice of Truth International*. Kevin is married to the former Lynne Hibbett, and they have two beautiful daughters, Loren and Kaitlyn.

Chapter 1

General Introduction to the Bible

The word “Bible” comes from the Greek *biblia*, plural of *biblion* (“book”), having become a singular noun as it passed through the languages of Latin, Old French, and finally English. There is only one book that can truly be termed *the* Book, namely the unequaled and unsurpassed volume we now call “The Bible.”

Composition of the Bible

The Bible is comprised of sixty-six separate books.¹ The two main divisions are the Old and New Testaments. The **Old Testament** is comprised of thirty-nine books and includes the following. **The Books of Moses** (Genesis - Deuteronomy), also known as the Pentateuch or Law [Torah]: records the beginning of the world (Genesis 1-11), the beginning of the Nation of Israel (Genesis 12-50), and the establishment of Israel’s Law (Exodus - Deuteronomy). **History of Israel** (Joshua - Esther): covers Israel’s turbulent history from about 1450 to 420 BC.² **Books of Praise and Wisdom** (Job - Song of Solomon): poetic and historical literature intended for instruction, counsel, and comfort. **Prophecy** (Isaiah - Malachi): warnings and promises concerning the future of Israel, surrounding nations, and the coming Messiah.

The **New Testament** is comprised of twenty-seven books. **The Gospels** (Matthew - John): biography of the life of Christ. **History of the early church** (Acts of the Apostles): the first thirty-two years of the church’s history, mostly focusing on the ministries of

Peter and Paul. **Epistles** (Romans - Jude): instructions to the early Christians. **Prophecy** (Revelation): a message of hope to suffering Christians.³

Chart 1

The Books of the Bible

The Old Testament - 39 Books

History

Genesis

The Law

Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

History

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
I Samuel
II Samuel
I Kings
II Kings
I Chronicles
II Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Wisdom or Poetry

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

Major Prophets

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

Minor Prophets

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

The New Testament - 27 Books

Gospels

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

Church History

Acts

Pauline Epistles

Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon

General Epistles

Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude

Prophecy

Revelation

Transmission of the Bible

The Bible was written by approximately forty different men over a period of about sixteen centuries. The first five books of the Bible (Genesis - Deuteronomy) were written by Moses around 1450 BC, and the last book of the Bible (Revelation) was written by the apostle John near the end of the first century AD. The Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew language (with small portions in Aramaic⁴), by about thirty-two men, between 1450 and 420 BC in the region now called the Middle East. The New Testament was initially written in the Greek⁵ language, by at least eight different men, between AD 45 and 100 in regions surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.⁶

The Bible was first written primarily on papyrus and parchment [leather] scrolls. Papyrus was a writing material made from a water plant; parchment was made from animal skins. Because of the fragile and temporary nature of these writing materials, hand-written copies were made so the Scriptures could be distributed and kept available for future generations. Many of these manuscripts were copied with great care and meticulous accuracy; others were not. Over the centuries a number of mistakes occurred in the transmission of these documents, known today as "textual variants." However, because of the vast number of biblical manuscripts still in existence (over 10,000),⁷ scholars can readily detect the inaccuracies and arrive at a very reliable text of the Bible. Most discrepancies involve things such as spelling, punctuation, reduplication, word order, etc., but no fundamental doctrine of the Bible is in doubt because of textual uncertainty.

Translation of the Bible

The Bible has been translated into almost every known language of man, and translation was being done in English (Anglo-

Saxon) as early as about AD 700. The earliest English translations of the Bible were those of Wyclif (1380), Tyndale (1525), and Coverdale (1540). Notable English versions over the years have been the *King James Version* (1611), *Revised Version* (1885), *American Standard Version* (1901), and *Revised Standard Version* (1952). Three of the more prominent translations, the KJV, ASV, and RSV, have been updated and revised: the *New King James Version* (1982), the *New American Standard Bible* (1971), and the *New Revised Standard Version* (1989). Another popular, though less accurate, English translation is the *New International Version* (1978). But be aware that there are strengths and weaknesses in all translations of the Bible.

A Word of Caution about Translations

A number of English Bibles available today are filled with the theological biases of their translators and do not accurately represent God's word. Some translations, such as the Jehovah's Witness *New World Translation* or the Roman Catholic *Douai Bible*, have been altered to convey the peculiar doctrines of these religious groups. Some versions, including paraphrases, tend to promote the particular religious views of the individuals who produced them, such as the *New English Bible*, the *Living Bible*, and *Today's English Version* ("Good News for Modern Man").

Notes

¹ The English Bible is further divided into 1,189 chapters, 41,173 verses, and 774,746 words. It takes an average reader about 70 hours and 40 minutes to read through the entire Bible.

² The abbreviation “BC” stands for “Before Christ” and represents the approximate number of years before the birth of Jesus. The abbreviation “AD” stands for the Latin expression *Anno Domini*, meaning “in the year of the Lord,” and represents the approximate number of years since the birth of Christ. Sometimes the alternative “BCE” (Before the Common Era) and “CE” (the Common Era) are used. The dates above are approximated and rounded off.

³ See **Appendix 1** for a brief synopsis of each OT and NT book.

⁴ Genesis 31:47; Ezra 4:8 - 6:18; 7:12-26; Jeremiah 10:11; Daniel 2:4 - 7:28. Aramaic (sometimes called “Syrian”) was a Semitic language, related to Hebrew and Phoenician, which gradually became the spoken language of the Jews, particularly after the Babylonian captivity (cf. 2 Kings 18:26; Isaiah 36:11).

⁵ From about 300 BC to around AD 500 the prevailing world-language was called *hê koinê dialektos* (“the common language”). The New Testament was not written in Classical or Modern Greek, but in *Koinê* Greek.

⁶ See maps **Appendix 5-A, B, C**.

⁷ The extant materials can be divided into the following categories: 1. Fragments of Greek papyri; 2. Greek parchment manuscripts divided into (a) Uncials (all capital letters) and (b) Minuscules (lower-case or cursive script); 3. Ancient versions in various languages; and 4. Quotations from early Christian writers.

?? Review Questions

1. The Bible was written by about how many different men?

2. The Bible was written over a period of approximately how many years?
3. The Old Testament was written primarily in what language?
4. In what language was the New Testament originally written?
5. Why were so many copies made of the Bible manuscripts?
6. How does this benefit us today?
7. Are all English translations of the Bible equally reliable?
8. The Bible is comprised of how many books?
9. The two main divisions of the Bible are what?
10. What translation of the Bible do you use as your main source of Bible study? Why?

Suggested Homework

Memorize the books of the Old Testament.

Recommended Reading

Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got the Bible*, Austin, TX: Sweet Publishing Company, 1962

Major Biblical Manuscripts

NAME	DATE
Magdalen Papyrus & Qumran 7Q5	AD 66
John Rylands	AD 94-127
Bodmer Papyrus II	AD 150-200
Diatessaron (Harmony of Four Parts)	AD 160
Chester Beatty Papyri	AD 150-200
Codex Vaticanus	AD 325-350
Codex Sinaiticus	AD 350
Codex Alexandrius	AD 400
Codex Ephraemi	AD 400
Codex Bezae	AD 450
Codex Washingtonensis (Freerianus)	AD 450
Codex Claromontanus	AD 500
Cairo Codex	AD 895
Aleppo Codex	AD 900+
Codex of the Prophets of Leningrad	AD 916
British Museum Codex	AD 950
Codex Babylonius Petropolitanus	AD 1008
Reuchlin Codex of the Prophets	AD 1105

English Translations of the Bible

King James Version (Authorized Version)	1611
Revised Version	1885
Young's Literal Translation	1898
American Standard Version	1901
Modern Reader's Bible	1923
The Basic Bible	1950
Revised Standard Version	1952
Emphasized Bible	1959
The Amplified Bible	1965
Jerusalem Bible	1966
New English Bible	1970
New American Standard Bible	1971
Today's English Version (Good News Bible)	1976
New International Version	1979
New King James Version	1982
Simple English Bible (NT)	1983
Holy Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text	1985
New Century Version	1987
McCord's NT Translation	1989
New Revised Standard Version	1989
21st Century King James Version	1994
God's Word (Today's Bible Translation)	1995
New International Reader's Version	1996
Third Millennium Bible (New Authorized Version)	1998
International Standard Version	1998
Revised King James Version (NT)	2001

Chapter 2

Inspiration of the Bible

The Bible claims to have come from God and to be all-sufficient to meet man's spiritual needs (2 Timothy 3:14-17). The writers of the Bible allege to have received their information directly from God's Spirit (2 Peter 1:16-21). The apostle Paul affirmed that the Holy Spirit revealed God's message to specially chosen men, and when we read what was written we can then understand this divinely inspired revelation (Ephesians 3:1-5).¹ While these statements, in and of themselves, are not absolute proof that the Bible is in fact what it contends to be, the absence of any such claims would be a strong argument against it. But how can one know for sure whether or not these claims are genuine? Is there any proof?²

Confirmation of the Bible's Inspiration

A. The Bible's Remarkable Unity. The sixty-six books of the Bible were written over a period of about 1600 years by at least forty different writers. The writers of the Bible were separated by time, geography, language, and culture, yet they participated in writing a book that is perfectly united in theme and in purpose. If the Bible were merely the product of forty different human minds, we would expect it to be a disjointed compilation of contradictory ideas and themes. The unity of the Bible is convincing proof that it is the product of a single, superior Mind (2 Timothy 3:16).

B. The Impeccable Accuracy of the Bible. Archaeology has confirmed the Bible's credibility time and time again. For example, there are over forty references in the Bible to the Hittites (Genesis 23:10; 26:34; etc.), and the Bible was the only historical document that mentioned these people until 1906 when the ancient

capital of the Hittite nation was discovered in central Turkey. The Assyrian king Sargon is mentioned in the Bible only in Isaiah 20:1, but he was never mentioned in any other extant historical records until 1843 when his temple, palace and numerous records were discovered near Ninevah. In the late 1800s Sir William Ramsay set out on an archaeological expedition in Asia Minor to disprove the historical accuracy of the book of Acts, but after years of exploration he was forced to conclude that Acts is accurate in every detail. *Time* magazine reported: “. . . an inscription unearthed in 1961 at Caesarea confirmed for the first time that Pilate was a first century Roman governor, as the Bible reports” (15 August 1988, p. 51). Unlike the writings of men throughout history, the Bible is not filled with mistakes and inaccurate information.

C. Fulfilled Predictive Prophecy. There are over 800 prophecies in the Old Testament, many relating to the rise and fall of various governments or individuals, each one fulfilled in every detail. Over 300 Old Testament prophecies relate to the initial coming of the Messiah (cf. Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39).³ Mathematician Peter W. Stoner estimated that if only *eight* of these prophecies were considered, the chances of one man fulfilling all of them is one in 100,000,000,000,000,000. It is statistically, mathematically, and humanly impossible that the fulfilled Bible prophecies happened by accident!

D. Indestructibility of the Bible. There has never been a book that has been under more attacks and attempted destruction than the Bible. Around 100 BC Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes burned all copies of the Scriptures that could be found and made it a capital crime (punishable by death) to possess a copy. In AD 303 Roman emperor Diocletian ordered all Bibles destroyed, set out to exterminate Christianity, and had a medal engraved which stated: “The Christian religion is destroyed and the worship of the gods restored.” In the 1700s Voltaire said, “In less than a hundred years

the Bible will be discarded and Christianity swept from the earth.” But despite all these attacks and more, the Bible is still thriving. All along it has affirmed that “the word of the LORD endures forever” (1 Peter 1:23-25).

E. The Bible’s Scientific Foreknowledge. The Bible is not a science book, but if it is from God we would expect it to be scientifically accurate. Numerous scientific truths can be found in the pages of the Bible. It wasn’t until 1522 that it was scientifically confirmed that the earth is round, yet the Bible has stated it all along (Isaiah 40:22).⁴ The Bible affirms that the earth is suspended in space (Job 26:7), but this was not scientifically proven until 1650. The water cycle, discovered in 1790, is in the Bible (Job 36:27-28). Paths (sea lanes) in the ocean were discovered in 1860, yet they had already been mentioned in the Bible (Psalm 8:8). Fresh water springs in the sea were discovered in 1920, but the Bible had alluded to them centuries before (Job 38:16). The scientific law of Biogenesis, affirming that all life comes from preceding life and that of its kind, is a long-established doctrine of the Bible (Genesis 1:11-12, 20-25). The Second Law of Thermodynamics not only verifies what the Bible has stated all along, i.e. that the physical universe is deteriorating (cf. Psalm 102:25-26; Isaiah 51:6), but it also supports the biblical teaching of an *end* to the physical universe in the future as well as a *beginning* when all matter and energy were in full abundance (Genesis 1:1; 2:1; 2 Peter 3:10). Over 3,000 years before the discovery of Vitamin K, which is responsible for the blood-clotting element prothrombin, it was recorded in the Bible that circumcision was to be carried out only when the boy was eight days old (Genesis 17:12; Leviticus 12:3). Scientists now know that the only time in a newborn’s life when prothrombin climbs above 100% is the eighth day! It is not possible for these Bible writers to have been aware of these and many other scientific facts, thousands of years before their discovery, without the aid of divine guidance.

Notes

¹ See also Exodus 24:4; 35:1; 2 Samuel 23:1-3; 2 Kings 17:36-37; Acts 1:16, 20; 1 Corinthians 2:6-13; 11:23; 14:37; Galatians 1:11-12; 2 Peter 1:3; Hebrews 3:7; 4:7; 10:15-17; Revelation 1:10-11.

² Charles Wesley argued that the Bible must be the invention either of good men, of bad men, or of God. It could not be the invention of good men because they would not and could not make a book, telling lies the whole time they were writing it, saying "Thus saith the Lord," when it was their own invention. It could not be the invention of bad men because they would not make a book that commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell for eternity. Therefore, the Bible must have been given by divine inspiration.

³ Messianic prophecies include: Genesis 3:15; 9:27; 12:3; 17:19; 18:18; 21:12; 22:18; 28:10-14; 49:10; Exodus 12:46; Numbers 24:17; Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Psalms 2:7; 16:9-10; 22:6-8, 16-18; 34:20; 35:11, 19; 38:13; 41:9; 45:6-7; 49:15; 68:18; 69:9, 21; 109:4, 25; 110:1, 4; Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-2, 6-7; 11:1-2; 35:5-10; 40:3; 42:1-9; 49:6; 50:6; 52:13-15; 53:1-12; 61:1-2; 62:11; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 31:15; 33:14-18; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14; 9:24-26; Hosea 6:2; 11:1; Micah 5:2-3; Zechariah 9:9; 11:12-13; 12:10; Malachi 3:1.

⁴ The Hebrew word *choog*, when used with reference to the sky or heavens, signifies a dome or arch (Job 22:14). But when applied to the earth, as in Isaiah 40:22, the significance appears to be "circle" (ASV, N/KJV, N/RSV, NIV; cf. Proverbs 8:27).

?? Review Questions

1. The Bible claims to be from what source?
2. Is this claim, in itself, sufficient proof that the Bible is inspired of God?
3. What proofs are there to support this claim?

4. What is so remarkable about the unity of the Bible's message?
5. Are you aware of any archaeological discoveries that have shown inaccuracies in the Bible?
6. Why is it not possible for the prophecies of the Bible to have been fulfilled by accident?
7. Why do you think all the attempts to destroy the Bible have been unsuccessful?
8. Is the Bible scientifically inaccurate?
9. Considering the evidence, is it reasonable to reject the Bible as God's word?
10. What is the benefit of accepting the Bible's claim of divine inspiration?

Suggested Homework

Memorize the books of the New Testament.

Recommended Reading

Wayne Jackson, *Fortify Your Faith*, Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 1974.

Chapter 3

The Canon of Scripture

The word “canon” (literally “cane” or “measuring rod”) is used to describe the list of books recognized as genuine, authoritative, and inspired of God. Early in history God began the formation of his inspired book. The Law of Moses was written in a book (Deuteronomy 31:24-26). Copies of this book were made (Deuteronomy 17:18; 2 Chronicles 17:9). Joshua contributed to the book (Joshua 24:26). Samuel wrote in a book and laid it up before the Lord (1 Samuel 10:25). This book continued to be acknowledged and held in reverence throughout Israel’s history (2 Kings 22:8-20). The prophets contributed to the sacred writings (Jeremiah 36:32; Zechariah 7:7-12). Isaiah makes reference to “the book of the LORD” (Isaiah 34:16). Ezra read this book of God publicly (Ezra 7:6; Nehemiah 8:1-8).

The Old Testament Canon

Jewish history recounts that when each Old Testament book was written, it was at that time recognized as inspired of God and placed in the tabernacle or temple with the accumulating group of sacred writings, and was carefully guarded. Copies were made as needed, and though many of these copies were eventually scattered or destroyed, after the Babylonian captivity Ezra reassembled and restored them as a complete collection. Revered as the word of God, no Jew would have ever intentionally added, removed or altered a single word in these sacred writings. In the first century AD this book was known as “the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27; John 5:39; Acts 17:2; Romans 1:2; 2 Timothy 3:15). These Scriptures were the same as the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament in our English Bible (cf. Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.7,8). [See chart below – Hebrew canon]. There are approximately 300 quotations from these

writings in the New Testament, and no book outside these is ever quoted as Scripture.¹

The New Testament Canon

Sacred writings of the New Testament were gradually added to these Old Testament Scriptures. New Testament writers acknowledged the divine origin and authoritative nature of their writings (1 Corinthians 2:7-13; 14:37; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Revelation 1:1-2). Although several of the epistles were addressed to individuals or single congregations, they were to be shared among others (Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27). Peter recognized Paul's epistles as a well-known collection of writings belonging to "the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:15-16). Paul quoted a passage found only in Luke 10:7 (cf. Matthew 10:10), referring to it as "Scripture" (1 Timothy 5:18).

Each of the early churches would have collected for itself a complete set of the writings proven to be, and accepted as, authentic documents from inspired writers.² The early churches took meticulous care to distinguish between genuine and counterfeit documents, held in high esteem the authentic writings, and communicated and distributed between themselves the necessary information promoting the well-being of the whole church.³ The New Testament canon was formed, not by any individual or congregation *deciding* which books belonged to it, but by a general *recognition* of the inspired writings.

The New Testament canon, as it exists in the English Bible today, is the same possessed by early Christians. This is confirmed by a host of ancient sources, including the Muratorian fragment, Eusebius, Epiphanius, et al. [See Appendix 5-E & F, *Ancient Testimonies*]. While the Council of Carthage in AD 397 formally pronounced the canonicity of the NT books as we know them today, this was mere-

ly a recognition of the books which Christians had already accepted as inspired for three centuries.

If the Bible is truly inspired of God and affirms that “the word of the LORD endures forever” (1 Peter 1:25), we must conclude that God has providentially ensured that the books which have been preserved over the centuries and comprise the Bible today are precisely what God wants us to have.⁴

The Apocrypha

The term “Apocrypha” means “hidden” or “concealed” and is applied to the fourteen books, mostly of uncertain authorship, written during the third to first centuries BC and generally considered non-canonical.⁵ These books were added to the Septuagint⁶ (Greek translation of the Old Testament), made during that period. But the apocryphal books were not in the Hebrew Bible and were never recognized by the Jews as part of the sacred Scriptures. These books are never quoted or referred to in the New Testament. They were never accepted by the early church as of divine origin.

When the Bible was translated into Latin in the second century AD, the Old Testament was not translated from the Hebrew Scriptures but from the Septuagint; thus the Apocrypha was added to the Latin translation. During the Reformation, Protestants rejected the Apocrypha as being no part of God’s word, just like the Jews and early Christians had done. It was not until the 1546 Council of Trent that the Roman Catholic Church declared these books canonical, and that is why they are in the Catholic Bible today. [*See chart below – Apocryphal Books*].

The Hebrew Canon of the Old Testament

Classification
of Books

Hebrew Names

English Names

The Law (Torah)	<i>Bereshith</i> = "In the Beginning" <i>We'elleh Shemoth</i> = "Now These Are the Names" <i>Wayyiqra</i> = "And He Called" <i>Wayyedabber</i> = "And He Said," or <i>Bemidbar</i> = "In the Wilderness" <i>Haddebbharim</i> = "The Words"	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy
Former Prophets	<i>Yehoshua</i> = "Joshua" <i>Shophetim</i> = "Judges" <i>Shemuel</i> = "Samuel" <i>Melechim</i> = "Kings"	Joshua Judges 1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings
Latter Prophets	<i>Yesha'yahu</i> = "Isaiah" <i>Yirmeyahu</i> = "Jeremiah" <i>Yehezke'l</i> = "Ezekiel" <i>Hoshea</i> = "Hosea" <i>Yo'el</i> = "Joel" <i>Amas</i> = "Amos" <i>Obadyah</i> = "Obadiah" <i>Yonas</i> = "Jonah" <i>Michayahu</i> = "Micah" <i>Nahum</i> = "Nahum" <i>Habaquq</i> = "Habakkuk" <i>Tsephan-yah</i> = "Zephaniah" <i>Haggai</i> = "Haggai" <i>Zekar-yah</i> = "Zechariah" <i>Mal'aki</i> = "Malachi"	Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi
The Writings (Hagiographa)	<i>Sepher Tehillim</i> = "Book of Praises" <i>Iyyôb</i> = "Job" <i>Mishle Shelomoh</i> = "Proverbs of Solomon" <i>Rûth</i> = "Ruth" <i>Shir Hashirim</i> = "The Song of Songs" <i>Qoheleth</i> = "Preacher" <i>Ekah</i> = "Ah, Howl!" <i>Hadassah [Ester]</i> = "Esther" <i>Daniye'l</i> = "Daniel" <i>Ezer</i> = "Ezra" <i>Dibere Hayyamim</i> = "The Words of the Days"	Psalms Job Proverbs Ruth Song Solomon Ecclesiastes Lamentations Esther Daniel Ezra/Nehemiah 1-2 Chronicles

Apocryphal Books

TITLE	DATE (approx)
Letter of Jeremiah	317 BC
Judith	200-100 BC
Tobit	200-100 BC
Prayer of Manasseh	200-1 BC
Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Jesus Sirach)	180 BC Hebrew; 132 BC Greek
1 Esdras	150 BC
Baruch	150-60 BC
Additions to Esther (103 verses)	114 BC
Bel and the Dragon	100 BC
Prayer of Azariah & Song of Three Young Men	100 BC
1 Maccabees	90 BC
2 Maccabees	90 BC
3 Maccabees	75 BC
4 Maccabees	10 BC; AD 20-54
Wisdom of Solomon	10 BC in Egypt
2 Esdras	AD 100
Psalms 151	?
Proclamation of Peter	AD 100
Apocalypse of Peter	AD 135
Gospel of Nazareans	AD 135
Acts of Andrew	AD 150
Gospel of Ebionites	AD 150
Gospel of Hebrews	AD 150
Gospel of Nicodemus (Acts of Pilate)	AD 150?
Gospel of Peter	AD 150
Protoevangelium of James	AD 150
Gospel of Truth	AD 160
Acts of Peter	AD 185
Acts of Paul	AD 190
Gospel of Thomas	AD 200
Infancy Gospel of Thomas	AD 200
Acts of Thomas	AD 215
Acts of John	AD 225
Ascension of Isaiah	AD 225?
Epistle to Laodiceans	AD 300?

Notes

¹ Jude 14-15 refers to a prophecy of “Enoch, the 7th from Adam,” and a similar reference is found in the apocryphal *Book of Enoch*, leading many to conclude that Jude quoted from this non-canonical source. It is important to note, however, that Jude does not suggest his information came from anything Enoch had supposedly **written**, and even if Adam’s great-great-great-great grandson had actually put something into writing (over two millennia before the earliest OT books), these documents would have perished in the Flood of Noah’s day (although Noah could have preserved an oral tradition, cf. Tertullian). But even if it is presumed that the *Book of Enoch* (whomever the author) was a contemporary work from which Jude may have quoted, remember also Paul’s practice of sometimes using quotes from secular literature to emphasize a point (cf. Acts 17:28; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Titus 1:12) and the inadvertent prophecy made by Caiaphas (John 11:49-52; 18:14). However, while writings attributed to “Enoch” seem to have been known as early as the second century AD, the extant *Book of Enoch* (discovered about AD 1773) is actually a conglomeration of fragments of various authorship, and the date(s) of these writings is uncertain. If the ancient Jews and early Christians had known of these writings, they apparently did not consider them canonical. Because the extant *Book of Enoch* contains numerous parallels to passages in the New Testament (at least 49 passages from 16 different NT books), **it is much more likely that Jude’s epistle was the primary source from which the writer(s) of the *Book of Enoch* borrowed the prophecy in question.** Jude may have received knowledge of Enoch’s prophecy through inspiration, oral tradition, or some other means, but since Jude does not provide any more information, speculation is futile.

² Paul likely kept copies of several of the letters he wrote (a common practice in the Graeco-Roman world), perhaps included among the “books” and “parchments” he possessed (2 Timothy 4:13). Peter was familiar with these writings (2 Peter 3:15-16), and the entire collection could have easily been made available to the brotherhood by Timothy, Mark, and/or Luke after Paul’s death (2 Timothy 4:11-13). This possibility is made even more plausible by the fact that all extant manuscripts containing the epistles of Paul are remarkably consistent, not only in the number of the Pauline epistles they contain but also in the order they are arranged. It is not improbable that Paul pre-selected which of his letters to include in the published collection.

³ To test inspired writings and eliminate spurious ones, the following

questions were applied: (1) Does the writing claim to be inspired of God? (2) Was it written by an apostle? (3) If not, is it in keeping with apostolic teaching? (4) Is it accepted by faithful congregations? (5) Does it have the “ring of genuineness”?

4 The renowned NT translator, J.B. Phillips, observed: “In the whole task of translating the New Testament I never for one moment, however provoked and challenged I might be, felt that I was being swept away into a world of spookiness, witchcraft and magical powers such as abound in the books rejected from the New Testament. It was the sustained down-to-earth faith of the New Testament writers which conveyed to me that inexpressible sense of the genuine and the authentic” (*Ring of Truth*, p. 95).

5 These writings are often referred to as “the Old Testament Apocrypha,” but there are other apocryphal writings more closely related to the NT period and beyond, many of which are more accurately designated “pseudepigraphical” because they are ascribed to authors who did not and could not have written them (e.g. Enoch).

6 This is often abbreviated LXX (the Roman numeral for 70), indicating the approximate number of men who participated in the translation.

?? Review Questions

1. What is meant by the “canon” of Scripture?
2. When did the formation of the canon of Scripture begin?
3. Was it a common Jewish practice to carelessly transmit or alter the text of Scripture?
4. Are the books in our English Old Testament different from those the ancient Hebrews had?
5. What did New Testament writers acknowledge about the origin of their writings?

6. How was the New Testament canon formed?
7. Is the Roman Catholic Church responsible for the books in the New Testament canon?
8. Is it likely that we do not have access to some inspired writings that God wants us to have?
9. What is meant by the “Apocrypha”?
10. Were these apocryphal books considered inspired by the early Jews and Christians?

Suggested Homework

Read the book of Genesis.

Recommended Reading

Neale Pryor, *You Can Trust Your Bible*, Abilene, TX: Quality Publications, 1980.

Chapter 4

The Old and New Covenants

A “covenant” is an agreement between at least two parties, with conditions to be met and promises to be fulfilled. While a number of covenants are mentioned in Scripture (e.g. Genesis 6:18; 9:9; 17:9), two stand out in prominence. Understanding the differences between these two covenants is vital to interpreting the Bible correctly.¹

The Old Covenant

God made a covenant with the nation of Israel in about 1490 BC when Moses led them out of Egypt to Mount Horeb in the Sinai Wilderness (Exodus 19:1-25; Deuteronomy 5:1-22). While this covenant was based on “ten commandments” written on tables of stone (Deuteronomy 4:13), it also included about 613 additional statutes, judgements, and regulations.² This covenant, also known as the Old Testament (2 Corinthians 3:14), the Law of Moses (Malachi 4:4), the Law of God or simply the Law (Nehemiah 8:7-8), was comprised of discernible parts (cf. Luke 24:44), but there was still only one law to which the Jews were amenable (Romans 2:17-18).³

Although the promises of this covenant were conditional (Joshua 23:14-16) and Israel did not live up to their end of the agreement (Jeremiah 11:8-11), this covenant was never meant to be permanent.⁴ It was a temporary measure to help the Israelites remain faithful until the Messiah came into the world (Galatians 3:16-25), after which it had fulfilled its purpose and became obsolete (Hebrews 8:6-13).

The New Covenant

About six centuries before Christ arrived on the scene, God promised to make a new covenant with his people (Jeremiah 31:31-34). When Jesus died on the cross, this promise was fulfilled (Hebrews 9:15-17). This new covenant is a *better* covenant in that it is established on better promises (Hebrews 8:6), is intended for all people rather than a single nation (Luke 24:47; Ephesians 2:11-22), has a superior priesthood and more excellent Mediator (Hebrews 7:11-28; 12:24), provides the assurance of a greater rest and hope (Hebrews 4:1-16; 6:11-19), offers forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17), has a superior atoning sacrifice (Hebrews 9:11-28), and is everlasting (Hebrews 13:20).⁵ But, above all else, the New Covenant is “better” because it alone has the validation of a Savior, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:5-10).

The Perils of Confusing the Two Covenants

Even though the Old Testament has been annulled as a binding set of regulations, it still serves a useful purpose for our learning and admonition (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:1-12). However, no one today is justified by that law (Romans 3:20-22). If someone wants to go back and observe any part of the old law, he is not only obliged to obey *all* of it, but in so doing he has lost his spiritual security assured only in the new covenant of Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:10; 5:1-4).

Many religious people today confuse these two covenants and fail to appreciate the important distinction between them. Some of the following Old Testament practices have been mistakenly adopted by a number of religious groups: Sabbath observance (Exodus 20:8-11), food restrictions (Leviticus 11:4-47), tithing (Malachi 3:10), an exclusive priesthood (Exodus 40:15), musical instruments and/or dancing in worship (Psalm 149:3), burning incense (Malachi

1:11), and others. But if some of these practices are going to be borrowed from the Old Testament, consistency demands that the rest be incorporated as well, including animal sacrifices (Exodus 20:24), polygamy (Exodus 21:10), killing the disobedient (Deuteronomy 21:18-21), circumcision (Leviticus 12:3), annual feasts (Exodus 23:14-17), a temple in Jerusalem (Isaiah 44:28), et al. But the Lord never intended for the two covenants to be indiscriminately blended together.

A number of allusions, quotations, and examples from the Old Testament can be found in the New Testament. General facts and principles such as the love of God, the necessity of obedience, consequences for disobedience, the importance of faith, etc., are continually relevant. But if an old covenant practice or requirement has not been placed in the New Testament by the Lord himself,⁶ it is a mistake to presumptuously go back under the old system which the Lord has deemed obsolete.

Notes

¹ Thanks to Jerry Dyer who first introduced me to the basic outline of this chapter several years ago.

² These were carefully counted by Jewish rabbis and divided into 248 affirmative and 365 negative precepts.

³ The Bible does not make a distinction between a so-called "moral law" and a so-called "ceremonial law." The old covenant law certainly had both moral and ceremonial aspects, but the Bible consistently speaks of a *single* law for ancient Israel and contrasts that law with Christ's new covenant system (e.g. John 1:17; 7:19; Romans 3:19; 4:13-16; Galatians 2:16). In Romans 2:17-25 Paul shows that the same law that addressed the moral issues of stealing, adultery, and idolatry also included ceremonial legislation on circumcision. In John 10:34 and 15:25 Jesus quoted Psalms 82:6 and 69:4 respectively, attributing both of these passages to the Jewish "law."

⁴ The Hebrew word '*olam*', commonly translated "forever," is often used to describe various aspects of the Jewish law (e.g. Exodus 12:14-17; 27:21; 28:43; 29:28; 30:21; 31:17; Leviticus 6:18-22; et al.). But rather than signifying "without end," it merely expresses simple duration and describes something that lasts as long as it was intended to last (cf. Deuteronomy 15:17; 1 Samuel 1:22-28; Isaiah 42:14).

⁵ The fact that the Lord *does not change* (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8) simply means that his character is immutable and his nature is consistent, but this has nothing to do with the *various* ways God has operated throughout human history. Even if God were to change his mind (cf. Genesis 6:6-8; 18:20-32; Numbers 16:20-24), this would not affect his consistent nature or suggest that his inherent attributes are changeable. God completed his work of creation long ago (Genesis 2:1), and even though he is no longer doing what he did in the beginning, the Creator himself is unchanged. Although God has communicated to man in a variety of *diverse* ways through the ages (Hebrews 1:1-2), the Lord himself remains the same. Under the old law God required a Levitical priesthood (Numbers 18), but God's consistent nature is not impugned when the Bible says: "For the priesthood being *changed*, of necessity there is also a *change* of the law" (Hebrews 7:12). At one time God required such things as animal sacrifices,

circumcision, Sabbath observance, and a temple in Jerusalem, but all these items have been superseded by the new covenant of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 8:6-13). While God himself is changeless, the old covenant of the Jews has become obsolete (Hebrews 8:13), is changed, annulled, weak and unprofitable (Hebrews 7:12, 18), was merely a foreshadowing of things to come (Hebrews 10:1), was taken out of the way (2 Corinthians 3:14; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 10:9), and we are no longer under it or justified by it (Galatians 2:16; 3:24-25). Despite the various covenants God has made in the past (Romans 9:4; Ephesians 2:12; cf. Genesis 6:18; 9:9; 15:18; Deuteronomy 5:2; Ezekiel 16:8; Malachi 2:4), the **new covenant of Jesus Christ** is the Lord's final covenant with mankind (Hebrews 13:20-21).

⁶ Basically nine of the "10 commandments" (Exodus 20:3-17) have been incorporated into Christ's new covenant system (Romans 13:9; etc.), so it is still sinful to commit murder, adultery, theft, etc., not because the "10 commandments" have been breached but because of what is legislated in the New Testament. In Romans 7:4-7, for example, Paul says that Christians "have become dead to the law" and "have been delivered from the law" (vs. 4, 6), which is the same law that includes the injunction, "You shall not covet" (v. 7), i.e. one of the 10 commandments (Exodus 20:17). But the teachings of Christ still do not allow covetousness (Luke 12:15; Ephesians 5:3). In contrast, there is no 7th-day Sabbath legislation (Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-18) in the New Testament.

?? Review Questions

1. What is a "covenant"?
2. A covenant consists of what two fundamental components?
3. With whom did God make a covenant on Mount Horeb in the Sinai Wilderness?
4. What foundational aspect of this covenant was written on tablets of stone?

5. How can one know the covenant God made with Israel was not meant to be permanent?
6. What happened to the first covenant when the new covenant was instituted?
7. What purpose does the Old Testament serve today?
8. What are some ways in which the new covenant is superior to the old one?
9. What religious practices have some erroneously borrowed from the old covenant?
10. What is the danger of trying to incorporate portions of the old covenant into Christianity?

Suggested Homework

Read the book of Exodus.

Recommended Reading



Roy Deaver, *How to Study the Bible*, Plano, TX: Biblical Publishing Corporation, 1976.

The Two Covenants

1st

- For Israel
- Old
- Shadow
- Temporary

Galatians 3:16-25, "*until the Seed [Christ] should come*"

2nd

- For All
- New
- Substance
- Everlasting

1490 BC

Deuteronomy 4:13; 5:1-3
God made a covenant (including 10 commandments) with Israel, but not with forefathers.

600 BC

Jeremiah 31:31-24
Promise of a new covenant, not according to the first one.

AD 30

Hebrews 8:6-13
Better Covenant. First one obsolete.
Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 9:15-17

The First Covenant now obsolete (Hebrews 8:13), changed, annulled, weak & unprofitable (Hebrews 7:12,18), merely a foreshadowing of things to come (Hebrews 10:1), taken out of the way (Hebrews 10:9; 2 Corinthians 3:14) & nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14); we are no longer under it or justified by it (Galatians 2:16; 3:24-25).

The New Covenant established on better promises (Hebrews 8:6), intended for all people rather than a single nation (Luke 24:47; Ephesians 2:11-22), has a superior priesthood & more excellent Mediator (Hebrews 7:11-28; 12:24), provides the assurance of a greater rest & hope (Hebrews 4:1-6; 6:11-19), offers forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17), has a superior atoning sacrifice (Hebrews 9:11-28), and is everlasting (Hebrews 13:20).

Chapter 5

Bible Chronology

While God is the ultimate author of the Bible, human writers were used over several hundred years to put it in written form, and then the separate writings were compiled into a single volume. However, the books of the Bible are not always arranged chronologically and this can sometimes cause confusion. Two considerations are (1) when each book was written, and (2) what periods of history are covered in each book. A number of the inspired books were written anonymously, which can make it more difficult to date them.¹ While internal and external evidences provide helpful information in dating these ancient writings, dates often differ among scholars because varying degrees of importance are placed on the different sources of information. But having a general idea of Bible chronology helps put the whole biblical story into perspective.

Three General Periods of Bible History

The history of the Bible can be divided into three major dispensations, and while the dividing line between each of them can be linked to a significant historical event, transitional periods made the change more gradual than abrupt.²

A. The Patriarchal Age. This is the historical period from Creation to the time of Moses, in particular to the giving of the Law at Sinai. A “patriarch” is a father figure, the head or ruler of a family or tribe. During this period of history God communicated his will through the patriarchs. The first eighteen chapters of Exodus may be considered a period of transition.

B. The Mosaic or Jewish Age. This covers historical events

from Moses (at Sinai) to the time of Christ. During this time God communicated his will through the Law of Moses and the prophets (cf. Luke 16:29). The life and ministry of Jesus might be considered a transitional or developmental period, with Jesus' death on the cross being the turning point (Colossians 2:14).

C. The Christian Age. This is the period from Christ's death and subsequent resurrection until the end of time. During this dispensation God has spoken through Jesus by way of the New Testament (Hebrews 1:1-2). During the first century AD, as the new covenant revelation was gradually unfolding, the Jewish system slowly faded away (cf. Acts 21:20-27; Hebrews 8:13) until the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 administered the crushing blow (Matthew 24:1-2, 34).

Chronology of the Three Ages

A. The Patriarchal Age can be divided into: (a) **the Beginning Era:** Creation to the Dispersing of the Nations (Genesis 1-11); (b) **the Patriarch Era:** Job (Job 1-42), Abraham — *ca.*³ 1995-1820 BC (Genesis 12-25), Isaac — *ca.* 1895-1715 BC (Genesis 24-26), Jacob — *ca.* 1835-1688 BC (Genesis 27-36), and Joseph — *ca.* 1744-1634 BC (Genesis 36-50).

B. The Mosaic Age can be divided into: (a) **the Exodus Era:** Deliverance from Egypt,⁴ the Giving of the Law, and Wilderness Wandering — *ca.* 1490-1450 BC (Exodus-Deuteronomy); (b) **the Conquest Era:** Jordan Crossing to the Settlement of Canaan — *ca.* 1450-1436 BC (Joshua), (c) **the Judges Era:** the Judges and the Story of Ruth — *ca.* 1435-1130 BC (Judges-Ruth); (d) **the Kingdom Era:** the United Kingdom to the Divided Kingdom and Exile — *ca.* 1170-606 BC (1 Samuel-2 Chronicles, Psalms-Jeremiah, Hosea-Zephaniah); (e) **the Exile Era:** the Babylonian Captivity to the Return — *ca.* 606-536 BC (Lamentations-Daniel);

(f) **the Post-Exile Era:** After the Return from Babylon — *ca.* 536-420 BC (Ezra-Esther, Haggai-Malachi).⁵

C. **The Christian Age** can be divided into: (a) **the Developmental Era:** Life and Ministry of Jesus to His Death, Resurrection and Ascension — *ca.* 6 BC-AD 30 (Matthew-John, Acts 1); (b) **the Early Church Era:** Beginning of the Church to the End of the First Century — *ca.* AD 30-95 (Acts 2-Jude); (c) **the Mature Church Era:** Roman Persecution instigated by Domitian (*ca.* AD 95-96) to the End of the Age (Revelation 1-22).⁶

From the very beginning the Bible story has pointed to the Christian Age which God had planned since before the foundation of the world (2 Timothy 1:9). Throughout the Patriarchal Age, the Lord was working to accomplish this scheme (Genesis 3:15; 12:3; 22:18). Throughout the Mosaic Age, God continued working toward the realization of this divine plan (Galatians 3:19-29). Finally, when the time was right, God's purpose was brought to fruition in the Christian Dispensation (Galatians 4:4-7).

Notes

¹ See **Appendix 5-D** for a chart on authorship and approximate dating of the books of the Bible.

² Although the Law of Moses was the turning point between the Patriarchal and Mosaic Ages, there was a gradual revealing of these regulations from Sinai until Moses' death (Exodus 24:1-4, 12; 31:18; 33:1-11; 34:1 ff., 27-28, 34; 35:1; etc.), with additional prophetic communications until about 420 BC. While the cross of Christ was the historical turning point between the Mosaic and Christian Ages (Colossians 2:14), there was a gradual unfolding of the new covenant revelation until its completion near the end of the first century AD.

³ The abbreviation *ca.* stands for the Latin term *circa*, meaning "approximately." Sometimes it is simply *c.*

⁴ From the beginning of Abraham's sojourn to the Israelite's exodus from Egypt was 430 years (Galatians 3:16-17), sometimes rounded off at 400 (Genesis 15:13; Acts 7:6). Abraham was 75 when his sojourn began (Genesis 12:4), and Isaac was born 25 years later (Genesis 21:5); Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born (Genesis 25:26), and Jacob was 130 when he and his family entered Egypt (Genesis 47:9), making a total of 215 years from God's promise to Abraham until his descendants entered Egypt. Their departure from Egypt was about 215 years later (cf. Genesis 46:8, 11; Exodus 6:16-20; 7:7), thus $215 + 215 = 430$ years (cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.2). In Exodus 12:40 the phrase "who lived in Egypt" is probably parenthetical, describing "the children of Israel" rather than "the sojourn," and should therefore read: "Now the sojourn of the children of Israel (who lived in Egypt) was 430 years" (cf. LXX). This dates the entire sojourn, beginning in 1920 BC with Abraham's departure from Haran, to the Exodus in 1490 BC (cf. 1 Kings 6:1). [N.B. Since 20 years was the general age of maturation (Exodus 30:14; Numbers 1:3), it is still possible for Joshua's somewhat ambiguous genealogy in 1 Chronicles 7:20-27 to fit into this time frame]. While conservative scholars have proposed a variety of dates for the Exodus, ranging from about 1520 to 1440 BC, considering the antiquity of the event, this gap is not very significant.

⁵ For about four centuries (from Nehemiah and Malachi to the time of John the baptist), there were no new revelations from God (cf. Malachi 4:4-5; Matthew 11:11-15). This is sometimes referred to as the Inter-testamental Period or the Era of Silence.

⁶ See **Appendix 2** for NT Chronology.

?? Review Questions

1. Are the books of the Bible arranged chronologically? How does this cause confusion?
2. In establishing Bible chronology, why do dates differ among various scholars?
3. What are the three general periods of Bible history?
4. What is a “patriarch” and why is this term used to describe the first period of Bible history?
5. Between each dispensation, why is it difficult to pinpoint a specific break between one and the other?
6. What significant events stand between the three Ages?
7. During what dispensation did Job most likely live?
8. How has God communicated with man during the Christian Age?
9. Did God come up with alternative plans as each preceding system proved to be insufficient?
10. When will the Christian Age end?

✍ Suggested Homework

Read the Gospel of Matthew.

📖 Recommended Reading

Max E. Anders, *Thirty Days to Understanding the Bible*, Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1988.

Chapter 6

The Heart of Bible Study

Since God wants everyone to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3-4), surely he has ensured that this knowledge is attainable. As a matter of fact, understanding the will of God is not only possible, it is something the Lord expects (Ephesians 5:17). Jesus promised that those genuinely wanting to follow him *can* and *will* know the truth (John 8:31-32). We have not only been given a Book that can be understood, but God has provided a revelation of his will that we can all understand *alike*! (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 1:27). The fact that there are currently so many conflicting interpretations of the Bible and so much religious division is not God's fault. The problem is the many ways in which the word of God has been misused, misinterpreted, and misapplied. Jesus said to the Sadducees, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures...?" (Mark 12:24). To possess the knowledge that God wants us to have, and has promised we can have, what is required?

Knowledge of God's Will Is Conditional

The state of one's spiritual heart is paramount to understanding God's word. In John 8:27 the Jews did not understand what Jesus was trying to teach, and later he explained the reason. "Why do you not understand my speech? Because you are not able to listen to my word" (v. 43). Their biased minds, hardened hearts, and preconceived misconceptions prevented them from understanding the truth (cf. v. 47). No matter how much of God's word a person is exposed to, if his heart is not inclined to the truth he will never understand it (Matthew 13:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Jesus also said, "If anyone wills [wants] to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority" (John 7:17). Notice that in order to know the will of God there must first be a personal willingness or desire (cf. 1 Peter 2:2; Revelation 22:17). But it is not simply a desire to **know** God's will — one must first have the willingness to **do** God's will.¹ Bible study has to be more than a mere academic exercise. If one does not approach the Scriptures with a sincere desire to obey whatever the Bible instructs (Matthew 28:20), knowledge of the truth will always be beyond that person's ability to grasp. Unfortunately, only a relatively few exhibit this willing disposition (Matthew 7:13-14).²

The Lord also said that one must follow him (i.e. be his disciple) in order to escape spiritual darkness and "have the light of life" (John 8:12). Jesus then revealed what is required to be his follower: "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). One cannot abide in Jesus' word unless he knows and understands it, and one cannot know and understand it until he takes the time to read, study, and meditate upon it. But even that is not enough. One must combine the acquired knowledge of God's will with the existing desire to obey it. "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone **keeps My word** he shall never see death" (John 8:51).

Knowledge of God's Will Is Proactive

Understanding the Bible is not for the lazy and indifferent. It takes time, patience, and concentrated effort. "Be **diligent** to present yourself approved to God, a **worker** who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). "These were more fair-minded than those [unreceptive Jews] in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and

searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed . . .” (Acts 17:11-12).

To help maintain the necessary attitude that leads to an understanding of God’s word, it is important to couple Bible study with prayer. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5). This does not mean, however, that God miraculously bestows wisdom on you without any personal effort on your part. The wise man Solomon instructed to “**incline** your ear to wisdom, And **apply** your heart to understanding; Yes, if you **cry out** for discernment, And **lift up your voice** for understanding, If you **seek** her as silver, And **search** for her as for hidden treasures; **Then** you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God” (Proverbs 2:2-5). Furthermore, by studying the Bible with a humble, prayerful attitude, it will become much harder to be misled by improper thoughts and personal biases.

Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself as you begin Bible study. Do I really want to understand God’s word? Do I have the desire to do whatever the Bible instructs me to do? Am I willing to invest sufficient time and effort to understand the Bible? Am I open-minded enough to change whatever beliefs or convictions I currently have if they conflict with what the Bible teaches?

“But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15). “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Notes

¹ “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ezra 7:10).

² When Jesus offered the spiritual nourishment of his words to an earthly-minded crowd, many of them walked away and followed him no more. “Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life’” (John 6:63-68).

?? Review Questions

1. How can we be certain that knowledge of God’s will is attainable?
2. Why are there currently so many conflicting interpretations of the Bible?
3. Why is the condition of one’s heart important in ascertaining the truth?
4. In addition to having a desire to know God’s will, a Bible student must desire what?
5. According to Jesus, what is required to be his follower? (John 8:31-32)
6. In addition to reading, studying, and meditating on God’s word, what else is necessary?
7. Why will a lazy or uncommitted person never fully understand the Bible?

8. To ensure understanding, what should be coupled with Bible study?
9. Does God give wisdom to those who do not diligently search for it?
10. To test your attitude about Bible study, what are some helpful questions to ask yourself?

Suggested Homework

Read the Gospel of John.

Recommended Reading

J. D. Thomas, *Harmonizing Hermeneutics*, Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1991.

Chapter 7

The Biblical Pattern

The word “pattern” refers to a model, plan or guide; something to be imitated or copied. Does this term aptly describe the word of God? Jeremiah wrote: “O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). From the very beginning God has set forth a divine blueprint to govern man’s life, worship, and relationships. Adam and Eve were given regulations to obey (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:17-19). Cain and Abel were instructed how to worship God acceptably (Genesis 4:3-7; Hebrews 11:4). Noah was given a specific pattern for building the ark and saving his family; “Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did” (Genesis 6:13-22). In constructing the tabernacle Moses was told to do all things “according to the pattern” revealed to him (Exodus 25:9, 40; 26:30). “Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did” (Exodus 40:16), and this pattern/obedience still serves as an example for us today (Acts 7:44; Hebrews 8:5; cf. 11:23-29; 1 Corinthians 10:1-11).

The New Testament Pattern

While Jesus is our supreme example (1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6), the New Testament record of the faithfulness of first-century Christians also serves as our pattern (Philippians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; Titus 2:7). Timothy and the disciples at Ephesus were admonished by Paul to: “Hold fast the **pattern** of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. . . . And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 1:13; 2:2). In order to be freed from sin, all must obey “from the heart that

form [pattern] of doctrine to which you were delivered" (Romans 6:17-18). Christians are to walk according to the prescribed **rule** or standard (Galatians 6:16) — likened to competing in athletics "according to the rules" (2 Timothy 2:5). This divine system of faith was once for all time delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

The new covenant of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 8:6; 9:15) serves as our pattern today, and no one has the right to annul or alter any part of it (cf. Galatians 3:15-17; 6:16). To be *anathema* (accursed from God) is the consequence of perverting this gospel or proclaiming a substitute message (Galatians 1:6-10). Paul stressed the importance of not going "beyond what is written" (1 Corinthians 4:6). "Whoever transgresses [goes beyond the prescribed boundary] and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).¹ Failing to abide in Christ's doctrine is considered an evil deed not to be supported by the faithful (2 John 10-11). Adding to or subtracting from the words revealed by God will result in one forfeiting the eternal inheritance (Revelation 22:18-19). It is possible to handle the word of God deceitfully (2 Corinthians 4:2), and those who distort the scriptural pattern do so to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16).

Since we are to "walk by faith" (2 Corinthians 5:7) and we cannot please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6) and faith comes by hearing [hearkening unto] God's word (Romans 10:17), this divine revelation obviously constitutes our pattern for Christian living. God speaks to us today through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2) and he is to be heard (Mark 9:7). Whatever we do in word or deed must be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17), i.e. according to his authority (cf. Acts 4:7-10). The authority of Jesus is behind all that he has commanded (Matthew 28:18-20), and this includes the entire body of Christian teaching (cf. 1 Corinthians

14:37; Galatians 1:11-12). The word of Christ also serves as our standard of judgement (John 12:48).

True Christianity is evidenced by our love for God and one another. But this is impossible without a divine pattern to follow. “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:2-3).² Those who reject the pattern of God’s word cannot exhibit true biblical love.

Jesus said, “the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35), i.e. its authority cannot be negated, withstood, or replaced. In the absence of a divine pattern to govern our lives, everyone does what is right in his own eyes (Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 17:6; 21:25), resulting in confusion, chaos, lawlessness, and division. May we humbly regard the biblical admonition: “And lean not on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). Thank God for giving us a pattern to guide us through life and on into heaven.

Notes

¹ The word “doctrine” is translated from the Greek *didachê*, meaning “teaching,” and whenever this word is used by John elsewhere, it **always** has reference to the doctrine taught *by* someone rather than the doctrine taught *about* someone (cf. John 7:16, 17; 18:19; Revelation 2:14, 15, 20, 24). The overall context of John’s first epistle, the other writings of John, and the rest of the New Testament clearly identify “the doctrine of Christ” as the doctrine which Christ taught (both personally and through his inspired agents), i.e. the entire body of Christian teaching (including, but not limited to, the doctrine *about* Christ).

² See also John 14:15-23; 15:9-14; 1 John 2:3-6. This does not mean, however, that we can *earn* our salvation through commandment-keeping. Without the grace of God we would all be hopelessly lost (Ephesians 2:4-8), and we should obey God’s commands in response to what he has done for us, because we love him, and because this is what he wants us to do (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:10). Merely doing the right things without the right attitude or the right motives is meaningless (cf. Matthew 15:8). Obviously there are certain types of deeds that contribute nothing to our salvation, e.g. works of human merit (Matthew 23:3-5; Ephesians 2:9; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5) or ingenuity (Acts 7:41), works of the Law of Moses (Romans 3:27; Galatians 2:16), works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) or of the devil (1 John 3:8). But the things commanded by God are not works that we have invented to save ourselves. There are certain kinds of works that play a crucial role in our response to God, namely works of [genuine] righteousness (Acts 10:35) as opposed to self-righteousness (Titus 3:5), works of humble obedience (Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 5:8-9), and even belief in Jesus is a “work” that God enjoins (John 6:28-29). Motivated by God’s grace, we should be “zealous for good works” (Titus 2:14) and “fruitful in every good work” (Colossians 1:10), realizing that we are “created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:10). “Faith” is unquestionably our fundamental response to God (Romans 3:27-31; 5:1-2), but biblical faith is an *active, obedient, working* faith (Romans 1:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; James 2:14-26), i.e. “faith working through love” (Galatians 5:6). When we simply do what God tells us to do, we are not negating the grace of God but rather appropriating it (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; 2 Corinthians 6:1). Humble, obedient faith is the only loving response to, and the only access to, God’s grace.

?? Review Questions

1. What is meant by the word “pattern”?
2. Why does man need a divine pattern?
3. Has there ever been a time when God has not provided a pattern for man to follow?
4. What are some Old Testament examples?
5. What does the New Testament have to say about a pattern?
6. What are the spiritual consequences of altering or deviating from the NT pattern?
7. How does one “walk by faith”?
8. What does it mean to do something in the Lord’s name?
9. In what way does loving God and one another necessitate a divine pattern?
10. What happens when no divine pattern is followed?

✍ Suggested Homework

Read the book of Acts.

📖 Recommended Reading

Goebel Music, *Behold the Pattern*, Colleyville, TX: Goebel Music Publications, 1991.

Chapter 8

Ascertaining the Lord's Will

The boundaries of what we are to believe, teach and practise are determined by what has been recorded in God's word (1 Corinthians 4:6; cf. 14:37; John 8:31-32; 2 John 9). But since we are instructed to exercise diligence in accurately handling the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15, 24-26), it must also be possible for the Bible to be carelessly and incorrectly used. Admittedly not everything in the Bible is easy to understand, so there is a real danger in distorting the Bible's message (2 Peter 3:14-18). Becoming familiar with basic principles of biblical interpretation will help to avoid some of these mistakes.

Five Ways the Lord's Will Is Communicated in the Bible

A. Direct Statements. These are facts, instructions, or commands that are explicitly stated. For example, when Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6), no further logic or reasoning is needed to deduce what is being conveyed. The same is true of most other direct statements in Scripture.

B. Principles. These are general exhortations requiring basic common sense and mature reasoning to make specific, practical applications (cf. Hebrews 5:14). For example, when Jesus said, "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33), no specific details are given about how to actually do it. It is up to us to carefully determine how this principle should be applied in every area of our lives. The same is true for principles such as abstaining from every form of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22),

not being conformed to this world (Romans 12:2), modest dress (1 Timothy 2:9), and many others.¹

C. Approved examples. While not all accounts of action recorded in the Bible are to be imitated today (e.g. Matthew 3:4), a number of them help to illustrate or clarify what God expects of his people and therefore serve as examples to be followed. For instance, baptism is a command (Acts 10:33, 48) and is described as a burial (Colossians 2:12), and the account in **Acts 8:36-39** helps to illustrate the action of baptism. Regularly observing the Lord's Supper is a biblical requirement (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), and the account in **Acts 20:7** shows when it was observed by early Christians. As a general rule, an account of action must have an implied or understood requirement behind it to make it relevant as an approved example.

D. Implication. This refers to something not directly stated but necessarily inferred from what is said. Although inferences are merely human deductions, when something is *implied* in Scripture, this means only one inference is *necessary*, i.e. no other conclusion can be legitimately drawn from the statement. For example, in **Acts 8:35** the text simply says that Philip "preached Jesus" to the Ethiopian official, but in the very next verse this man requested baptism. The *implication* (or necessary inference) is that preaching "Jesus" includes baptism (cf. vs. 5, 12). In **Matthew 28:16-20** the so-called Great Commission was expressly given by Jesus to the eleven remaining apostles. Although the Great Commission was not *directly* given to every Christian, each person who becomes a disciple is to be taught to observe all that Jesus commanded, which surely includes what he had just said. Therefore, by *implication*, all disciples are to be involved in the Great Commission. In **Matthew 19:9** Jesus does not *explicitly* state that it is permissible to remarry after divorce. However, he does *imply* that one who divorces a sexually immoral spouse is permitted to remarry.²

E. Rule of Exclusion.³ Since all that God wants us to know about his will has been completely disclosed in Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17), whatever is not communicated or authorized in the Bible (as per the above) is excluded from the revealed will of God.⁴ To illustrate, consider God's instruction to Noah (Genesis 6:14). The type of wood to be used in building the ark was specified, namely gopherwood. God could have provided a long list of every other kind of wood that was *not* to be used, but this was unnecessary. By specifically telling Noah what was required, everything else in that category was automatically excluded. Later God specified the type of fire that was to be used by the priests (cf. Leviticus 16:12) but did not give a comprehensive list of all the different kinds of fire they were not supposed to use. Nadab and Abihu ignored this principle of exclusion and offered fire which the Lord "had not commanded them," resulting in tragedy (Leviticus 10:1-2).

How is this rule of exclusion to be applied today? In **Matthew 26:17, 26-29**, for example, the elements to be used in the Lord's supper are specified, namely "unleavened bread" and "fruit of the vine" (i.e. grape juice, cf. Leviticus 25:5; Revelation 14:18). Would it be according to God's will to substitute or add other things (e.g. potatoes, peanut butter, cake, lemonade, coffee) to this memorial? The Bible never says, "Do not add . . ." followed by a long list of prohibited ingredients, because the rule of exclusion makes this unnecessary.⁵ Another example is musical praise in Christian worship. Every passage in the New Testament that addresses music in Christian worship always specifies vocal praise or heart-based singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; etc.).⁶ Would the addition of other kinds of music be according to the revealed will of God? If so, why? If not, why not?

Notes

¹ Without general principles, imagine how enormous the Bible would have to be in order to specifically address all moral, relational, and religious life situations! Applying biblical principles in modern times is not as difficult as some may surmise. William Larkin observes: "As human beings we have a commonality that enables us to interpret and apply ideas and patterns and forms from other cultures and time periods" (*Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 200).

² Other biblical principles (e.g. Matthew 7:1-5, 12; Romans 2:1-3, 11; 1 Peter 1:17) make it evident that the one divorcing a sexually immoral spouse is not himself (or herself) guilty of the same offense.

³ This is also referred to as the Law or Principle of Exclusion or Silence, or the Prohibitive Place of Silence.

⁴ It is important to note the difference between *generic* and *specific* instructions. Although church buildings, for example, are not specifically mentioned in the Bible, they are authorized by the generic admonition to assemble (Hebrews 10:25), which requires a place but does not specify *which* place. On the other hand, "water" is specifically named as that into which one is to be baptized (Acts 8:36-39; 10:47), therefore any other substance is unauthorized (like someone I know who was sprinkled with rose petals). Infant baptism, sprinkling instead of immersion, a universal pope, church fund-raisers, indulgences, supra-church organizations (e.g. missionary societies, synods), earthly headquarters, denominational bodies, et al. are examples of man-made religious items without NT authority.

⁵ "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus . . ." (Colossians 3:17). This principle is well-illustrated by the following two examples. (1) When the apostles did something in the Lord's name, they were simply doing what the Lord had authorized them to do (Acts 4:7, 10). (2) When certain Jewish exorcists attempted to do something in "the name of the Lord Jesus" which the Lord had not authorized (Acts 19:13-17), they were obviously serving their own selfish interests rather than the Lord's. How would you like someone going around doing something in *your* name without your approval or authorization?

⁶ See also Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Hebrews 2:12; 13:15; James 5:13. [N.B. All NT references to musical instruments (e.g. Luke 7:32; 1 Corinthians 14:7; Revelation 14:2) are used for illustrative purposes or to symbolize things other than Christian worship]. While instrumental music in ancient times was common among infidels (Genesis 4:21; Job 21:12; Daniel 3:5-15), it was adopted in Jewish celebrations only after the Israelites had spent over two centuries with the Egyptians (Exodus 15:20; Judges 11:34). It was David who introduced musical instruments into Israel's corporate worship (1 Chronicles 15:16; Ezra 3:10), but whether or not this ever had divine sanction is a matter of dispute (cf. Amos 6:1-5). Nevertheless, singing from the heart is the only kind of worship-music authorized in the new covenant of Jesus Christ, and church history attests to a cappella singing as the only form of musical praise in Christian worship for several hundred years after the time of Christ. It wasn't until the mid-seventh century AD that the organ was first introduced into Roman Catholic worship, although it didn't become commonplace until after the eighth century. Early Reformation leaders strongly opposed mechanical instruments in worship as a Roman Catholic innovation, but by the 1800s most Protestant denominations had adopted the practice any way. However, everyone committed to the restoration of NT Christianity has rejected all unauthorized additions or alterations to the simple NT pattern.

?? Review Questions

1. What determines the boundaries of what we are to believe, teach, and practise?
2. What are five ways the Lord's will is communicated in the Bible?
3. Are all of the Bible's direct statements in the form of commands?
4. What are biblical principles and how are they to be applied?

5. Give a sample of a biblical principle and list specific ways it can be applied.
6. What is the difference between an account of action and an approved example?
7. Generally speaking, what makes an account of action an approved example?
8. Does the Bible teach by implication? Explain.
9. How does the rule of exclusion apply to biblical interpretation?
10. Give some practical examples of how the rule of exclusion works.

Suggested Homework

Find samples in your Bible of each of the five ways the Lord's will is communicated (as discussed above).

Recommended Reading

Thomas B. Warren, *When is an "Example" Binding?*, Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, 1975.

Chapter 9

The Importance of Context

Every statement in the Bible is surrounded by and connected to additional information that helps determine its meaning — this is context. Without considering context, statements in the Bible may appear to convey something God did not intend.

Biblical Context Includes:

A. Immediate context: the paragraph or general discussion in which the statement is made. For example, Jesus spoke these words in Luke 12:19, “. . . take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” Taken in isolation, one might conclude that the Lord is advocating slothfulness. However, by reading the immediate context (Luke 12:13-21) we learn that Jesus, in addressing the problems of greed and materialism, tells a story in which the words of verse 19 are attributed to a misguided rich man.

B. Remote context: the entire book or collection of writings in which the statement is included. For example, Ephesians 4:4 states that there is “one body.” Without considering the remote context, this “one body” might be identified as any number of things. After reading the entire epistle of Ephesians, however, the one body is clearly identified as “the church” (cf. 1:22-23; 2:16-19; 4:12, 16; 5:23, 29-30).

C. Literary context: the type of literature that governs the intent of the statement. For example, Psalm 148 calls upon the entire creation to praise the LORD, including the sun, moon, stars, sea creatures, winds, and mountains. Reading this passage literal-

ly and ignoring its poetic imagery would make nonsense of it. The Bible is composed of several different types of literature, i.e. poetic, historical, instructional, hortatory (exhortation), epistolary (letters), apocalyptic (symbolic), etc., and should be interpreted accordingly.

D. Historical-cultural context: the historical and/or cultural setting that may influence the intended meaning of the statement. For example, Romans 16:16 says, "Greet one another with a holy kiss." Ignoring the cultural setting of this statement might lead some to conclude that all Christians today ought to be kissing each other. However, considering the fact that the kiss was the customary form of greeting in ancient eastern cultures, it is evident that whenever these disciples (to whom Paul was initially writing) greeted one another in the customary way, they were being instructed to do so in a *holy* manner.

E. Overall biblical context: how the statement relates to the rest of the information in the Bible. For example, by reading Romans 5:1 in isolation, it might be concluded by some that a person is justified by faith *only*. However, this conclusion is amended when other passages are considered, like James 2:24: ". . . a man is justified by works, and not by faith only."

Helpful Questions to Ask When Establishing Context

A. Who is speaking? Statements like, "Curse God and die" (Job 2:9), although recorded in the Bible, were not originally spoken by God or one of his representatives. While the Bible is the word of God, it also contains words spoken by the devil (Matthew 4:3-9), demons (Mark 5:7-12), and uninspired people (John 8:48). The fact that the Bible is God's word simply means that whenever

the statements of uninspired individuals are recorded, it is an accurate account of what was said. Before conclusions are drawn from statements in the Bible, one must first determine their original source.

B. Who is being addressed? Genesis 6:14 is a command of God to build an ark of gopherwood, but it was a specific command, to a particular person, for a limited time, not for everyone in the world for all time. In Acts 1:5 Jesus said: “for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” The immediate context (Acts 1:1-5) must be read to understand to whom this promise was made. It was specifically addressed “to the apostles whom he had chosen.”

C. Under what dispensation is this applicable? Exodus 20:8-11 is a commandment of God to keep the 7th day (Saturday) holy and to do no work on that day. But the remote context shows that this law was specifically given to the Jews after their release from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 19:1 ff.; 31:12-17; Deuteronomy 5:12-15), not to all nations of all time. This law was binding on the Jews until Jesus established his new covenant for all people (Hebrews 8:6-13; cf. Colossians 2:13-17). In Matthew 6:10 Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God: “Your kingdom come . . .” (in the future). The overall context of Scripture shows that while Jesus was on earth, neither the new covenant nor God’s kingdom had been established — this occurred after Christ’s death (cf. Mark 1:15; 9:1; Hebrews 9:15-17). Since the kingdom (the church) has now come (Colossians 1:13, 18), it is no longer necessary to pray for it to come in the future.¹

D. How is this topic addressed in other passages? Romans 10:13 states: “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” If no other biblical information is taken into account, one

might conclude from this verse that simply speaking the Lord's name is all that is required to be saved and thus baptism is unnecessary. However, other passages inform us that merely speaking the Lord's name is insufficient (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46) and that baptism is necessary for salvation (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Peter 3:21). Other passages identify calling on the Lord's name as an obedient response that includes baptism (Acts 2:21, 38; 22:16). All the information should be considered on any given topic in the Bible before final conclusions are drawn.

Notes

¹ “The kingdom of God” is the sphere of God’s rule and in a general sense applies to God’s universal sovereignty (cf. Psalm 22:28; 145:13; Daniel 4:3; Romans 13:1-2). However, since the majority of the world’s population rejects the rule of God in their lives, “the kingdom of God” is also used in a more limited sense, namely the sphere in which the Lord’s dominion is *acknowledged*. Only those who accept and submit to the Lord’s reign can comprehend, enter, and comprise God’s spiritual kingdom (Mark 4:11; John 3:3, 5). In this sense the “kingdom of God does not come with observation . . . For indeed, the kingdom of God is within [or ‘among’] you” (Luke 17:20-21). Jesus promised that the kingdom would be established during the lifetime of his first-century disciples (Mark 1:15; 9:1), and this promise was fulfilled when the church began at Pentecost (Acts 1:1-8; 2:1-47; cf. Matthew 16:18-19). “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed [transferred] us into the kingdom of the Son of His love And He is the head of the body, the church . . .” (Colossians 1:13, 18). It is *this* kingdom, also known as the kingdom of heaven or of Christ (Matthew 19:23-24; Ephesians 5:5), that will someday be delivered to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:23-24) to receive the everlasting kingdom in heaven (Matthew 13:43; 25:34; Philippians 3:20; 2 Peter 1:10-11).

?? Review Questions

1. What is context and what does it encompass?
2. Why is context important in correctly interpreting the Bible?
3. In addition to God and his representatives, whose statements are also recorded in the Bible?
4. How does the type of literature help determine the intent of the writer?
5. What can happen when the historical-cultural context is not considered?

6. What is the danger of ignoring the immediate, remote, or overall biblical context?
7. What is meant by letting the Bible interpret itself?
8. Why is it important to ask, "Who is speaking"?
9. How does considering the initial addressee(s) help in biblical interpretation?
10. Are all biblical commands and promises directly applicable today?

Suggested Homework

Do a brief study of Matthew 10:7-20 applying the above principles. What are some ways this passage could be misinterpreted and misapplied?

Recommended Reading

J. J. Turner, *How to Effectively Study the Bible*, Abilene, TX: Quality Publications, 1988.

Chapter 10

Bible Study Aids

The Bible was originally written in languages other than English, so unless one can read and understand these languages, he/she must rely on English translations and Bible study aids. Be aware that all English translations, footnotes, marginal notes and references, commentaries, and study tools are man-made and must therefore be used with varying degrees of caution.

Comparative Study

A simple and helpful way to understand the Bible is by comparing different English translations of the text. For example, compare the following renderings of Colossians 3:5.

King James Version: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

New King James Version: "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

New American Standard Bible: "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry."

What may be unclear in one translation could be clarified in another.

Helpful Bible Study Tools for English Readers¹

A. Exhaustive Concordance. Most Bibles have a concordance in the back, but the limitation of space only allows them to include a select number of words and references. An *Exhaustive Concordance*, however, contains every word in the English Bible along with every verse that contains that word. This tool is helpful in doing topical studies on specific words, persons, places or subjects, and if you are unable to locate a particular verse in the Bible, you can use the concordance to look up a key word in the verse to find it.

Limitations of an Exhaustive Concordance. Since the various English versions of the Bible often render a particular Hebrew/Greek term with different English words (e.g. KJV “covetousness,” NASB “greed”), the concordance you use needs to be based on whatever English translation you have. Since many Hebrew/Greek terms can be translated into several different English words (e.g. *logos* = “word,” “saying,” “discourse,” “doctrine,” etc.), by looking up only one of these English words in the concordance you will not have access to every verse in which the Greek word *logos* is used. Sometimes a single English word is used to translate a number of different Hebrew/Greek words (e.g. “other” = *allos*, *heteros*, *loipos*, *heis*, etc.); thus simply looking up the English word does not necessarily indicate the range of meanings that may be expressed in the original language. A concordance is limited in doing topical studies, since a particular subject (e.g. prayer) may be addressed in a number of passages that do not even mention the key word (e.g. John 16:23; Ephesians 5:20).

B. Topical Bible. This is similar to a concordance, but rather than an alphabetical listing of Bible words, it is an arrangement of Bible references according to general topics (e.g. Agriculture, Backsliding, Capital Punishment, etc.). This is much more helpful

when doing a topical study, but be aware that the Scripture references are arranged according to the editor's subjective preference.

C. Bible Dictionary and Atlas. The definitions of Bible words (including names) tend to be more comprehensive and closer to their intended meaning in a Bible dictionary than in a modern English dictionary. A good Bible dictionary is helpful because many words in the Bible (e.g. cubits, denarii, phylacteries, Nazirites) are not commonly used today or have changed meanings over the centuries. Most Bible dictionaries are limited in their usefulness because they tend to shy away from controversial definitions of words (e.g. baptism) that are debated in today's religious world. A Bible Atlas gives you a good geographical overview of Bible lands and events with maps, pictures, and illustrations.

D. Bible Encyclopedia. This gives much more information than a Bible dictionary, and usually consists of several volumes. In addition to Bible subjects, these encyclopedias also give historical information on other people, places and events relevant to the Bible.

E. Expository Dictionary of Bible Words. This is a helpful tool for English readers who want to go a little deeper into the original meanings of Bible words. While the words are arranged in alphabetical order in English, the different Hebrew/Greek words are given and defined with sample references. However, these dictionaries are usually not comprehensive, and like all other man-made study aids, one should be alert to the authors' possible theological biases.

F. Commentary. This is a book that gives an author's comments, usually verse-by-verse, on a particular section of the Bible. Helpful background information and insights can be gleaned from

these books, but obviously their degree of usefulness is determined by who did the writing. If commentaries are used, it is a good idea to compare the comments of a number of different writers to have access to a greater range of views. Commentaries are a short-cut to Bible study, should be used with discretion, and must never replace one's own investigation and conclusions.

G. Computer Software. Many of the above study aids and more are available on computer software (see *Appendix 3* for recommendations).

H. The best tool you have is your own Bible.²

Notes

¹ See **Appendix 3** for Recommended Study Aids.

² See **Appendix 4** for a sample study using Bible study tools.

?? Review Questions

1. Why should any Bible study tool be used with a certain degree of caution?
2. The Bible was originally written in what languages?
3. What is meant by “comparative study” and how is this method helpful?
4. What are some benefits and limitations of an Exhaustive Concordance?
5. In doing a topical study, which is more helpful: a concordance or a topical Bible? Why?
6. Why is a Bible dictionary more useful in Bible study than a modern English dictionary?
7. Which contains more information: a Bible dictionary or a Bible encyclopedia?
8. What are some strengths and weaknesses of an Expository Dictionary of Bible Words?
9. What are some strengths and weaknesses of using commentaries?
10. What is your best study tool?

Suggested Homework

Read 1 Peter 3:21 from at least three different English translations, then use a concordance to find additional biblical information on this subject.

Recommended Reading

Earle H. West, *How To Study the Bible*, Singapore: World Literature Publications, 1979.

Chapter 11

Notable Distinctions

Not everything in the Bible carries the same weight, and mature reasoning and common sense go a long way in discerning the various levels of biblical information (cf. Philippians 1:9-10). This chapter addresses some important distinctions which should be taken into account.

Permanent or Temporary?

Certain things in the Bible are permanently relevant while other things have served their purpose and are no longer directly applicable. During the first century AD, for example, before God's revelation was finished and while the church was still in its infancy, there had to be some way for God to communicate his will to these early Christians in the absence of the complete New Testament. Apostles and prophets, therefore, served in this important function (Ephesians 3:5). However, now that God's revelation is complete, these roles are no longer needed (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Since the apostles had to be eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:21-22) and prophecies were to cease when God's perfect revelation was completed (1 Corinthians 13:8),¹ the temporary nature of these offices is apparent. In contrast, there is a continual need for teachers, preachers, evangelists, elders, and deacons (cf. Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 3:1-13).

Obligatory or Optional?

Certain matters are obligatory while others are not. For example, the *day* Christians are to assemble together each week to partake of the Lord's Supper is not optional, but the *time* of day is. The **first day of the week** was the day on which Jesus conquered death

(Mark 16:9) and subsequently met with his disciples (John 20:19, 26), the church was established (Acts 2:1 ff.), and the early Christians were to assemble together to observe communion (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 16:1-2; Acts 20:7). The *time* of day, however, is never enjoined.²

Immersion in water is a necessary step in the salvation process (Acts 2:38; 8:35-39; 1 Peter 3:20-21; etc.), but the location of the water (e.g. river, pool, baptistery) is optional. Proclaiming the word of God is mandatory (Mark 16:15; 2 Timothy 4:2), but the various means utilized (e.g. public lectures, printed tracts, radio broadcasts) are optional. Obligatory matters have been bound by God, whereas optional matters are those wherein the Lord has granted us freedom to choose (Matthew 18:18; 1 Corinthians 8:8-9; 9:4-6, 12; 10:25-31).

Indispensable or Incidental?

The assembly mentioned in Acts 20:7-9 had some indispensable elements (the first day of the week, breaking bread, preaching), supported by a number of other biblical references, but it also contained some incidentals (many lamps, the upper room, a window). The indispensable elements of Acts 8:26-40 include Scripture, preaching Jesus, and water baptism. Things such as the road, the deserted place, and the chariot are mere incidentals. Incidentals are generally governed by the particular circumstances while indispensable elements are not.

Faith or Opinion?

Faith is based on what is revealed in God's word (Romans 10:17) but opinion is something beyond the direct revelation of God. The fact that John Mark left Paul and Barnabas to return to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13) is a matter of faith, i.e. this information is

revealed in God's word and can therefore be believed and taught with absolute assurance. However, the *reason* for his departure is not revealed, therefore any conclusion which might be drawn about this matter (whether he was ill, frightened, or homesick) is simply conjecture and cannot be pressed with certainty.

Consequential or Non-Consequential Doctrine?

The word "doctrine" simply means "teaching," and anything *taught* in the Bible is therefore doctrine. Sometimes the term "doctrine" is inaccurately equated only with teachings that are permanent, obligatory, and indispensable. However, as shown above, there are a number of biblical teachings that are not permanently binding or obligatory. Sometimes issues are mistakenly classified as "non-doctrinal" when in reality they *are* doctrine (i.e. taught in the Bible). For example, the question of female head-coverings is classified by some as non-doctrinal, but the fact that this issue is addressed in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 makes it a doctrinal matter. The crucial distinction is not whether or not something in the Bible is "doctrine," but what the *nature* of the doctrine is and how it is to be interpreted and applied.

Notes

¹ The 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians is in the middle of a three-chapter discourse on the use (and misuse) of miraculous gifts, an issue that had apparently been causing much controversy and division among the Corinthians. In chapter 13 Paul shows them “a more excellent way” (12:31), namely the way of Love, and in 13:8-13 the duration of love is contrasted with the duration of these miraculous gifts. Paul uses three of the gifts mentioned in the previous chapter, i.e. prophecies, tongues and miraculous knowledge (12:8, 10), to make the comparison. Incidentally, these particular gifts were all means by which God revealed and confirmed his word (cf. Acts 2:1-24; Ephesians 3:1-5). In contrast to love that “never fails,” i.e. is everlasting (cf. 1 John 4:8), these miraculous gifts were only temporary and designed to eventually fail, cease, and vanish away (v. 8). The gifts of knowledge and prophecy, for example, were merely “in part” (v. 9), that is, they were contributing parts of God’s revelation, bit by bit (cf. 12:8-11, 28-30; 14:26-31), that when pieced together would make something whole or complete. “But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away” (v. 10). The word “perfect” here is *teleion*, the neuter form of *teleios*, meaning “brought to completion; fully accomplished, fully developed . . . complete, entire, as opposed to what is partial and limited” (H. K. Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*, p. 400). Notice that *teleion* is not masculine in form (and thus not referring to a person), but is neuter, literally signifying “that [thing] which is perfect.” These gifts were to have served their purpose and would no longer be available when something “in part” was brought to completion. The revealed will of God, which was communicated and confirmed through these gifts (cf. Hebrews 2:2-4), is elsewhere described as “the perfect [*teleion*] will of God” (Romans 12:2) and “the perfect [*teleion*] law of liberty” (James 1:25). Paul concludes this discussion with three “before and after” illustrations (vs. 11-12), each applicable to the complete [perfect] word of God: (1) The word of God brings us to maturity (Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:2); (2) The word of God is the spiritual mirror which enables us to clearly see God’s will (James 1:21-25); and (3) Knowledge of God’s will now comes through his word (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Unlike faith, hope and love, which “abide” (Greek *menô* = continue, remain, last, endure), these temporary miraculous gifts were not meant to carry on (v. 13).

² Jesus established the Lord’s Supper on a Thursday evening (Matthew 26:20) to commemorate his crucifixion, which took place the following day

from about 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Mark 15:25; Matthew 27:45). Early Christians observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7) — the day of Christ's resurrection, which occurred early in the morning (Mark 16:9). Acts 20:7 states that Paul's *sermon* lasted until "midnight" but doesn't say when this assembly **began** or at what **time** they observed communion. As long as the Lord's Supper is observed each Sunday (regardless of the time of day), the NT pattern has been followed.

?? Review Questions

1. Does everything in the Bible carry equal weight?
2. What is needed in discerning the various levels of biblical information?
3. How might one distinguish between permanent and temporary legislation in the Bible?
4. What are some examples of obligatory and optional matters in the Bible?
5. How would you differentiate between indispensable and incidental elements in the Bible?
6. What separates faith from opinion?
7. What does the word "doctrine" mean?
8. The term "doctrine" legitimately applies to what parts of the Bible?
9. What is the crucial distinction with regard to the various biblical doctrines?
10. Give some examples of consequential and non-consequential doctrines of the Bible.

Suggested Homework

Read Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 - 10.

Recommended Reading

Roy C. Deaver, *Ascertaining Bible Authority*, Austin, TX:
Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1987.

Chapter 12

Divine Regulations and Cultural Conventions

Often divine precepts have been communicated amidst cultural conventions, and it can sometimes be challenging as we try to differentiate between the two. How do we go about distinguishing between temporary cultural practices and permanently binding principles in the Bible?

Permanently Binding Legislation

To help determine whether or not something in the Bible was intended to be permanently binding, here are some helpful questions to ask. Is the particular practice based on an eternally established fact or principle or divine injunction? Does the Bible indicate that it was to be observed until the end of time? Was it meant to be passed on to future generations? Is it necessary in order to become a Christian, to live the Christian life, or to be saved? Was it consistently practised by a number of congregations in different geographical or cultural settings?

The biblical teaching on the role of women is based on the unchangeable order of creation rather than a temporary local custom (1 Timothy 2:11-15), thus it continues to be relevant in all cultures of all time (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:3, 8-9; 14:33-35; Ephesians 5:22 ff.). The Lord's Supper proclaims Jesus' death "until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Matthew 26:29). Water baptism is necessary to become a disciple of Jesus, and is to be taught and administered and is relevant "until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:1-6).

Temporary Cultural Practices

To help determine whether or not something in the Bible was merely a temporal social conventionality, here are some helpful questions to ask. Is the particular practice connected to or even limited to a local setting, time, or culture? Is the reason for it culturally relevant? Is it merely incidental? Does the text itself or the rest of the information in Scripture qualify it? Is it necessary in order to carry out a clear biblical requirement?

In the ancient East, people customarily wore sandals and mostly traveled by foot, therefore to enter someone's house with dirty feet was practically unavoidable (cf. Mark 6:7-11; Acts 13:51). Thus the washing of feet became a customary act of hospitality and humble service (cf. Genesis 18:4; 19:2; 43:24; Judges 19:21; 1 Timothy 5:10). With this in mind and considering the context, the Lord's actions and subsequent instructions in **John 13:1-17** appear to have simply been a timely object lesson for his proud and selfish apostles (cf. Luke 22:14-27). But feet-washing was never instituted as a permanent Christian ritual.

In ancient eastern cultures the customary form of greeting was the kiss (cf. Genesis 27:26; 29:13; 2 Samuel 20:9; Matthew 26:49; Acts 20:37). Therefore, in the numerous references in the New Testament to the kiss-greeting (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14), it is obvious that these writers were **not initiating** a new form of greeting to be bound on the churches but were simply **regulating** the customary greeting that was already practised among those to whom they wrote.

In **1 Corinthians 11:2-16** there is a discussion about women praying or prophesying with covered heads. The fact that Paul actually used the word "custom" (*sunêtheia*) in this text (v. 16, cf.

ASV, N/KJV, NRSV) forces us to consider the cultural conventions of those to whom he was initially writing. Head-coverings were customarily worn by respectable women in ancient eastern cultures, including those of first-century Corinth (cf. Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Tertullian, etc.). Instead of instituting a new church ordinance, Paul seems to have been regulating a practice already observed (perhaps negligently?) by the original recipients of this epistle. Although he does appeal to eternally established principles (vs. 3, 7-9), these are tied to gender roles rather than the head-covering itself. The respective roles of men and women are permanently relevant (as per above) but this particular article of female attire is not.¹

In the cultural environment of first-century Ephesus, a woman was considered immodest if she wore plaited hair, gold, pearls, or costly clothing (**1 Timothy 2:9**). The principles of modesty, godliness, and submission continue to be applicable (cf. 1 Peter 3:1-6). But a woman with plaited hair does not betoken immodesty in most cultures today, therefore the principle can be kept without binding that particular culturally-relevant symbol.²

A word of caution is in order. It is vital that one does not allow his lack of knowledge, his personal biases, or his misplaced enthusiasm to *relegate* a biblical imperative to the status of temporary cultural expediency or to *elevate* a cultural conventionality to the status of divine precept. Wisdom, balanced reasoning, and prayerful study are indispensable.

Notes

¹ Be aware that several English translations of this text do a disservice to what Paul originally wrote. The words “a sign of” or “a symbol of” have been added to v. 10 in some versions (N/ASV, NIV, NKJV, NRSV) although not included by Paul, the RSV unjustifiably inserts the word “veil” into this verse (replacing *exousia* which means “authority,” “power,” “right” or “liberty,” cf. 7:37; 8:9; 9:4-6, 12, 18; 15:24), and the Greek word *toioutos* in v. 16 has been incorrectly rendered “other” in the NASB, NIV, and RSV when it actually means “such.” (For a more detailed discussion, see the author’s book *We Have No Such Custom: A Critical Analysis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*, Wanganui NZ: By the Author, 1998).

² Other examples include the biblical admonitions to “honour the king” and “be submissive to your masters” (1 Peter 2:17-18). Obviously this does not mean that in order to adhere to these scriptural mandates all Christians must live in nations governed by a monarchy and sell themselves into slavery. There are principles here, although communicated in a particular historical-cultural context, that can and must be applied regardless of one’s political or social environment.

?? Review Questions

1. What temporal cultural practices have some elevated to the status of binding precepts?
2. What biblical imperatives have some relegated to the status of mere social customs?
3. What are some helpful questions in trying to determine permanently binding legislation?
4. What are some examples of binding precepts in the Bible, and how can we be sure?
5. What are some helpful questions in trying to determine temporary cultural conventions in the Bible?

6. How do you view the biblical teaching on the role of women and why?
7. How do you view the biblical teaching on feet-washing and why?
8. How do you view the biblical teaching concerning the “holy kiss” and why?
9. How do you view the biblical teaching on female head-coverings and why?
10. How do you view the biblical teaching on modest clothing and why?

Suggested Homework

Do a brief study on the biblical teaching of “lifting up holy hands.”

Recommended Reading

Dave Miller, *Piloting the Strait*, Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 1996.

Chapter 13

Figurative Language

A basic rule of interpretation is to consider a passage literally unless the context demands otherwise. However, much biblical information has been communicated in figures of speech, and the true meaning of Scripture can be missed when figurative language is interpreted literally and vice versa.

Types of Figurative Language

A **metaphor** is a figure of speech in which a word is substituted for another word or concept to more vividly express it. "You are the *salt* of the earth . . . You are the *light* of the world" (Matthew 5:13, 14). Jesus said of Herod, "Go, tell that *fox* . . ." (Luke 13:32). John said of Jesus, "Behold! The *Lamb* of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

A **metonymy** is the use of a term for something else that is associated with or suggested by it. When Jesus said, "They have *Moses* and *the prophets*; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29), he was alluding to their writings. Jesus is referred to as "the *resurrection* and the *life*" (John 11:25) because he is the source of life. "Marriage is honorable among all, and the *bed* undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). In Matthew 26:27-29, "the cup" is a metonymy for the contents of the cup.

A **simile** is a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another. The Pharisees were "*like* whitewashed tombs" (Matthew 23:27); "All flesh is *as* grass" (1 Peter 1:24); "I heard behind me a loud voice, *as* of a trumpet" (Revelation 1:10). A **similitude** is an extended simile, e.g. the obedient and disobedient are likened to

wise and foolish builders (Matthew 7:24-27). A **parable** is an even more extended simile (cf. Matthew 13:3-52).

A **synecdoche** is a figure of speech in which a part of something stands for the whole or vice versa. In Ephesians 4:5 the word "faith" stands for the entire system of faith. The expression "break bread" in Acts 20:7 represents the whole of communion (cf. Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:24-26). In Genesis 21:7 the plural "children" stands for a single child. In Mark 16:15 the expression "every creature" is used for all accountable human beings.

Personification is when human attributes are ascribed to non-human or abstract things. "Does not wisdom cry out, and understanding lift up her voice?" (Proverbs 8:1); "do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing . . . tomorrow will worry about its own things" (Matthew 6:3, 34); "And the name of him who sat on [a pale horse] was Death" (Revelation 6:8).

Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration for the sake of emphasis. "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out" (Matthew 5:29); "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" (Matthew 23:24); "the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25). Paul described himself as "less than the least of all the saints" (Ephesians 3:8).

A **prolepsis** is the describing of a future event as though it has already occurred. Eve was called "the mother of all living" and Abram was called "a father of many nations" long before they actually were (Genesis 3:20; 17:5). The LORD told Rebekah, "Two nations are in your womb" (Genesis 25:23). Judas Iscariot is first introduced in Matthew's Gospel as the one who betrayed Jesus (10:4), although this actually happened later in the account.

Basic Guidelines for Interpreting Figurative Language

A passage should be considered figurative when such is expressly stated in the text. Matthew 13, for example, shows that Jesus was teaching parabolically and explains the reason for it. Revelation 1:1 states that the information presented in this book was “signified” (Greek *esēmanen*), i.e. given in signs and symbols.

When a literal interpretation involves a contradiction, an absurdity, or an impossibility, the passage should be regarded as figurative. Jesus was not contradicting himself when he said: “He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die” (John 11:25-26). He was simply making an illustrative comparison of physical and spiritual life. When the Lord said, “Take, eat; this is my body” (Matthew 26:26), obviously he was using symbolism. The idea of casting mountains into the sea (Mark 11:23) is hyperbolic, not literal.

As much as possible, let the Bible itself interpret the figures. When Jesus spoke of raising “the temple” in three days, the text reveals that he was speaking metaphorically of his own body (John 2:19-22). Ezekiel 37:1-21 describes an incredible account of a multitude of dry bones coming to life, and then explains that this symbolized the restoration of the nation of Israel following Babylonian captivity. Thunder, lightning, earthquakes, darkness, falling stars, and blood were common symbols of divine judgement and the violent overthrow of nations (Psalm 18:13-14; Isaiah 13:1-22; 34:1-5; Ezekiel 32:1-11; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 24:29-34). A figurative passage should always harmonize with literal teachings on the same subject.

Consider the historical context in which the figures were being used, and allow the facts of history to aid in interpretation. The “four beasts” of Daniel 7 represented four kingdoms, and history reveals these were the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman empires. The book of Revelation was written during a time of tribulation (1:9; 2:9; 7:14), the historical setting being the Roman persecution of the church. But try to avoid unnecessary speculation.

?? Review Questions

1. Why is it important to distinguish between literal and figurative speech in the Bible?
2. What is a metaphor and what are some biblical examples?
3. What is a simile and how does this relate to the similitude and parable?
4. What does “personification” mean?
5. When a hyperbole is unrecognized, how might this do damage to the intent of the passage?
6. If a text seems to involve a contradiction, absurdity or impossibility, what does this indicate?
7. What is the benefit of allowing the Bible to interpret its own symbolism?
8. Should a figurative passage be used to understand a literal one or vice versa?

9. How might the historical context aid in interpreting some biblical symbols?
10. What part does common sense play in interpreting figurative language?

Suggested Homework

Find examples of each of the above figures of speech in your Bible.

Recommended Reading

D. R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics*, Delight, AR: Gospel Light Company, no date.

Chapter 14

Practical Application of the Bible

One can read the Bible from beginning to end, but unless it is applied to one's life it will profit nothing. Let's examine the Bible's answers to some of life's most important questions.

Why Should I Believe in God?

All who genuinely search for God can easily find him (Acts 17:27), and to confirm the reality of God one could appeal to any number of philosophical arguments, logical syllogisms, or scientific data.¹ But the Bible itself provides the simplest and most powerful argument of all: "For every house is built by someone . . ." (Hebrews 3:4a). How simple, yet how profound! I exist, you exist, and this universe exists — so where did it all come from? The only alternative to a Creator is the untenable assertion that everything came from *nothing* through the accidental process of chance! It is much more reasonable (and believable) to accept this simple truth: "For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4).

Why Should I Believe in Jesus?

Secular history verifies the historical person of Jesus Christ,² but the writers of the NT provide the most comprehensive description of his life, character, and words. By honestly considering the testimonies of those who personally knew and observed Jesus, and by carefully examining his teachings, there is only one legitimate conclusion to reach: Jesus was exactly who he (and numerous oth-

ers) said he was — the very Son of God (cf. 2 Peter 1:16-21). Moreover, Jesus launched a religious movement nearly 2000 years ago that has not only survived and prospered in the face of the most extreme prejudice and persecution imaginable, but it has significantly impacted and transformed both human history and countless individual lives. “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30-31).

Why Should I Believe in the Holy Spirit?

Something much more substantial than subjective emotion or personal experience confirms the reality of the Holy Spirit.³ The Bible says: “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). The Holy Spirit, who guided the writers of the Bible to produce the most remarkable document ever written (2 Peter 1:21), reveals truth (1 Corinthians 2:10), sanctifies (2 Thessalonians 2:13), comforts (Acts 9:31), empowers (Romans 15:13), strengthens (Ephesians 3:16), leads (Galatians 5:18), and saves (Titus 3:5). And all this is accomplished through the medium of God’s word, which reveals truth (2 Timothy 3:15-17), sanctifies (John 17:17), comforts (Romans 15:4), empowers (Romans 1:16), strengthens (Psalm 119:28), leads (Psalm 43:3; 119:105), and saves (James 1:21). The Bible is obviously no ordinary book, because the Holy Spirit has given it life and power (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:23).

Why Should I Believe in the Bible?

The Bible is by no means an out-dated collection of irrelevant stories. The word of God “is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,” penetrating to the inner-most depths of

one's soul (Hebrews 4:12). The Bible has been transforming lives and shaping societies for centuries, and its message is just as relevant and powerful today as when it was first written. The Bible's greatest proof is itself!

Why Should I Believe in the Gospel?

The word "gospel" literally means "good news," but to fully appreciate the gospel one must be aware of the *bad* news to which it is contrasted. The *bad* news is that all accountable human beings have been separated from God because of sin (Romans 3:10-23). But the *good* news is that God still loves us, wants us all to be saved, and has provided the necessary means (Romans 5:8-11). Jesus is the Saviour of all who obey him (Hebrews 5:8-9), and this simply involves hearing and believing the gospel (Acts 2:37; 8:12), repenting of sins (Acts 3:19), confessing faith in Jesus (Romans 10:9), being immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), and remaining faithful until death (Acts 14:22; Revelation 2:10).

Why Should I Believe in the Church?

The Bible identifies the church of Christ as the body of Christ; there is only one, and Jesus is its Saviour (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23). The church of Christ is not a building or a denominational sect. Christ's church is comprised of all penitent believers who have been baptized into Christ for the remission of sins, who have been added to the church by the Lord himself, and who remain faithful to Christ's teachings (Acts 2:37-47). The churches of Christ can be identified today by the designation they wear (Acts 11:26; Romans 16:16), the pattern they follow (2 Timothy 1:13; 2:2), the plan of salvation they implement (Acts 2:37-38), their benevolence and evangelism (2 Corinthians 9:6-15), their organization (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-13), their love for one another

(John 13:35), and their spiritual worship each first day of the week involving praying, singing, biblical preaching, the Lord's Supper, and free-will giving (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29; 14:15; 16:2).

Why Should I Believe in the Christian Life?

Even if the promises of heaven were removed from the Bible, the Christian life would still be worth living. It is the most noble and fulfilling life possible. Living for Christ leads us away from the deceptive things of this world that ultimately destroy happiness, relationships, and lives (Colossians 3:1-11). The Christian vocation engenders personal growth, maturity, and character (Romans 5:3-4). It offers forgiveness, a good conscience, peace, and joy that would otherwise be unavailable (Philippians 4:6-9). Being a Christian makes life's burdens much easier to bear (Galatians 6:2; 1 Peter 5:7). The Lord never promised that the Christian life would be easy, but nothing worthwhile ever comes easy! (cf. Mark 10:29-30).

Why Should I Believe in the Return of Christ?

Every prophecy in the Bible has been fulfilled, with the exception of those pertaining to Christ's second coming. Because of the Bible's incredible track record, there is no sensible reason to doubt that Jesus is coming again. When the Lord returns it will be unexpected (Matthew 24:44), the dead will be raised (John 5:28-29), the earth will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10), the righteous will meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), everyone will stand before Christ's judgement seat (2 Corinthians 5:10), and God's faithful ones will live forever in heaven, while everyone else will spend eternity in hell (Matthew 25:46). Are you allowing the word of God to help prepare you for that day?

If there are sins in your life from which you need to turn away,

if you have not publicly confessed your faith in Jesus or been immersed in water for the purpose of having your sins washed away by Christ's blood, or if you are not a faithful member of the Lord's church, please write to the address in the front or back of this book so we can put you in touch with someone who can help you obey the Lord.

Notes

¹ The cosmological argument states that the universe exists, but it has not always existed nor did it create itself, therefore something (or Someone) superior to and beyond itself must have caused it (cf. Romans 1:20). The teleological argument reasons that the order, arrangement, and design of the universe (from the smallest micro-organism to the vast solar systems) imply an intelligent and purposeful Designer (cf. Psalm 19:1). The ontological argument affirms that man does not have the capacity to think beyond the information available to him, and since man can conceive of God even though the idea of God is beyond the human senses, God must be real (cf. Romans 1:19). Moreover, if the divine origin of the Bible can be substantiated (see chapter 2), then surely we can believe what the Bible says about its Author.

² Cf. Tacitus, *Annales* 15.44; Pliny, *Letters* 10.96, 97; Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.3.3.

³ Just about everything, from warm feelings and vague intuitions to selfish delusions and elaborate hoaxes, have been attributed to God's Spirit. But to attempt to speak on behalf of God without his authorization or to attribute something to the Holy Spirit for which he is not responsible is blasphemous (cf. Matthew 12:36).

?? Review Questions

1. Why do you believe in God?
2. Why do you believe in Jesus?
3. Why do you believe in the Holy Spirit?
4. Why do you believe in the Bible?
5. Why do you believe in the gospel of Christ?

6. Why do you believe in the church of Christ?
7. List, with scripture references, some identifying characteristics of Christ's church.
8. Why do you believe in the Christian life?
9. Why do you believe in Christ's second coming?
10. What do you need to do to prepare for the return of Christ?

Suggested Homework

Locate as many passages in the New Testament as you can find about the events surrounding the Lord's second coming, then list the various things that will occur.

Recommended Reading

Roger E. Dickson, *The Fall of Unbelief*, Winona, MS: J.C. Choate Publications, 1982.

Appendix 1

A Brief Synopsis of Each Book of the Bible

Genesis: the beginnings: of the world, mankind, sin, civilization, and the nation of Israel.

Exodus: the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and the giving of the Law of Moses.

Leviticus: regulations concerning Israel's worship and priesthood.

Numbers: Israel's experiences during their 40 years of wilderness wandering.

Deuteronomy: recounting the Law to the new generation and the farewell of Moses.

Joshua: Israel's conquests under the leadership of Joshua.

Judges: Israel's turbulent history under the administration of the judges.

Ruth: the story of a Moabite woman who became a faithful member of the Jewish community.

1 Samuel: the lives of Samuel, Saul, and David as Israel became a monarchy.

2 Samuel: the highlights of David's reign.

1 Kings: the reign of Solomon followed by a divided kingdom.

2 Kings: the northern and southern kingdoms until the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.

1 Chronicles: a religious viewpoint of David's reign.

2 Chronicles: history of Judah (primarily) and its kings from Solomon to the time of Cyrus.

Ezra: return from Babylonian captivity to rebuild the temple and restore the Law.

Nehemiah: rebuilding Jerusalem's wall and further restoration.

Esther: the story of a Hebrew girl who became queen of Persia and helped save the Jews.

Job: the story of a man who lost everything except his faith in God.

Psalms: a collection of poetic writings and songs on a variety of topics, mostly of praise.

Proverbs: a collection of wise sayings.

Ecclesiastes: a view of life apart from God.

Song of Solomon: a song of marital love.

Isaiah: prophecies of judgement (against Judah and surrounding nations) and messianic hope.

Jeremiah: forty years of Jeremiah's tearful prophetic messages to the sinful nation of Judah.

Lamentations: Jeremiah laments the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians.

Ezekiel: vivid prophecies, parables, and signs for the Jews in Babylonian captivity.

Daniel: the story of Daniel in Babylon, including his prophecies.

Hosea: prophecies for unfaithful Israel, illustrated by the infidelity of Hosea's wife.

Joel: a locust plague in Judah exemplifies God's future judgements.

Amos: warnings of judgement against the apathetic nation of Israel.

Obadiah: prophecies of impending judgement against the Edomites.

Jonah: the story of a reluctant missionary.

Micah: a message of judgement for the wayward leaders and inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Nahum: a prophecy concerning the overthrow of Ninevah.

Habakkuk: a message of judgement against Judah.

Zephaniah: Judgement against Jerusalem, Israel and other nations, plus a message of hope.

- Haggai:** the post-exile Jews are vehemently admonished to finish rebuilding the temple.
- Zechariah:** the post-exile Jews are positively encouraged to finish rebuilding the temple.
- Malachi:** a message of judgement against post-exile corruption, wickedness, and apathy.
- Matthew:** a biography of Christ for a Jewish audience.
- Mark:** a biography of Christ for a Roman audience.
- Luke:** a biography of Christ from a Greek perspective.
- John:** a biography of Christ for a universal audience, highlighting Christ's deity.
- Acts:** a thirty-two year history of the early church from Jerusalem to Rome.
- Romans:** a letter to the church in Rome emphasizing faith, righteousness, and the fact that Jews and Gentiles are accepted by God on the same terms.
- 1 Corinthians:** a letter addressing numerous problems in the church at Corinth.
- 2 Corinthians:** another letter to the Corinthians commending the penitent majority, rebuking the factious minority, and defending Paul's apostleship.
- Galatians:** a letter to the Galatian churches addressing issues generated by Judaizing teachers.
- Ephesians:** a general letter sent to Ephesus about blessings and duties in Christ's church.
- Philippians:** a letter of appreciation and joy to the saints in Philippi.
- Colossians:** a letter to the Colosse saints emphasizing the pre-eminence of Christ.
- 1 Thessalonians:** a letter of encouragement to the Thessalonians with positive information about Christ's second coming.
- 2 Thessalonians:** a letter to the Thessalonians to correct false teachings about Christ's return.

- 1 Timothy:** a letter to Timothy with instructions for the church.
- 2 Timothy:** a letter of encouragement to Timothy.
- Titus:** a letter to Titus with instructions for the church.
- Philemon:** a letter to a Christian slave-owner concerning a runaway slave.
- Hebrews:** a discourse about the superiority of Christ's new covenant system over the old one.
- James:** a letter of practical admonitions for Christians.
- 1 Peter:** a letter of instruction and encouragement for suffering Christians.
- 2 Peter:** a letter of warning against being led astray and falling away.
- 1 John:** a discourse on fellowship, obedience, and Christian love.
- 2 John:** a letter emphasizing the necessity of abiding in Christ's teaching.
- 3 John:** a letter commending Gaius and condemning Diotrephes.
- Jude:** a letter of warning against apostates.
- Revelation:** a highly symbolic message of hope to Asian congregations suffering persecution, assuring Christ's victory over evil.

Appendix 2

New Testament Chronology

Our current system of dating was formulated by Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century AD, but it is now known that his calculations were off by at least four years. Many of the dates below are approximations.

6 BC = birth of Jesus. Jesus was born in the days of Herod the Great, at least two years before Herod's death in 4 BC (Matthew 2:1, 14-19).¹

AD 27 = beginning of Jesus' ministry. The ministry of John the baptist began in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar's reign (*ca.* AD 26/27), and Jesus began his ministry sometime after when he was "about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:1, 23). The word "about" (*hōsei*) suggests that he was not exactly thirty but probably older. The first Passover during his ministry was 46 years after Herod had begun construction on the temple (John 2:13, 20).²

AD 30 = death and resurrection of Jesus. The ministry of Jesus incorporated at least three [probably four] Passovers (John 2:13; [5:1]; 6:4; 12:1), thus about three to three-and-a-half years. Pontius Pilate was prefect of Judea AD 26-36 (Luke 3:1; 23:1). Jesus was crucified on Friday 7 April and resurrected on Sunday 9 April AD 30. The church was established on Sunday (Pentecost) 28 May AD 30 (Acts 2).³

AD 31-33 = conversion of Saul. Saul is introduced as "a young man" (Acts 7:58), in contrast to "Paul, the aged" years later (Philemon 9). His conversion (Acts 9:1-19) was approximately a year-and-a-half to three years after the church was established. Saul spent the first three years of his Christian life in Arabia and Damascus (Galatians 1:17).⁴

AD 36-50 = Saul's visits to Jerusalem and first missionary journey. Three years after his conversion at Damascus, Saul spent 15 days with Peter in Jerusalem (Galatians 1:18). He then made subsequent travels (Acts 9:30; Galatians 1:21), spent a year in Antioch with Barnabas, and took relief aid to Judea likely in AD 43⁵ in conjunction with the famine of AD 44 (Acts 11). Herod Agrippa died in AD 44 (Acts 12:23), and Jesus' half-brother *James* probably wrote his epistle to suffering Jewish Christians sometime thereafter. Saul and Barnabas made their first missionary tour, evangelizing in Cyprus and the regions of Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia (Acts 13-14), during which time "Saul" became known as "Paul" (Acts 13:9). Fourteen years after his AD 36 visit, Paul returned to Jerusalem (Galatians 2:1; Acts 15).

AD 50 = Jerusalem council and beginning of Paul's second missionary journey. The meeting with the Jerusalem elders and apostles took place fourteen years after Paul's AD 36 visit (Galatians 2:1; Acts 15). After returning to Antioch, the second missionary tour commenced. Luke joined Paul and his companions in Troas and traveled with them to Philippi where Luke stayed (Acts 16:8-40).⁶ Paul's company went on to evangelize Thessalonica and Berea, then Paul traveled ahead to Athens where he sent for Silas and Timothy (Acts 17:1-15). Apparently Silas and Timothy met Paul in Athens but were sent back to Macedonia and then returned to work with Paul in Corinth (1 Thessalonians 3:1-6; Acts 18:5; 2 Corinthians 1:19).

AD 50-52 = Paul in Corinth. Claudius had dispelled Jews from Rome AD 49/50 and Gallio was proconsul of Achaia AD 51-53 (Acts 18:2, 12). Paul spent at least 18 months in Corinth, during which time he would have written the epistles of *First and Second Thessalonians* and possibly *Galatians*.⁷ The church in the nearby coastal town of Cenchrea may have been established during this time (Acts 18:18; Romans 16:1-2).

AD 52-53 = Brief visits and beginning of Paul's third missionary tour. Paul left Corinth around Spring AD 52 and made brief visits to Cenchrea, Ephesus, and Caesarea, stayed in Antioch (of Syria) "some time," then traveled through Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:18-23).

AD 53-56 = Paul in Ephesus. Paul arrived in Ephesus (Acts 19:1) in AD 53 and stayed three years until Spring AD 56 (Acts 20:31; 1 Corinthians 16:8). During this time he wrote a letter (no longer extant) to Corinth, received a letter from them, and then wrote *First Corinthians* (5:9; 7:1; 16:8). He sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia (Acts 19:22), and Timothy was also to visit Corinth (probably delivering the letter) and then return to Paul in Ephesus (1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10-11). Paul planned to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost AD 56 (1 Corinthians 16:8) then travel through the regions of Macedonia (1 Corinthians 16:5) and Achaia (2 Corinthians 11:10), in particular the city of Corinth to collect their contribution and possibly spend the winter (1 Corinthians 4:18-19; 11:34; 16:2-7), and then on to Jerusalem and Rome (Acts 19:21).

AD 56-57 = From Ephesus to Corinth. Paul left Ephesus and went through Macedonia (Acts 20:1-2; 1 Corinthians 16:5; 2 Corinthians 8:1 ff.), probably visiting the brethren in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. On the way he passed through Troas looking for Titus (2 Corinthians 2:12-13). Titus had been to Corinth and met Paul in Macedonia, reporting on the situation in Corinth (2 Corinthians 7:5-7, 13-15). Paul sent Titus and another brother back to Corinth (2 Corinthians 12:17-18), and had earlier tried to get Apollos to go as well (1 Corinthians 16:12). It may have been during this Macedonia visit that Paul traveled up to Illyricum (Romans 15:19). Paul intended to return to Corinth himself (1 Corinthians 4:19; 11:34; 16:2-7), which he apparently did (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:14, 21; 13:1-2), spending three winter months

in Greece (Acts 20:2-3; cf. 1 Corinthians 4:18-19; 16:2-7). Paul had wanted to come with confidence, but instead he came with sorrow (2 Corinthians 1:15-16; 2:1), and this sorrowful visit was after he had written to them at least twice⁸ (2 Corinthians 2:1, 3, 4, 9; 7:8, 12). During this visit he wrote his epistle to the *Romans* around AD 56/57 — Achaia's contribution had been purposed (Romans 15:26; cf. 2 Corinthians 8:10-11; 9:2, 5), he stayed with Gaius and mentioned Erastus (Romans 16:23; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:14; 2 Timothy 4:20), and he commended Phoebe from Corinth's seaport, Cenchrea (Romans 16:1; cf. Acts 18:18).

AD 57-59 = From Corinth to Caesarea. From Greece Paul went back through Macedonia (Acts 20:3) and wrote *Second Corinthians* (9:2-4) possibly from Philippi. He sent Titus and two other men back to Corinth to no doubt deliver the letter and to help get the contribution ready which the brethren had proposed a year earlier (2 Corinthians 8:6-24; 9:2-5). Paul refrained from returning to Corinth while he was agitated (2 Corinthians 1:23; cf. 13:10) but wanted to eventually return a third time if possible (2 Corinthians 1:16; 9:4; 10:2, 11; 12:14, 20-21; 13:1-2). However, this did not happen. Luke had been in Philippi for about seven years (unless he traveled elsewhere during that time), and in Spring AD 57 Paul left Philippi with Luke and hurried to get to Jerusalem within the next seven weeks (Acts 20:6, 16). In Jerusalem Paul was arrested and sent to Caesarea where he spent two years as a prisoner (Acts 21-26) until Summer (?) AD 59. Festus replaced Felix (Acts 24:27) in AD 59.⁹ Luke may have stayed in Jerusalem and wrote *the Gospel of Luke* during this time, and perhaps started the book of Acts. He would have been able to get first-hand information from Mary (the mother of Jesus) and the apostles there (John 19:26-27; Acts 1:14; 15:22; Luke 1:1-3). Since the Gospel of Luke was obviously written before the book of Acts (Acts 1:1), and Acts was completed at the end of Paul's two-year Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:30), and

Paul quoted from Luke 10:7 shortly thereafter (1 Timothy 5:18), this time frame seems likely.

AD 59-62 = From Caesarea to Rome. After Paul appealed to Caesar, his voyage to Rome began. Because “the Fast was already over” (September/October) and winter was approaching (Acts 27:9, 12), bad weather conditions led to their eventual shipwreck, and they spent three winter months on Malta (Acts 28:11), finally arriving in Rome around Spring (?) AD 60. Paul spent two whole years as a prisoner in Rome (Acts 28:30) until AD 62. During this time he wrote his “prison epistles”: *Ephesians*, *Philippians*, *Colossians*, and *Philemon*. Luke had traveled with him to Rome and apparently finished *the book of Acts* there (Acts 27:1; 28:16, 30; cf. Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24).

AD 62-64 = Paul’s subsequent travels and death. There are hints of information concerning Paul’s release from imprisonment (Philippians 1:19, 25; 2:24; Philemon 22; 2 Timothy 4:16-17) and subsequent travels (1 Timothy 1:3; 3:14; 2 Timothy 4:13, 20; Titus 1:5; 3:12), perhaps as far as Spain (Romans 15:28). During this time he would have written the epistles of *First Timothy* and *Titus*, possibly around AD 63. Then Paul was imprisoned again (2 Timothy 4:6, 16). At this time he wrote his *Second epistle to Timothy* in which he appears to have been anticipating death (4:6-8). According to tradition he was martyred in Rome (some date this as late as AD 67).

AD 63-68 = other NT writings. Nero began his persecution of Christians in AD 64 and died in AD 68. Peter was familiar with Paul’s writings (2 Peter 3:15-16) and apparently wrote from Rome (1 Peter 5:13).¹⁰ He probably wrote *First Peter* (with the help of Silvanus, 5:12) prior to the height of Nero’s persecution, having instructed his readers to “honour the king” (2:13-17), and then

wrote ***Second Peter*** sometime thereafter, getting ready to die a martyr's death (1:13-15). John Mark was also with Peter (1 Peter 5:13) and likely made use of Peter's eyewitness recollections in writing ***the Gospel of Mark***. Irenaeus (a pupil of Polycarp — contemporary of the apostle John) stated that ***Matthew*** wrote his Gospel [perhaps from Jerusalem¹¹] while Paul and Peter were in Rome (*Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1), plausibly around AD 63 or 64. The epistle of ***Jude*** appears to have been written sometime after Peter's second epistle, since Jude 17-18 seems to contain a quote from 2 Peter 3:3, not to mention the striking parallels between the second chapter of 2 Peter and Jude's treatise.¹² The ***Hebrews*** epistle was written to wavering Jewish Christians no doubt before AD 70, possibly around AD 65.

AD 70 = the Fall of Jerusalem. On 26 September AD 70, General Titus and the Roman armies destroyed the city of Jerusalem, including the Jewish temple, as the Lord had predicted (Matthew 24:1-2; Luke 21:5-6, 20).

AD 90-100 = completion of the NT and death of the last living apostle. Before his death, the apostle John contributed five books to the New Testament, apparently near the end of the first century AD — ***the Gospel of John***, three epistles (***1, 2, 3 John***), and ***Revelation***.

Notes

¹ Luke mentions “the days of Herod, the king of Judea” (1:5) as an historical indicator but also gives further information. In Luke 2:1 the decree is mentioned of Caesar Augustus (30 BC - AD 14) “that all the world should be registered.” The term “world” (*oikoumenē*) is often used by Luke in a more limited sense (cf. 4:5; Acts 11:28; 17:6; 19:27; 24:5) and here probably has reference to the known inhabited world of the Roman Empire or possibly even the land of Palestine. There is a great deal of controversy, however, surrounding Luke’s next historical marker: “This census first took place [or ‘This was the first census taken’ NASB] while Quirinius was governing Syria” (Luke 2:2). This statement implies that Luke was aware of a second census involving Quirinius, which he later mentions in Acts 5:37. Josephus dates this [second] census at AD 6 or 7 (*Antiquities* 18.1.1, 2.1), but Luke is the only historian who mentions the first one. Sentius Saturninus was governor from 9 to 6 BC and Quinctilius Varus was governor from 7/6 to 4 BC, then the historical record is uncertain until AD 6 when P. Sulpicius Quirinius became governor. While it is possible that Quirinius was governor of Syria during part of the period between 4 BC and AD 6, the first census mentioned by Luke still appears to be out of harmony with the chronology. However, the accuracy of Luke “is such that we ought to require very strong evidence before rejecting any statement of his as an unquestionable blunder” (A. Plummer, *The Gospel According to Luke* 50). A census in Judea at the time Luke suggests is not improbable, and some official connection of Quirinius with Syria at this time is not impossible. Moreover, the Romans tended to conduct a census every fourteen years, therefore if a census was taken prior to the one in AD 7, it would have been at a time perfectly consistent with Luke’s chronology. Furthermore, instead of describing Quirinius as “governor” [*legatus*] of Syria, Luke actually uses the term *hêgemoneuô*, which means to “be leader, command, rule, order” (BAGD 343). Quirinius was a highly placed military figure in the Near East in the closing years of Herod the Great’s reign, and it is highly plausible that Augustus would have put him in charge of the census during the transition between the governorships of Saturninus and Varus. No doubt because of his competent handling of this census, he was later put in charge of the one in AD 7.

² Almost all modern scholars date the beginning of the temple’s construction at about 20/19 BC (cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.380, although Josephus gives conflicting information elsewhere).

³ These dates are based on astronomical calculation and the facts that Jesus died on “the Preparation Day of the Passover” — the day before the Sabbath (John 19:31); the Passover was on the 14th day of the first Jewish [lunar] month (Exodus 12:6); and Pentecost was 50 days later (Leviticus 23:16).

⁴ The Nabatean King Aretas IV died in AD 40, thus Paul’s departure from Damascus was sometime prior to this (2 Corinthians 11:32-33).

⁵ In AD 57 Paul described the unusual account of “a man in Christ . . . caught up to the third heaven,” and this extraordinary vision had occurred fourteen years earlier (2 Corinthians 12:1-4), which coincides with the time of Paul’s AD 43 visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:29-30; 12:25).

⁶ It is generally accepted that Luke wrote the book of Acts, and the use of first person plural (“we,” “us,” etc.) in certain sections indicates that Luke was with Paul at those times (cf. 16:8-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1 - 28:16), while third person (“they,” “them,” etc.) excludes him.

⁷ Paul’s letter “to the churches of Galatia” (1:1) was most likely written to the congregations he and Barnabas had established in the southern Roman province of Galatia (Acts 13:14 - 14:24) rather than the northern territory of Galatia. Since the Galatian brethren knew Timothy and Silas (Acts 16:1-6) but in Paul’s letter to these churches he did not send greetings from these two men, this epistle may have been written before Silas and Timothy arrived in Corinth (Acts 18:5), making it Paul’s earliest extant writing. However, some scholars believe that Galatians was written much later, particularly because of its similarity to Romans, and precise dating is not beyond dispute. Paul again visited the disciples of Galatia on his way to Ephesus (Acts 18:23), and he may have written Galatians during his three-years’ ministry in Ephesus (AD 53-56).

⁸ The first letter to the Corinth church (1 Corinthians 5:9) is no longer extant, and the second letter is what we know as First Corinthians. Some believe that the “severe letter” alluded to in 2 Corinthians 2:3-4, 9; 7:8 was a third letter (no longer extant), and what is now called Second Corinthians was the fourth. It has also been suggested that Second Corinthians may actually be a compilation of multiple letters.

⁹ Eusebius (AD 270-340) mistakenly recorded the year of Felix's replacement by Porcius Festus as AD 55, and this date has been accepted by some ancient and modern scholars. However, this date does not fit into the chronology and it disagrees with the testimony of Josephus (*Jewish War* 2.271; *Ant.* 20.182-97). In Nero's fifth year (AD 58-59) there was a change in the Judean provincial coinage, which is more likely to have been done by a new procurator. Festus appears to have governed Judea from AD 59 to his death in AD 62 (cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts* 449 n. 44).

¹⁰ The reference here is to "Babylon," and the question is whether to take this literally or symbolically. Peter sends greetings to his readers from "She who is in Babylon, elect [chosen] together with you . . ." While some have suggested that "she" is a reference to an actual woman, perhaps Peter's wife (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:5), most interpreters understand this to be a metaphoric allusion to the church (cf. KJV) [N.B. *ekklêsia* is a feminine noun, cf. Ephesians 5:25-27; Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2, 9]. This interpretation is consistent with other occurrences of the word *eklektos* ("chosen") in 1 Peter (1:1-2; 2:9). If the word "she" is symbolic, it is natural to interpret "Babylon" symbolically as well. And if Nero's persecution was looming or in its early stages at the time of writing, Peter's reluctance to expressly identify "the church in Rome" is understandable. Furthermore, by 1 BC, at the time of Diodorus Siculus (2,9,9), the literal Babylon in Mesopotamia was almost entirely uninhabited (see also Josephus, *Ant.* 18.9.5-9), and no evidence is available that suggests a church was existing here in the first century AD or that Peter or Mark or Silvanus were associated with this region. Few, if any, would consider Egypt's Babylon as a possibility either. But in late Judaism "Rome began to take on the name and many of the characteristics of Babylon as a world-power hostile to God . . ." (BAGD 129), and the book of Revelation indicates that first-century Christians understood "Babylon" as a symbolic reference to Rome (cf. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21). Mark had been summoned to Rome by Paul (2 Timothy 4:11) and was with Peter at the time of writing (1 Peter 5:13), and there is substantial evidence that Mark's Gospel originated in Rome or was at least intended for a Roman audience.

¹¹ Antioch of Syria has also been suggested as the possible place of writing. The testimonies of Papias, Irenaeus, Pantænus, and Origen indicate that Matthew's Gospel may have been written originally in Hebrew or Aramaic (cf. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.16; 5.8.2; 5.10; 6.25).

¹² The possibility must also be acknowledged that Jude's epistle could have been the source from which the material in 2 Peter 2 was borrowed. However, the predictive nature of the future tense in 2 Peter 2:1-3; 3:3 and the apparent fulfillment implied in the present tense of Jude 4, 17-18 suggest that 2 Peter was written earlier than Jude. At the same time, however, it is not improbable that these inspired men collaborated with each other in writing their respective epistles or perhaps shared a common source, and the influence of the Holy Spirit cannot be ruled out either (2 Peter 1:19-21).

Appendix 3

Recommended Study Aids

English Translations (for comparative study)

New King James Version, New American Standard Bible, King James Version, American Standard Version, Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, New International Version (although the NIV translators frequently interpret rather than translate), *26 Translations of the Bible* (3 vols.), *The Simple English Bible*, *McCord's NT Translation of the Everlasting Gospel*

Study Bibles

Thompson Chain Reference Bible, Dickson New Analytical Study Bible, The New Open Bible, Nave's Study Bible, Nave's Topical Bible (arranged by topics).

Exhaustive Concordances

Young's Analytical Concordance, Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, New King James Exhaustive Concordance, New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance

Bible Dictionaries

Halley's Bible Handbook, Davis Dictionary of the Bible, Peloubet's Bible Dictionary, Baker's Bible Atlas, Abingdon Bible Handbook, Eerdmans Handbook to the Bible, IVP Illustrated Bible Dictionary (3 vols.), *Manners and Customs in the Bible*

Bible Encyclopedias

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (4 vols.), *McClintock & Strong's Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (12 vols.), *Nichol's Pocket Bible Encyclopedia*

Expository Dictionaries of Bible Words

Vine's Expository Dictionary of OT/NT Words, Wilson's OT Word Studies, Vincent Word Studies in the NT, Robertson Word Pictures in the NT

Commentaries

Gospel Advocate, *New International Commentaries*, *Barnes' Notes*, *Beacon Bible Commentaries*, *Denton Lectures*, *The Living Word*, *Tyndale Commentaries*, Keil and Delitzsch, H.C. Leupold, Adam Clarke, James Burton Coffman, Roy Deaver, Homer Hailey, Wayne Jackson, John Kachelman, Neil Lightfoot, J.W. McGarvey, Jim McGuiggan, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Howard Winters, Guy N. Woods, William Woodson

Computer Software

PC-Study Bible, *Logos* by Research Systems Inc., *Quickverse* by Parson's Technology, *FreeBible* by Freebible, *Bible Companion* by Loizeaux, *Bible Explorer*

NT Greek Tools

Guy N. Woods, *How to Read the Greek NT*; Greek-English Interlinear; W.D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek*; J.G. Machen, *NT Greek for Beginners*; R. Summers, *Essentials of NT Greek*; Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich & Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon*; H.K. Moulton, *Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*; J.H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*; *The New Englishman's Greek Concordance & Lexicon*; B. & T. Friberg, *Analytical Greek NT*

Miscellaneous

McGarvey & Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel*; Guy N. Woods, *Questions & Answers* (2 vols.); Wayne Jackson, *Notes from the Margin of My Bible* (2 vols.); John Waddey, *An Outlined Introduction to the Bible* (2 vols.); Charles Pledge, *Getting Acquainted with the OT* (2 vols.); Donald Guthrie, *NT Introduction*; Lectureship books (*Denton*, *East Tenn. School of Preaching*, *Florida School of Preaching*, *Freed-Hardeman*, *Fort Worth*, *Power*, *Shenandoah*, *Spiritual Sword*); Periodicals (*Christian Courier*, *Gospel Advocate*, *Reason & Revelation*, *Spiritual Sword*, *Voice of Truth International*)

Appendix 4

A Sample Study: Acts 18:18

I. Determine the Context

Immediate context: Acts 18:1-23 — after spending 18 months establishing the church in Corinth, Paul departs with Priscilla and Aquila. **Remote context:** the book of Acts is an historical record of the early church and the activities of the apostles, and chapters 13-28 focus primarily on Paul's ministry. **Literary context:** being a history book, Acts should be interpreted accordingly. **Historical-cultural context:** Acts was written around AD 62, and the events recorded in Acts 18:18 took place about AD 52 in Cenchrea near Corinth. Paul was an ethnic Jew (Acts 22:3; Philippians 3:5), chosen by the Lord to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; Ephesians 3:8). **Overall context:** additional information about Paul, Cenchrea, and vows can be found elsewhere in the Bible.

II. Comparative Study:

Acts 18:18 in three different English translations: **NASB:** "... In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow"; **NKJV:** "... He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow"; **KJV:** "... having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow." By comparing these versions, it appears that Paul did not have a simple hair cut, but his head was shorn at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken.

III. Exhaustive Concordance:

From *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible* we learn that "Cenchrea" is mentioned only twice in the Bible: **Acts 18:18** and **Romans 16:1** (the latter passage shows that at some stage there was a church here which included Phoebe among its members).

There are numerous OT references to “vow,” but only two in the NT: **Acts 18:18** and **21:23** (the latter also involved Paul, with four other Jewish Christians).

IV. Bible Dictionary

Peloubet's Bible Dictionary informs us that “Cenchrea” was the eastern harbour of Corinth and its trading centre (p. 112). The word “vow” is defined as “a solemn promise made to God to perform or to abstain from performing certain things . . . [vows] were entirely voluntary, but once made were regarded as compulsory” (pp. 726-27).

V. Bible Encyclopedia

McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature* provides additional information on “Cenchrea”: it was of special military importance and was about 9 miles [14.4 kms] from Corinth; the location still has the foundations of a variety of ancient buildings; and a Corinthian coin is pictured showing Cenchrea's two temples and a statue of Neptune (vol. 2, pp. 180-81). A lot of helpful information is given on Jewish vows, but it is stated that vows were not at all common in the early Christian community (vol. 10, pp. 816-19).

VI. Expository Dictionary

Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words has no information on “Cenchrea,” but we learn that the Greek word rendered “vow” is *euchê* and is also found in James 5:15 where it is translated “prayer” (p. 1215). Looking up the word “shear” or “shorn” we learn that *keirô* is the Greek word used in Acts 18:18, thus Paul's hair was completely cut off or shorn, not simply trimmed (p. 1041).

VII. Commentary

F. F. Bruce, in his commentary on *The Book of Acts*, comments: "This was probably not a formal Nazirite vow, which could not properly be undertaken outside the Holy Land, but a private vow, the fulfillment of which was an act of thanksgiving — possibly for the divine promise of verse 10, which had been confirmed by his preservation from harm throughout his Corinthian ministry" (p. 355). Using the study tools mentioned above, the reference to a "Nazirite vow" can be more clearly understood. H. Leo Boles further notes that "Paul, as a Jew, kept up his observance of the ceremonial [aspects of the] law for some instances, but refused to impose it upon the Gentiles" (*Commentary on Acts of the Apostles*, p. 293). Furthermore, Albert Barnes observes "that it was common for the Jews to make such vows to God, as an expression of gratitude or of devotedness to his service . . . there is reason to think that it was mainly with a design to convince the Jews that he did not despise their law, and was not its enemy [cf. 21:22-24] . . . But where nothing is recorded, conjecture is useless" (*Notes on the NT*, p. 490).

Conclusions

Taking into account the above information from various study tools, the following conclusions can be drawn from Acts 18:18. When Paul left Corinth, he traveled 14.4 kilometers to the coastal community of Cenchrea (this can be located on a map in the back of your Bible or in a Bible Atlas). He may have planted the church here on this visit, or more likely during his 18 months in Corinth, since a later reference is made by Paul to the church in Cenchrea and he shows personal knowledge of this congregation (Romans 16:1). This is of greater significance when we realize that Cenchrea seems to have been a predominantly pagan community. Since the vow Paul had made was not a customary practice among

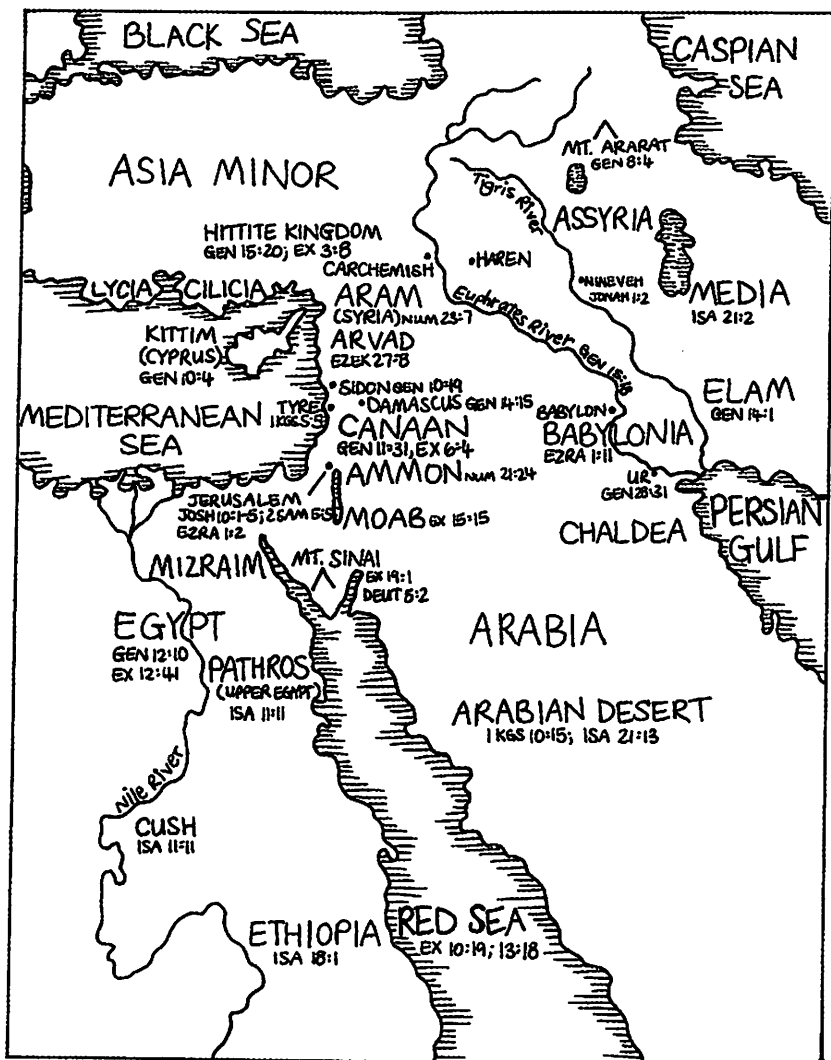
Christians, it seems to have been part of his Jewish heritage (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). This was apparently a personal vow, not to be confused with the Nazirite vow of the OT, and involved the complete shaving of Paul's head.

From this passage we may deduce a couple of things: (1) This illustrates an apparent transitional period in which the replacing of old Jewish conventions with new covenant revelation was not an abrupt transition but a gradual process during the first century AD; and (2) Cultural practices which do not violate principles of Christianity do not necessarily have to be abandoned when one becomes a Christian.

Having done a minimal amount of research, the account in Acts 18:18 becomes much more vivid and relevant. Always remember that your primary tool is the **Bible** itself, and everything else is secondary to that.

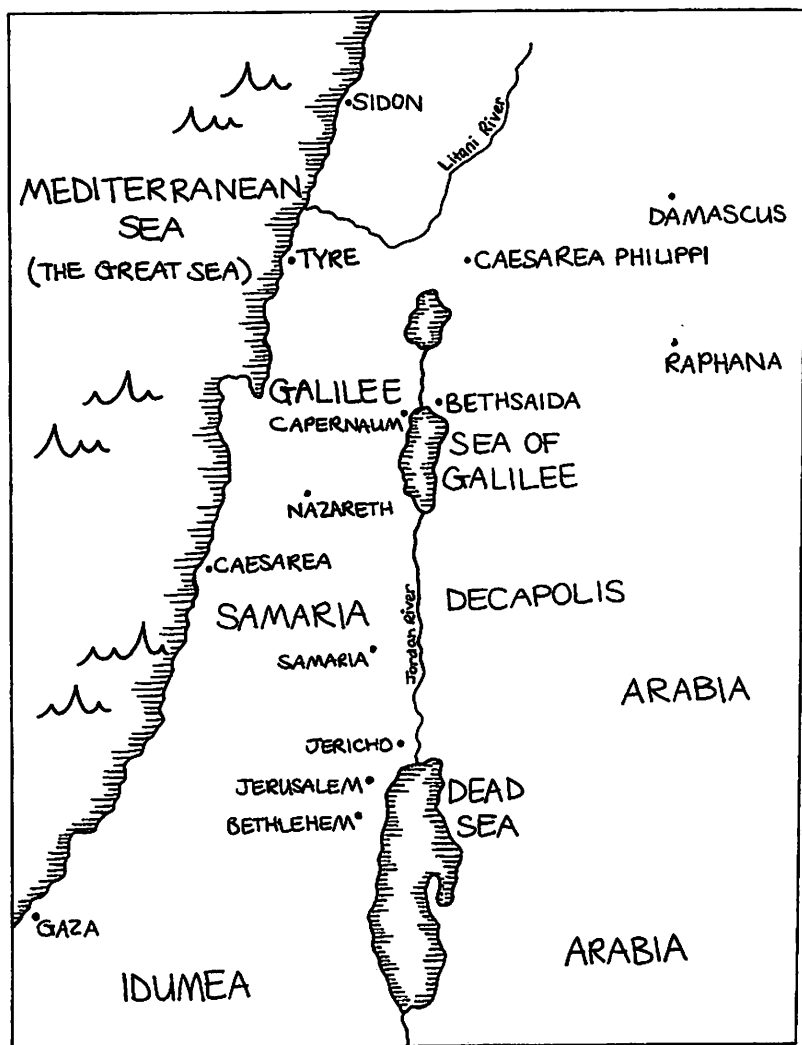
Appendix 5-A

MAP OF SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT



Appendix 5-B

MAP OF
NEW TESTAMENT PALESTINE



MAP OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN WORLD OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT



Authorship and Approximate Dating

(U=Uncertain)

Bible Book	Writer	Date Written ca.	Dates Covered ca.
Genesis-Deuteronomy	Moses	1450 BC	Creation to 1450 BC
Joshua	U; Joshua (?)	1436	BC 1450-1436 BC
Judges	U; Samuel (?)	1050 BC	1435-1130 BC
Ruth	U; Hezekiah	1050-420 BC	"days of judges" (1:1)
	Samuel, Ezra (?)	1050 BC	1115-970 BC
1-2 Samuel	U; Samuel, Nathan (?)		
1-2 Kings	U; Jeremiah, Ezra (?)	587-430 BC	970-586 BC
1-2 Chronicles	Ezra	430 BC	Adam to 586 BC
Ezra	Ezra	430 BC	538-458 BC
Nehemiah	Nehemiah	420 BC	445-420 BC
Esther	U; Mordecai (?)	470 BC	483-474 BC
Job	U; Moses (?)	1450 BC or later (?)	In Patriarchal Era
Psalms	David, Asaph +	compiled 500 BC	Creation to 500 BC
Proverbs	Solomon +	971-931 BC	971-931 BC
Ecclesiastes	Solomon	945-931 BC	945-931 BC
Song Solomon	Solomon	971-931 BC	971-931 BC
Isaiah	Isaiah	740-698 BC	740-698 BC
Jeremiah	Jeremiah	626-586 BC	626-586 BC
Lamentations	Jeremiah	586 BC	586 BC
Ezekiel	Ezekiel	593-570 BC	593-570 BC
Daniel	Daniel	605-536 BC	605-536 BC
Hosea	Hosea	750-725 BC	750-725 BC
Joel	Joel	830 BC	830 BC
Amos	Amos	755 BC	755 BC
Obadiah	Obadiah	845 or 586 BC	845-586 BC
Jonah	Jonah	790-750 BC	790-750 BC
Micah	Micah	735-700 BC	735-700 BC
Nahum	Nahum	625-612 BC	663-612 BC
Habakkuk	Habakkuk	625-605 BC	625-605 BC
Zephaniah	Zephaniah	630-625 BC	630-625 BC
Haggai	Haggai	520 BC	520 BC
Zechariah	Zechariah	520 BC	520 BC
Malachi	Malachi	430 BC	430 BC

Appendix 5-D

Matthew	Matthew Levi	AD 60-66	6 BC — AD 30
Mark	John Mark	AD 63-66	AD 26-30
Luke	Luke the physician	AD 57-62	6 BC — AD 30
John	John the apostle	AD 90-95	AD 26-30
Acts	Luke the physician	AD 62	AD 30-62
Romans	Paul	AD 56-57	AD 56-57
1-2 Corinthians	Paul	AD 55-57	AD 33-57
Galatians	Paul	AD 50-57	AD 33-57
Ephesians	Paul	AD 60-62	AD 60-62
Philippians	Paul	AD 60-62	AD 50-62
Colossians	Paul	AD 60-62	AD 60-62
1-2 Thessalonians	Paul & Silvanus	AD 50-51	AD 50 to the Lord's Return
1-2 Timothy	Paul	AD 63-64	AD 44-64
Titus	Paul	AD 63	AD 63
Philemon	Paul	AD 60-62	AD 60-62
Hebrews	U; Paul, Apollos, Silas, Barnabas(?)	AD 60-65	Patriarchs to Eternity
James	James, the Lord's brother	AD 45	AD 45
1-2 Peter	Simon Peter	AD 63-68	AD 27-68
1-3 John	John the apostle	AD 90-95	AD 27-95
Jude	Judas, the Lord's brother	AD 65-70	AD 65-70
Revelation	John the apostle	AD 96	AD 96 to Judgement

Appendix 5-E & F

Ancient Testimonies of the New Testament Canon

Number correspond to the NEXT CHART	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Acts	Romans	1 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	Galatians	Ephesians	Philippians	Colossians	1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	1 Timothy	2 Timothy	Titus	Philemon	Hebrews	James	1 Peter	2 Peter	1 John	2 John	3 John	Jude	Revelation
1	✓																										
2		✓																									
3					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓							✓	✓		✓			
4	✓	✓								✓						✓	✓										✓
5	✓					✓	✓						✓		✓												✓
6	✓	✓	✓	✓																							✓
7				✓		✓				✓					✓		✓		✓	✓		✓					
8				✓																							
9			✓																								
10				✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓									
11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																						✓
12			✓																								✓
13					✓		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
14																											
15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓														✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
16	✓	✓	✓	✓															✓								
17	✓	✓	✓	✓																							
18				✓																							
19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20																											✓
21	✓																										
22	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓											✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓										✓								
27	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
28	✓	✓	✓	✓																							
29	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
31	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Ancient sources that quote, list, allude to, or cite the NT Writings
(Numbers correspond to the previous chart)

SOURCE	DATE (approx)
1 Magdalen Papyrus	AD 66
2 Qumran fragment 7Q5	AD 66
3 Polycarp	AD 69-155
4 Epistle of Barnabas	AD 70-79
5 The Didache	AD 70-130
6 Papias	AD 70-163
7 Clement of Rome	AD 95-97
8 John Rylands fragment	AD 94-127
9 Paris Papyrus	AD 100-150
10 Ignatius	AD 110-117
11 Irenaeus	AD 125-200
12 Marcion	AD 140
13 Shepherd of Hermas	AD 142-157
14 Justin Martyr	AD 147-61
15 Clement of Alexandria	AD 150-203
16 Tertullian	AD 155-222
17 Tatian	AD 170
18 Theophilus	AD 170-180
19 Muratorian fragment	AD 170-210
20 Hippolytus	AD 170-236
21 Pantaenus of Alexandria	AD 180
22 Origen	AD 185-254
23 Eusebius	AD 260-340
24 Cyril of Jerusalem	AD 315-386
25 Epiphanius	AD 315-403
26 Jerome	AD 340-420
27 Codex Sinaiticus	AD 350
28 Augustine	AD 354-430
29 Athanasius	AD 367
30 Council of Laodicea	AD 360
31 Council of Carthage	AD 397

Bibliography

- Anders, Max E. *Thirty Days to Understanding the Bible*. Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth and Hyatt Publishers, Inc., 1988.
- Barnes, Albert. *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1980.
- Bauer, Walter. *A Greek English-Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. 2nd ed. Fredrick W. Danker. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- Bible Basics for Busy Believers*. Houston, TX: Communi-Creations Publishing Company, 1971.
- The Bible Visual Resource Book*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, Gospel Light Publishers, 1989.
- Boles, H. Leo, Guy N. Woods, et al. *New Testament Commentaries*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1978, et al.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Book of Acts*. Revised Edition. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988.
- Comfort, Philip Wesley. *The Quest for the Original Text of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992.
- Deaver, Roy C. *Ascertaining Bible Authority*. Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1987.
- *How to Study the Bible*. Plano, TX: Biblical Publishing Corporation, 1976.
- Dickson, Roger E. *The Fall of Unbelief*. Winona, MS: J.C. Choate Publications, 1982.
- Dungan, D. R. *Hermeneutics*. Delight, AR: Gospel Light Company, n.d.

- Earle, Ralph and W. T. Purkiser, eds. *Beacon Bible Commentaries*. 10 vols. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1965.
- Geisler, Norman L. and William E. Nix. *A General Introduction to the Bible, Revised and Expanded*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1986.
- Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970.
- Hailey, Homer. *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972.
- Hightower, Terry. *A Handbook on Bible Translation*. San Antonio, TX: Shenandoah church of Christ, 1995.
- “How Did Paul Deal With Customs?” in *What Does it Mean to be a Christian Like Paul?* 24th Annual Florida School of Preaching Lectureship. Ed. Bob McAnally. Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 1999: 325-366.
- Holman Book of Bible Charts, Maps, and Reconstructions*. Eds. M. Smith, J. Swann, and T. Butler. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1994.
- Jackson, Wayne. *The “Bible Translation” Controversy*. Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 1985.
- *Fortify Your Faith*. Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 1974.
- *Notes from the Margin of my Bible*. 2 vols. Stockton, CA: Courier Publications, 1993.
- Jenkins, Simon. *Bible Mapbook*. Sydney, Australia: A Lion Book, 1985.
- LaHaye, Tim. *How to Study the Bible for Yourself*. Irvine, CA: Harvest House Publishers, 1976.
- Larkin, William J. *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics: Interpreting*

- and Applying the Authoritative Word in a Relativistic Age.* Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988.
- Lightfoot, Neil R. *How We Got the Bible.* Austin, TX: Sweet Publishing Company, 1962.
- Mattox, F. W. *The Eternal Kingdom.* Revised with additional chapters by John McRay. Delight, AR: Gospel Light Publishing Company, 1961.
- M'Clintock, John and James Strong. *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature.* 12 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968-70.
- Miller, Dave. *Piloting the Strait.* Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 1996.
- Moore, Kevin L. *We Have No Such Custom: A Critical Analysis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.* Wanganui, NZ: By the Author, 1998.
- Music, Goebel. *Behold the Pattern.* Colleyville, TX: Goebel Music Publications, 1991.
- Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills.* Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995.
- Orr, James, ed. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.* 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1939.
- Peloubet, F. N., ed. *Bible Dictionary.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.
- Phillips, J. B. *Ring of Truth: A Translator's Testimony.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1967.
- Plummer, Alfred. *The Gospel According to Luke.* 4th ed. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1910.

- Pryor, Neale. *You Can Trust Your Bible*. Abilene, TX: Quality Publications, 1980.
- Readers Digest Atlas of the Bible*. Pleasantville, NY: The Readers Digest Association. 2nd Printing, 1983.
- Reed, A. H. *The Story of the English Bible*. Dunedin NZ: The Evening Star Company, Ltd., 1959.
- Riesner, Rainer. *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*. Trans. Doug Stott. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.
- Stonehouse, Ned, F. F. Bruce, and Gordan Fee, eds. *The New International Commentaries on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981, et al.
- Tan, Paul Lee. *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1979.
- Thiede, Carsten Peter and Matthew D'Ancona. *The Jesus Papyrus*. New York: Galilee Doubleday, 1996.
- Theron, Daniel J. *Evidence of Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957.
- Thomas, J. D. *Harmonizing Hermeneutics*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1991.
- Trobisch, David. *Paul's Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.
- Turner, J. J. *How to Effectively Study the Bible*. Abilene, TX: Quality Publications, 1988.
- Vine, W. E. *Expository Dictionary of NT Words*. McLean, VA: Macdonald Publishing Company, 1952.
- Waddey, John. *Growing in the Grace and Knowledge of Christ*. Winona, MS: J.C. Choate Publications, 1980.

- *An Outlined Introduction to the Bible*. 2 vols. Winona, MS: J.C. Choate Publications, 1977, 1987.
- Warren, Thomas B. *The Bible Only Makes Christians Only and the Only Christians*. Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, Inc., 1986.
- *When is an "Example" Binding?*. Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, 1975.
- West, Earle H. *How To Study the Bible*. Singapore: World Literature Publications, 1979.
- Woods, Guy N. *How to Study the New Testament*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1992.
- *Questions and Answers*. 2 vols. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1976, 1986.
- Young, Robert. *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, n.d.