



You Can Understand
the
BIBLE

Guidelines for Interpreting Scripture
By
Daniel L. Segraves

A Study Guide

Adapted by Linda Poitras

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Chapter I

Introducing Hermeneutics

Purpose: This chapter is designed to introduce the subject of hermeneutics.

What I Have Learned

- I. A clear understanding of Hermeneutics is important in order to obey 2 Timothy 2:15: *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

- II. Definition of Hermeneutics
 - A. The word "hermeneutics" comes from the Greek *hermeneuo*, which means "to explain" or "to translate." (Used in John 1:38, 42; 9:7; and Hebrews 7:2.)
 - B. Another form of the word, *hermeneia*, appears in 1 Corinthians 12:10 and 14:26, in a discussion of the gift of the interpretation of tongues.
 - C. Luke 24:27 records Jesus' encounter with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: *"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."* The word "expounded" is the Greek *dihermeneuo*, a compound word composed of:
 - The preposition *dia*, meaning "through" and
 - *hermeneuo*, meaning "to interpret."
 - The word thus means "to interpret fully."
 - This same Greek word is also used in Acts 9:36 = "interpretation."
 - 1 Corinthians 12:30 = "interpret."
 - 1 Corinthians 14:5, = "interpret."
 - 1 Corinthians 14:37, = "interpret," and
 - 1 Corinthians 14:27, = "interpret."
 - All of these Greek words find their root in the Greek Hermes, the name of the messenger of the Greek deities.
 - This word is translated in the New Testament as "Hermes" and "Mercury."
 - D. The word "Hermeneutics" can refer to any kind of interpretation; it has no specific theological reference.
 - E. When referring to the interpretation of Scripture, the proper term to use is "biblical hermeneutics."
 - F. Biblical hermeneutics is the science of interpreting the Scripture.

What Have You Learned?

1. Define the word "hermeneutics." _____

2. What is "biblical hermeneutics?" _____

Chapter 2

Misunderstanding Scripture

Purpose: This chapter is designed to acquaint you with the major causes for misinterpretation of Scripture and to discuss biblical hermeneutics at work.

What I Have Learned

- I. How is it possible to misunderstand Scripture?
 - A. Skeptics have said it is possible to teach any doctrine from Scripture.
 - B. This is true only if biblical principles of hermeneutics are ignored. Here are some major causes of misinterpretation of Scripture:
 - 1) A failure to recognize the communication gaps existing between the modern reader and the ancient peoples of Scripture;
 - 2) A failure to distinguish between the dispensations;
 - 3) A failure to recognize the different covenants;
 - 4) A failure to distinguish between the three ethnic groups addressed in Scripture;
 - 5) A failure to consider all that the Bible has to say on a given subject;
 - 6) A failure to consider the context;
 - 7) A failure to understand the significance of prophetic gaps in the midst of a passage; and
 - 8) A failure to understand the purpose for parables.
- II. Biblical Hermeneutics as Work
 - A. An example of Biblical hermeneutics at work is seen in Nehemiah 8:8.
 - B. After the return from captivity of the Jewish remnant, Ezra stood to read the book of the Law of Moses. With him stood several other men. *"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."*
 - 1) The reading was distinct. Since the words of the Bible are not ordinary, but the very words of God, they should be read carefully, thoughtfully, and distinctly—never rushed. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).*
 - 2) *"They gave the sense."* This may refer to the translation of the Hebrew words into the language of the people, Aramaic or Chaldee.
 - 3) *"They caused them to understand the reading."* They explained to the people the meaning of the Scriptures.
- III. Key Verse
 - A. The key verse of this entire book is 2 Timothy 2:15: *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*
 - B. It is the approval of God we are concerned about, not the approval of man.
 - 1) To receive God's approval will require diligent study.
 - 2) To handle the Scriptures is to be a "workman," and that involves skill.

What Have You Learned?

1. List eight (8) major causes of misinterpretation of Scripture. _____

2. Give an example of biblical hermeneutics at work. The example should include book, chapter and verse. _____

language to another by using letters that represent equivalent sounds.) In this case, the Greek word assigned the number 25 is translated *agapao*, with the final "o" being long in sound to represent the Greek omega.

- g) Immediately after the transliterated word, the phonetic pronunciation of the word in English letters appears.
 - h) Next is the possible origin of the word. IN this case, *agapao* may come from *agan*, which means "much."
 - i) There is some possibility that *agapao* may be derived from the Hebrew *'agab*, which means "to breathe after, i.e. to love (sensually)." See 5689 in the Hebrew dictionary.
 - j) We know 5689 is in the Hebrew dictionary because it is not in italics. If it were in italics, it would refer to the Greek dictionary.
 - k) The next entry gives the meaning of *agapao*. It means "to love (in a social or moral sense)."
 - l) The next entry gives the various ways *agapao* is translated in the King James Version. It is sometimes translated "beloved," sometimes "love," and sometimes "loved."
 - m) The final entry suggests a comparison of *agapao* with 5368 that, because it is in italics, is another word in the Greek dictionary.
 - n) Number 5368 is *phileo*, another Greek word for love with a different range of meaning.
- B. Young, Robert. *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1980.
- 1) *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible* also gives the student with no knowledge of the Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek languages access to these original languages. The technique used by Young is not the same as that used by Strong.
 - a) It is easier to find the reference you're looking for in *Young's Analytical Concordance* because this work does not list every appearance of a word under the same entry. Instead, words are located in their immediate context.
 - b) If you want to look on page 623, you will find that where the word "love" is found in the phrase "in love," it is listed separately from where the word "love" is found in the phrase "much love." These references are listed separately from those that have the words "brotherly love."
 - c) So, if you know a little more about the context, the reference you're looking for can be found more easily in *Young's* than in *Strong's*.
 - d) *Young's* does not assign numbers to the original words. It also offers extremely brief definitions.
 - e) If you look at number 5 in the center column on page 623 of *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, you will see how the concordance deals with the original languages.
 - f) Under the word "love," *Young's* lists most of the appearances of the English word in the King James Version, but groups them according to the original Hebrew or Greek word from which "love" is translated. Thus, all of the places where "love" is translated from *agapao* are listed together. In this case, *agapao* is defined as "to love."
 - g) If you will look at number 7 in the third column in *Young's*, you will see that *phileo* is defined as "to be a friend," regardless of how it is translated.
 - h) *Young's* does not list every word in the Bible.
 - 2) Although *Strong's* and *Young's* can be used profitably by the student who does not know Hebrew or Greek, great caution should be exercised in basing novel interpretations of Scripture on the definitions given in these works.
 - a) Both of them are exceedingly sketchy and inadequate for thorough and scholarly study.
 - b) For example, the entry on *agapao* in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964) runs almost to 34 pages!
- C. In addition to the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* and *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, the following works are of particular help to the student of the King James Version:
- 1) Green, J.P., Sr. *The New Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament*. Lafayette, IN: Associated Publishers and Authors, 1976.
 - 2) Bridges, Ronald and Weigle, Luther A. *The King James Bible Word Book*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994.
 - 3) Vine, W. E. *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1940.
 - 4) Berry, George Ricker. *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958. (This work is particularly useful because it is based on the same Greek text

PURPOSE: This chapter is designed to offer insight on the problem of communication gaps between the text of Scripture and the interpreter.

What I Have Learned

I. If a communication gap exists between people who live on the same planet, speak the same language, are citizens of the same nation, and who are living at the same time in history, it is reasonable to assume there are barriers to communication between God and man.

- God is infinite—man is finite.
- God is eternal—man is temporal.
- God is omniscient—man’s knowledge is extremely limited.
- God is omnipresent—man can be only one place at a time.
- God is omnipotent—man is weak and limited.
- God is self-existent—man is created.

None of this is to suggest that accurate communication between God and man is impossible; it merely underscores the importance of biblical hermeneutics. There are four (4) basic gaps between the interpreter of Scripture and the Scripture itself.

A. The Linguistic Gap

- 1) The precise words of Scripture are of utmost importance because this is how God chose to communicate His revelation—in words.
- 2) While some modern English translations are actually paraphrases or renderings of concepts or thoughts, God spoke in words.
- 3) He did not communicate ideas to the prophets; He spoke words.
- 4) Quoting the Old Testament, Jesus said, *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4).
- 5) The significance of every word is illustrated by the following examples from Scripture:
 - a) The Sadducees, a smaller religious party than the Pharisees, and one that professed a great interest in accommodating religion to the Greek culture widely embraced in the Roman Empire, denied the reality of the resurrection. They did not believe in angels, spirits, or life after death. They were the theological “liberals” of their day.
 1. When He confronted their error, Jesus quoted a statement of God to Moses: *“I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”* (Matthew 22:32). Then Jesus explained the significance of that statement: *“God is not the God of the dead, but the living”* (Matthew 22:32).
 2. The entire strength of Jesus’ argument rested on one word: am. If God had said, “I was the God of Abraham. . .” the Sadducees’ point would have been proven. When they were alive, the Lord was their God. But now they were dead, non-existent. But the fact that God used the present tense and said, *“I am,”* long after their deaths, proved they were actually still alive.
 3. So in the teaching of Jesus, the doctrine of immortality and of resurrection rested on one word, and more specifically on the tense of that word.
 - b) Paul, explaining the relationship of the Abrahamic covenant to the Law of Moses and to the Gospel, said: *“He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ”* (Galatians 3:16). In other words, God’s covenant with Abraham was not to the many who would be his physical descendants only, but to those—Jew or Gentile—who would identify with him by faith through identification with his singular seed: Jesus Christ. In this case, a major biblical doctrine hinges on whether one word is singular or plural.
- 6) The first obvious linguistic gap which must be bridged is the fact that the Scriptures were originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic (also called Chaldee) (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). It would seem obvious that the most desirable basis from which to interpret Scripture would be one of thorough skill in these languages. But since this is rarely the case, the issue of the linguistic gap must be confronted realistically. There are three basic considerations in bridging the linguistic gap:
 - Vocabulary;
 - Grammar; and
 - Genre.

- a) Vocabulary—the four essential considerations when examining the vocabulary of Scripture are as follows:
- The etymology of the word;
 - A comparative study of the word;
 - The cultural meaning of the word; and
 - The cognate languages.
1. The etymology of a word has to do with its history. It answers the questions:
 - From whence did this word come?
 - How was this word formed?
 - a. The meaning of a word is, of course, greatly influenced by its origins.
 - b. A good unabridged dictionary will be a great aid in tracing the etymology of English words.
 - c. The Webster's referred to earlier is especially helpful in this regard. But in a study of Scripture we must know more than the etymology of the English words; we must trace that of the Hebrew or Greek words. The *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, the *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* and similar references are helpful for this.
 2. The comparative study of the word has to do with examining each occurrence of the word in Scripture. Here it is important to research not just each occurrence of an English word, but to discover the Hebrew or Greek word behind it and research each occurrence of that word. One must be careful and diligent in this study, for many times in Scripture the same English word is used to translate various Hebrew or Greek words, and many Hebrew or Greek words may each be translated by a variety of English words. The *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* is especially helpful in this regard.
 - a. For example, the Greek word *ektropo* (#1624) is translated "avoid," "turn aside," and "turn out of the way."
 - b. The student may find this Greek word while researching the English word "avoiding." (This is the way the word is translated in 1 Timothy 6:20.) But he will not truly have compared the word until he has also examined the references where it is translated "turn aside" and "turn out of the way."
 - c. In addition to this, another Greek word, *stello*, is also translated "avoiding."
 3. The cultural meaning of a word has to do with its use and meaning in the specific cultural setting in Scripture.
 - a. For example, the word "conversation" today means "informal interchange of thoughts by spoken words; a talk or colloquy." But the Greek word frequently translated "conversation" in the New Testament (*anastrophe*, #391), means "behavior." During the time of the translation of the King James Version, the word "conversation" also meant "behavior, or manner of living."
 - b. Another illustration would be seen in a study of the word "fornication." Many have thought the word refers exclusively to sexual relationships outside of marriage. But the Greek word translated "fornication" is *porneia*, from which our English language has "pornography." The word *porneia* referred to moral impurity in the broadest of terms. Any moral impurity could be described by the word *porneia*. Likewise the English word "fornication," while certainly including moral impurity between unmarried persons, also included the meaning of adultery, incest, sodomy, and even idolatry.
 4. The study of cognate languages refers to a study of equivalent words in related languages.
 - a. For example, the ancient Hebrew and Aramaic were closely related. A study of one may help illuminate the other.
 - b. Many words in the English language are closely related to words from other languages.
 - c. For example, "(t)he English term church, along with the Scottish word kirk and the German word Kirche, is derived from the Greek Kuriakon, which is the neuter adjective of kurios 'Lord,' and means 'belonging to the Lord.' "
- b) Grammar—not only must the student be able to understand the words themselves; he must understand the relationship of the words to each other. Doctrinal errors can arise from a failure to understand the relationship between subjects, verbs, direct objects and whether a word is past, present, or future tense.

1. The Lord swore to David, "*Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne*" (Psalm 132:11). A failure to understand the meaning of the word "set" could lead to hermeneutical error at this point.
 - a. One might think this verse was a reference to the deity of the coming Messiah, when actually it is a reference to His humanity.
 - b. If the verse read, "Of the fruit of thy body will I sit upon thy throne," it would be a reference to His deity. The verb "sit" means "to assume a sitting position" or "to occupy a seat."
 - c. The word "set" means "to place, to put something in position." If the meaning of these words were confused, Jehovah would be saying to David, "Of the fruit of thy body will I personally sit upon thy throne." Instead, the meaning is, "I will set one upon your throne who will be the fruit of your body."
 - d. While we definitely believe in the deity of the Messiah, which is taught profusely elsewhere in Scripture, that is not the meaning of this verse. A careless hermeneutic here would not only displease God, it could also shake the confidence of one's hearers in his ability to rightly interpret Scripture.
 2. In addition to basic grammatical considerations, it is important to recognize that languages are structured in one of two basic ways or in a combination of the two:
 - a. *Analytic Languages*: These are languages in which the order of the words in a sentence determines the role each word plays in that sentence (e.g., whether a word is a subject, indirect object, or direct object). Hebrew and English are both analytic languages in that they stress word order.
 - b. *Synthetic Languages*: These are languages in which the ending of a word determines the role it plays in the sentence. Greek is a synthetic language stressing word ending.
- c) Genre—means "genus; kind; sort; style." In this case, It refers to the type of language being used in a particular passage or book. There are three basic areas of concern:
- Literary style*: When a book of the Bible is approached, the first step in Interpretation is to determine its literary style. Is it:
- Historical,
 - Poetical,
 - Apocalyptic, or
 - Prophetic?
- Literary expression*: Within any literary style there can occur passages utilizing unusual forms of literary expression. Is it a:
- Parable,
 - Allegory,
 - Psalm, or
 - Riddle?
- Figures of speech*: Within any literary style or expression there may occur a figure of speech; that is a phrase or sentence in which the author expresses himself using words in a way differing from their normal use, such as:
- Metaphors,
 - Similes, and
 - Idioms.
- B. The Cultural Gap—obviously quite different for students today than the culture of the ancient Hebrews or early Christians. Many passages of Scripture cannot be clearly understood without an appreciation for the manners and customs of the people of the day.
- 1) For example, passages having to do with marriage will be nearly unintelligible to those who have no grasp of the Hebrew marriage customs.

- 2) Though the Bible is adapted to all nations, it is in many respects an Oriental book. It represents the modes of thought and the peculiar customs of a people who, in their habits, widely differ from us. One who lived among them for many years has graphically said:
 “Modes, customs, usages, all that you can set down to the score of national, the social, or the conventional, are precisely as different from yours as the east is different from the west.
- They sit when you stand;
 - They lie when you sit;
 - They do to the head what you do to the feet;
 - They use fire when you use water;
 - You shave the beard, they shave the head;
 - You move the hat, they touch the breast;
 - You use the lips in salutation, they touch the forehead and the cheek;
 - Your house looks outwards, their house looks inwards;
 - You go out to take a walk, they go up to enjoy the fresh air;
 - You drain your land, they sigh for water;
 - You bring your daughters out, they keep their wives and daughters in;
 - Your ladies go barefaced through the streets; their ladies are always covered.”
- 3) Many good reference works exist on the subject of Bible manners and customs.
 4) Bible dictionaries are helpful, as are archaeological works.
 5) It is a most serious error to misconstrue the teaching of Scripture by forcing modern Western culture on an ancient Eastern book.
 6) Here is an illustration of the kind of insight given by a study of culture:
- a) When Jesus sat on the well in Samaria, it was about the sixth hour of the day (John 4:6). This meant it was about noon.
 - b) At that time a Samaritan woman came to draw water.
 - c) This was unusual, for the women of the day commonly drew their water early in the morning or late in the evening; it was a kind of community affair featuring fellowship and conversation.
 - d) The fact that this woman came alone in the middle of the day offers additional insight as to her moral character. She did not wish to be in the company of the other women. This would expose her to their questions and disapproval.
- C. The Geographical Gap—all of the stories of the Bible take place in a locale entirely foreign to most readers. Since so much of Scripture is tied to places—cities, rivers, lakes, mountains, desert—an understanding of these things is essential to obtain a clear grasp of their significance.
- 1) One of the things that most often strikes the modern day visitor to the land of Israel is its smallness. Those who are from nations with vast expanses may have difficulty understanding some of the geographical distinctives of a nation whose expression for a vast distance—“From Dan to Beersheba”—could easily be traversed in an automobile in less than a day.
 - a) The Jordan River is crossed on a single lane wooden bridge only some fifty feet long, spanning a “river” some thirty-five feet wide.
 - b) The Sea of Galilee is but thirteen miles long and, at its widest part, seven miles across.
 - 2) In addition to the geography of the land of Israel itself, other lands enter into the Bible story: Assyria, Babylon, Ur, Rome, etc.
 - 3) Many good works on Bible geography are available, including *The Bible Almanac* by J.I. Packer, Merrill C. Tenney, and William White, Jr., published in 1980 by Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- D. The Historical Gap—not only do we live in an era removed by two thousand years from the most recent inspiration of Scripture, but the writing of Scripture itself spanned some sixteen centuries, reflecting a broad historical spectrum.
- 1) Three things to consider in a study of history are the:
 - Political,
 - Economic, and
 - Religious climates.
 - 2) Must that is written in Scripture addresses directly the broad social situation of the specific day of the writer.
 - a) For example, an understanding of the economic and agricultural crises experienced by the nation of Israel at the time illuminates the Book of Malachi, especially the third chapter.

- b) A good work to help grasp the history of the Bible would be *What the Bible is All About*, by Henrietta C. Mears, published by Gospel Light Publications.

What Have You Learned?

1. List the three (3) basic considerations in bridging the linguistic gap. _____

2. List the four (4) essential considerations when examining the vocabulary of Scripture. _____

3. Explain the basic difference between analytic and synthetic languages. _____

4. List the three (3) basic areas of concern when considering the genre of biblical literature. _____

5. Explain the significance of the cultural gap. _____

6. Discuss the importance of the geographical gap. _____

7. List three (3) things to consider in a study of history. _____

Chapter 5

The Six Biblical Sciences

PURPOSE: This chapter is designed to introduce and explore the six biblical sciences.

What I Have Learned

- I. When we say there are six Bible “sciences,” we use the word “science” according to its common definition: “a branch of knowledge or study dealing with a body of facts or truths systematically arranged and showing the operation of general laws.”
 - A. In each of the six Bible sciences, there are certain laws at work which produce reliable results. To ignore these laws results in faulty biblical scholarship. The major Bible sciences are:
The study of the Canon (Canonology);
 - Historical Criticism;
 - Textual Criticism;

contains secret messages that can be deciphered only if you know the code. These codes are usually based on assigning numerical values to the letters and words of Scripture or on finding supposed messages by locating mathematical patterns in the words or letters of the Bible.

Actually, these current attempts to find hidden messages are no new thing. In the history of biblical interpretation there are many who found supposed messages in the Bible—messages never intended by the original authors—by ignoring the literal meaning of the words themselves in favor of secret or spiritual meanings. In this chapter, we will discuss various methods of hermeneutics that have been used in the history of biblical interpretation.

A. **The Allegorical Method**—with roots in the attempt to wed biblical theology and Greek philosophy in the theological school at Alexandria, Egypt, essentially denies the literal meaning of Scripture in its search for hidden meanings not apparent on the surface.

- 1) Allegorism is the method of interpreting a literary text that regards the literal sense as the vehicle for a secondary, more spiritual and more profound sense.
- 2) An example of allegorism may be seen in the following “interpretation” of the parable of the good Samaritan:
 - a) The man who is on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho represents Adam, the head of the human race.
 - b) He left the heavenly city and is traveling down to the city of earth, the profane city.
 - c) But, having turned his desires toward the earth, he falls into the hands of robbers; he is overpowered by Satan and his evil angels.
 - d) These robbers strip him of the garment of original righteousness.
 - e) They also beat him, leaving him full of wounds, half-dead (!). Yes, half-dead in sins and trespasses (!).
 - f) The priest and the Levite represent the law and the sacrifices. They cannot save the sinner. They are powerless to help.
 - g) But the Good Samaritan, namely Jesus Christ, is traveling that way and helps the poor sinner.
 - h) This Good Samaritan dresses his wounds with the oil of the Holy Spirit and with wine, namely, the blood of his Passion.
 - i) He, then, puts the poor man on his own mule, that is on the merits of his own righteousness (!). He takes the poor man to an inn, that is, to church.
 - j) The next day, the Good Samaritan gives the host two schillings, that is, the Word and the Sacraments, in order that with these he may provide for the spiritual needs of the poor sinner.
 - k) Then this Good Samaritan departs but promises to return later.
 1. Each parable is designed to conceal and reveal one basic truth. (See Matthew 13:10-15.) The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches one basic lesson: how to be a neighbor by showing mercy to those in need. (See Luke 10:36-37.)
 - a. The man on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho represents no one but himself, a man traveling alone on a dangerous road.
 - b. Of course, the allegorizing interpretation fails in that sinners are not half-dead, but dead in trespasses and sins.
 - c. The priest and Levites represent only themselves, two religious men who were more concerned with adhering to the regulations of the Law of Moses than they were with helping someone in need.
 - d. The Good Samaritan represents only himself, a man from Samaria with a heart to help a man in need.
 - e. Nothing in the parable represents anything else. Remember, there may be many applications, but there is only one interpretation.
 - f. Pentecost offers the following dangers of the allegorical method:
 - i. The first great danger of the allegorical method is that it does not interpret Scripture.
 2. Allegorism goes, supposedly, beneath the surface of the words of the Scripture to the real meaning hidden beneath the words. As a result, it does not concern itself with actually interpreting the Scripture itself, for the words of Scripture are supposedly mere chaff; the actual wheat is much deeper.

- a. ...a second great danger in the allegorical method: the basic authority in interpretation ceases to be the Scriptures, but the mind of the interpreter.
- i. One of the basic premises for true hermeneutics is that the Scripture interprets itself. But allegorism cuts the interpreter loose from any external authority; he has only himself to answer to for the meanings he imposes on Scripture.
 - ii. One student, for example, declared that the widow woman of 2 Kings 4:1-7 was the church. Supposedly the oil she was to pour into the empty vessels represented the Holy Spirit. While a person may think he has discovered deep spiritual truth by such allegorizing, he opens a Pandora's Box of all kinds of problems.
 - iii. For instance, the woman's husband was dead; she was a widow! Who is the husband of the church, according to 2 Corinthians 11:2? Christ is certainly not dead!
 - iv. Who was the creditor?
 - v. If it is suggested that the creditor is Satan, does Jesus owe Satan anything?
 - vi. What are the vessels?
 - vii. What is the significance of borrowing the vessels from the neighbors?
 - viii. Since Elisha told the woman to sell the oil to pay the debt, how is the church to sell the Holy Ghost?
 - ix. Actually, the woman represents no one but herself. That we can draw lessons of inspiration and encouragement from the story is certain; but we must not impose a meaning that is simply not there.
 - x. A third great danger in the allegorical method is that one is left without any means by which the conclusions of the interpreter may be tested.
 - xi. There is no final authority to which to take the allegorical interpretation. "[T]he control in interpretation is the literal method."
 - xii. The allegorical method casts the interpreter out into a sea of uncertainty; there simply are no biblical guidelines to control interpretation.
 - xiii. This method will, for example, allow one well known religious movement to declare that the rich man in the story of the rich man and Lazarus is the Protestant clergy, while Lazarus is the faithful members of the religious movement.
 - xiv. The Protestant clergy are persecuting the faithful members of the movement.
 - xv. The movement also denies the reality of the flames of hell, which are taught in the true story (not a parable).
 - xvi. But if one can say the rich man is the Protestant clergy, with absolutely no Scriptural support, another can say he is Hitler, or Atilla the Hun, or Jim Jones, or members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.
 - xvii. Such "interpretation" is preposterous, but it is necessary to those who would deny the plain literal teaching of Scripture.
 - xviii. One must not confuse the interpretation of types with allegorism. While we will later study the typical principle of hermeneutics, it should be noted now that the interpretation of a type depends on its literal meaning.
- B. **The Mystical Method**—has its origins in the "Hagadic method of exegesis developed by the Palestinian Jews in the inter-testamental period." It developed as "interpreters mistook application for interpretation."
- 1) While the mystical method has somewhat in common with the allegorical method, in that both reject the plain meaning in favor of a hidden meaning, the mystical method differs from the allegorical method in that it sees a multiplicity of meanings beneath any word passage. Allegorism sees only one mystical meaning.
 - 2) This method of interpretation was systemized among the Babylonian Jewish Gaonim scholars (A.D. 600-1000). It is practiced in the Jewish mysticism of our day known as Kabbalism.
 - 3) This system of hermeneutics examines Scripture "not only allegorically and analogically, but also through the interpretation of words and letters according to their numerical equivalents, and by

interchanging numerical equivalents new letters and words would be created, thereby allowing for new interpretations."

- 4) Another, perhaps more common term for the mystical method is "spiritualization." An example is seen in Swedenborg's interpretation of Exodus 20:13: "*Thou shalt not kill.*" In applying a three-fold sense of Scripture to this commandment, he says that its natural sense is that murder, hatred and revenge are forbidden; its spiritual sense is that "to 'act the devil and destroy a man's soul' is forbidden; and its heavenly sense is that for the angels, hating the Lord and His Word is as murder."
 - 5) The errors of the mystical method are the same as those of the allegorical method, and they are even more pronounced.
- C. **The Devotional Method**—defined by Ramm as "that method of interpreting Scripture which places emphasis on the edifying aspects of Scripture, and interpreting with the intention of developing spiritual life."
- 1) Obviously, all Scripture is profitable for "*doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*" (2 Timothy 3:16). This includes every word from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.
 - 2) But Scripture should be applied in a devotional way only "after it has been interpreted literally and historically. Devotional interpretation must also be harmonized with doctrinal interpretation."
 - 3) Those who indiscriminately practice the devotional method may be led to believe the Bible tells them what color of car to buy, who to marry, whether to move to the North, East, South, or West.
 - 4) There is not a doubt that principles can be drawn from Scripture to apply to current situations, but to say that the word of God to some ancient king or prophet is a specific commandment to anyone else is in error.
 - a) For example, God told Noah to build an ark of gopher wood, but that commandment was for Noah only. There would be absolutely no value in anyone today building such an ark.
 - b) There is no limitation in the devotional method as to what Scripture should be interpreted for an individual and what should not.
 - 5) There are two basic weaknesses of devotional interpretation:
 - a) It falls prey to allegorization especially in the use of the Old Testament.
 - b) No doubt certain aspects of the tabernacle represented something yet to come. The book of Hebrews is quite specific about this.
 - c) But not everything in the tabernacle represented something else. It is error to impose a spiritual meaning on every silver socket, knob, plank, or the linen fence.
 - d) When the New Testament clearly points out that a certain article of furniture or some other aspect of the tabernacle represented a spiritual reality, the interpreter is on safe ground. But beyond that is pure speculation.
 1. Any devotional application of Scripture must be based solidly on the literal meaning of the passage.
 2. It is not uncommon for cults to err in this regard. The Mormons have taught, for example, that the "Joseph" in Ezekiel 37:16 is Joseph Smith. The writing on the sticks (v. 20) is the Book of Mormon. This is, of course, purely arbitrary and capricious. The message is simply to the people of Israel concerning their future reconciliation under the Messiah (Ezekiel 37:15-26). If the "Joseph" here is not the Joseph of Scripture whose sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, were the founders of the two largest tribes in the Northern Kingdom, which was at that time divided from the Southern Kingdom, then it may be Joseph Smith, Joseph Kennedy, Joseph Stalin, or anyone in the world.
 - e) Devotional interpretation may be a substitute for the requisite exegetical and doctrinal studies of the Bible.

"[S]ome well-meaning Christians have interpreted Matthew 10:9, 10, 19 to mean that in their evangelizing they should neither take any material provision nor make any spiritual preparation. ... The chief danger of this method is that in seeking to apply Scripture personally the interpreter may ignore the plain literal sense of what God was saying to those in that particular historical setting, and thus apply Scripture self-centeredly."
- D. **The Rationalistic Method**—Germany was the source of a great deal of rationalistic theory during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The basis of this viewpoint was a denial of the supernatural. Rationalism denies that Scripture is actually the inspired Word of God. Miracles are disregarded.

Rationalism is humanistic in essence, for it sets the interpreter up as the final arbiter of truth. If the Scripture can be understood and explained by the interpreter's intellect, it is accepted. If not, it is rejected.

E. **The Literal Method**—"the method that gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether employed in writing, speaking or thinking."

- 1) Also known as the grammatical method because it holds that the meaning of any text can be determined by the consideration of grammar and history.
- 2) The literal method "recognizes that a word may have different meanings in different contexts and thus must be interpreted in the light of its contextual usage. It contends that though a word may possibly have several meanings, in any one particular usage it generally will have but one intended meaning."
- 3) That the literal method is the one specifically approved by the Holy Spirit is seen in the fact that the inspired writers of the New Testament, in quoting hundreds of verses from the Old Testament, always interpreted them literally.

- a. This does not preclude the allegory given by Paul in Galatians 4: 22-31. it should be noted that Paul's allegory was based on the literal truth of the existence of Abraham, his two sons, the bondmaid Hagar, his wife Sarah, Mount Sinai, Jerusalem and so forth.
- b. While each of these was used by Paul to represent something else, he had no way denied the literalness of any of them.
- c. Had Paul denied the literal existence of a boy by the name of Ishmael, declaring that Ishmael was simply a symbolic way of referring to the Law of Moses, he would have been guilty of "Spiritualizing" or allegorizing Scripture.
- d. But his allegory was based on the literal fact of the existence of these people and place and events.

"Perhaps one of the strongest evidences for the literal method is the use the New Testament makes of the Old Testament. When the Old Testament is used in the New it is used only in a literal sense. One need only study the prophecies that were fulfilled in the first coming of Christ, in His life, His ministry, and His death, to establish that fact. No prophecy that has been completely fulfilled has been fulfilled any way but literally. Though a prophecy may be cited in the New Testament to show that a certain event is a partial fulfillment of that prophecy (as done in Matthew 2:17-18), or to show that an event is in harmony with God's established program (as was done in Acts 15), it does not necessitate a non-literal fulfillment or deny a future complete fulfillment, for such applications of prophecy do not exhaust the fulfillment of it."

- 4) The literal method does not deny that Scripture includes figurative language. It simply declares that "figures of speech are used as a means of revealing literal truth. What is literally true in one realm, with which we are familiar, is brought over, literally into another realm, with which we may not be familiar, in order to teach us truths in that unfamiliar realm."

a) For example, the Bible declares, "*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John*" (John 1: 6). Without question, this is a plain, literal truth. John was a real man. But later, John says, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1: 29). This is a symbolic statement, but the truth it reveals is literal. While Jesus Christ was not a literal lamb, He was a literal man who fulfilled the role a literal lamb symbolized in the sacrificial system. (See 1 Corinthians 5:7.)

b) That the Book of Revelation makes broad use of symbols is seen immediately in the first chapter.

1. There we have seven stars that represent the seven angels of the seven churches and seven golden candlesticks that represent the seven churches (Revelation 1:20).
2. The angels are not literally stars and the churches are not literally candlesticks. In this case the Scripture itself interprets the meaning of the symbols it employs.
3. This is often the case. A literal truth is revealed by this symbolism. The seven stars are in the right hand of the one like unto the Son of man (Revelation 1: 16).
4. This appears to speak of the position of authority and power given the angels, as well as the protection offered them. (The word "angel" is a transliteration of the Greek *angelos*, which means "messenger.")
5. The position of the one like unto the Son of man in the midst of the seven candlesticks speaks of Christ's relationship to the seven churches; He is in their midst (Revelation 1:13).

6. The use of symbolism continues throughout the book. For example, consider Revelation 5:1-7: *"And I say in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals"* (v. 1).
7. Since we know that God is an invisible, omnipresent Spirit without flesh and bones who dwells in the light no man can approach unto, it is obvious that John is seeing a vision. This is confirmed in Revelation 4:2: *"And immediately I was in the spirit..."* John was not seeing this with his natural eyes; indeed he was at this time in his physical body still on the isle of Patmos.
8. The door that was opened in heaven (4:1) was a door into the spirit realm (4:2). In the spirit realm of visions, one thing often represents another.
9. In the case where Scripture declares that certain things cannot be seen, they can be comprehended only by representative manifestations. God, as a Spirit, does not have a right hand.
10. The book pictured as being in the hand of him that sat on the throne was not a literal book or scroll, but a representation of the events yet to transpire. *"And I say a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?"* (v. 2).
11. Angels are spirits (Hebrews 1:14). Spirits are invisible to the natural eyes of mortal men. While they can be visibly manifested so as to be visible, John was still "in the spirit." He was therefore not seeing this with his natural eyes, but with spiritual vision.
12. The angel was inquiring as to who was worthy to open the book. This makes it obvious that a symbolic scenario was unfolding before John's eyes, for he who sat on the throne was obviously God Himself, and to suggest that He, as God would not have been worthy to open the book would border on blasphemy. *"And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon"* (v. 3). *"And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon"* (v. 4).
13. The meaning is clear. It is not that God Himself was unworthy to open the book, but that no man (human) was worthy. *"And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof"* (v. 5).
14. It is outside the scope and purpose of this brief overview to discuss the identity of the elders. It is obvious that they are representative and symbolic, in that there are exactly twenty-four of them, sitting on twenty-four seats around the throne (4:4).
15. That they have harps and sing songs in worship to the Lamb, and that they possess golden vials representing the prayers of the saints, and that they are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, and that they are kings and priests unto God strongly suggests that they represent the redeemed church.
16. The invitation of the elder was, *"[B]ehold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah."* That John did not behold a literal lion is obvious, for the elder continued, *"[T]he Root of David."* John did not behold a literal root. Lions and roots do not open books, but He Who was represented by these figures of speech could indeed open the book in His redemptive role as the Messiah, David's root, who came through the tribe of Judah. (See Genesis 49:10 and Isaiah 11: 1.)
17. *"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth"* (v. 6). Symbolism is inherent within this verse. When John looked to behold this lion and Root, he saw instead a Lamb, bleeding as in death. It had seven horns and seven eyes, the latter being interpreted in the verse itself as representing the seven Spirits of God. (See Isaiah 11:2, where the seven aspects of God's Spirit which make up the one Spirit of Ephesians 4:4 are listed.) Without question, the slain Lamb represented the Messiah, Jesus Christ, in His sacrificial role as the Lamb of God.
18. *"And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne"* (v. 7). This has been used by those who believe in a multiplicity of persons within the Godhead to suggest that the first person (the Father), sat upon the throne while the

second person, (the Son) came to Him and took the book out of His hand. But this confuses the obviously symbolic nature of the passage.

- a. A slain lamb would be unable to move.
 - b. Even if the lamb were not slain, it would have no way of taking the book out of someone's hand, unless it took the book in its mouth. But then, how would the lamb open such a book? (See 6:1.)
 - c. In the Spirit, John saw One sitting on the throne; he saw angels, elders, and lambs. But all of these symbols, though he literally did see these things in the realm of the Spirit, merely represented spiritual reality that would otherwise have been invisible to him.
 - d. The purpose of the passage is not to teach plurality of persons within the Godhead, but to reveal the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ as it relates to future events.
 - e. Jesus Christ was both God and man. (See 1 Timothy 3:16, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 John 4:1-3, John 1:1, 14, and Galatians 4:4.)
 - f. The one sitting on the throne in Revelation 5:1 represents His deity; the Lamb represents His humanity.
 - g. If the symbolism of the passage is denied, then we must say that the one sitting on the throne was God Himself in a visible body, possessing a literal right hand and presumably all other members of a body, and that the Lamb was a literal seven-horned, seven-eyed lamb, bleeding in death.
- 5) Ramm, himself a trinitarian, discusses the use the Scripture makes of anthropomorphisms. The word "anthropomorphism" is from the Greek words *anthropos*, meaning "man," and *morphe*, meaning "form." The word refers to the way human terms are used to communicate to man something about God's nature or attributes. They are not to be taken literally any more than God is to be supposed to literally have feathers and wings. (See Psalm 91:4.)
- "The fact of God's almightiness is spoken of in terms of a right arm because among men the right arm is a symbol of strength or power. Pre-eminence is spoken of as sitting at God's right hand because in human social affairs the right hand position with reference to the host was the place of greatest honor."
- a) What are the dangers of taking anthropomorphisms literally? "More than one unlettered person and cultist has taken the anthropomorphisms of the Scriptures literally and has so thought of God as possessing a body."
 - b) The Literal method of interpreting Scripture does not deny symbols, figures of speech, or spiritual truth. It simply insists that all interpretation must be made on the basis of the literal meaning of the Scriptures. If the passage is not clearly symbolic, the symbols must be interpreted literally, i.e. their literal, concrete meaning must be discovered.
 - c) The late Clyde J. Haney offered four "Laws Governing a Safe Approach to Prophecy." They are:
 1. "No Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20-21).
 2. "In the mouths of two or three witnesses" (Matthew 18:16).
 3. It must be established BY whom it was written, WHEN it was written and TO whom it was written. For example: Scriptures applying to Israel cannot be applied directly to the church. (Ezekiel 31:1 – often applied to the church – see vs. 11).
 4. It must never be spiritualized or symbolized unless the right is given. For example, "likened unto," "as it were." Otherwise it would be safest to keep it on the literal basis. When any one verse of Scripture seems to stand out as contradicting all other Scriptures related to that subject, the fault is in the knowledge of the student and not the Scripture itself.
- 6) Each principle discussed in this book will be based upon the presupposition that the literal method of interpretation is the only accurate and Scriptural method.

What Have You Learned?

1. List and define the five (5) methods of interpretation of Scripture. _____

- b) During this time, man had the responsibility to do good (Genesis 4:7). While there were those during this time who lived by faith (Hebrews 11:4-7), the overwhelming majority of people were wicked (Genesis 6:1-8).
 - c) There are points of continuity and discontinuity between the Law of Moses and the human conscience. Some things inherently known by human conscience to be right or wrong are included in the Law of Moses; some things included in the Law of Moses are not inherently known by human conscience.
 - 1. For example, unless a person or society has been turned over to a reprobate mind (Romans 1:28), the conscience informs them that things like murder and adultery are wrong. Of course, these sins are listed in the Law of Moses as prohibited.
 - 2. But the Law of Moses includes commandments to observe the Sabbath day, new moons, feast days, dietary laws, and many regulations concerning day-to-day activities—like planting seeds in a garden, the fabric of clothing worn, animals which may not be yoked together—which are not inherently known by human conscience.
- 3) **The Dispensation of Human Government**, beginning after the flood and extending to the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 8:1-11: 9).
- a) This dispensation lasted about 427 years. Man was given specific responsibility (Genesis 9:1-7), including the ultimate expression of the solemn duty of human government, capital punishment (v. 6).
 - b) God's command to *"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth"* (Genesis 9:1) was inherently a command to spread out over the whole earth, subduing it for the glory of God. (See Genesis 1:28.)
 - c) Instead, man created a centralized government, which was to be epitomized by a city and a tower which symbolized their rebellious plan to glorify themselves and avoid their God-given responsibility: *"[L]et us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth"* (Genesis 11:4).
 - d) This dispensation ended in judgment as God destroyed their scheme by confusing their languages.
- 4) **The Dispensation of Promise**, extending from the call of Abraham to the Exodus from Egypt (Genesis 11:10 – Exodus 15:21).
- a) This dispensation lasted 430 years.
 - b) During this time God dealt directly with the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), giving them specific commandments and promises. (See Genesis 12: 1-3; 13: 14-17; 15: 6; 26: 2-3.)
 - c) As a result of the disobedience of these covenant people to the commands of God, the dispensation ended in judgment with Israel in oppressive slavery in Egypt. The mercy of God was demonstrated, however, in their deliverance.
- 5) **The Dispensation of Law**, extending from Sinai to Calvary (Exodus 19 – Matthew 5: 17-18; John 19:30; Galatians 3: 15-19; Romans 10:4; Hebrews 9: 16-22).
- a) This dispensation lasted about 1491 years. The Law of Moses was a covenant made specifically and only between God and the nation of Israel.
 - b) It included 613 commandments the nation was to observe.
 - c) This dispensation ended with the coming of Jesus Christ and His complete fulfillment of all the prophetic aspects of the Law. (This will be discussed more fully in the section "Why Christians Do Not Observe the Jewish Sabbath.")
 - d) The dispensation ended in judgment upon the nation of Israel as they rejected the Messiah and Jerusalem was ultimately destroyed, with the Jewish people scattered afresh into the nations of the world.
- 6) **The Dispensation of Grace**, extending from the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost to the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the Great Tribulation (Acts 2 – Revelation 5:14).
- a) This dispensation is for an undetermined period of time. Since no man knows the time of the Second Coming (Matthew 24:36), we cannot know the time of the Rapture of the church, which occurs about seven years prior to the Second Coming.
 - b) The church itself is a mystery, not revealed to the prophets of old (Ephesians 3:3-6).
 - c) During the church age, God is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name (Acts 15: 14). During this age, believing Jews can be saved as well (Galatians 3:28).

- d) After the Rapture of the church (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), the judgments of God will fall upon the Laodicean church and the unbelieving world (1 Thessalonians 5:1-9; Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; Revelation 2:14-22; Daniel 9: 24-27) for a period of seven years.
 - e) Even during this time, however, those Jewish people who do embrace Jesus Christ as the Messiah will be saved, as well as an unnumbered multitude who believe as a result of their preaching (Revelation 7).
 - f) These believers will form a separate company from the church and from those who will be saved during the Millennium. They will reign with Christ during the one thousand year Millennium era (Revelation 20:4).
 - g) The Great Tribulation will end with the Second Coming, with the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16), and with the resurrection of the Old Testament saints (Daniel 12:11-13).
- 7) **The Dispensation of the Millennium**, extending from the Second Coming to the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20; Psalm 2, 11).
- a) The word "millennium" comes from the Latin *mille*, which means "thousand" and was used in the Latin Vulgate to translate the Greek *chilia* in Revelation 20:4. By definition, this dispensation will last one thousand years.
 "After the second advent of Christ the millennial kingdom will be set up in fulfillment of all the promises given in both Testaments and particularly those contained in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. The Lord Jesus Christ, who will personally take charge of the running of the affairs of the world during that age, will be the chief personage of the dispensation. It will continue for one thousand years, and man will be responsible for obedience to the King and His laws. Satan will be bound, Christ will be ruling, righteousness will prevail, overt disobedience will be quickly punished. Yet at the end of the period enough rebels will be found to make a formidable army that will dare to attack the seat of government (Revelation 20: 7-9). The revolt will be unsuccessful and the rebels will be cast into everlasting punishment."
- E. The importance of the Dispensational Principle in hermeneutics is that truth must be correctly divided between and even in the dispensations (2 Timothy 2:15).
- 1) Before we seek to apply Scripture, we must correctly interpret it.
 - 2) Essential to correct interpretation is asking to whom the Scripture is written and for what purpose.
 - 3) Obviously the command of God to Noah to build an ark was for Noah alone. It would have done Adam no good to build an ark, nor was the commandment to abstain from a specific tree applicable to Noah.
 - 4) We must not take truth having to do with another dispensation and interpret it into this dispensation. Nor are we to take truth belonging to this dispensation alone and export it into another dispensation.
- F. One of the most common criticisms leveled at the doctrine of dispensationalism is that it teaches that God has had more than one plan of salvation. Since God does not change, this is assumed to disprove dispensationalism. Dispensationalism does not, however, teach that God has had various plans of salvation. The soteriology of dispensationalism is accurately expressed by the following four statements:
- The basis of salvation in every age is the death of Christ.
 - The requirement for salvation in every age is faith.
 - The object of faith in every age is God.
 - The content of faith and the way faith is expressed changes in the various dispensations.
- 1) It has never been possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin (Hebrews 10:4).
 - 2) The only validity such sacrifices ever had was that they looked ahead to their final fulfillment in the offering up of the Lamb of God, the Messiah.
 - 3) The blood of Christ was provided for the remission of these past sins (Romans 3:25).
 - a) After concluding the great chapter on men and women of faith, the writer of Hebrews declares, *"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise. God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect"* (Hebrews 11:39-40).
 - b) All of the sacrifices, indeed all of the ceremonies of the Law of Moses, prefigured Christ (Colossians 2:16-17). The first point is true because Jesus Christ is the *"Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"* (Revelation 13:8).
 - c) It is true because He was *"a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world..."* (1 Peter 1: 19-20).
 - d) The only basis upon which salvation will be available in any future age, is the blood (death) of Christ.

- e) This can be so because the cross of Christ was a settled fact in the mind of God as the basis of salvation before He created the first man.
- 4) The truth of the second point is illustrated well in Hebrews 11. From Abel through the prophets and beyond, all were required to demonstrate faith in God. Indeed, Hebrews 11:6 asserts, *"But without faith it is impossible to please him...."* No man ever has been saved, nor will any man ever be saved, apart from faith.
- 5) The truth of the third point is also illustrated in Hebrews 11:6: *"[F]or he that cometh to God must believe that he is...."* According to Jesus, the first and great commandment is *"Hear O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord...."* (Mark 12:29).
- a) Faith in a false god has never produced salvation.
- b) Faithlessness has never produced salvation.
- c) For there to have been any hope of salvation in any age, or at any point in the future, one's faith must be in the true God.
- 6) The truth of the fourth point is also well illustrated throughout Hebrews 11 as well as in the entirety of Scripture.
- a) Abel's faith was expressed as he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.
- b) Enoch's faith was expressed in the way he walked with God.
- c) Noah's faith was expressed by building an ark.
- d) Abraham's faith was expressed by leaving Ur.
- e) Moses' faith was expressed in his rejection of Pharaoh and his choice to identify with the people of God.
- f) Rahab's faith was expressed in accepting the spies, protecting them, and sending them out another way.
- g) Throughout the Law of Moses, the faith of Israel was expressed by obedience to its requirements.
- h) Today, faith is expressed by believing on Jesus Christ as the Messiah, God manifest in the flesh, by repentance from sin, water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and the acceptance of the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16).
- 7) While truth from one dispensation may be applied to another dispensation (i.e., the principle seen in the truth may be related to men of another place and time), it is critically important not to interpret truth from one dispensation as being a requirement in another.
- 8) Paul, who declared that we are not under the Law of Moses, and that the law was fulfilled and ended with the coming of Christ, nevertheless said, *"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully"* (1 Timothy 1:8). (See also Romans 3:20-21; Hebrews 7:18-19; 10:1-12; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14-17; Galatians 2:11-16; Romans 14:5-6; and Acts 15.)
- 9) To make lawful use of the law in the New Testament, and to avoid the pitfall of reestablishing the law as an expression of faith, we must examine how Paul himself used the law.
- 10) An example is seen in 1 Corinthians 9:8-10:
- "Say I these things as a man? Or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope."*
- 11) In the context of 1 Corinthians 9, Paul is discussing the support due the ministry by those who receive ministry.
- a) He points out that soldiers do not support themselves while engaged in warfare.
- b) Those who plant vineyards think nothing of eating the fruit of the vineyard.
- c) Those who feed flocks freely drink of the milk of the flock.
- d) Then he points out that these lessons are not only observable and true from the realm of human experience and nature, but that an oxen treading out corn was to remain free to eat of the grain he was treading.
- e) Then Paul points out that if this is true in the realm of nature, and certainly if the concept is endorsed in the law, it must also be true during the church era. Those who *"preach the gospel should live of the gospel"* (1 Corinthians 9:14).
- 12) This is not spiritualizing or allegorizing. Paul would have been guilty of these erroneous methods of interpretation if he had denied that the statement in the law had any reference to literal oxen and

corn. He would also have been guilty of them if he had declared that the ox is a minister and the corn is financial support. He did neither.

- a) He recognized the muzzle was a literal muzzle, the ox a literal ox, the corn literal corn.
 - b) He merely drew an application from the principles seen behind the Old Testament commandment, that is *"[H]e that ploweth should plow in hope; and...he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope"* (1 Corinthians 9:10).
- 13) Paul would have violated the dispensational principle if he had suggested that those in the church era who muzzled their oxen were committing sin for which they would be lost.
- a) It is unwise for those in the church who have oxen to muzzle the animals; their strength will weaken and they will not be able to produce as much work. But this certainly has nothing to do with salvation.
 - b) Neither is it necessary in the Christian era to build a battlement (fence) upon the roof of one's house (Deuteronomy 22:8).
 - c) A Christian may sow his vineyard with various kinds of seeds if he wishes; he can plow with an ox and an ass together; he can wear clothing of different kinds of cloth, and so forth. (See Deuteronomy 22:8-11.)
- 14) While the study of the relationship of the law to the church is a discipline of its own, it should briefly be noted that not every requirement included in the Law of Moses originated with the Law of Moses.
- a) Those general requirements of God that have been in existence from the beginning were maintained in the Law of Moses and survive the law into the Christian era.
 - b) For example, Abraham preceded the Law of Moses by four centuries. He knew nothing of the 613 commandments included in the law. And yet Genesis 26:5 declares, *"...Abraham obeyed...my laws."*
 - c) There were laws of God revealed to men prior to the Law of Moses.
- 15) It should be understood that when we discuss the importance of not interpreting things that had to do exclusively with the Law of Moses as having to do with other dispensations, there are nevertheless truths included in the Law of Moses which predated it and which survived it. These things are part of God's general revelation and they are requirements in any day and time.
- a) For example, it was wrong to practice idolatry prior to Mount Sinai—it is still wrong.
 - b) It was wrong to kill before the Law of Moses—it still is.
 - c) Stealing was wrong before Mount Sinai—it is still sin.
 - d) Adultery was prohibited from Genesis 2—it is still prohibited.
 - e) In other words, only that which originated with the Law of Moses and was unique to the law is now no longer required.
- 16) One of the great principles revealed in Scripture is that God is immutable, or unchanging (Malachi 3:6).
- a) Those things that displeased God prior to the law continued to displease Him during the era of the law and continue to displease Him today.
 - b) A clue to these universally true principles is the phrase *"abomination unto the Lord thy God."* If something is abominable to God, and God does not change, it will always be abominable to Him, regardless of the dispensation.
 - c) One such issue is addressed in the midst of the Law of Moses: *"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment" for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God*" (Deuteronomy 22:5). This is in the midst of a discussion about bird's nests, eggs, battlements upon roofs, seed, clothing, and animals. But none of these issues are said to be abominable to God. There may be principles behind them that can be applied to other dispensations, but they are not requirements in other dispensations.
 - d) But those things that are abominable to God continue to be so, and they are important in all dispensations. Similar abominations are seen in Deuteronomy 7:25; 18:12; 25:16; Proverbs 6:16-18; 11:20; 12:22; 21:27; 28:9; Luke 16:15.

G. In summary of the dispensational principle, Christians are not required to refrain from eating certain trees, to build an ark, to leave Ur of the Chaldees, or to keep the Law of Moses. These were for other dispensations.

- 1) While not limited to these, the Scriptures which most specifically address the issues of concern to the church are:
 - The final words of Jesus after His resurrection,
 - The Book of Acts,

- All the epistles,
 - Revelation 1-4, and 19-22.
- 2) In general, Scriptures outside of these may be applied to the church, but they should not—with the exception of certain portions of the gospels that definitely have to do with the church—be interpreted as being about the church.
- II. Progressive Dispensationalism—currently an effort by dispensational theologians to revise certain aspects of this approach to interpreting Scripture.
- A. One purpose is to avoid some excesses common among some dispensationalists and to “fine-tune” the system.
- B. Some dispensationalists now see four dispensations rather than seven.
- C. It is important not to allow current revisions in the dispensationalist perspective to cloud the essence of dispensationalism.
- 1) It may make no significant difference whether it is more accurate to say there are seven dispensations, or four, or some other number. The number of dispensations is not what dispensationalism is all about.
- 2) The essence of dispensationalism is the distinction between the nation of Israel and the church.
- III. Why Christians Do Not Observe the Jewish Sabbath—this discussion will illustrate the use of the dispensational principle in answering a question which perplexes many: “Should Christians observe the Sabbath Day?”
- A. In order for the keeping of the Sabbath Day to be binding on New Testament Christians, it would have to be a commandment that preceded and survived the Law of Moses. If it originated with the Law of Moses, it would be unique to that dispensation and would be binding only upon that dispensation, unless a clear New Testament statement made it also binding upon the church. That the command to keep the Sabbath Day was for Israel only will be explained by the following:
- 1) The first mention of the Sabbath in the Bible is Exodus 16: 23.
“And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seeth that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.”
- a) There is no biblical record before this time of anyone keeping the Sabbath or even being aware of it.
- b) The word “remember” in Exodus 20:8 (*“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy”*) refers back to the command in Exodus 16:23, not to something Israel had previously known, for there is not one Scripture which suggests Israel was aware of the Sabbath before leaving Egypt.
- 2) No one before Israel knew of the Sabbath.
“The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day” (Deuteronomy 5:3).
- a) The elements of the covenant God made with Israel—including the requirements to keep the Sabbath—had not been given to any previous generation. The covenant in all its aspects originated at Sinai.
“Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant” (Nehemiah 9:13-14).
- b) The Sabbath was made known to Israel at Sinai. Even Israel did not know of it before this time.
“Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them” (Ezekiel 20:12).
- c) The Sabbath days were given to Israel by God to be a sign between Him and Israel alone. They were never a part of a covenant between God and any other people.
“He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord (Psalm 147: 19-20).
1. The statutes and judgments of the law given to Israel were unique to them; God did not deal in that way with any other nation.
2. Those things unique to the Law of Moses, therefore, were not binding on other peoples at other places and times.

3) The Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel only.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:12-17).

- a) The only way the Sabbath could be a sign between God and Israel would be if it were unique to that relationship.
- c) If God required all men to keep the Sabbath, what kind of a special sign would it have been between Him and Israel? Something is a sign only because it is unique, special. If it is common, it is no sign.
- d) The Sabbath was a visible sign that would allow God immediately to test Israel's obedience to Him.

"Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily" (Exodus 16:4-5).

4) God predicted He would make a new covenant with Israel.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they break, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be a covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

- a) The new covenant God will yet make with Israel will be unlike the covenant He made with them at Sinai. It will not be according to that covenant.
- b) The feature of this covenant is knowledge of God superior to that offered by the Law of Moses.
- c) Instead of having to do with days, festivals, offerings, and so forth, this new covenant will feature a deeply personal relationship with God, indicated by having His law written in their hearts. Nothing is said about the Sabbath.

5) Jesus Christ did not come to obey the law; He came to fulfill the prophecies contained in the law and the prophets.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18).

- a) It is commonly reported by modern law keepers that these verses prove Jesus Himself came to obey the law. The word "fulfill" is said to mean "obey."
- b) Actually, the Greek word *pleroo*, translated "fulfill," means "to finish, to end, to make complete, to cause to expire."
- c) The key to interpreting the verses is contained within the verses themselves. Jesus said, *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets...."* He came to fulfill both the law and the prophets.
- d) Whatever He meant by fulfilling the prophets, He meant the same about fulfilling the law. How could he obey the prophets?
- e) The basic ministry of the prophets was predictive, to tell of coming personages and events, and especially the Messiah.

- f) Both the law and the prophets were heavily weighted with elements predictive of the coming Messiah. These Jesus fulfilled.
"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself .. all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me" (Luke 24:27, 44).
- g) The word "law" has a broad use in the Old Testament. It may refer to:
- The ten commandments (Exodus 20:1-17; 24:12);
 - A regulation within the Law of Moses (Leviticus 7:7);
 - The Book of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 1:1-5; 27:1-8; Joshua 8:30-35);
 - The entire Pentateuch (Luke 24:44; 1 Corinthians 14:34 with Genesis 3:16; 1 Chronicles 16:40);
 - One of the two major sections comprising the entire Hebrew Scriptures (Matthew 5:17);
 - The entire Hebrew Scriptures (Matthew 5:18; Romans 3:10-19; Isaiah 28:11 with 1 Corinthians 14: 21; John 5:10 with Jeremiah 17:21).
- h) The word "law" alone in Matthew 5:18 must be understood in light of the context, as must all mentions of the word.
1. The previous verse has already indicated that the subject of Jesus' statement is both the law and the prophets.
 2. The second use of the word "law" alone is an abbreviated way to refer to the entire Old Testament.
- i) Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses not by obedience to it but by His role as the object of all the predictive elements of the law. This included the meat offerings, the drink offerings, the holy days, the new moons, the Sabbath days, the Passover, the priesthood, and so forth. (See Colossians 2: 16-17; 1 Corinthians 5:7; and Hebrews 10:1-20).
- 6) Jesus broke the Sabbath.
- a) Those who believe keeping the Law of Moses is essential to New Testament salvation hotly dispute this claim. But it is the clear teaching of the New Testament.
 - b) As Jesus visited the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath, He healed an impotent man, commanding him, *"Rise, take up thy bed, and walk"* (John 5:8). The man obeyed, totally healed.
 - c) This action of Jesus on the Sabbath was bitterly condemned by the Jews. In fact, they sought to kill Him. *"because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God"* (John 5:18).
 - d) Some suggest that the Jews merely supposed Jesus had broken the Sabbath, that the only thing He broke was a commandment or tradition of men. But Jeremiah 17:19-22 records the commandment of Jehovah:
"Thus said the Lord unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem. And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the Lord; take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers."
 The statement of John is clear: *"...he...had broken the sabbath..."* He did not say, "The Jews supposed He had broken the Sabbath."
 - e) On another occasion when the Pharisees accused Jesus and His disciples because they plucked ears of corn to eat as they walked through a field on the Sabbath, Jesus' answer included this statement, *"Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?"* (Matthew 12:5). (See Numbers 28: 9-10; 18-19.)
 - f) Jesus did not suggest that the priests were exempt from the Sabbath obligations and that therefore their strenuous labor on that day was not a violation of the commandment. Instead, He said, *"...the priests...profane the sabbath..."* And yet, He said, they *"...are blameless."* In other words, even to the nation of Israel under the dispensation of the Law of Moses, there were times and circumstances when the law was not binding!
 - g) In His defense of His disciples' plucking the corn on the Sabbath, Jesus also referred the Pharisees to David's clear violation of the law, a violation for which he received no condemnation: *"Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not*

lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?" (Matthew 12: 3-4).

1. The shewbread belonged only to Aaron and his sons.
2. It was to be eaten only in the holy place by them.
3. It was most holy unto the Aaronic priesthood. (See Leviticus 24:9.)
4. Clearly it was unlawful for David, who was of the tribe of Judah not Levi, to eat this holy bread. Jesus said it was unlawful. Yet there was no guilt attached to the action.

Jesus explained His refusal to condemn the disciples this way:

"But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day" (Matthew 12: 6-8).

- h) The one greater than the temple is, of course, Jesus Himself. The simple implication of this is that anything done under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and which does not receive condemnation from Him cannot be sinful.
 - i) Even under the Law of Moses, the supreme desire of God was not the hair-splitting observance of legal technicalities, but the showing of mercy. (See Hosea 6: 6.)
 - j) Jesus Christ was Lord even of the Sabbath. In other words, Jesus Himself is greater than any of His commandments.
 - k) While there is not one account anywhere in Scripture of the Lord failing to deal with a violation of moral law, there are indeed accounts of His refraining from passing judgment on violations of ceremonial law.
 - l) The Sabbath and all aspects of the tabernacle were ceremonial; that is, they were in some way predictive of the coming Messiah.
- 7) God warned of vain Sabbath keeping.
- "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? Saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I can not away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow"* (Isaiah 1:10-17).
- a) In this passage, the disobedient Israelites are referred to spiritually as Sodom and Gomorrah. (See Revelation 11: 8.)
 - b) They went through the motions of the ceremonial law, but it was repulsive to God.
 - c) The ceremonial aspects of the Law of Moses were never meant by God to be an end in themselves. The law was a schoolmaster to bring Israel to Christ (Galatians 3:24).
 - d) Those who kept the ceremonial aspects of the law without a heart in right relationship with God were not accepted by Him.
 - e) On the other hand, Gentiles who may have had a heart right with God could have been accepted by Him, even without the works of the law. (See Romans 2:25-29.)
- 8) God caused the Sabbaths to cease.
- "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts"* (Hosea 2:11).
- a) The reason for this action was clearly the spiritual adultery of Israel.
 - b) But had the Sabbath been an end in itself—if the point of the Sabbath was the keeping of the Sabbath—it would seem strange that the same God who commanded it would now stop it.
- 9) God caused the Sabbaths to be forgotten.
- "And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest"* (Lamentations 2:6).
- a) Again, if the Sabbath was an end in itself, it would seem very strange for the Lord, who commanded the observance of the day, to cause it to now be forgotten.

- b) It would seem rather that He would wish to cause it to be remembered.
- 10) Early Judaizers wanted the Christians to keep the Law of Moses, but the church would not command such a thing.
"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses...Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment" (Acts 15: 5, 24).
- a) A careful reading of Galatians 3, 4, 5 will serve to put the Law of Moses in its proper perspective.
1. It was for the nation of Israel only;
 2. It began at Mount Sinai and had no impact whatsoever on any previous covenant God had made with people;
 3. It ended with the coming of Christ.
- b) The danger of going back under the law is clear. Paul declared:
"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Galatians 4: 10-11).
- 11) Christ fulfilled the Sabbath.
"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of any holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2: 16-17).
- a) The Sabbath, a day of rest, was predictive of the coming Messiah and the spiritual rest believers would find in Him.
- b) The Sabbath was merely a shadow; it was no substance in and of itself. (See also Hebrews 10: 1.)
- c) Now that the substance has come in the person of Jesus Christ, there is no longer any need for the shadow.
- d) Indeed, it would be an insult to Jesus and spiritually dangerous to maintain a fascination with any ceremonial law whose purpose has been served.
- e) It would be just as distasteful to God for New Testament Christians to observe the Sabbath as it would be for them to offer the blood of bulls and goats.
- 12) An Exegesis of Exodus 20:11
"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."
- a) This study would be incomplete without a consideration of the above verse. It is used by law keepers to teach that the Sabbath was created on the seventh day, just after the creation of man.
- b) Further, it is taught from this that all faithful men, from Adam on, were obliged to keep the Sabbath. A careful study of the verse will prove otherwise.
- 13) The key word is "wherefore."
 The word "wherefore" is translated from two Hebrew words that seem to carry the meaning "for this reason." In other words, God's rest on the seventh day was the pattern for Israel's rest on the Sabbath day.
- 14) The Sabbath is in the seventh.
"Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest..." (Exodus 31:15).
- a) In the beginning it was the seventh day; under the law it became the Sabbath day.
- b) The seventh day became the Sabbath for Israel only.
- c) There is no absolute guarantee that the Sabbath was on the same day as the original seventh. Time for Israel began in Exodus 12: 1-2:
"And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."
- d) Exodus 20:11 says God blessed the seventh day in the beginning, not the Sabbath (Genesis 2:1-3).
- e) God blessed the Sabbath in giving the manna. (See Exodus 16.)
- 15) Exodus 20:11 Amplified
"...and rested the seventh day (of creation): wherefore (for this reason) the Lord blessed the sabbath day (the day of rest just revealed in the giving of the manna), and hallowed it."

B. The Hebrew Sabbath and the Modern Saturday—widely assumed that the modern Saturday is the Hebrew Sabbath that has been observed by orthodox Jews since the exodus from Egypt. That this cannot be true is demonstrated by Curtis Clair Ewing in his work *Israel's Calendar and the True Sabbath*.

"The calendar of Israel at Sinai was a solar calendar, and it is not to be confused with the modern Jewish solar-lunar calendar of A.D. 359."

- 1) The Hebrew calendar began its dating from the deliverance from Egypt.
- 2) As Ewing points out, the Hebrews retained the Egyptian calendar of 12 months of 30 days, but, instead of adding the five supplementary days at the end of the year, they added three at the end of the sixth month, and two at the end of the twelfth month.
- 3) The 15th day of Abib, the first month, had to be a Sabbath every year, which meant that the first and eighth of Abib were fixed Sabbaths, as were the seven Sabbaths following the 15th of Abib (Leviticus 23:6, 7, 11, 15-16).
- 4) The 50th day would then be Pentecost:

"Now the Sabbath of Abib 15th being fixed by date, it follows that these seven successive Sabbaths must also have been on fixed dates and would fall as follows:

 - Abib 22, 29;
 - Iyar 6, 13, 20, 27; and
 - Sivan 4.

By no possibility can there be seven Sabbaths complete from Abib 15 to Sivan 4th unless those Sabbaths came on fixed dates of the month every year."
- 5) Since the date of the month was constant, the day of the week was variable. "This means that once in seven years each of them would fall on every single day of the week, just as your birthday comes on a different day of the week every year."
- 6) "But this is not all. According to Exodus 12:3, 5, 6, 24 and Leviticus 23:15, the 10th, 14th and 16th of Abib could never be Sabbaths because they were workdays of specific command: real work like cleaning house, butchering cattle, and reaping fields. We know these days would fall on Saturday once every seven years and if Saturday were the Sabbath there would be a conflict of commands. There would be three dates in which Israel is commanded to work falling every seventh year on days in which Israel was commanded not to work. We know that never happened, because God is not the author of confusion.
- 7) "...Israel's Sabbaths were fixed to fall on the same dates of the month every year. With these fifteen regular Sabbaths coming on the same dates every year and the three commanded work days coming on the same dates every year, it is impossible for Saturday to have been the Sabbath.
- 8) "If the year had 365 days in it and we divide 365 by 7 we get 52 weeks and one day left over. The question then is, where did the extra day go? That was absorbed by a 48-hour Sabbath on the 4th and 5th of Sivan as shown by Leviticus 23: 15, 16, and 21. This changed the day of the week on which the Sabbath was celebrated each year, but also maintained the fixed Sabbaths on the same day of the month and the 7-day cycle....
- 9) "There is nothing in the Bible to determine the length of a Sabbath. The Scriptures use the same word to describe:
 - A rest one day long (Exodus 20: 8-11; Deuteronomy 5: 12-15)
 - A rest two days long (Leviticus 23: 15, 16, 21),
 - A rest one year long (Leviticus 25: 4-8);
 - A rest two years long (Leviticus 25: 8-12); and
 - A rest seventy years long (2 Chronicles 36:21).
- 10) The meaning of the word "Sabbath" is cessation or rest.
 - a) One cannot rest twice unless he has worked between those rests.
 - b) This 48-hour Sabbath was not two rests or Sabbaths but a lengthening out of the one rest or Sabbath through two days.
 - c) As an illustration, note that the rest of the land during the whole of every 49th and 50th year was not two rests to the land, but one rest to the land during the two whole years, hence a Sabbath two years long once in fifty years.
 - d) Just so, when God required "the seventh Sabbath" and the "morrow after the seventh Sabbath" both to be a Sabbath, it was one Sabbath 48 hours long because no work came between them.

- 11) In like manner, by a law of necessity, we know that 3 days of the additional 5 days at the end of the year were added at the end of the month Elul, because we have shown that the 1st of Tisri had to be a Sabbath every year.
- a) The last Sabbath of Elul was the 27th of the month; but, in order to have 6 days of labor before another Sabbath, 3 days have to be added here.
 - b) After the same manner we know that the 2 remaining days of the 5 supplementary days were added at the end of Adar.
 - d) We have shown that the 1st of Abib in every year was a Sabbath; but the last Sabbath of Adar was on the 26th, leaving 4 days of the 30.
 - e) So, in order to have 6 days labor before the next Sabbath, we must insert the 2 extra days here.
 - Since the Sabbath is not mentioned prior to Israel's exodus from Egypt,
 - Since it was given to the nation of Israel only and not to any other,
 - Since it was a shadow of the coming Messiah, and
 - Since the New Testament never enjoins its observance upon the church but rather rejects the Law of Moses as binding upon Christians,

We conclude that the Sabbath belonged to the dispensation of the law only. It would be a serious error to bring this dispensational distinctive into the dispensation of grace.

What Have You Learned?

1. List the seven (7) dispensations. _____

2. Give the point of origin and the point of termination of each of these dispensations. _____

3. Identify the basis of salvation in every dispensation. _____

4. Identify the requirement for salvation in every dispensation. _____

5. Identify the object of faith in every dispensation. _____

6. Identify the variable between the dispensations. _____

- a. This covenant is still in effect and will continue to be until the earth is renovated by fire (2 Peter 3: 12-13).
- d) The Abrahamic Covenant—was instituted in Genesis 12:1-3 and elaborated upon in Genesis 13: 14-17; 15: 1-18; and 17: 1-8.
 - 1. In it God promised to make of Abram a great nation, to bless him, to make his name great, to make him a blessing to others, and to bless those who blessed him and to curse those who cursed him.
 - 2. It will finally be completely fulfilled during the Millennial Dispensation.
- e) The Mosaic Covenant—parallels the Dispensation of the Law, and it was a conditional covenant, hinged upon the obedience of Israel to the Law of Moses (Exodus 20).
 - 1. There were specific promises of blessings and curses depending upon Israel's obedience to or disobedience to the Law.
 - 2. The covenant ended with Israel's final and great disobedience with their rejection of the Messiah.
- f) The Palestinian Covenant—was actually a continuation of the Mosaic Covenant and was made in view of the disobedience of the Jewish people to the Mosaic Covenant. (See Deuteronomy 27-30.)
 - 1. It was a conditional covenant—based on Israel's repentance—promising the return of the dispersed Jews to the land of Palestine, their conversion, great blessing and prosperity, and judgment upon the nations that have persecuted them.
 - 2. The covenant will end with the inauguration of the new heavens and new earth.
- g) The Davidic Covenant—was announced to David by the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 7: 8-19; Psalm 89: 34ff). It was both conditional and unconditional.
 - 1. The conditional aspect of the covenant provided that a human descendant of David would always sit on his throne. This depended upon the faithfulness of his human descendants: if they would be faithful to God, the Davidic lineage on the throne would endure forever.
 - 2. David's descendants did not fulfill this requirement and were ultimately removed from the throne. (See Jeremiah 22:30; Ezekiel 21: 25-27; Hosea 3:4.)
 - 3. There was, however, none to take their place; the throne has been vacant since.
- i) The New Covenant—an unconditional covenant God has made with Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 8: 8; Matthew 26: 27-28).
 - 1. The covenant is based upon the blood of Christ, and it involves a much greater and more intimate relationship with God than that available through the Mosaic Covenant.
 - 2. With the inauguration of this covenant, Israel will have a superior knowledge of God and will be led by the Holy Spirit instead of by laws written in tables of stone.
 - 3. This covenant will begin to be fulfilled with Israel during the Millennium.
- 5) While the covenant was made with Israel, the church now enjoys its spiritual benefits (Ephesians 2: 11-20).
- 6) John Phillips offers an analogy which is helpful in understanding the role of the covenants in biblical interpretation:
 - a) "We see eight different covenants in the Scriptures. They are a remarkable set of contractual agreements drawn up between God and members of the human race. That is what a covenant is: a contract, a legal agreement between two or more parties. If we are to rightly divide the word of truth, we must learn to differentiate between these various contracts, their provisions, their parties, and their purposes.
 - b) "In our study of the Bible we cannot afford to neglect the covenants, nor can we afford not to differentiate between the common and different clauses in those covenants. They have been drawn up by God, in His grace, with different people, at different periods, and for different purposes."
- 7) The covenants with eschatological implications pertain specifically to the nation of Israel: *"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises"* (Romans 9:4). These would include the Abrahamic, the Palestinian, the Mosaic, the Davidic, and the New covenants.
- 8) The Edenic Covenant is no longer in force. It concluded when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, which perished in the worldwide flood of Noah.

- 9) The Adamic Covenant is still in force and will continue to be until the introduction of new heavens and a new earth.
- 10) The Noahic Covenant is also still in effect and will continue until the new heavens and the new earth.
- 11) The Adamic and Noahic covenants are general covenants made with all people.
- 12) The Abrahamic Covenant is still in force, as is the Davidic and Palestinian.
- 13) The Mosaic Covenant concluded with the coming of Christ (Galatians 2:19). The New Covenant is yet to be introduced to Israel and Judah.
- 14) It has been suggested by some that there is a ninth covenant: The Everlasting Covenant. Isaiah 24:5 declares, *"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."*
- 15) It seems better, however, to understand the term *"the everlasting covenant"* to refer not to a specific covenant clearly distinguishable from the other eight, but to the general duty of all men everywhere at all times to be obedient to God to the extent of the revelation given them.
 - a) For example, there was no written Bible for the first 2,500 years of human history. But this does not mean there was no revelation from God.
 - b) There was first a general revelation from creation (Psalm 19; Romans 1:18-21).
 - c) Secondly there was a general revelation to the conscience of men (Romans 2:12-15).
 - d) There was thirdly the oral transference of the general laws of God from parents to offspring, beginning with Adam. How else could Cain and Abel have known anything about a sacrificial system?
 - e) During the time prior to written Scripture, God also spoke to selected men audibly. There can be no doubt these impressive messages from God would have been communicated by fathers to their sons.
 - f) Abraham, for example, lived four centuries prior to the Law of Moses. He knew nothing of the arrangements made between Israel and Jehovah at Sinai. Yet Genesis 26:5 declares, *"Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."*
 - g) Previously, the Lord had said of Abraham, *"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him"* (Genesis 18: 19).
 - h) It is clear that before written revelation came to man there was a general revelation men were obliged to observe.
 1. A hint of this is seen in the Code of Hammurabi that dates from the time of Abraham.
 2. This Mesopotamian law was merely codified by Hammurabi; it actually predated him by an unknown period of time.
 3. Included in this law are many specific commandments bearing resemblance to the Law of Moses that was later given to the nation of Israel.
 4. What was the source of these laws? Were they merely humanly conceived, or could they have been based originally on divine revelation passed orally from father to son? The similarity of the code with the later revelation to Israel would certainly seem too much to be coincidental.
- 16) The term *"everlasting covenant"* appears numerous times in Scripture, but it is most frequently associated with one of the eight covenants already specified. Most frequently, the term is *"an everlasting covenant,"* not *"the everlasting covenant."* The following chart will show the use of the term *"an everlasting covenant"* to refer to various of the eight specific covenants:

The Use of The Term "An Everlasting Covenant"

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Covenant</i>
Genesis 17: 7	Abrahamic
Genesis 17: 13	Abrahamic with the seal of circumcision
Genesis 17: 19	Abrahamic as renewed to Isaac
Leviticus 24: 8	Mosaic (use of shewbread)
2 Samuel 23: 5	Davidic (Messianic promise)
1 Chronicles 16: 17/Psalm 105: 10	Abrahamic/Palestinian
Isaiah 55:3	Davidic
Isaiah 61: 8	New Covenant with Israel

Jeremiah 32: 40	New Covenant with Israel
Ezekiel 16: 60	New Covenant with Israel
Ezekiel 37:26	A covenant of peace during the millennium

- 17) The term "*the everlasting covenant*" appears three times in Scripture.
- a) The first is in relation to the covenant God made with mankind in general not to destroy the earth again by water (Genesis 9:16). In this case the use of the article "the" rather than "an" is simply a grammatical necessity. There is certainly no suggestion that the Noahic Covenant is the everlasting covenant in the sense of being superior to or basic to the other seven. It is not essentially a redemptive covenant, nor has it eschatological significance as related to Israel.
 - b) The second use of the term "*the everlasting covenant*" is in Isaiah 24:5, which has already been discussed. " *'The everlasting covenant'* probably refers not to the Abrahamic or Mosaic Covenants but to the covenant people implicitly had with God to obey His Word. Right from the very beginning mankind refused to live according to God's word (Genesis 2: 16-17; 3: 1-6; cf. Hosea 6: 7). And throughout history people have refused to obey God's revelation."
 - c) The final use, and apparently the most significant, of the term "*the everlasting covenant*" is in Hebrews 13:20: "*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.*" Again, rather than this referring to a covenant separate from the other eight, it would seem to be a reference to the fact that the blood of Christ has been the basis, in the mind of God, of all the covenants. Jesus Christ is "*the Lamb slain without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times...*" (1 Peter 1: 18-20).
 1. All of God's dealings with men from Eden on have been based on the appearance of the Messiah who would suffer on behalf of the people.
 2. Therefore, the phrase "the everlasting covenant" in Hebrews 13: 20 seems to refer to the common basis of all the covenants: the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is seen as the basis of each of them, either typically or actually.
- 18) Another major consideration in the discussion of the Covenantal Principle is the question of the relationship of the church to the New Covenant.
- a) It is clear from Scripture that the New Covenant has to do specifically with Israel and Judah: "*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*" (Jeremiah 31: 31-34)
 - b) Related scriptures include Isaiah 59: 20-21; 61: 8-9; Jeremiah 32: 37-40; 50: 4-5; Ezekiel 16: 60-63; 34: 25-26; 37: 21-28.
 - c) This new covenant is yet to be fulfilled to Israel after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, during the millennial age. Paul alludes to this in Romans 11: 26-27: "*And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*"
 - d) The following references to the New Covenant appear in the New Testament:
 1. "*Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament of my blood, which is shed for you*" (Luke 22: 20).
 2. "*After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me*" (1 Corinthians 11: 25).
 3. "*Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life*" (2 Corinthians 3: 6).
 4. "*For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah*" (Hebrews 8: 8).

5. *"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15).*
 6. *"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26: 28).*
 7. *"And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many" (Mark 14:24).*
 8. *"For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Romans 11: 27).*
 9. *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 8: 10-13).*
 10. *"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12:24).*
- e) In answer to the question, "What is the relationship of the church to the New Covenant?" the most reasonable answer seems to be that while the eschatological implications of the New Covenant have yet to be fulfilled to Israel and Judah, the salvific implications are presently enjoyed by the church.
- f) It must be remembered that the church is a mystery not revealed in other ages (Ephesians 3: 2-6).
1. While the Old Testament promises to Israel did include blessing upon Gentiles through the redeemed nation of Israel, the Old Testament did not foresee a day when *"Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, the partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel"* (Ephesians 3:6).
 2. The Old Testament promises saw the nation of Israel as the vehicle for divine blessings upon Gentiles. This will yet be fulfilled during the Millennium. But the present blessings upon believing Gentiles and Jews alike are not because of Israel's fullness, but in spite of Israel's fall. Paul puts this into clear perspective:
"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" (Romans 11: 11-12).

What Have You Learned?

1. Define the Covenantal Principle. _____

2. List each of the eight (8) covenants, when they were established, with whom they were established, and whether they were conditional, unconditional, or a combination of both. _____

- 3) In Ezra 4:12, descendants of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi are called Jews. The implication is strong, however, that the term reaches out to include some representatives of all twelve tribes.
- "So the priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwell in their cities, and all Israel in their cities" (Ezra 2: 70).*
- "And offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel (Ezra 6: 17).*
- "Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats for a sin offering: all this was a burnt offering unto the LORD" (Ezra 8:35).*
- 4) Throughout Ezra and Nehemiah these are called Jews.
- 5) Throughout the Book of Esther, all Israelites in the kingdom of the Medes and Persians are called Jews.
- 6) Thus the word "Jew" came to be a synonym for "Israelite."
- This is reasonable in view of the fact that Judah was in the greatest sense the leading tribe.
 - It was that tribe through which the Messiah would come.
 - It was the tribe that always led in battle.
 - When the northern tribes rebelled against the house of David, Judah retained its loyalty.
- 7) But with the rejection of the Messiah by the nation of Israel at large, and with the continued persecution of the early believers by the Jewish leaders, there came a gradual shift in the meaning and significance of the word "Jew."
- 8) Throughout the gospels and the Book of Acts, both the godly and the ungodly who were physically descended from Jacob were called Jews.
- "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4: 9).*
- "And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10: 28).*
- "And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name [was] Bar-jesus" (Acts 13: 6).*
- "And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them" (Acts 18: 2).*
- "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus" (Acts 18: 24).*
- "And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so" (Acts 19: 14).*
- "But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people" (Acts 21: 39).*
- 9) A clear shift is seen in Romans 2: 28-29:
- "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2: 28-29).*
- This passage is often misinterpreted to mean that Christians are "spiritual Jews." This is not the point at all.
- There is no Scripture in the entire New Testament that suggests that Gentile Christians become "spiritual Jews" or "spiritual Israel."
 - Such an idea begins quickly to confuse the hermeneutical principles concerning the dispensations, the covenants, and ethnic division.

- c) The logical outgrowth of this erroneous interpretation is to deny the nation of Israel any future in God's dealings and to reinterpret all the Old Testament prophecies having to do with Israel as referring in some spiritual way to the church.
- 10) Actually, the Romans 2: 28-29 passage reveals that physical ancestry alone is not enough to qualify one to be a true Jew (Israelite). Sincerity of heart must be coupled with physical descent.
- 11) This is what is meant by Paul's statement in Romans 9: 6: *"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."* In other words, not all who are physically descended from Israel are actually true Israelites. True Israelites are those who have both physical and spiritual descent.
- 12) This clarifies Paul's statement in Romans 11: 26: *"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."*
- a) This is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled in God's future dealings with Israel.
- b) It certainly does not mean that every physical descendant of Israel who has ever lived will be saved, nor even that all of them living at the time the prophecy is to be fulfilled will be saved.
- c) What it does mean is that all the physical descendants of Israel who are living at that time and who have a true heart after God, responding in faith to the Messiah, shall be saved.
- d) These will be those who, from faith, call on the name of the Lord; they are the remnant. (See Joel 2: 32.)
- 13) That God has always had a true remnant within the nation of Israel is evident. Asaph wrote, *"Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart"* (Psalm 73: 1). The statement of God's goodness to Israel is qualified by the phrase *"to such as are of a clean heart."* Not all of national Israel could be described by these words. They were thus excluded from the blessing Asaph had in view.
- 14) Paul said, *"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God"* (Galatians 6: 16).
- a) The *"Israel of God"* in this New Testament sense refers to believing Israel, Jews who had embraced Jesus as their Messiah.
- b) No doubt Paul added this blessing in view of the nature of the Book of Galatians.
- c) In it he had dealt firmly with Judaizers, Jewish professing Christians who wanted to require Gentile believers to keep the Law of Moses as a condition of salvation.
- e) Paul's unequivocal rebuke of these erring Jews must have prompted him to wish to reassure the sincere Jewish believers of his love for them.
- 15) In his letter to the church at Smyrna, the Lord Jesus said, *"I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan"* (Revelation 2: 9). This seems to be a similar statement to that made by Jesus in John 8, where He declared to Jews, Abraham's seed, *"If God were your Father, ye would love me... Ye are of your father the devil ..."* (John 8: 42, 44; See also vv. 31, 33, 37-41).
- 16) A key, then, to understanding the implications of the word "Jew" is to closely examine the context. The following chart will illustrate this:

Various Uses of the Word "Jew"

The tribe of Judah or the two tribes of the southern kingdom	2 Kings 16: 6; 25: 25
The tribe of Benjamin	Esther 2: 5
Hebrews and Hebrewesses	Jeremiah 34: 9
Jesus, of the tribe of Judah	John 4: 9
A sorcerer and false prophet	Acts 13: 6
Aquila	Acts 18: 2
Apollos	Acts 18: 24
Sceva, a chief priest	Acts 19: 14
Paul, of the tribe of Benjamin	Acts 21: 39
As distinguished from Gentiles	Romans 1: 16
The tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi	Ezra 4: 12

- 17) All of the converts to Christianity prior to Acts 10 were Jewish, with the possible exception of some proselytes (Acts 2:10). These retained their Jewish identity. The Gentiles converted beginning with Acts 10 retained their Gentile identity.
- 18) And yet Paul wrote that in Christ, there are no racial, social, or sexual barriers: *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3: 28).
- 19) Obviously Christianity does not erase sexual distinctions: men are still men and women remain women.
- a) Neither does it negate social status: those who were converted as bondmen remained bondmen; those who were freemen remained freemen (1 Timothy 6: 1-2; 1 Corinthians 7: 20-24).
 - b) It follows, therefore, that conversion does not erase the ethnic distinctions between Jews and Gentiles. Jews are physically still Jews; Gentiles are physically still Gentiles.
- 20) The point of Paul's statement is that *"in Christ Jesus"* all are one. That is,
- The Jew has no advantage over the Gentile;
 - The man has no advantage over the woman;
 - The freeman has no advantage over the bondman.
- As someone said, "The ground is level at the foot of the cross."
- 21) It is obvious, in certain cases, that both the terms "Jew" and "Gentile" carry negative connotations. In these cases, both terms refer to un-regenerated members of both ethnic groups.
- 22) For example, Paul wrote,
- a) *"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands"* (Ephesians 2:11).
 - b) In Romans 2: 24 he wrote, *"For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written."*
 - c) Again, in 1 Corinthians 10: 20, Paul declared, *"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."*
 - d) In the same book, he said, *"Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led"* (1 Corinthians 12:2).
- 23) The word "Jew," (or derivations of it) is used in the same sense, speaking of un-regenerated members of the Jewish race.
- a) Paul, himself a Jew, warned Titus that he should *"not give heed to Jewish fables,"* an obvious reference to the Jewish oral traditions. (See Titus 1: 14.)
 - b) He also refers to Judaism, as distinguished from Christianity, as *"the Jews' religion."* (See Galatians 1: 13-14.)
 - c) In 1 Corinthians 10: 32, then, the term "Jew" refers to un-regenerated members of the Jewish nation.
 - d) The term "Gentiles" refers to the un-regenerated members of all nations other than the Jewish nation.
 - e) The term "the church of God" refers to all who by one Spirit have been baptized into the one Body of Christ, regardless of their ethnic background, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. (See 1 Corinthians 12: 13). This was the mystery discussed by Paul in Ephesians 3: 2-6.
- 24) The mystery in the Old Testament was never that Gentiles would one day come to the Messiah through the redeemed nation of Israel. The mystery was that in Christ the ethnic distinctions would be dissolved and both the Jew and Gentile would be "of the same body" and "fellow heirs."
- 25) In the future dealings of God with the nation Israel, Gentiles will come to the Messiah through the redeemed nation. (See, for example, Revelation 7: 4-14 and Isaiah 60: 3.)
- a) But this will be separate and distinct from the church, in which Jew and Gentile stand on equal footing.
 - b) Though the Gentiles will have opportunity for redemption, the nation of Israel will still retain distinct privileges and status.
 - c) The barrier between Jew and Gentile will not fall.
- 26) There is no clearer explanation of the oneness of Jew and Gentile in the church than that found in Ephesians 2: 11-19. Notice carefully what is and what is not said in this passage.

- a) What is Not Said:
- That Gentiles are “spiritual Jews;”
 - That Gentiles are now part of the commonwealth of Israel;
 - That Gentiles are now partakers of the covenants of promise (those with eschatological implications).
- b) What Is Said:
- That Gentiles are now “made nigh” by the blood of Christ;
 - That the “middle wall of partition” between Jew and Gentile is broken down (an obvious reference to the wall that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the areas of the temple reserved for the Jews. But the breaking down of this wall did not make the Gentiles into Jews any more than it made the Jews into Gentiles);
 - That the “law of commandments contained in ordinances” was abolished (an obvious reference to the ceremonial law, which was distinctively Jewish and included all non-moral commandments given uniquely to Israel, and which were predictive in nature of the coming Messiah);
 - That in Christ both Jew and Gentile are made “one new man;”
 - Both Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God by the cross;
 - Both Jew and Gentile have access to the Father by the same Spirit;
 - Gentiles are no more strangers and foreigners;
 - Gentiles are fellow citizens with the saints; and
 - Gentiles are members of the household of God.
- c) While a quick reading of this passage might seem to suggest that believing Gentiles have become part of national Israel, a careful study will reveal this is not the case. The most accurate Scriptural statement that can be made is not that believing Gentiles become “spiritual Jews” (a term that appears nowhere in Scripture), but that believing Jews and Gentiles together are made “one new man,” and a new man that is, spiritually, neither Jew nor Gentile. (See Galatians 3: 28.)
- 27) Is the Church the Tabernacle of David? The church council recorded in Acts 15 was crucial to the future of the New Testament church. The church leaders met to come to grips with the teaching that Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses (Acts 15: 5-6).
- 28) After Peter, Barnabas and Paul testified of the work of God among the Gentiles apart from circumcision and law keeping, James summarized what the Holy Ghost was saying:
- “Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15: 13-18).*
- 29) Some interpret James’ reference to Amos 9: 11 to mean that the church is the rebuilt tabernacle of David. The most common application made of this teaching is that the New Testament church is to pattern its worship after that of David and others who worshipped at the tent David set up to house the Ark of the Covenant.
- “And they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord” (2 Samuel 6: 17).*
- a) The tabernacle of the Mosaic economy was in Gibeon at this time, but for reasons unexplained, the ark was never returned to it. Its next resting place after this tent prepared by David was the temple built during Solomon’s reign.
- b) It should be noted that this tent erected by David is not referred to in 2 Samuel 6: 17 as “the tabernacle of David.” The phrase “the tabernacle of David” occurs only three times in Scripture. Two of the references have already been mentioned: Amos 9: 11 and Acts 15: 16.
- c) The third reference clearly identifies the tabernacle:

"And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness" (Isaiah 16:5).

1. This prophecy concerns the reestablishment of David's throne, not the erecting of a tent. Nor does it concern the New Testament church age, which was not made known to the prophets of old (Ephesians 3:2-6).
2. It is a mistake to base interpretation of Scripture on assumptions. And it is an assumption that the tent erected by David to temporarily house the ark is the "tabernacle of David" in Acts 15: 16 and Amos 9: 11. This is especially true since Isaiah 16: 5 identifies the tabernacle of David with the throne, or reign, of David.
3. The Davidic Covenant provided that David's house and kingdom and throne would be established forever (2 Samuel 7: 16). While there would come a time when the sinfulness of David's offspring would result in the throne being uninhabited (Jeremiah 22: 30; Ezekiel 21: 25-27; Hosea 3: 4), David had the assurance of his throne one day being occupied by the Messiah Himself (Acts 2:30; Psalm 16: 8-11; 132: 11).
4. The ultimate expression of the tabernacle of David will be seen in the Millennium, when the re-gathered nation of Israel will enjoy peace and prosperity (Amos 9: 11-15).
 - a. Gentiles who call on the name of the Lord will also enjoy these blessings through the influence of the redeemed nation of Israel (Amos 9: 12).
 - b. All of this will be possible because Jesus Christ, the Messiah, will rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords on the throne of David (Isaiah 9: 7; Luke 1: 32; Revelation 19: 15-16).
 - c. This will fulfill all of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the throne of David, the preeminence of the nation of Israel, and the salvation of the Gentile nations (Isaiah 42:6; 54: 3; 60:3; Malachi 1:11).
5. In Acts 15: 13-18, James based his remarks on Gentile conversion on the well known fact that the Old Testament predicted such a thing would one day occur.
 - a. He did not say that the conversion of Gentiles in the church age was the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies; he said that the conversion of the Gentiles agreed with the words of the prophets.
 - b. That is, the prophets of old agreed that the Gentiles could and would be converted.
 - c. It should have been no surprise, then, that they were being baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ.
 - d. If God had a plan for them in the future Tribulation (Revelation 7: 9-1) and Millennium, He would surely have a place for them in His present work, the church.
6. None could argue against the possibility of Gentile salvation. It was happening, as Peter, Barnabas and Paul testified, and the prophets agreed that it was possible.
7. But James' appeal to the authority of the Old Testament must not be taken to mean that he saw the conversion of the Gentiles in the church as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Amos and others. A careful examination of his reference to Amos will show this to be true:

"After this I will return" (Acts 15: 16).
8. While this is not a precise quote, it gives the sense of Amos' prophecy beginning in Amos 9: 9.
 - a. Amos 9: 9-10 is a reference to the Great Tribulation, during which God will "sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve."
 - b. "After this," or after the Great Tribulation, Daniel's Seventieth Week which was determined upon the house of Israel (Daniel 9: 24-27), the Lord will return for the purpose of restoring the tabernacle of David, which is synonymous with the inauguration of the Millennium.
 - c. The idea that the church is the tabernacle of David is disproved by a simple observation: James declared this tabernacle would be rebuilt after the return of the Lord. He has not returned.

...and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up" (Acts 15:16).

9. Whatever the tabernacle of David is, it will be built again.
 - a. It is something that existed prior to this time.
 - b. The church did not exist prior to its establishment by Jesus Christ on the Day of Pentecost.
 - c. The tabernacle of David that will be rebuilt is the same one that is fallen down. It is the tabernacle that is in ruins.
 - d. This is not a reference to the church. Nor is it a reference to the tent David erected for the temporary housing of the ark.
 - e. The Ark of the Covenant will not be a feature of the restored tabernacle of David (Jeremiah 3: 16).
 - f. This is a reference to the house of David as it will be expressed by the Messiah, who is of the seed of David, sitting on David's throne.

"That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called..." (Acts 15:17).
10. Again, this is not an exact quote, but it is the inspired New Testament rendering of the import of Amos' prophecy.
 - a. The phrase "the residue of men" may be the equivalent of Amos' "the remnant of Edom," which had been one of Israel's most persistent enemies, and the phrase "and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called" is the counterpart to Amos' "and all of the heathen, which are called by my name."
 - b. The reunited and redeemed nation of Israel will finally fulfill the original purpose God had for them, to be a holy nation of priests to represent Him to the Gentile nations of the world (Exodus 19: 5-6).
 - c. This will be a different expression of soteriology than we see in the present dispensation.
 - In the church there is neither Jew nor Greek (Galatians 3: 28);
 - Believing Gentiles are fellow heirs with believing Jews, of the same body (Ephesians 3: 6).During the Millennium, however, the Jewish nation will have a place of preeminence. The law will go forth from Jerusalem and all of the nations of the world will flow to that city (Isaiah 2: 3; Micah 4:2; Zechariah 14: 16-19).
11. Herein is the danger of the position that the church is the rebuilt tabernacle of David: It denies any future for the Jewish nation. Thus it must spiritualize all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the future of the nation of Israel.
 - It is claimed that the church is Israel;
 - That Christians are spiritual Jews; and
 - That the work God is now doing on earth is His final work.In this view, there is no future Tribulation or Millennium.
12. What Peter, Paul, and Barnabas had seen God do was not to build again the tabernacle of David. What they had seen Him do was pour out of His Spirit upon the Gentiles. James defended the possibility of this happening by appealing to the agreement of the prophets to future Gentile conversion.

- B. We must reject any teaching that spiritualizes away vast portions of Old Testament prophecy.
- 1) The church is a mystery not seen by the prophets of old.
 - 2) It fills the expanse of time between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week of Daniel.
 - 3) All of the seventy weeks have to do with Daniel's people, the Jews, and with the city of Jerusalem.
 - 4) The church stands in a special relationship with God as the bride of Christ. As such it is unrelated to the Law of Moses and to the future dealings of God with the nation of Israel.

What Have You Learned?

1. Explain the meaning and significance of the Ethnic Division Principle. _____
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2. Identify the three (3) ethnic groups to whom Scripture is addressed. _____

3. Explain why the church is not the tabernacle of David. _____

Chapter 10

The Typical Principle

PURPOSE: This chapter is designed to discuss the Typical Principle.

What I Have Learned

- I. The definition of the Typical Principle is: "A type is a divinely appointed illustration of some scriptural truth." The words "divinely appointed" are especially important in this definition. They limit the Typical Principle to that which is clearly revealed in Scripture to be a type.
 - A. The safest position to take is that the only types in the Old Testament are those specifically and clearly revealed in the New Testament to be types. This will avoid fanciful and inaccurate claims for Scriptures that are not typical at all.
 - B. It would be appropriate for the purposes of this book, however, to point out that some scholars, while recognizing the dangers of fanciful and imaginary interpretations, suggest that there are two kinds of types: innate and inferred.
 - 1) "An innate type is a type specifically declared to be such in the New Testament.
 - 2) "An inferred type is one that, not specifically designated in the New Testament is justified for its existence by the nature of the New Testament materials on typology."
 - 3) Thus the brazen serpent lifted up by Moses for the healing of those bitten by fiery serpents would be an innate type of the Messiah being crucified, for Jesus said, *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"* (John 3: 14-15).
 - 4) In an apparent reference to this, Jesus also said, *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me"* (John 12: 32).
 - 5) By its very nature, an inferred type cannot be found specifically mentioned in the New Testament, but it would include, for example, Joseph as a type of Christ. While John Phillips

admits that “[w]e must interpret types only on the basis of some clearly revealed New Testament truth,” he offers the following example of the life of Joseph as typical of the life of Christ:

- a) “To begin with he [Joseph] was the father’s well-beloved son. He was set apart from his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, by his coat of many colors, the garb of a chieftain or a priest. His brothers envied him and could not speak peaceably to him. They resented his favored relationship with the father. His dreams, which spoke of his coming glory and power, moved them to murderous rage. When his father sent him to his brothers, they conspired against him and sold him for the price of a slave. Handed thus over to the Gentiles, he was falsely accused and made to suffer for sins not his own.
 - b) “In the prison of Pharaoh, he “preached” to others who were there awaiting their final sentence. For the chief butler he had a message of life; for the chief baker he had a message of a second and worse death. Brought out of prison, Joseph was given a position second only to that of Pharaoh, exalted to the right hand of the majesty, and thus became a ruler in the land of Egypt before whom everyone would bow.
 - c) “Exalted—taken from obscurity and raised up to share his place on high—Joseph was given a position second only to that of Pharaoh, exalted to the right hand of the majesty, and thus became a ruler in the land of Egypt before whom everyone would bow.
 - d) “There is scarcely a point in the story of Joseph that does not parallel the story of Jesus. Joseph is one of the great life-types of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Moses is another and so is David. In a greater or lesser degree such men as Adam, Noah, Melchizedek, Isaac, Samson, Boaz, Joshua, Aaron, Jeremiah, and Jonah all prefigure the Lord Jesus. So do many others.”
- 6) No doubt the wonderful story of Joseph does parallel in many places the situations or circumstances surrounding the life of Christ. The story of Joseph is one of the most beautiful and inspiring in the Scriptures. But even here we must exercise caution in trying to see typology relating to Jesus Christ in every aspect of Joseph’s life.
 - 7) It is one thing to say, “Just as Joseph was rejected by his brethren, so was Christ.” It would be quite another to say, “Joseph was in every way a type of Christ.”
 - 8) Perhaps, if we admit that Joseph was a type of Christ, we could stay on safe ground by remembering the maxim, “There is no such thing as a perfect and complete type.”
 - a) There are definite flaws in any attempt to make Joseph represent Jesus precisely.
 - b) These flaws are revealed even in the supposed parallels offered by Phillips. (That these may indeed be parallels is admitted, but the greatest of care must be taken in attempting to illustrate any doctrines from them.)
 - 9) For example, Phillips says, “To begin with he [Joseph] was the father’s well-beloved son.”
 - a) This is an obvious reference to the fact that Jesus was the only begotten Son of God, to Whom a voice from heaven said, “*Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*” (Mark 1: 11).
 - b) Obviously, Jacob had eleven other sons. Jesus was the only begotten.
 - 10) Phillips comments, “Joseph was given a position second only to that of Pharaoh, exalted to the right hand of majesty....”
 - a) If that is truly a type of Jesus in a strict sense, does Pharaoh represent God the Father?
 - b) Is Jesus’ present place of exaltation one that is “second only” to another?
 - c) Are Jesus and the Father separate persons as were Joseph and Pharaoh?
 - 11) Phillips comments, “Joseph was given a Gentile bride....”
 - a) But the church, the Bride of Christ, is neither Jewish nor Gentile. It is a body made up of both; “one new man.”
 - 12) We would not wish to deny the parallels between the life of Joseph and that of Jesus, or between many other Old Testament men of faith and Jesus.
 - 13) But to say that something is a “type” seems to suggest an exact and detailed symbolism, at least to a large degree.
 - 14) Ramm, while agreeing that there are inferred types (i. e., types not specifically mentioned in the New Testament to be types), refers to Mildert as indicating “that which makes a type a type is divine intention.” If this is kept in mind, perhaps the Bible interpreter will not stray too far afield in his typology, even if he admits there may be inferred types.

- 15) Defending deferred types, Ramm comments, "Our Lord's own use of the Old Testament is His invitation to us to find Him in the Old Testament." He continues:
- a) "In Luke 24: 25-44 Christ teaches the disciples about Himself, beginning at Moses and following through all the Scriptures.
 - b) "...In John 5: 39-44 Christ invites men to search the Scriptures for they testify to him inasmuch as Moses wrote of Him.
 - c) "Paul uses sacrificial language of the Old Testament in speaking of the death of Christ (Ephesians 5: 2) thus showing that Christ is in the offerings.
 - d) "Hebrews clearly teaches that the Tabernacle which was, is now realized in a present heavenly tabernacle of which Christ is the minister of the sanctuary (Hebrews 9: 9-11, 23-24). Thus Christ is to be found in the Tabernacle.
 - e) "And certainly from Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians 10: 4 Christ was in the wilderness wanderings."
- 16) Thus Ramm suggests that the typology of the Old Testament as it relates to Christ is not to be limited to those things clearly revealed in the New Testament to be types. The implication is that if the New Testament declares an institution or event to be typical of Christ, it is typical of Him in all its elements. This view is more liberal in its interpretation of types than the view that would limit types to those clearly defined as such in the New Testament, yet Ramm does offer guidelines that provide restraint.
- a) "In a type here must be a genuine resemblance in form or idea between the Old Testament reference and the New Testament counterpart....
 - b) "This resemblance must be designated...A type is properly designated when either it is so stated to be one in the New Testament, or wherein the New Testament states a whole as typical (e.g., the Tabernacle, and the Wilderness Wanderings)...
 - c) "Dissimilarity is to be expected. ... The typical truth is at the point of similarity."
- 17) Thus Ramm would probably not find Joseph to be a type of Christ, for the New Testament nowhere declares this to be true. Ramm would find types additional to those clearly declared to be son in the New Testament only within designated types.
- 18) Ramm offers the following rules for the interpretation of types:
- a) "Note the typology of the New Testament and see how it treats the subject...in typology we should restrict our efforts to major doctrines, central truths, key spiritual lessons and major moral principles.
 - b) "...the New Testament specifies the Tabernacle with its priesthood and offerings, and the Wilderness Wanderings as the two major areas of typical materials.
 - c) "Locate in any given type the typical and the accidental...a good exegete will restrain his imagination when he discusses the Tabernacle. Much about the Tabernacle has no typical significance...
 - d) "Do not prove doctrine from types unless there is clear New Testament authority. ...Types may be used to illustrate New Testament truth."
- 19) An example of fanciful typology is that which declares the laver of the Tabernacle to be a type of water baptism. Several problems may immediately be seen with this idea:
- a) The New Testament nowhere suggests that the laver was typical of water baptism.
 - b) Only the priests washed at the laver.
 - c) The laver was not a place of immersion.
 - d) The priests had to wash at the laver repeatedly, each time they planned to enter the tabernacle.
- 20) Actually, the New Testament does offer divinely appointed types of water baptism. These include:
- Noah's flood (1 Peter 3: 21);
 - Circumcision (Colossians 2: 11-12); and
 - The crossing of the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10: 1-2).
- 21) A careful study of the typology of water baptism as it relates to the nation of Israel would recognize that the crossing of the Red Sea was a much more accurate type than the laver.
- a) All experienced this baptism, not just the priests.
 - b) This baptism occurred only once; there was no need to repeat it.
 - c) The baptism was a part of their deliverance from bondage.

- d) They were baptized unto their deliverer, Moses.
- 22) If the laver were typical of any New Testament truth, it would seem more appropriate to consider it to be typical of the daily washing of believers by the Word of God, as seen in Ephesians 5: 26: *"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."*
- 23) The laver would seem to be an appropriate symbol for this for the following reasons:
- a) It was covered with mirrors, reflecting the approaching priest's image. The New Testament compares the Word of God to a mirror in which men behold themselves (James 1: 23).
 - b) The washing at the laver was a continual thing; the washing of water by the Word is a continuing process.
- 24) The following Greek words are used in the New Testament in reference to the Old Testament:
- a) *Hypodeigma*—a sign suggestive of anything, a representation, a figure, a copy, an example.
 1. This word appears in 2 Peter 2: 6; James 5: 10; Hebrews 4: 11; 8: 5; 9: 23, and John 13: 15.
 2. It is translated "ensample, example, pattern."
 - b) *Typos*—the mark of a blow, the figure formed by a blow, an impression, a form, a letter, a doctrine, an example, a pattern, a type.
 1. This word appears in Philippians 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 9; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 1Thessalonians 1: 7; 1 Peter 5:3; 1Corinthians 10: 6; 1 Timothy 4:12; Acts 7: 44; Romans 5:14; Acts 7: 43; Romans 6: 17; Acts 23: 25; Titus 2: 7; Hebrews 9: 5; and John 20: 25.
 2. The word is translated "ensample, example, fashion, figure, form, manner, pattern, print."
 - c) *Skia*—a shade, a sketch, an outline.
 1. This word appears in Matthew 4: 16; Mark 4:32; Luke 1: 79; Acts 5: 15; Colossians 2: 17; Hebrews 8: 5; and Hebrews 10: 1.
 2. It is translated "shadow."
 - d) *Parabole*—a placing by the side, hence a comparison, a likeness, a similitude.
 1. This word appears in Mark 4: 30, Hebrews 9: 9; 11: 19, and many other times in the gospels.
 2. It is translated "comparison, figure, parable, proverb."
 - f) *Eikon*—an image, a figure, a likeness.
 1. This word appears in Matthew 20: 20; Mark 12: 16; Luke 20: 24; Acts 19: 35; Romans 1: 23; 8: 29; 11: 4; 1 Corinthians 11: 7; 15: 49; 2 Corinthians 3: 18; 4:4; Colossians 1: 15; 3: 10; Hebrews 10: 1, and many times in Revelation.
 2. It is translated "image."
 - g) *Antitypon*—a repelling blow, an echoing, a reflecting, a thing formed after a pattern, a counterpart, an antitype.
 1. This word appears in Hebrews 9: 24 and 1 Peter 3: 21.
 2. It is translated "figure."
 - h) *Allegorea*—to tell a truth in terms of a narrative.
 1. This word appears in Galatians 4:24, where it is transliterated "allegory."
- 25) These New Testament words referring to the nature of the Old Testament establish the typical character of the Old Testament.
- C. Ramm lists six kinds of types in Scripture:
- 1) Persons—This would include Adam, Abraham, Elijah and perhaps others.
 - 2) Institutions—This would include the ceremonial law (e.g. sacrifices, sabbaths, new moons, feasts, etc.).
 - 3) Offices—This would include the offices of Moses (leader; lawgiver), Aaron (priest), and Melchisedec (king and priest).
 - 4) Events—This would include the wilderness wanderings.
 - 5) Actions—This would include the lifting of the brazen serpent.
 - 6) Things—This would include the Tabernacle.
- D. The interpreter is always on safe ground when he interprets as types those things specifically mentioned as types in the New Testament. In addition to this, he can probably remain on safe ground in going beyond this strict limitation, so long as the type has a genuine designated resemblance (i.e., the whole is

designated as a type), and the interpreter remembers that there is no such thing as a perfect and complete type.

What Have You Learned?

1. Define the Typical Principle. _____

 2. Explain the difference between an innate type and an inferred type. _____

 3. List the six (6) kinds of types in Scripture. _____

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Chapter 11

The First Mention Principle

PURPOSE: This chapter is designed to discuss the First Mention Principle.

What I Have Learned

- I. The First Mention Principle is "[t]hat principle by which God indicates in the first mention of a subject, the truth with which that subject stands connected in the mind of God."
 - A. The use of the First Mention Principle by Jesus is seen in Matthew 19: 3-9.
 - 1) Responding to the Pharisees' question, *"Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"*, Jesus went all the way back to Genesis 2:24, the first statement ever made about how marriage functions.
 - 2) He skipped over all the subsequent mentions, including all of those in the Law of Moses, and went back to the very beginning to reveal the pure truth on the subject.

"In general, the first time a thing is mentioned in Scripture it carries with it a meaning which will be consistent throughout the entire Bible. ...Since God knows the end from the beginning, as an author He was able to formulate in the first mention of a thing that which characterize it in its progressive unfolding."
 - C. The First Mention Principle, in conjunction with the Typical Principle, can be demonstrated in an examination of the first mention of the subject of water baptism in Scripture.
 - 1) Surprisingly, the first mention of water baptism is not in the New Testament, but in the Old. It is found in symbolic form:

"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3: 20-23).
 - 2) The demonstration of the First Mention Principle with the teaching on baptism is based on the fact that this principle has to do with the first mention of a subject, not the first mention of a word, in Scripture. Since Peter identifies the flood of Noah as a type of water baptism, this is considered to be the first mention of the subject.
 - 3) From this first mention of baptism, we learn the following truths:

- a) Baptism is salvific (i.e., it has to do with salvation).
 - b) Baptism is not just a physical cleansing.
 - c) Baptism will be the step taken by the person who has a clear conscience toward God (i.e., he has confessed his sins and has nothing to hide)
 - d) The benefits of baptism are provided by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- D. As we continue a study of baptism in conjunction with the Progressive Mention Principle we will note that none of these truths are contradicted in any subsequent mention of baptism. Rather, they are strengthened and new insights are revealed. Here are some things to keep in mind in the use of the First Mention Principle:
- 1) The first step in using the first mention principle is to accurately locate the first mention.
 - 2) Never refer only to the first mention of a word in the Bible, rather try to discover if the principle of that word has been demonstrated previous to its use.
 - a) To illustrate point 2, if we looked for the first mention of baptism under the word "baptism," we would start with the New Testament. But by looking for the principle or subject, we find a very early Old Testament reference.
 - 3) No subsequent mention of a subject should be used to contradict or violate that which is in the first mention.

What Have You Learned

1. Define the First Mention Principle. _____

2. List three (3) things to keep in mind when using the First Mention Principle. _____

Chapter 12

The Progressive Mention Principle

PURPOSE: This chapter is designed to discuss the Progressive Mention Principle. It also includes an introductory discussion of textual criticism.

What I Have Learned

- I. The Progressive Mention Principle is defined as "[t]hat principle by which God makes the revelation of any given truth increasingly clear as the Word proceeds to its consummation."
- A. In using this principle, we begin with the first mention of a subject in Scripture, locate the next mention, then the next, all the way through to the final mention of that subject. As we do this, we will see the truth first revealed in the first mention strengthened, confirmed, and further developed until we arrive at the full-orbed revelation on that subject.
 - B. We illustrated the First Mention Principle with Peter's use of the worldwide flood to symbolize water baptism.
 - 1) As we move into the Progressive mention principle, we notice that the second mention of water baptism in Scripture is similar to the first, in that it is an Old Testament event said by an inspired New Testament writer, Paul, to symbolize water baptism:
"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein

also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2: 11-12).

- 2) Here Paul indicates that Old Testament circumcision was a symbol of a great reality: New Testament baptism. We could say that water baptism is the circumcision of Christ. This is the second mention of baptism in Scripture, because it is the next chronological event after the worldwide flood said to represent baptism.
- 3) The tense of the word "buried" in Colossians 2: 12 indicates that the burial (baptism) and circumcision occur simultaneously. Specifically, the word "buried" is in the aorist tense that "puts the burial as contemporaneous with the circumcision."
- 4) We learn nothing in this second mention of baptism that contradicts the truth seen in the first mention. Instead, connection of baptism with the resurrection of Christ is reinforced. Then, new insight is obtained:
 - a) Baptism is not a human work (i.e., it is "made without hands")
 - b) Baptism results in sin being put off.
 - c) Baptism is burial with Christ.
 - d) In baptism we are not only buried with Christ; we also join in His resurrection.
 - e) Baptism is valid only by faith.
 - f) The efficacy of baptism is in "the operation of God" (i.e., what God does in baptism, not what man does).
- 5) To further illustrate the Progressive Mention Principle, the third mention of baptism in Scripture is 1 Corinthians 10: 1-2:

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

 - a) This is the third mention because it is the third event chronologically which is identified as symbolizing water baptism: the crossing of the Red Sea by the nation of Israel.
 - b) Nothing is seen here which contradicts the first or second mention, but additional insight is gained:
 1. Baptism is a mark of deliverance and separation from the old life.
 2. Baptism is for all who would experience this deliverance and separation.
 3. As Israel was baptized unto her deliverer, Moses, so the church is baptized unto her deliverer, Jesus Christ.
 4. Some would no doubt see further symbolism in the cloud and the sea. They would see the cloud as a symbol of Holy Spirit baptism and the sea as a symbol of water baptism.
 5. So even if we did not have Acts 2:38 and other similar Scriptures, we would know the following from the first three mentions of baptism in the Bible:
 - a. Baptism is salvific (i.e., it has to do with salvation).
 - b. Baptism is not just a physical cleansing.
 - c. Baptism will be the step taken by the person who has a clear conscience toward God (i.e., he has confessed his sins and has nothing to hide).
 - d. The benefits of baptism are provided by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - e. Baptism is not a human work (i.e., it is "made without hands").
 - f. Baptism results in sin being put off.
 - g. Baptism is burial with Christ.
 - h. In baptism we are not only buried with Christ; we also join in His resurrection.
 - i. Baptism is valid only by faith.
 - j. The efficacy of baptism is in "the operation of God" (i.e., what God does in baptism, not what man does).
 - k. Baptism is a mark of deliverance and separation from the old life.
 - l. Baptism is for all who would experience this deliverance and separation.
 - m. As Israel was baptized unto her deliverer, Moses, so the church is baptized unto her deliverer, Jesus Christ.
- 6) Cal Beisner denies the necessity of water baptism. In his discussion of Matthew 28: 19-20, he makes the following remarks:
 - a) "We have here a command of Christ that we should teach...all nations, and instrumental in that teaching is the act of baptizing converts. IN other words, baptism is part of

making disciples. However, it does not say here that baptism is necessary for salvation. ...If we are to assume that baptism is essential to salvation, then by consistent interpretation of the context, we should say that absolute obedience to all Christ's commands is also necessary for salvation.

- b) But this, of course, is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Scripture tells us that no one, even the Christian is without sin (1 John 1: 7-2: 2). If, then, we are to say that believers to not obey all of Christ's commands may be saved, then we may, unless some other text teaches otherwise, say that believers who are not baptized may also be saved."
- 7) Beisner's reasoning is clear: Water baptism is a command of Christ. It is therefore a sin not to be baptized. But it is possible to sin and be saved, so water baptism is not essential!
- 8) It is interesting that Beisner referred to 1 John 1: 7 – 2: 2, which indeed teaches that all believers sin, but that he stopped short of 1 John 2:3:
"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."
- 9) 1 John 2:4 continues:
"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."
- 10) One of the most simple and plain truths in Scripture is that when a believer sins, he must confess and forsake his sins. (See Proverbs 28: 13.)
- 11) Beisner's reasoning would suggest that believers can live in sin and yet be saved. But Jesus said, *"[Go], and sin no more"* (John 8: 11). John declared, *"He that committeth [continues in] sin is of the devil..."* (1 John 3:8).
 - a) Any doctrine that teaches a Christian can continue to live in un-confessed and un-forsaken sin and yet be saved is an abomination.
 - b) The writer of Hebrews warned, *"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no sacrifice for sins"* (Hebrews 10: 26).
- 12) Any sincere believer who discovers he has violated a commandment of Christ will confess and forsake his sin.
 - a) If it is a sin of commission, he will stop doing whatever it was.
 - b) If it is a sin of omission, he will begin doing whatever he was not doing.
 - c) In the case of water baptism, when he discovers it to be a command of Christ, he will be baptized. To refuse to do so would be to manifest rebellion and to continue to live in sin.
 - d) Cal Beisner makes the following comment on Mark 16: 16:
"While the first clause says that all who both believe and are baptized will be saved, it does not say that all who neither believe nor are baptized will not be saved. In other words, the clause does not exclude any group, while it does tell of a group of people who will be saved, namely, those who both believe and are baptized. But the second clause negates one group: those who do not believe will not be saved. There is no negation of the group of those who believe but are not baptized. Thus while the verse as a whole does teach that belief is essential to salvation, it does not each that baptism is."
 - e) Actually, the person who does not believe will be damned whether or not he is baptized. It is very unlikely that an unbeliever would submit to baptism, but even if this were to happen, he would not be saved.
 - f) Beisner claims that the first clause does not exclude any group. It does, however, exclude all who do not believe, whether or not they are baptized. Also, the negation of those who believe and are not baptized. Also, the negation of those who believe and are not baptized is in the first clause. By joining believing and baptism together in this way, Jesus made both acts equally essential. If this were not the point, Jesus could have said, *"He that believeth and is saved should be baptized."*
 - g) Beisner's attack on the authenticity of Mark 16: 9-20 reveals that he is not himself fully satisfied with his argument. He says, *"Since there is serious doubt concerning the originality of Mark 16: 16 it should not be used as proof of doctrine."* If he believed his view to be unquestionably correct, he would not need to appeal to this so-called doubt.
 - h) The "serious doubt" is based on the fact that one Greek manuscript, Sinaiticus, simply omits Mark 16: 9-20. One other, Vaticanus, also omits it, but leaves a blank space exactly the right size for the inclusion of the passage. This proves that the scribe

baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him" (Matthew 3:6, 11, 13).

Nothing here contradicts any previous mention of water baptism. Instead, its relationship to the confession of sins and repentance is underscored. We notice that even Jesus was baptized *"to fulfill all righteousness."*

E. The next mention of baptism is Mark 1:4:

"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

There is certainly no contradiction here, but it is clearly said that even the baptism of John the Baptist was *"for the remission of sins."*

F. The next mention involves the ministry of Jesus:

"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. ...When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)" (John 3:22; 4: 1-2).

G. Again, there is no contradiction of any previous teaching on baptism, but new insight is gained.

- 1) Baptism was performed under the ministry of Jesus by His disciples, who apparently did the baptizing under His authority (i.e., in His name).
- 2) Thus, Christian baptism did originate before the Day of Pentecost.
- 3) This effectively negates the argument that John 3:5 could have no reference to Christian baptism because it was not yet instituted, and the argument that it would have been impossible for the disciples to baptize 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost. If all 120 were already baptized with Christian baptism—and we may assume they were since they were faithful disciples of Jesus—many or all of them may have participated in baptizing the new believers. This would not have been an impossible task.

H. The next mention of baptism is Matthew 28: 19:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

While there is no contradiction here with any previous mention, we do see that baptism is a command of Christ. It is thus necessary to obey.

- 1) We also notice that baptism is to be done *"in the name"* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. That is, baptism is to be performed by a specific authority.
- 2) As Bible commentators have noted, this is a singular name, one name.
- 3) In view of the fact that we know that previous mentions have indicated that baptism is into or unto Jesus Christ and that subsequent mentions will also call for baptism to be done in His name, we examine this verse more closely.
- 4) The name of God in the Old Testament was known as Jehovah (from the tetragrammaton, YHWH). The name "Jesus" means "Jehovah-Savior." Thus there is no discrepancy between the name of the Father and of Jesus.
- 5) J. Oliver Buswell, a Presbyterian theologian, wrote,

"...when Paul says, "the Lord, [Kyrios,] is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3: 17), he means us to understand, Jahweh is the name of the Holy Spirit, just as truly as the name of the Father and of the Son. The "name," not "names" of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in which we are to be baptized, is to be understood as Jahweh, the name of the Triune God."

- 6) Buswell is correct in that it is a name that is in view in Matthew 28:19, not names.
- 7) He does not, however, take the issue far enough, but stops with the Old Testament name of God. (Jahweh is another form of Yahweh, which is another way of spelling and pronouncing the tetragrammaton, YHWH.)
- 8) The name of God revealed in the New Testament is Jesus, which is the name above every name because it incorporates YHWH but further identifies Him as Savior (Philippians 2: 9-10).

I. The next mention of baptism is Mark 16: 16:

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 16).

Nothing is seen here that contradicts any previous revelation. Instead, the idea that baptism is involved in salvation is underscored.

J. The next mention is Acts 2: 38:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

By the time we arrive at this verse using the Full Mention Principle, nothing in it is a surprise. Previous verses have indicated:

- The connection of repentance with baptism,
- The idea that baptism is for all who would leave the old life behind,
- The fact that baptism is identification with Jesus Christ in His burial and resurrection, and
- That it effects the remission of sins.

K. There are, of course, many other verses dealing with baptism (e.g., Acts 8: 16; 10: 48; 22: 16; Romans 6: 3; 1 Corinthians 1: 13), but this will be enough to demonstrate the use of these hermeneutical principles.

II. The Origin of "Jehovah"

- A. The first Bible translator to transliterate YHWH as Jehovah was William Tyndale in the sixteenth century.
- 1) The spelling did not originate with him, but with a French scholar.
 - 2) But Tyndale would not have pronounced "Jehovah" as we do today, with an initial "jay" sound.
 - 3) The pronunciation of the initial "J" with the current "jay" sound originated in the seventeenth century from the influence of the French language on the English language.
 - 4) Prior to that, the initial "J" was pronounced with a "Y" sound.
 - 5) In fact, the transliteration as it actually appeared was at first IEHOVAH.
 - 6) This is the way it is spelled, even in the 1611 edition of the King James Version.
 - 7) Here is the way this transliteration developed:
 - a) The Tetragrammaton (YHWH) is spelled with the Hebrew letters *yod hey waw hey*.
 - b) The English "I" was originally the transliteration of the Hebrew *yod*, for the sounds were equivalent.
 - c) At the time, the initial "I" was pronounced like the current English "Y," even as it is still pronounced in words like "million," where the second "i" is pronounced like "y."
 - d) The English "H" was the transliteration of the Hebrew *hey* because of the equivalency of sound.
 - e) The English "W" was the transliteration of the Hebrew *waw* for the same reason.
 - f) So the result was YHWH.
 - 8) The Hebrew alphabet contains no vowels, only consonants.
 - a) Originally, the vowel sounds were transmitted by tradition, as the Scriptures were read aloud in public.
 - b) But in about the seventh century A.D., the Massoretic scribes devised a system of dots and dashes to preserve the traditional pronunciation of the Hebrew text.
 - c) But by the time of the Massorettes, the original pronunciation of YHWH was no longer known.
 - d) The Jewish people had stopped vocalizing the name after the Exile when, in an attempt to live more rigorously by the Law of Moses, they sought to avoid the risk of taking the name of God in vain by refraining from speaking it altogether.
 - e) Instead, when the Scriptures were read publicly, the Jewish people would substitute *Adonai* for YHWH. *Adonai* means "master" or "lord."
 - f) It is in keeping with this tradition that most English translations render YHWH with LORD almost without exception.
 - g) When the Massorettes added their system of dots and dashes to the Hebrew text, they inserted the vowel sounds for *Adonai* into YHWH.
 - h) They did not mean for people to pronounce YHWH with these vowels; they meant for the vowel markings to remind the reader to say *Adonai*.
 - i) But Christians unaware of this thought they should pronounce YHWH with the vowels belonging to *Adonai*.
 - j) The result was *YeHoWaH*, which is actually not a word at all.
 - 9) As the English language developed, when the letter "i" appeared twice in succession, the first letter began to be written with a "tail" to distinguish it from the second letter.

- a) When the letter "i" was the first letter in a word, it began to be written with the same "tail."
- b) This was the origin of the current English "J."
- c) This factor, together with the insertion of the vowel sounds for *Adonai* into the Tetragrammaton, results in *JeHoWaH*.
- d) The Hebrew *waw* (as it was pronounced by the Massoretes) is pronounced *vav* in more recent Hebrew, resulting in *JeHoVaH*.
- e) We can be certain, however, that is not the original pronunciation of the Tetragram YHWH.
- f) The Hebrew language has no equivalent to the English "jay" sound. Most scholars believe that YHWH was originally pronounced something like Yahweh.

III. The Meaning of "Jesus"

- A. "Jesus" means "Jehovah-Savior" or "Yahweh-Savior."
 - 1) The English transliteration of the Greek name is *Jesous*.
 - 2) The first two letters, "Je," are the English transliteration of the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew abbreviation for YHWH, YH, or—as it appears in the King James Version in Psalm 68: 4—JAH.
 - 3) The letters *sou* are the English transliteration of the Greek transliteration of a form of the Hebrew word *yasha*, which means "salvation."
 - 4) The final "s" is the Greek nominative case ending, which is common for names in Greek.
 - 5) As with "Jehovah," the name "Jesus" began to be pronounced with an initial "jay" sound due to the development of that sound in the English language.
 - 6) So the name "Jesus" is formed from two Hebrew words, YHWH and *yasha*.
 - 7) If the name were written in Hebrew, it would be pronounced *Yeshua*.
 - 8) YHWY is the name of God; "*shua*" is from *yasha*, which means "salvation."
 - 9) The meaning of "Jesus" is thus "Yahweh is Salvation," "Yahweh is Savior," or "Yahweh-Savior."
- B. The point of all this in our discussion is that YHWH was the name by which God revealed Himself in the Old Testament.
 - 1) The name "Jesus" incorporates the name "YHWH."
 - 2) When Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28: 19), they would have understood perfectly that He had reference to one name, both because "name" is singular and because they knew the name by which God had revealed Himself.
 - 3) It is also obvious that they understood that the name "Jesus" meant "Yahweh" with the added identification that He was Savior, for they always baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 2: 38; 8: 16; 10: 48; 19: 5).
 - 4) To them, there was no contradiction between Matthew 28: 19 and their actual practice.
 - 5) The name to which Jesus had reference in Matthew 28:19 was the Tetragram, and the Tetragram is incorporated into the name of Jesus.

What Have You Learned?

- 1. Define the Full Mention Principle. _____

- 2. Explain the significance of the Full Mention Principle. _____

- 3. As briefly as possible, explain why the Hebrew Tetragram YHWH is pronounced "Jehovah." _____

For example, since we know the church was not revealed in the Old Testament, no verse there can be interpreted as having to do specifically with the church, a called out body consisting of both Jews and Gentiles.

D. Consider the context of the entire Bible.

- What else does the Bible have to say on the subject?
- Would an interpretation that may seem plausible contradict what the Scripture says elsewhere on that subject?

A simple illustration of the Context Principle at work may be seen in a consideration of 2 Peter 1: 10:

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

Many have testified that they wish to make their calling and election sure. But how is it done?

- 1) The key is in the statement, "[F]or if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." What are "these things?"
- 2) A study of the context will reveal that they are the things listed in 2 Peter 1: 5-7.
 - If one adds virtue to his faith,
 - Knowledge to his virtue,
 - Temperance to his knowledge,
 - Patience to his temperance,
 - Godliness to his patience,
 - Brotherly kindness to his godliness, and
 - Charity to his brotherly kindness, and
 - If these things abound, they make one's calling and election sure.
- 3) In the use of the Context Principle, the student should be especially careful to notice words like "wherefore," "therefore," and "for."
- 4) Any word that might refer to a prior statement should be noticed.
- 5) Proper use of the Context Principle will help us practice good exegesis (getting out of the text the truth that is there) rather than eisegesis (reading into the text something that is not there).

IV. Inspired Contexts—The United Pentecostal Church has always believed the Bible to be inspired of God and the final authority in matters of doctrine

- A. The Preamble to the Articles of Faith of the UPC states, "We believe the Bible to be inspired of God; the infallible Word of God...The Bible is the only God-given authority which man possesses; therefore, all doctrine, faith, hope, and all instruction for the church must be based upon, and harmonize with, the Bible...."
- B. Each year, every faculty member of Bible colleges in North America endorsed by the United Pentecostal Church International signs a statement which says he or she believes "in the divine inspiration of the whole Bible, the infallibility of the original writings and that the Bible is truth without error and is inspired even to the very words and is therefore the inscripted Word of God."
- C. Since this marvelous revelation of God we know as the Bible consists of words, we do believe the very words are given by inspiration. That is, "*Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*" (2 Peter 1: 21).
- D. While God did not override the individual writer's vocabulary, literary style, or background, He did influence the writing in such a way that every word written accurately expressed His mind.
- E. But the Bible consists of more than inspired words. Since the words themselves are inspired, they exist in inspired contexts. If one word is inspired, so is the word next to it, and so one.
 - 1) The consequence of this is that no word can be lifted out of its context and given a meaning independently of the words that surround it.
 - 2) Strictly speaking, dictionaries do not define words. They merely give possible ranges of meaning.
 - 3) Words are actually defined by the context in which they appear. For example:
 - The English word "bear" may be a verb with about 30 possible ranges of meaning.
 - Or it may be a noun with nearly ten different ranges of meaning.
 - Similarly, Hebrew and Greek words carry wide ranges of meaning.
 - While a work like *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* gives the barest of thumbnail sketches as to various ways a word is actually translated, a theological dictionary may take several pages to discuss all of the possible uses of the same word.
 - 4) As the student of scripture seeks to be approved of God by rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15), he will consider not only individual words, but the larger context in which they appear.

- a) This will first involve the verses immediately surrounding the one under consideration,
- b) Then the context of the entire passage,
- c) Then the context of the book,
- d) Then the testament in which it appears, and finally
- e) The context of the entire Bible.
- f) This final context is called the “analogy of Scripture,” in view of the fact that no word or verse will ever contradict the general teaching of Scripture on any subject.
- g) According to Peter, Scripture twisted by misinterpretation is destructive (2 Peter 3: 16).
- h) But Scripture rightly understood teaches, reproves, corrects, and instructs, ultimately bringing God’s people to maturity (2 Timothy 3: 16-17).

V. The Context Principle Illustrated—The Context Principle may be illustrated by concentric circles illustrating the scope of the context of any verse.

- The first circle away from the verse under consideration represents the immediately surrounding verses.
 - The next circle away represents the context of the chapter in which the verse is found.
 - The third circle represents the context of the entire book of the Bible where the verse appears.
 - The fourth circle represents the testament (Old or New).
 - The last circle represents the entire Bible.
- A. The point is that any verse of Scripture must be interpreted in light of the verses immediately surrounding it. It cannot be lifted out of its context and given a meaning foreign to the intention of the author.
- B. Then, the immediate context of the verse must be viewed in the larger context of the author’s intent in that section of the book.
- C. It is really a misnomer to talk about the context of the chapter; the Bible was not originally written in chapters or verses.
- 1) Actually the next context to consider after that of the verses immediately surrounding the verse under consideration is the context that represents most accurately the author’s “outline” that he followed in writing the book.
 - 2) This is not to suggest that each author actually had an outline before him as he wrote, but that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write in coherent, logical thought patterns.
 - 3) It may be that such a section of the book is represented by a chapter, but it may actually be a part of a chapter or more than a chapter.
 - 4) Any study Bible that provides an outline of the books of the Bible will be helpful in ascertaining this context.
- D. Next, the context of the entire book must be considered.
- To whom was the book written?
 - Who wrote it?
 - Why?
 - Where were the recipients located?
 - Where was the author when he wrote?
 - When was it written?
- All of these factors, and more, are useful in interpreting any verse within a book.
- E. Then, the context of the testament must be considered.
- 1) The books included in the Old Testament, or Old Covenant, serve a purpose distinct from those included in the New Testament.
 - 2) All of the books in the Hebrew Bible were written during the era the Old Covenant was in force; all of the books of the New Testament were written during the era when the New Covenant was in force.
 - 3) Since Christian believers are under the New Covenant, not the Old Covenant, these things must be considered in the matter of interpretation and application.
- F. Finally, the context of the entire Bible must be considered. No individual verse can be wrested out of its largest context to have some meaning foreign to the general testimony of Scripture.

What Have You Learned?

1. Define the Context Principle. _____

- a) All of these are Messianic prophecies. All of them use a common word to describe the Messiah: Branch.
 - b) The word "Nazarene" is from the word "Nazareth," which is from the Hebrew word *nitser*, which means "branch."
 - c) In other words, the word "Nazareth" is the transliteration of the Hebrew word for branch, *nitser*.
 - d) Therefore, the prophets did indeed say, "*He shall be called a Nazarene (nitser, branch).*"
- C. It is important to realize that more than one place (i.e., city or location) may have the same name, and one place may have more than one name. For example,
- 1) Bethany is located on the slope of the Mount of Olives. Thus, when Luke says that Jesus ascended from Bethany (Luke 24: 50-51) and then in Acts records that He ascended from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1: 9-12), there is no discrepancy.
 - 2) Sinai and Horeb speak of the same mountain.
 - 3) There is more than one city called Antioch, and there are five places called Ramah.
 - 4) Mount Hor and Moserah are the same.
 - 5) The Dead Sea is also called the Sea of Plain and Salt Sea.
 - 6) The Sea of Galilee is also Chinnereth, Genessaret, and Tiberias.
 - 7) Egypt is Ham.
 - 8) Bethel is Luz.
 - 9) Jerusalem is Ariel.
 - 10) There are three Bethsaidas and five Ramoths.
 - 11) In addition, more than one man may have the same name. For example:
 - a) Saul of Tarsus is not King Saul;
 - b) Jehoram, the king of Israel, was not the same man as Jehoram, the king of Judah;
 - c) There are three men names James, four named John, and many Herods in the New Testament;
 - d) There are ten Simons and sic Marys in Scripture;
 - 12) Sometimes we use titles as names:
 - a) Abimelech was the titel of the king of Philistia;
 - b) Agag, Caesar, and Pharaoh were all titles.
 - c) Different individuals bore those titles.
 - 13) One person may have more than one name. For example:
 - a) Jacob was also Israel;
 - b) Silvanus was also Silas;
 - c) Timotheus was also Timothy;
 - d) Levi was also Matthew;
 - e) Peter was also Cephas and Simon;
 - f) Jehoiachin was also Coniah and Jechoniah;
 - g) Saul was Paul;
 - h) Abram was Abraham;
 - i) Sarai was Sarah; and
 - j) Joseph was Zaphnath-paaneah.
- D. The proper use of the Agreement Principle recognizes that no Scripture will contradict another.
- 1) Any apparent contradiction is simply a lack of knowledge.
 - 2) There is other information that, if known, would reconcile the supposed differences.

What Have You Learned?

- 1. Define the Agreement Principle. _____

- 2. Explain the significance of the Agreement Principle. _____

- 5) Further, we endorse pretribulational premillennialism, which means we believe the church will be raptured prior to the tribulation.
- 6) Pretribulational premillennialism takes into account and recognized the validity of the Gap Principle.

II. An Illustration of the Gap Principle

- A. Premillennialism is the belief that Jesus Christ will return bodily to the earth to introduce a 1,000 year period of peace on earth, during which He will rule all nations with "a rod of iron."
 - 1) During this time, Satan will be bound.
 - 2) At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be loosed for a little while, and he will gather those who reject Jesus Christ in a final doomed attempt to defeat God's purposes. (See Revelation 20.)
- B. Amillennialism is the belief that the 1,000 year reign of Christ is to be taken allegorically or "spiritually," and that it represents the church age, during which believers enjoy peace with God and have the ability to cast out devils.
 - 1) Amillennialists believe that all that remains is the coming of the Lord, which will introduce the eternal realm.
 - 2) They see no future for the nation of Israel.
- C. Postmillennialism is the belief that the church will bring in the millennium by the gradual conversion of the world through preaching the gospel and infiltration into positions of leadership and influence in government, education, business, the arts and sciences, and so forth.
 - 1) Postmillennialists believe that after the church has brought in this long period of peace (not all postmillennialists agree that it will be a literal 1,000 years), Christ will return.

III. The Gap Principle As Seen in Daniel 9: 26-27

- A. The word translated "people" in the phrase "*the people of the prince who shall come*" is 'am, which is a noun masculine construct. It is by means of the construct state that the Hebrew language imparts the prepositional idea "of." That, there is no Hebrew equivalent of the English "of" here; the genitival relationship is expressed by a juxtaposition of nouns in two states, construct and absolute. It is, of course, correct to translate it into English with the preposition "of."
- B. The word translated "prince" is *nagiyd*, which is a noun masculine singular in the absolute state.
- C. The word translated "that shall come" is *habba'*, which consists of the definite particle prefixed to a Qal active participle. The idea is "the coming [one]."
- D. There is nothing in the passage that demands that this prince be Messiah the Prince previously mentioned. Verse 26 indicates that the Messiah is cut off. Then a new thought begins with the *waw* conjunction (equivalent to the English "and") that seems to imply consecutive action.
- E. That is, the actions of the people of the prince that shall come occur after the Messiah is already cut off. It would seem strange grammatically and contextually if the prince to whom these people belong (who do this destructive work) is the Messiah.
- F. Alva McClain, in his book *Daniel's Prophecy of the 70 Weeks* remarks, "There are two different princes mentioned:
 - 'Messiah the Prince'; and
 - 'The Prince that shall come.'"

The expression 'prince that shall come' cannot possibly refer to 'Messiah, the Prince' for the simple reason that it is the 'people of the prince that shall come' who are to destroy Jerusalem after the death of the Messiah. And since it is now a matter of history that Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70 by the Roman people, not by the Jewish people, it follows that 'the prince that shall come' cannot be the Jewish Messiah but is some great prince who will arise out of the Roman Empire."

- G. The question that arises in verse 27 is to whom the pronoun "he" refers in the phrase "*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.*"
 - 1) The common objection made to the idea that the "he" refers to "*the Prince that shall come*" is that the antecedent of a pronoun cannot be the object of a preposition in English grammar.
 - 2) We should recognize, however, that the rules of English grammar are in a state of constant flux, and that they have changed considerably since 1611.
 - 3) There definitely are cases in the King James Version where the antecedent of a pronoun is the object of a preposition.
 - a) For example, Acts 20: 28 reads: *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*"

- b) In this verse, the antecedent of "he" is "God," the object of the preposition. There is no other antecedent in the passage to which the "he" can refer.

What Have You Learned?

1. Define the Gap Principle. _____

 2. Explain the significance of the Gap Principle. _____

 3. Define premillennialism. _____

 4. Define amillennialism. _____

 5. Define postmillennialism. _____

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Chapter 17

The Double Reference Principle

PURPOSE: This chapter is designed to discuss the Double Reference Principle.

What I Have Learned

- I. The Double Reference Principle is defined as "that peculiarity in the writings of the Holy Spirit, by which a passage applying primarily to a person or event near at hand, is used by Him at a later time as applying to the Person of Christ, or the affairs of His kingdom."
 - A. For example, Hosea 11: 1 clearly refers to the nation of Israel as God's son in their calling out of Egypt. But in Matthew 2: 14-15 the same reference is used by the Holy Spirit to speak of Christ's return from Egypt after the death of Herod.
 - B. In 2 Samuel 7: 12-16 the Davidic Covenant is set forth. In one verse it has to do with Solomon, while the next goes beyond Solomon to David's greater Son, Jesus Christ.
 - D. The statement in Deuteronomy 18: 15 about a prophet arising after Moses like unto him refers both to Joshua and to Christ (Acts 3: 22-23).
- II. A caution is in order: Use the Double (dual) Reference Principle only when the New Testament reveals a double reference.
 - A. Without this restriction there is no limit to the fanciful interpretations that could be forced on Scripture.
 - B. While a comparison of Hosea 11: 1 and Matthew 2: 14-15 will reveal that the word "son" referred both to the national Israel and the Messiah, there is nothing to suggest that the vast portion of prophecies in the Old Testament have any meaning other than their singular, immediate meaning.

- III. The Double Reference Principle is influenced by the use the New Testament makes of the Old Testament. The New Testament quotes or alludes to the Old Testament in many places, but not all New Testament references to the Old Testament are to be understood in the same way they are used for a variety of reasons.
- A. In some New Testament references, the Old Testament is said to be fulfilled. That is, there are places where the New Testament quotes from the Old Testament as a specific fulfillment of prophecy (e.g., Matthew 1: 22-23).
- B. In some New Testament references, quotations from the Old Testament are preceded by the words "it is written," without a specific claim that an Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled. In other words, New Testament writers sometimes borrow Old Testament words to make a point without claiming that their point is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.
- 1) In cases like these, the words have a new context and thus a new meaning in the New Testament (e.g., 1 Corinthians 14: 21).
 - 2) This can happen because the New Testament is inspired equally with the Old Testament;; if the Holy Spirit, who gave the words originally to a Hebrew prophet, wished to give them later to a New Testament writer with new significance or added significance, He certainly had the authority to do so.
- C. Quotes or allusions to the Old Testament take different form in various places in the New Testament.
- 1) In some cases, New Testament writers quote directly from the Hebrew text, providing their own translation into Greek.
 - 2) In other cases, they quote from the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures made in about 250 B.C.
 - 3) In other cases, they seem to provide a kind of loose paraphrase.
 - 4) In each case, the New Testament writer was inspired of the Holy Spirit to do what he did. But because of the nature of these differences, we must be careful to understand what the New Testament writer meant by his use of the Old Testament.
 - 5) Every quote from or allusion to the Old Testament in the New Testament must be interpreted in its context in the New Testament.
- D. An understanding of the issues involved in interpreting the New Testament uses of the Old Testament may be aided by the following commentary on Romans 2:24:
- "For 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,' as it is written"* (NKJV).
- 1) Here Paul quotes the Septuagint translation of Isaiah 52: 5. This is an interesting example of the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament.
 - 2) In many cases, various New Testament writers quote the Old Testament to demonstrate the fulfillment of specific prophecies.
 - 3) But in other cases, like here, Hebrew Scriptures that in their original context have to do with situations far removed from New Testament events are nevertheless applied to those events by the inspired writers.
 - 4) In the original context, the words here quoted by Paul recounted Israel's captivity in Egypt, then their oppression by Assyria, and looked ahead to the captivity of Judah in Babylon.
 - 5) The Hebrew text of the portion of Isaiah 52: 5 quoted by Paul is translated, *"And My name is blasphemed continually every day"* (NKJV). Paul chose, however, to quote the Septuagint's rendering, which is a freer translation or a paraphrase.
 - 6) Contextually, the meaning of the Hebrew would be understood to include "among the Gentiles because of you," for Isaiah's discussion had to do with the Babylonian captivity and thus the blasphemy which the Babylonians would utter against Israel's God as a result of their disdain for the Jews.
- E. This brings up the question of the status of the Septuagint as it pertains to reliability as a translation.
- 1) The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, with small portions in Daniel and Ezra originally written in Aramaic.
 - 2) The Septuagint was a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures accomplished in about 250 B.C.
 - 3) In some cases, New Testament writers quote the Septuagint; in others, they quote the Hebrew directly; in still others, they apparently provide their own translation.
 - 4) The quality of translation in the Septuagint is not even; some books are more carefully translated than others.

- F. If we keep in mind that the writers of the New Testament were inspired of God equally with the original writers of the Old Testament, it will help us understand their use of Old Testament passages.
- 1) Their use of the Hebrew Scriptures was directed by the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit wished to invest new meaning into the words of Old Testament prophecies, or if He wished to make use of the essence of an Old Testament prophecy and to add additional significance to it by means of adopting the reading of the Septuagint or any other translation (including that of the human authors of the New Testament), He was certainly free to do so. The words were His.
 - 2) There may be an analogy here with the way a human author can revisit words he has previously written and revise them to take on new or additional meaning.
 - 3) In the case of Scripture, of course, the words of the New Testament are inspired of God, and are thus without error, just as the words of the Old Testament.
 - 4) When the New Testament quotes the Old Testament in any form, the New Testament statement must be interpreted in the context in which it is found in the New Testament.
 - 5) If the New Testament quotes the Hebrew Scriptures and claims they are fulfilled in a specific New Testament event, additional insight for interpretation may be gained from examining the Old Testament context as well. But in this case the interpreter must be certain the New Testament actually claims the Hebrew Scripture is fulfilled in the New Testament event.
- H. We must remember that the inspiration of Scripture ended with the writing of the last book of the New Testament by the Apostle John. (See Revelation 22: 18-19.)
- 1) For that reason, we do not have the authority today to invest new meaning into Old Testament Scriptures.
 - 2) No one in our day is inspired equally with the writers of the New Testament to expand on the meaning of any inspired writing.
 - 3) The task before today's interpreter is to seek to understand all of Scripture in its original context.
- I. Paul's use of Isaiah 52:5 is intended to remind his Jewish readers that their inconsistencies dishonor the God who gave them advanced revelation.
- 1) The Gentiles were aware of the Jews' claim to superiority of knowledge, and when they saw the Jews' failure to abide by their own Law, it prompted the Gentiles to mock the revelation received by the Jews and the God who gave it.

What Have You Learned?

1. Define the Double Reference Principle. _____

2. Explain a caution in the use of the Double Reference Principle. _____

3. Discuss the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. _____

Chapter 18

The Christo-Centric Principle

PURPOSE: This chapter is designed to discuss the Christ-Centric Principle.

What I Have Learned

- I. Martin Luther was right when he wrote that the Bible is a Christ-centered book.
 - A. To the Jews who thought they could gain eternal life by the discipline of studying the Scriptures, Jesus said, *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me"* (John 5: 39, NKJV).
 - B. It is a wonderful thing to study the Bible, but if a person rejects Jesus Christ, his study will be fruitless, for the central message of all Scripture is Christ, the Messiah.
 - C. In Revelation 19: 10, John wrote, *"For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"* (NKJV). This means that the very spirit of prophecy is the witness concerning Jesus.
 - D. Although men, cities, and nations have a large part in Biblical prophecy, its chief subject is a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. As John was reminded at this climactic point when he was about to see the appearance of Christ in glory, *"the testimony of [witness concerning] Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*
 - E. All the prophetic themes are to be studied with care, but never in such a way as to obscure the fact of the centrality of Jesus Christ.
- II. The Christo-Centric Principle is defined by six points.
 - A. It is the principle by which God shows:
 - 1) The mind of Deity is eternally centered in Christ.
 - 2) All angelic thought and ministry are centered in Christ.
 - 3) All Satanic hatred and subtlety are centered at Christ.
 - 4) All human hopes are, and human occupations should be, centered in Christ.
 - 5) The whole material universe in creation is centered in Christ.
 - 6) The entire written Word is centered in Christ.
- III. That this principle is essential to an understanding of the of the Old Testament is seen in Paul's discussion of the reason for the blindness on the eyes of Jews:

"But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away" (2 Corinthians 3: 14-16).

 - A. The vail is there because of a failure to recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the subject of all Messianic prophecies.
 - B. The following Scriptures reveal the absolute centrality of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures:
 - *"...in the volume of the book it is written of Me..."* (Hebrews 10: 7).
 - *"...He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself"* (Luke 24: 27).
 - *"...all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me"* (Luke 24:44).
 - *"To Him give all the prophets witness..."* (Acts 10: 43).
 - *"We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write"* (John 1: 45).
 - *"...that in all things He might have the preeminence"* (Colossians 1: 18).
- IV. Guidelines—these should be followed when the Christo-Centric Principle is in use:
 - A. The ultimate purpose of the written Word is to bring us to Christ, the Living Word.
 - B. This principle can be used only when the verse or passage under consideration speaks of Christ either:
 - 1) Characteristically
 - a) Typically
 - b) Symbolically
 - 2) Prophetically
 - 3) Historically
 - 4) Doctrinally

- C. A verse should never be applied directly to Christ unless it possesses Christo-Centric characteristics.
- D. This principle should never be used when the resultant interpretation violates the actual literal sense of Scripture.
- E. The Old Testament Scriptures that contain Christo-centric characteristics must be interpreted in the light of New Testament clear revelation of Christ.

What Have You Learned?

1. Define the Christo-Centric Principle. _____

2. List the conditions under which the Christo-Centric Principle can be used. _____

Chapter 19

The Comparative Mention Principle

PURPOSE: This chapter is designed to discuss the Comparative Mention Principle.

What I Have Learned

- I. The definition of the Comparative Mention Principle is “that principle by which a certain verse or group of verses may be interpreted by comparing and/or contrasting it with another verse or group of verses.”
 - “Compare: to bring things together in order to examine the relationships they bear to each other, especially with the view of ascertaining their agreement or disagreement; points of resemblance or difference.”
 - “Contrast: to place together in view things widely differing from each other, though of the same category or class, in order to make the difference more vividly marked.”
- II. Writers of Scripture used comparison and contrast in the following areas:
 - A. Principles—see, for example, the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 28: 1-6, 15-19.
 - B. Events
 - 1) See John 3: 14-15.
 - 2) See Luke 17: 26.
 - C. Symbols
 - 1) See 2 Corinthians 3: 1-18.
 - D. Persons
 - 1) See 1 Corinthians 15: 45-49.
 - E. Places
 - 1) See Hebrews 12: 18-21, 22-29.
 - 2) See Revelation 11: 8.
 - F. Prophecy
 - 1) See Acts 2: 14-36.
 - G. Parables
 - 1) See Matthew 13: 3-9, 18-23.

These are but a few examples of places in Scripture where these categories of things are compared and/or contrasted. As you study Scripture, you should be alert to the possible use of this principle.

- A. Most of the Bible is written to teach people what they should be and what they should do.
 - 1) Many of these lessons are found as clear, concise instructions, such as the epistles and the teachings of Jesus.
 - 2) But much Scripture contains indirect instruction, morals, and applications that must be discovered.

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter" (Proverbs 25:2).
 - B. As Paul indicated, the Old Testament is not written merely to provide a history of an ancient people. It is written to provide examples and lessons to believers of all ages.
 - C. This method must be balanced with all other hermeneutical principles, for not all of Scripture was meant to be moralized.
 - D. The Bible provides more than practical lessons for daily living. It also supplies a theological structure that is important in its own right, and that must never be compromised for purposes of trying to find practical lessons.
- II. One very well known example of the Moral Principle at work has to do with the story of the bringing back of the Ark of the Covenant to Israel in 1 Chronicles 13: 7-14 and 15: 1-3, 13-15.
- A. This was, of course, an historical event, but it provides a clear moral teaching: God's work must be done God's way in order to receive God's blessing.

What Have You Learned?

- 1. Define the Moral Principle. _____

Chapter 21

The Parabolic Principle

PURPOSE: This chapter is designed to discuss the Parabolic Principle.

What I Have Learned

- I. The definition of the Parabolic Principle is "[t]hat principle by which any parable is interpreted by discerning its moral and interpreting its elements insofar as they are meant to be interpreted."
 - A. The word "parable" is transliterated from the Greek *parabole*, which suggests something thrown or placed alongside something else for purposes of comparison.
 - B. Jesus explained His use of parables to His disciples in Matthew 13: 9-19. He had a two-fold purpose:
 - To reveal truth to those who were open and hungry-hearted;
 - To conceal truth from those who were closed and hard-hearted.
 - C. Jesus took His parables from two major sources:
 - The realm of Creation (seed, wheat and tares, fish, leaven, pearls, sheep, etc.);
 - The realm of Human Relationships (father and son, servant and master, bride and bridegroom, friends, etc.)
- II. Guidelines—the following should be kept in mind when using the Parabolic Principle.
 - A. The first step in using this principle is to make certain that the passage under consideration is a parable, whether designated or not. For example:
 - 1) The account of the Rich Man and Lazarus is not a parable.
 - 2) It is an actual history of two men who really lived.
 - 3) In no parable did Jesus name specific people.
 - B. A parable is a comparison between the natural realm and the spiritual realm.
 - C. Every parable is designed to conceal and reveal one fundamental spiritual truth.
 - 1) Do not attempt to make every detail of the parable represent something.
 - 2) There is one basic purpose for the parable, and many of the supporting details are there for literary purposes only. For example:

- a) The Parable of the Good Samaritan was given to show how we are to be a neighbor to those in need.
- b) No meaning should be forced on the donkey, the oil, the two pence, the inn, etc.
- D. Since parables are drawn from the cultural background of their authors, the interpreter should research the manners, customs, and material culture involved in the parable he is interpreting.
- E. Doctrine should not be founded solely upon parabolic teaching.

What Have You Learned?

1. Define the Parabolic Principle. _____

2. Explain the two-fold purpose of parables. _____

3. List the two (2) major sources from which Jesus took His parables. _____

4. What five (5) guidelines should be followed when using the Parabolic Principle. _____

Chapter 22

Final Hermeneutical Matters

PURPOSE: This chapter is designed to discuss:

- The difference between revelation and inspiration;
- The Protestant system of hermeneutics;
- Significant cultural elements that must be researched in the interpretative process;
- The function of cultural awareness in Biblical interpretation;
- Some guidelines for word studies in Biblical interpretation;
- The doctrinal use of the Bible;
- Major concepts which must be kept in mind when interpreting the various types of Biblical literature; and
- Principles of application of the Biblical text for the contemporary believer.

(The following material was originally written to fulfill assignments made by Dr. James Sawyer in the Hermeneutics class of Western Seminary. The material appears essentially as written for that class, with some minor revisions.)

These works are listed not just as sources of the following material, but also as recommended reading for those who wish to study the subject of hermeneutics more in depth.

Carson, D.A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984.

Cotterell, Peter and Turner, Max. *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989.

Fee, Gordon D. and Stuart, Douglas. *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982.

Kuhatschek, Jack. *Taking the Guesswork out of Applying the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990.

Radmacher, Earl D. and Preus, Robert D., eds. *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984.

Ramm, Bernard. *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. 3rd rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970.

Ryken, Leland. *How to Read the Bible as Literature*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984.

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I. Revelation—by revelation we mean a specific manner in which God communicates something about Himself to mankind. Scripture presents two modes in which revelation occurs. For the sake of identification, we refer to them as general and special.

A. General revelation has to do with those means by which God communicates knowledge about His existence and nature to the entire human race.

- 1) Some scholars, such as Karl Barth, have asserted the impossibility of any revelation aside from the incarnation. For Barth, the destruction of the imago Dei in man brought about by the fall renders man incapable of receiving any general revelation.
- 2) Others recognize the possibility of general revelation, but see it as being recognized only by those who have first been regenerated.
- 3) It has been common for liberal theologians, on the other hand, to see general revelation as sufficient to accomplish the redemptive purposes of God in bringing fallen man to regeneration.
- 4) Thomas Aquinas taught that it was possible for an unregenerate person to come to a thorough knowledge of God's existence and nature, purely on the basis of human reason. However, regeneration depended upon further special revelation.
- 5) Finally, scholars such as Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Hodge and Warfield believed that general revelation had a limited usefulness in communicating to mankind certain basic knowledge of God and His nature.

B. The following modes of general revelation are recognized in Scripture:

- 1) External: creation (nature) (Psalm 19: 1-4; Acts 14: 17; Romans 1: 18-21); history (the outworkings of God's purposes in the world) (Daniel 4: 25-26, 32);
- 2) Internal: conscience and an awareness of deity (Romans 2: 14-15).

C. In response to Barth and to those who suggest that only the regenerated can grasp general revelation, it should be noted that this revelation is:

- 1) Universal (Psalm 19: 1, 4);
- 2) Constant (Psalm 19: 2); and
- 3) Understandable in any language (Psalm 19: 3).
- 4) It is sufficient to impart an elementary knowledge of God to the unregenerate (Romans 1: 20-21).

D. But contrary to liberal thought, general revelation does not reveal redemptive truth. No man would gain by general revelation alone a knowledge of Jesus Christ or of the atonement provided through Him.

- 1) The sufficiency of general revelation is in only two areas:
 - General revelation is sufficient to confirm the guilt of every man, for no man lives up to all he knows to do (Romans 3).
 - Theoretically, at least, general revelation would be sufficient to provide a starting point for the man who had a heart after God. If a man will follow all the revelation he has, God will reveal more of Himself to him (John 1: 9; 1 John 1: 7; 1 Timothy 1: 13).
- 2) Aquinas seems to have failed to recognize that the fall affected all of man, including his reasoning abilities.

- 3) Any knowledge of God based on general revelation alone will be incomplete at best and flawed at worst, both because of the limited nature of the revelation and the inability of the corrupted unaided human mind to grasp pure truth (Ephesians 2: 1-3; 4: 17-18).
- E. The position of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Hodge and Warfield seems more consistent with the teaching of Scripture.
- 1) There is a certain limited amount of information about God communicated by general revelation.
 - 2) This is essentially limited:
 - To the fact of His existence;
 - To His obvious power; and
 - To His nature as a loving God who provides for His children.
- F. Special revelation has to do with those means by which God communicates much more specific information about Himself and about His purposes, especially His redemptive purposes, to individuals, groups of people, nations, or to those with access to the Scriptures. This has occurred through:
- 1) Miracles (whereby God intrudes on His previously established order or on "nature") (John 2: 11);
 - 2) Through direct communication (whereby He spoke directly to a man or men by means of dreams, visions, voices, or theophanies) (Hebrews 1: 1; Numbers 12: 6-8; Genesis 32: 24-30; Acts 22: 17-21);
 - 3) Through the incarnation (whereby He took on the form of man for redemptive purposes) (John 1: 14; Philippians 2: 5-8; 1 Timothy 3: 16); and
 - 4) Through the Scriptures (whereby He moved Holy men to write His Word for purposes of teaching—doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteous living) (2 Timothy 3: 16).
- G. Without doubt the most significant of these special revelations is the incarnation, an actual historical fact that occurred at a specific point in time.
- 1) Even this, however, has been challenged by the eighteenth century revival of the Platonic concept of "eternal ideas" which are more significant than any historic event or combination of them.
 - 2) This rationalistic idea would suggest that revelation comes in the arena of reasonable contemplation, not on the stage of history.
- H. Schleiermacher suggested that "we know God only in relation to us and not as he is in himself, and that God communicates life and not doctrines...."
- I. But the revelation described in Scripture is a revelation so specific as to be made up of words (Hebrews 1: 1) and events (Galatians 4: 4) involving historic persons and places.
- J. And God does communicate to mankind a great deal about Himself, even separate and apart from His relationship with us.
- 1) In Genesis 1 we see Him at work even before man was on the scene; and
 - 2) The Scriptures declare things about Him:
 - His eternity,
 - His immutability,
 - His omniscience,
 - His omnipresence,
 - His omnipotence...
 Which are simply beyond our power to grasp.
 - 3) The Scripture is given specifically for doctrine (2 Timothy 3: 16).

II. Inspiration

- A. The doctrine of inspiration finds its primary base in 2 Timothy 3:16. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.
- 1) The word "inspiration" comes from the Greek *theopneustos*, which in its most literal sense means "God-breathed."
 - 2) This would suggest the accuracy of the evangelical position of verbal, plenary inspiration. That is, since Scripture is made up of words, the inspiration is verbal.
 - 3) It extends to the very words of Scripture. Since the inspiration extends to all Scripture, the inspiration is plenary.
- B. Inspiration must not be confused with revelation and illumination.
- 1) Revelation communicates new truth;
 - 2) Inspiration makes provisions for its inerrant and infallible preservation;
 - 3) Illumination gives insight into the revealed and inspired Scriptures.

- C. Inspiration occurred in the context of the Holy Spirit moving holy men to speak and/or write in such a way that the words thus spoken or written accurately expressed the mind of God (2 Peter 1: 20-21).
- 1) The process was not one of mechanical dictation, for God did not override the personalities, cultural backgrounds, vocabularies, or writing styles of these men.
 - 2) And yet that which was written by them could be only called "the Word of God," for they were influenced to write in such a way that every word was perfectly suited to communicate God's message.
- D. Inspiration does not mean that every statement in the Bible is true, for the Scripture records the erroneous words of Satan and unregenerate men.
- E. But inspiration does mean that everything the Bible reports, even from Satan and unregenerate men, is accurately reported.
- III. The Protestant System of Hermeneutics—Protestant hermeneutics has as its foundation the belief in the divine inspiration of the Bible. As a consequence of the view that the Bible is divine in its origin and content, it is seen as a spiritual book that demands certain minimal spiritual qualifications of its interpreter.
- A. The idea of inspiration also means that Biblical records are actual history and that there is a revelational aspect that adds new depth to key words in the New Testament.
- B. Protestant hermeneutics rejects all forms of rationalism, but it recognizes fully:
- 1) The importance of discovering the original text of the Bible;
 - 2) The true rules of interpretation; and
 - 3) The most careful application of them so that the word of man does not corrupt the word of God.
 - 4) The goal of Protestant hermeneutics is to produce a spiritual effect in the life of the man who reads Scripture.
 - 5) The theological context of Protestant hermeneutics includes general assumptions that govern exegesis. They are:
 - The clarity of Scripture, or the idea that the external clarity of Holy Scripture is its grammatical clarity, and that the internal clarity is the work of the Holy Spirit;
 - Revelation is accommodated to the human mind in a way that the human mind can assimilate it (revelation is anthropomorphic in character);
 - Revelation is progressive, which means the initiative in revelation comes from God, not man, and that revelation progresses from a theological infancy in the Old Testament to maturity in the New Testament;
 - Scripture interprets Scripture, demanding that obscure passages must give way to clear passages;
 - The analogy of faith, which assumes that there is one system of truth or theology contained in Scripture, and that all doctrines must agree with each other;
 - The unity of the meaning of Scripture, which opposes the idea of a plural meaning of Scripture, as seen in allegorisms, cults, and much of Protestant pietism; and
 - Interpretation and Application, which remembers that the purpose of Scripture is not interpretation alone, but application to one's life.
 - 6) The Philological Principle is also important to Protestant Hermeneutics.
 - a) Philology has to do with the technical and comparative study of words.
 - b) But it reaches beyond that to include a study of history, culture, and literary criticism.
 - c) This is commonly called the historico-grammatical method of interpretation, or the literal method.
 - d) The goal is exegesis, which discovers the original meaning and intention of the text.
 - e) A fundamental presupposition of the philological method is that exegesis must be done in the original languages to be competent and trustworthy.
- IV. Significant Cultural Elements Which Must Be Researched in the Interpretive Process—by "cultural" is meant the total ways, methods, manners, tools, customs, buildings, institutions, and so forth, by means of which, and through which, a clan, tribe, or a nation carry on their existence. The following must be researched:
- Biblical geography—including mountains, rivers, plains, crops, flora, fauna, seasons, and climate.
 - Biblical history
 - Biblical culture (in the strict anthropological sense).
 - Material culture—tools, objects, dwellings, weapons, garments, and so forth, that the given people use in the maintenance of its life.

- Social culture—all the customs, practices, rites, and so forth, that a society observes in the societal ongoing of the people.

In the final analysis, cultural research must include the above and all the following:

- Puberty rites,
- Marriage rites,
- Burial rites,
- Political structures,
- Legal systems,
- Family structures,
- Farm practices,
- Business practices,
- Methods of warfare,
- The practice of slavery,
- The treatment of captives,
- The monetary system,
- The economic system,
- The religious practices, and
- Any other contributing cultural agenda, including, for example the Greek philosophy as it relates to Paul's ministry.

V. The Function of Cultural Awareness in Biblical Interpretation—Although the Scriptures are profitable to all men, everywhere, of every age, for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3: 16), they are also written to specific individuals or specific groups of individuals within a variety of cultural frameworks.

- A. The Scriptures do address specific cultural norms of the day, and they do not attempt to anticipate every cultural development of the future.
- B. But the fact that Jesus commanded His disciples to go into all the world, teaching all people everywhere to obey His commandments (Matthew 28: 19) does suggest that the gospel can be applied to any cultural setting.
- C. The Bible interpreter must be thoroughly aware of the cultural norms of Bible history in order to accurately understand the meaning of Scripture in the cultural context in which it was given, and to apply the cross-cultural truth to another people, time, and place.

VI. Word Studies in Biblical Interpretation

- A. Don't...
 - 1) ...commit the root fallacy.
Don't suppose that every word actually has a meaning bound up with its shape or its components.
 - 2) ...fall prey to Semantic anachronism.
Don't read a later use of a word back into earlier literature.
 - 3) ...overlook Semantic obsolescence.
Don't forget that a word may have had a meaning in earlier times which is no longer found within the live, semantic range of the word.
 - 4) ...appeal to unknown or unlikely meanings.
 - 5) ...be careless in your appeal to background material.
It is possible to make an inappropriate appeal to background material that does not involve an intrinsically unlikely meaning.
 - 6) ...be guilty of verbal parallelomania.
The possibility of listing verbal parallels in some body of literature does not necessarily demonstrate conceptual links or even dependency.
 - 7) ...practice unwarranted linkage of language and mentality.
Don't assume that any language so constrains the thinking processes of the people who use it that they are forced into certain patterns of thought and shielded from others.

- 8) ...make false assumptions about technical meaning.
Don't assume that a word always or nearly always has a certain technical meaning.
- 9) ...minimize the problems surrounding synonyms and componential analysis.
The terms "synonymy" and "equivalence" are little understood and adequate distinctions are not always preserved. To the extent that two items are synonymous neither can explicate the other. Componential analysis attempts to isolate the components of meaning (i. e. the semantic components of [usually] words).
- 10) ...use evidence selectively and prejudicially.
- B. Do...
- 1) ...study the etymology of words.
Although there are limits to etymological research (i.e., we may not know the origin of a word or a compound word may have a meaning quite different from the separate components), there is nevertheless value in attempting to understand the word by the way it is formed. This may involve prefixes, infixes, suffixes, or a combination of words.
- 2) ...study words comparatively.
Use a Hebrew or Greek concordance to discover all the occurrences of the word in Holy Scripture. As we see the contexts in which the word is used, we begin to get a "feel" for the word. This may save us from making premature, simplified judgments as to the meaning of a word.
- 3) ...study the use of the words in their culture.
- 4) ...study words in cognate languages and ancient translations.
A word that may puzzle us in one language may be better understood by investigating its equivalent in another language of the same family. Since the Scriptures were translated into other languages in a historical period much closer to the Biblical period than we are today, we can gather something of what the ancient translators thought about Hebrew and Greek words.
- 5) ...pay attention to grammar.
Words occur in context, and in some cases the context tells us far more what the word means than pure philological research. Attention to the grammar of Scripture is going to reveal that Hebrew is an analytic language while Greek is synthetic. It will cause one to recognize the significance of inflection, declining, conjugation and syntax.
- 6) ...consider the context.
Every word of Scripture occurs in the context first of the entire Scripture, then of the specific testament where it is found, then of the particular book in which the passage occurs, then of the materials immediately before and after it.
- 7) ...examine parallel passages or cross references.
A real cross-reference is that parallelism of words or expression where the content or the idea is the same and there is profit from the mutual study of the texts.
- 8) ...recognize conceptual cross-references.
There are verses or passages in some books of Holy Scripture that have the identical substance or content of another verse or passage even though there is no common use of words.
- 9) ...discover parallel cross-references.
When two or more books of the Holy Scripture describe essentially the same events, compare the accounts to get the whole picture before attempting interpretation.
- 10) ...recognize literary mold or genre.
There are ways thoughts can be expressed which cannot be understood by ordinary grammatical examinations. There may be a figure of speech (metaphors, similes, hyperboles, etc.), parables, allegories, fables, riddles, historical accounts, dramatic epics, apocalyptic passages, poetry or wise sayings.

VII. The Doctrinal Use of the Bible

- A. The theologian is a redeemed man standing in the circle of divine revelation.
- B. The main burden of doctrinal teaching must rest on the literal interpretation of the Bible. This does not deny that the Bible uses figures of speech, but even these depend on the literal sense for their very existence and they are controlled by the literal.
- C. The main burden of our theology should rest on the teaching of the New Testament.
 - 1) While the Old Testament is inspired equally with the new, the New Testament is the capstone of revelation, and God's word through the supreme instrument of revelation, His Son (Hebrews 1: 2).
 - 2) A sense of proportion should be developed in interpreting Scripture which sees the worth of the Old Testament in the Christian church as its function as a seed and preparatory Christian document.
 - 3) The doctrines of faith, sin, atonement, Christ, sanctification, resurrection, heaven, hell, and the new earth with its New Jerusalem are all most clearly developed in the New Testament.
- D. Exegesis is prior to any system of theology.
 - 1) The theologian must not come to Scripture with any preconceived notion by which he forces Scripture into a certain mold.
 - 2) The theological system must be built up exegetically brick by brick.
- E. The theologian must not extend his doctrines beyond the Scriptural evidence.
 - 1) Questions which are unanswered by the text must be left alone.
 - 2) The control used to weed out false theological speculation is logic and evidence, with the evidence being Scripture itself.
 - 3) Much of exegesis depends on the logic of implication and the principles of induction and evidence.
- F. A theological interpreter strives for a system—a body of interrelated assertions.
 - 1) The theologian will strive to present a systematic formulation of each individual doctrine of the Bible with the data gathered intelligently from the entire range of Scripture.
 - 2) He will interrelate these doctrines into a coherent systematic theology.
 - 3) To do this competently, the theologian must have a minimum acquaintance with the history of philosophy and the history of theology.
 - 4) It must be remembered that there is an historical progression of revelation, and that the final systematic teaching of the Scripture is in its final intention.
- G. The theologian must use his proof texts with proper understanding of his procedure.
 - 1) While some criticize "proof-texting," it will by definition be necessary to appeal to specific portions of Scripture to establish any theology.
 - 2) The theologian must keep in mind that the mere listing of proof texts is of no value unless each verse is underwritten by sound exegetical work.
- H. What is not a matter of revelation cannot be made a matter of creed or faith.
 - 1) Only what is taught in Scripture is directly binding to conscience.
 - 2) This sets Protestant Biblical hermeneutics apart from Roman Catholicism that also holds the moral unanimity of the Father, the ecumenical creeds, the decisions made by ecumenical councils, and the ex cathedra utterances of the pope to be binding.
 - 3) It also rejects the claims of the cults that add to the Scriptures official handbooks or other writings.
 - 4) In addition, the theologian must object to the man who equates his interpretation with the Word of God, or who engages in extra-Biblical speculations, or who makes his own moral judgments with the certainty and authority of Scripture.
- I. The theological interpreter must keep the practical nature of the Bible in mind.
 - 1) The Bible is not a handbook on all there is to know.
 - 2) The intention of Scripture is limited to supplying man with the knowledge necessary to lead to salvation and to provide instructions on living a godly Christian life.
 - 3) It is an inspired selective history written to accomplish a specific purpose.
- J. The theological interpreter must recognize his responsibility to the church.
 - 1) The theologian is not in search of novel interpretations never before discovered.

- 2) He recognizes that he stands within a stream of sincere students of Scripture who have for 2,000 years wrestled with the text and who in the process have alike discovered it to contain certain fundamental or common themes:
 - That the Scriptures are the truth of God;
 - That the Scriptures speak of the woes of hell and the bliss of heaven; and
 - That salvation from one destiny to the other was wrought by the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh.
- 3) A theologian will not propose changes in doctrine lightly, but with a great deal of tentativeness and in submission to the larger circle of wise counsel.

VIII. Major Concepts Which Must be Kept in Mind When Interpreting the Various Types of Biblical Literature

A. Narrative

- 1) Look upon Biblical stories as an invitation to share an experience, as vividly and concretely as possible, with the characters in the story.
 - This concept considers the biblical stories to be accurate records of actual events.
- 2) Pay close attention to every detail of setting that a storyteller puts into a story, and if setting has an important role analyze how it contributes to the story.
 - This concept considers the setting of the biblical story to refer to actual times, places, and cultures in which God was active.
- 3) Use every relevant detail in a story to get to know the characters as fully as possible.
 - This concept considers the characters of the stories to have been real people who shared in the humanity common to all.
- 4) Identify the exact nature of the plot conflicts in a story, noting how they develop and are finally resolved.
 - This concept considers a specific story to have been divinely chosen out of many stories which could have been told for the specific reason of imparting truth that can be applied to other concrete situations.

B. Poetry

- 1) Poetry is a language of images that the reader must experience as a series of imagined sensory situations.
 - This concept implies that divine inspiration could extend not only to the recording of actual events that happened, but also to the expression of truth in imagery
- 2) Whenever you find a statement that compares one thing to another, first meditate on the literal or physical half of the comparison and then analyze how many correspondences can appropriately be drawn between that situation and the object of the poem.
 - This concept implies that divine inspiration could make use of the most highly developed literary forms.
- 3) Interpret as figurative any statement that does not make sense at a literal level in the context in which it appears.
 - This concept implies that divine inspiration normally results in words to be interpreted literally, but that this is not always the case. Sometimes the words are not intended to be interpreted literally, but figuratively. Even then, however, the figurative will always be based on the literal.

C. Proverb

- 1) Proverbs usually have a single point of comparison or principle of truth to convey.
 - This concept limits the interpretation of a proverb and prevents fanciful speculation about inconsequential meanings.
- 2) The rule of end stress is pervasive in the parables; the last element in a parable seems to be the most important.
 - Divine inspiration is able to make use of a common story-telling technique, with its development of characters, conflict, and climax to impart truth.
- 3) Parables are to be treated as allegories.
 - This is not to say that we should use arbitrary allegorization, but that the parables are allegories wherein one thing represents another. The only legitimate allegorical elements are, however, those intended by the person telling the parable.
- 4) A parable may have more than one mail point.

- While it has been long held that a parable has only one main point, there does appear to be multiple themes in some parables. This does not mean that everything in the parable represents something else. But it does mean that the person telling the parable may have had dominant and sub-dominant themes in mind and that he may have woven them together in his story.

D. Satire

- 1) Identify the object(s) of attack, the satiric vehicle, the tone, and the norm or standard by which things are criticized.
 - Divine inspiration is able to make use of widely accepted literary techniques to impart truth.

E. Letter

- 1) Determine the overall structure of the letter, "think paragraphs" in following the logical flow of ideas, interpret figurative language, and be sensitive to effects of artistic patterning.
 - Divine inspiration is not locked into a word alone, but into units of meaning defined by groups of words arranged so as to communicate some complete thought.

F. Prophecy

- 1) In visionary literature, be ready for the reversal of ordinary reality.
- 2) When reading visionary literature, be prepared to use your imagination to picture a world that transcends earthly reality.
- 3) Visionary literature is a form of fantasy literature in which readers must be willing to exercise their imaginations in picturing unfamiliar scenes and agents.
- 4) Instead of looking for the smooth flow of the narrative, be prepared for a disjointed series of diverse, self-contained units.
- 5) Ask, "Of what historical event or theological reality or event in salvation history does this passage seem to be a symbolic version?" The Holy Spirit is able to make use of symbolic fantasy to impart truth. The literal meaning of this symbolism is obtained by asking the following series of questions.
 - Where does the action occur?
 - Who are the actors?
 - What do they do?
 - What is the result?
 - What overall plot conflicts govern the work?
 - Who are the main actors in the work?
 - What changes occur as the book unfolds?
 - What final resolution is reached in regard to the overriding conflicts?

IX. Principles of Application of the Biblical Text for the Contemporary Believer

- A. All practical lessons, all applications of Scripture, all devotional material, must be governed by sound exegetical principles.
- B. The Bible is more a book of principles than a catalogue of specific directions.
- C. The Bible emphasizes the inner spirit rather than the outward religious cloak.
- D. In some statements it is the spirit of the statement that is to be our guide.
- E. Commands in terms of one culture must be translated into our culture.
- F. Commands in terms of one culture must be translated into our culture.
- G. We must make a distinction between what the Bible records and what it approves.
- H. We may take direct application from all of those incidents that the Bible directly censures or approves.
- I. Express commands to individuals are not the will of God for us.
- J. In the lives of men in the Scriptures determine what the outstanding spiritual principle is.
- K. In the application of examples to our lives we do not need a literal reproduction of the Biblical situation.
- L. In considering promises...
 - Note whether the promise is universal in scope.
 - Note whether the promise is personal.
 - Note whether the promise is conditional.
 - Note whether the promise is for our time.

X. Other Principles

- A. We must understand the original situation described in the passage and how God's Word applied to that situation.
- Cross the time barrier.
 - Cross the language barrier.
 - Cross the cultural barrier.
 - Cross the geographical barrier.
 - Identify the type of literature you are studying.
 - Get an overview of the book.
 - Study the book passage by passage.
 - Be sensitive to the mood of the book or passage.
 - Compare your interpretation with one or two commentaries.
- B. We must determine whether God's Word in that situation reflects a specific application of a broader principle.
- 1) The Bible contains many levels of application.
 - 2) These levels are like a pyramid, with only two commands (love for God and neighbor) at the pinnacle and all other commands at various levels between the pinnacle and the base.
 - Does the author state a general principle?
 - Why was this specific command or instruction given?
 - Does the broader context reveal a general principle?
- C. Apply that general principle to situations we face.
- 1) We can apply the principle to the identical situation faced by those in the passage.
 - 2) We can apply it to a comparable situation.
 - 3) Identify the key elements that are common to both the original situation and the principle we wish to apply. Then determine whether our situation contains each of these key elements.
 - Look at the original situation and the contemporary situation together.
 - Briefly summarize the issue in the original situation.
 - Write down the general principle in behind the original situation.
 - Compare the two, looking for how the elements were expressed in the original situation.
 - Ask whether your contemporary situation contains those elements.
 - 4) We can apply it to an entirely different situation, depending on what we mean by different.
 - A contemporary situation must always be comparable to the original situation in one respect: both must share the same key elements found in the general principle.

What Have You Learned?

1. Define "revelation." _____

2. Define "general revelation." _____

3. List the two (2) modes of general revelation. _____

4. Define "special revelation." _____

5. List the four (4) ways special revelation has occurred. _____

