

Rightly Handling The Word of Truth!

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A presentation for the 2008 CBC Lectures, Talamban, Cebu City, Philippines.

A Christian's quest for personal growth is a drawn out process of **EDUCATION** that produces different results in different individuals. Even though the teachings, ideals and goals are the same for all Christians of all genders, nations and cultures, no two individual Christians will grow at the same rate and achieve the same levels of capability in their service to the Lord. The reality of this was mentioned by our Lord when he spoke of the "good soil" in his famous "*Parable of the Sower*" in **Matthew 13:23**.

Observation shows us that the only consistent things that will be found in personal growth are

- 1) The more one studies the Bible, the more and faster they will grow.
- 2) The more a person grows in knowledge, the more **capability** they will have to serve.
- 3) Unless they **choose to use their knowledge and capability**, no good will come for the Lord!

The famous passage, **Romans 10:14-17**, illustrates a relationship between faith and listening to "the sayings of Christ" and **Hebrews 5:11-6:3** shows us that a person who becomes "lazy to listen" will not grow and even forget what they learned in the past!

Just as in the world, personal "Christian" growth does not come automatically nor does one become strong in the faith by sleeping on the Bible as a pillow, or by simply keeping a special copy of the Word of God on a prominent table in the house in full view of all who might enter! Only those who actually open the Bible and study it will grow! **Only those who CONTINUALLY open and study it will continue to grow!**

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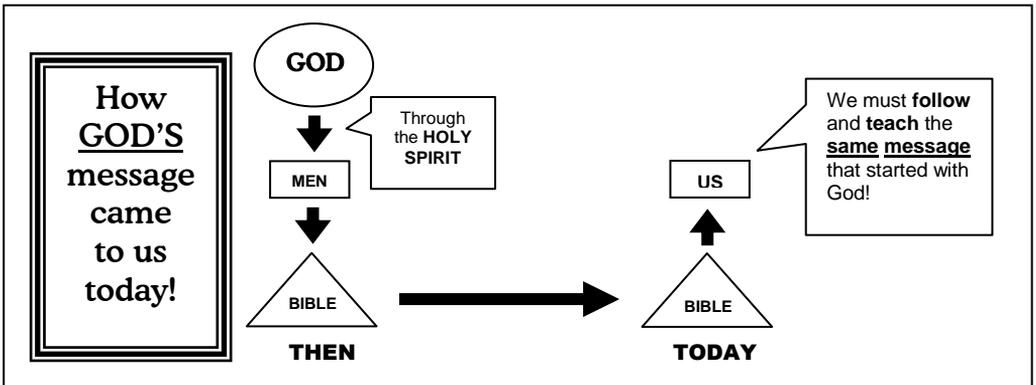
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Studying the Bible, obeying and remaining faithful to it are the keys to personal growth!

God's Word: The Foundation of Our Faith

As we begin our material for this study, we need to review a few foundation points on which **FAITH** is built.

1. When it comes to knowing what God wants, **no man can guide himself** and so he must get his instructions from God.
(See: **Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12; 1 Corinthians 2:11-12**)
2. The message of the Bible came to us from God, it **belongs to God alone**, and it is the same for all people in all places and for all times.
(See: **2 Timothy 3:16-17**)
3. God's message is to be **understood** and not interpreted.
(See: **2 Peter 1:20-21; Isaiah 55:8-9**)



An Assault on God's Authority:

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One of the most difficult challenges faced by anyone today is recognizing and battling the many and various false teachings that exist in the religious world around us. We live in a world that continues to drift farther away from reliance upon good Bible study methods and into a dependency upon a supposed “illumination” by the Spirit. In the name of “spirit guidance” many new prophets, teachings and churches have come to exist and flourish, and many of our own brethren have become persuaded by their doctrines to the point that some have left the faith while others seek to bring into the Lord’s church denominational teachings as “beneficial improvements”.

As we consider this dilemma, let us not forget that this kind of situation is not new to Christianity. The Epistles of John address the same kind of situation and the writer’s energy was directed toward getting the people to remember, understand, and follow one simple instruction. *“Let that which you heard from the beginning remain in you. If that which you heard from the beginning remains in you, you will remain in both the Son and the Father.”* (1 John 2:24)

When it comes to the topic of God’s authority in religion today, we all heard and accepted these points back in the beginning of our faith. When we stood in the water of our baptism, we believed that the Bible is God’s word. We believed that it is a complete guide for religion today, and that we cannot add or take away from its content. We also believed that our goal in study is to understand its message **IN CONTEXT** and then implement any portions that apply to us in our time.

People who are new in Christ, and whose trust is fixed upon God, have little trouble accepting these basic truths. However, with the passing of time and our ever-increasing contact with “denominational Christians” of other churches some brethren become perplexed at what they see as a contradiction. *How, they ponder, can we be so confident*

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and **INSIST** upon a rigid conformity to the details of the Bible message, which specifically explains **who IS** and **who IS NOT** a Christian¹, and by which details many

¹ The New Testament teaches that Christians are believers who have made a commitment to change their lives (repentance) followed by a moment in water where they first stood as a penitent “believer” who was still dead in sin, but who in the next moment, by means of immersion, was plunged under water in a “burial” to join with Christ’s death and blood and then in the next moment was raised out of that watery grave of immersion to “walk in new life” just as Christ was raised from his own grave never to die again! (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38, Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:8-13; Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Examples of conversion in Acts 2:1-41;8:4-13;8:26-39;9:1-19 & 22:12-16; 10:23-48;16:13-15;16:25-34;18:8;19:1-7) The writer of Hebrews (in chapters 8, 9, and 10) shows through a shadow-versus-reality relationship he makes between the Old and New Testaments that sin is only forgiven through the shedding of BLOOD (Hebrews 9:22). Other places indicate that Jesus taking our sin and dying to shed his BLOOD was a **favor** God did for us when we did not deserve it. This “undeserved favor” is what is meant by the Greek word found in the text that is translated into the English word GRACE! It is by this GRACE/FAVOR alone (the DEATH/BLOOD of Jesus) that sinners are saved! The instructions and examples of conversion (mentioned above) clearly show that the only way people were told to receive this GRACE/BLOOD into their lives was to TRUST God, REPENT of their sins, CONFESS that they believed in Jesus and his death, and then be JOINED with him and his death by being buried and raised with Christ through immersion in water. We are immersed because God instructed us and in doing so, as we read in Colossians 2:12, we are trusting in GOD to do what he promised and we believe that we have NEW LIFE when we come up out of the water, just as he tells us. In immersion, GOD alone does the work! If Jesus’ blood is only received through immersion, then anyone who does not experience immersion to join with Jesus’ death does not yet have his blood! Consequently, no matter how sincere and penitent they might be, they are still lost because if there is no BLOOD then there is no forgiveness of sins and if there is no immersion into Christ then there is no blood! This is the reason why immersion is included in Jesus’ farewell instructions to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20

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*good people that we know would **not** even be counted as Christians?* After all, many of these people possess wonderful spirits and attitudes and are quick to give God and Christ all the credit for the changes brought about in their lives. **Does not the fact of their goodness, humility of spirit, and especially their eagerness to give God the credit PROVE beyond doubt that these people are in fact genuine Christians?** This is a very difficult problem to overcome in the hearts of many brethren, and, it seems that many are now leaving to join denominational churches that accept anyone who claims to be a Christian, or, they embark upon crusades to alter the teachings and practices of the Lord's church to allow the entry "as brothers" of anyone "professing" the name of Christ!

Before we throw up our hands in disgust or in surrender, let us consider three very simple facts. First, everything that anyone today might believe or teach concerning "Christianity" **MUST** come from Jesus Christ! Everyone, regardless of what denomination they happen to belong to, **MUST agree to this statement!** After all, everyone who claims to be a Christian believes that **Jesus IS LORD!** Second, it is Jesus himself who has the power and right to say if and when a person is a Christian. Third, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Whatever specific details he gave on the matter when he walked the earth apply just as much today as they did then!

If Christ **IS** the founder and Lord of **CHRIST**ianity, and if his teachings are found only in the pages of the New Testament, then anything that is to be believed

and Mark 16:15-16. **Please Note:** There is no such thing as a "Sinner's Prayer" mentioned in the Bible and there is no passage where any person was ever told to say the "Sinner's Prayer" in order to receive Jesus and join with his death. Finally, there is no evidence, from the examples of people becoming Christians in the book of Acts, of any person being told to say such a prayer or actually saying such a prayer to become a Christian. The teaching and practice of saying that prayer is something people made up after reading and misapplying Romans 10:8-10.

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and taught in **genuine** Christianity today **MUST** be that which is recorded in the Bible.

Having said that, is it **possible** that **TODAY**, as so many people insist, the Holy Spirit “**guides**” people to the truth of Christianity? Possible? Of course, it is **possible!** After all, we know that God used the Spirit to give people messages and instructions ever since the time of Creation. However, **IF** the teachings of Christianity were originally given by Jesus and his apostles, who were all guided by the Spirit, **AND IF** people today are in fact being guided by that same Spirit, shouldn't the message these people receive today be the same one we have recorded in the New Testament? In fact, **HOW CAN WE BE CERTAIN** that people today who **CLAIM** to be “guided” by God are really teaching the truth? We must compare what they say to what is recorded in the Bible and if there are any differences, we must reject them! Therefore, whether we might receive the teachings direct from the Spirit or not, the Bible becomes a measuring device we can use to determine if something that people might **claim** to be true really is true!

While on the subject of the possible guidance of the Holy Spirit today, consider this one final thought. Let us forget for one moment about the actual content of the recorded message in the Bible. If **ALL** the groups today that claim this special Spirit guidance are in fact receiving such guidance, shouldn't they **ALL** receive the exact same **consistent** message from group to group to group? **YES**, because if the **same** Spirit **is** guiding them, then it **should** deliver the **same** message to all groups! Therefore, without even looking at the specific teachings, the mere fact that these groups **do not teach the SAME THINGS** is proof that this so-called guidance of the Holy Spirit **IS NOT** happening today.

Jesus spoke many things when he walked the earth, but none relates to our discussion more than **Matthew 7:21-23**, where Jesus spoke about religious people, who **CLAIMED** to have a relationship with him. Jesus described

them as being good and moral people, who believed in him, who did mighty works for God, and who even exercised spiritual powers in his behalf! These were people who, like our own good and sincere friends and neighbors of today, would joyfully call Jesus, “Lord”, and who would confidently consider themselves “Christians”. This is why it is so shocking to continue reading and hear Jesus deliver his angry condemnation upon them as “evil doers”.

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How can **these good people** be considered evil? They **believed** in Jesus! They **worked** for him! They had **power** over evil! And ... as many today emphasize... **they gave ALL credit to God!** Therefore, how is it possible that Jesus could say “**depart from me, I NEVER knew you**”, to people such as these? However difficult it may be to accept, this is exactly what the Lord did and a careful look at the context reveals that their problem was one of details. They did **what THEY thought** was right but Jesus said that they were **WRONG** for doing that. He said that they should have done what he called, “**the WILL of my Father.**”

Remember the second “very simple fact”, mentioned back on page 5; that **CHRIST decides** who is right and wrong in Christianity! A certain way of doing things might **SEEM** right to us, but it might end up being the way to death, as it was for these “believers”, in Christ’s story! (**Proverbs 14:12**)

This leaves us with a very important question to answer. *What is this, “WILL of the Father”, that was Jesus’ basis for judging these people as “evil doers”?* On another occasion, in **John 12:44-50**, Jesus spoke about his role as his Father’s spokesperson and about the Judgment. He said that the Judgment will be based upon **the TEACHINGS he gave** and that these teachings are not his own, but that they came **from his father!** Therefore, the most logical conclusion is that the “will of the Father” and the teachings Jesus gave to us from the Father, by which he will judge people, must be the same thing. We have these teachings in the New Testament and anyone who wants to survive the Judgment should learn and practice those teachings instead of simply doing **what THEY think** is right!

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As mentioned earlier, the situation we face today is not new. It is the same as it was during the time of original Christianity. When Christianity began, everyone in the church seemed content and devoted to the teachings delivered by the Apostles². However, thirty or forty years later things were very different.

The New Testament contains evidence that, for some unknown reasons, people who started out as Christians left behind the original teachings they received and started believing and teaching things that were not correct. Evidently, many of these people claimed to have received their teachings from God. However, **WITHOUT EXCEPTION**, these people and their teachings were condemned by the apostles.

Consider the warnings recorded in the following passages and look carefully at their context.

2 Corinthians 4:1-2

Paul tells the Corinthians, “we renounced shameful things, not walking in **CRAFTINESS**, neither **DISTORTING THE WORD OF THE GOD**, but by means of the showing of the truth while recommending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the presence of the God.”

Galatians 1:6-9

The Galatians were being influenced to accept a different “Good News”. Since Galatia is a region there must have been several “congregations” affected. Looking at what Paul says, and the way he repeats himself in verse 9, the problem must have been great! What is his point? If **ANYONE TEACHES SOMETHING DIFFERENT** then “let him or her be an accursed thing”!

² Please see Acts 2:42-47 for more details.

2 Timothy 4:3

Paul tells Timothy that the time will come when people will no longer be satisfied with sound teaching, but **ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN DESIRES**, they will accumulate for themselves teachers “tickling” their ears and they will turn away from the truth and turn aside to the myths!

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2 John 1:9-11

Here, John warns people in the strongest of terms not to go beyond what Jesus taught or else they will not have God! They are **NOT TO INVITE** people who teach wrong things into their houses or even greet them because doing so will make them partners with them in their evil work!

Revelation 22:18-19

Here we see a just warning about **ADDING** or **TAKING AWAY** from what was revealed in the Book of Revelation. This plainly shows that there are grave consequences for doing either of these things!

There Is An “ETHIC” To Maintain:

There is an **ethic**³ defined in these passages, which as it turns out, is no different from the one that is universally expected and applied in all cultures of our world today!

The **ethic** is simple:

- Any message that originates with a certain person is his or her own property and no other person has any right to alter it in any way.

³ An **ethic** is a system of standards for behavior that help people determine what is right and wrong.

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- Anyone who hears that message is to understand what the owner of the message intended to say in its context.
- Any person who desires to pass that message on to others (whether it is to be done in the same language or through translation into different languages) is duty bound to leave the original message and context unchanged even if they do not agree with the content of the message itself!
- **ANYTHING LESS IS “TAMPERING” AND THAT IS UNETHICAL!**

ETHICS and Bible translations:

When a person picks up a copy of “The Holy Bible”, in any language, there are assumptions that take place in his or her heart and mind. It is **assumed** that the book in hand is a **genuine** translation of the God’s message and that when he or she uses it, they are reading the original words God intended them to see, understand, and follow. Unfortunately, this is not always the case!

*** “*Word-for-word*” Versus “*Thought-for-thought*” ***

As a basic premise, the translation of any written document from one language into another is linguistic matter. Any time a message is translated, the primary goal is to take each word in the original language and find a corresponding word in the translation language. Because languages do not always relate to one another well enough to accomplish a word-for-word correlation, there are difficulties to overcome. Sometimes grammar and syntax of the original and translation languages are so different that it is virtually impossible to make any word-for-word translation! In addition, languages often contain non-literal uses of certain words, and phrase constructions that carry unique meanings. Linguists use the term “idiom” to

represent such situations. There are many idioms found in the original text of the Bible. When idioms are encountered in translation, it is impossible to translate word-for-word and preserve the original intended meaning. To solve this problem of translating idioms, the principle of translating “thought-for-thought” was developed, which takes intended **meaning** of the idiom and then uses whatever words are necessary in the translation language to represent the intended meaning and achieve the desired effect of the original idiom.

The earliest **ethic** for Bible translation followed the idea of being as literal as possible and using thought-for-thought only in cases of idiom, or, where no corresponding word from the original language could be found in the translation language.

A careful survey of the history of Bible translation philosophy reveals that earliest English translators followed this philosophy fairly consistent, however, over the past 100 years, a shift has occurred away from a “literal” translation ethic toward one that is more “thought-for-thought” oriented in all situations. The trouble with using “thought-for-thought” for translating the entire Bible text is that it releases the translators from the need to carefully consider and find corresponding words and to use consistent corresponding words for multiple occurrences of words in the original language. Thought-for-thought allows translators to use whatever words **they think convey their perceived meaning** of the original message.

“Consistency” then becomes defined by the **translators’ perceived meaning** of the original message! When this happens, the translator ceases to be a “linguist” and becomes a “theologian”! Using thought-for-thought, it is far too easy for translators to insert their theological opinions into the message and the result can be that some of the wordings in their translation of the Bible contain words that God never spoke and what the person who purchases their Bible and reads it will see are words and ideas of men that

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covered up and replaced the original words and ideas that God intended for them to see, understand, and obey! **This is unethical!**

*** Refusing To Translate Simple Words ***

Another problem in translations occurs when translators intentionally do not translate words from the original language. This usually happens when the passage or word in question has something to do with church doctrine and where literally translating the original word into its simple corresponding word in the translation language would contradict what their particular group believes and practices. The best and simplest example of this is found in the word “**baptism**” found inside our English Bibles.

The original language text of the Bible always contains the same Greek word in every verse where “baptism”⁴ is found. Even though the original Greek word was common in everyday life, and is easily translated into English, the translators do not translate it. The reason is that different religious groups practice “baptism” **through different methods** and translators do not want to offend or alienate anyone. Some groups practice immersion in water, while others use sprinkling or pouring of water upon the person. The problem with this reasoning is that **GOD used one particular word in HIS message** and the translators are supposed to translate that word into its English counterpart, regardless of the consequences. The facts of the matter are simple

1. The word in the text is βαπτίζω (BAPTIZO), which means, “I immerse, dip, or submerge”.
2. BAPTIZO **cannot** mean either sprinkling or pouring.
3. The action of “sprinkling” has a corresponding Greek word: ραντίζω (RHANTIZO).
4. The action of “pouring” has a corresponding Greek word: ἐκχέω (EKCHEO).

⁴ The noun form of the Greek word is βαπτισμα, and the verb form is βαπτίζω, These words can only mean **immersion** or **dipping**.

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The point here is simple. If God wanted people to be sprinkled then in the original text of his message he would have used the Greek word RHANTIZO, or the Greek word EKCHERO if he had wanted people to have something poured upon them! However, the word God used was BAPTIZO and so he wanted people to be immersed into something!

Consider the translators that work at the United Nations. They do not have the right to skip or change the meaning of the words of an original message, even if they completely disagree with what is being said, or, if translating accurately might offend or anger the hearers. Even if translating accurately might start a war they still must translate exactly what they hear **accurately and completely** and then let the hearers of their translation deal with accepting or rejecting the message!

The word **BAPTIZO** continues to remain **BAPTISM** in English translations because translators and publishers are either too afraid of offending people whose religions use another “method” for baptism, or, they themselves are leaders of religious groups who use these different methods and simply do not wish to admit that they are wrong. Therefore, they leave the original word untranslated!

Translators cannot refuse to translate words of a message because of the fear that some of those reading or listening might be offended! It is unfair to the owner of the message!
It is unethical!

*** Combining Passages To Form Human Concepts ***

Another problem in Bible translations involves the practice of translators formulating religious concepts by selecting certain Bible passages and then bypassing the simple meanings of the original language words and creating new English words, which were not part of the vocabulary of the original language, and, which they insert into these verses **in place of the original language words that God intended for people to see.**

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These words are almost always used in other places in the text besides the locations in their carefully selected list, and in those other locations, these same translators translate the words appropriately, using the word meanings people in the time of the New Testament understood and used. However, they take their list and then combine various aspects of the original language words found in these passages to form an idea, which they represent with an entirely different word in English!

To illustrate this point, consider the idea of making a fruit salad! When a person makes a fruit salad, they combine pieces of different kinds of fruit, which are in no way related to one another in color, texture, or flavor, but when combined together result in a special flavor that tastes good! While fruit salad may be a good thing when speaking about deserts, it is not good when translating someone else's message!

When translators ignore the actual meanings of the words found in an original message and assign one English word to represent the meaning of a group of original language words in a carefully chosen list of passages, this is like making "translators' fruit salad"!

When this occurs, several bad things happen.

1. The **translators, and NOT God**, establish a link between those original language words, which neither the language nor the context of the message support.
 - By their deliberate action, without any prompting by the language or context, THEY go beyond their authority and add things to God's message.
 - The only way that a concept involving several original language words can be proven to be established is if the writer of the message used them together and thus defined the concept.

2. The **translators, and NOT God**, betray the readers of their translation because these people trust the translators and believe that whatever English word the translators use in these verses **MUST** be a genuine accurate representation of the original language.
 - How can two or more unique original language words have consistent individual meanings individually, which are consistently different from the meanings of other words in their “list”, and yet in **select passages**⁵ mean exactly the same thing? That goes against common sense!
3. The **readers of the translation** do not see the words that God intended for them to see!

Unless the readers of the translation learn the original languages, then take time to research these matters fully, and carefully, how will they ever know that these concepts are man-made? After a generation or so of acceptance of a particular wording in certain Bible passages, the man-made concept becomes accepted to the point that the meaning of the substituted word becomes added as a possible “secondary meaning” to the definition of the original language word in “trusted” lexicons and Bible dictionaries. While it may be true that words in languages that are used today evolve, words of a dead language are fixed and they will not change. The languages of the Bible text are all “dead languages”, meaning that no one alive today speaking these languages in their original form.

One example where translators have done this is the very emotional topic known as “**WORSHIP**”. There is not one single word in the original languages that meant what we think of when whenever hear the word “worship”.

Commentators and theologians readily admit that this topic **IS NOT** defined specifically **by God** in the Scripture

⁵ Different Bible translations will have slightly different verse listings for the word “worship”. See **Appendix A** for a sample. If this concept was from God, should not the word “worship” be found **in the same verses inside ALL Bibles?**

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In reality, the idea of “worship” **was defined by translators**, who chose selected verses that contained several different Greek words. Then **they, and NOT God**, combined the different aspects of the definitions of those original language words⁶ to create the concept, which called, and we know today, as “worship”.

- The first problem with this is the fact that the English word “worship” is commonly understood by religious minded people to represent the idea of coming together in order to sing songs of praise to God, to pray to God, to hear a message from the Bible, to partake of the Lord’s Supper together, and to contribute money. However, if you go back to the original text, and try to apply this **modern** understanding into what the original writer and readers understood, it does not fit!
 - Any conclusion we make today in Bible study that will not fit back into the context of the time of the original message must be considered wrong!
- A second problem we notice is the inconsistency of the translators of different English Bibles.
 - Why is it that if we do a concordance search on the word “worship” in different English Bibles, the resulting list of verses will be slightly different? It is because different groups of translators have different verses they use to build their individual idea for the concept of “worship”. Therefore, the “concept” will vary depending upon which Bible translation you use!

⁶ While there are generally three basic Greek words that the translators have combined, some translations translate as many as 14 different original language words as “worship”. Each of these words had its own unique meaning in the time it was being used and there is no place in the Bible where any writer uses these words together and defines them into a concept.

- A third problem we see is the inconsistency of the translators when more than one of their “key” Greek words appears in a single verse.
- **Matthew 4:10** is a good example of this point as it applies to “worship”. Two of the words translators combine to create the concept are found. In their list of key verses, where these two words usually stand alone, they translate each one by substituting the word “worship”, however when the two Greek words appear here in the same verse it creates a problem.
 - Did Jesus say to the Devil, “you will **worship**⁷ your Lord God and you will only **worship**⁸ him”?
 - Did the Devil tell Jesus that he would give him all the kingdoms if he would have a special service where Jesus would sing songs to Satan, pray to Satan, and do other special activities during that time in honor of Satan? No!
 - The original is very easy to represent in English. Satan told Jesus he would give him those kingdoms if he would “**BOW DOWN in homage**” to him. In response, Jesus tells Satan, “you will **bow down in homage** only to your Lord God and you will only **serve** him.”

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Just as we saw in the example of fruit salad, **who** decides which verses should be included in the ones translated “worship”? Which set of Bible translators should we follow in order to get the right explanation? The answer is “none of them”! If the Bible is God’s message and he wanted us to have this particular concept, he himself would have defined it and then told us to practice it.

⁷ The word here is προσκυνέω, which means “to bow down in homage” or “to prostrate”.

⁸ The word here is λατρεύω, which means “to serve”.

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Remember, as it was stated at the beginning of this section, that theologians and commentators will readily admit that God does not define “worship” in the Scripture. If God did not define it, **is it ethical** for translators to do it?

Before we leave this point, it should be noted that **God does establish** a relationship between several Greek words in his message. Consider the topic of the church leaders, called **ELDERS**. The book of Acts records a speech⁹ that Paul made to a group of “elders” from the city of Ephesus, in which he establishes a relationship between three Greek words to show what being an Elder is supposed to be. Because of this, we know that an “Elder”, is a “Pastor”, is a “Guardian”!

This is very different from what we saw in the case of “worship in that;

- **God**, and not the translators, made the relationship between these Greek words in the original message.
- There is **no substitution of a new vocabulary word** to replace what the original words would be translated into.
 - Even though the three words relate to each other, they are translated with their simple word-for-word equivalencies in English.
 - It would be wrong for translators (just as they did in the case of “worship”) to simply combine these three words together, come up with a single English word (like “**leaders**” or something similar), and then insert that one word in place of those three words found in the original language text!

⁹ In Acts 20:17 it states that Paul called to him the ELDERS or OLDER MEN (πρεσβύτερος) and then later, in verse 28, he spoke to them about being PASTORS or SHEPHERDS (ποιμήν) and GUARDIANS or OVERSEERS (ἐπίσκοπος).

Translators should remain translators and refrain from being theologians in their translation work. They should translate the words of the message completely and accurately. Once they are done then the theologians can have the translation and determine what the message means and how it applies.

If concepts and ideas are legitimate, they must be defined by the one who gives the message and the context and usage of words used by the original writer are the only legitimate way this can be done. **When translators overstep their mandate and do this then they are TAMPERING with God's message and being unethical!**

*** Using Words Not Found In The Original Text ***

Another problem with translations today concerns the practice of some translators who ignore the original language words in the text and place words in the translation that have no relationship whatsoever to the words God placed in his message.

An example of this problem is **Romans 12:1**. The original language text at the end of the verse contains the phrase λογικὴν¹⁰ λατρείαν¹¹. These are both simple words and easy to translate. The first one is the word for “reasonable” or “logical” and the second one means “service”, as in service given for hire, such as “employment”. Together, these two words would yield an English phrase, “reasonable service” or “logical service”.

However, a careful examination of English Bible translations shows that while **ALL** translations made before 1900 translate this phrase as one would expect to find in a simple word-for-word translation, translations beginning

¹⁰ This Greek word means “reasonable” or “logical”, and is where we get our English word “logical”.

¹¹ This Greek word means “service” such as the kind given by someone who is hired to do a job.

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with the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901, depart from the literal translation of the two into various combinations and resulting meanings. (Please see the **Appendix B** at the back of this booklet for a detailed listing.)

For some reason, the translators of the ASV chose to use the English word “spiritual” in place of “reasonable/logical”. This is not possible because, just as we saw in the case of the word “baptism”, the original Greek language of the 1st Century **HAD** a very simple word-for-word equivalent for the English word “spiritual”. It was the word **πνευματικός**¹² and a careful study of the secular writings of the time shows no relationship between these two original language words. The point here is simple. The word God used in **HIS** original message was **λογικὴν** and not **πνευματικὴν** and so why did the ASV translators not simply translate it as “reasonable” or “logical”? Did God intend for English speaking people to see the word “spiritual”, or “reasonable”/“logical”? **Was it ethical when these translators set aside the simple literal meaning and injected their own perception?**

On the other side of this two-word equation, a quick look back at the **Appendix B** list will show that the translators of the Bible in Basic English (BBE) of 1949 chose to translate the second word in the original language phrase using the English word “worship” instead of the simple word-for-word translation “service”.¹³ As it turns out, this verse is one of the KEY verses in the defining of the idea of “worship” and so this explains why even though the meaning of the original language word here is clear and simple, “service”,

¹² This Greek word means, “spiritual”, and is used several times by the same writer of Romans, in letter to the Corinthians, where he writes about “spiritual” gifts!

¹³ Remember that the English word “worship” represents a man-made concept and the Greek word in this verse is one of the three main words that the translators chose to mistranslate in certain strategic places.

the translators of different Bibles often use the word “worship”. Once again, we ask the same questions, “Did God intend for English speaking people to see the word ‘spiritual’, or ‘reasonable’/‘logical’? **Was it ETHICAL** when these translators set aside the simple literal meaning and injected their own perception?”

If we look back at the **Appendix B** list one more time, we see that **MANY** translators even went so far as to change **BOTH** the original words, yielding the phrase, “spiritual worship”! Did God intend for English speaking people to see the phrase “spiritual worship”, or “reasonable service”? **Was it ETHICAL** when the translators to set aside the simple literal meanings?

Please remember that our purpose in this study is not to be controversial or confrontational. However, if the evidence causes controversy then we must consider the point carefully. The major point is still about the ethics of translation. Do the translators of any message have the authority to alter the original content in any way? No! Tampering is not allowed!

*** *Translating Using “Religious” Words* ***

One final area of difficulty with translations concerns the practice of using English words that most people associate exclusively with “religion” to represent original language words that had no exclusive religious association in the minds of the people who used them in Bible times.

One example of this problem is the word “baptism” discussed previously in this study. When most people today hear the word, they think of religion because the word baptism is almost always used in discussions about religion. The original language **word BAPTIZO was not a religious word**. It simply meant, “to immerse” or “to dip”. It was used in everyday life and so when people heard this word being used within the context of the teachings of Jesus it was easy for them to understand what was being required of them.

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However, because people today see the confusing and “religious” word “baptism” in their Bibles they think it refers to some complicated religious ceremony.

Another example of this problem is with the word **HOLY**. Most people think of religion when they hear this word. However, the original language word that is found in the verses where the English word “holy” is seen was not a religious word at all, but a simple, everyday word that carried the idea of **something being “special” as opposed to ordinary**. It did not have the idea of “clean” or “pure” included in its meaning. Something could be special without being clean!

- To illustrate the point, a mechanic might have a special tool in his toolbox that is used for a special purpose. That tool might be scarred and covered in dirt and grease, but it is still a “special” tool, one set apart for a special purpose. This is what the original language word for HOLY means.

When this word is applied to people, the translators typically use the word “**SAINTS**” in their translations. However, people today also associate this word with religion and the original meaning of God’s message becomes lost. Christians are saints, meaning that they are God’s “special people”, set apart by him for a special purpose.

- The Greek language has additional words for “pure” and “clean” and sometimes these words are used in the original text of the message **in connection with** a person being “special”, but these ideas are not included as part of the definition of the original language word that is translated “holy”!

Another illustration of the problem has to do with the existence of very long and confusing words found in some English Bibles. These words often represent essential concepts in Christianity and misunderstanding those makes one unable to fulfill one’s obligation to God!

One such word is **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, which is another English word that most people associate with religion. However, the original language word found in the text had no exclusive religious meaning but was a very common everyday word with a simple meaning. This word is part of a family of words that form the foundation of how God deals with people and how people should deal with one another!

The original language word represents the idea of “balance” and it was used in two basic areas of life in New Testament times. One was in the financial world, where this word was used to represent the idea of “balanced” books, and “fairness” in business practices. A second area was in the judicial system where it was used to represent the idea of balance and fairness. It was the Greek’s word for “acquittal” in trial cases and the word people in that day and time used for our word “justice”! However, because the translators use the confusing and “religious” word righteousness, most people today never get the point God is trying to make in his message!

To make the situation even more difficult, some translations **use TWO long and confusing words** instead of one. Translations that contain the words “righteousness” and “justification” hide the fact that these two are translated from one and the same original language word in the original text!

Is it ethical when translators intellectualize the simple message of God by using “religious” and confusing words in place of the simple and clear words they could be using?

Summarizing What We Have Seen So Far

The application of the ethic mentioned earlier to the general act of translation is simple. Any person who changes or misrepresents the original message of another is being dishonest and it does not matter if their **intention**

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is good or evil. A person's intended meaning is contained in what **they** said and not upon what a translator, assistant, or even a good friend might **THINK** they meant to say, or, might have **WANTED** them to say!

The application of this ethic to God's message in the Bible is equally simple. Whether it be through textual criticism, exegesis and translation from the original languages, personal Bible study activities, or in preparing materials for teaching others, **ANY change made to GOD'S message is wrong! Any effort we make must result in people seeing the words God intended for them to see!**

The bottom line is this. A message belongs to the one who makes it. They alone know what they intended to say and they said things exactly the way they wanted. If a translator changes the original message in any way is unethical!

**Who among us will not
become upset if we are
misquoted or
misrepresented out of
context by others in
anything that we say or do?**

**Are You Being ETHICAL , Or Applying
"SPIN"?**

One thing is certain, people today must do a much better job of handling the message of God. If God's message is one message for all people living in all places and times, and if that message has only one meaning, then logic demands that **there SHOULD ONLY BE "ONE FAITH,**

ONE LORD, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF US ALL”, just as we read in the writings of Paul to the Ephesians! (**Ephesians 4:1-6**) If this is **NOT** what we see in religion today, the fault **IS NOT** in the message, but in the way people study and teach the message. It is not right to read a passage of the Bible and then make it say what we want it to say.¹⁴ According to what Jesus taught, there should be unity among believers. There **should be UNITY** like the one shared by Jesus with his Father, just as he prayed for all believers in **John 17:20-23**!

A situation with 20,000 plus religious groups **CLAIMING** that they are Christian, **CLAIMING** that Jesus is Lord, **CLAIMING** that they are right, while no two of these groups teach the same thing is **NOT UNITY AND IS UNETHICAL!**

In like manner, a situation where baptized believers become divided on “issues” that are not part of God’s message, but are matters of personal importance where brothers and sisters in Christ strain and twist at the message of the Father in order to justify their “position”, while the world looks on and wonders how this can be God’s **TRUE** church, **IS NOT UNITY AND IS UNETHICAL!**

Which situation is worse?

In reality, **BOTH** are unacceptable! Can you imagine Jesus acting in either of these ways toward the Father that he loves more than life itself? Is not the essence of the command, “Love the lord you God with all your heart mind and soul”, lived out in the lives of people who pay extra careful attention to **HOW they handle GOD’S message** so as not to misunderstand or misrepresent something **HE** said? **How much do YOU love God, and HOW are you SHOWING HIM THIS LOVE?** Are you turning within yourself, making up a list of things “to do” that sound good to you, then collecting teachers, or finding a church that believes what you want and which will endorse your ideas so that you **FEEL** secure? Is this how **TRUTH** is revealed and discovered?

¹⁴ This is what many people today refer to as “spin”.

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Or... are you simply giving yourself as servant and child to the loving Father and day by day seeking to understand **HIS WILL**, following only what you read in the Bible, listening only to teachers **that agree 100% with HIS WILL**, and accepting as “brother”, without reservation, any person who also submits to God in the very same way? **If ALL will do this, then Jesus will tell us WHEN we are Christians, and who IS and IS NOT a Christian!**

The Lord who told the story of **Matthew 7:21-23** awaits all of us at the end of time to judge us and he will not accept any excuses!

Make every effort to present yourself to the God *as an unashamed workman, “cutting straight” the word of the truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)*

How To Study The Bible:

Seeing that there have been many books written on the topic of “**How To Study The Bible**”, one would think that the subject matter would be exhausted. The sad fact is that people have become so misguided by the supposed “guidance” and “illumination”, mentioned earlier, that the process of study has been set aside in favor of a combination study/illumination “experience” where **ANY** conclusion can be justified as needed for the given setting. However, the reality is that **HOW a person studies** the Bible will determine what they conclude from the process.

The premise set forth here is simple. While **the material** we study in the Bible is unique and special, **the process of studying** it in no way differs from the process of studying any other literature.

Studying the Bible is no different from studying prose or poetry, except for the fact that while the usual prose and poetry we study comes to us from men, the material inside the Bible comes from God!

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“Guidelines” For Bible Study:

We must learn to think of the **process** of studying the Bible the same way as the process of studying literature we would use in a school situation. We have to use the minds that God gave us to reason out and test all the things that we study. Our primary instrument for Bible study is common sense and the **process** of Bible study is rational and logical, even if the resulting conclusions are not!

The following guidelines are suggested to assist in studying and reasoning out logically what God is trying to tell us. After we discover the true meaning of God’s message, then we must decide whether we will follow it.

1. THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE IS TO CHANGE OUR LIVES, NOT TO INCREASE OUR KNOWLEDGE.

One fact we all must accept about the Bible is that there is a finite amount of information contained within its pages. Knowing this to be true, there is not a specific answer for every possible question we might ask. Rather than being like an encyclopedia, the Bible is more like a speech in which the speaker is trying to give specific information that applies to a topic about which he has chosen to speak. God has chosen what to speak about and it is our responsibility **to listen to and follow** what he says.

Let us now turn to and read some passages that illustrate this point. We will begin with **John 20:30-31**. Notice how the purpose for the author writing his book is clearly stated. He is **not** trying to write a general history of the life of Jesus but rather a very specific and carefully constructed view of certain portions of Jesus’ life that would – in the opinion of the writer – **convince** any reader that Jesus is the Christ.

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Another passage we need to consider is **2 Peter 1:3-4**. Notice how Peter indicates that God has provided us with all things (information and instruction) which we need “for life and for godliness” and how there is a PURPOSE behind God giving his message to mankind. That purpose is “change”!

Another important passage is the **2 Timothy 3:16-17** we looked at in our previous lesson. As we discovered, it contains the idea that, because the Bible comes from God (and not from man), it is “**USEFUL FOR**” a number of specific things. This would indicate, once again, that the message from God came in order to accomplish something besides reading for entertainment.

Ultimately, we must accept that it is not enough simply to devote ourselves to daily Bible reading or even to memorizing certain passages. God’s intention for all mankind continues to be for us to listen carefully to all of what he says, but, more importantly, for us **to follow** whatever he says!

2. THE BIBLE COMES FROM GOD.

All the information we have seen in our studies so far shows us that the Bible comes from God and belongs to him. Since this is true, each person should be very careful to accept each and every teaching found inside. Bible study is not like eating at a cafeteria, where a person can select only the food they like and pass over the food they do not like. The only choice a person has is whether to BELIEVE and FOLLOW God. If we choose to do so, then we MUST accept and submit to EVERYTHING that God says. Therefore, if conflicts arise between the teachings of a certain religious group, and what is taught in the Bible, then **we must choose** which one we will follow. Ignoring the problem will not make it go away! Unfortunately, deciding NOT to choose ... IS to choose!

Let us consider an interesting passage from the life of Jesus. **Matthew 7:21-23** contains a warning to anyone wishing to become a follower of God. It explains that it is not enough for a person to claim to be a follower and be a “religious” person. What God is looking for in a follower is someone that will **do the things HE wants** them to do. This means that the message God gave us in the Bible contains all things that **he wants** his followers to do and anyone seeking to be one of his followers must choose to accept those things and do them in the way God wants them done.

Ultimately, since the Bible comes from God, we must accept it as the final authority on any subject. We must also reject any person or idea that does not agree with its teachings – no matter how sincere or religious they may appear! It is “the will of the Father” that we must seek to follow and **that will** is contained only in the Bible.

3. GOD'S MESSAGE HAS ONLY ONE MEANING AND SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED.

Since the message of Christianity comes from the New Testament, and since the New Testament message was completed during the time of the first Christians and written down for all time, then the teachings and practices of Christianity today should be the same as those of original Christianity. Since we have the same God and the same message, then if we understand and follow exactly what the Bible says we will become the same kind of Christians they were!

God's message will never change even though time and technology might. The world today is much more advanced than it was during the time of Jesus. During his time, people didn't have any cars, busses, television sets, radios, airplanes, gas stoves, and the Internet. However, God's message is not intended to make man more advanced in the area of technology. The part of

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man that the Bible message affects does not change with the advances in technology. Man today still sins in the very same ways that men were sinning back in the time of Jesus. The Bible seeks to help man eliminate sin from his life and so the message of the Bible is just as much for **US** as it was for **THEM!** God's message is the same for **all** people living in **all** times and **all** places and so **genuine** Christianity will always be the same anywhere it happens to be found and in any time period.

4. WHEN WE STUDY THE BIBLE, WE MUST PUT ASIDE ALL RELIGIOUS IDEAS THAT WE WERE TAUGHT IN THE PAST.

Religious **bias**¹⁵ is perhaps the most dangerous enemy of good Bible study. It sneaks into a person's mind very slowly over the years and causes a person to believe very strongly in one certain way of thinking, to the point where they can easily become close-minded to any beliefs that differ from their own.

The main problem with this is that, in reality, those beliefs that have been planted in the heart of an individual **may not be correct**. For most people, religious bias comes from the years of exposure to their "family religion" and, while this may seem innocent it must be admitted that growing up in a certain religious environment causes one to trust whatever beliefs and practices one has been exposed to – **without the proper investigation**. One reason why religious bias is so dangerous is that it is hard for a person who is biased to realize it because, as it usually turns out, their biased view of religion is the only one they have ever known and they have never studied the Bible to make certain that their beliefs are true. Evidence that religious bias exists can be seen in the fact that so many people today

¹⁵ Bias happens when a person assumes that what he has been told is true even though he has never investigated to see if there is evidence to prove that it is true.

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are drawn to believe that certain things are right and wrong without any real explanation for why they think so. Many people will simply oppose any teaching or practice **which is not found in their own church** because of the conviction in their heart that, “My church is the right church and since we don’t practice that teaching then it must be wrong because if that teaching was correct then my church would be doing it!” This way of thinking has led many sincere people to conclude that the most important thing in religion is to belong to the **right group**. The idea seems to be that if a person is in the right group then they are “covered” by the group’s good behavior and practices. In such a situation, the individual would no longer have to think about what they personally believe, but rather, they would simply need to follow whatever the group’s leaders told them to do.

This idea is very wrong!

Where does this religious bias come from? Once we become adults one of the most dangerous things we carry with us into Bible study is the knowledge we have learned from our past religious experiences. Most of the things we know about religion were learned by listening to friends, family members, and various religious leaders. **Very few of us can say that we believe as we do because of careful Bible study!** However, how can we be certain that all of the things we heard from all those people are true **if we never study the Bible to check to see if they are true?** Does the fact that a certain religious group has existed in a particular country for hundreds of years prove that what they teach is correct? If this same religious group currently has millions of followers, does that prove that its teachings and practices are genuine and come from God? Of course not and yet it is very possible that a person involved in such a group might be biased and mistakenly think so.

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Even in Bible study, our bias might keep us from finding and accepting God's truth. After all, the thought of having to accept that the religion of one's family is teaching error is a powerful force to overcome! However, whenever we study the Bible we **MUST put aside** all former teachings we have learned over the years and pretend that we have never heard about them. Then we **MUST** study the facts presented in the Bible without being biased! We **MUST** make conclusion based only upon what the facts presented by God in the Bible tell us. Once we have finished our research and made our conclusions we can bring back our religion's ideas and teachings and compare them side by side with what we have learned from our Bible study. If what we have learned from our Bible study matches what we were taught in our religion then we have no reason to worry. However, if the two are different then we have a problem. We must decide which of the two we will follow—the teachings of our religion or God's teachings!

This is the difficulty every person faces he or she decides to study the TRUTH of the Bible and it takes much strength and courage to carry through to the end.

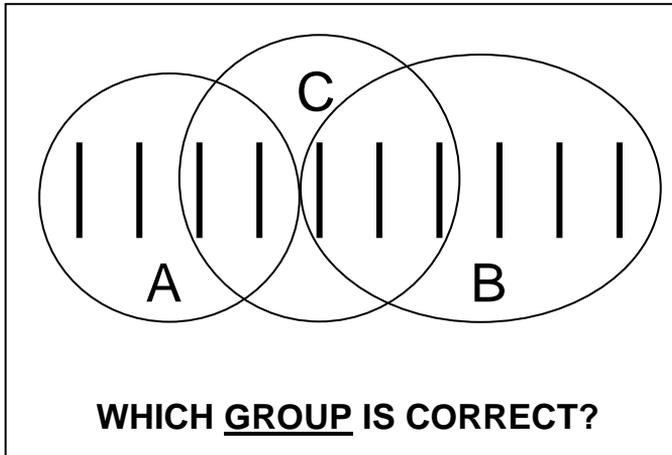
5. STUDY ALL AVAILABLE MATERIAL ON A SUBJECT BEFORE YOU MAKE ANY CONCLUSIONS.

Another reason why people sometimes come to wrong conclusions about what the Bible teaches is that they only study a portion of all the evidence found in the Bible. We are all familiar with making conclusions based upon evidence because it happens every day in the courts of our land. Judges make rulings based upon the presentation of evidence and as long as they are not biased, and, they examine **ALL** of the evidence, then it is possible for them to make fair and truthful judgments.

In many ways, there is a parallel between our example of a judge in a courtroom and studying the Bible. When a judge hears a case, the lawyers for each side present

their evidence. One side will go first and then the other. Suppose that a certain judge presides over a case in which there are ten (10) witnesses. Let us further assume that there will be five (5) for the prosecution and five (5) for the defense. Would it be proper for the judge to hear the testimony of the five prosecution witnesses and then stop the trial and make his decision? Of course not, because that would not be fair! After all, no matter how convincing the first witnesses might be there might be a witness from the other side that would prove the truth of the matter beyond a doubt. Therefore, **a good judge MUST consider ALL evidence BEFORE making any conclusions!**

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With this in mind, consider the following hypothetical illustration. Let us say that there is a topic we are very interested in learning about and the Bible has ten (10) verses that provide the details of what God has to say. Now let us say that there is a hypothetical religious group, we will call it “**Group A**”, and they begin a search for what God says on the matter. These people are very sincere and honest but they only accept 4 out of the 10 possible verses. While they might take great care in

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putting these 4 passages into context their conclusion is only partly correct because they refuse to add the details found in the remaining 6 pieces of evidence. Now then, let us say that there is another religious group, “**Group B**”. They accept the remaining 6 verses which “Group A” would not accept, but this new group refuses to accept the 4 that are used by Group A! Naturally, their conclusion is “different” from Group A!

To make matters even more confusing for us, let us say that there is a third group, “**Group C**”. They take 2 of the verses from “Group A” and 3 of the 6 used by “Group B” to come up with a completely different conclusion, which they feel is a compromise between the extreme positions of the other two!

Notice that while each group makes a conclusion, which they can say is “based upon what the Bible says”, none of the three is accomplishing what they should because none are looking at **ALL** of what the Bible says regarding this particular question. Each group arrives at a conclusion and each conclusion is a little different. The problem is that each group **CLAIMS** to be teaching the truth and has Bible verses to support their belief!

The ultimate question we must ask is, “**Which group is correct?**” The answer of course is, “**NONE OF THEM!**” While all three groups go to the Bible for evidence on which to base their conclusion, they do not consider **ALL** of the evidence. The result is that their different teachings come about due to their only looking at partial evidence. However many passages God might give for consideration, our conclusion **MUST** include information contained in **ALL OF THEM!**

In reality, our sample using three groups does not accurately represent what is happening today because there are literally hundreds of groups creating different ideas and teachings based upon partial evidence!

It is not enough for someone to claim to have **found a certain Bible verse**¹⁶ to support a certain teaching or answer a certain question. Each individual verse must fit together with the other passages that speak about the same subject in much the same way pieces of a jigsaw puzzle fit together to form a picture. Each piece fits only one way and a person cannot understand the meaning of the picture unless all the pieces are assembled in their proper place. We know from our experiences in school that in order for a person to understand a lesson adequately, all the points presented in the material must be understood and linked together logically. It is the same for studying and understanding the Bible.

6. WE MUST CAREFULLY PUT EACH AND EVERY VERSE INTO ITS PROPER CONTEXT.

One of the most common mistakes people make when they study the Bible is taking a passage and attaching a meaning to it that is out of the original **context**¹⁷.

Context plays an extremely important part in all communication and it is **especially important** when determining the correct meaning of written communication. A sentence that is part of a paragraph might have several possible meanings if it is looked at by itself. However, when a person looks at that sentence **in the context** of the other sentences found in the same paragraph then the **intended meaning** of the original writer is much easier to determine.

In Bible study, we must remember that each individual verse is actually a sentence or a portion of a sentence,

¹⁶ This practice of finding a verse for each point of doctrine is often referred to as “**proof texting**” since each verse is said to provide **proof** of the doctrine. While it may be true that the Bible provides such support for certain ideas and teachings, very often verses used **in this way** are used out of their original context. When this happens, it is wrong!

¹⁷ Context means looking at how something fits together with the things going on around it.

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that each sentence is part of a paragraph, and that each paragraph is part of a thought, which in turn is combined with other thoughts presented by God through an author to communicate something to the intended readers. It may become necessary to read the entire chapter or even an entire book, before we can understand the intended meaning of a single verse!

In addition to the context of the sentences, **we must also consider such things as the historical, cultural, and social backgrounds** of the original writer and the readers in order to understand the intended meaning of the verses of the Bible.

In Bible study, there are **two basic types of context**:

1. **NEAR CONTEXT**, which is concerned with how a passage fits together with verses that come before and after it.
2. **BIBLE-WIDE CONTEXT**, which, as the name implies, seeks to understand how the meaning of a particular verse, and its surrounding verses, fit together with other passages speaking about the same subject that are found elsewhere in the entire Bible.

Adding this point about context to what we have already learned, we find that proper Bible study is done by finding all available information on the topic we want to study and then putting each passage into its proper context so that we can discover each passage's intended meaning. Once we have done that we can combine the individual details together, like pieces of a puzzle¹⁸, to create a "picture" that will answer our question.

¹⁸ In a **puzzle**, each piece contains a portion of a picture and you will be able to see the picture if you assemble all the puzzle pieces correctly!

7. DIFFERENT TYPES OF LITERATURE MUST BE CONSIDERED APPROPRIATELY.

The Bible contains different kinds¹⁹ of writing. While most of it can be categorized as simple **narrative** (story telling), there are also **poems, figurative language, letters, parables, and allegories** to name a few. Each kind has special considerations that must be kept in mind and great care must be made not to confuse one with another.

Appendix C, in the back of this booklet, contains a listing of many different figures of speech found in the Bible and helpful suggestions on how to understand them properly.

8. BIBLE STUDY IS A TWO-PHASE PROJECT. WE MUST FIRST SEEK TO OBTAIN THE ORIGINAL INTENDED MEANING. THEN WE CAN DETERMINE IF THAT MEANING APPLIES TO OUR TIME.

Does every verse of the Bible have an application for us in our time? Whenever we read the story of Noah in the book of Genesis and find that God gave instructions to build a giant boat, are we supposed to build that boat again today? It is doubtful that anyone would answer, “Yes”, to that question because **context** shows us that those instructions were only intended for Noah.

What about the other passages and teachings that are found in the Bible? How can we determine which portions of the Bible we should and should not follow in our lives today? **Hebrews 1:1-2** shows that the Bible is God speaking to mankind and that he spoke in **TWO messages**. The first (Old Testament) was for the ancient Jews and came through the prophets. The second message (New Testament)²⁰ came through Jesus and is for us today.

¹⁹ Different types of literature are often referred to as “**genre**”.

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The story of Noah and his giant boat shows us that there **are** instructions found inside the Bible that are only for certain people living in certain places and in certain times. Because of this, we learn that Bible study is in fact **a two-phase process**.

The **first phase** of Bible study is discovering the intended meaning of the original writer. This is done by carefully investigating each verse **in its context**.

Once the original meaning has been understood then we must see if the intended meaning has any application in our lives today. This is the **second phase** of the Bible study process. In this phase, we must look more closely at the background of the passage and see who is doing the speaking and to whom is the person speaking. In order for something to be applicable for us in our time, it needs to be established that the instruction was really intended for us.

We should also be aware of the fact that not all instructions found in the Bible come to us in the same form. Some instructions are given in the form of direct statements, or commands, which everyone must accept and follow in exactly the same way. (An example of this kind of teaching would be the commandment, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart....”) However, other instructions take the form of principles, which can be applied in various ways, depending upon the circumstances. (An example of this kind of teaching would be “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.”) Even if we determine that a passage of the Bible applies to us, we need to consider whether it applies in our time in the same way as it did in the time of the Bible people. This can be very difficult to do!

9. NO BIBLE PASSAGE THAT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WILL CONTRADICT ONE THAT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND.

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Analyzing a passage of the Bible is not always easy to do because some passages are very difficult to understand. However, most Bible studies will include verses that will be easy to understand and some not so easy. We must remember that any conclusions we might make concerning a difficult passage should not contradict verses that are easy to understand. In such situations, the easier passages make a foundation of understanding for that topic and the more difficult passages must be studied while considering those easier ones. There cannot be two different (or opposing) conclusions for any one subject.

If we encounter a difficult passage, which seems to contradict a conclusion that can easily be seen from looking at a number of very simple and clear passages, then we must conclude that our understanding of the difficult passage is wrong. It is not logical that God would say one thing using very simple statements and then say the opposite using statements that are difficult to understand. (Going back to our earlier example of the puzzle, a person cannot **force** a puzzle piece to fit where it does not belong! We establish where a piece of the puzzle belongs by carefully looking at the surrounding pieces.) If working out the context of the passage does not help then look for other verses that give information about the same subject. Perhaps the meaning of those other passages will be clearer and help understand the intended meaning of the difficult passage. (If we go back to the puzzle illustration, if there is one piece that gives people a problem at the beginning of the puzzle, all you have to do is leave it aside until the very end and it will be easy to find where it goes because there will be only one space left!)

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A very good and simple illustration of this point is found when we compare two parallel statements made by Jesus. In **Luke 14:26** he says that anyone who “does not **hate**” his relatives cannot be his disciple. The use of the word “hate” gives us some difficulty because it is a very strong word in our language today. Does Jesus mean that disciples must carry true hatred in their hearts for their relatives as a requirement for being a disciple? This is confusing. However, there is a parallel passage for this topic. It is found in **Matthew 10:37-38**. Here, context reveals that Jesus is speaking about **the same topic** – the commitment of discipleship – and once again, he speaks of the believer and his attitude regarding relatives. (The context here is extremely important in establishing a link with the one found in Luke 14!) Here, Jesus **more clearly** brings out the meaning of what he said in Luke 14. By looking carefully at both passages – and considering also the rest of Jesus’ teachings on commitment, discipleship, love, and hate — **we can more easily understand** that Jesus intended for the people of Luke 14 to understand what is more clearly explained in Matthew 10.

10. BIBLE EXAMPLES HELP TO CONFIRM OUR UNDERSTANDING AND CONCLUSIONS.

After completing research and coming to a conclusion, if we can identify examples of people in the Bible doing or teaching the same thing that we have concluded, we can be fairly certain that our own conclusion is correct. On the other hand, if we find examples of people from that time, and in the same situation, doing or teaching something different from what we have concluded, then that would be an indication that our own conclusion might not be correct. Bible examples may not always be present, but when they are, we should pay careful attention to what they show us.

Simply finding an example of someone doing or not doing something may or may not be an indication of some kind of instruction from God. It may or may not be something that all believers are supposed to do. The discovery of a single example of someone doing something in the Bible does not **in itself** mean that we should or must do the same thing. Even the continued occurrence of one or more people doing something repeatedly in the Bible does not **in itself** indicate something that everyone must do. **Frequency alone** is not sufficient evidence to make such a determination. We might be fairly certain that an example is being intended if we find people **in different places** and **different contexts** doing the same things. In such cases, it could be possible that there is some instruction from God that is causing the consistent pattern of behavior. However, concluding such, **without any accompanying instruction**, even if a consistent pattern can be seen, would still be guessing!

11. GOD'S EXPLANATIONS IN THE BIBLE SHOULD ALWAYS TAKE PRIORITY OVER OUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, FEELINGS AND EXPECTATIONS.

Sometimes people have what is often referred to as a "**RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE**", which may take the form of anything from seeing a vision in a dream to receiving what some people call "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" during a religious gathering.

While none of us determines what God may or may not do to communicate with people today we should remember that even if something unique like this might happen to us we do not have the right to say that we no longer need to study the Bible! Whatever we might experience, the facts we learned earlier in this study remain true. God said that his message has already been revealed, during the first century, and every person who lives after the death of his son is required to understand and follow that message. This fact will never change. Ever since Jesus left the Earth, people have

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desired to “**experience**” God in a personal way. Unfortunately, this desire has often led sincere people to believe that they have experienced something that in fact they did not. Some people after having an experience like this have left the Bible message behind believing, instead, that they have direct guidance from God.

We must never allow “**personal religious experiences**” to become more important to us than what we read in the Bible. If we feel that we have experienced God's direct action or revelation in our own life then we should examine the Bible carefully to see if it describes the same experience as something that is indeed from God. If the Bible is silent or explains things differently—in even a small way—then our experience is not from God because we have discovered that God will not say or do something to you that he has not previously said or done in the lives of the original Christians!

Before proceeding any further, please turn now and read the verses found in **2 Thessalonians 2:9-11**. (Please read this passage twice.)

This is an amazing Bible passage! It speaks of miracles, and deception, and the power of the **Evil One**²¹, and it speaks of God acting in a way that seems opposite of his usual character! Let us take the points one by one, as they are presented. All the negative statements are introduced by the portion that describes the hearts and minds of the people being spoken about. They are people who will no longer hold fast to the truth and instead will put their trust in what they **have experienced**. Notice that it is **their desire** for these miraculous powers that causes them to be dissatisfied with the truth. This desire blinds them to the point where they can no longer see that the power they are witnessing is from the Evil One and not God.

²¹ The phrase “Evil One” is often used to refer to Satan.

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Since they refuse to love the truth, God responds in a very interesting way. The passage says that he sends to them “a working of deception” to **cause them to believe** that what they are seeing and experiencing is from him when in fact it is not!

One very clear thing we can learn from this is that you cannot be certain that all-powerful things you see with your eyes are from God! **Satan can CLAIM** to do powerful things and the only way to know the difference is by examining the message that is found together with that power. God’s power and God’s message will always agree.

This warning is echoed in **2 Corinthians 11:13-15**, where we are told that people will be deceived by the servants of the Devil. They will believe that what they are seeing is true when in fact it is not. With warnings like these, we cannot accept everything we see or experience as being genuine simply because it is being done “in the name of God”. We first must verify what we have seen or experienced by comparing it to what we find in the Bible.

There is a direct relationship here with what Jesus taught in **Matthew 7:21-23**. Remember how he spoke of people **doing miraculous things “in his name”**, but how he will reject those people because their lives were not based upon the Father’s will — the truth?

We all would like very much to have a very direct relationship with God in which we could constantly receive personal guidance, instruction, and perform miracles through **HIS** power! However, we should remember that God has already decided how he will relate to us. He gave us the Bible and through it has shown what he expects people to do. It is our responsibility to accept what God offers **on HIS terms**. If we place too much desire upon **how we would LIKE God to communicate with us**, then we should not be

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surprised if all the things we desire begin to happen just as we want them. However, just because our expectations become realities does not mean that what we are experiencing is real. It may all be a delusion from God, sent to condemn us!

Considering the warnings mentioned above the only way we can be absolutely certain we are in a right relationship with God is if we read and understand his message and carefully follow what he says. There is no substitute for studying the Bible.

Illustration: A Story About A Man Caught In A Flood

Once there was a man who lived in a house beside a river. After several days of heavy rain the river began rising, and when the water entered his house, the man escaped by crawling up onto his roof. As the water continued to rise, he became afraid for his life and so began praying to God that he might be delivered from this terrible situation. A few minutes later, a man in a very small boat came paddling over to the house and he offered to take the man to safety. The man replied, "No thank you for I have prayed to the Lord and he will save me!" The man in the boat scratched his head and left. Time passed and the water continued to rise until it was up to the level of the roof! Again, the man prayed to the Lord and a few minutes later, a man in a large motor boat came by and offered to take him to safety. The man replied, "No thank you for I have prayed to the Lord and I **know** he will save me!" The water continued to rise until even though the man stood at the highest point of his roof the water was up to his knees! Once again, the man prayed to the Lord, this time with loud cries and tears, and a few minutes later, a helicopter arrived and the pilot sent down a ladder and offered to take the man to safety. Once again, the man replied, "No thank you, Sir, for I have prayed to the Lord and I **just know** that he will save me!" Shortly

thereafter, the water swept the man away and he drowned. All at once, he found himself standing in the presence of the Lord. The man suddenly became upset and asked, “Lord, why did you desert me and leave me to die when I asked you three times to save me?” In reply, the Lord said, “How can you say I left you to die? Didn’t I send you a man in a small boat, then one in a large motor boat, and finally one in a helicopter?”

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The lesson is simple. The man **expected** a certain reaction from God based on **what he wanted** God to do. His desires blinded him to the point that he did not recognize God’s hand in the offers of the men that tried to rescue him. God speaks to us and tells us exactly **what HE wants** and **in the way that HE wants!** We cannot demand that he do the things we want and in the way that we want them done! **He is God and does things his own way!**

12. EVERY INDIVIDUAL HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDY THE BIBLE FOR HIMSELF/HERSELF.

Please read and consider very carefully **Romans 14:10** and **2 Corinthians 5:10**. Both of these passages speak about the Judgment Day and both passages emphasize one point; that the Judgment will happen! Each person will be responsible for his or her own actions, and the determination of where they end up will be based upon the things each person has done. It is also important to note that once again, we see that Christ will be the one who determines who is and is not a Christian!

Since the final judgment will be a matter that is between each individual person and God then it is very important for each person to make certain he or she knows exactly what he or she is supposed to do. You cannot blame anyone but yourself if you do not find the truth!

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13. THE BIBLE DETERMINES WHAT A RELIGIOUS GROUP SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT TEACH AND NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND!

Considering the attitudes of people in modern religion, this might be the most important guideline to remember. Just because a group of influential religious people (whether they might be preachers, priests, pastors, elders, apostles, or even angels from heaven) decide that a certain teaching should or should not be taught **does not** make it correct! **If a teaching is genuine, then we should be able to find it explained and taught to the original Christians inside of the Bible!** Following teachings that originate from men is wrong. We already have enough things given to us by God to do. We certainly don't need the added burden of having to follow additional teachings given by religious leaders. The message of the Bible belongs to God and if we want to establish a relationship with him we must **LISTEN TO WHAT HE SAYS** and disregard the opinions of men! Always remember that God's word must take priority over the opinions and teachings of **ALL MEN!**

Consider carefully the following passages, paying careful attention to their context.²²

Galatians 1:6-9 - *"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently, some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!"*

²² These three passages are quoted from the **New International Version** of the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 - *"But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power."*

2 Timothy 4:1-5 - *"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry."*

Do you remember the 20,000 groups we mentioned at the beginning of this study? **It is not enough for people today simply to CLAIM to be Christians, or to CLAIM to follow the truth! If we CLAIM to follow God then we must truly follow him!**

14. USE BIBLE RESEARCH AND REFERENCE BOOKS TO HELP YOU IN FINDING THE TRUTH.

Seeing that, in some instances, it is necessary to study through as many as a hundred verses or more before making a conclusion, one might wonder how we go

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about finding all those passages. Fortunately, there are helpful reference tools that make the task easier and more fulfilling.

One such reference book is called a **CONCORDANCE**, which is a special book that provides lists verses from a Bible translation that use the same particular word of speak about a certain subject. These books do not explain teachings or give commentary on the verses. They simply provide lists of verses.

There are concordances made for almost every bible translation that has been made, and now there are even computer programs that will easily search for every location in a Bible translation where a certain word of phrase is used.

The best kind of concordance is one that makes lists based upon the original Greek and Hebrew texts. Concordances help us find all of the “puzzle pieces” and make it much easier for us to do research.

A **LEXICON** is another useful tool. This is simply a dictionary for the Bible languages and there are lexicons for both the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, and the Greek language of the New Testament. We can use lexicons to look up the meanings of the words found in the original language text of the Bible.

To gain more understanding about what life was like during the Bible times, and about the people and places mentioned in the Bible, it helps to look for information on the topic using a **BIBLE DICTIONARY**. These books are good because they often give historical and cultural information on the people and places we read about in the Bible.

COMMENTARIES are books that are written by men and women who feel they can help people by explaining what they think God was trying to say in the Bible.

Commentaries come in various types. Some might deal with a certain book of the Bible and go through its content verse by verse while others may be “topical” and deal with a certain subject or question.

We should always **be cautious when using commentaries because the people who write them are NOT guided by the Holy Spirit** and they often misinterpret the Bible because they fail to apply the simple guidelines for Bible study we have learned. Therefore, when reading a commentary one should never take the comments of the author without first studying the Bible and finding the truth. Use commentaries only after you have completed your own study, to see if other people have come to the same conclusions as you!

The GOAL of the Guidelines:

The Bible is the **only BOOK** that contains God's message for man and the only book we can completely trust! Bible study is one of the most important endeavors we will ever perform! We cannot follow God unless we know what he wants us to do. We cannot know what he wants us to do unless we study. This truth will not change throughout time! By keeping these few guidelines in mind you will find that you **can** understand the Bible, form your own conclusions, and these conclusions can be correct! However, always remember that **YOU are responsible to answer to God for what YOU believe!** Do not neglect this! Study carefully or you **will** regret it!

In addition, never forget that it is not enough simply to **read the Bible and CLAIM to be a Christian**. God's goal is not fully accomplished in our lives until we obey what he has told us. As a closing thought to this section, let us reexamine **1 John 2:3-6**, and notice how the writer states, in way very similar to how Jesus spoke in **Matthew 7:21-23**, that it is not enough for someone to **SAY** they believe in God. If the claim of belief is not supported by the action

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of obedience, then there is no truth in the claim! This is why Bible study alone is not sufficient. **Bible study helps us to know God's will. Obedience to that will makes us his possession!**

Applying The Guidelines:

At first, this kind of Bible study sounds simple. However, please understand that it is not quite **THAT** simple. Earlier, one of our illustrations involved a simple model using ten (10) passages. In reality, there are some topics in the Bible that will involve studying through several hundred passages and the study time will be considerable. You will find that the most difficult price to pay in Bible study is **time!** However, if you are willing to spend the time, the reward will be a faith that you **UNDERSTAND** and embrace **because of CONVICTION!** We hope that this reward might motivate you to start your own journey of Bible study. In order to help you see what we are talking about, we want to take you through a sample study that will use many of the "guidelines" for Bible study mentioned above. Let's give it a try.

A man is attacked... and you must find his attacker!

During the final day of Jesus' life, he was involved in an incident, which is recorded in four different locations in the New Testament. As you will soon discover, each account is slightly different and no single account contains all of the details. By studying through each account and then combining all of the details together you will be able to see the whole picture and experience how Bible study really works.

The exercise you are about to do is designed to use the **King James Version**²³ of the Bible. Since this version of

²³ This version of the Bible was translated back in 1611 AD, in England, and is one of the most popular Bible translations ever produced. Most people today no longer use this translation

the Bible is not so common today, we have provided you with the King James Version text of the four accounts of the incident we will use in our sample study. Please read and compare them carefully before proceeding.

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Account #1

Matthew 26:46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me. 47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. 49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. 50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. **51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.** 52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Account #2

Mark 14:44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely. 45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him. 46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him. **47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.** 48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? 49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

because many of the words contained in it are no longer part of the everyday English language.

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Account #3

Luke 22:47 *And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. 48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? 49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? 50 **And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.** 51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.*

Account #4

John 18:3 *Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. 10 **Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.** 11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

The specific portions of the verses we will focus attention upon are **Matthew 26:51**; **Mark 14:47**; **Luke 22:50**; and **John 18:10**. (They have been highlighted for you above in **bold** print.) We have provided the other verses so that you can see a little of the context. Read each of these highlighted verses carefully. Do all four accounts say

exactly the same things? No, they do not. While they all mention some common details, each account contains individual information that is unique. The most important thing to notice is that **NONE of the four passages contains 100% of the information we need in order to make a conclusion** about what happened that night when Jesus was arrested. To get the full story, **we must COMBINE** the details together.

One of the first things you will notice about these passages is that the English is not very easy to read and understand. Aside from the strangeness of the wording²⁴, you will notice that the word “**smote**” is used in our passages several times. **Smote** is not a common word in our English language of today. What does this word mean? Finding words that we do not know is a common problem in Bible study. However, very often we will find that parallel passages use other words that we **DO** know and understand and by taking note of how the difficult words are interchanged with words we know in the parallel passages, we can often figure out the meaning of a difficult word or phrase. Because the word **smote** (in **Mark 14:47**) is interchanged with the word **struck** (in **Matthew 26:51**) we can determine that **smote** most probably means, “**to hit**”. A quick look at a dictionary confirms that this is the correct meaning.²⁵ The attacker smote/struck the servant with a sword. The reason why the ear came off was that he struck the ear with a sword instead of a stick or his hand!

The best way to accomplish Bible research is to make a chart for recording details, like the one provided on the next page. Look at each passage from the King James Version text provided above. Next you will notice there are columns in the chart with questions at the top of each

²⁴ You will notice that the King James Bible uses strange words like **ye, thee, thou, thy**, and adds **-est** at the end of words.

²⁵ The word **smote** is past tense for the word, **smite**. According to *Webster's Dictionary* “smite” means to strike hard with the hand or anything held in the hand.

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column. Using the details provided by the context of each verse, record the answers to the questions found at the top of each column in the space provided for each verse of the study. Be very specific about what you record in each box. Make certain that the details you record are actually stated in the verse. Write exactly what it says, not what you think it says! Try it! It will not be difficult.

The story of Malchus' Ear

Verse	Who did this crime?	What was the weapon used?	What did he do with the weapon?	Who was the victim?	What was the resulting injury?
Matt. 26:51					
Mark 14:47					
Luke 22:50					
John 18:10					

Here is an interesting thought to consider. As you think about the story of Malchus, what if for some reason we did not find the passage **John 18:10**? We would only have considered the first three accounts. How different would our conclusion have been? The most outstanding

difference would be not discovering the identity of the attacker. We would have found that the attacker was part of a group that was with Jesus but we would not have learned his name. This would have created a major gap of information in the story. In the absence of any direct evidence, we could have easily **speculated** that the attacker was John, because the Bible documents that John was a very close friend of Jesus and surely, he could have done this in an attempt to help his very close friend! It would have been very **logical** to expect a close friend of Jesus to try to save him and **John seems like an excellent choice!**

Do you notice how **GOOD** all of the reasoning sounds? Jesus and John had a close friendship.... Friends defending friends is very logical... Nevertheless, **we KNOW that this assertion would be wrong** because the one remaining piece of evidence (**John 18:10**) **clearly states** that it was Peter and not John who attacked the High Priest's servant! Imagine how important the information from one single verse can be! This is why we cannot afford to skip any verse in a list in a study.

What if the subject we were studying here was "man's salvation from sin" instead of "Malchus' ear"? Leaving out the details of even one verse could mean the difference between spending eternity in heaven or in hell! This is why it is so very important to try to get **ALL** the details **before** making **ANY** conclusions.

Bible study is not simply a matter of finding one or two verses and making a conclusion. Bible study is making conclusions based upon all available information!

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Practical Solutions:

As you look back upon all the things covered in this booklet, it can be very frustrating. There are so many things wrong with **RELIGION** today and so much that needs fixing! Translators are not translating as they should, and people are not studying as they should! There are so many things that we have to keep in mind as we study through God's message. How do we sort it all out? What action do we need to take in order to be fair to God and all he has done for us?

The answer depends upon how far along you are in your quest to be **all you can be** for God! There are two basic tracks to follow.

Track 1: Assuming that you have a working knowledge of the original Greek language of the Bible.

Track 2: Assuming that you have not yet started training in the original Greek language of the Bible

Track 1:

Assuming that you have trained in at least New Testament Greek, then it suggested that you keep in mind the following

1. Set a goal to eliminate the use of your English Bible as your main Bible. This will immerse you in the Greek text and help you become more familiar with the grammar, vocabulary and idioms of the Greek language.
2. Keep yourself up to date regarding **Textual Criticism** and the latest news and discoveries of Archaeology!
3. Review and apply the formal steps of exegesis in all studies that you do. This scientific procedure will give consistency and credibility to your results. If people can trace what you have done and understand why you concluded the way you did then they will be much more likely to respect you as a teacher and learn from you.

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4. In your translation work, do not forget the failings of the current translation philosophy. Use word-for-word as far as is possible and thought-for-thought only when necessary.
5. When looking up word meanings, remember that we are not looking for the definition that we want to find or hope to find. We are looking for the genuine meanings of the words that were known and used by the people living in the time of the New Testament. As a suggestion, begin your search in the more secular lexicons (like Liddell & Scott and Moulton & Milligan) and then cross check what they say with the more “religious” ones (like Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Kittel). Always be on guard for definitions that religion has added over the centuries and avoid using them because they do not fit back into the 1st Century!
6. As often as possible, encourage and help other brethren to learn the Greek language so that they can also benefit from making a connection back to the original message! The more people we have who can read the Bible, the better off we will be.
7. Never ever forget that the message belongs to God. If something in his message is vague, be careful how you proceed. **Do NOT insert your own opinion!**
8. **BE ETHICAL in your life and in your study of God’s word!**

Track 2:

A. If you have not started training in the Greek language but would like to...

1. Begin Greek training because there is no substitute for studying from the original language. Seeing the logical structure of the language, the ease of most translation work, and the simplicity of God’s actual message, will motivate you and give you much more confidence in what you believe. This in turn will help you as a teacher, to be more accurate and better explain the true meaning of God’s message.

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2. Once you have completed the basic training program, follow **TRACK 1!**

B. If you do not have the time or desire to study Greek but want to investigate Greek words and verse listings from the original language text you will have to acquire and learn to use the Greek tools that are available for non-Greek students.

1. There are **texts of the Greek New Testament** available, called “interlinear Bibles”, which have the Greek text with English words printed either underneath or on top of each Greek word. The more useful ones also have what is known as the “Strong’s numbering system”²⁶ included. If you find an interlinear text with the Strong’s numbers then you will easily be able to use other reference books that use the numbering system to search for dictionary definitions and concordance lists on any Greek word in the text!

- To use this tool, simply find the verse that contains the word you would like to research in the English portion of the interlinear, then locate the specific English word you are looking for, then note down the small number that is written either above or below that word. This is the Strong’s number. Once you have the number you can go to dictionaries that use this numbering system to find definitions and to Greek concordances that also use the number system so that you can find verse lists where that particular Greek word is used!

²⁶ Mr. James Strong, who made the famous “Strong’s Concordance” in English devised a numbering system where he assigned each individual vocabulary word in the Greek New Testament a unique number. This numbering system is used in many Greek tools so that students can easily find any Greek word and look it up in other tools.

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- Be certain that the Greek text is either the Nestle/Aland Text (often referred to as the GNT) or the United Bible Society (called UBS) text. It is highly recommended that you stay away from the Greek text that is called the “Majority Text” or the “Erasmus Text” as these texts contain wordings that have been proven to be later changes that were made by men!
2. There are **Greek dictionaries** (lexicons) available that also use the Strong’s numbering system.
- Once you find the word that you want to do research on and you have found its Strong’s number, go to the lexicon and find the page that has that word’s number on it.
 - The word entries inside the lexicon are arranged in Strong’s numerical order beginning with word number 1 on page 1.
 - The number will mark the location where the information you are looking for is to be found.
 - Turn and locate the number of the word you are looking for and that will lead you to the information about that word’s meaning.
3. There are also **Greek concordances** that use the Strong’s numbering system.
- These will help you find lists of the verses where Greek words are found in the Greek New Testament.
 - These are good tools because they are not giving lists based on any English translation. You are getting lists of locations in the original Greek text where these particular words are used.
 - Once you find the Strong’s number, go to the concordance and find the page that has that word’s number on it.

Notes:

- Just like the lexicons, concordances are arranged in Strong's numerical order beginning with word number 1 on page 1.
- The number will mark the location where the information you are looking for is to be found.
- Turn and locate the number of the word you are looking for and there you will find the listing of all locations where that particular Greek word is found in the New Testament!

C. If you do not have the money to buy those Greek study tools, use several Bible translations and do "comparative Bible study".

1. The important thing to remember is **there is no perfect Bible translation**, and so there are two things that brethren should never do to one another
 - a. **Never** fight with one another over the meanings of words!
 - b. **Never** fight with one another over which Bible translation is better!
- If great differences, in the wordings of different Bibles being used by members, surface in the congregation, and there is someone in the congregation who has the training in the original languages needed to help sort things out, then **PLEASE seek out their assistance** and let them help discover what the problem is and what God intended for people to read and understand.
- If this problem occurs and there is no one in the congregation who has the original language training needed to help sort things out, then **PLEASE seek out the assistance of a faithful brother or sister in another place who DOES** know the language and let them help discover what the problem is and what God intended for people to see.

Notes:

2. There are different kinds of Bible translations for sale in stores and some are better than others are. Some are even DANGEROUS to your faith!
 - a. There are Bibles that are translated more **literally**, or word-for-word, than others are.
 - Most of these will be older translations but there are newer translations that also claim to be more literal.
 - This type of Bible is often difficult to read and understand because of the literalness of the translation.
 - Even though this kind of Bible is more literal, the translators can still substitute their bias and opinion into the text and so never put your complete trust in even a more literal kind of Bible!
 - You should have at least one of this type of Bible for your study.
 - See **APPENDIX D** for a listing of several translations of this category.
 - b. There are Bibles that are translated more **dynamic**, or thought-for-thought, than others.
 - Most of these are the newer and current translations that are popular with people today.
 - These are more popular than the more literal ones because they are easier to read and understand.
 - Remember that in this type of Bible the message of God can more easily be altered and so you must be careful not to simply take this kind of Bible and trust it alone.
 - You should have at least one of this type of Bible for your study.
 - See **APPENDIX D** for a listing of several translations of this category.

Notes:

- c. There are Bibles that are known as **paraphrases**.
- These are extreme thought-for-thought Bibles and are not really translations at all. They are more like commentaries than Bibles.
 - More often than not, these Bibles are the work of one person and they are very popular because they are very easy to read.
 - However, in this type of Bible the message of God can very easily be altered and so you must be careful not to take this kind of Bible as your main translation.
 - You should have at least one of this type of Bible for your study.
 - See **APPENDIX D** for a listing of several translations of this category.

3. Whenever you study something from God's message do **comparative reading** using each of the different Bible types you own.

- a. Read each Bible passages in your study from each of the three kinds of Bible and compare what they say.
- As long as they agree then there is most likely no problem.
 - However, when they disagree, you will need to go deeper into your investigation to find out why they are different.
 - Let the differences in word choices help you understand the meanings of words in one Bible that you do not know. (like the example of "smote" in our sample study)
 - In this way, the differences in wording will complement one another and help you better understand what God is trying to say

- b. Put the passage into its context and record your findings in some kind of chart or notebook.

Notes:

D. If all you have is one copy of the Bible and it is old and worn out, do not despair.

1. Read... Read... Read from your Bible and think carefully about what it says.
2. As you read, notice the context of the situation and record summaries of what is being said inside of a notebook.
3. There is no substitute for Bible reading no matter what kind of Bible you might own!
4. Any Bible is better than no Bible at all! Just be aware of what kind of Bible you own and be careful.

NEVER FORGET!

**THE MAIN PURPOSE
OF THE BIBLE IS
TO CHANGE OUR
LIVES, NOT JUST TO
INCREASE OUR
KNOWLEDGE!**

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APPENDIX A

A sample listing of the English word “worship” as found in the Gospels of the ASV, KJV, NIV, RSV, ESV, NET and NRSV translations.²⁷

Book	ASV	KJV	NIV	RSV	ESV	NET	NRSV
Matthew	2:2	2:2	2:2	2:2	2:2	2:2	2:2
	2:8	2:8	2:8	2:8	2:8	2:8	2:8
	2:11	2:11	2:11	2:11			2:11
	4:9	4:9	4:9	4:9	4:9	4:9	4:9
	4:10	4:10	4:10	4:10	4:10	4:10	4:10
	8:2	8:2					
	9:18	9:18					
	14:33	14:33	14:33	14:33			14:33
	15:9	15:9	15:9	15:9	15:9	15:9	15:9
	15:25	15:25					
	18:26	18:26					
	20:20	20:20					
	28:9	28:9	28:9	28:9			
	28:17	28:17	28:17	28:17			
	Mark	5:6	5:6		5:6		
7:7		7:7	7:7	7:7	7:7	7:7	7:7
15:19		15:19					15:19
Luke			1:10				
	2:37		2:37	2:37			
	4:7	4:7	4:7	4:7	4:7	4:7	4:7
	4:8	4:8	4:8	4:8	4:8	4:8	4:8
		14:10					
24:52	24:52	24:52					
John	4:20	4:20	4:20	4:20	4:20	4:20	4:20
	4:21	4:21	4:21	4:21	4:21	4:21	4:21
	4:22	4:22	4:22	4:22	4:22	4:22	4:22
	4:23	4:23	4:23	4:23	4:23	4:23	4:23
	4:24	4:24	4:24	4:24	4:24	4:24	4:24
	9:31	9:31		9:31			9:31
	9:38	9:38	9:38	9:38			
	12:20	12:20	12:20	12:20	12:20	12:20	

There are six (6) different Greek words represented in this list. In addition, there are other places in the Gospels where these words are located, but these translators did not translate them “worship”. Why are the translators inconsistent? **Which one is correct?**

²⁷ Lists generated using the program BibleWorks, Version 7, by BibleWorks, LLC.

APPENDIX B

A Translation of the Phrase “λογικὴν²⁸ λατρείαν²⁹” in **Romans 12:1**
as found in 37 English Translations, arranged by date

Version	Wording	Date
1. Tyndale	reasonable seruyng	1534
2. Coverdale	reasonable seruyng	1535
3. Bishop's New Testament	reasonable seruice	1595
4. Geneva Bible	reasonable seruing	1599
5. King James Version	reasonable service	1611
6. Noah Webster Bible	reasonable service	1833
7. Young's Literal	intelligent service	1862
8. Darby Bible	intelligent service.	1884
9. English Revised Version	reasonable service	1885
10. Douay-Rheims Bible	reasonable service	1899
11. American Standard Version	spiritual ³⁰ service	1901 ³¹
12. Moffatt's Translation	your cult a spiritual rite	1922
13. Revised Berkeley Version	reasonable service	1945
14. Bible In Basic English	worship ³² it is right for you to give him	1949
15. New World Translation	sacred service with your power of reason	1950
16. Revised Standard Version	spiritual worship	1952
17. Phillips Modern English	act of intelligent worship	1957
18. Self Interpreting New Testament	reasonable service	1958
19. New English Bible	the worship offered by mind and heart	1961
20. Jerusalem Bible	worship in a way that is worthy of thinking beings	1966
21. Living Bible	when you think of what he has done for you is it too much to ask	1971
22. New International Version (1973)	spiritual worship	1973
23. TEV/Good News	true worship that you should offer	1976
24. New American Standard Version	spiritual service of worship	1977
25. Simple English Bible	true worship	1978
26. New King James Version	reasonable service	1979
27. New International Version (1984)	spiritual act of worship	1984
28. New Jerusalem Bible	kind of worship for you, as sensible people	1985
29. Easy To Read	the spiritual way for you to worship God	1987
30. New Century Version	spiritual way for you to worship	1987
31. New Revised Standard Version	spiritual worship	1989
32. New American Bible	spiritual worship	1991
33. English Standard Version	spiritual worship.	2001
34. Contemporary English Version	the most sensible way to serve God	2004
35. New Living Translation	truly the way to worship him	2004
36. New English Translation	reasonable service	2004

Note 1: Those written in **bold type** are accurate translations of the phrase.

Note 2: All English translation before 1900 (see line) translated this phrase accurately! Most of them that came after 1900 have not!

²⁸ This Greek word means “reasonable” or “logical”, and is where we get our English word “logical”.

²⁹ This Greek word means “service” such as the kind given by someone who is hired to do a job.

³⁰ The Greek word for “spiritual” is πνευματικός, which is **NOT found** in the Greek text or in any variants of the Greek text!

³¹ The American Standard Version is the first English translation to use the word “spiritual” for the Greek word λογικός in this passage.

³² The Bible in Basic English is the first English translation to use “worship” for the Greek word λατρεία in this passage.

APPENDIX C

FIGURES OF SPEECH IN THE BIBLE

The Bible abounds in Figures of Speech. In order to understand God's Word we need to know something of these various figures of speech and something of figurative language. Types, metaphors, parables, allegories and fables can be confusing. One must remember not to apply rigid rules of interpretation in determining the figure of speech an author had in mind--he may not have had any figure of speech at all in mind! Since the writers of the Bible made use of many common figures of speech, we need to know how these are generally used.

I. THE PARABLE

Our word "parable" comes from the Greek words PARA meaning "beside" and BALLEIN meaning "to throw". A parable must be something which either did happen or could happen. The actors in a parable are real -- they do nothing which they could not do. Parables are given for these purposes: (1) to reveal the truth, (2) to conceal the truth from those who would not receive it, (3) to put the truth into permanent form, (4) to cause men to agree to the truth before they know its meaning.

A parable usually has one main point though other truth may be taught incidentally. Much damage is done to the truth when men attempt to make each item of a parable have some spiritual application. Always ask "Why was the parable given?" The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), for example, was given to answer the question, "Who is my neighbor?" It has sometimes been twisted in an attempt to make it answer many other questions to which it has no reference at all.

II. THE FABLE

Fables are often confused with parables. A fable, however, is a fictitious story intended to enforce some useful truth or precept. Aesop's Fables have become world famous in this respect. A classic fable is found in Judges 9:6-21; another in 2 Kings 14:8-10. The criticism intended by this fable may be seen if one knows the historical background. Amaziah hired an army of Israelites to assist him against Edom. The Lord refused to let them go. He paid them and sent them home. They were angry and injured the Jews. Amaziah was successful against the Edomites and then adopted their idolatry. When he returned, he asked that the matter of bad faith be settled between the armies of the Jews and the Israelites. Jehoash answered in the form of a fable.

III. SIMILE

A simile is a "word or phrase by which anything is likened in one of its aspects to another; a similitude; a poetical or imaginative comparison." It furnishes the means of comparison by a statement--not a story. Examples may be found in Isaiah 29:8; 55:10-11; 1:8-9.

IV. SIMILITUDE

The similitude is a drawn out or prolonged simile. It differs from an allegory in that it is constituted of similes and not of metaphors.

It differs from the parable in that it is made from statements, but is not a story. The similitude usually contains its own explanation. The comparison of the wise man and foolish man building houses on the rock and the sand is actually a double simile or similitude. The same thought could be put into story form and made a true parable. In 2 Timothy 2:3-7, where Paul talks about suffering as a good soldier of the cross, he used the form of a metaphor, but it contains the likeness or sign of comparison and therefore, should be properly catalogued as a similitude. Many of the Psalms are in the form of similitudes. Many examples may be found in Psalms 102:2-11.

V. METAPHOR

Metaphor comes from two Greek words, META, meaning "beyond or over," and THEREIN, meaning "to bring or to carry." A metaphor is "a short similitude, a similitude reduced to a single word, or a word expressing similitude without the signs of comparison. Thus 'that man is a fox' is a metaphor, but 'that man is like a fox' is a simile, similitude or comparison." The Bible is full of metaphors. Christ is called a "husband" (2 Cor. 11:2) and He is the "lamb" of God that takes away the sins of the world. He is also the "lion" of the tribe of Judah. All of these metaphors vividly picture our Lord. God is spoken of as having ears and eyes, hands and feet and hinder parts, as hating, being jealous, divorcing Israel, and permitting his wife to return again after she had played a harlot. The metaphor thus gives vivid descriptions that all may understand.

VI. THE ALLEGORY

This word "allegory" comes from ALLOS meaning "other," and AGORUEIN meaning "to speak in the assembly". Allegories and metaphors are so similar that they are commonly confused. The allegory differs from the metaphor in two respects--it is carried out to a greater variety of particulars making a connected story and it suppresses all mention of the principal subject, leaving us to infer the writer's intention. The allegory is related to the metaphor as the similitude or the parable is to the simile. When Jesus was asked why his disciples did not keep the customs of the people, he responded with the allegory in Matthew 9:16- 17 about

putting a piece of new cloth on an old garment. Paul gives a description of the defensive armor of the Christian. This is one of the easiest allegories in the scriptures to interpret (Ephesians 6:11- 17). The "double allegory" is used in Romans 11:15-24 where Paul talks about the two live trees. In Galatians 4:21-25, Paul gives an allegory of two women--Sarah and Hagar--to show the difference between the Old Testament and the New.

VII. METONYMY

Metonymy comes from the Greek words META meaning "change," and ONOMA meaning "name". Metonymy literally means "to employ one name or word for another". There are many forms of metonymy.

Metonymy of the Cause, is a figure of speech where the cause is stated while the effect is intended. An example is, "but ye did not so learn Christ." (Ephesians 4:20). The meaning is they did not learn the teaching of Christ regarding the manner of living. In this figure of speech, parents are sometimes put for their children, as for example the statement concerning the descendants of Noah in Genesis 9:25-27.

This is true of the statement "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. (Romans 9:13). This was said concerning the descendants of Jacob and Esau several hundred years after their progenitors were dead (Malachi 1:2,3).

In Metonymy of the Effect, the effect is put for the cause. The cause is named but the effect is meant, e.g., "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." (Ecc. 11:1). The meaning here is plain--not that the man would find his bread, but that the good one does will come back to him.

In Metonymy of the Subject, we have the subject announced while some property belonging to the subject is referred to. The subject is put for the adjunct: some mere appendage or circumstance dependent upon it. Thus "thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thine heart..." (Deut. 6:5) means with all the affections. "Heart" is used in this way in many places in the Bible.

In Metonymy of the Adjunct, the adjunct is put for the subject. The subject is intended, but the adjunct is named. Examples: "Then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." (Genesis 42:38). Circumcision and uncircumcision stand for Jews and Gentiles in Romans 3:30; Galatians 2:9.

VII. SYNECDOCHE

Synecdoche is from the Greek SUNECHDEECHETHAI meaning "to receive jointly." It is a figure of speech by which we refer to the whole by speaking of a

part, or to a part by using a term denoting the whole. Examples: "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow and a mover of insurrection among all the Jews throughout the world." (Acts 14:5). Obviously, he did not cause insurrection "throughout the whole world" except by using this figure of speech where a whole is allowed to be put for the part. At other times this figure of speech is used and a part is put for the whole. When Paul was in Athens, "his spirit was provoked within him." Spirit here represent the whole man.

IX. PROVERBS

Proverb comes from the Latin PROVERBIUM. From PRO meaning "before" and VERBUM, "a word." A proverb is a sentence condensed into a word or a small form. It is a short pithy sentence containing a complete and valuable thought. Proverbs are found in many books of the Bible, but principally in the book bearing this name.

X. SARCASM

Sarcasm is from the Greek SARKASMOS meaning "to tear flesh like dogs," "to bite the lips and rage," "to sneer". An example is seen when the people knelt before Jesus and said, "Hail, King of the Jews." (Matthew 27:29).

XI. HYPERBOLE

Hyperbole is from the Greek HUPER meaning above or beyond, and BALO meaning to throw. This is a figure of speech in which the expression is an exaggeration of the meaning intended to be conveyed, or by which things are represented as much greater or less, better or worse than they really are. An example is seen in the report of the ten spies (Deut. 1:28), "The cities are great and walled up to heaven..." In Gen. 41:49 it is said that Joseph "laid up corn as the sand of the sea, very much..."

XII. IRONY

Irony is from the Greek word EIRONEIA, meaning to dissemble in speech-- to say one thing while meaning another. Irony is a form of ridicule which may be detected because of the tone of voice, accent or manner of the speaker, the character of the address, the extravagance or over statement. An example is found in Job 12:2, "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." (See Judges 10:14; 1 Cor. 4:8- 13; Acts 2:13).

XIII. The APOSTROPHE

Apostrophe comes from the Greek APO meaning from and STREPHEIN meaning to turn. In rhetoric it is turning away from the real authority and addressing an imaginary one. Examples, "O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). Sometimes the address is to be an absent person as when David addressed Absalom in 2 Samuel 18:33.

XIV. PERSONIFICATION

Personification is a figure of speech by which inanimate objects are spoken of as if they had life. Animals are endowed with feelings like those of men. Examples: "The earth opened her mouth..." (Num. 16:32).

XV. INTERROGATION

Interrogation is a figure of speech when it is employed for the purpose of affirming or denying with great force. It is not an inquiry into a proposition, but an ending of the matter. An example is seen when the apostle Paul said concerning himself, "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?" (1 Cor. 9:1). Paul did not ask these questions to gain an answer, but simply to state a fact.

XVI. PROLEPSIS

Prolepsis is from the Greek PRO meaning before and LAMBANEIN meaning to take. This is a figure by which objections are anticipated and prevented or answered. In the scriptures we have Bethel spoken of at a time that Abraham came into the Land of Canaan (Gen. 12:8). Yet at the time of Jacob's flight from his brother, he slept there and because of the visitation of the angels it received its name. (Gen. 28:10-19). The account, however, was written long after the town had been known by that name so it was called Bethel. In Matthew 10:4 Judas as one who betrayed Christ, yet it was more than a year before the betrayal took place.

XVII. PARALLELISM

Parallelism is from the Greek PARALLELISMOS meaning beside. As a figure of speech it is placing beside each other several lines having the same or similar import. This is frequently seen in poetry and in singing. Several examples are seen in Luke 1:46-55.

Synonymous Parallelism, is when the lines contain the same thought or nearly the same thought. An example is seen in Isaiah 55:6,7 "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: ..."

Antithetic Parallelism, is that in which lines and sentences are made to oppose each other. Truth is made to appear by the use of the antithesis. Examples: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. (Isaiah 1:3).

XVIII. RIDDLE

The riddle is different from the fable in that it is purposely designed to perplex and puzzle the hearer. It is obscured to test the sharpness and penetration of those who attempt to solve it. Many of the proverbs are basically riddles. The Hebrew word for riddle is from a root which means, to twist, or tie a knot. Queen of Sheba came to test Solomon with riddles (1 Kings 10:1). Understanding riddles is beginning of wisdom (Pro. 1:5-6).

XIX. ENIGMAS

Enigmas are distinguished from riddles in that enigmas refer to mystic utterances which serve to conceal and enhance some deep and sacred thought; riddles refer to earthly things and are designed to exercise human ingenuity and shrewdness.

XX. PROPHECY

Prophesying in the scriptures is not just a prediction of future events. The Hebrew word signifies one who speaks under the pressure of divine fervor. He may speak of events past, present, or future. He is appropriately called a "man of God" (1 Kings 13:1; 2 Kings 4:7,9) and a "man of the Spirit" (Hos. 9:7).

Understanding prophecy. Look for repetition in prophecy. Several prophecies are given and then repeated years and chapters later. e.g. The promise of a Messiah is broadly stated in Gen. 3:15. Future prophecies occur to Noah (Gen. 9:26-27), Abraham (Gen. 12:3). Many Messianic prophecies were given to the prophets and kings.

OTHER FIGURES

There are other figures of speech in the Bible and many figures of thought such as antithesis, symbols, and typology. Understanding different figures of speech used in the Bible will add meaning and beauty to the word of God and will make its study a richer and fuller experience than we could know otherwise. Every Christian should study God's word carefully and, above all, ask God for wisdom which He has promised and give abundantly.

Source: George W. DeHoff, DeHoff's Bible Handbook (Nashville, Tenn.: Williams Printing Company, 1964); pp. 319-327. (Edited)

APPENDIX D

List Of Major Bible Translations According To Type

Bible Translation Type: **LITERAL** (word-for-word)

Acronym	Name	Publication Date
KJV AV	King James Version (also known as Authorized Version)	1611
ASV	American Standard Version	1901
NASB	New American Standard Bible	1971 (Revised 1996)
MLB NBV	Modern Language Bible also known as New Berkley Version	1959 (NT - 1945; NT revised 1969)
RSV	Revised Standard Version	1952
NKJV	New King James Version	1982
NET	New English Translation	2004

Bible Translation Type: **DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE** (thought-for-thought)

Acronym	Name	Publication Date
JPB	Phillips NT in Modern English	1958 (Revised 1972)
GNB TEV	Good News Bible/ Today's English Version	1974 (NT - 1966; Revised 1993)
NIV	New International Version	1978 (NT - 1973)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version	1990
ICB NCV	International Children's Bible New Century Version	1986 (NT - 1978)
CEV	Contemporary English Version	1995 (NT - 1991)
NLT	New Living Translation	1996

Bible Translation Type: **PARAPHRASE** (extreme though-for-thought)

Acronym	Name	Publication Date
LIV	The Living Bible	1971 (NT - 1962)
NLIV	New Living Bible	1996
MES	The Message	1995