

How to Study the Bible

Teaching Series Conducted At
West Side Church of God in Christ
Rockford, Illinois

© Maurice A. West
December 2007



THOUGHTS ON HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

GROUND RULES

- **ACCEPT THE BIBLE AS INFALLIBLE (EXEMPT FROM ERROR).** If you have any different ideas regarding the Bible, then this is all a waste of time. We must go into our studies believing that we're doing more than reading a book. This is not as easy as it seems. Look at this verse from the infallible Word of God: **Song of Solomon 4:5** *Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.* I've never preached from it but there it is in the Word of God. Is it still the Word of God? Yes, it is.
- **ACCEPT THAT SOME TRANSLATIONS MAY HAVE TRANSLATION ERRORS.** Doesn't this contradict the prior ground rule? No, the key here is to not get hung up on one Scripture saying 30,000 while another says 300,000. The message of the Bible is without error but you may find two Scriptures that don't agree in this fashion. This is when a good study Bible comes in handy (more to come on this).
- **BE READY TO DO WHATEVER THE BIBLE TELLS YOU.** If you're not willing to change based on what the Word says, why bother?
- **DON'T GET STUCK ON CHURCH TRADITION OR PERSONAL BIAS.** You may prefer the King James Version as long as you remember that Jesus Christ did not speak in King James Version English. Don't look at other translations as sinful. You may have a preference but don't let your preference impact how you study.
- **DON'T SKIP OVER ANY WORD THAT YOU'RE UNSURE OF.** **Psalm 19:13** *Keep back thy servant also from PRESUMPTUOUS sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.* If I don't know what a presumptuous sin is, how can I avoid it? (Presumptuous - Going beyond what is right or proper.) **Psalm 22:15** *My strength is dried up like a POTSHERD; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.* This word has nothing to do with POSTURE (how you stand), which I've heard a few preachers say, but it means, "broken pottery fragment".
- **DON'T TRY TO MAKE THE BIBLE FIT OUR COUNTRY, OUR TIME, OUR RACE, OR OUR ANYTHING.** Accept what it says at face value and try to find out what God is saying to YOU. Here's where prayerful obedience and discipline come in. The discipline uncovers what the Bible is telling us and the obedience sets aside the ideas we cherish so that we may take on the Bible's vision.

THOUGHTS ON HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

- **REMEMBER THAT THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE BIBLE IS JESUS CHRIST.**
Don't use the Bible to win your point, attack your fellow church member, or do anything that does not support the central theme.

THOUGHTS ON HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

2 Timothy 2:15 *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

This lesson is intended to give you the basic tools you need to work with (rightly divide) the Word of God. I know there is much more we could add to it but this is intended to deal with the basics. We understand WHY we study the Bible – we study to show ourselves approved unto God. With that question behind us, we'll deal with three other questions in our study:

- (1) How do I start?
- (2) Where do I start?
- (3) ...and finally, how should I study my Bible?

HOW DO I START?

Before you open that Bible, you need some starting points to help you in your studies. Once you're comfortable with how to start, some of the other questions will fall into place.

1. **WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO STUDY?** Just like you did back in school (or should have) you need an atmosphere that helps YOU to retain what you're studying. Some students have seen some success studying in front of the television. You CANNOT do that in studying your Bible. There is usually no unseen enemy working to destroy your grades in school, however, he is ALWAYS there to keep you from what God has for you out of the Word of God. He will use any distraction he can find. Look at **Luke 8:12** *Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.* These have heard and allowed the Word to get into their hearts. But they also allow the devil to come into their hearts to destroy the benefits of the Word and they lose all of the benefits that could have come from it. Whose fault is it that the Word did not benefit them? It's THEIR fault. Therefore, find you a location where you will not be disturbed with adequate lighting and no phone. (It WILL ring – be prepared to ignore it, if you can.)
2. **TIME REQUIRED** – Don't rush time in the Word of God. Think about how much time you would spend on other things. Plan to give some quality time to the Word of God.
3. **GATHER YOUR TOOLS.** If you have ever called a minister or teacher and asked, "Where can I find this and that in the Bible", you don't have adequate Bible study tools (or you may just be in a hurry). This is the most important section to this study so I'm going to take more time here. What tools do you need?
 - **BIBLE** – Of course you need a Bible to study the Bible but if you spent less than \$20 on your Bible and have known the Lord more than 2 years, SHAME ON YOU!!! A good

THOUGHTS ON HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

plumber, carpenter, bricklayer, accountant, doctor, or whoever invests in the best tools. They do this because they understand that a big investment now keeps them from making many investments in the future. You need either a “chain reference” Bible or an “annotated” Bible or one that has both features. So what are the features of a “good” reference Bible?

- It will have a high quality leather binding and, preferably, “India” paper, which holds up better over time and handles being marked up well.
- It will have a “Harmony of the Gospels”. The Harmony of the Gospels is the arrangement of the Gospels in parallel columns for the purpose of studying their similarities and differences. It really helps in focusing on the central theme of the Bible, Jesus Christ, and it’s an important tool in comparing Scripture with Scripture.
- It will have a concordance (an alphabetical index of the principal words of the Bible with a reference to the passage in which each occurs). This is NOT the only one you need but a good Bible will have an abbreviated version.
- It will have some type of reference material in either notes by the author, references to other Scriptures of the same topic, an archaeological supplement, topical index, maps, outlines of the books of the Bible, or other items like this.
- Examples of “good” reference Bibles are the Thompson Chain Reference Bible (\$30-\$100+), the Dake Annotated Reference Bible (\$45-\$100+), the Ryrie Study Bible (\$50-\$100+), and the MacArthur Study Bible (\$50-\$100+). (My personal recommendation is either Thompson or Dake.) Let me add one note of warning though before we move on. Almost all Bibles with notes are based on the *opinion* of the writer. Dake had a Pentecostal Holiness background so he reflects what we believe but he had other issues that you have to look over in his text. Even the chain reference Bibles can “lead” you because the author is telling you what Scriptures THEY thinks are important. Therefore, you have to remember to pray and allow the Spirit to guide you in the right direction.
- DIFFERENT BIBLE TRANSLATIONS – While we’re on the subject of Bibles, it is also helpful to have other Bible translations to compare how other translations interpreted the same passage. A nice resource is a Parallel Bible, which has a number of translations side-by-side. Again, be careful here. Some translations reflect the modernistic, liberal thinking of the author. Let’s deal with some of the major translations here. (I thought I would try to hit most of them but I found in my research that over the last 30 years, there has been a new translation released EVERY YEAR.):

THOUGHTS ON HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

- King James Version – This is the main translation used by Protestant (non-Roman Catholic) Christians. It was translated from an earlier translation but the Hebrew and Greek texts were studied by 47 scholars. It has been the main translation used throughout the English-speaking world for over 300 years. The King James Version is the “gold standard” of Bible translations.
- The New King James Version – The biggest “draw” of the New King James Version is that it is advertised to be the same as the King James Version without the Old English words. However, that is not true. It is a new translation. The people that know say that this Bible is useful to help in your studies but not as a main study Bible.
- Amplified Bible – This translation uses multiple English word equivalents to each key Hebrew and Greek word to clarify and amplify their meanings. It is really helpful to understand what the original text was saying.
- New International Version – The New International Version (NIV) was produced by a committee of scholars associated with various evangelical churches in America, conceived as a version that would appeal to evangelicals. It was not a revision of any previously existing version, but an entirely new translation in twentieth-century English. It is a nice translation that can be used as a main Bible.
- New Living Translation – The New Living Translation is an extensive revision of the Living Bible (which I personally greatly disagree with). It was designed to improve the accuracy of that version and it succeeded.

Before I leave this section, be careful with what translation you choose. Some theologians feel that the new translations are a result of the “dumbing down of America”. In addition, some of these translations are just wrong so you must be careful. Some of the ones that I discourage completely are the Living Bible and Today’s English Version. Both of these were very popular in the 70’s and 80’s but they took too many liberties with the basics of Christianity. They are dangerous translations!

- DICTIONARY – The kind of dictionary is unimportant but it should be thorough. You don’t want to skip over words without knowing what they mean (remember our ground rule). Today, we’re blessed with on-line tools such as www.dictionary.com, which will give you a massive dictionary FREE.
- BIBLE DICTIONARY – There are a number of “good” Bible Dictionaries and some that are not as good. One of the standards is Unger’s Bible Dictionary. It is thorough and does not have a lot of the opinions of the author. Again, you can go on-line for this at www.ccel.org. The actual dictionary will cost you around \$30-\$40. I have had mine since 1972 so it is a

THOUGHTS ON HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

one-time investment and I've found it more useful to have one in hand than to rely on the on-line version.

- CONCORDANCE – Remember, a concordance is an alphabetical index of the principal words of the Bible with a reference to the passage in which each occurs. The concordance with the best reputation is a Strong's Concordance. The best one to get is the “exhaustive” or “complete” version. Also, don't forget that most concordances are based on the King James Version. A Strong's Exhaustive Concordance will cost you about \$20-\$25 but, again, I've had mine since 1976 so it's also a one-time investment. (Note: You'll never have to call and ask that question about where the Scripture is found with a concordance.)
- COMMENTARY – There are many commentaries available. What is a commentary? It is an interpretation of the Scripture written down by an “expert”. **BE CAREFUL WITH COMMENTARIES!** They are wonderful but they are the “comments” of another person. They are helpful but prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit can get you to the same point. With that caution, they are still useful because they are written by scholars who have dug deep into the Word of God. There are so many out there but start with the “classics” – Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, the Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, and Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible. These are all available on-line at www.studylight.org, www.biblegateway.com, or www.blueletterbible.org. However, for a hardcopy, I recommend the Bethany Parallel Commentary, which has all three of these “classics” side by side. This is an expensive commentary – about \$80 for the Old Testament and the same price for the New Testament. With this expense, I would recommend using the on-line version and seeing if you find it useful before making this investment. Here's the key, after you finish with the commentary, you have to pray and ask the Lord if this person made sense or not (and I've found from personal experience that sometimes they do not).
- MARKING PENS – Are you afraid to mark in your Bible? Your Bible is a resource tool to help you live the Christian life. You need to be able to get back to those Scriptures that really effect you in a positive manner.
- ON LINE RESOURCES – Almost everything mentioned is available as an on-line resource or as a tablet app. This will remove the expense so we are really inexcusable. Many of them have already been mentioned so **USE THEM.**

WHERE DO I START?

What are you trying to achieve when you pick up your Bible? Are you trying to dig deep into the Word and dig out mysteries or are you trying to keep yourself continually up to date? (Ministers and teachers also study for a message or a lesson but that really is part of digging deep.) These two

THOUGHTS ON HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

require a different approach. In the next section, I'm going to go through what you should do to dig deep into the Word. However, we need to stay up-to-date and fresh on what's in the Bible. To do this, there are some approaches you can use:

- I've added to the back of this study to read the Bible in one year (there are many versions of this type of schedule available and this is just one of them). You can use that schedule.
- You can get into an ongoing Bible study in a church (or your local church!) and study the book that's being studied at that time.
- You can pick out a book that's interesting and just decide to read there.
- You can read the passages provided for daily Bible study in your Sunday School. (Now I just KNOW that if you're interested in the Bible that you're a good Sunday School student also!!!)

Whatever method you choose, you should have some consistency in your Bible reading so that you know how to use your Bible as a tool.

What if you're new to Bible study? I recommend what my past mentors told me – start in the Gospels. Remember, Jesus Christ is the central theme of the Bible so He is the one that you must know. I also recommend that if you don't have a schedule, read in one or more of the Gospels once each year. There are many myths about the Lord Jesus and the only way to wash them out is to know who He is.

HOW SHOULD I STUDY MY BIBLE?

Now we FINALLY get to the details. Many people who have the reputation of “knowing” their Bible don't really know it because they don't dig deep enough.

1. **AUTHOR** – Who wrote the book that you're reading? Once you've become a student of the Bible, you understand the style of the writer and their focus. For example, most books of the New Testament were written by Apostle Paul so we know that these books are focused on helping us to live this Christian life. However, this is especially important in the Old Testament. For example, most people call the Book of Psalms the “Psalms of David” but David didn't write all of them. The same is true of Proverbs. This is where you need your Bible Dictionary (or your computer) to get a view of the author.
2. **SETTING** – What's the setting of this book? We need to understand the time line of the Bible. **Bible Study Principle – the Bible is NOT in chronological order!** The oldest book in the Bible, according to time, is Genesis but according to authorship, it's Job. The oldest book according to time is Revelation but according to authorship, it is said to be the Gospel of John. We need to also understand the historical perspective of what was going on WITH THE JEWISH PEOPLE when the book was written because the Bible's focus is God's people.

THOUGHTS ON HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

3. **FACTS** – Study to get the facts that are there. Know these facts and apply these facts. Most Christians live beneath their privileges as Christians because they don't know the facts the Bible says about them. Also, know the historical facts. This is not the same as the setting. Know what the Bible said about a certain person or place at a certain time because it was said for a reason and will probably come up again.
4. **COMPARE SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE** – The Bible agrees with itself. **Bible Study Principle – Don't build a new revelation or insight from one Scripture.** When the early church fathers came to decide what books go in the Bible, they used the Lord Jesus as the key. If the Lord referred to the book, it was considered as a sacred book. (By the way, this is why we KNOW some things early in the Book of Genesis are FACTS because the Lord Jesus said so!)
5. **HIGHLIGHT** – Highlight the key verse or verses that really spoke to you that day in a mild color such as yellow. Whatever was a “WOW” thing to you should be highlighted in such a way so that you can later find it quickly. You may want to add a note in the margin or write something down. I have always recorded these “WOW” incidents so that I could always refer back to them because they spoke to ME.
6. **WHAT IS THIS SAYING TO ME** – Now that you've found some key verses, ask the Lord to show you what this verse is saying to YOU. The reason you found it is because His Spirit led you in that direction. I am still amazed how that I can read a book I've read a number of times and “discover” a verse that really speaks to me. I didn't need it as much before as I need it now.
7. **REHEARSE IN YOUR MIND WHAT YOU RECEIVED OUT OF THIS** – Before you leave your study time, go over what you have received – the “WOW” verses and those verses that spoke to you. What will you now do differently since the Word has spoken to you? You see this is the essence of Bible study, to have God speak to us through His Word.

Thank you for the time to share this brief study with you. As I close, let me share with you seven steps from Dr. J. Vernon McGee on Bible study and allow the Word of God to speak to you!

1. Begin with prayer.
2. Read the Bible.
3. Study the Bible.
4. Meditate on the Bible.
5. Read what others have written on the Bible.
6. Obey the Bible.
7. Pass it on to others.



APPENDIX 1

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS

THE HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS

Subjects	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Pre-Christ Narratives				
St. Luke's preface			1:1-4	
"God the Word"				1:1-14
The Birth and Early Childhood of Christ				
Birth of John Baptist foretold			1:5-25	
Annunciation of the birth of Jesus			1:26-38	
Mary visits Elizabeth			1:39-56	
Birth of John the Baptist			1:57-80	
The two genealogies	1:1-17		3:23-38	
Birth of Jesus Christ	1:18-25		2:1-7	
The watching shepherds			2:8-20	
The circumcision			2:21	
Presentation in the temple			2:22-38	
The wise men from the East	2:1-12			
Flight into Egypt, and return to Nazareth	2:13-23		2:39	
Christ in the temple with the doctors			2:40-52	
The Baptism of Christ				
Ministry of John the Baptist	3:1-12	1:1-8	3:1-18	1:15-31
Baptism of Jesus Christ	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21, 22	1:32-34
The Temptation of Christ				
The temptation	4:1-11	1:12, 13	4:1-13	
The Early Ministry of Christ				
Andrew and another disciple and Simon Peter				1:35-42
Philip and Nathanael				1:43-51
The marriage in Cana of Galilee				2:1-11
Passover and cleansing the temple				2:12-25
Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night				3:1-21
Christ and John baptizing				3:22; 4:2
Christ at the well of Sychar				4:3-42
John the Baptist in prison	4:12; 14:3	1:14; 4:17	3:19, 20	3:24
Christ returns to Galilee	4:12	1:14, 15	4:14, 15	4:43-45
The synagogue at Nazareth			4:16-30	
Andrew and Simon, James and John called	4:13-22	1:16-20	5:1-11	
Miracles of Christ				
The nobleman's son at Capernaum healed				4:46-54
The demoniac in the synagogue healed		1:21-28	4:31-37	
Simon's wife's mother healed	8:14-17	1:29-34	4:38-41	
Circuit round Galilee	4:23-25	1:35-39	4:42-44	
Healing a leper	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-16	
Christ stills the storm	8:18-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
Demoniacs in the land of the Gadarenes	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	
Jairus' daughter. Woman healed	9:18-26	5:21-43	8:40-56	
Blind men and demoniac	9:27-34			
Healing the paralytic	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
Matthew the publican	9:9-13	2:13-17	5:27-32	
"Thy disciples fast not"	9:14-17	2:18-22	5:33-39	
The Feast and Miracle at Bethesda				
The feast at Jerusalem				5:1
The pool of Bethesda				5:2-15
Jesus and the irate Jews				5:16-47
Ministry and Parables				
Plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath	12:1-8	2:23-28	6:1-5	
The withered hand. Miracles	12:9-21	3:1-12	6:6-11	
The twelve apostles	10:2-4	3:13-19	6:12-16	
The sermon on the mount	5:1-7:29		6:17-49	
The centurion's servant healed	8:5-13		7:1-10	
The widow's son at Nain			7:11-17	
Messengers from John	11:2-19		7:18-35	

THE HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS

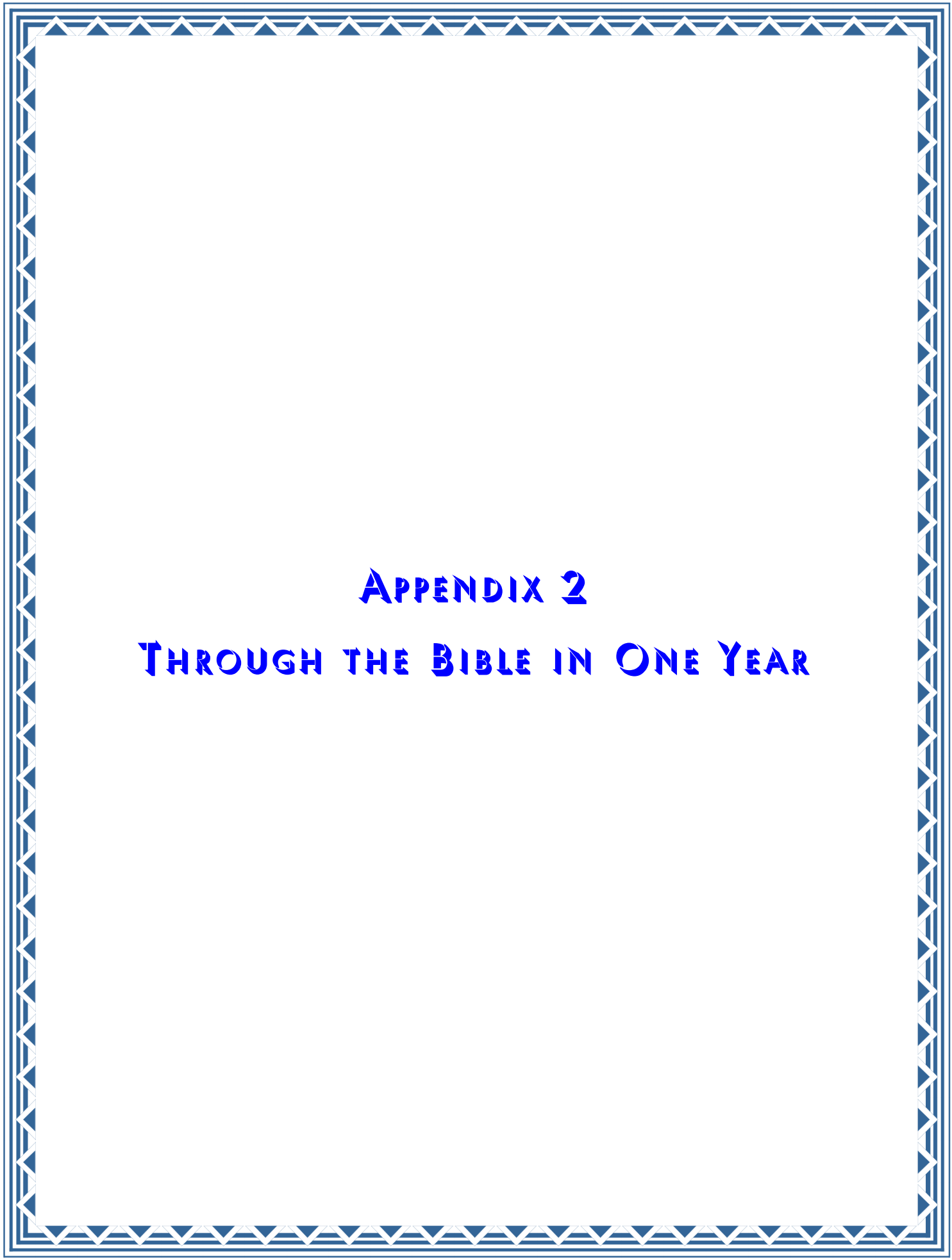
Subjects	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Woe denounced to the cities of Galilee	11:20-24			
Call to the meek and suffering	11:25-30			
Anointing the feet of Jesus			7:36-50	
Second circuit round Galilee			8:1-3	
Parable of the sower	13:1-23	4:1-20	8:4-15	
Parable of the candle under a bushel		4:21-25	8:16-18	
Parable of the seed growing secretly		4:26-29		
Parable of the wheat and tares	13:24-30			
Parable of the grain of mustard seed	13:31, 32	4:30-32	13:18, 19	
Parable of the leaven	13:33		13:20, 21	
On teaching by parables	13:34, 35	4:33-34		
The wheat and tares explained	13:36-43			
The hid treasure, the pearl, the net	13:44-52			
His mother and His brethren	12:46-50	3:31-35	8:19-21	
Reception at Nazareth	13:53-58	6:1-6		
Third circuit round Galilee	9:35-38; 11:1	6:6		
Sending forth of the twelve	10:5-42	6:7-13	9:1-6	
Herod's opinion of Jesus	14:1, 2	6:14-16	9:7-9	
Death of John the Baptist	14:3-12	6:17-29		
Feeding of the five thousand	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-15
Christ walking on the sea	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:16-21
Miracles in Gennesaret	14:34-36	6:53-56		
"The bread of life"				6:22-65
The washed hands	15:1-20	7:1-23		
The Syrophenician woman	15:21-28	7:24-30		
Miracles of healing	15:29-31	7:31-37		
Feeding of the four thousand	15:32-39	8:1-9		
The sign from heaven	16:1-4	8:10-13		
The leaven of the Pharisees	16:5-12	8:14-21		
Blind man healed		8:22-26		
Outside of Galilee				
Peter's profession of faith	16:13-19	8:27-29	9:18-20	6:66-71
The passion foretold	16:20-28	8:30-9:1	9:21-27	
The transfiguration	17:1-9	9:2-10	9:28-36	
The coming of Elias	17:10-13	9:11-13		
The lunatic healed	17:14-21	9:14-29	9:37-42	
Back in Galilee				
The passion again foretold	17:22, 23	9:30-32	9:43-45	
The fish caught for the tribute	17:24-27			
the little child	18:1-5	9:33-37	9:46-48	
One casting out devils		9:38-41	9:49, 50	
Offences	18:6-9	9:42-48	17:2	
The lost sheep	18:10-14		15:4-7	
Forgiveness of injuries	18:15-17			
"Binding and loosing"	18:18-20			
Parable of the unmerciful servant	18:21-35			
"Salt with fire"		9:49, 50		
Ministry in Jerusalem				
Journey to Jerusalem			9:51	7:1-10
Fire from heaven			9:52-56	
Answers to disciples	8:19-22		9:57-62	
Teaching at the feast of tabernacles				7:11-53
Woman taken in adultery				8:1-11
Dispute with the Pharisees				8:12-59
The man born blind				9:1-41
The good shepherd				10:1-21
Feast of the dedication				10:22-30
Departure beyond Jordan				10:40-42

THE HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS

Subjects	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
In Galilee				
Mission of the seventy			10:1-16	
The return of the seventy			10:17-24	
The good Samaritan			10:25-37	
Mary and Martha			10:38-42	
The Lord's prayer	6:9-13		11:1-4	
Prayer effectual	7:7-11		11:5-13	
The blasphemous Pharisees reproved	12:22-37	3:20-30	11:14-23	
The unclean spirit returning	12:43-45		11:24-28	
The sign of Jonah	12:38-42		11:29-32	
The light of the body	5:15; 6:22, 23		11:33-36	
The Pharisees	23:1-39		11:37-54	
What to fear	10:26-33		12:1-12	
Covetousness	6:25, 33		12:13-31	
Watchfulness			11:32-59	
Galileans that perished			13:1-9	
Woman healed on the Sabbath			13:10-17	
The grain of mustard-seed	13:31, 32	4:30-32	13:18, 19	
The leaven	13:33		13:20, 21	
Towards and At Jerusalem				
Journey towards Jerusalem			13:22	
"Are there few that be saved?"			13:23-30	
Warning against Herod			13:31-33	
Prophecy against Jerusalem	23:37-39		13:34, 35	
Dropsy healed on the Sabbath day			14:1-6	
Choosing the chief rooms			14:7-14	
Parable of the great supper	22:1-14		14:15-24	
Following Christ with the cross	10:37, 38		14:25-35	
Parables of the lost sheep, piece of money, prodigal son			15:1-32	
Parables of the steward, rich man and Lazarus			16:1-31	
Offences	18:6-15		17:1-4	
Faith and merit	17:20		17:5-10	
The ten lepers			17:11-19	
How the kingdom cometh			17:20-37	
Parable of the unjust judge			18:1-8	
Parable of the Pharisee and the publican			18:9-14	
Divorce	19:1-12	10:1-12		
Infants brought to Jesus	19:13-15	10:13-16	18:15-17	
The rich man inquiring	19:16-26	10:17-27	18:18-27	
Promises to the disciples	19:27-30	10:28-31	18:28-30	
Laborers in the vineyard	20:1-16			
Death of Christ foretold	20:17-19	10:32-34	18:31-34	
Request of James and John	20:20-28	10:35-45		
Blind men at Jericho	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
Zaccheus			19:1-10	
Parable of the ten talents	25:14-30		19:11-28	
Raising of Lazarus				11:1-44
Meeting of the Sanhedrim				11:45-53
Christ Departs to Ephraim				11:54-57
The anointing by Mary	26:6-13	14:3-9	7:36-50	12:1-11
Christ enters Jerusalem	21:1-11	11:1-10	19:29-44	12:12-19
Cleansing the temple (second)	21:12-16	11:15-18	19:45-48	
The barren fig tree	21:17-22	11:11-14, 11:19-23		
Exhortation to prayer and forgiveness	6:14-15	11:24-26		
The questioning of the chief priests	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8	

THE HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS

Subjects	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Parable of the two sons	21:28-32			
Parable of the wicked husbandmen	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-18	
Parable of the wedding-garment	22:1-14		14:16-24	
The tribute money	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26	
The Sadducees confuted	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-40	
The great commandment	22:34-40	12:28-34		
David's Son and David's Lord	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44	
The hypocrisy and ambition of the Pharisees	23:1-39	12:38-40	20:45-47	
The widow's mite		12:41-44	21:1-4	
Christ's second coming foretold	24:1-51	13:1-37	21:5-36	
Parable of the ten virgins	25:1-13			
Parable of the talents	25:14-30		19:11-27	
The last judgment	25:31-46			
Greeks visit Jesus. Voice from heaven				12:20-36
The judgment of unbelief				12:37-50
Last Passover. Conspiracy of Jews	26:1-5	14:1, 2	22:1, 2	
Judas Iscariot	26:14-16	14:10, 11	22:3-6	
Paschal supper	26:17-30	14:12-26	22:7-23	13:1-35
Contention of the apostles			22:24-30	
Peter's fall foretold	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-39	13:36-38
Last discourse.? The departure.? The Comforter				14:1-31
The vine and the branches. Abiding in love				15:1-27
Work of the Comforter in the disciples				16:1-33
The prayer of Christ for them				17:1-26
Gethsemane	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:40-46	18:1
The Betrayal and Trial of Christ				
The betrayal	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-11
Christ before Annas and Caiaphas.? Peter's denial	26:57, 58, 26:69-75	14:53, 54, 14:66-72	22:54-65	18:12-27
Christ before the Sanhedrim	26:59-68	14:55-65	22:66-71	
Christ before Pilate	27:1, 2, 27:11-14	15:1-5	23:1-6	18:12-28
The traitor's death	27:3-10			
Christ before Herod			23:7-12	
Accusation and condemnation	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:13-25	18:29; 19:16
The Crucifixion and Burial of Christ				
Treatment by the soldiers	27:27-31	15:16-20	23:36,37	19:1-3
The crucifixion	27:32-38	15:21-28	23:26-34	19:17-24
The mother of Jesus at the cross				19:25-27
Mockings and railings	27:39-44	15:29-32	23:35-39	
The penitent malefactor			23:40-43	
The death of Christ	27:50	15:37	23:46	19:28-30
Darkness and other portents	27:45-53	15:33-38	23:44, 45	
The bystanders	27:54-56	15:39-41	23:47-49	
The side pierced				19:31-37
The burial	27:57-61	15:42-47	23:50-56	19:38-42
The guard of the sepulcher	27:62-66; 28:11-15			
The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ				
The resurrection	28:1-10	16:1-11	24:1-12	20:1-18
Disciples going to Emmaus		16:12, 13	24:13-35	
Appearances in Jerusalem. Doubts of Thomas		16:14-18	24:36-49	20:19-29
Appearance at the sea of Tiberias				21:1-23
Appearance on the mount of Galilee	28:16-20			
Unrecorded works				20:30, 31; 21:24, 25
The ascension		16:19-20	24:50-53	



APPENDIX 2
THROUGH THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR

SCHEDULE TO READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR

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

Day 51	Deuteronomy 1-3
Day 52	Deuteronomy 4-6
Day 53	Deuteronomy 7-9
Day 54	Deuteronomy 10-12
Day 55	Deuteronomy 13-15
Day 56	Deuteronomy 16-18
Day 57	Deuteronomy 19-21
Day 58	Deuteronomy 22-24
Day 59	Deuteronomy 25-27
Day 60	Deuteronomy 28-30
Day 61	Deuteronomy 31-34
Day 62	Joshua 1-3
Day 63	Joshua 4-6
Day 64	Joshua 7-9
Day 65	Joshua 10-12
Day 66	Joshua 13-15
Day 67	Joshua 16-18
Day 68	Joshua 19-21
Day 69	Joshua 22-24
Day 70	Judges 1-3
Day 71	Judges 4-6
Day 72	Judges 7-9
Day 73	Judges 10-12
Day 74	Judges 13-15
Day 75	Judges 16-18
Day 76	Judges 19-21
Day 77	Ruth 1-4
Day 78	1 Samuel 1-3
Day 79	1 Samuel 4-6
Day 80	1 Samuel 7-9
Day 81	1 Samuel 10-12
Day 82	1 Samuel 13-15
Day 83	1 Samuel 16-18
Day 84	1 Samuel 19-21
Day 85	1 Samuel 22-24
Day 86	1 Samuel 25-27
Day 87	1 Samuel 28-31
Day 88	2 Samuel 1-3
Day 89	2 Samuel 4-6
Day 90	2 Samuel 7-9
Day 91	2 Samuel 10-12
Day 92	2 Samuel 13-15
Day 93	2 Samuel 16-18
Day 94	2 Samuel 19-21
Day 95	2 Samuel 22-24
Day 96	1 Kings 1-3
Day 97	1 Kings 4-6
Day 98	1 Kings 7-9
Day 99	1 Kings 10-12
Day 100	1 Kings 13-15

Day 101	1 Kings 16-18
Day 102	1 Kings 19-22
Day 103	2 Kings 1-3
Day 104	2 Kings 4-6
Day 105	2 Kings 7-9
Day 106	2 Kings 10-12
Day 107	2 Kings 13-15
Day 108	2 Kings 16-18
Day 109	2 Kings 19-21
Day 110	2 Kings 22-25
Day 111	1 Chronicles 4-6
Day 112	1 Chronicles 7-9
Day 113	1 Chronicles 10-12
Day 114	1 Chronicles 13-15
Day 115	1 Chronicles 16-18
Day 116	1 Chronicles 19-21
Day 117	1 Chronicles 22-25
Day 118	1 Chronicles 26-29
Day 119	2 Chronicles 1-3
Day 120	2 Chronicles 4-6
Day 121	2 Chronicles 7-9
Day 122	2 Chronicles 10-12
Day 123	2 Chronicles 13-15
Day 124	2 Chronicles 16-18
Day 125	2 Chronicles 19-21
Day 126	2 Chronicles 22-24
Day 127	2 Chronicles 25-27
Day 128	2 Chronicles 28-30
Day 129	2 Chronicles 31-33
Day 130	2 Chronicles 34-36
Day 131	Ezra 1-3
Day 132	Ezra 4-6
Day 133	Ezra 7-10
Day 134	Nehemiah 1-3
Day 135	Nehemiah 4-6
Day 136	Nehemiah 7-9
Day 137	Nehemiah 10-13
Day 138	Esther 1-3
Day 139	Esther 4-6
Day 140	Esther 7-10
Day 141	Job 1-3
Day 142	Job 4-6
Day 143	Job 7-9
Day 144	Job 10-12
Day 145	Job 13-15
Day 146	Job 16-18
Day 147	Job 19-21
Day 148	Job 22-24
Day 149	Job 25-27
Day 150	Job 28-30

Day 151	Job 31-33
Day 152	Job 34-36
Day 153	Job 37-39
Day 154	Job 40-42
Day 155	Psalms 1-5
Day 156	Psalms 6-10
Day 157	Psalms 11-15
Day 158	Psalms 16-20
Day 159	Psalms 21-25
Day 160	Psalms 26-30
Day 161	Psalms 31-35
Day 162	Psalms 36-40
Day 163	Psalms 41-45
Day 164	Psalms 46-50
Day 165	Psalms 51-55
Day 166	Psalms 56-60
Day 167	Psalms 61-65
Day 168	Psalms 66-70
Day 169	Psalms 71-75
Day 170	Psalms 76-80
Day 171	Psalms 81-85
Day 172	Psalms 86-90
Day 173	Psalms 91-95
Day 174	Psalms 96-100
Day 175	Psalms 101-105
Day 176	Psalms 106-110
Day 177	Psalms 111-115
Day 178	Psalms 116-120
Day 179	Psalms 121-125
Day 180	Psalms 126-130
Day 181	Psalms 131-135
Day 182	Psalms 136-140
Day 183	Psalms 141-145
Day 184	Psalms 146-150
Day 185	Proverbs 1-3
Day 186	Proverbs 4-6
Day 187	Proverbs 7-9
Day 188	Proverbs 10-12
Day 189	Proverbs 13-15
Day 190	Proverbs 16-18
Day 191	Proverbs 19-21
Day 192	Proverbs 22-24
Day 193	Proverbs 25-27
Day 194	Proverbs 28-31
Day 195	Ecclesiastes 1-3
Day 196	Ecclesiastes 4-6
Day 197	Ecclesiastes 7-9
Day 198	Ecclesiastes 10-12
Day 199	Song of Songs 1-4
Day 200	Song of Songs 5-8

SCHEDULE TO READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR

Day 201	Isaiah 1-3
Day 202	Isaiah 4-6
Day 203	Isaiah 7-9
Day 204	Isaiah 10-12
Day 205	Isaiah 13-15
Day 206	Isaiah 16-18
Day 207	Isaiah 19-21
Day 208	Isaiah 22-24
Day 209	Isaiah 25-27
Day 210	Isaiah 28-30
Day 211	Isaiah 31-33
Day 212	Isaiah 34-36
Day 213	Isaiah 37-39
Day 214	Isaiah 40-42
Day 215	Isaiah 43-45
Day 216	Isaiah 46-48
Day 217	Isaiah 49-51
Day 218	Isaiah 52-54
Day 219	Isaiah 55-57
Day 220	Isaiah 58-60
Day 221	Isaiah 61-63
Day 222	Isaiah 64-66
Day 223	Jeremiah 1-3
Day 224	Jeremiah 4-6
Day 225	Jeremiah 7-9
Day 226	Jeremiah 10-12
Day 227	Jeremiah 13-15
Day 228	Jeremiah 16-18
Day 229	Jeremiah 19-21
Day 230	Jeremiah 22-24
Day 231	Jeremiah 25-27
Day 232	Jeremiah 28-30
Day 233	Jeremiah 31-33
Day 234	Jeremiah 34-36
Day 235	Jeremiah 37-39
Day 236	Jeremiah 40-42
Day 237	Jeremiah 43-45
Day 238	Jeremiah 46-48
Day 239	Jeremiah 49-52
Day 240	Lamentations 1-3
Day 241	Lamentations 4-5
Day 242	Ezekiel 1-3
Day 243	Ezekiel 4-6
Day 244	Ezekiel 7-9
Day 245	Ezekiel 10-12
Day 246	Ezekiel 13-15
Day 247	Ezekiel 16-18
Day 248	Ezekiel 19-21
Day 249	Ezekiel 22-24
Day 250	Ezekiel 25-27

Day 251	Ezekiel 28-30
Day 252	Ezekiel 31-33
Day 253	Ezekiel 34-36
Day 254	Ezekiel 37-40
Day 255	Ezekiel 41-44
Day 256	Ezekiel 45-48
Day 257	Daniel 1-3
Day 258	Daniel 4-6
Day 259	Daniel 7-9
Day 260	Daniel 10-12
Day 261	Hosea 1-3
Day 262	Hosea 4-6
Day 263	Hosea 7-10
Day 264	Hosea 11-14
Day 265	Joel 1-3
Day 266	Amos 1-3
Day 267	Amos 4-6
Day 268	Amos 7-9
Day 269	Obadiah
Day 270	Jonah 1-4
Day 271	Micah 1-3
Day 272	Micah 4-7
Day 273	Nahum 1-3
Day 274	Habakkuk 1-3
Day 275	Zephaniah 1-3
Day 276	Haggai 1-2
Day 277	Zechariah 1-3
Day 278	Zechariah 4-6
Day 279	Zechariah 7-10
Day 280	Zechariah 11-14
Day 281	Malachi 1-2
Day 282	Malachi 3-4
Day 283	Matthew 1-3
Day 284	Matthew 4-6
Day 285	Matthew 7-9
Day 286	Matthew 10-12
Day 287	Matthew 13-15
Day 288	Matthew 16-18
Day 289	Matthew 19-21
Day 290	Matthew 22-24
Day 291	Matthew 25-28
Day 292	Mark 1-3
Day 293	Mark 4-6
Day 294	Mark 7-9
Day 295	Mark 10-12
Day 296	Mark 13-16
Day 297	Luke 1-3
Day 298	Luke 4-6
Day 299	Luke 7-9
Day 300	Luke 10-12

Day 301	Luke 13-15
Day 302	Luke 16-18
Day 303	Luke 19-21
Day 304	Luke 22-24
Day 305	John 1-3
Day 306	John 4-6
Day 307	John 7-9
Day 308	John 10-12
Day 309	John 13-15
Day 310	John 16-18
Day 311	John 19-21
Day 312	Acts 1-3
Day 313	Acts 4-6
Day 314	Acts 7-9
Day 315	Acts 10-12
Day 316	Acts 13-15
Day 317	Acts 16-18
Day 318	Acts 19-21
Day 319	Acts 22-24
Day 320	Acts 25-28
Day 321	Romans 1-3
Day 322	Romans 4-6
Day 323	Romans 7-9
Day 324	Romans 10-12
Day 325	Romans 13-16
Day 326	1 Corinthians 1-3
Day 327	1 Corinthians 4-6
Day 328	1 Corinthians 7-9
Day 329	1 Corinthians 10-12
Day 330	1 Corinthians 13-16
Day 331	2 Corinthians 1-3
Day 332	2 Corinthians 4-6
Day 333	2 Corinthians 7-9
Day 334	2 Corinthians 10-13
Day 335	Galatians 1-3
Day 336	Galatians 4-6
Day 337	Ephesians 1-3
Day 338	Ephesians 4-6
Day 339	Philippians 1-4
Day 340	Colossians 1-4
Day 341	1 Thessalonians 1-5
Day 342	2 Thessalonians 1-3
Day 343	1 Timothy 1-3
Day 344	1 Timothy 4-6
Day 345	2 Timothy 1-4
Day 346	Titus 1-3
Day 347	Philemon
Day 348	Hebrews 1-3
Day 349	Hebrews 4-6
Day 350	Hebrews 7-9

Day 351	Hebrews 10-13
Day 352	James 1-3
Day 353	James 4-5
Day 354	1 Peter 1-5
Day 355	2 Peter 1-3
Day 356	1 John 1-3
Day 357	1 John 4-5
Day 358	2 John, 3 John, and Jude
Day 359	Revelation 1-3
Day 360	Revelation 4-6
Day 361	Revelation 7-9
Day 362	Revelation 10-12
Day 363	Revelation 13-15
Day 364	Revelation 16-18
Day 365	Revelation 19-22



APPENDIX 3
BASIC RULES FOR NEW TESTAMENT
EXEGESIS

Basic Rules for New Testament Exegesis

by Brian Knowles

For whatever reasons, God chose three languages in which to preserve his revelation to man: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. To understand the meaning of the Bible for our times, it is necessary that *someone* knows intimately the languages of Scripture and is able to interpret them for the rest of us. The process of interpreting Scripture – that is, drawing out of the text its meaning – is called exegesis.

Languages have rules. When one violates the rules of language, the end product is gibberish and confusion. Much Bible interpretation these days is subjective and intuitive (especially among Charismatics), agenda driven (Liberation, Feminist and Black theologies), and otherwise politicized. Because the text as it stands does not naturally yield a meaning that serves the interests of certain groups, theologians representing these groups often perform eisegesis (reading into the text what one wants it to mean) rather than exegesis. Doing editorial violence to the text of Scripture denigrates the Bible's authority. If the writing down of those thoughts that eventually became Scripture was an inspired process (cf. II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21), then robbing them of their intended meaning and imposing upon them a false meaning is an act of defiance against the God that inspired them. This is to be expected of a natural, unconverted mind for "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:7). It should not be expected of the mind yielded to God.

The rules of exegesis

Gordon D. Fee, in his *New Testament Exegesis*, p 27, states simply, "Exegesis...answers the question, What *did* the biblical author mean? It has to do both with *what* he said (the content itself) and why he said it at any given point (the literary context). Furthermore, exegesis is primarily concerned with intentionality: What did the author *intend* his original readers to understand?"

Before we can determine what a given text might mean for us today, we must establish what it meant for its original audience. This is the process of exegesis. In this article, we will lay out the fundamental rules, of which there are eight. In future articles, we will elaborate on each one from a nuts & bolts perspective. The rules listed are taken directly from Prof. Fee's excellent book (p. 32), mentioned in the paragraph above.

Rule No. 1: Survey the historical context in general.

Rule No. 2: Confirm the limits of the passage.

Rule No. 3: Become thoroughly acquainted with your paragraph or pericope (see article No. 1 in this series for a discussion of pericopes).

Rule No. 4: Analyze sentence structures and syntactical relationships.

Rule No. 5: Establish the text.

Rule No. 6: Analyze the grammar.

Rule No. 7: Analyze significant words.

Rule No. 8: Research the historical-cultural background.

Literary Genre

Whenever one is doing a technical analysis of a passage of Scripture, the above eight rules should ideally be followed. Leaving one out can be exegetically disastrous, resulting in all manner of erroneous interpretations. (This does not mean that it is necessary to follow these steps for every article or sermon. But the process of sound exegesis should be *behind* any presentation that is made.)

Not only is it important to follow these basic rules, but one must also consider the nature of the documents under scrutiny. The New Testament comes to us in four literary genres (types of literature). They are as follows:

1. **Epistles (Letters).**
2. **Gospels (pericopes and individual narratives or teachings).**
3. **Acts (shorter narratives forming a long one, plus speeches).**
4. **Revelation (visions woven together to form an apocalyptic narrative).**

Each of these literary genres requires additional exegetical consideration. Yet all of the steps do not apply equally to all New Testament passages. Some passages, for example, present no major textual problems; others are seriously problematic.

Completing the process

Fee recommends four additional steps to complete the process of exegesis:

1. **Consider the broader biblical and theological contexts.**
2. **Consult secondary literature.**
3. **Provide – if one is able – a finished translation.**
4. **Write your analysis.**

Those who write for peer review – i.e. in learned journals – are often careful to follow this process rigorously. As with all understanding within the Church, there tends to exist three levels: the scholarly, the pastoral, and the lay. Pastoral and lay levels are more often concerned with denominational fidelity than with objective accuracy. Scholars, to be true scholars, must rise above the constraints of denominational orthodoxy and perform exegesis that is not designed to confirm already-held beliefs. If a given scholar begins his exegesis with the idea that the denomination that sponsors him holds a certain belief on this or that subject, and then sets out to “prove” that is true, he has abandoned his scholarly integrity. He has lost objectivity. He has become a mere agenda-driven propagandist.

The goal of a true exegete of Scripture must be to allow the examined passage or pericope to yield up its intended meaning, not to impose meaning upon it. By following the steps listed in this article, this is more likely to happen than not.

At the same time, it goes without saying that “spiritual things are spiritually discerned” (I Corinthians 2:14). How we approach the text of Scripture makes a difference in how our process of analysis turns out. We will discuss this further in other articles in this series.

Recommended Reading: *New Testament Exegesis* by Gordon D. Fee, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, KY, Revised edition, 1993.