

How to Study the Bible Part 2

Here are some rules on how to have an effective Bible study:

The following rules should be studied well, in connection with the Scripture references, if the Bible student would benefit from them.

1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible.

Matthew 5:18

2. All Scripture is necessary and may be understood by diligent application and study. 2

Timothy 3:15,16,17

3. Nothing revealed in the Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering. Deuteronomy 29:29; Matthew 10:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Philippians 3:15; Isaiah 14:11; Matthew 21:22; John 14:13, 14; 15:7; James 1:5, 6; 1 John 5:13, 14, 15.

4. To understand doctrine, bring all the Scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence, and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error. Isaiah 28:7-29; 35:8; Proverbs 19:27; Luke 24:27,44,45; Romans 16:26; James 5:19; 2 Pet. 1:19,20

5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound it to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, not the Bible. Psalms 19:7-11; 119:97-105; Matthew 23:8-10; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16; Ezekiel 34:18,19; Luke 11:52; Malachi 2:7,8

6. God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables, and in this way, the same things are often revealed again and again, by different visions, or in different figures and parables. If you want to understand them, you must combine all of them. Psalms 89:19; Hosea 12:10; Habakkuk 2:2; Acts 2:17; 1 Corinthians 10:6; Hebrews 9:9, 24; Psalms 78:2; Matthew 8:13, 34; Genesis 41:1-32; Daniel 2; 7; 8; Acts 10:9-16

7. Visions are always mentioned as such. 2 Corinthians 12:1

8. Figures always have a figurative meaning and are used much in prophecy to represent future things, times, and events; such as mountains, meaning governments; beasts,

meaning kingdoms; waters, meaning people; lamps, meaning Word of God; day, meaning year. Daniel 2:35,44; 7:8,17; Revelation 17:1,15; Psalms 119:105; Ezekiel 4:6

9. Parables are used as a comparison to illustrate subjects and must be explained in the same way as figures, by the subject and the Bible. Mark 4:13

10. Figures sometimes have two or more different significations; as day is used in a figurative sense to represent three different periods of time. • Indefinite. • Definite, a day for a year. • Day for a thousand years. If you put on the right construction, it will harmonize with the Bible and make good sense; otherwise, it will not. Ecclesiastes 7:14; Ezekiel 4:6; 2 Peter 3:8

11. How to know when a word is used figuratively: If it makes good sense as it stands and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally; if not, figuratively. Revelation 12:1,2;17:3-7

12. To learn the true meaning of figures, trace your figurative word through your Bible, and where you find it explained, put it on your figure, and if it makes good sense, you need look no further; if not, look again.

13. To know whether we have the true historical event for the fulfillment of a prophecy: If you find every word of the prophecy (after the figures are understood) is fulfilled, then you may know that your history is the true event. But if one word lacks fulfillment, then you must look for another event, or wait for its future development. For God takes care that history and prophecy doth agree, so that the true, believing children of God may never be ashamed. Psalms 21:5; Isaiah 14:17-19; 1 Peter 2:6; Revelation 17:17; Acts 3:18

14. The most essential rule of all is that you must have faith. It must be a faith that requires a sacrifice, and, if tried, would give up the dearest object on earth, the world and all its desires, character, living, occupation, friends, home, comforts, and worldly honors. If any of these should hinder our believing any part of God's word, it would show our faith to be vain.

Nor can we ever believe so long as one of these motives lies lurking in our hearts. We must believe that God will never forfeit His word. And we can have confidence that He that takes notice of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our head, will guard the translation of His word, and throw a barrier around it, and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in His word, from erring far from the truth, though, they may not understand Hebrew or Greek.

These are some of the most important rules I find the word of God warrants us to adopt and follow. And, if I am not greatly deceived, in so doing, I have found the Bible, as a whole, one of the most simple, plain, and intelligible books ever written, containing proof in itself of its Divine origin, and full of all knowledge that our hearts could wish to know or enjoy. I have found it a treasure which the world cannot purchase. It gives a calm peace, in believing, and a firm hope for the future. It sustains the mind in adversity and teaches us to be humble in prosperity.

It prepares us to love and do good to others, and to realize the value of the soul. It makes us bold and valiant for the truth and nerves the arm to oppose error. It gives us a powerful weapon to break down infidelity and makes known the only antidote for sin. It instructs us how death will be conquered and how the bonds of the tomb must be broken. It informs us about future events and reveals the preparation necessary to meet them. It allows us to have a conversation with the King of kings and shows the best code of laws ever enacted.

This is but a faint view of its value; yet how many perishing souls treat it with neglect, or, what is equally as bad, treat it as a hidden mystery which cannot be known. Reader, make it your chief study. The divinity taught in our schools is always founded on some sectarian creed. A free mind will never be satisfied with the opinion of others, but will prove what is being taught.