

The Bible

Avenues By Which To Study the Scriptures - Part 2

... a continuation from January 2017

9) Historically

- a) Very few Biblical books are written in strict chronological order therefore, it is important to take notice during what period a prophet was prophesying. This is why, for instance, Isaiah will begin with, "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (Isa. 1:1). Ezekiel begins by agitating our minds by the statement, "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month" (Ezek. 1:1). The question then is, "The thirtieth year from what?" Then, in the second verse, he tells of a happening on the same day but with a different emphasis, "In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity" (Ezek. 1:2). This causes us then to go back to the kings who preceded him and the event twenty five years previous. The Spirit is making us do some historical research. Knowing when the prophet prophesied we can look at the political, spiritual, and cultural condition of those to whom He spoke. Furthermore, a consideration of history is of great importance for it is on his own personal history that Paul prevents the message of the gospel being tarnished (Gal. 1:12-2:15) and the Holy Spirit informs us that the ancient scriptures were given for our learning (Rom. 15:4; 16:25-26; 1 Tim. 3:16). Consequently, it is a great help to study historically.

10) Spiritually

- a) There is a distinction between pseudo spiritualizing a passage and the spiritual intent of the passage. Spiritualizing a passage normally indicates a fanciful interpretation void of any Biblical foundation. For instance, it is often said that the Badger skins were drab and therefore indicate the unattractiveness of the Lord and there being no beauty in Him (Isa. 53:1). However, this is imagination and void of any biblical truth for the badger skin was something which was lovely. The scripture for this interpretation is when God says, "I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk" (Ezek. 16:10). Pseudo spiritualizing the badger skins makes them drab, but the spiritual teaching of the badger skin is the beauty of the walk of the Lord.

11) Critically

- a) By studying critically it means that I do not blindly accept that which someone says without Biblical evidence? To study critically will mean to consider the two books of Jonah and Obadiah. How do we know they prophesied to the same people, which of them was first, and how was that manifested in the message he spoke? What evidence is there who was first, how long was there between them, or were they associates at the same time? Again, what is the smallest amount of money mentioned in Mark, and what is the largest, and why?

12) Christologically

- a) This is the most delightful study for Christ permeates every book of the scriptures. All the parables He told, the Old Testament pictures of the Tabernacle, the offerings and the priesthood, all convey either the Lord's person, His manifold glories, or offices. What exciting and glorious truths are presented in the gold, purple, scarlet, and blue. Who can plumb the depths of the extra lengths of the goats hair curtain, or the pathos of Isaiah fifty three? Truths so high the heart can do nought but rejoice and bow in worship at the wonder of the man who they all foretold. See any of the papers under the heading, "Christ in all the scriptures".

13) Linguistically

- a) If an individual was to consider Matthew it will be noticed how he gathers his material. For example, the sermon on the mount, the parables of the mysteries of the Kingdom, the miracles, etc. Why does he do that? In this avenue of study one observes the tenses of words, and words found in a passage and no where else. For instance, in the Roman epistle there are ninety four words which occur no

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where else in the New Testament, words such as, “wild olive tree” (ch. 11:17, 24); “come abroad” (ch. 16:19); “stretched forth” (ch. 10:21); “newness” (ch. 6:4; 7:6). What do they tell us about the writer and the people to whom he wrote?

14) Synthetically

- a) Studying the Bible synthetically is the opposite of studying it analytically. To study synthetically means to study the Bible as a whole, or a book as a separate unit, and then how each chapter in the book relates to another. It is the putting of things together such as in John 6 when after the feeding of the five thousand the Lord says, “Gather up the fragments . . . that nothing was lost” (Jn. 6:12). Later in the same chapter the Lord said, “of all which He (the Father) hath given me, I should lose nothing” (Jn. 6:39). Clearly there is a connection between these matters. Studying the scriptures in this way leads to an orderly grasping of the truths the book is presenting.
- b) The book of the Acts deals with the spread of the gospel, and a synthetic view of the book will show that outreach was in three parts:
 - i) From the Lord’s ascension and commission to the death of Stephen (ch. 1:1-8:40) and deals with the Lord’s work in Jerusalem, with a hint of the coming outreach in the gospel being preached to the Ethiopian eunuch.
 - ii) From the persecution by Saul to his conversion and again the indicator to the gospel going outside Israel with the conversion of Cornelius. This section deals mainly with the Lord’s work in Judea and Samaria (ch. 9:1-11:30).
 - iii) The gospel going to the far reaches of the known world, the work of the Lord to the “utmost parts” (ch. 12:1-28:31). NOTE ch. 28:28, it will be observed that the spreading of the gospel was not in neat little boxes but there was an overlapping between the gospel for the Jews and its spreading to the Gentiles.

15) Analytically

- a) This is what I call, “fine tuning” the study. It is looking at the passage in detail. Staying in John 6, four times we read, “at the last day” (Jn. 6:39, 40, 44, 54), but is there a distinction between what is being raised up, for in John 6:39 the Lord says that he “should raise it up again at the last day”? The word “again” is not used in any of the other verses.

16) Observationally

- a) There are five major things which must be looked for in any book of the scriptures. Even if none of the above methods were used, they are:
 - i) What aspect of God is being emphasized?
 - ii) What aspect of Christ is being emphasized?
 - iii) What aspect of the Holy Spirit is been emphasized?
 - iv) What aspect of salvation is being emphasized?
 - v) What aspect of practical living is being emphasized?

[Illustration of A Theological, Practical, and Christological Study of Hebrews](#)

1) Theologically

- a) The book of Hebrews is divided into two major sections, doctrinal and practical. In each section there is great emphasis on God being the speaker. For instance:
 - i) Section 1 (Ch. 1:1–10:18)
 1. In each recording a Scripture is predominant, therefore, in section 1 (Ch. 1:1–10:18) we will read the following expressions: “Thou art my Son” (Ch. 1:5); “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (Ch. 2:6); “Today of ye will hear his voice” (Ch. 3:7); “If they shall enter into my rest” (Ch. 4:5); “Thou art a priest for ever” (Ch. 5:6); “Surely blessing I will bless thee” (Ch. 6:14); “The Lord swear and will not repent” (Ch. 7:21); “This is the blood of the testament” (Ch. 9:20); “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not” (Ch. 10:5).

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ii) Section 2 (Ch. 10:19–13:25)

1. “He that shall come will come” (Ch. 10:37); “The stars of the sky in multitude” (Ch. 11:12); “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord” (ch. 12:5); “I will never leave thee” (Ch. 13:5).

2) Practically

- a) This avenue asks, “What truth or truths are being emphasized?” because of this emphasis on God speaking?
 - i) That which is taught must be substantiated by the Scriptures for they are the final court of appeal.
 - ii) That which is taught must be the true interpretation of the Scriptures for we are commanded to “rightly divide the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). What serious errors have been made because of failing to rightly divide and interpret the Scriptures correctly. For instance, “Baptized for the dead” (1 Cor. 15:29), what does it mean? Can we understand this passage to mean that people can get saved after death if we are baptized for them, or does this mean that others are baptized to make up the numbers of those who have died? I reject the first and question the second. The importance of this is seen by the fact that behavior is not the child of knowledge but of belief, and the unsaved have a belief which affects their lifestyle. So those who believe in the resurrection, that ought to affect their lifestyle. That which I believe is governed by interpretation and vital to have a true biblical interpretation. Therefore, in the study of any book one must, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). In other words, give all diligence to substantiate yourself as one who is approved to God by correctly interpreting the word of God according to context and the balance of the scriptures. Such an individual must know what it is to be taught of God. This is not study, but being taught! This necessitates certain characteristics which are:
 1. A right attitude in accepting the reality of God as the teacher, “Behold, God exalteth by His power: who teacheth like him?” (Job 36:22). He will teach through the Holy Spirit of whom our Lord said, “He will guide you into all truth” (Jn. 16:13); “Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way thou shouldest go” (Isa. 48:17). Let it be clear, behavioral modification is not intellectual expansion, that is, one’s spirituality cannot be judged by the individual’s knowledge of the truth.
 2. The individual must have a teachable spirit, for no one is correct all the time and there must be humility for, “If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor. 8:2).
 3. The individual must have the right purpose. There must be a right motive of, “Do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). How does God then teach us the Scriptures? The importance of having proper tools depends on the level of teaching which goes back to where we began.

3) Christologically

- a) It is always delightful to muse on the glorious person of the Lord, and in this, Hebrews is superlative. Consider His distinguishing names and offices. The following are a few of them:
 - i) “Son” (ch. 1:2, 5, 8); “Firstbegotten” (ch. 1:6); “Captain of their salvation” (ch. 2:10); “Apostle and High Priest” (ch. 3:1); “Minister of the sanctuary” (ch. 8:2); “Christ” (ch. 9:11); “this man” (ch. 10:12); “The Lord is my helper” (ch. 13:6); “That great shepherd of the sheep” (ch. 13:20). The question is why are these used in the various passages?

From this it is seen that Bible study is a life long experience and soon it will be realized that no avenue of study can be isolated for others. For instance, it is impossible to study Genesis without considering the doctrines of God, the Holy Spirit, Christ, man, and creation! Still, in Genesis, there will be:

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- a) The subject of God and approachability, sin, and retribution.
- b) The subject of God's providential dealings, divine revelation, and the spiritual development of individuals.
- c) It will be observed the book begins with God in all His might and ends with a man in a coffin, why?

As can be seen, any one study leads to others, and may the Holy Spirit open our eyes to see the need for His enlightenment.



**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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