

MARCH 2005

UPLOOK

• ASSESS THE NEED • CATCH THE VISION • TAKE THE CHALLENGE •



**On Target:
WHAT DOES A
STUDENT NEED?**

SEE PAGE 31

**A
CALL
to ARMS**

THAT CERTAIN SOUND

**Are
You An
A&P Team?**

SEE PAGE 6

THAT CERTAIN SOUND

Does anyone play trumpet these days?



I am not known for my musical expertise, but one thing I do know: the beauty of the trumpet is its ability to play single notes well. In spite of all the sophisticated communications equipment available, the trumpet has been used by the military to efficiently and effectively send clear and simple messages directly to the troops. When urgency is a life or death matter, it's no time for the trumpeter to try out his trills. Or as Paul writes: *"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"* (1 Cor. 14:8).

He was writing to the Corinthian church about their fascination with tongues speaking, and pointed out to them that the purpose of communication was, well, to communicate! What good was it—when lives hung in the balance—to make sounds that were unintelligible? We should be certain about the notes to be played and then play them certainly. Anything else leads to confusion or something worse.

Failing to raise the alarm can be fatal. The Lord laid this principle out through His servant Ezekiel: *"If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, his blood will I require at the watchman's hand"* (Ezek. 33:6). Is there no enemy to be fought in our day? Is there no watchman on the wall? Is there no trumpet to be blown? *"Is there not a cause?"*

After the lengthy preparatory notes given to the Jews before they entered Canaan, God gave one final set of instructions, and it had to do with trumpet playing: *"If ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets...that they may be to you for a memorial before your God"* (Num. 10:9-10).

The silver trumpets, made from the redemption money, were to be blown by the priests. Yes, it was priestly work then—and still is—to call God's people, both for assembling together and for going out **unitedly** to war.

In recent years, there has been a blowing of trumpets in North America to call the saints together at the *"beginning of your months"* for conferences. These have been both days of *"gladness"* and *"solemn days."* Most who are familiar with these times would agree that much good has been done and that the Lord has brought in blessing to the Lord's people, both individually and corporately.

But it should be noted well that the silver trumpets were not only to be used to call the Lord's people to assembly. The question remains: who among us will give the trumpet blast, in no uncertain terms, to call the Lord's people to a concerted and sustained gospel offensive? Who will call the saints to war?

This is a day of mealy-mouthed equivocation and chaotic confusion in the camp of Christendom. Some seek a path of compromise with the phoenix-like Babylonian complex. Others pour their energies into trying to salvage a condemned world system through political activism. Yet others busy themselves with building religious empires, energized by best sellers and bottom-line successes. With soldiers running this way and that, distracted by their own agendas, is it any wonder that the enemy is dominating the field in the countries of the West?

The battle is generally going badly for the Church in North America and Western Europe. Yet we thank God for some fearless fighters who, Jonathan-like, say to their armorbearer, *"Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us; for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few"* (1 Sam. 14:6). Valiantly Jonathan's armorbearer replied, *"Do all that is in thine heart...behold, I am with*

Continued on page 4

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FEATURES

AM I TEACHABLE? <i>Sam Oommen, MD</i>	5
2 TIMOTHY 2:15 <i>Mike Attwood</i>	11
DOCTRINAL PREACHING <i>David Dunlap</i>	13
20 THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND <i>Chart</i>	16
BIBLE STUDY TOOLS	19
LEARN OF ME <i>Boushra Mikhael, MD</i>	21
MARY'S COLLEGE <i>Gary McBride</i>	23
MARY <i>Anonymous Poem</i>	24
SOUND DOCTRINE <i>Patrick Long</i>	25
MEDITATION OR STUDY? <i>Colin Anderson</i>	27
THE DA VINCI HOAX <i>Staff Report</i>	28
PITFALLS IN BIBLE STUDY <i>Shawn Abigail</i>	29
IT IS GOD'S WORK <i>Rob Brennan</i>	32

DEPARTMENTS

EDITORIAL: <i>That Certain Sound</i>	2
FRONT LINES	7
WORLD VIEW	10
SCIENCE & YOU: <i>Which Came First?</i>	18
ELDER HELPS	20
FINAL WORD: What Does a Student Need? <i>Jamie Martin</i>	31

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From page 2

thee according to thy heart" (1 Sam. 14:7). And, as the story goes, when the Philistine thugs saw the brave duo below them, they hurled down the challenge: "*Come up to us, and we will show you a thing*" (v. 12).

It was Jonathan and his young compatriot, however, that showed the Philistines a thing or two. Up they went, with the armorbearer strangely enough following Jonathan. Aren't assembly leaders to simply rally the troops from a safe place, surrounded by the people? "*Come up after me,*" cries Jonathan, confident that "*the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel*" (v. 12). Oh, for elders like that today who will shout, "Come after me!"

The commentary adds that, like the work done by oxen yoked together, the two Israelites—a prince and a commoner—plowed the mountain-top half acre for God. But that was by no means the end of the battle; it was only the beginning. Such terror took hold of the Philistine hordes that, from a vantage point several miles away, Saul's watchmen gaped incredulously as the uncircumcised "*multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another*" (v. 16)! In the same way, I firmly believe, our God could turn the tide of battle today.

Let Saul play king at his make-believe court under a tree at Gibeah; let Israel's erstwhile soldiers "*hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits*" (13:6) or feel suddenly called to take an extended vacation in the land of Gilead. As long as Jonathan had his trusty friend—and the Lord—they would not while away their afternoons drinking tea and discussing the deplorable state of things. To say the least, with his sword in hand, Jonathan certainly made his point, one still heard today by any serious believers.

Young men and women, before you strap on your weapons and head out to prove God in the high places of the field, a word of warning. Read the rest of the story again, in case you have forgotten. Here it is, in brief.

When Saul hears the tumult of the battle, he lifts his head in wonder, in fear. Who has gone missing from the camp of idlers? Who dares to stir up the bees' nest and taste the sweet and strengthening honey of victory? Who would defy the king's example of resolute inaction? Who would take such initiative to fight the foe without a general consensus of the inert mass gathered about Saul? It was his son, a man from the next generation!

The king now compounds his error by commanding the people not to enjoy the spoils of war, not to strengthen themselves for the ongoing battle. And so "*the people were very faint*" (14:31). What folly! Yet those who wish to head out to battle today must take this message to heart. It will not only be the Philistines you will need to face; there will also be those who ought to encourage and help us who will actually stand in our way. The only harsh words ever recorded from Jonathan's lips come at this moment: "*My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if perhaps the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?*" (vv. 29-30). Withholding resources from the soldiers of Christ in the time of battle will not go unnoticed by our Commander-in-chief.

In conclusion, permit me to humbly issue a two-fold challenge:

- **To those who have lingered long enough, waiting for a call to arms:** Look to God alone for your encouragement, your equipping, and your victory. Let Him lead you against the foe. Don't worry about numbers. Find a kindred spirit or two to take with you. And with sword well in hand, go show the enemy a thing!

- **To those who have hesitated to call a generation of spiritual young people to united battle:** We face a strong and determined foe. He uses ruthless tactics and relentless pressure while we pick and fuss over trivialities. The enemy spares no expense while we often try to nickel and dime our way to victory. From this day forward, like another generation in another cause, may we declare that "with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge...our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor" to advance instead the cause of the once-crucified Christ "*while it is called Today.*"



J. B. NICHOLSON, JR.

AM I TEACHABLE?

If we don't get this right, none of God's truth will benefit the believer's life.

Sam Oommen, MD

Occasionally I share in the responsibility of interviewing prospective candidates applying to our residency in Emergency Medicine. One of the most memorable characters was a young physician who entered the room, sat down, and without any prompting, began a monologue about why he believed he was well-suited to our program. Unfortunately for him, this set the tone for the rest of the interview. As he sat there, overconfident, he left us with the impression that he felt we needed him more than he needed our services. After he left the room, one of the concerns expressed was, "I don't think he's going to be teachable."

For believers applying to be students of the most important school—the study of the Word of God—our success as learners will be determined by how teachable we are. We have all known Christians who fail to advance in their walk with the Lord because they are not teachable. And if we are honest, we realize that there are many times when we approach the Word of God or sit under its ministry, and our hearts similarly are not receptive.

The Scriptures provide us with several criteria that should characterize every student of God's Word who desires to be taught.

Marks of the Teachable Christian

Am I teachable? Do I approach the Scriptures with an attitude of eagerness and enthusiasm?

As He neared Jerusalem at the end of His earthly ministry, it was the Lord's custom to teach during the day in the temple and spend the night on the Mount of Olives. We read in Luke 21:38 of the personal sacrifice of those who desired to hear Christ. Legitimate personal needs were set aside so they could get up "early in the morning" to come to Him in the temple and listen to Him.

Notice as well how Acts 17:11 describes the Bereans as those who "received the Word with great eagerness." We have all met newborn Christians who seem to just explode in their faith and understanding. Even in a short period of time they seem to surpass other believers who have been

on the Christian road far longer. Why is that? A teachable spirit is hungry! They cannot get enough. Like newborn babes, they long for the pure milk of the Word (1 Pet. 2:2). We can learn from their example. If I am to be teachable, I need to rekindle this attitude as I approach God's Word.

Am I teachable? Do I come to the Word of God with a humble attitude and submissive spirit? Young Samuel responded to the divine call in 1 Samuel 3:10 with the words, "Speak, for your Servant is listening." How vital to emulate Samuel's attitude as we open God's Word with this same prayer.

Throughout the Gospels, Mary is often described at the feet of the Lord Jesus. In John 11, she is weeping. In John 12, she is worshipping. But in Luke 10:39, while her sister was "cumbered about much serving," we notice Mary "listening to the Lord's words, seated at His feet." Her posture reflects her heart, the attitude of the servant with an open ear, listening to the Master's instructions. Lacking this spirit is a great impediment to being taught by God.

The Pharisees, in putting out of the temple the man whose sight Christ had restored, answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are You teaching us?" (Jn. 9:34) Their words drip with pride and speak of their unteachable hearts.

But even genuine believers, when confronted with the Scriptures concerning a particular area of their lives, have balked at it. They remain unteachable in this area of their lives because they lack the servant's heart. The Holy Spirit desires to do business with the student of God's Word and teach us some things about ourselves that we are not going to appreciate. We must pray that we will have the attitude of Mary and young Samuel as we open the Book.



Am I teachable? This question could well be phrased: Am I in tune with the Spirit of God? The Bible is like no other course of study. It is impossible for the Christian in his natural ability to understand the things of God—they are foolishness to Him. Consequently, God has graciously equipped every child of His with this built-in tutor. *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things”* (Jn. 14:26).

But although this is a privilege afforded to every believer, not every believer is teachable. Why is this? Paul tells the Corinthian believers that the things they spoke were *“not in words taught by human wisdom but in those taught by the Spirit”* (1 Cor. 2:13). The thoughts of God can only be appraised by the spiritual man. If the Spirit of God is going to teach me, I need to submit to His influence in my life.

Paul had to provide these same Corinthians with spiritual *“milk”* to drink (food already prepared for easy consumption). They were unable to receive the deeper things of God because they were fleshly. If I am to be taught, I need to appreciate the central role of the Holy Spirit in unfolding the Scriptures and be under His control. A. W. Tozer puts it this way, *“The Scriptures to be understood must be read with the same Spirit that originally inspired them.”*¹

One Last Requirement

Thus far we have looked at a few of the yardsticks with which the Scriptures provide us to measure how teachable we are. For the most part, they address the attitude of our hearts and frame of mind with which we approach the study of the Word. But there is at least one other criterion to determine whether or not we are teachable. That is: How do we respond to God’s Word?

The Lord tells His disciples in John 10:27, *“My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow Me.”* It is not only that we have an ear for the Shepherd’s voice, but also that it affects our conduct—it leads to obedience.

The Lord’s commendation in Luke 6:47 is not to those who *“hear His words”* but to the one who also *“acts upon them.”*

To be teachable is far more than to acquire knowledge. The study of the Word of God needs to be translated into a changed life. Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine that God will continue to unfold the great mysteries of His Word if we have regularly failed to act on the revelation He has already shown.

But there is a very real danger in becoming students of God’s Word. We are warned that our hearts might be lifted up in pride. *“The very greatness of the subject matter will intoxicate us and we shall come to think of ourselves as a cut above other Christians because of our interest in it and grasp of it.”*² Paul warned the Corinthian believers that *“knowledge puffeth up.”*

I do not believe it is possible to come to the Word of God with eagerness, the humble heart of a servant, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and not leave forever changed. Therefore as we ask the question of ourselves, *“Am I teachable?”* we also need to answer the question, *“What is the ultimate purpose in being taught?”* Paul reminded the Ephesians in 4:17 of their former manner of walk and then he added in verse 20, *“but you did not learn Christ in this way.”* Christ Himself needs to be the subject and motivation for our study. Paul wrote of putting off, renewing and putting on the new self *“which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”* To learn Christ is to become like Him. To be teachable, ultimately, is to be made like Him. *“Am I teachable?”* can really be rephrased, *“Am I becoming like Christ?”* ⓘ

1 A.W. Tozer, *The Best of A.W. Tozer*, (Christian Publications, Camp Hill, PA, 1978), p. 130

2 J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, (Hodder and Stoughton, London, England, 1973), p. 18



Are You An A&P Team?

“SEEKEST THOU GREAT THINGS FOR THYSELF? SEEK THEM NOT.”

Committed young couples are needed. Are you willing to be transplanted by the Lord to advance the Cause? Aquila and Priscilla were such a couple. Paul asked them to go with him to Ephesus so their new home (and business) could be used as a beachhead for the gospel. Many young couples are barely utilized in some overcrowded assemblies while some pioneers are being stretched to the limit as they try to see new testimonies planted. Would you pray about it together? It could be the most exciting thing you ever do! Watch upcoming issues of *Uplook* to be introduced to some A&P couples who could use the right kind of help—hard workers, solidly biblical, willing to risk for Christ, people who care about people, eager to see New Testament Christianity at work in the 21st Century.

FRONTLINES

PRAY AROUND THE WORLD • PRAISE AROUND THE CLOCK

JOHN PIERRE MICHON (1916-2004)

John Michon, one of the original founders of the Yonkers Gospel Mission, went to be with the Lord on Dec 20, 2004, from Pittsboro, NC, where he retired in 1997. Believers participated in a service of praise for John's life on December 22. Lyman Gordon wrote: *"The Yonkers Gospel Mission had its beginning at the open air meetings of the Yonkers assembly...It was at a park where drug addicts and alcoholics hung out in the evenings. John Michon and Dennis Goodall were deeply concerned as to what to do when these unfortunate men would get saved and had no place to sleep in the winter months. After much soul-searching...and prayer, they found a site that they could afford on North Broadway...The three-story building had oil-soaked floors, a damp basement, and no heating. The basement was bedrock...To make it habitable, John and Denny...aided by assembly brethren...ripped out all the flooring and walls, broke the bedrock with torches, water, hammer and chisel, and then installed a furnace...The building could only sleep 10 or 12. In the following years, they moved to larger quarters at 191 North Broadway as the work expanded. Through it all, John was in it heart and soul. As he worked long hours at the Mission for many years, he did it all for the Lord he loved and served."*

GROTON WEEKEND

The brethren of Wellspring Bible Fellowship in Groton, CT invite you to join them for a weekend of study in God's Word and fellowship, Apr 1-3, in the will of the Lord. Speaker: Ken Hardisty. The weekend begins Friday evening at 7 PM and concludes Sunday at noon. For further information and directions, contact:

John Clifford at 860-445-0622

BALDWIN, KANSAS CONF.

The saints of the Gospel Chapel in Baldwin City, KS, announce their annual "Weekend After Easter" conference for Apr 2-3, 2005. Speakers are those known and who minister among us. Meetings begin at 2 PM Saturday and conclude with supper on Sunday. Meals/housing provided.

Ray M. Jones at 785-594-3374

rmjones@idir.net

Ken Keane at 785-594-3520

kenkeane@myvine.com
or write: Gospel Chapel, P.O. Box 45, Baldwin City, KS 66006

NC SPRING CONFERENCE

Ramseur (NC) Gospel Chapel will host their annual Spring conference Apr 3-6, 2005, Lord willing, Sunday-Wednesday at 7:30 PM. Keith Keyser (PA) is the scheduled speaker. The annual Men's Bible Reading is scheduled before the conference on Saturday, Apr 2 from 10 AM to 3 PM. Keith is also scheduled to lead the study. Lunch provided. Call 336-824-5525

CONFERENCE IN INDIANA

The annual Spring conference at the Gospel Chapel, 321 Cliff Dr. Logansport, IN, is to be held Apr 9, Lord willing. Expected speaker: Ross Ragland (MO). Refreshments at 9:30 AM with sessions at 10 and 11 AM. Lunch provided. Brother Ragland

will also speak Sunday morning. Ralph Garver at 574-722-1012
e-mail: Leegar@Lneti.com

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY CONF.

The Community Gospel Chapel, 20 Bergen Avenue, Voorhees, NJ will host a Spring conference Fri. Apr 8-Sun. Apr 10, 2005. The theme is "Christian Liberty" with Randy Amos (NY) as the speaker. Sessions: Fri. 7:00-9:00 PM; Sat. 10:00 AM-2:00 PM; Sun. 9:00 AM-12:00 noon
Call 856-546-9005

SPRINGTIME IN ALABAMA

The Christians at Hope Bible Chapel in Birmingham, AL, invite you to their annual spring conference Apr 15-17, 2005, in the will of the Lord. Mr. Mike Attwood (GA) is the invited speaker. Contact Peter Rosborough at 205-833-2380
prosborough@juno.com

WEEKEND IN THE WORD

Rex Trogon (NC) will be the speaker at the 2005 Weekend in the Word Bible conference to be held Lord willing, Apr 15-17, 2005 at the Willow Valley Conference Center in Lancaster, PA. The conference will begin on Friday evening and conclude on the Lord's Day with the Monterey assembly. Families with children welcome. Prompt registration strongly encouraged. Contact: Mark Kolchin
P.O. Box 305
Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734
knowtheword@comcast.net
www.knowtheword.com

LAWRENCE CONFERENCE

Lawrence (KS) Bible Chapel, 505 Monterey Way is planning its conference Apr 16-17, 2005. John Heller (AR) is the invited speaker. Child care for ages 1-6 will be available during the Saturday meetings. Call: John Scollon at 785-841-5271

LIMON, COLORADO CONF.

Limon Bible Chapel, 385 J Ave., Limon, CO, will have its annual con-

ference Apr 23-24. Speakers: Keith Trevolt (KS) and James Stahr (IL). Accommodations and meals.
Limon Bible Chapel
P.O. Box 1208
Limon CO 80828
719-775-9788 or 719-346-8547

CHICAGO AREA CONF.

The Chicago area Spring conference will be held, Lord willing, Apr 22-24 at the Palos Hills Christian Assembly, 10600 S. 88th Ave., Palos Hills, IL. Speakers expected are Keith Keyser (PA), Joe Mikhael (ON), and Alan Schetelich (NJ). Special sessions for children. Contact: John Daghfal at 815-886-4152
jdaghfal@hotmail.com

INVITE TO IOWA

All are welcome to join the believers at Hilltop Chapel (Redfield, IA) for the annual Spring Conference Apr 30 and May 1. Join them for a weekend of Bible teaching, fellowship, and a spring canoe trip on the beautiful Raccoon River (weather permitting). The invited speaker is Arnot McIntee (ON). Contact:

Nathan Speichinger
515-789-4021
speichingern@wdmcs.org

NEW YORK IN THE SPRING

The Bellevue Gospel Chapel in Schenectady, NY and Northway Bible Chapel in Clifton Park, NY will hold an Annual Spring Conference at Northway Bible Chapel Apr 30-May 1, 2005. Speaker: Tony Hart (PA). The meetings will begin Saturday, May 1 at 3:30 PM. Contact: John E. Smith
518-861-6486
johnsmith@aol.com

ONTARIO WORKERS

The Annual Ontario Workers' & Elders' Conference is scheduled for May 3, 4, & 5 at Oakwood Bible Chapel, Windsor, ON. The theme is "Christ Supreme." Keynote speakers expected: Roy Hill (UK) and Charlie Fizer (IA). To register, contact: Ken Armstrong at 519-969-6435



SEEDSOWERS CANADA

TWO SHORT TERM MISSION OPPORTUNITIES!

QC

Join other believers **Jun 26 to Jul 2** for a gospel outreach in towns and villages in the northern Lake St. John area of Quebec. This is an opportunity to link with the historic Girardville assembly (first assembly established in Quebec, in 1934). Camp with your tents or travel trailers (a limited number who don't have such can be accommodated).

This is a great chance to meet new Christian friends, see the work of God first-hand, and have on-the-job gospel training. Both English and French speakers welcome. The days will include Bible study and singing, sports, swimming, and camp fires. Accommodation and meals \$75/person or \$150/family (voluntary contribution for children).

FOR INFORMATION AND/OR REGISTRATION:

Donald Cox, 4026 des Outardes, Jonquière QC G7X 9B4

tel/fax: 418-542-5092

lizdon4@sympatico.ca

PEI

You are invited to join with the assemblies of Upton, Montague, Charlottetown, and Summerside, Prince Edward Island **Aug 13 to 20** for a PEI Gospel Outreach. It is hoped that 53,000 John 3:16 texts will be distributed. There will also be a Good News Breakfast and the use of ExpoBible. The team will be staying at Emmanuel Bible Camp, St. Peter's Bay.

3284 Rockwell,
Windsor, ON N9E 2A7
email: kjarmstrong@cogeco.ca
For all other inquiries, contact:
Patrick Long at 905-718-5344
761 Beaupre Avenue,
Oshawa, ON L1J 1E4
email: patrick.long@msc.on.ca

LADIES MISSIONARY CONF.

The 28th Annual Ladies' Missionary Conference, Saturday, May 7, 2005, will be held at Turner Road Bible Chapel, 2100 Turner Road, Windsor, ON. Speakers expected: Elisabeth Aiken (Middle East), Hayley Cuthill (Greece), and Adina Dumitru (Peru). Registration: 9:30 AM; First session: 10:00 AM; Final session: 1:30 PM. Lunch will be provided. Child care provided for children 2 and under. For further details:
Jan Gillis at 519-977-5576

NEW ORLEANS CONF.

The Lake Park Chapel, 201 Schlieff Dr., Belle Chasse, LA will hold its 61st Annual Bible conference May 7-8, 2005. This year David Dunlap (FL) and Bob Brown (LA) will be the speakers DV. Join them for a spiritually refreshing weekend in God's Word. Meetings begin on Saturday at 3:30 PM. Contact Ray Cummings:
103 Dickson Dr.
Belle Chasse, LA 70037
504-394-3087 or 504-393-7083
ibelievegodsllove@juno.com

NW WORKERS' CONF.

The Northwest Workers' Conference is again at Lakeside Bible Camp on Whidbey Island (WA), beginning with dinner on Tuesday, May 10 and concluding with lunch on Friday, May 13. The main speaker is Warren Henderson (WI). His theme is the life of Abraham. Cost is \$76.

Contact: LeRoy Junker
505 Mckenzie Road SW,
Olympia, WA 98512.
l.junker@comcast.net

WORD ALIVE SOUTHEAST

In Word Alive's final session for the Spring, May 13-14, J. B. Nicholson Jr. (MI) will address the subject of Christian Apologetics. Session from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Bible readings continuing in Colossians from 2:00-3:00 PM. Held at Washington Bible Chapel, 808 E. Robert Toombs Ave, Washington, GA. Lunch provided. For more information, call:
Sam Thorpe at 706-359-6297
Mike Attwood at 706-678-3180
website: wordalivese.org

CLAREMONT CONFERENCE

The believers at Claremont Bible Chapel, 432 W. Harrison Ave, Claremont, CA are having their 14th annual conference May 13-15. The invited speakers are Doug Kazen (WA) and Willie Burnett (ON). Accommodations available. Contact:
J. Harry Elliott at 909-621-1064
jhdelliott@aol.com

SUMMER IN THE SMOKIES

College students and young adults! Come and enjoy a week of fellowship and Bible teaching at Camp Living Water, May 15-21, with Jon Brower (VA) as our speaker. Cost is just \$95 per person. Contact Joel at:
DCLW@dnet.net
828-488-6012

OLNEY PHILLY CONF.

Readers are invited to the Memorial Day Weekend Bible Conference at Olney Gospel Hall, 314 W. Chew Ave., Philadelphia, PA on May 27, 28 & 29 (Fri evening, Sat. & Sun.). Speakers will be Steve Hulshizer

(PA), Harold Smith (NJ), and Tom Wilson (NJ). Dinner will be served on Saturday, and both lunch and dinner on the Lord's Day. Contact:
Earl Weldon at 215-549-6778
info@weldonstudio.com

VESSELS OF HONOR 2005

A Young Adult Conference convened by East Tulsa (OK) Bible Chapel is to be held on the campus of Baker University, Baldwin City, KS, May 27-30, 2005. General session speakers: Mike Attwood (GA), Joe Reese (ON), and Sam Thorpe (GA). Seminar session speakers, along with the general session speakers, will include Jeff Erb, Ann Reese and others. Contact:
Jim Lindamood at 918-663-1121
jimlindamood@vesselsofhonor.org
Dan Moffitt at 918-744-6484
danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net
www.vesselsofhonor.org

TURKEY HILL RANCH

The Memorial Day Family Camp is scheduled for May 27-30. Speakers include: John Heller (adults), George Farber (children 9-13), Chris Klaeger (children 6-8).

Various week-long camps (for ages 8-17) are planned during June and July. Please see the camp's website @ www.turkeyhillranch.com for schedule, applications and details. If you are age 15 or older, prayerfully consider serving the Lord on staff at Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp. See camp website for a staff application.
13489 Maries Rd. 301
Vienna, MO 65582
573-744-5843

ON THE TABERNACLE

Palos Hills Christian Assembly, 10600 S. 88th Ave, Palos Hills, IL, plans to host a series of meetings on

the Tabernacle from Monday, Jun 13 to Friday, Jun 17 at 7:30 PM each evening. The scheduled speaker is Randy Amos (NY), who will be presenting fascinating lessons using a full-size model of the tabernacle.

Robert Fiebig at 708-448-2552

UPWARD BOUND '05

Upward Bound will be held this year on the campus of Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo ON, from Aug 14-26. The first week (Aug 14-20) will consist of numerous daily seminars on topics that will give a deeper appreciation of the Scriptures and also practical help for living a victorious Christian life. As well, there will be many opportunities for fellowship and recreational enjoyment. First week speakers include: Brian Russell (UK), Rex and Nancy Trogdon (NC), Dennis Leblanc (NB), Charlie Tempest (ON), Joe Mikhael (ON), and Sandy McEachern (NS).

The second week is a canoe trip into Algonquin Park, a chance to enjoy the beauty of God's creation, fellowship with fellow believers and also to pursue further studies in the Scriptures. Contact Sandy McEachern at 902-420-9489

sandymceachern@hotmail.com

COMMENDATIONS

Katie Scott

The believers at High Point Bible Chapel, Davenport, IA, commend Miss Katie Scott to the work of the Lord at Living Waters Bible Camp in Westby, WI. Katie grew up in the assembly and has demonstrated a love for the Lord and His work. She graduated from Emmaus Bible College with a degree in Elementary Education. She has been working at Living Waters for two years as program director. The elders at High

Point Bible Chapel have visited the camp and talked to Katie and feel confident that this is where the Lord wants her to serve. They heartily commend her to this work.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Camp Iroquoia Helpers

This year they need ladies who would like to work with girls, ages 8 through 14, in a beautiful Pennsylvania setting, Aug 6-20. This is a two-week camping season, but if you can only serve the Lord for one week, your help will be appreciated. Multiple areas available to serve the Lord. Please contact Evelyn Higer:

122 Frank's Creek Drive,
Hertford NC 27944
esoundhaven@inteliport.com
252-426-7055

CHANGES

Sam and Barbara Thorpe

Email address change:
sambarb@nu-z.net
They can still be reached at
samthorpejr@yahoo.com

LOOKING FOR MINISTRY?

The Oakville Bible Study started in 1994, and ministry has been given by some of the best Bible teachers in North America on a monthly basis. Every message has been preserved on audio tape and sales have been made to attendees. Willie Burnett writes: "Coming upon this treasure-trove of master tapes recently, I felt like the lepers outside Samaria who said, 'We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace...now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household' (2 Ki. 7:9). As a result of this conviction, we have prepared a catalog of the Oakville Study tape ministry. Audio tape prices: for entire year, \$48.00;

per study session, \$6.00. Catalog and audio cassettes available from:

H. W. (Bill) Allison
3199 Sovereign Road
Burlington, ON L7M 2W1
905-336-8101
w.allison@sympatico.ca

TSUNAMI RELIEF UPDATE

A very useful meeting was held in London recently between various service groups and representatives from some of the countries involved in the December Indian Ocean tsunami. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how the present relief operation was going and to identify longer term building and rehabilitation projects which we can support with the funds that have been given specifically for this.

Our Christian colleagues in the countries affected have been actively involved in the first phase of the exercise and much help has been distributed to many affected by the disaster. We have now been able to identify specific projects in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, the Andaman Islands and Nicobar, which can be supported over the next few months. At present, adequate funds seem to be present in Thailand for the ongoing rebuilding and relief work. We will continue to monitor the situation with care and try to ensure that funds are properly applied to approve projects.

We wish to thank all of those who have responded so generously to the great need by sending money. At present, the service groups represented in London have adequate funds to meet the needs that have been identified and reserve funds which are available for other projects as these emerge. —*Echoes of Service*

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

A devotional look at Proverbs 8 and 1 Corinthians 1:30

Mike Attwood

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”

What are the lessons we can learn from this well-loved and often quoted verse in Holy Scripture? Truly it has not been without its controversy down through the years.

The Context

A vital issue in determining the correct meaning of any verse is that it must be taken in its rightful context.

Note first the overall context of the book. The big picture in 2 Timothy is departure from the faith. We have the rise of false teachers and Paul’s being abandoned by many that once stood with him. Generally it is a gloomy scene reminiscent of the book of Judges in the Old Testament—days of declension, ruin, and difficulty.

In the midst of all this failure, not unlike our own day, there is the need for men of God to arise. This is where chapter 2 comes in. Paul reveals to us what a man of God is, and reveals seven features which mark him out. He exhorts Timothy to be that kind of man.

A remarkable feature of the Word of God is its numerical structure. Seven is a prominent number, and often the seven is divided into four and three. This happens frequently in the Book of Revelation, as well as the Kingdom Parables in Matthew 13 and the Feasts of Jehovah in Leviticus 23. So in 2 Timothy 2 we have seven figures of a man of God and they also are divided into two groups of four and three:

1. A disciple maker (v. 2), spiritually reproducing
2. A soldier (v. 3), enduring hardness and not getting sidetracked from the battle
3. An athlete (v. 4), playing by the rules to win the crown
4. A farmer (v. 6f), partaking of the fruits of his labor

We then have an interlude with verses 8-14. Following this, there are three more word pictures:

5. A workman (v. 15), unashamed of his work
6. A vessel unto honor (vv. 20f), suitable for the Master to use
7. A servant (v. 24), not striving, but being gentle to all.

In between the two groupings, in verses 8-14, we have the supreme motive for wanting to be a man of God in a day of ruin: “Remember Jesus Christ.” Don’t forget Him; let Him be your motive.

As we think of Him, we are brought to remember His life and God’s plan for Him. It was simple: suffering first and glory to follow. Paul’s experience also followed this same pattern, and for the man of God now, it will not be any different. This is the divine pattern: it was seen in Joseph’s life, David’s life, and Daniel’s life, which are beautiful pictures of the Lord Jesus.

Being a man of God will entail suffering, perhaps even rejection and ridicule from those we love and care for, but call to mind the Lord Jesus Christ. As we look specifically at one of these figures of a man of God, let us be motivated by the Son of God to be men and women of God in our day. “Remember Jesus Christ”!

Now notice the immediate context. In verse 14, Paul warns Timothy of the danger into which some may lapse, that of squabbling about words, making distinctions where there is none (although we will later see that we do need to acknowledge biblical distinctions that are really there), and forgetting the plain and practical sense of the Word. This practice subverts or ruins the hearers. It is simply not helpful. Paul uses this opportunity to exhort Timothy to be a careful student himself.

The Controversy

The controversy surrounding the book relates to the matter of Dispensationalism, and one of its most popular authors, the late C. I. Scofield. His helpful little booklet, which takes its title from our text, *Rightly Dividing the Word*



of Truth, has been used to deliver many from the errors of Reformed and Covenant Theology, systematic theologies which fail to distinguish things that clearly differ.

In response to Scofield's work, there has been an attempt to discredit it by stressing that the word "study" in our text has actually nothing to do with Bible study. Bible study is something which dispensational teaching has done much to promote among the Lord's people. So is Scofield's text really out of context?

The Content

Yes, the word "study" in the KJV could be a misleading translation, as it literally means to "strive diligently," as rendered by J. N. Darby in his New Translation. We are exhorted to strive diligently or make every effort to show or present ourselves approved unto God as workmen. But let me ask the question: how are we to be an approved workman? Just how is this to be achieved? Does it have no relationship to the Word of God at all?

On the contrary, it is by correctly handling the Word of truth and living by the precepts we find in it, that we will be approved workman. The only way we can correctly handle the Word of Truth is if we really know it.

We are exhorted, therefore, to "strive diligently." This implies much more than a casual relationship with the Word of God. It implies hard work, and that is exactly what is involved. A careful student will spend hours diligently working and vigorously thinking to gain a good understanding of the Word.

The purpose of this diligent study is to show or present yourself approved to God. Notice Paul says it positively here and then negatively, "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." To be an approved workman then, you must diligently study and seek to apply the truth to your own life. The study of the Word of God is not just to gain intellectual knowledge of the Bible. Knowledge, we are told, puffs up! But we are to study in order to equip ourselves to be approved workmen. The better you know your Bible the more effective you will be in any area of ministry.


A better evangelist. You will be able to remember relevant passages to share with an anxious inquirer, to put to flight the errors of the cultists (counterfeits are always easier to spot when you are familiar with the original), and to deal with the supposed objections to Biblical Christianity.

A better shepherd or encourager of the Lord's people, you will be able to use the scripture to comfort, encourage, warn, and even rebuke the sheep.

Every area of Christian work is enhanced by a deep knowledge of the scriptures. This was brought home to me recently when dear friends suffered the tragic loss of a family member. On hearing this news, I called them as I was out of the country preaching at the time. Before calling I had prayed for appropriate Scriptures to be able to share with them. Their response was quite remarkable. They said, "We knew that you would share Scripture with us, and to be honest with you, it is the only thing that brings us any comfort right now."

"Rightly dividing the word of Truth." The primary idea is to handle the truth properly, to cut it correctly. Paul, as a tentmaker, would not want to waste the valuable cloth. He would cut it correctly or else the expensive cloth would be ruined. If we don't handle the truth correctly, then we will ruin the lives of those we speak to, perhaps by misapplying promises that give them a false hope, which in turn will only leave them disappointed in God. In this regard it is vital to recognize the clear distinctions in the word of God. Many a truth intended for Israel has been misapplied or misclaimed as a promise for the Church today.

The Compulsion

The underlying motive behind all of this is to meet His approval, to receive that "well done, thou good and faithful servant". If we might borrow from another phrase in 2 Timothy 2, "That he may please Him who has chosen him to be a soldier." Is not that your desire? To please Him who loved us and gave Himself for us? Then "study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." 

A website has been created to provide the information formerly published in the Workers Together newsletter. The web address is www.wtonline.info Your comments and suggestions are welcome.

DOCTRINAL PREACHING

David Dunlap

The doctrinal preaching of the Word of God is a vital necessity. The proclamation of the Scriptures with clarity and precision is God's method of transforming the lives of men and women. It is the authoritative link between the heart of God and the souls of men. The modern world has had enough of theories, conjecture and rationale—it hungers for the truth of God plainly spoken. It longs for the *“thus saith the Lord.”* It is waiting for men of God, like Jonah of old to whom God spoke, saying, *“Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee”* (Jonah 3:2).

Unfortunately, the preaching of the Word of God has fallen out of favor with many evangelical church leaders. Today there is a growing opposition toward doctrinal preaching of the Word of God. Social action is more appealing to many Christian leaders. They question the use of mere words, when the lost of this world are looking for deeds. In addition, Church growth experts contend that biblical preaching is old-fashioned; therefore videos, panel forums, discussions, music, and multimedia presentations are now filling the place once occupied by preaching. D. L. Moody once wrote,

Does a man wish to attract crowds? Well, get back to the Bible. Don't you think God knows how to interest people? What we need today is men who believe in the Bible from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet.

However, evangelical leaders defend their views by stating that the churches are filled, para-church ministries are in demand, and Christians are busier than ever. But what is the spiritual condition of the church? Are these new methods in agreement with the Word of God? Let us examine these issues more closely.

Dangerous Trends

Those who continue to value preaching are calling for radical changes in the traditional methods. A growing number of church leaders throughout North America maintain that the faithful preaching of the Word of God is



no longer an effective means of reaching the lost and developing mature believers. The cry now is for preaching that addresses “relevancy” and the “felt needs” of the audience. This technique is now being espoused by many Church Growth institutes and ministries throughout the U.S. and Canada.

However, under closer investigation one discovers that this technique was examined and rejected by Bible-based Christians 70 years ago, when the modernist preacher Harry Emerson Fosdick urged its use in Christian churches. In 1928, he scolded godly men of the Book, writing,

Preachers who pick out texts from the Bible and then proceed to give their historic settings, their logical meaning in the context, their place in the theology of the writer, are grossly misusing the Bible. Let them not end but start with thinking of the audience's vital needs, and then let the whole sermon be organized around their endeavor to meet those needs. This is all good sense and good psychology.¹

Sadly today, a growing number of evangelical leaders are urging the use of this same technique, albeit redressed in evangelical terminology. In his book on reaching out to “Baby Boomers,” Doug Murren, the pastor of a large charismatic congregation in the Pacific northwest, provides readers with the following seven suggestions for preparing messages:

1. Visit the “how-to” sections in your local bookstores.
2. Regularly have a small group submit a list of their greatest challenges at home and on the job.
3. Similarly, acquire inventories of needs from several secular

- (unsaved) people in your community.
4. Periodically, examine issues of *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *USA Today*, as these publications are on the cutting edge of the felt needs and fears people are facing.
 5. Apply practical aims to every study, message or program in your church.
 6. Practice composing practical, catchy titles for your messages.
 7. Limit your time to 20 minutes. And don't forget to keep your messages light and informal, liberally sprinkling them with humor and personal anecdotes.²

It is remarkable that all of these suggestions are adapted to meet man's social, emotional and material needs; furthermore, not one refers to the Word of God or to meeting man's most important need: spiritual separation from God. These new methods are not resting on the bedrock of the Scriptures, but rather on the shifting sand of psychological and humanistic principles.

The Need for Doctrinal Preaching

This raises several new questions: What negative consequences will this new method bring? Is it merely an evangelistic fad and nothing more? Furthermore, should Bible-believing Christians embrace it as an effective evangelistic tool? A closer investigation may serve to help us answer these and other questions.

Professor James Davidson Hunter, a researcher from the University of Virginia, has studied the views of evangelicals at sixteen leading seminaries and Bible colleges, and reported his findings in 1987 in his book entitled *Evangelicalism: the Coming Generation*. Hunter argues convincingly that seminaries are moving away from doctrinal orthodoxy.

Among the students he interviewed, over 50% said that the Bible should not be taken literally in matters of science and history. There were 33% who disagreed with the statement, "The only hope for heaven is through personal faith in Jesus Christ." And 46% felt preaching to unbelievers "about hell" is in poor taste.³

Jay Kesler, the president of Taylor University, a Christian college in the Midwest, stated, "I agree with Hunter's observations of the changes taking place not only at Christian colleges and seminaries, but in evangelical culture generally."

In 1994, Josh McDowell Ministries conducted an extensive study on the Christian character of evangelical young people in the U.S. In the study, 3,795 young people

between the ages of 11-18 were asked 193 questions concerning their commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Although 86% stated that they had trusted Jesus Christ as their Saviour, the results of the survey uncovered an array of troubling statistics.

The study revealed that 45% watched MTV at least once a week; 57% said that the Bible was not a reliable standard of truth. The study also revealed that many evangelical young people are cheating, smoking, gambling, watching X-rated movies, and engaging in premarital sex.⁴

Further research has shown that many Christians do not possess a satisfactory understanding of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, such as justification, the deity of Christ, inerrancy, imminency, and sanctification. Why are evangelical young people engaging in such harmful activities? Why is there so little understanding of biblical doctrine?

One reason must be: the failure of the evangelical churches to preach and teach the great doctrines of the faith. When the Holy Scriptures are taught with conviction, lives and lifestyles will be transformed to the glory of God (Isa. 66:2).

G. Campbell Morgan exhorts,

A preacher's first business is to impart knowledge, and then our purpose must be to lead those whom we teach to obedience. Therefore, our goal is not to illuminate the intellect or to move the emotions but to bring men into right relationships with eternal things.

The New Testament Model of Preaching

The New Testament models this practice of doctrinal preaching and demonstrates the blessing that will follow. The preaching of doctrine characterized the teaching ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles. As Christ was teaching His disciples, it was said of Him, "He taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in His doctrine" (Mk. 4:2). As others heard His teaching, it was said, "the people were astonished at His doctrine" (Mt. 7:28)

The early New Testament Church "continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine" (Acts 2:42), and they were exhorted to "Preach the word...exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). They were entreated to refute the false teachers with doctrine, "holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9).

Doctrinal preaching was the charge, the challenge, and full resource to all who sought to serve and honor the Lord

Jesus Christ. H. A. Ironside wrote,

Earthly principles will not do as guidance for heavenly men. The wisdom of this world is utterly opposed to the wisdom of heaven. Human philosophies center in self. The wisdom that is from above centers in God and His Word.

Another crucial factor in favor of doctrinal preaching is its ability to preserve the Church from false teaching. Doctrinal preaching by definition involves doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction (2 Tim. 3:15). Corrective preaching, therefore should address doctrinal error and also the false teachers who are bringing the error.


Paul charged the New Testament believers, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*” (Rom. 16:17). Failure to do so will open the door to false teachers and cause many sincere believers to be spiritually imperiled.

A sad account is given by Henry Thiessen, a former professor of theology at Wheaton College, who points out that in the absence of passionate doctrinal preaching, doctrinal error found fertile soil in which to flourish, leading to the formation of the Jehovah’s Witnesses. He writes,

Oratorical preaching may bind the congregation to the preacher; but when the preacher leaves, the people leave also. It has been often demonstrated that only when people are thoroughly taught the Word of God do they become strong Christians and effective workers for Christ. There is a definite connection between doctrinal preaching and mature spiritual growth. Thomas DeWitt Talmadge may be cited as a man of great oratorical powers who built up a large congregation

by his ability. However soon after Talmadge’s death, the Brooklyn Tabernacle (which seated 4,000 persons) fell into the hands of Charles Taze Russell, the founder of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (known to us today as the Jehovah’s Witnesses).⁵

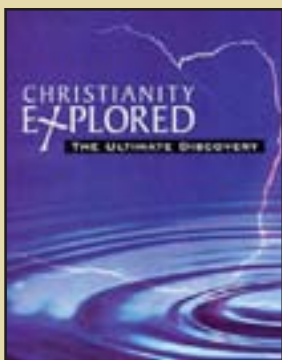
Today, the total number of Jehovah’s Witnesses worldwide is estimated to be 11.5 million strong, making them the largest religious cult in the world. However, this sad situation may well have been averted through vigorous doctrinal preaching.

May this illustration serve as a warning and wake-up call to all serious believers. New Testament churches must put aside the current popular fads, the glitter and sparkle of the newest trends, and return to the rock-solid foundation of doctrinal preaching and the unchanging power of the Word of God. Then the church will be strong, the believers vigorous for Christ, and the world attentive to the life-changing power of the gospel. 

Endnotes

- 1 Harry Emerson Fosdick, “What is the Matter with Preaching?” *Harpers Magazine*, July, 1928, p. 135
- 2 Doug Murren, *The Baby Boomerang*, (Regal Books, Glendale, CA, 1990), pp. 227-228
- 3 James Davison Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1987), p. 198
- 4 Josh McDowell, “Help Your Teen Make the Right Choice,” *Focus on the Family Magazine*, Nov. 1994, p. 4
- 5 Henry Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*, (Eerdman Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 194), p. 30

CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED SEMINAR



A *Christianity Explored* conference is planned for Saturday, May 7, 2005. The seminar will provide training to those interested in using this very effective evangelistic study. The authors of the *Christianity Explored* study, Rico Tice and Barry Cooper along with Sam Shamas (UK) will be present to teach how to lead the study and present Mark’s Gospel. Highly recommended for those interested in an assembly gospel outreach or a home evangelistic Bible study. The seminar location:

Markham Bible Chapel, 50 Cairns Drive, Markham, ON L3P 6G9
Call 905-294-7369 or email ce@markhambiblechapel.org

20 THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. Its Author. When studying the Bible we have the advantage of having its Author with us. The Holy Spirit desires to teach us what the Bible says and has the power to illuminate us about its teachings (1 Jn. 2:27). We must constantly look to the Lord to help us understand, rather than trusting our own intellect.

2. Read it. The more we read the Bible, the more we'll understand it. And since the Bible is a unified whole, reading in Genesis can help us understand our study in Revelation.

3. Meditate. This doesn't mean that we are to sit cross-legged and chant. This is simply the process of thinking about a passage over and over in different ways. We needn't expect to understand every verse the first time we read it. If the verse confuses us, we ought to pray that the Lord will help us understand.

4. Context. The Bible is not a collection of verses randomly thrown together. Verses relate to the verses around them. All kinds of bizarre teachings flow from taking Scripture out of context. We can take a verse out of context (Php. 4:13), a chapter out of context (1 Cor. 13), or a book out of context (James). Note:

- **Immediate Context.** What do the verses immediately before and after this verse say? (e.g., Php. 4:13 does not mean that Paul could leap tall buildings in a single bound; 2 Tim. 3:1-5 shows how terrible disobeying parents really is).
- **Passage Context.** What events were happening before and after the passage you're considering? (e.g., Mk 5:25-34).
- **Topical Context.** What is the main topic being addressed in the passage? (e.g., 1 Cor. 13 isn't a random love song; it shows the only suitable motive for using our gifts, see chs. 12 and 14).
- **Book Context.** What do you know about the book this verse is in? (e.g., so much of what is said in Hebrews means far more when we remember that Hebrews is dealing with Christ's superiority over Judaism, e.g., 6:19). Who wrote the book? To whom was it written? What kind of literature is it? Is the purpose for the book stated? What period of time does the book deal with? Other examples of books whose context is generally ignored are James and Ecclesiastes.
- **Bible Context.** How does this verse fit into the rest of the Bible? What does the rest of the Bible say about this topic?
- **Historical Context.** What other events in the Bible were occurring at the same time as this? (e.g. Zech. 6:9-15).

5. To whom was the passage written? All of the Bible was written *for* us but not all of it was written *to* us. We must distinguish between Jews, Gentiles and the Church (1 Cor. 10:32). We can't apply Leviticus to our lives in the same way that we can apply Philippians. Much confusion in Christendom comes from failing to distinguish between Israel and the Church.

6. Interpret scripture with scripture. In seeking to understand a word, phrase or verse, look to other related Bible passages to see how it is used elsewhere. Some examples:

- Who is "*him who overcomes*" in Rev. 2 & 3? See 1 Jn. 5:5.
- What is "*the key of David*" in Rev. 3:7? See Isa 22:20-25.
- What did Christ mean in Mk. 15:34? See Ps. 22 for the answer.
- What does Jude 11 mean? See related Old Testament passages.
- What does 1 Cor. 14:21 mean? See Isa. 28:11 for the answer.
- What is the vineyard in Isa. 5:1? See Isa. 5:7 for the answer.
- Do you want to know why the Lord Jesus told people not to tell others about Him (Mt. 12:16-21)? See Isa. 42:1-4 for the answer.
- Do you want a good commentary on the OT? Try Hebrews.

7. The Bible at face value. To take the Bible literally means to take it in its plain and obvious sense unless otherwise indicated (e.g., Dan. 2:28, 36; "*I am the vine,*" "*this is My body*"). "If the plain sense of a passage makes common sense, seek no other sense." Too often we can twist the Bible by spiritualizing, or explaining everything away (e.g. Mt. 5:34; 1 Cor. 11; 1 Tim. 3:2). The disciples were unnecessarily confused by some things the Lord Jesus said simply because they refused to take them at face value (e.g., Mk. 9:9f, 31f). The Bible contains many figures of speech (e.g., "*four corners of the earth,*" Isa. 11:12; "*face to face*" meaning "mouth to mouth" or directly, Ex. 33:11).

8. Word meanings. Make sure you understand what the Bible means when using a word. Many words mean something different in today's speech (e.g., church, justify, son).

9. Consider all of the verses on a subject. Don't build a doctrine on just one verse. Consider every reference to a subject before coming to a conclusion. Interpret obscure passages in light of clear ones. If you make 1 Cor. 15:29 your main passage for studying baptism, save yourself the trouble and give up now. When the Bible has dozens of passages that teach something clearly (for example, eternal security), don't be confused by one verse that at first glance seems to teach the opposite. Start with what you understand, not with what you are confused by.

WHEN INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

10. Grammar. Note what is singular and what is plural; passive vs. active; positive vs. negative; statement vs. question; completed action vs. continuing action.

11. Other translations. Frequently a verse that is unclear in one translation will be clearer in another one.

12. Compare and contrast. Look up similar events, people, passages, teachings, etc. Cross-reference books can help (e.g., as found in *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*). When looking at contrasting elements, remember that because two things are similar does not mean that they are identical:

- In Rev. 2 and 3, each letter has a similar structure. You could, for example, study the promises of each letter or the descriptive terms regarding Christ in each letter.
- In Hebrews, Christ is compared to all aspects of Judaism. He is prophet, priest, sacrifice, altar, veil, etc. But Christ is also contrasted with all aspects of Judaism—He is superior to them.
- Rom. 5:12-21. Here we're told that Adam was a "type" of Christ (stressing their similarities), yet the large parenthesis in the passage is devoted to showing their differences (vv. 13-17).
- 2 Sam. 7:4-17 and 1 Chron. 17:3-15 clearly are parallel passages, yet the 2 Sam. passage is referring to Solomon and Christ whereas the 1 Chronicles passage refers to Christ alone.

13. Prophecy. There are at least three factors to keep in mind when studying Bible prophecy:

- Some prophecies are placed in the past prophetic tense to emphasize that they are guaranteed (e.g., Heb. 2:14; Isa. 53).
- Some prophecies have more than one fulfillment (e.g., Joel 2:28ff); often one is partial and the other complete.
- Some prophetic statements are blended together (e.g., those concerning Judas in Acts 1) or separated into two distinct events (see fulfillment of most of Isa. 61:1-2 except "*day of vengeance*").

14. Interpreting personal experience. Always interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture, not the other way round. Our feelings, thoughts, experiences can be misleading or dead wrong. Scripture is without error.

15. Build on a solid foundation. Take the time to learn the major doctrines of the Bible as they progressively unfold. To rush into studying all of the details of the Bible before getting a grip on its doctrinal teachings is like trying to build a house's superstructure without first laying a foundation.

16. Types and shadows. When we consider Old Testament types and pictures, we must be careful since there's a ditch on either side of the road. On the one hand, we can make the mistake of ignoring types. This is regrettable since types can be very helpful in illustrating New Testament teaching. For example, the five Levitical offerings show us five aspects of the work of Christ that we would be hard-pressed to see clearly with only the New Testament. On the other hand, we can make the mistake of becoming obsessed with typology and waste time exercising our fertile imaginations. Types were intended by the divine Author.

17. Parables. Similar to types, parables are intended both to illustrate biblical truth (to the believer) and obscure it (from those who resist the truth). In interpreting parables, we must not let our imaginations run free and assign meanings to every tiny element of the parable. The same is true of other illustrations in the Bible. For example, when Peter refers to the Word of God as milk (1 Pet. 2:2), don't become too fanciful in thinking of ways that the Word is like milk (e.g., "Milk is white and that speaks of the purity of the Bible." Certainly the Bible is pure, but that's not the point God was making when He likened it to milk.).

18. The Bible is complete. We don't need to appeal to outside sources to understand the Bible. Be careful: in almost all instances when people appeal to extra-biblical sources to "interpret" the Bible, they are really trying to explain away the Bible's clear teaching. Much danger lies in trying to interpret the Bible through outside history.

The unchanging Word of God is the only accurate, reliable source of interpretation. Of human history, no scholar knows even 1%, and most of what is known is slanted, speculative, fluctuating and fragmentary. To apply man's historical accounts in a way which contradicts the teaching of divinely revealed Scripture (e.g., speaking about the practice of first century prostitutes to shave their heads to explain 1 Cor. 11) is extremely foolish.

19. Supposed contradictions. One contradiction has never been proven. Many apparent contradictions have evaporated as we have learned more. You can trust the Bible!

20. Christ. Christ is unique. He is frequently "the exception to the rule" in the Bible. For instance, when Paul writes, "*There is none righteous, not even one*" (Rom. 3:10) he clearly doesn't mean to include Christ in that blanket statement any more than he intends to include the Father or the Holy Spirit.

SCIENCE & YOU

VISIBLE CREATION SHOWING US THE INVISIBLE GOD

WHICH CAME FIRST?

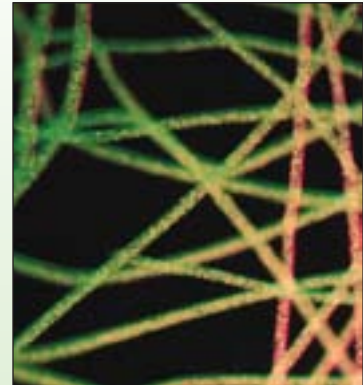
Consider for a moment the lowly protein. We take proteins for granted because they are produced and act automatically in our cells. Much is known about how proteins are made and how they function. But the harder question is: Where did proteins come from? Proteins are made from instructions in DNA but proteins are needed to make DNA. So we might ask: Which came first—the DNA or the protein? The answer is that neither came first. In order to have either DNA or protein, both are required.

The evolutionary explanation for how proteins formed is that lightning reacted with chemicals in the atmosphere of the “early earth” to create amino acids. This formed a thin soup of chemicals in warm tide pools. Amino acids joined together to make proteins which then became part of fat globules that then became living cells. Easy, isn’t it? It seems so to those of the evolutionary faith and to those with little scientific background.

The environment of the “early” earth would have been harsh. High levels of radiation would break proteins down as quickly as they formed, and the heat from volcanoes would also destroy proteins. But there is another, more fundamental, problem with the evolutionary scheme for protein formation, a problem that would prevent proteins from ever being formed to begin with. Chemical reversibility.

Proteins can be both made and broken apart depending on the chemical conditions. One of those conditions is the presence or absence of water (H₂O). When amino acids join together, a molecule of water (H₂O) is released and a chemical bond is formed. This water has to be removed before the next amino acid is added, otherwise the next bond will not form or the previous bond may be broken. This means that the last place one would predict a protein could form is in the early ocean because the chemical reactions forming the protein would be immediately reversed by all the water! Dr. A.E. Wilder-Smith in his book, *The Natural Sciences Know Nothing of Evolution*, makes exactly this point.¹ The formation of functioning proteins by chance natural processes in the “early ocean” would be a totally futile chemical exercise. As soon as one chemical bond would be made, it would be broken.

What does this mean for the faith of the evolutionist? Probably not much. Evolutionary believers have immense faith in the unseen hand of chance and millions of years of time for unlikely events to happen over and over. Maybe proteins came first, then DNA; or perhaps it was DNA and then protein. It doesn’t really matter for the evolutionist since time and chance can make both. But if you must already have both to have either one, then they could not have evolved in sequence, one after the other. Nor could DNA and protein have evolved in different locations since they each require the other to function in a cell. No, to have both DNA and protein in the same place at the same time to form a living cell would take...God.



MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.

¹ Wilder-Smith, A. E. *The Natural Sciences Know Nothing of Evolution*. Master Books, San Diego, CA. 1981.

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

The right tools can make the task much more enjoyable—and more fruitful, too.

Concordance: A concordance is the most basic of our study tools. It allows those of us with imperfect memories to find half-remembered verses. It also allows us to see how words are used in the Bible and to find a more complete list of verses on a subject. Note that your concordance should match the Bible translation you use for study. An “exhaustive” concordance is far superior to other kinds of concordances because it lists *all* references to all words, not just a selection. *Strong’s* is an example.

Cross-references: A book of cross-references (e.g., *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*) is an important tool. In fact, just looking at all the cross-references for a passage can be a study all by itself! Note that many computer programs can now do the work of a concordance and a cross-reference aid much more quickly than printed versions.

Vine’s Expository Dictionary: While it won’t make you an expert in the Greek, *Vine’s* is an essential study tool for those of us who are not competent with New Testament Greek. It clearly and concisely explains the meanings and connotations of most major New Testament words.

Translations: Most errors in doctrine can be avoided if one consults several reliable translations. While some are better than others, consulting these translations is important if we are to avoid error and obtain a more full understanding of the verses and passages we are studying.

Other helpful books: Christian publishers have certainly proved the proverb: “Of the making of books there is no end.” And while we may lean too much on others, the Lord has gifted the Church to help us. Here are some suggestions for helpful books that will aid our understanding of Scripture.

Believer’s Bible Commentary (William MacDonald): This commentary is eminently reliable, extremely practical, and was clearly written out of love for the Lord Jesus and His Word. It makes an excellent gift or prize for new Christians or Sunday School students.

Treasury of Bible Doctrine (Precious Seed Publications): A summary of the doctrines of the Bible. Every important doctrine of the Christian faith is explained and substantiated from Scripture.

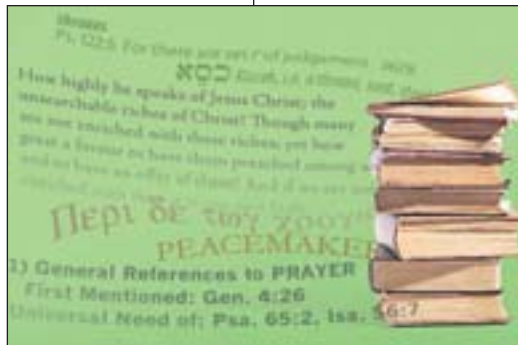
Dispensationalism (Charles Ryrie): To understand dispensational truth is to have a foundation on which to accurately interpret the Bible and build other doctrines. Ryrie’s classic from the 1960s has now been updated.

Jesus Christ Our Lord (John Walvoord): This is an introductory textbook on Christology. To know Christ better is the ultimate goal of our Bible study. This book brings together the whole of the Bible’s teaching about our Lord.

Basic Bible Interpretation (Roy Zuck): Principles of Bible interpretation are an additional foundation upon which profitable and accurate study of the Bible is based. While not all Zuck’s observations are valid, this is a great introductory book for new Christians.

According to Luke (David Gooding): Rather than simply being a commentary on Luke, this book unfolds the underlying structure of Luke. The book introduces the reader to the idea that the Bible was put together for specific reasons and with a specific structure. By understanding this structure we are better able to learn its meaning.

What the Bible Teaches (series from John Ritchie): In-depth, rich, and trustworthy commentaries on the books of the Old and New Testaments. They have covered the New Testament in eleven volumes and have now begun work on the Old Testament.



ELDERHELPS

TO FEED • TO TAKE HEED • AND TO LEAD

This page is reserved for my fellow elders, for aspiring elders, or those interested in the subject of shepherding in a local assembly. Even if you do not think of yourself as a writer, you can help others by submitting your questions and/or answers and they will be appreciated, edited and used in some way. Please e-mail me care of elders@uplook.org

I have many times been asked a question similar to this one from Ontario:

“How does a person come to be recognized as an elder? I have been working in this assembly for eight years and am presently teaching a Sunday School class. I have also counseled a number of people, but I’ve never been asked to be an elder. Should I take the bull by the horns and speak to the existing oversight?”

This problem could either reflect the present elders’ lack of discernment, or yours! Let me begin with you. From what you say, I would think that you are the type of person any local congregation would love to have in their fellowship. However, we have never met and I have to ask a few pointed questions.

What message are people in your assembly getting from you? When you are with any group of fellow Christians and make some practical suggestions, what response do you get? Is your advice well-received and sometimes implemented, or is it invariably ignored? If the last is true, then you may need to learn a bit more about leading others. Would-be shepherds must not only have good ideas, but also know how to convince others that their ideas are scriptural and worth putting into practice. Think about what Solomon said along this line (Eccl. 12:9-11).

You say you have done some counseling. Do you come across as being superior to those you seek to help or are you truly humble? Before talking to those who confess to having “messed up,” I try to remember Galatians 6:1-3.

I judge that the present elders are older than you. Elihu acted very appropriately in the company of his elders and had the last word before God Himself spoke. See Job 32:4.

Now I’ll stop imagining that you might need such advice and speak about elders. Experience has taught me that they may often not be open to the idea of a younger person being associated with them. They are comfortable with each other and a newcomer can disturb the “balance of power.” Elders should not form a power bloc, but Peter saw it as a temptation to which they are vulnerable. Shepherds beware! You have to answer to the Chief Shepherd. See 1 Peter 5:3-4.

Let me encourage our questioner to think this way. If you are being called of the Lord and have a God-given desire for this work, you can do it whether anyone else is pleased to recognize it or not. Nothing can stop you except your desire for recognition! Waiting for your brethren to acknowledge your worth can be a frustrating exercise. Do whatever shepherding you can and leave it to the Lord to honor you in due time. That may not always come in this life, but think of the example set by your Lord and Master as foreseen by Isaiah in 49:1-4.

May God bless you and those who share your concern.

You will notice that I have not answered the correspondent’s first question, “How does a person come to be recognized as an elder?” I have purposely left that open, and look forward to hearing from you before the next edition of *Uplook*. Can you offer suggestions about recognizing or appointing elders to those seeking to establish a new assembly? Write care of the e-mail address above or use snail mail:

Uplook Elder Helps, P. O. Box 2041, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041

LEARN OF ME

Amazing! The master Teacher was willing to be the Learner!

Boushra Mikhael, MD

The life of a true child of God should be a continuous exercise of daily learning from the Lord. The moment we receive salvation we are enrolled in the school of Christ. To grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us should always be our ambition. The excellency of His knowledge surpasses any other privilege in life. He said *“Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me...and ye shall find rest unto your souls”* (Mt. 11:29), thus pointing us to the truth that the way to obtain rest is in carrying His yoke and learning of Him.

His Words

It is amazing that the Teacher of all, who has left us an example to follow (1 Pet. 2:21), has Himself, during His earthly sojourn, taken the place of the learner. Speaking by the words of the prophet Isaiah, He says, *“The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary”* (Isa. 50:4). His words were always words of grace, spoken at the right time, and achieving the purpose for which they were uttered.

We also learn that the source of these words was the Father Himself. For as the Father has taught Him, so He spoke (Jn. 8:26-28). Christ could say to the Jews, *“I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father who sent Me, He gave Me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak...whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto Me so I speak”* (Jn. 12:49-50). To the Father, He says in His high priestly prayer for the disciples, *“I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me”* (Jn. 17:8).

Is it not amazing that the Omniscient One has, in the days of His humiliation, taken the place of the Learner? But such is the example that He has left us. Are we willing to be learners in His school?

His Prayers

But how did He get to have the tongue of the learned? Our verse continues by saying, *“He wakeneth, morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear like the learned”* (Isa. 50:4). The awakening of the ear every morning speaks of the continual communion between the Father and the Son and refers to the prayer life of the Saviour. As the perfect Servant of Jehovah, we find Him often in prayer to His Father. In the Gospel records we read of many occasions

where the Lord is seen alone in prayer. Luke, who portrays Him as the perfect Man, speaks of Him as having *“continued all night in prayer”* (Lk. 6:12). And we should not think that this was the only time. We read that He prayed at His baptism (Lk. 3:21), before choosing His disciples (Lk. 6:12), and on the Mount of Transfiguration (Lk. 9:29), just to mention a few examples.

We read of an even more moving aspect of our Lord’s prayer life in the Book of Hebrews. *“Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared”* (Heb. 5:7). This perhaps refers to His agony in prayer in Gethsemane. Yet we know that He ultimately prayed, *“Not My will, but Thine be done”* (Lk. 22:42). What an example of a prayer life that brought delight to the Father’s heart and that glorified Him here on earth!

How diligent are we in our prayer life? And how fervent are our prayers? May the desire of our hearts be: *“Lord, teach as to pray”* (Lk. 11:1).

His Obedience

“Though He were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8). Why was it necessary for the Son, who came down from heaven to do the Father’s will, to have to learn obedience? For all eternity



past, He had perfect fellowship with the Father, dwelling with Him in glory and rejoicing in His love (Jn. 17:5,24). But no personal experience of suffering was His there. Yet coming into a sinful world He soon learned experientially the suffering for righteousness' sake that was part of obedience to the Father. Nonetheless He chose to obey at the cost of laying down His life (Jn. 10:17).

Faithful amid unfaithfulness, 'mid darkness only light;
Thou didst Thy Father's name confess, and in His will delight.
—J. G. DECK

How do we measure up to that divine standard of obedience in the life of our Lord? Are we willing to suffer for His sake?

His Example

"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:22-23). How do we react to provocation and insults? Do we not often feel like avenging ourselves instead of committing all to our heavenly Father?

The example He left us is so clear. He faced and endured such contradiction from sinners against Himself, and still dealt with all so graciously. Never did He stretch out His hand to harm anyone. He went about doing good. When Peter tried to use the sword at the gate of Gethsemane to resist the Lord's imminent arrest, the Lord Jesus asked, *"The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"* (Jn. 18:11). What dignity! What self-control! What commitment do we see in His behavior! Would that we learn of Him even in a small measure (Rom. 12:17-21).

His Commandments

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments...He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (Jn. 14:15, 21). It should be the exercise of our hearts and the outworking of our love to Him that we keep His commandments. He leaves us a new commandment *"that ye love one another as I have loved you"* (Jn. 13:34). His great, unfathomable love is the standard, in that He laid down His life for us. We ought to ask Him to help us learn from Him how to be willing even to *"lay down our lives for the brethren"* (1 Jn. 3:16).

His Great Commission to go into the world and preach the gospel to all nations is so dear to the Saviour's heart. It was His parting word to the disciples. How serious are we about sharing the good news with others? And how much

time and energy are we willing to spend in doing so?

His Yoke

"My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Mt. 11:30). There is indeed a cost for following Christ and for being His disciple. *"And whosoever doeth not bear his cross, and come after Me cannot be My disciple"* (Lk. 14:27). To follow our Lord now in His day of rejection means to suffer rejection with Him. To stand for Christ and to champion His cause means that we will be cast out of the world's elite circles and its favorite associations. How do we feel about that? Do we think that it is too great a sacrifice? Or are we willing to follow Him, accepting and indeed proving that His yoke is easy and His burden is light? Do we long that His Holy Spirit will do a work of character building in us, so that we may learn to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3)?

His Walk

"But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be it that ye have heard Him and have been taught of Him, as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:20-21). The unbelieving people in the world around us are alienated from the life of God. They often give themselves over to a lustful lifestyle (Eph. 4:18-19). The child of God who has learned of the holy life of our Saviour and desires to emulate Him, would walk even as He walked (1 Jn. 2:6).

Thy Name we love Lord Jesus, it tells Thy birth so lowly;
Thy patient grace Thy tenderness, Thy lonely walk so holy.
—W. Yerbury

The believer in Christ is first expected to discard the old manner of life with its deceitful lusts, and then to be renewed in the spirit of his own mind through the power of the Spirit of God, who applies the word of God to cleanse and sanctify him (Titus 3:5). Through the nurturing of the new nature we are to put on that new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:22-24). How can this be done? By spending time regularly with the Lord in prayer, and in meditating on His word, by not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, and by witnessing to others of His saving grace.

May we all delight in sitting at His feet and, like Mary of Bethany, learning of Him.

We wonder at Thy lowly mind, and fain would like Thee be;
And all our rest and pleasure find, in learning Lord of Thee.

—J. G. Deck 

MARY'S COLLEGE

Tuition is free and the Teacher to student ratio is one to one!

Gary McBride

In the Gospels there are four touching portraits of a woman at the feet of the Lord Jesus. In the first of these pictures, the woman is unnamed; in the other three, the woman is said to be Mary of Bethany. It is also possible that Mary was the unnamed woman in the first of these stories. These four scenes, viewed sequentially, unfold a story of developing love. Running parallel to this love story is a progressive revelation of the offices of the Lord Jesus as Saviour, Prophet, Priest, and King.

The Commencement of Love Luke 7:36-50

The first scene takes place in the house of Simon the Pharisee as a woman, who was known publicly as a sinner, came into the home. In reverence and repentance she bowed at the feet of the Lord Jesus. The woman was aware of her condition and recognized her great need for salvation as well as the ability of the Lord Jesus to meet that need. Tears of repentance poured forth and she proceeded to wash the Lord's feet with her hair. She then anointed His feet with perfume. This is a beautiful display of contrition and brokenness. The character of the Lord is such that "a broken and contrite heart [He will] not despise."

The Lord Jesus acknowledged the depth and extent of the woman's love in the parable of the debtors. After the parable the Lord said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." He further told her, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."

This, then, is the commencement of the love story. As a repentant sinner, the woman came to the feet of the Lord and found in Him a Saviour who could save her from the penalty of her sin.

The Communion of Love Luke 10:38-42

In Luke 7, the sinful woman came to the Lord Jesus.

Here in Luke 10, the movement is on the Lord's part as He came seeking to have fellowship with His own. Martha welcomed Him into the home and then she became busy in preparing the meal. Mary took advantage of the moment and spent time at the Saviour's feet. Martha's work was important but Mary had "chosen that good part," like the maiden in the Song of Solomon who could say, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste." This was Mary's portion, the place of protection and provision.

Mary occupied the place that prepared one for service. The Lord Jesus reveals Himself in His office as Prophet, where He unfolds precious truths and instructs His devoted servant. At His feet Mary heard and understood truths about the passion of Christ that few others were able to grasp. The opportunity was available to others, but it seems that Mary alone took advantage of the privilege.



The Comfort of Love John 11:32-36

This is a very different scene, and it stands out because it involves sorrow and death. In verse 32 we see Mary in a familiar and natural position, at the Saviour's feet. Here "she fell down at His feet," not as a sinner, not in service, but in deep sorrow. This is the sorrow of a broken heart in the face of death and the loss of a loved one.

What comfort she found in the Saviour's love as He sympathized with her and wept with her! The depths of His feelings are seen in that "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled." Here the Lord Jesus is seen in His priestly office, as the One who is "touched by the feelings of our infirmities," and can thus, in love, respond to the deepest need. The place of comfort was found at the feet of the One who could not only sympathize but can also control the future.

The Consecration of Love John 12:1-9

Once again Mary, and only Mary of all who were present, is at the feet of the Lord Jesus. In an act of worship

she took costly ointment and anointed the feet of her beloved Lord. She then used her hair and wiped the Saviour's feet. She was the one who realized what was coming—as a result of the previous time at the Saviour's feet—and thus came prepared to anoint Him in advance for the day of His burial.

Here Mary is seen not as a sinner coming to her Saviour for salvation; nor as a servant being instructed by the Prophet; not in sorrow to be comforted by a Priest; but rather as a saint recognizing the Lord Jesus as her Lord and King. She acknowledged Him as her Sovereign and gave Him the best she had to offer.

The Consummation of Love

There is coming a day when all saints will bow at the feet of the Lord Jesus when He is seen on His throne in glory. As shown in Revelation 5, the redeemed shall bow at His feet and proclaim the worthiness of the Lamb that was slain. Each of His offices will be recognized and appreciated to a depth far beyond our present capacity.

Each week at the Lord's Supper there is a foretaste of this day as the precious bottle of perfume is broken and the fragrance of worship ascends on high. The bottle is filled during the week as saints sit at the feet of the Lord and learn of Him. The perfume is costly because of the time involved to fill the bottle and because the contents are thoughts of the Lord Jesus in His glory and beauty.

The Challenge of Love

Each Christian has bowed at the Saviour's feet on that day when they came as sinners for salvation. In the future the redeemed will prostrate themselves at His feet when He is revealed in glory. In the interval between salvation and glory is there any better place than at the feet of the Lord Jesus? This is the choosing of the good part that Mary enjoyed. Love for Him is expressed not so much in activity as it is in appreciation; this is demonstrated by the desire to be intimate with the Lord who died for us.

Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,
By my love how much I owe.

Is there time in the day to sit at His feet to learn of Him? Are we daily approaching His throne of grace and finding mercy for times of need? Has there been the experience of lying at His feet in consecration of self to Him and the overflow of a heart of worship? It is only those who sit at His feet who are equipped to stand for Him. Thus the necessity to spend time in "Mary's college."

MARY *from the Children's Hour*



© PhotoSpin

**Happy Mary! oh how sweet
Thus to sit at Jesu's feet;
With a true, unwavering heart
Thus to choose the blessed part!**

**Happy Mary! thus to hear
Holy words of heavenly cheer:
'Tis no marvel that to thee
All things else should trifling be!**

**Happy Mary! on that Face
Beaming with celestial grace,
Fixed is thine adoring gaze,
While thy heart is filled with praise!**

**Happy art thou! Earthly care
Falls on thee as down on air,
While thy longing soul is fed
Freely with the Living Bread.**

**Happy all who daily sit,
Mary-like, at Jesus' feet;
By His Spirit and His Word
Taught to own Him as their Lord.**

SOUND DOCTRINE

The adage “you are what you eat” was never more appropriate.

Patrick Long

Before we look at this topic, it might be worthwhile to comment on the occurrence of the two Greek words for “*sound*” and “*doctrine*” in our Bibles. Although the words individually occur more than 30 times, in combination they only occur four times, and those instances are in Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus. In these three epistles Paul is giving his last charges to these two younger men, and in doing so, touches on the importance of sound doctrine in their own lives, and in the lives of those with which they were in contact.

What is sound doctrine?

Not being a Greek scholar, nor living in the 1st century, it’s not possible to give a full description of what this phrase meant to those receiving these letters, but it would seem that the thought contained in this phrase denotes “the content of teaching which is healthy and properly developed.”

The word “sound” carries the thought of “wholesome” or “well-developed” when speaking of a person, and this thought is present when speaking of doctrine also.

Doctrine, in this context, refers to the content of the teaching. It isn’t any particular item of doctrine, as we might refer to the “doctrine of salvation,” but the whole body of the things taught.

Why is sound doctrine important?

The first instance of this phrase is in 1 Timothy 1:10 where Paul writes that the conduct which he describes is “*contrary to sound doctrine*.” The consistent teaching of the New Testament is that what is in the heart gives rise to conduct. If our conduct is to be wholesome, what is in our heart must be also. Our Lord used the figure of a tree and its fruit. The character of the tree is seen in the fruit. So the first reason why sound doctrine is important is that without it, there will not be godly conduct.

In 2 Timothy 4:3, Paul talks about people who cannot

tolerate sound doctrine, but look only for those teachers who are pleasant to listen to, with the result that they become occupied with fables. Sound doctrine may not be easy to listen to, but it is an antidote to being led astray. In the context of today’s Christian society, this is an important thought to keep in mind. Have we sunk to the level of being more concerned about how pleasant the words are than how truthful they are?

The qualifications for elders given in Titus 1 point out that it is by sound doctrine that the shepherds of the flock are able to deal with those who are “*gainsayers*” and who subvert whole households.

As Paul introduces the role of the teacher in the various aspects of the local assembly (Titus 3), he says that it is to be consistent with sound doctrine.

So we see that in all areas of life—our conduct, heeding good teaching, refuting those who oppose, and teaching the various groups in the local assembly—sound doctrine is the foundation.



What are the marks of sound doctrine?

There are a number of ways in which we could evaluate sound doctrine, but perhaps the following very simple points would be a help.

- Sound doctrine is Christ-honoring
- Sound doctrine is internally consistent
- Sound doctrine is based on solid biblical principles

Sound doctrine is Christ-honoring: The first and most important mark of sound doctrine will be that it brings honor to our Lord Jesus. The aim of the enemy is to diminish His honor, and the mark of most of the heresies from the 1st century to the present day is that they diminish the honor of our Lord. This has been done in many ways—from the outright denial of His deity, through the various permutations of teaching which would say that He is an angelic being, or only partially God, to doctrines that would in subtle ways make Him less glorious than He actually is.

So when we encounter a particular group or body of



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doctrine, that diminishes either His person or His work, we need to be wary. It is likely that we are in the presence of unsound doctrine.

A second aspect to this is that our own studies and thinking need to always keep

Him in our focus. Our studies, thinking, preaching, and teaching ought always to be Christ-centered. This will then be sound doctrine.

Sound doctrine is internally consistent: Not too long ago I was reading a book that decried the lack of the teaching of logic in our schools. The author's point was that very few of us in this day have the ability (or desire) to think logically about a particular statement or teaching. The book was written from an entirely secular viewpoint, but the thought is applicable to biblical teaching, to our doctrine. Peter writes in his first epistle that we are to gird up the loins of our mind and think soberly. The context is that of holy living, but it is applicable to all areas of doctrine.

We should think things through carefully with a view to examining the internal and external consistency of the particular area of teaching. For example, the results of our study of the typology of the Tabernacle should not contradict our theology of the person and work of our Lord Jesus. Because all Scripture is from one Author, there will be no contradiction if we have understood things correctly.

Of course, there will be times when we will not be able to fully understand some of the things we study, since they will touch on areas outside our realm of time and space; but the things that we are able to grasp should not contradict one another. The Scripture itself is perfectly consistent, and our study of it should not lead to contradictory teaching. This is a valuable concept to keep in mind when dealing with the cults. Their doctrines will often be internally contradictory.

This is a common cause of error. Sometimes a person will become so engrossed in a particular narrow area, to the exclusion of all other areas, that he might wander off into ideas that could properly be termed "speculative." One man was heard to say that he had not studied or thought of anything else but "baptism" for a period of more than six months. Intensive and careful study is good; but we need to guard against "tunnel vision."

It is based on solid biblical principles

The third point is somewhat related to the preceding ones. What do I mean by "solid biblical principles"? The principles referred to are what might be understood as foundational. For example, we understand the Bible to be the Word of God. That implies accuracy and precision. Therefore, when we might be tempted to discard from our thinking a passage which does not seem to agree with the conclusions at which we have arrived, we need to pull ourselves up short. If my thinking seems to contradict the Scripture, then it is my thinking that is wrong, not God's Word.


Another principle would be that we understand the clear sense of the Scripture to be the correct interpretation, unless there are good reasons to do otherwise. An example here could be that if we find ourselves having to allegorize or spiritualize at every turn, we are doing something wrong. If, for instance, my view of prophetic matters means that I cannot see any future for Israel as a nation, and I have to see all the prophecies of the Old and New Testament as having only allegoric or "spiritual" application, then I need to go back and re-examine my basic principles. Without an extreme degree of stretch, these prophecies relating to Israel and her return to the land under her promised King can only be seen as literal and historical.



What are the results of sound doctrine?

The world sometimes says, "You are what you eat." Applying this to the subject at hand, if you wish to have a healthy spiritual life, and know a healthy assembly life, sound doctrine must be the diet. Paraphrasing a godly author of the last century, "Principles are more important than practice, but practice reveals principles."

There are other reasons for a lack of soundness in the spiritual life of the believer, or of the local assembly, but a lack of sound doctrine is an important one.

It is this author's prayer that the Lord's people, and the assemblies they fellowship in, will be known as sound in doctrine and in personal life. 

KEY ISSUES

THINKING IT THROUGH • BUILDING IT IN • LIVING IT OUT

MEDITATION OR STUDY?

The importance of finding a biblical balance.

Colin Anderson

Grandmother had a large collection of fine china, and most of these articles were kept in a locked room except for times when she entertained guests who could appreciate the worth of her treasures. She had stories to tell about how each piece came into her possession. Every week or two she would enter the room and carefully dust them off. If the grandchildren asked why they were not permitted into her sanctuary, she would say, "Because that's where Grandma keeps her precious things."¹

Precious is a word we may use to describe anything that has cost us something to possess. It applies not only to material things, but also to thoughts and ideas. For the Christian, this is especially true of things the Lord has taught us from His Word and in the school of experience. If we are wise, we do not let everyone into our "sanctuary"; we do not *"give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast [our] pearls before swine."*

The psalmist's mind was obviously a very large sanctuary, so large that we may well believe that some of his words were prophetic rather than merely personal, and that He spoke of the Messiah rather than himself when he said, *"How precious are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I am awake, I am still with You"* (Ps. 139:17-18).

In *"the days of His flesh"* the Lord Jesus stored His mind with the Word of God and knew exactly how to apply it when occasion required. His mouth then became like a sharp sword, and with it He

routed the enemy. (See Isa. 49:2 and compare Mt. 4:1-11.) Isaiah reveals something of the process by which this took place: *"He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned"* (Isa. 50:4).

Our minds too were designed to be a sanctuary for the thoughts of God. But before we were saved, many of the things we stored there were worthless and harmful. The renewing of our minds began at conversion, but it must be an ongoing process. It calls for conscious effort on our part. We all have to learn to meditate on the word that comes to us from God.

The meditation recommended in Scripture bears no relation to the "transcendental" kind, except that the mind is involved in both. In the transcendental variety the aim is to sweep the mental sanctuary clean without consciously selecting what is to fill it. Matthew 12:43-45 warns us that this may result in even greater bondage. Godly meditation, however, does not merely cleanse the mind; it enriches it with new and precious thoughts.

To many today it would seem that meditation is passé: it belongs to the monastery, or at least demands of us a discipline we are not skilled enough to undertake. We may tell ourselves that we are really not the meditating type. Of course, we expect the preacher to meditate on God's Word before he preaches. We don't want him giving messages he

hasn't thought through, but for the rest of us—well, we really are too busy.

All of the above excuses are lies, and devilish lies at that. Take that foolish idea about "not being the type." Probably this notion seems reasonable to our minds because we confuse it with in-depth study, and we have to agree that not all of us are called to spend



hours in biblical research. But for meditation we do not need a concordance, a lexicon, or any other of the helps designed to tell us what the Hebrew and the Greek mean. King David was born in the days before Cruden or Strong, yet in his writings he speaks a great deal about the value of meditation.

Study can enrich our meditation, but it must never become a substitute for it. In fact, the two things are quite different. You have listened, no doubt, to preachers who are thoroughly evangelical and perfectly sound, but who nevertheless give sermons that are purely intellectual but hardly heart-warming. It is as if they served you a dinner from the refrigerator instead of the oven.

The writer of this article attended a Bible school at one time. It soon became apparent that my fellow students and I were all in danger of stuffing our heads full of knowledge and leaving our hearts untouched. The only way to overcome this, I found, was to take time to think about what Scripture said, apart from any of the subjects we were required to take. In this way I learned that even the study of Scripture cannot and must not be a substitute for meditation.

Perhaps the reader will object to what may seem a very fine distinction between the two disciplines of study and meditation. Let me point out that the Word of God (the common misinterpretation of 2 Timothy 2:15 notwithstanding) has very little to say about “studying.”

In fact the King James version uses the word *study* only three times. It tells us that “*much weariness of the flesh*” can result from it, and the other two references are not speaking of poring over books but rather mean that we should “make it our aim” to do something. For instance, “*Study to be quiet*” in 1 Thessalonians 4:11, in the New King James is correctly translated into more modern language as, “*Aspire to be quiet.*”

A good, though well-worn, illustration for the idea of meditating is that of an animal chewing the cud. A mouthful of food is ingested, but then can only be digested by regurgitation from time to time. This can be done and must be done with the text of Scripture if we would be wiser than our enemies, understand more than our teachers and be delivered from being subject to merely “traditional” interpretations. Please read Psalm 119:97-104 and Joshua 1:8—and, of course meditate on them!

1 The writer begs forgiveness for including this story of a fictitious grandmother, though he has no doubt that many of this species once existed. Some may even still be alive.

The DA VINCI HOAX

It's almost impossible to avoid Dan Brown's historical thriller *The Da Vinci Code*. The best seller can be seen everywhere. Even *U.S. News & World Report* has published a “collector's edition” so full of errors it is suitable only for the trash collector. One writer dares to claim that there's no evidence Jesus even existed!

The novel has stirred expected protests from serious scholars, mostly conservatives. Now, liberals are also weighing in, claiming that Brown's ploy of presenting facts through fiction is itself a fiction.

Bart Ehrman, religion chairman at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, and an expert in early church documents key to Brown's plot, has authored *Truth and Fiction in The Da Vinci Code* (Oxford). Ehrman says Brown makes “numerous mistakes, some of them howlers,” and wonders, “Why didn't he simply get his facts straight?”

In an Associated Press article (Jan. 8, 2005 *Wichita Eagle*) Richard Ostling writes: “The most important contention of the scholarly characters in *The Da Vinci Code* is that Jesus was considered a mere mortal but then voted into divine status by bishops at the fourth-century Council of Nicea, for political reasons.

“‘Absolutely not true,’ Ehrman asserts. ‘As far back as we have Christian writings’ it was ‘commonplace to understand that Jesus was in some sense divine.’ The controversy decided at Nicea was how to define that divinity alongside Jesus’ humanity.’

“The novel also stumbles in claiming that the four Gospels chosen for the New Testament treat Jesus as divine only, Ehrman says. Any ‘straightforward reading of the Gospels will make clear’ that he was fully a human who ate, became tired and experienced suffering.

“It wasn't the Gospels but apocryphal writings outside the Bible that made Jesus so divine that he was barely human, the exact opposite of Brown's scenario.

“Moreover, contrary to Brown, ‘the oldest and best sources we have for knowing about the life of Jesus’ are the first century's Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Ehrman says. That's ‘the view of all serious historians of antiquity of every kind, from committed evangelical Christians to hard-core atheists.’...

“Brown's plot involves Jesus marrying Mary Magdalene, so the novel says it was unthinkable for a Jewish man to remain unmarried. But Ehrman says historians agree that the Dead Sea Scrolls disprove Brown's claim.

“Ehrman's wry conclusion: ‘There's something to be said for knowing what really happened.’”

Does the popularity of Brown's *Da Vinci Code* remind us of the warning of the Master? “*This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*” (Jn. 3:19). 📖

PITFALLS IN BIBLE STUDY

Anything as high voltage as the Word needs to be handled with care.

Shawn Abigail

In most Bible-believing churches we are encouraged to read and study the Bible for ourselves. We know it is not sufficient to have a copy of the Bible in our homes. It must be read and studied and learned. Only in doing so can we hope to obtain the full benefit God intends for us. But there are pitfalls in doing our own Bible study, and we must learn to handle the Word of God in a responsible manner. This touches our attitudes, methods, tools, and goals in studying the Bible.

Ignoring God-given resources

One of the greatest pitfalls in Bible study is to deny the gifts God has given to the Church. Some people have the notion that only a trained scholar can understand the Bible. But in an effort to avoid this danger, we sometimes move to the opposite extreme and ignore the work of countless Bible teachers whom the Lord has raised up.

A balanced view sees the study of the Bible as the birthright of every born-again believer. Likewise, a proper view understands that the work of generations of Bible teachers has value. While it may sound pious for a man to claim he uses no tools except his Bible, it is really arrogance. Wise students of the Word study the Bible for themselves and use the tools provided by generations of outstanding Bible teachers.

Similarly, comparing Bible translations and then doing careful word studies is a very powerful technique in Bible study. This technique helps us avoid the error of basing our ideas solely on

the way something is phrased by a single translation.

Another resource the Lord has given us is the Bible knowledge of the more mature and experienced believers in our own assembly. In learning to study the Bible, seek some guidance from them rather than trying to learn how to study by trial and error.

Original language pitfalls

To gain real proficiency with the original languages of the Bible requires years of study. This is the sort of commitment that requires more than just a couple of courses in seminary. Word study tools have value, but it is important not to think that the use of Strong's numbers and Vine's Dictionary makes us proficient in Greek and Hebrew. By all means use Vine's dictionary, but double-check your discoveries against reliable Bible commentators.

There are certain common errors people make when doing word studies. One is to build a sermon by taking every possible meaning a Greek or Hebrew word could have and then applying them all to a specific passage. We would never do this in English, so why would we think it would help us in Greek?

Another classic error is to see a Greek or Hebrew word that is usually translated one way, and then assume that if it is translated using a different English word in another place, the translators are wrong.

Also, breaking a word into its parts doesn't always yield additional information, whether we do this exercise in Greek or English. We can think of a thousand English words that can be broken into component parts without revealing additional meaning



(e.g., pineapple and butterfly). In most cases, context will teach us more about the meaning of a word than our word studies.

Another common pitfall is reading modern meanings back into ancient words. How many times have we been told that the gospel is the dynamite of God? Romans 1:16 tells us the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The fact that the Greek word for power (*dunamis*) came to be used as the root for the name of an explosive two thousand years later tells us absolutely nothing about the biblical meaning of this passage.

Likewise, 2 Corinthians 9:7 tells us God loves a cheerful (*hilaros*) giver, but Paul was not thinking of the modern word “hilarious” when he wrote the verse. He did not envision people doubling over in laughter as they contributed to the needs of the saints. Do not read modern meanings back into ancient words.

Over-spiritualization

For many hundreds of years, responsible Bible study was paralyzed by a tendency to allegorize the Bible. This was a particular problem in how some people dealt with the parables. In an allegory, every part of the parable has some supposed deeper meaning. So for example, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the robbers would be said to represent sin, the priest represented the Law, the Levites represented the prophets, the oil and wine represented the Lord’s Supper and baptism, and the inn represented the church, etc. Clearly the problem with allegorizing is that it allows us to claim that almost any passage means almost anything. Perhaps in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the oil and wine represent Law and Grace. Or perhaps they represent Saturday and Sunday. Or perhaps they represent something else?

With the allegorical approach not only the parables, but also much of prophecy and even historical passages are interpreted and re-interpreted in light of the reader’s preconceived beliefs. Plain teachings are spiritualized away, every reader can imagine a different meaning, and we are left with very little that we can say with certainty.

Over-emphasis

In our studies we must be careful not to focus on one favorite topic to the exclusion or detriment of all others.

Heresy is often simply truth out of proportion. If we allow ourselves to be taken up with one doctrine we will soon start imagining it everywhere in the Bible. Our understanding of almost all Bible passages will become skewed as we interpret everything in light of our pet doctrine.

Studying without a mirror

Many people study the Bible without considering the personal significance of what they are reading. So, for example, many men have studied what the Bible teaches concerning the silence of women in the meetings of the church, without appreciating the implication that men should come prepared to speak in a profitable manner.


It is dangerously easy to divorce our study from any practical consequences in our own lives. James warns us that we must be quick to see ourselves in the mirror of the Word of God and make the necessary adjustments (see 1:22-25).



Missing the point

Perhaps the greatest pitfall in Bible study is to forget the goal. Our goal is not to gain knowledge. Our goal is to get to know the Lord Jesus Christ better and be conformed to His image. As such we need to consider the Christological implications of what we read. If we study the Bible just to find out what it means for us, then we are missing the real point. The more important question is, “What does this passage tell me about the Lord Jesus Christ?”

Sports fans memorize the statistics about all their favorite players and teams. Music fans can tell you where their favorite singers were born and what their favorite flavors of ice cream are. Do they learn this information because it helps them in any way? Of course not! They learn this information just because they want to get to know their heroes better. If this is true for worldly heroes, shouldn’t it be true of our attitude toward the Lord Jesus?

We should get to know Him better just for the sake of getting to know Him. Yes, there will certainly be a blessing for us, but the blessing for us is incidental. The real purpose is far nobler. It is to have a heart overflowing with the perfections of the Lord Jesus, and to have a storehouse of pleasant thoughts about the Son which we can then present to the Father in our worship. To study the Bible and not see the living Word is the biggest pitfall of all. 

WHAT DOES A STUDENT NEED?

Is this verse a refuge for times when we have a paltry harvest?



Back-to-school shopping—it seems the flyers come out earlier every year. Soon they’ll be out before the last school year is over! They try to tell us what a student needs because, to do well, a student must be prepared. And almost all students love back-to-school shopping, even the ones who will spend the next ten months complaining about school! Our world recognizes students by giving them lower bus fares and special rates. But in reality we’re all students. And this is especially true of Christians. We need to learn at salvation, “*Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me*” (Mt. 11:29). And, once saved, we have a lifetime of learning in front of us: “*grow...in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*” (2 Pet. 3:18). There is always more to learn. We’re students, even if it’s been decades since we were in school. We need to be prepared, too. So let’s ask ourselves, “What does a student need?”

A student needs a course of study. Christians have a great deal to learn, and all of it more worthy than studying beetles and semicolons and times tables. We are called to learn: the Lord’s judgments, statutes, and commandments (Ps. 119:7, 71, 73), to fear the Lord (Deut. 14:23), to do well (Isa. 1:17), to learn “*the ways of My people*” (Jer. 12:16). We must learn Christ (Eph. 4:20), to show piety at home (1 Tim. 5:4), and to maintain good works (Titus 3:14). We are to grow in our knowledge of God (Prov. 2:5), of wisdom (Prov. 24:14), of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4), of the glory of God (2 Cor. 4:6), the Son of God (Eph. 4:13), and the will of God (Col. 1:9).

Next, a student needs a textbook. And what a Textbook we have! It is no dead, dry man-made volume. The Word of God is “*quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword*” (Heb. 4:12). We study a Textbook that is perfect, whose teachings never change, that has delighted and sustained millions through every imaginable trial in life. It is written not for an elite few, but for all—of any age, race, country or occupation—who will take it seriously. This Textbook has shaped the course of history, has stood the test of time, has endured the fury of empires which empires have since crumbled away. And it has topped the bestseller list for almost 30,000 weeks in a row.

Above all, a student needs a teacher. And there has never been a teacher like our Teacher. As with everything He does, He is the best. Teaching was natural for Him: “*opening His mouth, He began to teach*” (Mt. 5:2). Teaching was His habit: “*as He was wont, He taught them*” (Mt. 10:1). He taught impartially (Mt. 22:16), with authority (Mk. 1:22), and tenderly (Hos. 11:3). Over and over again we read of Him as “*the Teacher.*” Truly “*God is exalted in His power; who is a teacher like Him?*” (Job 36:22)

Lastly, a student needs a goal. Many have studied for noble purposes—the betterment of their lives, the relief of physical suffering, the knowledge of the wonders of Creation. But every Christian has the noblest goal of all: conformity to the image of God’s Son. What a wonderful thing to know! Although in human studies a student may fail, everyone in God’s school will reach the goal, not because of our cleverness or effort, but because of His purpose and power: “*...predestinate[d] to be conformed to the image of His Son*” (Rom. 8:29).

So let us press on in our school work. Let us study and learn from the Master. And when the course is hard, when the tests seem too difficult, when the way appears too long, let us take our eyes off the immediate and look toward our graduation day: “*A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher*” (Lk. 6:40).

JAMIE MARTIN

IT IS GOD'S WORK...

“FOR YOU ARE GREAT, AND DO WONDROUS THINGS; YOU ALONE ARE GOD” (Ps. 86:10, NKJV).

Rob Brennan

Recently we have been encouraged by an open door from the Lord. We were praying about the possibility of getting into the elementary school here in 100 Mile House, BC, after hearing of a similar opportunity in Prince George. The principal of one elementary school in town had accepted invitations and handed them out to every student at the end of last year for our summer outreach.

With intentions to stop by and meet the principal again, one Tuesday morning I headed into town. But the day went quickly by and soon it was time to head out of town to another school where I was picking up a young boy to take him fishing.

As I was parked in the school parking lot, the thought came to me that maybe this school might be the school I should approach. I considered finding the principal and talking to him about the possibility of a Bible class in the school, but immediately prayed instead, “Lord, if You want me to talk to the principal, please send him out to talk to me.” With that I got out of my car to look at a bus that had just pulled into the parking lot.

I watched it for a moment. Then looking back toward the school, I saw a man approaching. When he was still sixty feet away, he called out to me. “Hello!” he began and came up and introduced himself as Mark.



He asked me my purpose for being there, and I explained how I knew the young boy I was picking up and my purpose in taking him fishing.

As Mark continued the conversation with me, I thought of the prayer I had made only a few minutes earlier. Prompted by this, I asked him if he was the principal of the school, to which he answered “Yes.”

I was taken aback, but right away told him of the opportunity in Prince George to teach the Bible, to which he replied, “We could do that here!”

Surprised by his ready response, I gasped, “We could? When?”

“Whenever you want—before school, at lunch or after school.” He then told me that he was a Gideon, implying that he was very interested in seeing the Bible in the public schools.

I drove away from the school almost in shock. The whole experience I just described took maybe ten minutes from start to finish.

Mark has since sent home parental permission forms to be signed. In a school of eighty students about twenty-four children have been granted permission.

“...Thou wilt answer me. Among the gods there is none like unto Thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto Thy works” (Ps. 86:7-8).