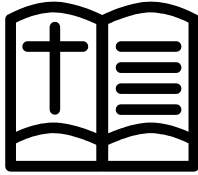


# **HOW TO READ AND STUDY THE BIBLE**



**THE PNBC CONGRESS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION  
ORLANDO, FL**

**August 8-11, 2022**

**REV. Terry D. Streeter  
Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church  
215 Rhode Island Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20001**

**THE JOY OF DISCOVERY BY OLETTA WALD**

## **How to Read and Study the Bible**

**Pastor Terry D. Streeter, Facilitator**

One of the first steps in studying a passage is to make sure that you are in the right relationship with the Lord (**I Corinthians 2:12-3:3**). The greatest challenge the student faces is not the material, but himself. We must be accountable to the truth we study. Make sure that you have the proper tools for study. Tools are helpful, but the Bible, not a commentary, is the most important item.

### **Problem Approaches to Bible Study**

1. Hit and miss method.
2. We never study
3. We use the commentary instead of reading the Word.

Because the Bible is God's holy and sacred Word, it must be treated with respect, its purity protected and the intended message never violated nor misrepresented. This means that the Bible student must be diligent to be as precise as he can be in his study. Study requires work. Since nothing is as important as the Word, we must use all the energy we have to rightly divide it.

As we read the Bible we must be careful in observing what is there. We must be systematic in how we put together what we see. We must be persistent in our approach. Avoid the temptation to jump right into commentaries or other study books.

### **Four Important Things About the Bible**

1. The Bible is in normal language. (God intended for us to understand it.)
2. The revelation is progressive. God reveals more as man is able to deal with it.
3. Scripture interprets scripture. If you don't understand one part of the Bible it will be opened up to you in another section of the Bible.
4. Interpretation should be literal. Your explanation of the Bible should deal only with facts.

### **To Aid Us In Bible Study We Need:**

1. Desire to study God's Word.
2. Discipline: We should set aside study time and keep to the schedule.
3. Diligence: Pay attention when we study. Clear all else from your mind.
4. Determination:
5. Development: The more you study and use the Bible the better your study skills and knowledge of the Bible will become.

### **Bible Does:**

1. Bears witness of one God.
2. Is one continuous story (from Genesis to Revelations)
3. Makes predictions and records their fulfillment.
4. Has one great theme - mans fall to God's solution
5. One central figure-GOD.
6. One author.

### **The Bible and Salvation**

1. Preparation: Old Testament
2. Purchase: Gospels
3. Proclamation: Acts
4. Explanation: Epistles
5. Consummation: Revelation

### **Divisions of the Bible**

#### Old Testament

1. The Law - First five books
2. History
3. Poetry - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes
4. Prophecy  
Four Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel  
Five major books of prophecy: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Lamentations

#### New Testament

1. Gospels
2. History
3. Epistles
4. Prophecy

## **How God Dealt With The Human Race In The Bible**

Adam - Gentile Race Genesis 1-11

Abram - Jewish Nation Genesis 12- Acts 2

NOTE: The Jews are predominant in Bible history. Those who were not Jews were Gentiles

Pentecost - Church - Acts 2 - Revelation

If you want to know the importance of a subject look at how much space the author gives it.

## **Three Classes of People in the Bible** - I Corinthians 10:32

1. Jews
2. Gentiles
3. Church

Choose a short time each day or a longer period of time each week for study. This is your appointment with God that you don't want to break. Have a place where you regularly do study. Also have a plan for study. A simple plan is as follows:

1. Underline the main characters
2. Circle the important places
3. Put a question mark by words or phrases you don't understand
4. Put an exclamation point by new discoveries

## **The Bible Study Method**

**Observation** - What Does the Passage Say

**Interpretation** - What Does the Passage Mean by What It Says

**Application** - What is the Passage Saying To Me

**Observation** - Giving careful attention to make sure that you see things as they really are. One of our common errors is to come to a conclusion about a passage without being aware of all that the passage says. In observation, we are seeking what the writer is saying.

### **I. Investigate words**

### **II. Investigate Structure**

### **III. Ask Questions**

**A. The six basic questions are:** Who, what, when, where, how, why

**B. The three basic areas to probe**

1. Meaning
2. Reason
3. Implication

**Interpretation** - What does the passage mean? The bridge from observation to interpretation is having a good interpretive question. You want to discover the meaning and not attribute one to the passage.

### **I. Find a good interpretive Question**

### **II. Define all your Important Words**

### **III. Study the Context and Related Passages**

**IV. Study books that have materials that relate to your questions**

**V. Pray, Meditate and Think**

**VI. Summarize your findings in Writing**

**Application** - The ultimate end of your study. Honest application depends upon your attitude. You need an Acts 9:6 attitude. Some helpful questions are:

1. **What does God want me to believe and obey?**
2. **What do I need to learn about the way God thinks?**
3. **What skills or abilities does God want me to develop?**
4. **What hope does God set out for me?**

What does this passage say to me?

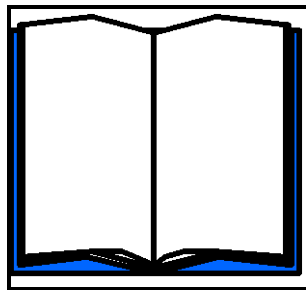
Sin to avoid

Promises to depend on

Examples to follow

Commands to obey

Stumbling blocks to doing what God says



**Stay in the Book**

## Symbols

A symbol is a sign that suggest meaning rather than stating it. They are used to represent something else.

Characteristics of symbols

1. They are literal - Jeremiah 24 - Good and bad figs
2. Symbols are used to convey some lesson or truth

How to Interpret Symbols

1. The Bible often interprets symbols for you - Jeremiah 24
2. Try to determine from the context the purpose for using a symbol
3. Watch how the same symbol is used in various passages - see Matthew 13:33; 16:6
4. Observe the qualities of the literal object - I Corinthians 5:5-9
5. Symbols suggest meaning and must be interpreted with care. Different things suggest different things to different people

Some common symbols

leaven - sin  
gold - divinity  
wood - humanity  
silver - redemption price/ price of life  
ram -substitution

Symbolic numbers in the Bible

1 - unity  
2 - division  
3 - trinity or resurrection  
4 - old creation  
5 - grace  
6 - work  
7 - rest or perfection  
12 - Israel  
24 - Priesthood  
40 - complete or probation or trials  
42 - advent (coming)

## Recognizing How Truth is Applied

Local Truth - Applied to a specific person, group, or time.

Timeless Truth - Applies to all people, groups and times.

The Bible recognizes three specific groups, namely, Jews, Gentiles and the Church - I Corinthians 10:32

Timeless Truth - Apply directly

Local Truth - Apply directly to the situation. We learn the lessons and principles of the passage.



## **Typology**

**Typology** occurs when God causes a correspondence between a person, event or institution of the Old Testament and a person, event or institution of the New Testament in order to illustrate a truth about the New Testament person, event or institution.

The item in the Old Testament is called the type.

The item in the New Testament is called the antitype.

See Matthew 12:40-41 and Jonah 1:17

Many others like:

1. The Passover Lamb
2. The Ram of Substitution
3. Solomon (Hebrews 1:5; II Samuel 7:14)

### **Recognizing and Interpreting Types**

1. There must be a designated resemblance between the two things caused by God. Because a thing is similar does not make it a type.
2. A type always has characteristics not applicable to the antitype
3. The typological interpretation of a passage never destroys the normal interpretation of a passage. See John 3:14 and Numbers 21:9
4. Never use typological interpretation to teach a doctrine that is not taught clearly elsewhere in scripture.

### **Principles of Interpretation**

1. Approach the scriptures without a foregone conclusion about what it means. Allow the scripture to speak for itself.
2. A word may have several different meanings but in a particular place it has only one meaning. The sentence itself will help you choose the right definition.
3. Words repeated in a passage are usually key to the meaning of the passage. (Romans 3:19-20)
4. The immediate context often defines the words. (Hebrews 5:14)
5. Give preference to the clearest and simplest interpretation.
6. Distinguish between application and interpretation. See Acts 1:8

## Notes on Structure

Structure refers to the underlying design, organization or arrangement of material. Anything planned with a purpose should have structure. The function determines the form. You need to see the parts in relationship to the whole.

1. Words: Every sentence has one or more key words. Look for words that are repeated. Pay close attention to connective words.

Key connective words:

- for, because, therefore, wherefore: They usually introduce a reason or result
- but: indicates a contrast
- in order that: is setting forth a purpose
- if: shows a condition
- If...then: cause and effect
- verily, verily: The following statement is very important.

2. Structure: Look for contrast and comparisons between words, ideas, persons

Observe atmosphere of a passage. Is it happy or sad? Read the passage in the mood -that it was written. Try to feel what the passage is saying.

Observe setting of passage. Take note of the location and study the history of the location.

Try to determine the author's purpose for writing the passage.

## **Parables**

Parables are an extended simile. This is where one set of circumstances is likened to another.

### **Characteristics of a Parable**

1. It is a story drawn from real life. (It either happened or could have happened)
2. It is designed to graphically teach one central truth

### **The Types of Parables**

1. Single-purpose parables are intended to make truth clear to everyone. Luke 10:25-37
2. Dual-purpose parables taught only the Lord's followers. (Matthew 13:10-17)

### **Interpreting a Parable**

1. Parables are used to drive home one point emphatically.
2. The details of a parable, which have significance, are the only ones that need to be defined to make the central point clear.
3. Don't read too much into a parable.
4. The last line is usually the most important.
5. The context often defines the symbols for you.
6. Sometimes the meaning of the whole parable is in the context.