

## LESSON 1

# HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE



**Introduction: Some people think that the Bible is so difficult to understand that they are afraid even to try. Others wonder why, if the Bible really can be understood, there are so many different churches, all claiming to believe the Bible and yet teaching different things. The reason for so many different beliefs is that, although many people claim to believe the Bible, they have not studied it the way God has told them to. God has told us how to understand the Bible. If we will just follow the method He has outlined, we can know exactly what it means. We can know truth! We can have eternal life! In this lesson we will learn how God tells us to study the Bible.**

# 1. What claim does the Bible make about itself? 2 Timothy 3:16 [2 Peter 1: 20,21]

- 2 Timothy 3:16

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

**[Note: Faith in the Bible as the inspired Word of God is developed by studying it. In these lessons we will witness how the Bible accurately reveals future events, and we will experience how it meets the needs of every human being.]**

2 Peter 1: 20, 21

20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

# 1 A. How do Bible prophecies confirm it's divine inspiration?

- The Bible says, "I am the Lord. ... New things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them" (Isaiah 42:8, 9).

"I am God ... declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done" (Isaiah 46:9, 10).

Before Cyrus was born, God's Bible prophet named him as the general who would overthrow Babylon.

**Answer:** Bible predictions of future events that have come to pass dramatically confirm the divine inspiration of Scripture. These are just a few examples of fulfilled Bible prophecies: Next page

# 1 B. What other facts about the Bible prove its divine inspiration?

- The Bible says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16).
- **Answer:** One of the greatest miracles of the Bible is its unity. Just ponder these amazing facts:

The 66 books of the Bible were written:

- On three continents.
- In three languages.
- By about 40 different people (such as kings, shepherds, scientists, attorneys, an army general, fishermen, priests, and a physician)
- Over a period of about 1,500 years
- On the most controversial subjects
- By people who, in most cases, had never met
- By authors whose education and background varied greatly



## 2. Why were God's people in ancient times destroyed? Hosea 4:6 [Isa. 5:13]

- Hosea 4:6

6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

- Isaiah 5:13

13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

**Answer:** For Lack of Knowledge and forgetting the Law of God

### 3. What portion of God's Word is needed for real spiritual life? Matt. 4:4 [Deut. 8:3]



- Matthew 4:4

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

- Deuteronomy 8:3

3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

**Answer:** Every Word that proceeds out of the Bible shall man live by.

4. What did Jesus say was the basic theme of the Scriptures?  
John 5:39 [Note: The only part of the Bible written at this time was the Old Testament. Luke 24:44]

- John 5:39

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Luke 24:44

44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

**Answer:** Jesus is the Central theme of the entire Bible. The Words testify of Him

## 5. What did Jesus call those who do not believe all that the Bible says? Luke 24:25 [Matt. 22:29]

- Luke 24:25

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

- Matthew 22:29

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

**Answer:** Jesus calls them fools, who error and do not know or study the scriptures



## 6. Why did Paul commend the Bereans? Acts 17:10, 11 [2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Chron. 20:20]

- Acts 17:10, 11

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

- 2 Timothy 2:15

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

## Page 2 - Question 6 -(Why did Paul commend the Bereans? Acts 17:10, 11 [2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Chron. 20:20])

- 2 Chronicles 20:20

20 And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

- **Note: Thus, as we have just seen, if we are going to understand the Bible we must recognize that all of it is important and none of it is to be neglected. If we will study the whole Bible exactly as God tells us to, we will find the truth. Even children and those who are poorly educated can understand it. God gives us six rules for studying the Bible correctly. Let us look at these six principles.**

## 7. What is one condition that God sets forth for understanding the Bible? Matt. 11:25 [1 Cor. 1:21, 26-31]

- Matthew 11:25

25 At that time Jesus answered and said I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

- 1 Corinthians 1:21

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

## 7. What is one condition that God sets forth for understanding the Bible? Matt. 11:25 [1 Cor. 1:21, 26-31]

### ● 1 Cor1:26-31

- <sup>26</sup> For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:
- <sup>27</sup> But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;
- <sup>28</sup> And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:
- <sup>29</sup> That no flesh should glory in his presence.
- <sup>30</sup> But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:
- <sup>31</sup> That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

**Answer: We must be humble and teachable.**

## 8. What is a second condition that God gives for understanding the Bible? Isa. 28:9, 10

- Isaiah 28:9, 10
- 9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.
- 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:
- **[Answer: We must let the Bible interpret itself by comparing Scripture with Scripture. We should study everything the Bible says on a subject to make sure we are not misinterpreting a given passage. 1 Cor. 2:13; Luke 24:27, 44]**

## 9. What is a third condition for understanding the Bible?

### 1 Cor. 2:7, 10-14

<sup>7</sup> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 1 Corinthians 2:7

<sup>10</sup> But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

<sup>11</sup> For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

<sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

<sup>13</sup> Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

<sup>14</sup> But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2:10-14

**[Answer: We must ask that the Holy Spirit guide us. John 16:13]**

# 10. What is a fourth condition God sets forth for understanding the Bible? 2 Thess. 2:9-12

<sup>9</sup> Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

<sup>10</sup> And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

<sup>11</sup> And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

<sup>12</sup> That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

## 10. What is a fourth condition God sets forth for understanding the Bible? 2 Thess. 2:9-12

- <sup>12</sup> For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

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<sup>28</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;  
Romans 1:28

10

**[Answer: We must really want to know truth. Some people are looking for excuses not to believe the truth. If they look hard enough, God will let them be deceived, but they will still be lost! Heb. 4:12; Rom. 1:28]**



# 11. What is the Fifth Condition God gives for understanding the Bible?

<sup>13</sup> And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13

<sup>6</sup> Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Matthew 5:6

**Answer:** We must really search for truth. Even if we have all the true principles for studying the Bible, if we do not spend sufficient time studying, we still will not find God's truth for today.

## 12. What is a sixth condition for understanding the Bible? John 8:31, 32

<sup>31</sup> Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

<sup>32</sup> And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:31, 32

<sup>17</sup> If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. John 7:17

**Answer: We must follow what we already know to be truth. Why should God reveal more truth to us if we are not following what He already revealed to us?**

## Note: The six principles God gives us to understand the Bible:

- We must be humble and teachable
- Let the Bible interpret itself
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide us
- We must really want to know truth
- We must really search for truth
- We must follow what we already know to be truth



- Yet, though it seems totally inconceivable, the 66 books maintain harmony with one another. And even when new concepts on a certain subject are expressed, they do not undermine what other Bible writers say on the same subject.

This is almost too amazing to believe! Ask people who have viewed the same event to give a report of what happened and you'll discover that their stories will often differ widely and will contradict each other in some way. Yet the Bible, penned by 40 writers over a 1,500-year period, reads as if it was written by one mind. And indeed it was: "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). The Holy Spirit "moved" them all; He is the real Bible author.

**Commitment:** Is it your desire to let Jesus teach you truth through His Word? Will you endeavor to study His Word every day in the way God has told us to study it? Spend time in the Word daily. Start off with 20 or 30 minutes daily and watch it grow.