

The Bible

Avenues By Which To Study the Scriptures - Part 1

Introduction

To be a student of the scriptures more is needed than a questioning mind and the ability to recognize threads of truth in a particular passage or book. It must be understood that no part of the scriptures can be comprehended apart from the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. God stated it clearly, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). Furthermore, it is the Holy Spirit who guides into all truth (Jn. 16:13), he is the unction (1 Jn. 2:20) for our enlightenment and instruction. Consequently, there must be the heart felt appreciation that I will see “nothing” in a passage beyond the immediate story unless my eyes are opened by the Spirit of God. For instance, the Lord told the parable of the Shepherd in John 10. It is a lovely story that can be taught to a little child, or in the gospel, but what is the deeper teaching? Ofttimes the relationship between it and the blind man getting his sight in the previous chapter, unless the Holy Spirit reveals the relevant truths to me. What a rebuke to the Pharisees to be told they were hirelings, thieves and robbers and not shepherds (Jn. 10:8, 12); what a manifestation of the Lord Himself as the one to whom the Porter (the Holy Spirit)(Jn. 10:3) opened the door through circumstances for Him to come into the world to be the Good Shepherd.



Having said that, the understanding of the scriptures will not come unless an individual does their part. The individual who studies the Scriptures is similar to a doctor making a diagnosis or a detective looking for clues. In each of these works the individual is a researcher who carefully considers the various symptoms or clues which are obvious, and then looking for those which are not seen. Having considered the relevant data, there will be determining which are more relevant and those which are not. The individual will have the ability to interpret clues properly and piece them all together in an orderly way to discover the ailment or degree of guilt of the criminal. If a person follows the same methods in Bible study, then he or she will be able to comprehend the main purpose of book which, at times thankfully, we are told (Lk. 1:4; Jn. 20:30-31; 1 Cor. 7:1).

A careful reading of Romans chapter one indicates that the first major sin was, “neither were thankful” (Rom. 1:21). In the goodness of God we have so many blessings for which we can give God thanks, blessings such as health, a clear mind, emotional stability, being able to love and be loved, and I suppose within this context, curiosity. How many inventions have come because of a questioning mind? This is a blessing which God has instilled into humanity from Adam. In Genesis we read of a river that went out of Eden to water the garden which records, “And from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which encompasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the second river Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And that the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goes toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates” (Gen. 2:10-13). Having been told that at the end of the first river there was gold, bdellium and the onyx stone, a certain excitement would have arisen resulting in the question, “What is at the end of the other three rivers?”. God gave us minds that are curious as to what, when, how and why. When it comes to the study of the scriptures there are a number of ways in which God seeks to teach us its truths. Some of which are in this and the next paper. They are:

1) Typically

- a) This involves the consideration of certain places seen in a deeper more spiritual level (Gen. 22:2); the garments of the priests and high priests (Ex. 28:4; 31:10); the tabernacle (Ex. 25:9); Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs. 7:51); and of course the sacrifices (Lev. chs. 1-6).

2) Doctrinally

- a) What doctrines are manifested in this section? Is there any reference to the doctrine of love; divine revelation; inspiration; the trinity; angels; Satan; men; sin; redemption; etc., etc.

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- 3) Biographically
 - a) This involves the study of individuals such as Issac who only once do we find connected with an altar (Gen. 26:25). Why are there so many references to “goods” in the early part of Abraham’s life? (Gen. 14:11, 12, 16), possessions (Gen. 12:16; 14:16); and what revelation was brought by Melchizedek which changed his outlook? (Gen. 14:17-24)
- 4) Prophetically
 - a) When it comes to prophecy, is the church the outflow or development of Israel, or are we to distinguish between Israel, the Gentiles, and the church (1 Cor. 10:31)? When will the Lord come, before, mid, or after the tribulation? Who is the great whore? Is it Rome? (Rev. 17:1-18).
- 5) Dispensationally
 - a) Is there such a thing as dispensations when God deals with man under distinct conditions? Are we still under law, and if not, ought we to tithe as they did under the Mosaic law? What is meant by, “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (Jn. 1:14), or the “world to come?” (Heb. 2:5)
- 6) Geographically
 - a) If an individual was to spend time in seeking out every nation mentioned in the scriptures, it will be found that there are places beginning with every letter of the English alphabet with the exception of “Q”, “V”, “Y” and “Z”. Some of them are: Arabia (Isa. 21:13; Gal. 1:17); Buz (Jer. 25:23); Chaldea (Ezek. 16:29); Dedan (Jer. 25:23); Tema (Jer. 25:23); Edom (Isa. 11:14); Grecia (Dan. 8:21); Isles of the Gentiles (Gen. 10:5); Kedar (Isa. 21:16, 17); Libya (Ezek. 30:5); Moab (Num. 21:13); Nebaioth (Isa. 60:7); Ophir (Isa. 13:12); Palestine (Joel 3:4); Ramah (Jer. 40:1); Seba (Psa. 72:10); Tarshish (Isa. 23:6); Uz (Jer. 25:20); Zoan (Isa. 30:4).
- 7) Grammatically
 - a) At a time when loosely worded “Bibles” are produced, it is of great importance to consider to what extent the scriptures are inspired? No bible today can claim absolute inspiration for it is impossible to translate many of the words in their shades of meaning. However, inasmuch as a translation adheres to the originally inspired scriptures, it will be correct. In the original the following were all inspired:
 - i) these words (Ex. 19:7; Rev. 22:18)
 - ii) the smallest, the jot or tittle were small accent marks on various words (Matt. 5:18)
 - iii) the repetition of a word (Jn. 1:51)
 - iv) the repetition of a clause (Isa. 28:13)
 - v) a single word, “yet” (Jn. 3:24; Heb. 12:4; Isa. 53:4)
 - vi) the inclusion of a single word “but” (Heb. 2:8-9)
 - vii) the tense of a word or clause, “I am”, stressing identification (Jn. 5:43); eternity (Jn. 8:58)
 - viii) the mood of a word, “If” (Col. 3:1), is the word “if” indicative or subjective?
 - ix) the singularity of the noun (Gal. 3:16 and the word “seed”)
- 8) Structurally
 - a) This is a very rewarding avenue of study. For instance, the book of Romans has two major doxologies, ch. 11:33-36 and ch. 16:25-27 (ch 8:31-39 is not a doxology). Thus, the book is by the Spirit divided into two sections. Then the question becomes, what is the difference between them and how do they relate to each other? A careful look would show that chs. 1-11 deal with the way of salvation through grace, or what God has given to humanity in grace, then chapters 12-16 tells of what man can do for God through gratitude.

... to be continued in February 2017

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

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