

How to
STUDY
the
BIBLE



An Ambassador College Publication

How to **STUDY** the **BIBLE**

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Why is the Bible the most misunderstood book in all history? The most twisted, distorted, maligned, misrepresented and lied-about book there is? Because people refuse to believe it means exactly what it says! Apply these simple basic rules and you will begin to really understand the plain truth of God's Word!

WHAT ARE WE? Were we put on earth for a purpose? And what is that purpose? Why are human lives empty, discontented, unhappy? How may human life become happy, filled with interest, abundant, successful, prosperous? What is the real cause of wars, and the way to world peace?

What lies on after death — what is the way to a happy, abundant, eternal life? No book ever written, except the Holy Bible, reveals the answers to these fundamental questions of life!

Yet, why do we find such confusion — such disagreement as to what this book says? Why don't the hundreds of differing church denominations and sects agree on what their acknowledged textbook says? Why do so many individuals, capable of understanding almost any other book, say: "I just can't understand the Bible"?

Study for Yourself

You yourself need to understand how to get the most out of God's Word.

You need to KNOW that God does exist. If you are in any doubt about this basic point, write immediately for our free booklet *Does God Exist?* Before even beginning to seriously study the Bible, you must realize that your Creator exists.

In Bible study, as well as with anything else, there is a right and a wrong way to accomplish. There are certain rules which, if followed, will give you a more thorough understanding of God's Word — leave you with fewer questions, begin to help you think and act as God does because you understand what He says in His Word.

The following rules are not necessarily in order — they are certainly not *all* the rules of Bible study — but they are basic and important and will help you gain the truth from God's Word.

Pray for Guidance

First, before you even open the Bible, you must ask God, in prayer, to open your mind to His Word in the study that you intend to make. David was a man after God's own heart — he studied that portion of God's Word which was available to him in his day. He meditated, thought about and considered God's laws and His ways. He was close to God in every way, and yet many times throughout the Psalms we read how David asked God to guide him in his study, to open his mind, to reveal His truth.

“Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. . . . Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. . . . Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: Quicken me in thy righteousness” (Ps. 119:33-40).

Without sincerely and believingly asking God's direction in your Bible study — without seeking God's Kingdom and His righteousness first (Matt. 6:33) — Bible study of itself would be ultimately futile. Just as you can worship God in vain (Mark 7:7), so you can study His Word in vain! Many wise and intelligent men have made a life study of God's Word in its original languages, and yet did not understand the depth of its meaning.

Men like Moffatt, who translated the entire Bible

from Genesis to Revelation, certainly studied God's Word, but did not get the message, did not understand the Gospel.

Even in the introduction to his translation, Moffatt explains how he feels the Old Testament is a compilation of Jewish literature. Adam Clarke wrote six volumes of a commentary covering every last verse in the Bible — yet not by any stretch of the imagination could he be construed to have understood God's plan.

The study and work that men of this intelligence have contributed can be helpful to us. But not because of any special intelligence that we may have — only because we have asked God to open our minds and give us *His* understanding of His Word.

Formal Education Not Necessary

Do not feel that you have not had enough education, or that you are not intelligent enough to really study God's Word. God tells us plainly that it is not the wise, the mighty or the noble that He is calling to an understanding of His Word now — read I Corinthians 1:25-27.

Take for granted that you do not know of yourself how to understand the plan of God — that's why you must ask Him to make it plain.

If all that was needed to understand God's Word were brains, then a vast number of the people of the world would have a thorough understanding of God's Word! God says, "... They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jer. 4:22). As long as you know how to read, you can get down on your knees and sincerely ask God to guide you in a study of His Word. He will open your mind to understand things that the most intelligent minds of mankind have not been able to understand. Prayer will open to you an understanding of God's Word that Einstein did not have. Prayer will open your mind to understand God's Word in a way that the graduates of the great universities of the world are not able to understand.

Prayer — your contact with God — is important in the beginning of your study of His Word — His contact with you — or you may spend profitless hours of studying

His Word in vain. The time spent, the verses covered, your understanding of the depth of the Greek, your memorization of how many verses there are in the Bible, will be of no avail at the return of Jesus Christ! Only that part of His Word which you have made a part of your very character will be of any account!

Heartfelt prayer for God's guidance in your own personal Bible study will insure success!

Attitude Must Be for Self-Correction

This next rule really goes hand-in-hand with the first. Before you rise from your knees in prayer, you should fully recognize in your own mind and heart that your purpose for this Bible study is not just to gain academic knowledge, not only to prove or disprove a certain doctrine or fact — but to get you closer to the stature of the fullness of the very character of Jesus Christ. The only way this can be done is for you to be corrected!

God's Word is written directly to each of us as an individual — it is personal, direct — and as far as our achieving salvation is concerned has nothing to do with anybody else on the face of the earth.

Therefore your attitude should be the same as Jeremiah's. In fact, since you're going to be studying the Bible, turn to Jeremiah 10:23 and read two verses there meaningfully and as part of your prayer. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is *not in himself*: it is *not in man* that walketh to direct his steps. O Lord, *correct me*, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing."

Don't just go through this mechanically, really mean it! Don't just do this because this booklet says to do it, but because you want correction from your Creator.

Remember, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16).

In order for your attitude to be proper in your approach to God's Word, turning to one other scripture would clearly aid you in understanding what your

approach should be — in educating your attitude to be right before you begin. “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that *ye* build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but *to this man will I look*, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and *trembleth at my word*. . . . Hear the word of the Lord, *ye that tremble at his word*” (Isa. 66:1-2, 5).

This Bible, *as originally written*, contains the very mind and thoughts of your Creator God! It is not to be argued about. It is not meant to be a club to chastise other people with. In other words, if you are a husband, do not use Ephesians 5:22 as a weapon against your wife — or, if you are a wife, do not use Ephesians 5:25 as a weapon against your husband. But each of you as husband or wife should apply Scripture *to yourself*.

The Bible commands you to “study [be diligent] to show *yourself* approved unto God . . .” (II Tim. 2:15).

Prove All Things

This third rule is in a way an extension of the proper attitude of self-correction. Your approach to God’s Word should be completely positive! The example given by the Bereans in Acts 17:11: “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” — this was a *positive* attitude. The Bereans were not searching the Scriptures to prove Paul was wrong. They were not negative, angry, bitter.

So if you have heard something about the Bible that you do not fully understand, your approach in your own personal Bible study should be to prove that it is so.

The common *misunderstanding* of I Thessalonians 5:21 which says “Prove all things” is that this *proof* must entail a deep research into the Hebrew or Greek backgrounds, and into encyclopedias and historical references, lexicons and musty historical records. This is erroneous. If your research takes you into references of this sort, and

you are endeavoring to prove positively God's truth, this is perfectly all right — but it is not always necessary.

This word "prove" is positive. That is the one main point of this particular law of Bible study. But the word itself means "to put to the test." There are proving grounds on which the modern automobiles manufactured in Detroit are tested. In the parable Jesus Christ uses regarding the wedding supper, there is a reference to a man who had just bought five yoke of oxen. The excuse he gave for not coming to the supper was that he wanted to "prove" these oxen (Luke 14:19). This is the same Greek word as used in I Thessalonians 5:21. Yet this man did not mean that he was going to go to his local library and look up in some dictionary a description of oxen to find out for sure whether they *were* oxen — it meant he wanted to be excused from the wedding supper so that he might take the oxen out to the field, yoke them up, hook a plow behind them and find out whether they would be able to do what oxen are supposed to be able to do. This is basically what God means in I Thessalonians 5:21.

For example, God commands us in the book of Malachi to prove Him in tithing. What He wants us to do is not to technically search lexicons to find out Greek and Hebrew derivations, but — just as the principle is throughout the entire Bible — to do what He says to do. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me [test me] now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10). This is a positive going forward, a finding out of what God does say, not a search for error or disproof.

Bible Never Contradicts Itself

Make no mistake about it. If the Bible is inspired by God, there can be no errors in it as *originally written*. Jesus plainly said, "The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). The Bible does *not* contradict itself.

So if you have difficulty in understanding any particular scripture — if it *seems* to say something different from

another scripture, you may just need to study further. Always remember beyond any shadow of a doubt the principle of rule four: that God never contradicts Himself. Therefore, either your understanding of the particular scripture or the translation that you are reading is incorrect or misunderstood.

Malachi 3:6: "For I am the Lord, I *change not*; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed," means what it says. Hebrews 13:8 — "Jesus Christ *the same* yesterday, and to day, and for ever" — means what it says.

The very source of truth is God's Word (John 17:17) — and unless your approach to it, your study of it, is from this point of view you will never gain any understanding from it.

Let's notice an *apparent* contradiction appearing in Proverbs 26:4, 5. Verse four reads: "Answer not a fool according to his folly." Yet, the very next verse tells us: "Answer a fool according to his folly."

Actually, these two verses are not contradictory — but complementary! The use of either verse — that is, its principle applied to a particular use — depends on the set of circumstances. Both these verses contain gems of wisdom that each one of us needs to learn to properly apply in answering other people's questions.

The last part of each verse holds the key which unlocks the meaning of these verses — and shows them to be practical, usable and wise principles.

Verse four reads: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, *lest thou also be like unto him.*" The last part of the verse holds the key: Don't degrade yourself by descending to his level in an argument! Don't harangue — don't bite back, don't try to "argue back" — with someone who is obviously trying to stir contention.

The perfect example of this is found in Luke 20:1-8. Here Christ was teaching in the temple. The Pharisees came to Him with these words: "Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?"

Quite obviously, they weren't interested in learning anything — they weren't coming as humble individuals

hungering after new knowledge. They were there to argue with Christ!

Notice how Christ handled the situation.

“And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing, and answer me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?”

“And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was.

“And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things” (Luke 20:3-8).

Christ answered their question with a question! To answer their question directly would have only resulted in a verbal battle. An argument would have ensued. Christ avoided strife by not answering them according to their folly.

Now, understand verse five in Proverbs 26. Again, the last part of the verse holds the key: “Answer a fool according to his folly, *lest he be wise in his own conceit.*”

In this case, if you don't answer his question — if you don't accept his challenge — he is going to think himself to be wise!

The Apostle Paul had this problem. False apostles in Corinth were claiming they were the true apostles of Christ. The congregation was being led astray!

Now was not the time for silence, or clever questions! Now was the time to smash the contentions — to answer these false apostles.

Start with II Corinthians 11:23 and notice how he answered these foolish men:

“Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

“Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. . . . In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”

Paul showed the people he was their true minister. He

answered and debunked the claims of these other men.

There is no contradiction! But rather much wisdom in these two verses. Wisdom we need to apply in our daily lives.

What Does the Bible Say?

Many times our misunderstanding comes from the confusion that this world causes — from a misinterpretation, a direct twisting of a scripture to conform to false doctrines.

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight” (Isa. 5:20-23). Many who claim to be representatives of God, the interpreters of His Word, twist and wrest that Word to their own destruction and the destruction of their hearers.

So always remember to ask yourself — and, answer — the question: “What does the Bible say?”

John 3:6 is a good example of this. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” This is a very clear scripture, explaining that flesh is flesh and spirit is spirit. That’s what the Bible says. But that’s not what people say the Bible says!

Sometimes you may have to refer to a reference work (which we will cover under a separate rule) for scriptures such as I John 5:7.

Or perhaps a note in the margin of your Bible will help you understand a scripture that seems to contradict what you know to be the truth. Take the example of Luke 17:20-21: “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, *the kingdom of God is within you.*” Here, the Bible does say, “The kingdom of God is *within* you.” But here it is only the King James *translation* which says this — not necessarily God’s exact Word. So, since it is not clear in the King James translation, other aids are necessary to find out what it does say.

This leads automatically to another important rule of Bible study.

Which Bible Do We Recommend?

THE Ambassador College Correspondence Course recommends that its students use the Authorized or King James translation. Many people wonder why.

The King James Bible is based on the reading of the majority of the authoritative Greek texts. About 95% of the known Greek manuscripts agree with the basic text of the King James Version.

Some people will argue that these texts are not the oldest — therefore they cannot be the most accurate. Some modern critics have found a few variant, corrupt manuscripts and fragments and suppose these bits and pieces to be more reliable than the text carefully preserved generation after generation in common usage. Actually these few fragments amount to less than 5% of the total texts that have come down to our day. These corrupt texts were long ago rejected by the Greek world.

The texts modern critics have salvaged from the monasteries in Egypt and elsewhere cannot be elevated

— simply because they are “old” — above the thousands of reliable Greek manuscripts carefully preserved in the Greek world.

Of course, Bible translations other than the King James Version are sometimes helpful. Their modern wording makes certain sections clearer than the King James. The Revised Standard Version, *The New English Bible*, and the Moffatt translation are written in modern English.

Both *The New English Bible* and the Moffatt translation are not merely revisions of the King James Version. They are free-flowing meaning-for-meaning, thought-for-thought comparisons — not the traditional phrase-by-phrase translation of the KJV.

Where the translators have correctly grasped the thought intended by the biblical writers, they have produced a remarkably clear rendering. But without the knowledge of what is the true text, the translators at times went astray.

Since very few basic textual errors appear in the King James Version — though it is not always a perfect or clear translation — it should be used most often for actual Bible study — as opposed to just reading and scanning for story flow. (For further information, see the section on *Bible Study Aids* at the end of this booklet.)

Check the Context

Context means, con — *with*, text — *text*. In order to check the context, you merely read the texts which come with the text that is in question. You read the texts before and the texts after. In this example of Luke 17:21, you need to also ask yourself a number of questions regarding the context. The text that is with (con) Luke 17:21, is Luke 17:20! This verse just before answers the question regarding verse 21, but in order to answer that question you must ask yourself the question, "Who?"

In other words, you must ask yourself: if "the Kingdom of God is within you" — *who* is the "you" that the Bible is referring to? In this case verse 20 explains that it is the Pharisees! Certainly you know Jesus Christ wasn't saying that the Kingdom of God is inside of Pharisees! Therefore, the con (with) text helps you to see that there must be a mistranslation in this particular verse.

And sure enough, when you check the margin of your Bible, you will find that the word "within" should be better translated "among" — referring to Jesus Himself as a representative of God's Kingdom who was at that time "among" the Pharisees!

In order to understand any scripture thoroughly, in its context, you need to ask yourself — and answer for yourself — all the following questions: What? When? Where? Why? Who? How? When you have answered these questions regarding any particular text, and you have read all of the accompanying texts, with the text in question, you will have God's answer to the problem.

Many people misunderstand Mark 7:19 — thinking that in this place unclean meats were cleansed by Christ — simply because they do not read the context. In this case the context is the entire chapter. You must go back from verse 19, until you begin to find the subject about which verse 19 is talking. That subject has to do with whether or not to wash your hands ceremonially before you eat, and has nothing to do with whether the food you eat is clean or unclean according to the laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.

(For more information about biblical dietary laws, send for your free copy of "Is All Animal Flesh Good Food?")

There are even *lies* written in the Bible, and you have to be careful that you ask yourself exactly what the Bible says in the entirety of the context of any one statement. The Bible says, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). This is a biblical statement! But in order to find out whether it's true or not you have to find out who said it. In this particular case, the same verse explains that Satan the devil said it, but in order to find out whether it is true or not (because sometimes even Satan tells the truth), you have to go back in the context until you come to Genesis 2:17 where the Creator God is quoted as saying, "Thou *shalt* surely die." Then you know what the Bible, in its entirety and in its truth, does say!

One particular *hindrance* in checking the context is the very presence of chapters and verses. While this system of division is certainly helpful in finding biblical passages, it can be misleading. Take the division between Matthew 16:28 and 17:1, for example. In order to understand Christ's enigmatic statement in the last verse of chapter 16, you have to read all the way to verse 9 of chapter 17. Yet, people tend to stop reading at chapter breaks. Sometimes an important key to understanding a difficult scripture is just to continue reading beyond the chapter break.

Get All the Scriptures

No one scripture can of itself, taken out of context, be used to establish the truth. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (II Peter 1:20).

God has put His Bible together in a very unusual manner. He has written it so that men could study it intricately in its original languages, poring over its pages for their entire lifetime — and yet never come to a knowledge of the truth. Many people have memorized great sections of the Bible and yet not come to realize what those sections mean. You must take the whole Bible in its

What Were the Words on Jesus' Cross?

The Gospels are four *different* accounts or biographies of the ministry of Jesus. Each biographer records the truth — but each one is written from a different point of view, stressing a different facet of Christ's ministry, or grouping His teachings together differently. To glean the whole truth from the Gospel accounts, you must first get all four Gospel accounts on any given subject and put them together.

For example, notice the inscription placed on Jesus' cross, as recorded by the Gospel writers:

Matthew 27:37	— This is Jesus	The King of the Jews
Mark 15:26	—	The King of the Jews
Luke 23:38	— This is	The King of the Jews
John 19:19	— Jesus of Nazareth	The King of the Jews
Sum	— This is Jesus of Nazareth	The King of the Jews

Not one Gospel account contradicts the other — but they complement each other when you take all four together and add them up as you would an arithmetic problem. The answer is the sum total of all the scriptures on the subject. You might find it convenient to purchase a copy of Robertson's *Harmony of the Gospels*. This very helpful book puts all four Gospel accounts together in chronological order.

entire context, getting all of the scriptures in that Bible on any one subject, before you can come to the knowledge of that particular subject from God's point of view.

"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. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. . ." (Isa. 28:9-10).

That is how the converted mind is to study the Bible. Yet, when the unconverted study God's Word a little here and a little there, they are still not able to understand the message of God's truth because they do not have His Holy Spirit guiding them. That Holy Spirit — the very mind and understanding of God — is the power that inspired those words in the first place, and without that Spirit to inspire the understanding, the door to the Word of God remains shut! (The Holy Spirit is given only to those who obey God — Acts 5:32.) Continuing from Isaiah: "... But the word of the Lord was unto them [those who disobey] precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken" (Isa. 28:13).

Oftentimes people think that the Bible is contradicting itself when actually all it is doing is supplementing itself. A good example of this is found in Matthew 27:37 as compared to Luke 23:38. Here Matthew and Luke appear to contradict one another in their statements as to what was written on the sign affixed to the cross upon which Jesus Christ was crucified.

Now while you're going through this booklet, just take time to get your Bible and use this example to prove that getting all of the scriptures on any one subject will give you God's understanding on it. In order to find out what was written on that sign, who wrote it, and how many languages it was written in, you will need to put at least four scriptures together, not just two. So turn first to Matthew 27:37, and write down what the Bible says was written on that sign. Then, go right on to Mark 15:26 and write beneath what you have written what Mark says was

written on that sign. Then do the same with Luke 23:38 and also John 19:19. Put them all together and you will see what was written on that sign.

If one of these scriptures were left out you would not know that it was Pilate who did the writing. If two of these scriptures were left out, you would not know that the writing was originally done in three languages. These four bits of information, each from a different author, supply us with a complete record of what was written there originally. No one scripture contradicts the other — each only serves to complement and round out the information of the other.

Here is one important key in helping you grasp this point: Two or more Bible writers may approach the same subject from different angles. One writer may follow a strict chronological order. Another groups associated ideas together. One may write a detailed history. Another will omit some events and condense others. But always remember that these accounts of the same event(s) complement — not contradict — each other.

Let the Bible Interpret the Bible

So many people write in and comment how much they enjoy *Mr. Armstrong's interpretation* of the Bible. Time and again you will hear Mr. Armstrong explain to the television and radio audience that it is not his interpretation that is being heard, but only plain biblical truth!

In your edition of the King James Bible, the book of Revelation will probably be entitled "The Revelation of *St. John the Divine*." This is an excellent example of *man's* interpretation. Now in order for you to understand what the book of Revelation is — whose revelation it is, to whom it was written and what it is about — all you have to do is read the first few verses of the book itself! In fact the very first words of the very first verse directly contradict man's interpretation of the Bible with the plain Bible statement that this book is "*the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (Rev. 1:1).

Romans 3:4 is a good clear principle to live by in this rule of Bible study: "... Let God be true, but every man a liar."

The book of Revelation has long been an enigma to the people of the world. God says it is a book of *revelation*. THE WORLD SAYS it is a book of hidden mystery. People have come up with many weird interpretations for the book of Revelation — yet the book of Revelation is vivid in its own clear description and needs no interpretation. Continue in Revelation 1:

Take the case of the seven golden candlesticks that John saw in Revelation 1. You don't have to wonder what these seven golden candlesticks are — all you have to do is read on until you come, in the context, to verse 20; and that verse tells you plainly that the seven candlesticks are the seven churches. In verse 16 it states that John saw seven stars in the hand of the Son of man. There is no need to go into great eloquent illustrations of what the seven stars are, because again verse 20 reveals the plain Bible truth — no interpretation necessary — that the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. And so it goes through the rest of the Bible.

All you have to do is be patient and search God's Word and you will come up with God's clear answers to the muddled questions of mankind.

Don't Put Vague Scriptures First

Perhaps a better general statement of yet another vital rule of Bible study would be: Never establish a doctrine by a vague or difficult-to-be-understood scripture.

Too many people assume that the vision which Peter had regarding the unclean beasts lowered to him on a sheet affirms that God "cleansed" unclean meat. Because they take out of context a verse, unclear of itself, that says, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:15). However, all they need to do is read on two more verses and verse 17 very plainly says that Peter himself doubted what the vision meant when he saw it. He didn't jump to any conclusions, but vague-scripture quoters are eager to! Further reading in the same chapter will

The Living Bible – Paraphrased

The Living Bible captures the story flow of the Bible, but is not a literal word-by-word translation. It is a paraphrase that is *not* always accurate in *some key doctrinal areas*.

One essential rule of Bible study is: "Don't establish doctrine with Bible helps." *The Living Bible* is essentially a "Bible help," not a translation. It is a *paraphrase* of the Bible, often leaning to what one sincere individual thinks the Bible says.

Another rule for Bible study is "Don't put vague scriptures first." By making vague scriptures "come clear," but clearly wrong, *The Living Bible* could possibly deceive and mislead those who are not extremely careful.

Many people do not realize the Bible is, in the original languages, *literally* cryptic in some passages. Such unclear passages are not always "King James euphemisms"; they are often Hebrew literary or poetic expressions. When any individual tries to "uncloud" unclear passages, such a person is very liable to make errors.

After all, Peter DID say Paul was "hard to be understood" (II Pet. 3:15, 16). So don't take all of *The Living Bible's* "easy-to-be-understood" versions of Paul's complex statements at face value.

For example, *The Living Bible* repeatedly refers to Chris-

tians "going to heaven." (Write for our free booklet *What Is the Reward of the Saved?* if you don't understand why this particular viewpoint is in error.)

The anti-law approach of *The Living Bible* is graphically demonstrated by the following quotation taken from the preface to the *Living Laws of Moses*. (*The Living Bible* originally appeared in seven consecutive books beginning with *The Living Letters* in 1962.)

. . . Many of the laws recorded here are obsolete, now that Christ has come. So why read them? One reason is that we can rejoice in being free from them! For Christ has set us free. Well does the old hymn remind us: "Free from the law, oh, happy condition! . . ." Do not only think "Oh boy, I'm glad I'm free from having to follow all those weird rules!" But also think, "What was the purpose of those rules?"

Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets . . ." (Matt. 5:17).

Of course, you have seen *The Living Bible* quoted on occasion in Ambassador College publications, but that has primarily been to add color and life to already clearly understood verses.

The Living Bible should be read and scanned for story flow, but not necessarily "studied." David was inspired to write, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6). We can't afford to let any translation, version or paraphrase mislead us in the slightest!

explain what Peter finally came to understand about the vision. Read verse 28: "God hath showed me [by means of this vision] that *I should not call any MAN common or unclean.*"

When studying any one particular biblical subject or doctrine, begin with the plainer scriptures. Reserve the more obscure ones until you have more knowledge. Realize that some scriptures — if taken by themselves and out of context — can be made to say more than one thing. This is why it is important to observe a previous rule: Study *all* the scriptures on any one subject to get at the truth. But, always begin with plain, clear scriptures.

When studying the law and the Ten Commandments, keep these clear and plain scriptures in mind: I John 3:4; 2:4; 5:2, 3; Matthew 5:17; 19:17. These scriptures cannot be twisted to say that God's law and commandments are abolished and no longer need to be obeyed.

If heaven and hell is the subject, begin with such scriptures as John 3:13 and Acts 2:34. Then understand John 14:2 and Luke 16 in the light of John 3:13 and Acts 2:34. About the soul: Genesis 2:7, Psalm 146:4 and Ecclesiastes 9:5 are clear and plain. Matthew 10:28, on the other hand, is vague and obscure. Any such scripture must be understood in the light of the plainer ones.

Use Several Translations

In Matthew 27:46 Jesus Christ, while hanging on the cross before He died, used the Aramaic translation of the first verse of Psalm 22. Even though the original Word of God was inspired in the Hebrew or the Greek (some portions of the books of Daniel and Ezra were inspired in Aramaic), God has allowed it to be translated into nearly every language spoken by mankind. If we were going to be particular about which language we used or which translation, then we would all have to learn Hebrew and Greek and study the Bible in its original languages.

The King James Version was written about 360 years ago. In the time since, the English language has undergone many changes. Sometimes those texts which are vague and unclear in the King James can be cleared up very

Who Divided the Bible into Chapters and Verses?

The system of dividing the Bible into chapters and verses is *man-made* and of comparatively recent origin. The Bible, as inspired by God, had no such divisions.

Chapters and verses are helpful in finding passages in the Bible. However, this division has sometimes obscured the meaning of certain passages of Scripture by separating thoughts that ought to be joined together.

The first modern system of dividing the Bible into sections was devised by Cardinal Hugo in the mid-thirteenth century. Hugo, who was compiling a concordance to the Latin Vulgate Version of the Bible, found it necessary to divide the Bible into sections. These sections basically became the chapters that we are acquainted with today. As yet there were no divisions into verses.

Later, in 1445, Mordecai Nathan, a Jewish scholar,

divided the Hebrew Old Testament into chapters. He and a later scholar by the name of Athias are credited with the further breakdown of the Old Testament chapters into verses.

In 1551 the New Testament was similarly subdivided into verses. This work was accomplished by the famous English printer, Robert Stephens. Ever since that time, the Bible has retained the present chapter and verse system.

Such a system is not without flaws, however. In some places, Stephens' divisions are inaccurate and tend to interrupt the natural sense of the subject. Because of such imperfections, a new system of supplementing the chapter-verse division with paragraph arrangements has been adopted in many of the newer revisions of the Bible. This often helps the reader to better comprehend the subject matter.

easily by just reading a more modern translation, such as the Moffatt or the Revised Standard Version.

However, one note of caution should be brought out at this point. Modern translations such as the RSV, Moffatt version, and *The New English Bible* as well as paraphrases such as *The Living Bible* should not be solely relied upon. The King James Version is still the best generally available standard by which to judge the accuracy of these other translations, versions, and paraphrases. These modern renderings will often clarify vague verses in the King James, but they are most likely in error when they totally depart from the KJV. Many of these modern versions have been rendered from faulty original texts. (For further information about different translations, see the section on *Bible Study Aids* at the end of this booklet.)

But there is one thing to note about the King James translation, and that is regarding italics. This word *italic* is written in italics. Words that look like this in your King James Version are not in the original languages but are supplied by the translators. So everywhere in the King James Version where you notice words in italics they are supplied to help you understand the meaning of the sentence. However, the translators did not always supply the words correctly. So some of these words in italics are incorrect and do not help, but rather hinder, your understanding.

On the other hand, not all of the words which are supplied by the translators are in italics. Take I John 5:7 for instance, where the reference to three who bear witness in heaven is a completely erroneous reference inserted by a monk-copyist in the Middle Ages. The fact is this particular verse appears only in the King James Version and is in none of the other translations of the Bible.

Often these difficulties will be cleared up by merely reading another translation and comparing it to the King James. Any questions arising after a thorough reading through several translations of any one verse will be few, and can be handled by studying further in Bible helps.

If there are words that you have difficulty in under-

What Do Bible Italics Signify?

What about the use of italicized words in the Bible? Italicized words were first used in 1560 when an edition of a Bible, known as the Geneva Bible, appeared. This Bible had been prepared by the Reformers in Geneva and was translated directly from the original Hebrew and Greek. In this Bible there were words which had to be added in English to make the full meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek idioms plain. No language can be translated word for word. The reformers distinguished such necessarily added words by italicizing them. This was the most popular Bible obtainable at that time.

There were three versions of the Bible in England by the beginning of the seventeenth century. These translations were by no means perfect and, as time passed, the meaning of some of the English words changed. The need for

a better translation arose.

As a result, our most popular translation today, the King James or Authorized Version, was made. King James I of England gave this task to a group of fifty-four translators. In this group were High Churchmen, Puritans and the best scholars in the land. They translated from the best Hebrew and Greek texts available to them and also made use of italics to distinguish the words they added to make peculiar Hebrew and Greek idioms understandable in English.

In most cases italicized words clarify the meaning of certain phrases. But if you will investigate, you will find that the translators were not filled with God's Holy Spirit. Consequently, such men — on occasion — did make mistakes.

You should be careful therefore to notice which words are italics and to distinguish them from the other words of the text.

How to Use a Bible Concordance

A Bible concordance is very helpful in searching out particular scriptures. A concordance is an *index* of the words found in Scripture. By knowing just a few words of a passage you will be able to find the scripture in your Bible.

A concordance can also help you to understand your Bible in two important ways. (1) A concordance has all the scriptures containing a certain word listed together, enabling you to bring related material together so that you can get the whole meaning of what the Bible has to say about a particular subject. (2) A concordance will help you to find the meaning of *symbolic* words. For example, to find who or what is the "dragon" of Revelation 16:13, look up the word "dragon" in the concordance. You will find this word is also found in Revelation 12:9, where the identity of the dragon is revealed.

Several concordances are available. The small *Cruden's Concordance* is very popular and quite good for general Bible study. Then there are the large, complete concordances showing meanings of words in the original Hebrew and Greek such as *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and *Young's Analytical Concordance*. These can be obtained at most Bible bookstores, local bookstores or your local public library.

standing, remember not only to look them up in an English dictionary such as Webster's, but if possible in a Bible dictionary or in a concordance so that you can see what the meaning of the word in the original is. Sometimes people will look up a word in a modern dictionary and find a definition that is not at all the *sense* of the word as used in the King James Version. Take for example the word "conversation" in I Peter 3. Conversation to us today means talking between two people. A modern dictionary will give this definition. However, in the time of King James, this particular word meant *the entire conduct* of a person, and that is the usual meaning in the Bible of this word.

Another good example is the word "prevent." Its usual biblical meaning is to *precede* or *go before*, but it means to *hinder* in modern-day English. Therefore I Thessalonians 4:15 should be corrected to read: "... We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not *precede* [prevent] them which are asleep."

In order to understand certain biblical expressions then, you need to understand the meaning of the original word, and not just the meaning in a modern dictionary.

But this leads to our next rule.

Don't Establish Doctrine With "Bible Helps"

Clarke's Commentary and the commentary by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown are good reference works — as is Halley's *Pocket Bible Handbook*. (A more complete list is available at the end of this booklet. See the section on *Bible Study Aids*.)

Sometimes in the backs of Bibles there will be sections called "Bible Helps." These "helps" may often lead you astray.

Therefore, all of these Bible helps should be used only to establish historical or grammatical facts related to the Bible and must not be used to establish doctrine or to interpret the meaning of the Bible itself.

Many Bibles have a center-reference column. They can be useful in locating other scriptures on the same

subject. However, they also can be confusing. For instance, in my Bible, at Revelation 1:10 which says "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day . . .," there is a little *z* by "the Lord's day." In the margin column by the *z* there are two scriptural references — one to Acts 20:7 and the other to I Corinthians 16:2. Both refer to the first day of the week, but have nothing to do with the Lord's day, which is explained in the rest of the book of Revelation.

Yet to find out what the Bible says about what day Jesus Christ is Lord of, read Mark 2:27-28. "And he said unto them, the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath."

So, with Bible helps you must remember to use them only for technical facts and not for interpretative facts.

Apply these vital rules diligently, and your Bible study will be both interesting and rewarding.

DEVELOPING A BIBLE-MARKING SYSTEM

Intelligently marking the Bible is a vital aid to study. But do you know how to make Bible marking useful and helpful? Here are some suggestions for creating a personally effective Bible-marking system.

MARKING the Word of God as an aid to effective study can be one of the most rewarding activities of Christian life. Although it is a very personal and individual matter, many, it seems, would like to learn a systematic plan of marking. Many, in fact, have tried their own methods. But over a period of years, it is apparent that they are doing little more than cluttering the page with confusion. What is lacking?

No Distinctive System

The essential problem is that there is no distinction between various types of marks and reasons for marking.

For example, suppose you are reading the Bible and come to a verse that strikes *you* personally. So you color it bright red to help you remember where it is. Perhaps later you find a verse that clarifies a basic doctrine. Out comes the red pencil. This verse gets the same mark.

Again later while studying, you notice that one particular verse summarizes the overall flow or meaning of that section. So, diligently you color in this verse to help you remember the content of the passage. All with the same red pencil.

Such a simple system is adequate as long as one does not have too many marks. But as Bible students have painfully found, unless there is some distinction in the *type* of marks used and the reasons why marks are made, whole chapters eventually get marked. The result is often worse than leaving the entire page blank.

Therefore, a good system of Bible marking should consist of a separate standard mark for each reason for marking.

Marking Types and Reasons to Mark

When considering all the possible ways to mark a printed text, you will eventually isolate four basic methods: 1) coloring, 2) underlining, 3) bracketing and 4) making marginal marks. Others are mere variations of these basic types.

Even the way in which individuals go about studying can vary considerably. But basically, there are underlying reasons, typical of virtually all Bible students, for marking the Bible.

These areas cover: 1) flow or outline, 2) personal emphasis, and 3) doctrine. Let's analyze them.

Marking for flow enables one to quickly be reminded of the overall content or story flow of that section. Flow marking may seldom deal with verses of importance personally or doctrinally. They are the ones which help you recapture the *outline* of that section of scripture. Students and ministers find flow marks particularly useful.

Personal emphasis marking, on the other hand, is often quite individualistic. This category of marking makes a particular verse stand out and helps one to find it again rapidly.

Doctrinal emphasis markings are by nature more technical. These marks emphasize a verse or section that is significant for explaining an important teaching of Scripture.

Now we need to decide which of the four types of marks (coloring, underlining, bracketing, margin marks) ought to be used with these three categories of marking.

One Sensible Combination

Even though many may not realize it, outline or story flow is probably the most important reason to mark the Bible. In the technically well-marked Bible there will often be more of this type of marking. Therefore, it is logical to give flow marking the first choice of marking types. But before trying to decide whether to use color, underlining, brackets or marginal marks, consider another aspect of both marks and reasons for marking.

Flow or outline is essentially an IN-context issue. Personal or doctrinal emphasis marks generally have nothing to do with their location in the Bible. In other words, they are OUT-OF-context issues.

Now notice the types of marks. Coloring is an in-context mark. It is placed *on* or *in* the text. So, in fact, is underlining. It too is an in-context mark. Brackets and marginal marks, on the other hand, are an out-of-context mark. They are placed outside the text.

Besides this, it is also important that marks and purposes do not overlap. If, for example, you mark a verse for a personal reason, what happens if you discover that you need it for outline as well?

Here is one of the best overall ways to keep everything straight. Use in-context marks for the in-context purposes. Use out-of-context marks for the out-of-context purposes.

This means that both coloring and underlining should be used to mark the flow; color for the main issues, underlining for the smaller sub issues. Brackets and marginal marks are better used for personal emphasis, doctrinal emphasis and clarification.

In the long run, there are not that many personal or doctrinal verses on any one page that need to be marked for memory. It is far better to make these part of your life rather than simply marking them in your Bible.

Marking, frankly, is more of a literary matter than

personal. When you open to a particular passage, it is intellectually more essential to have your mind focused onto the main subject. That is why it is more sensible for most people to reserve both the strong IN-context marks of underlining and color for flow.

But why both? Couldn't one use something like color for personal verses and underlining for flow? Not without confusion.

Imagine a Bible page on which flow was underlined and personal verses colored. Color stands out far more emphatically than underlining and would virtually cancel out any marks for the outline.

But if you use brackets for personal and doctrinal verses, there is little conflict. Both stand out in clear relief and do not interfere with each other.

Some may wonder why no distinction is made between personal and doctrinal marks. The reason is simple. There is very little difference between the two because both are items you consider important and that need emphasis. Secondly, there are rarely more than one or two such verses on any one Bible page. So a distinctive mark is necessary — brackets do very well for both.

With this system you can open to any chapter and immediately see the context. And if you are reviewing a doctrine or looking for a verse of personal significance, the brackets will lead you effectively to it. Nothing overlaps or conflicts. Notice the examples shown.

Multicolored Pencils and Special Pens

Do not be tempted to employ a battery of multicolored pens and pencils. They only lead to confusion over a period of time.

The beauty of the above-described system is that it needs only one simple colored pencil (any color) and a pen. Incidentally, it is best to select a pen that will not run or smear on the Bible page. Many pens, especially if they contain red ink, will make an awful mess after a few months. Test the ink on a back page before you use the pen extensively.

CHAPTER 7.

¹ The Pharisees find fault at the disciples for eating with unwashen hands. ¹⁴ Meas defileth not man. ²⁴ Christ healeth the Syrophenician woman's daughter, at one that was deaf, and stammered in his speech.

THEN ⁶ came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

'ceremonially defiled'

² And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled hands, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault.

³ For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

⁴ And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

⁵ Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

⁶ He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, ⁶ This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

⁸ For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as ¹ the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

⁹ And he said unto them, Full well ye ¹⁰ reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

¹¹ For Moses said, ¹² Honour thy father and thy mother; and, ¹³ Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

¹¹ But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, ¹¹ It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free?

¹² And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

¹³ Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

¹⁴ And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand.

15 There is nothing from without a man that can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

¹⁶ If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

¹⁷ And when he was entered into the house from the people, ¹⁸ his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

¹⁸ And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;

¹⁹ Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

²⁰ And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

²² Thefts, ²³ covetousness, wickedness, deceit, ²⁴ lasciviousness, ²⁵ an evil eye, ²⁶ blasphemy, ²⁷ pride, foolishness;

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

²⁴ And from thence he arose,

¹ ch. 5. 41.
² Lev. 19. 3.
³ Cp.
Mat. 27. 6.
⁴ To ver. 30.
Mat. 23. 1-28.
⁵ Or, commin.
Acts 20. 46.
⁶ Is. 29. 13.
Rom. 14. 14.
Heb. 10. 29.
⁷ ver. 5.
Mat. 25. 20.
⁸ ver. 8.
⁹ Or, differently.
with the original.
The Three phylactes.
to be in the Gospels.
¹⁰ ver. 8.
Heb. 9. 10.
Ver. 8. 6.
Mat. 23. 25.
Luke 11. 29.
¹¹ Sicut erat in libro et in libro.
¹² Or, And.
ver. 30. &c.
¹³ Mat. 19. 19.
ch. 3. 9.
¹⁴ Cp.
Mat. 15. 15.
¹⁵ Cited from Lu. 9. 13.
ver. 4.
¹⁶ Or, Antiquitate.
Luke 7. 30.
John 8. 21.
¹⁷ ch. 6. 26.
Luke 7. 30.
ch. 10. 16.
John 12. 48.
¹⁸ Cp. 1. 9.
Gal. 3. 15.
¹⁹ Theb. 2. 8.
1 Tim. 5. 12.
²⁰ Gr. covetousness.
wickedness.
²¹ Rom. 13. 13.
²² Cor. 13. 6.
Gal. 5. 19.
Eph. 4. 19.
²³ 1 Pet. 4. 3.
²⁴ 1 Pet. 2. 21.
Jude 4.
²⁵ Mat. 6. 43.
²⁶ Cited from Ec. 10. 12.
²⁷ Rom. 1. 30.
Cited from Ec. 10. 12.

Breaking 5th commandment and sanctioning a type of juvenile delinquency.
1 Tim. 5:8 If any provide not for his own... he is worse than an infidel.

i.e. a speck of dirt on hands won't defile. Subject is "unwashen hands" (v. 2) not meats. Matt 15:20 To eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man. Doesn't mean nothing you eat can injure your health - what about arsenic?

Gal. 5:19-21 Fruits of flesh Gen. 8:21 Man's heart evil from youth. Luke 11:13 If ye, being evil... Is 45:7 I... create evil... Rev. 21:27 No one spiritually defiled will be in book of life.

Q 9
● Moffatt = This money might have been at your service but it is Corban (that is dedicated to God)...

SAMPLE OF MARKED BIBLE PAGE: Basic chapter outline emphasized by underlining and color. Personal and doctrinal verses (7, 21-23) stand out by means of brackets. Significant individual words and phrases are marked with small brackets. Marginal notes amplify and explain. Longer notes are placed in bottom or top margins with a symbol to note their presence at the appropriate verse. Notice how none of the marks conflict, yet stand out clearly.

It is generally best to use this basic one-pen/one-pencil system. You can find such tools anywhere and you will never be confused by which color or pen to use. Multicoloration and special pens and pencils look pretty, but rarely prove effective.

Marginal References

Earlier it was mentioned that marginal marks are also useful. Here is how.

Suppose you want to add some emphasis or clarification to a word, phrase or an entire section of the text. For example, "conversation" in Philippians 3:20 should read "citizenship." (This is the more correct translation from the original Greek.) How can you mark this, yet not confuse the main system?

Simple! Just put a small bracket around "conversation" and make a note in the margin. You won't confuse this with a doctrinal mark because these should be used on *whole verses only*. If it ever becomes necessary to explain an entire verse, rather than just a word or two, don't mark it at all. Just write a note in the margin.

Some people like to draw lines between words or verses on the same page to show a connection. Do so if you wish, but with caution. Too many such marks can confuse the flow. A few could be useful, especially in certain places.

Chain References

Another type of Bible mark that needs mentioning is chain referencing. How, for example, should you mark a *series* of scriptures on one subject?

The best way is to simply make a note in the margin and put no mark at all on the verse itself. If you wish, you can number these chains. For example (3) for "repentance," (5) for "faith," etc., but don't be tempted to color all the verses on a particular subject. You will too often find that the same scripture is needed in several chains. Which color would you make it? But a numbered note in the margin does not obscure other notes already there.

Frankly, chain referencing is of limited value and should be used sparingly. Chain references are better put

in the back of your Bible, leaving the actual Bible pages free for more useful notes.

In marking your Bible, always use caution. An improperly marked verse will remain in your Bible, confusing you every time you turn to it. Think before you mark. Be sure you really do understand the verse.

In particular, go extremely slow on marking scriptures for personal correction. You will return to a verse marked earlier for personal correction and wonder why you ever marked it. Take time to digest comments and ideas before you permanently mark your most important personal possession. Don't be concerned if it takes several years to flow mark most of your Bible.

Don't Be Afraid to Mark

Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). The message contained *in* the Bible is the important thing. The words Jesus spoke are *spirit* and life.

But the ink and paper on which God's Word is printed is not "holy." God nowhere sanctifies the ink, paper, binding, or other physical components of the Bible.

Therefore don't be afraid to go ahead and mark your Bible. Make *use* of it. Study it carefully, diligently, and mark it with wisdom. If you don't have a good quality Bible for marking, save enough money to purchase one — a Bible with easily readable print, good-sized margins, printed on good quality paper. They can be obtained through almost any large bookstore.

Remember the admonition of the Apostle Paul: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, *rightly dividing* the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). Study your Bible more effectively. Use it as a handy tool. Make it useful by means of a systematic, practicable and *simple* marking system. Make your Christian "sword" — the Word of God — sharp and glittering and effective by marking your Bible. □

ADDITIONAL READING

Ambassador College publishes many colorful, informative booklets on a wide range of biblical topics: Four are listed below.

What Do You Mean . . . Salvation?

What is salvation? Is it a place, destination, condition, or reward? Not one in a hundred knows what salvation is or how to receive it. Do you?

All About Water Baptism

Is water baptism essential to salvation? What about the "thief on the cross"? Was he saved without it? What is the proper form or mode — sprinkling, pouring, or immersion?

Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?

Does it make any difference which day we observe? Was the Sabbath given only for Jewish people? Are Christians commanded to keep Sunday as the Lord's Day?

Where Is God's True Church Today?

Does Jesus Christ have many different church denominations doing His Work? Is Christ divided? How, when, and where did this religious babylon of multiple denominations get started? And how does one recognize the true Church?

Write for your personal copies of the above booklets. They are sent free as an educational service in the public interest.

The Bible is a ***NOW*** Book

BELIEVE it or not, the Bible was written for our day, this age — this generation! The Bible is the most up-to-date book you can read today.

In the pages of this "Book that nobody knows" are revealed the causes of all of today's ills — the social problems, the economic problems, and even the threat of nuclear annihilation hanging over mankind today.

The Bible shows where world events are leading, and what the final outcome will be.

But ironically, this "Book of all books" is the **LEAST UNDERSTOOD** of all books!

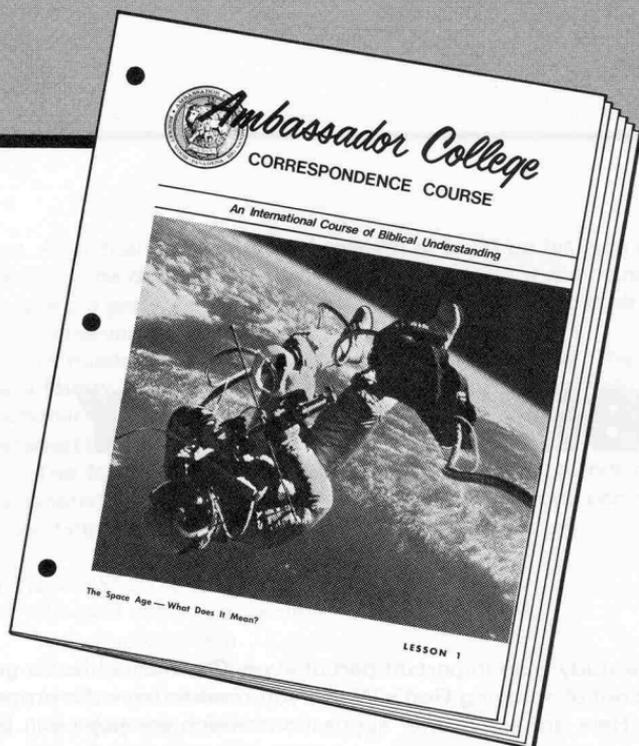
Why?

Simply because when most people try to read the Bible, they can't understand it. Consequently, they assume it's out of date and irrelevant in our modern age.

But you can understand it.

Here's how!

For more than a decade and a half, Ambassador College has been helping thousands to become "Biblical literates" through the Ambassador College Correspondence Course. This unique course of *Biblical*



understanding has led over 200,000 students in nearly every country on earth to a greater knowledge and understanding of the Bible.

This course has been designed to guide you through a systematic study of your own Bible — the Bible is the only textbook.

A different major subject of vital interest in this fantastic push-button age is thoroughly gone into and made clear with each 16-page, monthly lesson.

There are no assignments or tests to send in. You review and evaluate your own progress at home. And there is no tuition cost to you whatsoever.

This course is absolutely free! Just write to the following address and ask to be enrolled. You'll be glad you did.

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
CORRESPONDENCE COURSE
Pasadena, California 91123

If you live outside the United States, please see the mailing addresses at the end of this booklet.

BIBLE STUDY AIDS

Bible study is an important part of every Christian's life. To get the most out of studying God's Word, you need to have the proper "tools." Here are some brief suggestions which we hope will be helpful.

As a basic Bible we recommend the King James Version. It is the most accurate translation, despite its archaic language and expression. But it is often helpful to consult modern translations and to compare several different translations on difficult passages. A list of some of the modern translations can be found on the next page.

We suggest that you visit a local bookstore to select your Bible. Most bookstores stock several different Bibles, or at least have a catalogue showing the different type styles and sizes. That way, you can choose the Bible that will suit you best. A center or marginal reference is beneficial. So is a good selection of maps in the back. Many also like a Bible with wide margins for making notes.

The concordances in the backs of most Bibles are abridged and should carry little weight in your selection. It would be better to have a separate concordance, such as Cruden's, which would be more complete and not very costly.

We recommend that each person own a good study Bible and a concordance. Most will probably want one or more of the modern translations as well. A one-volume Bible dictionary will often prove very useful. There are many on the market such as Unger's, Davis', Peloubet's, Hastings'. Look at them and determine if you would like

one. After that, it is up to each person to build up his own personal library *as he has the need and can afford it. But it is NOT necessary to spend a great deal of money on dozens of books or multi-volume commentaries.*

In most cases, a person can find sufficient Bible "helps" in a local library. The average person would not use multi-volume Bible dictionaries and commentaries enough to make it practical to have personal copies.

The following lists are only suggestions and are not meant to be exhaustive. We do not necessarily recommend one commentary, Bible dictionary, or modern translation above another.

OTHER BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Revised Standard Version

New English Bible

New American Bible

Moffatt translation

The Amplified Bible

The Goodspeed Translation

The Holy Scriptures translated by the Jewish Publication Society (Old Testament only).

There are a great many translations of the New Testament ONLY. Some of them are known by the names of the translators, such as Williams or Phillips. While these often add clarity where they are right, they also tend to introduce denominational doctrinal bias depending on the author's preconceptions. One volume, *26 Translations*, includes extracts from 26 different versions for each New Testament passage.

CONCORDANCES

Cruden's *Complete Concordance*

Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*

Young's *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*

Englishman's *Greek Concordance of the New Testament* and the Englishman's *Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament* (one does not have to know Greek or Hebrew to use these).

COMMENTARIES — MULTI-VOLUME VERSIONS

The International Critical Commentary

The Jerome Bible Commentary

Clarke's Commentary

Jamieson-Faussett-Brown *Critical and Experimental Commentary*

The Tyndale Bible Commentaries

DICTIONARIES AND HANDBOOKS

The New Bible Dictionary

The Interpreter's Bible Dictionary

Peake's Bible Dictionary

Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible

Halley's Bible Handbook

Unger's Bible Handbook

Oxford's Bible Atlas

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Robertson's Harmony of the Gospels

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