

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Lesson One – Handout

Paul's Prayers for the Church in Ephesus

Note: Paul was praying these prayers on behalf of believers. If you are a believer, these prayers most assuredly extend to you. Pray them faithfully every day and personalize them by inserting your name. God is faithful and we are told in 1 John 5:14-15 "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." So, take God at His word and see what happens!

From Ephesians 1:17-23 and 3:14-21...

Father, in the name of Jesus, I (your name) pray that you, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give me the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of You, having the eyes of my understanding enlightened; that I may know what is the hope to which You have called me, what are the riches of your glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of Your power toward us who believe, according to the working of Your great power which you worked in Christ when you raised Him from the dead and seated Him at your right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And You have put all things under His feet and have given Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Therefore, I bow my knees before You, Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of Your glory You may grant me to be strengthened with power by Your Spirit in my inner man, so that Christ may dwell in my heart through faith, that I, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that I may be filled with all the fullness of You.

Now, unto you, who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to you be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus through out all generations, forever and ever.

Amen.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Lesson One, September 22, 2015

Note: We will turn to scriptures marked with an asterisk () during class*

I. Description of course

- a. Hermeneutics - The principles and methods used to correctly interpret Scripture.
- b. Importance of knowing and believing Scripture
 1. Discernment (Mt 4:5-6)
 2. Necessary for faith (I Tim 6:12; Rom 10:17)
 3. Keeps us from apostasy (I Tim 4:1-2; Mk 13:22; II Tim 3:13; II Cor 11:13-15; II Cor 11:3)
- c. Goals of course
 1. To restore or build your confidence in the veracity of the Scriptures
 2. To teach you how to correctly approach, interpret and apply the truth of Scripture to your life.
 3. To encourage you and get you started on a lifetime program of reading and meditating on the Word of God.

II. The Bible: What it claims to be and do

- a. Claims to be divinely inspired (***II Tim 3:16-17**; ***II Pet 1:21**; Jn 6:63)
- b. Claims to be "The Word of Truth" (***II Tim 2:15**)
 1. Lets us know there is absolute truth or reality (Jn 14:6)
 2. Gives us standard to determine what is true and what isn't true
 3. Shows us superiority of God's knowledge to ours
(Isa 55:8-9; Prov 14:12; 16:25; I Cor 3:19; II Tim 3:7)
 4. The Bible's way of determining truth (***Acts 17:11**)
 5. The supernatural connection between the Trinity and the Bible
(***Jn 1:1, 14:6**; ***Jn 14:16-17**; **16:13**; ***I Cor 2:9-14**)
 6. Prayer for you to pray (Eph 1:15-23; 3:14-21; I Jn 5:14-15)

SEE HANDOUT

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Lesson TWO, September 29, 2015

Note: We will turn to scriptures in BOLD with an asterisk () during class*

II. The Bible: What it claims to be and do (cont'd)

- c. Claims to be divinely inspired. (II Tim 3:16-17; II Pet 1:20-21)
- d. Claims to be "The Word of Truth" (II Tim 2:15)
 - 1. Holy Spirit sent to indwell believers and reveal truth to us (Jn 14:16-17; 16:13; I Cor 2:9-14)
 - 2. Prayer to ask for revelation (Eph 1:15-23; 3:14-21)
- e. Claims to have power to transform us
(***Rom 12:2**; 8:29; I Jn 3:2; ***II Cor 3:13-18**; Jn 14:9)
- f. Claims to be the means by which we as Christians are sanctified and cleansed
(***Jn 17:17,19,20**; Eph 5:25-27)
 - 1. Not by sending bad things to harm us (***I Pet 5:8**; Jn 8:44; II Cor 4:4; Ps 34:19; Heb 13:5; Ps 46:1; Rom 8:28; Rom 10:17)
- g. Claims if we know it and continue in it, will set us free
(***Jn 8:31-32**; Jn 14:1; Phil 4:6-7)
- h. Claims God will "make good" on everything the Bible promises or predicts
(***Num 23:19**; ***Isa 55:11**; Jer 1:12)
 - 1. God puts great importance in His Word
(Ps 138:2; Heb 1:1-3; I Tim 3:16; ***Mt 24:35**; ***I Pet 1:24-25**)
- i. Claims Word of God is our weapon (***Eph 6:13-17**; Mt 4:1-11; ***Rev 19: 19-21**)

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Lesson THREE, October 6, 2015

Note: We will turn to scriptures in BOLD with an asterisk () during class*

I. How the Bible Substantiates the Claims it Makes

- a. Through fulfilled prophecy (***Isa 46:9-10; 41:21-23**; Amos 3:7)
 1. Example of Daniel's 70 Weeks (Dan 9:24-27)
 2. Example of Israel's scattering (Lk 19:41-44; 21:20-24)
 3. Example of Israel's re-gathering
(***Ezek 36:19-28**; Amos 9:14-15; Ezek 36:4; 34:26,27; 36:36)
 4. Example of Israel's future war (Ezek 38; Ps 83)
- b. Through the unity and agreement of the Scriptures (II Pet 1:20-21)
 1. Old Testament painting a picture of Jesus and God's plan for redemption
(***Lk 24:27**; I Pet 1:19-20)
 2. Example Types and Shadows, The Feasts of Israel
(***Col 2;16-17; *Lev 23; 1-2**)
- c. Through the inner witness (***Rom 8:16-17**; Psm 119:18)

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Lesson FOUR, October 13, 2015

Note: We will turn to scriptures in BOLD with an asterisk (*) during class

I. **The Truth of the Bible under attack today**

- a. Warning in Rev (***Rev 22:18-19**) (Principle may apply to all Scripture)
 - 1. Add to Scripture
 - 2. Take away from Scripture

II. **How the Old Testament (OT) Books were assembled**

- a. Gt synagogue assembled OT Canon in Ezra's time (c 425 BC)
- b. Hebrew OT (one Jesus used) identical to ours except for arrangement of and combinations of some books
 - 1. We get arrangement from Septuagint (Greek version of OT c 250 BC in Alexandria, Egypt)
- c. Around 90 AD Council at Jamnia ratified OT Canon
- d. Originally OT and NT not divided into chapters and verses
 - 1. Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, divided into chapters in early 1200's
 - 2. Hebrew OT divided into verses by Rabbi Nathan in mid-1400's. NT by Robert Estienne in mid-1500's.
- e. Not part of the OT Canon are the 15 books that form the Old Testament Apocrypha written bet 200 BC and 100 AD

III. **Authority of the Old Testament**

- a. Approximately 1/10 of Jesus words in NT were direct quotes from OT
- b. NT constantly refers to OT

IV. **How the New Testament Books were assembled**

- a. Gospels first communicated in spoken form
- b. From 50 AD and onward many copies in circulation
- c. Writers recounting under inspiration of God Himself (Gal 1:11-12; Rev 1:1-2)

V. **Authority of New Testament**

- a. Criteria for inclusion in NT canon
 - 1. Must be written by Apostles or
 - 2. Must be written by someone with firsthand knowledge (Lk 1:1-4; II Pet 1:16; I Jn 1:1; I Cor 15:1-8; Rev 1:1-2)

- b. Formed foundation for the church (Eph 2:20)
- c. 393 AD Synod of Hippo listed 27 books of the NT
- d. Divine Inspiration claimed (Gal 1:11-12; Rev 1:1-2)
- e. New Testament passage recognized as Scripture (***I Tim 5:18**)

VI. Accuracy of the Bible

- a. Textual Criticism (The science of determining the original wording of any literal work for which the original document doesn't exist)
 - 1. Compares all copies of ancient manuscripts to determine any differences
 - 2. Scholars make determinations of which variant is the most accurate
 - 3. Have thousands of copies from which to compare

VII. Examples of Early Manuscripts

- a. Codex Alexandrinus 450 AD Contained earliest written record of both OT and NT
- b. Dead Sea Scrolls found in Qumran – copied by Essenes from 250 BC
 - 1. Contains oldest Hebrew copy Isaiah (200 BC)
 - 2. Refutes argument Isaiah really two books (Is 44:28; 45:4; 6:1; Matt 3:3; Is 40:3; Matt 8:17; Is 53:4)

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Lesson FIVE, October 20, 2015

Note: We will turn to scriptures in BOLD with an asterisk (*) during class

The four “gaps” one must consider when reading The Bible:

I. **Historical Gap (*Heb 1:1)**

- a. Tools to help bridge the gap
 - 1. Bible dictionaries
 - 2. History books
 - 3. Study Bibles

II. **Cultural Gap (Works two ways)**

- a. People of Bible were products of their culture
- b. We are just as much products of our culture
- c. Tools to help bridge gap
 - 1. Bible dictionaries
 - 2. Study Bibles
 - 3. Books on culture and times of the Bible:
 - The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Alfred Edersheim
 - What Paul Really Said about Women* by John Temple Bristow

III. **Geographical Gap (Lk 24:13-15, 27)**

- a. Tools to help bridge gap
 - 1. Atlases of the Bible; Bibles with maps

IV. **Language Gap**

- a. Old Testament written mainly in Hebrew
- b. New Testament written in Greek
- c. Popular translations (see handout)
- d. Some types of Bibles available
 - 1. Annotated Bibles
 - 2. Commentary Bibles
 - 3. Chain Reference Bibles

- 4. Interlinear Bibles
- e. Other study helps
 - 1. Concordance
 - 2. Computer Programs and the Internet

**V. Introduction to Hermeneutics –The Science of Biblical Interpretation
(*II Tim 2:15)**

- a. Goals of hermeneutics
 - 1. To be good exegetes of Scripture (II Tim 2:15; II Pet 1:20-21)
 - 2. To determine truth (II Tim 2:15)
 - 3. To move the Body of Christ towards unity of the faith
(*Eph 4:1-6; 11-16; Matt 18:19; Acts 2:1-4; 23-32)
- b. How to approach Scripture
 - 1. Pray before reading (Ps 119:18; *I Jn 5:14-15)
 - 2. Check Motive (Jn 8:31-32)
 - 3. Make the decision to study daily (II Tim 2:15)

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Lesson SIX, October 26, 2015

Note: We will turn to scriptures in BOLD with an asterisk () during class*

Methods of Interpretation

I. The Grammatico Historical Method

- a. Involves Question asking
 1. Who is speaking; whose viewpoint is being given? (Job 38:1-2; 42:7)
 2. To whom is the passage addressed? (I Cor 10:32)
 3. When did this occur? (Heb 1:1-2; Rom 8:14)
 4. Where did this occur and under what circumstances? (II Tim 4:6)

II. Analogy of Faith (*II Tim 3:16-17; *II Tim 2:15)

- a. Always interpret in agreement with the rest of Scripture
- b. Never take an isolated scripture to form doctrine
(*II Cor 13:1; Mat 18:16; Deut 19:15)
- c. Always Check Context
 1. Immediate (Jn 3:3, 6; Heb 9:27)
 2. Relation to Chapter
 3. Relation to Book
 4. Relation to Testament
 5. Relation to Bible (Heb 1:1-2)
- d. Context of Dispensations (Eph 3:2; 1:10)
 1. Edenic or Age of Innocence (creation to fall)
 2. Antediluvian or Conscience (fall to flood)
 3. Postdiluvian or Human Gov't (flood to Abraham)
 4. Promise (Abraham to Moses)
 5. Law (Moses to Jesus' resurrection) (Ex 20-23; Deut 28; Heb 9)
 6. Grace – Jesus' resurrection to resurrection (rapture) of the church
(Isa 53; Eph 2:8-9; *Eph 3:1-7; Acts 10)
 7. Tribulation: 7 years of Judgment (Dan 9:27; Mt 24)

8. Millenium: 1,000 year Kingdom on Earth (Rev 20:1-6)
9. Eternal State (Rev 21-22)

e. Interpreting in Light of Dispensational Knowledge

1. Truth that belongs in one part of past may not necessarily apply to another (Mat 10:5-6; Mk 16:15)
2. Truth that belongs to a past dispensation may not necessarily apply to present (Deut 6:25; Rom 3:20; Eph 2:8-9)
3. Truth that belongs to the present dispensation may not necessarily apply to a past one
4. Truth concerning future dispensations may not necessarily apply to our present dispensation
5. Truth concerning future dispensations may not apply to one another (I Thess 4:13-18; I Cor 15:51-57; Jn 14:1-3; Zech 14:5; Rev 19:7-14; I Thess 3:13)

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Lesson SEVEN, November 3, 2015

Note: We will turn to scriptures in BOLD with an asterisk () during class*

Methods of Interpretation (Continued)

II. Analogy of Faith (*II Tim 3:16; 2:15) – *continued*

- f. Covenants (Interpretation in light of context) Noetic (Gen 8: 21-22; Gen 9: 1-17)
- g. Abrahamic (Gen 12:1-7; Gen 15; Gen 17)
- h. Palestinian (Gen 13:14-18; 17:7-8, 21; Heb 11:8-19)
- i. Mosaic (Ex 20-23; Deut 28; Heb 9:1-10)
- j. Davidic (II Sam 7:12-29; I Chr 17:11-14; 6:16)
- k. New (Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:10; 10:16; Eph 2:8-9; 3:1-7; Acts 10)
- l. Questions to ask when interpreting covenants
 - 1. To whom is this addressed?
 - 2. When was it made?
 - 3. For what purpose?
 - 4. Conditional or unconditional?
 - 5. What are the terms?
 - 6. Does this covenant apply to me?

III. Literal Interpretation (unless otherwise indicated)

- a. Figures of Speech not to be taken literally
 - 1. Hyperbole (Jn 21:25)
 - 2. Personification (Is 55:12)
 - 3. Metaphor (Jn 6:35; Mt 26:26; Jn 6:48-63; I Cor 11:23-25)
 - 4. Anthromorphism (Is 30:27-28; Ps 91:4)

b. Literary forms that require consideration

1. Historical narrative (***Lk 1:1-5; 2:1-5**; Dan 1:1; Ex; Num 20-36)

2. Didactic or teaching passages (Lev; Epistles; Parts of Gospels)

3. Apocalyptic passages

(Eze; Dan; Rev; Dan 12:4,8,9; Deut 29:29; ***Rev 1:7-18**; Eph 6:17;
Heb 4:12; Jn 1:1; ***Rev 19:11-15**; Rev 19:7-8; Psm 2:9)

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Lesson EIGHT, November 10, 2015

Note: We will turn to scriptures in BOLD with an asterisk () during class*

III. Literary Interpretation - Forms that require consideration (continued)

a. Parable

1. Designed to communicate a spiritual truth, moral lesson or religious principle (Mt 13:44-46)

b. Designed to reveal and conceal (Mt 12:24; ***13:10-17**; Isa 6: 9-10)

2. Importance of seeking the truth (Jn 8:31-32; 3:16-21)

3. Interpretation of Parables (Mt 13;1-9; Mk 4:3-0; Lk 8:5-8; II Sam 12:1-7)

c. Poetry (Parallelisms)

1. Synonymous (I Sam 2:6-7)

2. Antithetic (Prov 19:12,16)

3. Synthetic (Ps 92:9)

IV. Application (***II Tim 3:16**; ***Jas 1:22-25**; Jn 8:31-32; Ps 1:2)

a. Direct (***Phil 4:6-9**)

b. Principalizing

1. When passage involves customs (I Cor 8)

2. When passage not specifically addressed to you

(Ex 34:13-14; II Kg 15:3-4, 34-35; 12:2-3; 14:3-4)

V. Recognizing Error: Questions to ask when encountering new teachings or the supernatural (***Mt 24:4**; **24**)

1. What is Holy Spirit saying to me? (Jn 16:13)

2. Does this line up with Scripture?

(***Gal 1:8-9**; Acts 17:11; ***II Cor 11:13-15**; Mk 13:22)

3. What fruits are manifesting? (***Mt 7:15-23**)

4. Is Jesus Christ confessed to be the son of God who came in the flesh?

(***I Jn 2:22-23**; ***I Jn 4:1-3**)
