

The Remnant

*“Even so then at this
present time also there
is a remnant according to
the election of grace.”
Romans 11.5*

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STUDY

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a
workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly
dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2.15)*

*

*Thy gardens and thy pleasant greens
My study long have been
Such pure delight by human sight
Hath never yet been seen.—Hymn 284,
Benjamin Lloyd hymnbook*

*

In 1999, we published three articles on the general theme of some observations on “Bible study.” (Interested readers with Internet access may read these articles in the March, May, and September issues of 1999 at our two websites, which are listed in the mast-head on page 2.) Recently some of our readers have encouraged us to write more on the Bible, and how to study it, and why.

There are some, of course, who object to “Bible study” as if any serious study of the sacred Scriptures were an Arminian scheme to “get people saved” who would otherwise go to hell. Such a misconception of studying the Bible is not even worthy of mentioning here, were it not a sad reality. In spite of this, a lifelong growing familiarity with God’s word brings treasures and pleasures untold.

God’s word is exactly what we call it: God’s word. It is not something to be taken lightly or to be trifled with. It is not a collection of fables, as is usually implied on television’s “history” and “educational” channels; such so-called “history” channels are revisionist, rewriting history to suit a godless world-system. Their so-called educational programs are usually designed to educate the masses into believing the universe is an evolutionary system that developed randomly on its own, without the benefit of either a Designer or a design.

Words are the expression of thoughts, and when God spoke to men, He spoke with both (1) the Word and (2) words.

(1) **The Word** is the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Godhead, the expression of the mind of Jehovah, by Whom He created all things. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not (John 1.1-5).”* The darkness of the depraved human mind still does not comprehend Him.

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Contents

Study.....	1
More Observations on Studying the Scriptures.....	6
Books, Tapes, Notices.....	17-19

(Continued from page 1)

(2) **The words** are the recorded written word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit (the third "Person" of the Godhead), that we call our *Bible*. Man's sin-darkened mind can no more comprehend **the words** any more than it can comprehend **the Word**.

Peter, writing of the salvation provided by Christ, says: "...of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it [or rather, **He**] testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." What did the prophets "search" if not their own God-inspired writings and those of their fellow prophets?

One example: In Daniel 9.1-2, Daniel was reading in Jeremiah's prophecy and said, "***I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.***" There was no professional jealousy on Daniel's part. Jeremiah was his fellow prophet. In Daniel's searching the available Scriptures of his day, the Lord made him aware of "**things which must shortly come to pass**

(Revelation 1.1)”; in Daniel’s case, he was made aware that the end of the seventy years of Israel’s captivity in Babylonian was at hand.

Since Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and other Prophets of God diligently searched their own writings to understand “the grace that should come unto you,” is it a strange thing that God in Christ would bid His hearers, and us through His words, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me”?

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables [as the TV specials on Bible subjects say we have done], when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount. We have also a **more sure word of prophecy**; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 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** (2 Peter 1.16-21).”

Peter says he and the other disciples who were with Christ on the mount heard the voice of God and were eyewitnesses to Christ’s majesty. This is certainly something we think must put an end to all our doubts and fears, had we been there to witness the glory of Christ

accompanied with the testimony of God the Father’s speaking audibly from heaven; but Peter says there is something more sure than even such a “mountain-top experience,” and by God’s grace and in His providence we all have it. It is the Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit’s *moving* the prophets and other writers to write God’s own *words*.

God spoke aloud on that mountain, but we cannot go back to hear His voice now. If we could, what good would it do? On another occasion God spoke aloud; “The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him (John 12.29).” So people can actually hear God’s voice and be mistaken about what they heard. But Peter says that we have something better and more sure than if we had been there on that day: The same God who spoke aloud on the mount, ratifying Jesus Christ as His Word (“**Hear ye Him!**”), has given His people something much more sure than hearing God speak aloud. It is His inspired, written word, a copy of which anyone may usually obtain easily. Moses, with the tables of stone “written with the finger of God (Exodus 31.18)” had no advantage over us; we have in our hands and on our coffee-tables the complete word of God inspired infallibly by the Holy Spirit and providentially preserved against all the attacks of men and devils for over two millennia.

The Bible is the supernaturally inspired and infallible word of God, inspired down to the individual dots and dashes, the *jots and tittles* (Matthew 5.18), what we would call “the dotting of an *i* and the crossing of a *t*.” That is quite emphatic, but Jesus did not exaggerate (as is sometimes said), **one iota**. (“**Iota**” is the ninth letter in the Greek alphabet, answering to the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet,

yod, and the equivalent of our letter **I**. In some languages the **I**, **J**, and the **Y** are interchangeable, so that is how we came to get “jot” from “yod” and “iota.”)

Berean Jews Commended

In Acts 17, Paul’s life was threatened by the mob in Thessalonica. “And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea [a neighboring town]: who [Paul and Silas] coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These [the Jews of Berea] were more noble than those in the Thessalonian synagogue, in that **they**

(1) received the word with all readiness of mind, and

(2) searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so (Acts 17.10f).

Exactly what were “those things which were spoken by Paul”? Luke described what Paul said as follows: “And Paul, **as his manner was**, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that (1) Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that (2) this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.” Later, Paul defined the gospel he preached in much the same way: “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel...how that Christ died for our sins **according to the scriptures**; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day **according to the scriptures** (1 Corinthians 15.1-4).”

The Jews of the Berean synagogue were more noble than those of the Thessalonian mob who would have killed Paul. For that matter, these Bereans were more noble than those of our own day who, assuming they already know whatever truth there is to be known, see no need to search the Scriptures to ascertain

some of God’s truth that may have escaped them. To them, such a thing as their not knowing everything that is knowable could not possibly exist. In fact, these men of the twenty-first century, like the Thessalonian Jews, would no doubt have trouble fathoming why Paul would preach in a Jewish synagogue in the first place.

“Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth”

If there is a right way to divide the word of truth, then there must also be a wrong way to divide it.

From the one Greek word translated by our two words, “rightly divide,” we understand that we are to make a *straight* cut, not a crooked one. Rightly dividing has to do with dissecting with precision. High school and college biology labs are known to dissect frogs and other animals as well as plants and insects. If we used a hatchet to chop a frog in two, it might be a straight cut indeed, but it would not be precise. The poor frog would be divided, but not rightly. Dissection, or rightly dividing something, whether in the science lab or in the Bible, has to do with precision cuts.

Hence we have Paul’s suggestion to the young preacher Timothy (and others), to study. No one should think that how we cut open a frog is more important than how and to what intent we open the Bible.

Cutting frogs open properly is thought to be a necessary part of our secular education, while rightly dividing the word of truth is required neither by the modern church nor the state. As people study the anatomy of frogs so intently, we ask: Is not studying the structure of the word of God at least as important as understanding that of a bug or an amphibian?

Nor are we saying that any human being has the intellectual ability to discern with his

natural mind what the Spirit saith to the churches (Revelation 2.7). Understanding spiritual truth only comes about by God's revealing His truth to whomsoever He pleases, and it pleases Him to reveal His truth to His own people. As it has pleased Him that by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, so it has pleased Him that He would reveal His truth to His people by the foolishness of their studying what they cannot begin to comprehend by studying with their natural minds.

Why should God's people study the Scriptures, then? Because God said to study them. One would search for a long time to find a better reason. Will studying the Scriptures make someone a better person? We might counter that question by asking, will one's studying the Scriptures make him the worse? (It will, if he studies it in a slipshod and careless manner, "not discerning the Lord's body.")

In the Scriptures there are hidden treasures. "Then said He unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old (Matthew 13.52)."

Even as there are *pleasures* hidden from those who do not practice the washing of the saints' feet (John 13.17), so there are *treasures* hidden from those who do not search the Scriptures. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of **kings** is to search out a matter (Proverbs 25.2)." To what extent you have been given a hope that you are one whom God has made—or will make—"kings and priests (Revelation 5.9f)," then to that same exact extent it is honorable that you search out what God hath concealed in His word that we call our *Bible*.

If a preacher says, "The apostle Job said, 'For God so loved the world...,'" or "Isaiah

said, 'For by grace are ye saved through faith,'" (or worse: "For by **faith** are ye saved....") we might ask: Does it make any difference to you or to anyone else who said what, or who the preacher says said it?

Does a *preacher* have any need to "study his Bible"? The preacher, of all people, is the one who most needs to be familiar with the inspired words of God, if he is going to speak in the name of God or at least pretend to do so. Paul directed our text to a young preacher, Timothy. Again we say: A child of grace does not receive God's truth by his studying, but it is **in conjunction with studying** that God gives His word to the preacher. If the Lord "just pours the Bible into the preacher's head and out his mouth," then the hole into which the Lord pours His word is the preacher's eye-hole. It is readily evident to his Bible-reading hearers whether or not a preacher reads or studies his Bible.

Why should the "regular" members of a congregation read their Bibles? Isn't it enough for their preacher to tell them what the Bible says and means? Not really. This ends in Dark-Age style priestcraft, depending on the preacher-priest to do our thinking for us so that we need not think for ourselves. Those who take this approach are in a twofold worse condition than the peasants of the Dark Ages who had no Bible. Reliance on a priest's interpretation was forced on the people until they became totally dependent on Rome, both spiritually and mentally. Those who willingly abdicate the right to read the Bible and to think for themselves become fit candidates for slavery.

Men are liable to say anything, and since preachers are men, unless the Holy Spirit restrains them, preachers may say anything that pops into their heads. How will you know if what a preacher says is in harmony with God's word if you yourself do not know what God's

word says? Is it possible for a radio preacher to be right about something and your own preacher be wrong about the same subject? Who will arbitrate in such a case, if it is not God? And what will His standard be if it is not His written word He gave to His people? Many men have died martyrs' deaths to make the Bible available to us all. Some Bible translators were burned alive at the stake with a copy of the Bible tied around their necks as a warning to others against making the Scriptures available to the poorest among all peoples and nations in their own native languages. Thanks to our Lord God and those martyrs He raised up, you and I have access to God's word, whether we read it or not.

The text at the heading of this article, "Study...rightly dividing the word of truth," was written to Timothy, a young preacher/minister/pastor, who later became the pastor of the church in Ephesus until A.D.97:

At this period, as the pagans were about to celebrate a feast called Catagogian, Timothy, meeting the procession, severely reproved them for their ridiculous idolatry, which so exasperated the people that they fell upon him with their clubs, and beat him in so dreadful a manner that he expired of the bruises two days after.—*Fox's Book of Martyrs*

To this same Timothy Paul also wrote, "*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine* (1 Timothy 5.17)." Such labor in these two areas, the word and the doctrine, is vital in a providential way to the ongoing welfare of the church. The worldly chaos, ignorance, and spiritual darkness that goes on nowadays in the name of God, Christ, religion, and "the church" manifests the lack

of the word and the doctrine of Christ being studied, understood, and preached.

From time to time brethren have told me of certain important principles that mean much to them as they are reading their Bibles. Having much confidence in these brethren and their judgment, I will pass on a few of these principles to our readers in hope that these things will be of encouragement to you. In this present article or the one following (or any!) there is nothing meant to be of a dictatorial nature. As brethren sometimes say, "Eat the fish; spit out the bones." I hope there is something for each of us in the following article, "no bones about it!"—*CCM*

MORE OBSERVATIONS ON STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES

Many brethren have found the following principles both sound and useful in their reading and searching the Scriptures. One brother in particular mentioned several of the following principles to me, encouraging me to pass them on to our readers.

1. Study the Bible with a spiritual mind: Many read the Bible to benefit the natural man, thinking (according to the Arminian/free will scheme), "God will bless me materially if I read the Bible." Our "daily devotional" is supposed to satisfy God, so, once it is behind us, we are content with giving God His five minutes and getting it behind us for another day. By reading it (so they reason), we might learn how to manipulate God Himself, and we can thereby better ourselves in this life and in the life to come. **Study the Bible with a spiritual mind** as much as the Lord God will enable you to do so, and not merely with the natural mind for selfish incentives.

2. Use a good translation: Use the King James Version (KJV), not modern translations such as the “Living Bible,” “Good News for Modern Man,” and the like, which are for the most part not translations. They are mostly perversions or worse, and we say this for a number of reasons.

(1) Some “Bible versions” are not actual translations; their printing companies admit their books are paraphrases according to the publishers’ understanding. They are merely Bible-related stories according to their fiction-authors’ thinking. This is not an exaggeration. A paraphrase by definition is putting something in your own words. When men feel the necessity to put God’s words into their own words, they are trying to improve upon what God said; they think they can say something more clearly, and something that is more correct, than what God has said. Such arrogance goes back to Genesis 3.1, where Satan introduced the FIRST QUESTION into the mind of Eve: “Yea, **hath God said**, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” This question, “HATH GOD SAID...?” has been with us from that day until this, and ever since the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden, Satan and his followers have been questioning and trying to “improve” upon what God has said. Man’s “improvements” are not efforts to clarify what God has said; they are efforts to do away with God’s sovereign dominion over His creatures. “But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us (Luke 19.14).” “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh:

the Lord shall have them in derision (Psalm 2.2-4).”

(2) Most of the publishers of modern version Bibles are Arminian or free-will in their belief; that is, they do not at all believe in the God of the Scriptures or His sovereign election of His people and the reprobation of all others. They believe God loves all mankind “equally and without discrimination,” that He does not hate Esau and those (profane ones—Hebrews 12.16) like him; they do not believe “The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil (Proverbs 16.4),” and specifically that He made men like Pharaoh to be destroyed. Publishers and printers are mortal men like everyone else, sinners with personal religious beliefs, mostly of the free-will persuasion. (How many Primitive Baptist **Bible publishers** do you know of, or any who are of the “sovereign grace” persuasion who will neither back down or back away from the solid principles of grace? There are, of course, a few exceptions, but they are few and far between.)

(3) Some Bible publishers are “liberal” in their belief and do not believe God supernaturally inspired His word to be recorded as we have the Bible today.

This is not to say we believe the KJV is perfect. There is a far cry between a **translation** and *trying to improve upon what God has actually said*. We value the KJV because the men who translated it were God-fearing men who believed, as we do, that the Bible *in its original languages* was literally the God-breathed words of the Holy Spirit Himself.

3. Look up and read the marginal references. Not all the time, though. Set aside a special time to look up words and references, but mostly read fast, without always interrupting yourself to be looking up marginal

references. They are manmade and not “inspired,” so do not use them as a crutch. Read large portions repeatedly at a single sitting. Use the marginal references warily, primarily as the Bible’s commentary upon itself.

(a) A **bad** example of marginal references: Someone wants to know what being “born of water” in John 3.5 means, so he “runs the references” and ends up reading Mark 16.16 and Acts 2.38. Unless this reader realizes the references were compiled by a Campbellite sympathizer, or if he thinks the marginal lists are inspired as part of the Bible itself (wrong!), he will be led down the path of believing the Bible teaches *baptismal regeneration*.

(b) A **good** example: Isaiah is quoted 21 times in the New Testament. Using the marginal references, go back to Isaiah to see what Isaiah actually said, to whom he said it, for what purpose he said it, and where Isaiah was when he was writing or talking.

When the New Testament does not quote the Old Testament exactly, do not ever think it is a contradiction, an error, or a misquote. Examine the context of the verse you’ve looked up. The Bible is always its own best commentary upon itself.

(1) *An example within this example:* After the temptation of Christ as Matthew 4.1-12 records it, the account continues in verse 13:

And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw

great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

But comparing the above quote with the original record in Isaiah 9, from which Matthew was quoting, we see Isaiah actually said,

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

(Isaiah 9.1f)

A comparison of such texts often reveals important inspired Bible commentary upon itself:

(a) Variations in spelling, such as *Zabulon* and *Zebulun*, and *Nephthalim* and *Naphtali*, are the result of going from the Hebrew language of the Old Testament into the Greek of the New. That is nothing for the reader to be overly concerned about.

(b) Isaiah’s “Galilee of the **nations**” and Matthew’s “Galilee of the **Gentiles**” brings out what has often been mentioned before in *The Remnant*, that in both the Hebrew and the Greek languages the same word is translated into English by four interchangeable English words: they are **nation** (or nations), **people** (or peoples), **heathen**, and **Gentile** (or Gentiles). All four words mean the exact same thing: non-Jews.

(c) Those who were spoken of in Isaiah’s day as “The people that *walked* in darkness” were, in Christ’s day, “the people which *sat* in

darkness.” Such changes are instructive, not “happenstance.” Isaiah really said *walked*, and Matthew really said *sat*. Why would we have this change, if it were not that seven centuries of *walking* in darkness is a great weariness to the flesh, and that necessitates a need for sitting down to rest? Could this be an anticipation of the rest God provided in Christ, which He later mentions in Matthew 11.28?

(d) Isaiah said that those who walked in darkness have **seen** a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light **shined**. Matthew says that “the people which sat in darkness **saw great light**; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death **light is sprung up**.” This NT clarification places the power not in *the people* who see it, but in *the Light itself*, or **Himself**, meaning that God, who is light (1 John 1.5), and more particularly the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Light of the world (John 8.12, 9.5), is the efficient cause of anyone’s seeing the great light, Jesus Christ.

4. **Study a theme through, or one book of the Bible at a time:** Examples of themes are **Jesus Christ**, as prophesied in the Old Testament and manifest in the New; **the first and second resurrections**; **prayer**, how to pray, what to pray for, and the purpose of prayer; **baptism**—where did it originate, its method, purpose; **grace, faith, law, works, Adam, Abraham, David**, or whatever subject or theme you are stirred to explore. To do this, one needs a good unabridged, exhaustive concordance such as Strong’s, which brings us to

5. **Get a good unabridged concordance for reference.** Nothing is more useless than the Arminian concordance found in the backs of most “study Bibles.” Arminians design concordances that are incomplete and slanted only toward helping “soul-winners” find texts to help

them get people to “know the Lord,” a totally useless, worthless pastime.

So, do not rely on the skimpy concordances found in the backs of most Bibles. A real concordance, complete with Hebrew and Greek dictionaries, is a necessity for anyone who is serious about finding out what God has said to His people. More about concordances will be said later on, Lord willing.

6. **Use a good dictionary to look up the meaning of words.** That is, a Webster’s or other reliable dictionary of the English language (or whatever language your Bible is written in). It should be complete enough that it will give the older meanings of words as they were used a hundred or more years ago. *Examples:*

(a) What does “concupiscence” mean? I still have to look it up in the dictionary every time I come across the three times it occurs in the KJV. (It means a lust or desire for what is forbidden.)

(b) We use the word “let” to mean allow or not to hinder. In the 1600s it meant the exact opposite; it meant to *hinder* or *prevent*. To King James and his translators, “...only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way (2 Thessalonians 2.7)” meant “he who now hinders (restrains, holds down) will hinder, until he be taken out of the way.” That is a word that *some* dictionaries can help you with.

(c) **Corn:** The Israelites did not have maize, “corn-on-the-cob,” the “Indian corn” with which we are most familiar nowadays. The word *corn* comes from a common root with the words *kernel* (“cornel”) and *grain*. The context will sometimes show what is meant. When Ruth gleaned “corn” in 2.14, we find it was actually barley (2.17).

7. **The Bible was written thousands of years ago** in a totally different **culture** with different **customs**, in a far different **part of**

the world. Do not think our customs and outlooks are anywhere near the same as those of the times in which the Bible was written:

(a) “**Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.**” “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.” “**While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.**”

Do not think for a moment the parable in Matthew 25 has anything to do with our modern wedding ceremonies with an organist playing Mendelssohn's “Wedding March,” complete with bride’s maids, a tiny ring-bearer, a little flower-girl, a young bride dominating the scene in a costly white gown, and a nervous groom leaning on his best man while the guests silently hum “Here Comes the Bride” to themselves. In this parable, the **bridegroom** (who *does* represent Christ the Lord) was the center of attention in those Bible days, not the bride. He is splendid in **His** apparel, “...as a bridegroom decketh HIMSELF with ornaments.” He did not deck himself in a somber black tuxedo and let his woman steal the day.

The virgins waiting for the bridegroom were **not** the bride. He was not going to marry all ten girls. They were the wedding party waiting for the groom **to bring his bride/wife back home** with him, not for him to bring her to a church wedding or a wedding chapel.

(b) “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For **thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head**, and the LORD shall reward thee (Proverbs 25.21f).”

Years ago I thought this meant that if I returned good to my enemy for evil he had done to me, it would be like throwing a shovelful of hot cinders in his face and smoldering ashes down his collar (revenge is sweet!).

Not so. In those days before central heat, stick matches, butane, propane tanks, lighters, and electric ranges, fire was a most important commodity. To be without fire could be a hazardous threat to the lives of a man and his family. People sometimes “borrowed” fire from their neighbors. We did it in the rural USA well into the twentieth century. In Bible days they carried the burning coals home in clay pots balanced on their heads. To “heap coals of fire upon his head” was not as vengeful an act as it sounds. It was giving him an important necessity of life. It was returning good for evil.

These few examples are given to illustrate the fact that we do not always understand the customs of biblical times. A book on the customs and practices of the Hebrews and other peoples of Bible times is most helpful to anyone who hopes to explore the Bible beyond the KJV English.

8. **Word meanings have changed.** Many of the meanings of the **words** in the Bible do not resemble the meaning of those same words today. Some words are obsolete and no longer used. Use the context, dictionary, and Strong’s.

9. **Note for each Bible book** you read, who wrote it, from where, to whom, and what the writer’s stated purpose was. It makes a vital difference who wrote something and to whom he wrote it, and why. Moses did not write to the New Testament church of Christ, but what he wrote is important in our understanding of where we are today. To grasp the Old Testament writings, we must filter them through the teachings of Christ and His apostles, more particularly, the writings of the apostle Paul, most particularly Paul’s letters to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the Thessalonians, and the Hebrews.

For example, **Paul wrote the book of Hebrews to the Hebrews to tell the Hebrews to quit being Hebrews.** If a soldier writes to his family back home, he did not write it to you, unless you are one of his family. **BUT** you might learn much about the man, his family, instructions he gives to his family in conducting family and financial affairs, what is happening on his assignment, and the like. In a similar manner, Paul did not write Hebrews to us Gentiles, but we Gentiles can learn much about Moses, the law (including the laws pertaining to the sacrifices), the Levitical priesthood, the priesthood of Melchisedec, and other Old Testament doctrines involving Israel, to Jewish believers, and to their relationship to Christ from what Paul wrote to the Hebrews. From there, as the Holy Spirit makes those truths evident to us, we can “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3.18).” This is true because “**All** scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3.16f).” That “**all** Scripture” means ALL Scripture, even those Scriptures which are not written directly to believers who are Gentiles by nature.

10. **Forget man’s traditions; stick with what the Scriptures say.** This can be tricky, because Paul said, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after **the tradition of men**, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (Colossians 2.8).” In so saying, he leaves room to follow **traditions** that are “after Christ”—that is, *Christ’s* established traditions.

Paul also said, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the **traditions** which ye have

been taught, whether by word, or our epistle (2 Thessalonians 2.15).” Again, this calls our attention to #10, above: To whom was Paul writing, when, and why? Surely he did not mean any, every, and **all traditions** we have ever been taught; if so we would be mired in traditions of Santa Claus and the Easter bunny, which is of course ridiculous.

When Paul wrote was before the New Testament was completed; the letters to the Thessalonian church were the first two letters Paul wrote. Romans, Corinthians, and Paul’s other epistles (letters) had not yet been written. The Thessalonian church may have had some of the Old Testament Scriptures, but they did not have any of the New Testament except for these two letters, First and Second Thessalonians. The “traditions which ye have been taught” were the oral teachings Paul and his traveling companions had given them before Paul was run out of town, and what had been taught by his companion Silas (and other brethren) after Paul had moved on to Berea.

11. **Remember the Scriptures are spiritual.** They are literal, also, as literal as a newspaper or a secular magazine. (Literalness does not take away from the Bible’s “spirituality.” Christ’s virgin birth was **literal**, but it was certainly **spiritual** also.) If the newspaper says an earthquake in China killed 5,000 people, no one thinks it is necessary to ask, “*How do you interpret* this ‘earthquake’?”

“Well,” answers Elder X, “I think it means thousands of the Chinese were convicted in their hearts and they died to sin but are alive unto God, like Romans 6.11 says.”

No, no one “interprets” the evening news in such a manner; they save that kind of nonsense for “interpreting” the Bible. An earthquake means an earthquake, whether it is in Zechariah, in Revelation, or in the Wall Street Journal.

12. **Read, read, and reread the same chapters and verses.** Read large portions of the Bible at a single reading, and read them over and over again. It is in this way one becomes familiar enough with the Scriptures to relate incidents that are five, ten, or twenty or more chapters apart. Again we emphasize this is not something merely of the flesh. Only the Holy Spirit, who is the Author of this book, can make it a living reality to His people. If God is not in it, "...much study is a weariness of the flesh (Ecclesiastes 12.12)."

Always keep in mind who is talking or writing, who is being addressed, and the purpose of the conversation or writing.

The Bible is not made of thousands of disjointed and unrelated verses piled up like so many M&Ms in a candy dish for us to pick our favorites and leave the others. It is one unified whole, a precision piece more accurately put together than the finest Swiss watch or the most excellent automobile imaginable by human standards. The Maker of this book is God, and not one jot or tittle of it will pass away. Men who change or ignore it will not thwart what God has said and purposed. Men change or ignore it at their own peril, and thereby they fulfill it.

As with anything else, by reading and rereading the Bible a book at a time (or some similar systematic method) one becomes more familiar with God's book.

Objection: "sometimes I am totally uninterested in reading it, and I seem to get nothing out of it."

Reply: That is covered in the text, "Preach the **word**; be instant in season, **out of season**; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and **doctrine** (2 Timothy 4.2)." Read the word daily, anyway; study the doctrine anyway. By God's grace the Spirit will leave His mark on your spirit. We are divinely built ("I am fear-

fully and wonderfully made," Psalm 139.14)," so that nothing ever passes though our brains without its finding a lodging in it. In God's providence He will bring to remembrance what it pleases Him to bring to you, whenever it pleases Him to do so. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14.26)." You do not remember something you have never experienced, but, once something is experienced, it will never leave the inner recesses of your mind.

An example of how texts distant from each other are sometimes providentially brought together might be in order here: When Isaac, old and blind, asked his son Jacob, "who art thou, my son?" Jacob replied, "I am Esau thy **firstborn**..." This happened in **Genesis 27**. From the time he told that lie and forward, we might say that, in one sense, from a *providential* standpoint, Jacob's troubles began. He fled from the fear of Esau's threat to kill him; his beloved mother Rebekah told him, "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; and tarry with him **a few days**, until thy brother's fury turn away; until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and *he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence*...(Genesis 27.42ff)." That "few days" turned into twenty years, Rebekah never sent for her beloved son Jacob, and she died without their ever having seen each other again.

Soon after, Jacob was deceived by Laban over a **firstborn** daughter, Leah, whom he (Jacob) was tricked into marrying, although he never really loved her. A coincidence? Never! Things do not "just happen" in God's unswerving predestination.

Many years later Jacob, now an old man himself, making his own burial plans, said: "In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. There **they** buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there **they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.**" (Jacob helped bury Isaac but not his mother Rebekah.)

THEY buried my dad (and mother), he says; I did not. I was occupied elsewhere, in Padanaram, where my mother sent me "for a few days" for my safety. I never saw my mom again. I didn't even bury my beloved Rachel, the only woman I ever loved, there. I buried her on the trail, near Bethlehem, after she died giving birth to my last son, Benjamin.

Truly the sad old man could give testimony to what Paul later said: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

But that is not the whole story of what came of "**Who art thou, my son?**" "**I am Esau thy firstborn...**" Over twenty years later, Jacob still feared his brother Esau's vow of revenge. The night before he met Esau, he wrestled with "a man," whom many believe was the angel of the Lord, or an Old Testament pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved (verse 30)."

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

And he said unto him, **What is thy name? And he said, Jacob** (Genesis 32.24ff)."

The Lord picks up exactly where Jacob's relationship with Him left off. From Genesis 27 to this point in chapter 32, when Jacob is brought to confess the truth, I am Jacob, his sin and deception remains unresolved. He is brought back to admitting who he really was: a supplanter still in mortal fear of Esau's vengeance. Only then did God take up with the blessing of his father Isaac: "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed (verse 28)."

The relationship of Genesis 27.18f and Genesis 32.24, together with all the intervening details, is easy to lose in those details themselves, and easy to miss using the "chapter-a-day" Bible reading method. Such important things must be given us by the Holy Spirit. From the experimental or personal standpoint, this is brought to our remembrance in our familiarity with the text, which in turn is brought about by a regular reading of the Book.

13. Pay close attention to little words.

A major doctrine can hinge on a two- or three-letter word such as *in*, *to*, *by*, *as*, or *for*.

Example: "... he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed **IN** his deed (James 1.25b)." Almost anyone should notice right away that James did not say this man shall be blessed **FOR** his deed. He said he will be blessed **IN** the doing of the deed, and that is not because you earned the blessing by doing it "all by yourself." You are blessed **IN** the deed because "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2.13)." (Do not let will-worshipers put you off with some comment like "that makes man a robot and makes you a fatalist." Remember, even Christ

did not take credit for His words and deeds. He said in John 14.10, “the words that I speak unto you *I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.*”)

14. **The books of the Bible were written by Jews, for God’s people, but originally it was almost exclusively written to the Lord’s children among the Jews. The main exceptions are Paul’s church epistles addressed to the seven Gentile churches and the letters he wrote to individual Gentile church members like Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, and a very few other exceptions. Even the epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude were written to Christian believers from among the Israelites, who, for one reason or another, were scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Hence James wrote to “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting,” and Peter wrote to “the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.”**

Lest we be tempted to believe the spiritualizers who will tell us the *twelve tribes* to whom James wrote were “spiritual Israel, the Gentile church,” and the *strangers* to whom Peter wrote were the same, we may let Paul settle the issue:

“But contrariwise, when they saw that **the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;** (For he that wrought effectually in **Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision,** the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles;) and when **James, Cephas, and John,** who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that **we should go unto**

the heathen, and they [i.e., James, Cephas, and John would go] unto the circumcision.”—Galatians 2.7-9

This point does not mean we cannot learn from every single book of the Bible, as before mentioned; for we can learn much from any and all of the Bible, if God is in the matter. This point (#14) is just another way of saying: Be aware of who is writing, to whom he is writing, and why, or what his purpose is in the Scripture he has written—what he is saying and why he is saying it in this specific way.

When Paul writes, “*Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law* (Galatians 4.21) ?” I trust he is not saying this to or about most of our readers, for most of our readers do not desire to be under the law. But those of us who do not desire to be under the law are vindicated by Paul’s text here. We are justified in our belief in and reliance upon the freedom in Christ and we can therefore rejoice in what Paul is saying to the churches of Galatia.

15. **When the Bible was written, the day began at sundown instead of at midnight or at dawn as the Gentile nations have variously defined a day.** God created days and years in the first place; it is His privilege to say what a day is and a year is. “And the evening and the morning were the first day (Genesis 1.5)” ; not “sunup to sundown” or “midnight till the next midnight.” Man thinks he must always be improving on God’s doings.

Originally, the year was 360 days, made up of twelve moon months of thirty days each. **Prophetically, that is the way it still is.** Man changes his calendars, but God has never had any need to change. That is why the 3 1/2 years are variously described as “a time, times, and an half (Daniel 7.12),” or “a time and times and the dividing of time (Daniel 7.25),”

“a time, and times, and half a time (Revelation 12.14),” or “forty and two months (Revelation 11.2, 13.5)” or 1,260 days (Revelation 11.3, 12.6). They all figure the same: 3.5 years.

16. Some chapter divisions are in the middle of a subject (See 2 Timothy 2.15):

In your reading, therefore, ignore the Chapter divisions. Read from the start of a *subject, not a chapter*, to its end. Remember: A few centuries ago, there were no chapter and verse divisions.

You have no doubt noticed that when Bible writers or speakers refer to another place in the Scriptures they do not give the “chapter and verse.” Rather they say things like “For David speaketh concerning him,” “As he saith also in another place,” “It is written,” “...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet,” “Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying...”, or “As he saith also in Osee [Hosea].” These references were vague because at the time of the Bible’s being written there were no verses and chapters to which Jesus, Paul, and the others could refer.

The injunction about rightly dividing the word of truth strongly implies there is *a wrong way* to divide the word of truth; this includes manmade chapter and verse divisions.

Men invented chapter and verse divisions and put them in the Bible as a convenience so people could quickly find a citation instead of having to hunt through Isaiah (or one of the other Old Testament writers) for hours on end for a text when John says (chapter 12), “But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that **the saying of Esaias the prophet** [We wonder, “where?"] **might be fulfilled**, which he spake, ‘Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?’ [We wonder, “*Where did he say that?*”] There-

fore they could not believe, **because that Esaias said again** [We wonder, where?], ‘He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.’ [We wonder, “*Where did he say that?*”] These things said **Esaias**, when he saw his glory, and **spake of Him** [We wonder, “*Where...?*”].” So now we have the convenience of chapters, verses, and marginal references; but sometimes we are “conveniently” misled by these “helpful” divisions.

The insertion of chapters and verse divisions was providentially controlled by God, but they are not inspired as the original text is. Examples:

A. Isaiah 53: The “53rd chapter” should begin where the subject begins, at Isaiah 52.13: “**Behold, my servant** shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men: So shall He sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” etc.

Behold My Servant is God’s subject-theme from 52.13 through the end of (what we call) chapter 53. “His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men” is part of the portrait continued in verses 4-5 following: “we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”

“His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men” is perhaps the most graphic part of the entire passage. Its literal rendering is terrible; it says His face (“visage”) was pounded into such a bloody pulp (“marred”) that He no longer could be recognized as a human being (“more than any man...more than the sons of men.”)

B. John 7.53 and 8.1: There should be no chapter break here. The “seventh chapter” should continue: “And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.” By observing the chapter division we miss the continuity of the fact that no one extended any hospitality to the Lord of Glory; and He had no home of His own on this earth. Others went home to bed, but Jesus camped out that night beneath the olive trees.

C. 2 Timothy 4.1 follows chapter 3.16-17: When Paul says, “I charge thee **THEREFORE** before God...” what is the **therefore** there for? Read it in context with what goes before, and the text takes on new meaning: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”*

17. SUBJECT DIVISIONS: This is a somewhat different approach, in that when studying a subject—which may run into hundreds of references—one should be aware of exactly what is being said about the subject and any changes from one subject to another within a text. A few examples:

A. Israel versus the Church: Israel is the nation of twelve tribes descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (whose name God changed to Israel). The twelve tribes are named after Israel’s twelve sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah (from whose name we get the word “Jew”), Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. When someone says the church is “spiritual Israel” (a term that occurs nowhere in the Bible), ask them which “spiritual **tribe**” they are a member of.

The church is the body of Christ, a local assembly of His saints the Father has chosen and Christ has redeemed by His blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Revelation 5.9). Study the differences between Israel and the church as well as the similarities, *i.e.*, what they have in common.

B. The Kingdom of Heaven versus the Kingdom of God: Jesus Christ defined the kingdom of God with two simple statements to Nicodemus: (1) “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” and, (2) “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3.3, 5).”

Without this spiritual birth, a person can neither see nor enter into the kingdom of **GOD.** That is how Christ defined it, which should be good enough for all concerned.

That definition, by itself, would leave the rest of creation exempt from God’s ruling over it, except for this: This is where the kingdom of heaven comes in: “The LORD hath prepared His throne in the **heavens**; and His kingdom ruleth over **ALL**(Psalm 103.19).”

To ignore this distinction leads to nothing but confusion. It is necessary for the one who would understand these two terms to always observe this distinction in order to understand

which kingdom the Bible writer is speaking about.

It is also important to remember that since the kingdom of heaven rules over **all**, and the kingdom of God is composed only of God's children, it follows that (a) the kingdom of God is only a part, or a proper subset, of the kingdom of heaven, which is all-inclusive; (b) some things said of the kingdom of heaven therefore do apply to God's children; (c) The references to the kingdom of heaven in the parables and prophecies of the kingdom of heaven, as recorded in Matthew, often apply to His future reign on the earth. For example, when Christ bid His disciples to pray, "...Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in [or *on*] earth, as it is in heaven," it was a direct reference *back* to the kingdom of heaven which He and John had been preaching (Matthew 3.2, 4.17, 5.3, 5.10, 5.19-21, and *forward* to His yet future earthly rule upon this earth from the throne of His father David (Luke 1.32-33, Psalm 2.8f). Thanks to two thousand years of Rome's influence, there is much confusion about what the kingdom of heaven is. The Jews to whom John the Baptist, Jesus, and His apostles preached the kingdom of heaven had no such confusion. They realized John and the Lord Jesus were announcing the prophesied and long-awaited retribution of the kingdom of David, the destruction of Israel's enemies, and Christ's universal earthly rule.

Ignoring this distinction contributes without end to the errors of Arminianism and her twin sister, Conditionalism. If the Lord will bless you to do so, look deeply into what Christ, John the Baptist, and the apostle Paul say about these two kingdoms. Deliberately ignoring this distinction adds to the confusion of Arminians and Conditionalists who ever look on outward appearances and wonder if afflictions are God's

punishment upon them. If that were the way it is, examining Paul's life would lead us to conclude that he was the most disobedient and rebellious saint who ever lived.

(To be continued, Lord willing)

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A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES:

The following is an outline of principles the readers of *The Remnant* may expect to see maintained in this publication. Under no circumstances do the publishers or writers for *The Remnant* seek to delineate herein a standard of doctrine or views to be imposed upon the readers. Rather, we set these principles before the readers that they may know what general principles guide our efforts. All attempts at declaring articles of faith will be marred by prejudices and frailty, and ours are by no means any exception.

We believe these principles are, in the main, harmonious with the articles of faith published by predestinarian associations and churches of the old order of Baptists known as Primitive, Particular, or Old School Baptists the world over.

1—The eternal existence, sovereignty, immutability, omnipotence, and perfections of Jehovah God; He has revealed Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these sacred Three are One; Jesus Christ was and is God manifest in the flesh, and in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

2—The Old and New Testaments in their original languages are the verbally inspired word of God, and they are the complete and only valid guide of faith and practice; the King James Version is the preferred English translation;

3—The will of the eternal God is the first cause of all causes;

4—The absolute predestination of all things;

5—The eternal personal election of the redeemed in Christ, before the world began, and their eternal, vital union with Him; their number is fixed, certain, and sure, and can neither be increased nor diminished; their fall in

their federal head Adam into spiritual death, total depravity, and just condemnation; their utter inability to recover themselves from this fallen state;

6—The blood atonement and redemption by Jesus Christ are for the elect only, and are both efficacious and effectual in accomplishing the will and purpose of God to reconcile His people unto Himself;

7—The sovereign, irresistible, effectual work of the Holy Spirit in quickening the elect of God; the new birth is by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit without the use of any means;

8—The final preservation, perseverance, and eternal happiness of all the sons of God, by grace alone;

9—No works are good works other than those which God Himself has so designated; none of the works called good are left up to men to perform or not, at the creature's discretion; nor do the works of the creature, either before or after regeneration, result in merit accruing to his account in God's sight;

10—The peaceable fruits of righteousness are the certain result of God's working in His people both to will and to do of His good pleasure, and His people will be found walking in paths of righteousness for His name's sake;

11—The separation of church and state;

12—The principles outlined in the Black Rock Address of 1832;

13—The bodily resurrection, first of Christ, and also that of all the dead;

14—The final and eternal judgment; and,

15—The bliss of the redeemed and the torment of the wicked are both eternal and everlasting.