

Understanding the Scriptures

Chapter One

I left you in the Introduction of understanding the scriptures at the analogy of baseball and being born again to be first base and you had to reach first base to begin your Christian life. From there on you will be led by the Holy Spirit and by the word of God and the word is the bible. If you have not been born again then I also offer you some ways to begin to understand the scriptures and open your heart to receive the Holy Spirit into your heart. It is not about joining churches and is not about denominations but is about you as an individual joining “the Church which is the body of Christ”. If you seek and search with a sincere heart, then the Lord Jesus will meet you on that journey and lead you safely home.

Basic ground rules for understanding the Bible.

The bible is a complex accumulation of writing from many different writers but is directed by one power, which is the God of all creation, with one continuous message. You may not see it that way at first, but it is essential to understanding the bible that you know that the spirit of God has directed the writings and that they are blended together for a purpose that can be revealed only by the ultimate author. Therefore, you will need a guide to help you on your journey. That guide is the Holy Spirit, and He will teach you if you diligently seek to know the truth. For a general guide I like to see the big picture first then go back and fill in the details. My overriding rule is that the whole bible is the word of God, and you cannot take parts of the bible out and cannot add things that are not written. If you do, you have placed man’s word above God’s word. There will be differences of opinion about the meanings at times but let the bible be the referee of which is correct. Do not say I do not believe that –such as you do not believe there is a hell. When you say that you are calling Jesus a liar for, He talked about hell many times and often warned us to do whatever it takes to keep from going there. Therefore, you must believe the whole word, or you will have a corrupted word. For me I like to look at the historical picture of the bible.

1. What timeframe are we in?
2. Who is doing the writing?
3. What is the subject or context they are talking about?

4. Is the writing about the current time of the writing period or future or past? Be aware that often the time or events may have switched in the middle of the writing and may have a dual meaning of a future time. Also be aware that all writings are not in chronological order or not necessarily in sequential order.
5. Many writings are written in Chiastic method which is common in the bible. A Chiastic writing is one in which the first item is related to the last and the second is related to the third. Do not get trapped in expecting everything to flow without interruptions but may be separated by a different subject. Spiritual understanding is needed to tell the difference. It is also necessary to understand the whole bible because the answer or clarification may be in another part of the bible.
6. Prophecies are often written with large gaps of time between one part and another. There may be hundreds of years or even thousands of years. These prophecies are also not necessarily in continuing sequence. There may be a gap and then it starts again about a later time.
7. There are many times when things are said that have another spiritual meaning. These times require spiritual understanding and extensive bible knowledge and history knowledge. These are often referred to as types and shadows which are literal for the present time but are shadows of things that will happen in the future. I will give you examples later.
8. God has been speaking from the beginning with symbols and seasons and days and weeks and ages. You may be reading about days, but it may mean years or even a thousand years. A week may mean seven days or seven years. Sometimes we will not know except by history. Therefore, expect that God has spoken to us in these symbols and such and you are to use your spiritual eyes to understand along with your knowledge of history as a guide.
9. God also uses numbers to teach us. 1 is for one God. --3 is for the God head of Father, Son and Holy Spirit --5 is referred to as Grace --6 is the number of man --7 is for completeness --8 is for a new beginning --12 is for God's government. These are the ones I remember of the top of my head. There are probably more such a 40 which is the years spent in the wilderness and the days Jesus spent in the wilderness and it rained 40 day and 40 nights which seems to be a time of testing? So, numbers are important communications from God. The earth was created in 6 days and God rested

on the 7th. These are not coincidental numbers God has used them for a reason. I may write more extensively on numbers later.

10. The use of names is also used to teach us like symbols are used. A name has meaning in Hebrew and therefore is a part of the story. Jesus is the English name but in Hebrew it is Yahshua. There are many similar names and have an associated meaning but are spelled differently. I will write more on names later.
11. You must remember that every word has a reason for being in the bible. These words however must be studied with the context in mind and with study to find the meaning. You cannot start cutting out parts of the bible that you do not agree with or do not like or do not understand. Your study should be with a translation and not a paraphrase edition. You can read the others but not to study by. Every word has a purpose we must believe the whole word even though we may not understand it at the time. I will write more later. Every book is essential to the full understanding of the complete message. Study them all.
12. The word is veiled and is not going to be understood with just human logic. It is veiled because understanding the word is reserved for those that are true believers. Those that are unbelievers may never understand until they humble themselves and submit to the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Do not give up if at first do not understand but submit yourself in humility to the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter Two

Exploring churches and denominations

I will try to give you some examples and clarifications of some of these types and shadows and numbers and names and symbols as they relate to some scriptures and at the same time to teach some key scriptures. I know that a lot of denominations have not taught the whole word and you may be at a disadvantage because you have never heard the books of Daniel and Ezekiel and Jeremiah and Zachariah and Isaiah and Revelation. In some churches these are ignored because they think these books cannot be understood or maybe they do not want to face what they say and therefore disprove their theologies. I do not write to prove or disprove theologies but to teach what the word of God says on all subjects without

bias toward denominations or belief. There are many errors and distortions of the truth out there and the words of scriptures will undoubtedly hit some of the errors right in the face.

Therefore, I must write from a nondenominational viewpoint. I seek the truth and am willing to follow the word wherever it leads us. I must seek to teach what the bible teaches regardless of denominational differences. Many denominations have some things right and a few things that may need further discussion.

Some denominations have taken a wrong turn somewhere in their journey and have not gone back to rethink their teachings. I do not usually write about movies or books but in this case, I think it illustrates the point of making wrong decisions by whole denominations who may have had the correct theology at one time but changed to a false theology later, so they are not the same denomination as they were in the beginning. So, I tell you a story from a movie.

You may remember the movie "Driving Miss Daisy". Miss Daisy had gotten older and needed a driver to get her where she wanted to go. She was not pleased about her son's insistence on her having a driver therefore, she was not very cooperative and did not want to give up control. One day she wanted to go to Mobile to celebrate a family birthday. So, they set out on the trip with Miss Daisy in the back seat with the map and the driver without any knowledge of how to get to Mobile except by Miss Daisy giving directions of where to go. This trip progressed well until they got to Opelika, and she missed the turn and went a long way down the wrong road. They were headed to a wrong destination. Miss Daisy discovered the mistake and had the driver turn around and go back to Opelika and get back on the right road to Mobile.

Therefore, the movie reminds me that some denominations have taken the wrong turn in their theology and need to go back to Opelika and get back on track to their original destination of the Kingdom of God. Their destination has been going to the wrong place and they are taking their congregation like this driver to the wrong place and if they continue the present course they will end in destruction and take their congregations with them. Congregations beware of false teachers they may be leading you to the wrong place. Congregations you must know the word and

have the Holy Spirit abiding in you. You may have to leave your denomination if they do not go back to Opelika and correct their course.

Point two—The one with the map which is the bible do not share the whole word with the congregation but have corrupted the word and have by teaching incorrectly or not teaching what should be taught. The congregations are trusting the leader with the road map and are trusting because they have been to seminary and therefore know more than themselves, so they are trusting teachers and preachers from the pulpit instead of the written word. Warning to these false teachers that have distorted the word and have removed large portions of the bible from their teaching. That is why the books of Daniel and Revelation along with other prophetic writing are not taught at all. They are fully true from the time they were written and are true until the last of their prophecies are fulfilled.

There are also some beliefs that are not Christian but look similar in some ways. Beware of these for their central belief is not in Jesus Christ as Son of God and that He came and died on the cross to save us from our sins and that He arose from the tomb on the third day and walked about with His resurrected body to witness the truth of His resurrection and to witness to us that as believers that we are also to be resurrected one day as He was. Their central belief is not in the written word of God and in the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that brings about our changed hearts. Therefore, be aware there are counterfeit churches.

Then there are churches that only need to go back to where they got off track and restudy the scripture from the viewpoint of finding the truth. Some of these churches have fallen prey to believing in a man's teaching or an organization teaching and have lost the search for truth. Some may have started out well and believed a solid theology but through the years have forgotten their beliefs and picked up the worlds belief and have been contaminated by world views and thinking and tossed aside what the bible teaches believing the world view over the bible view. Unless these churches reverse course, they are in a death spiral. Remember that we have an enemy which is Satan who goes about lying and stealing and deceiving. This goes on in the organizational church but to those who are in Christ, having been born again should be operating in the word and the spirit of Christ and should be resisting errors in teachings and we must be able to properly interpret the scriptures and offer truth in Love.

It is a hard thing to turn around a whole organization. It is like a train that has gotten on the wrong track and does not have a single driver but has many trying to turn the train around. It may be impossible, but God is able to turn it around, but He may try to save individuals from the train and let the train crash. This was the warning to some of the churches in Revelation. Repent and turn to your first love or your lamp stand will be taken away.

Therefore, my conclusion is there should not be any denominations in the kingdom of God for we are supposed to be brothers and sisters in Christ and there will not be denominations in heaven but will be one as Jesus prayed, we would be one. So, our road map is the bible as translated from the original text and not twisted to fit personal opinions and denominational opinions. Stick to the word.

Therefore, be aware of all teachings that do not line up with the teachings of the bible. Many of the mainline denominations have not rethought their beliefs based on the happenings of recent history and I refer you to history that has started to change in drastic ways in the last 100 to 150 years and many denominations have not adjusted to this new information that God has given us. They need to readdress their thought process to include these new revelations of history.

As one example I talk to you about the belief of "Replacement Theology". This belief says that the church has replaced Israel in God's plan for mankind. It may have appeared to make sense before the Zionist movement began somewhere in the 18 hundreds. This now has come into full bloom in the 19 hundreds and continuing into the 2000's. Israel has now become a nation again and "is a heavy stone and if the nations try to lift it, they will be hurt". If we then go back and re-read the scriptures, we will find that is what the scriptures had already told us, but we did not have understanding.

We need to constantly readjust our thinking process for God is setting up nations and taking down nations. The world is still changing, and God has told us much in the scriptures. If we will study with the thought of finding the truth instead of trying to make the scriptures fit our beliefs. We must submit our beliefs to the test of the scriptures.

So, I say to you there was an Israel established many years ago by God's sovereign hand and there will be an Israel at the end of the age of the gentiles which is Christ's second return. There is a church age that began about 2000 years ago and has

continued until today, but the church age will end sometime before the second coming of Christ. There will be a time of great tribulation that Israel will have to go through, but the church will not go through this wrath of God. So, Israel has not been replaced but has been set aside to make room for the church age and for Israel to reach the place that God has appointed for them. Please read my writing on the Age of the Gentiles located in bible lessons under the prophecy section and you will get a detailed teaching.

Stay in love and seek the true word!

Howard