

Hednesford Pentecostal Church

Rightly Dividing God's Word

Unless otherwise stated all Bible references are taken from “*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*”, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

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1. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary
Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible
Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible
Enhanced Strong's Lexicon

2. INTRODUCTION

2 Tim 3:16. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

Psa 119:97. Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

The interpretation of the Bible, understanding what a particular passage means, is called Hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics is said to be both a science and an art. It is a science because there are defined rules which should be applied, but it is also an art because these rules are not sufficient in themselves.

John 14:21. "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

The two prerequisite of growing in the godly life are: knowing God's word and obeying God's word. Those who are spiritually growing have a great appetite for the God's word.

1 Pet 2:2. as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,

The student of the Word seeks to meet with God, hear from God, learn about God, receive answers and direction from God and find application which needs obedience. They submit themselves to the word, seeking to be its disciple and not its critic or commentator.

2 Tim 2:15. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Acts 20:27. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

It is important that we understand the balance of teaching from the whole of Scripture on a subject. There are no contradictions in Scripture. But we do need to realize that revelation has been progressive throughout the writing of the Bible. We need to apply different weight or priority to some passages over others.

We understand that Jesus' teaching has superseded the Old Testament dietary laws. There may be more Old Testament commands on the subject, but just one verse from Jesus is sufficient to relegate such teaching to a past dispensation. This is because of WHO is speaking.

Mark 7:18-19. So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, {19} because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?"

Elsewhere Jesus describes the shortcomings in Moses' commands concerning divorce. The New Testament requirement of saints is more stringent because of the problem of the hardness of man's heart can be dealt with through the new birth.

Mark 10:5. And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

3. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY

Four keys to understand what a Bible passage is saying:

- *Observation:*

Do I understand the basic facts of the passage such as the meaning of all the words?

- *Interpretation:*

What did the author mean in his own historical setting?

- *Evaluation:*

What does this passage mean in today's culture?

- *Application:*

How can I apply what I have learned to how I live my life?

3.1. BIBLICAL CRITICISM

There are a number of literal techniques used in the scientific study of ancient books, including the Bible. This is called Literary Criticism. The name of this discipline might suggest to some that it is opposed to or critical of the Bible, but this is not the case. The intention is to help the reader understand the Bible better.

Textual Criticism is the examination of the existing Hebrew and Greek manuscripts from which the English Bible is translated. It is an attempt to determine, as accurately as possible, the original wording of the text as first written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Historic Criticism is the examination of the Bible in light of history so the reader may better understand a book that records events from the beginning of civilization in the ancient world to the Roman Empire of the first century AD. Historical criticism is helpful in determining when the books of the Bible were written, since not all the authors provide that information. Some books in the Bible, like Genesis, have a dramatic date (the time of the events described) which is much earlier than when the book was written. Historical criticism asks if the details of the stories reflect the conditions of the times in which they supposed to have happened. The consensus is that these stories better reflect their dramatic date than the dates of their writing.

Literary Criticism is the consideration of when, where, and why the books of the Bible were written. Literary criticism may be divided into a number of subdivisions.

3.2. THE BIBLE IS A DIVINE BOOK

The Bible is a spiritual book, which is closed to those who are not in a relationship with God. Human intellect, labour or reason cannot assist us in correctly understanding what God is saying and what it means.

1 Cor 2:14. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Reading and studying the scriptures are therefore spiritual exercises, in which we are trying to meet with God and hear what he is saying. They need to be undertaken prayerfully.

2 Tim 2:7. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

2 Tim 2:7 (NIV) Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

3.2.1. The Holy Spirit

Jesus gives us His Holy Spirit to interpret and bring to life the word to us.

John 14:26. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

1 John 2:27. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

John here is not suggesting that there is no need for teachers in the body of Christ, but rather he is combating a lie from the Gnosticism heresy that great revelations and insights were given to individuals who were of the intellectual elite. The same spirit of revelation, John argues is given to all believers.

3.2.2. Seducing Spirits

Over the years there have been numerous people who have built up and promoted erroneous doctrines, which they have based on isolated verses, taken out of context. The same sense of spiritual excitement and elation we experience when God shows us something, can be induced by deceiving spirits.

1 John 4:1. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 John 1:8. If we say that we have no sin, **we deceive ourselves**, and the truth is not in us.

No true revelation from God will contradict Scripture. When anyone claims they have been shown a truth which is at variance with written word they are in error. For example I have heard a person claim that God told them that a person must never be angry, and indeed all anger was sin. Yet the word says "Be angry, and do not sin" (Eph 4:26). Their revelation was false. There are times when anger is the just and correct response. God expresses anger.

3.2.3. Having a Right Spirit

Mat 6:23. "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

The attitudes we have in our spirit colour and filter the things we see and hear. Bad attitudes can blind us to God's word and make us deaf to correction. In this state we only spot passages that confirm our prejudices.

Luke 9:55. But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.

We all live in a particular mix of culture and context. We are influenced by our national culture, our ethnic culture, our family culture and our economic culture. We tend to view the world around us through the framework of our cultural background. In discerning the intended meaning of a passage we have to attempt to adjust to the different culture of the day.

Jude 1:17-21. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: {18} how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. {19} These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. {20} But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, {21} keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Some people can have an unteachable spirit, usually those who are arrogant and conceited. Paul says that we all only know in part.

1 Cor 13:9. For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

We may have received a revelation or insight from God, but that does not mean that we know the whole truth on that issue. Somebody else could have an insight that will complement our knowledge.

3.3. THE BIBLE IS A HUMAN BOOK

God provided Scripture for human beings to read, and it is therefore a human book, which should be interpreted like any other book. It takes common sense to correctly discern the Bible, and those who abandon common sense are easily deceived.

If I am systematically reading through the Bible, then sooner or later I will read every verse. So on the morning I read a particular passage, has God stored up that verse just for me? We may find that our daily reading does answer our questions, or sooth our troubles; but when we start believing everything is a personal message from God, rather than a generic statement, we can get in a great deal of trouble.

For example:

Ezek 24:16-19. "Son of man, behold, I take away from you the desire of your eyes with one stroke; yet you shall neither mourn nor weep, nor shall your tears run down. {17} Sigh in silence, make no mourning for the dead; bind your turban on your head, and put your sandals on your feet; do not cover your lips, and do not eat man's bread of sorrow." {18} So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died; and the next morning I did as I was commanded. {19} And the people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these things signify to us, that you behave so?"

3.3.1. Grammar

We are to look at the grammar of a passage carefully to see what it says. I have heard people quote a text at another person in order to have a go at them, as though quoting the text added some weight or authority to their argument.

Two examples are: "Much learning is driving you mad!" and "You, O troubler of Israel?"

What the person quoting these passages did not take into account was that in both cases the charges were made by ungodly men against a saint!

Acts 26:24. Now as he thus made his defence, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

and

1 Ki 18:17. Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"

3.3.2. Understand the Context

The primary rule of biblical interpretation is "context." Let a passage speak for itself within the context of the paragraph, chapter, or book and the majority of errors in interpretation can be avoided.

There is the context of the passage; how an argument is being developed, who is speaking, what is the theme of the passage.

There is the historic context; has what is being said been superseded, does it still apply today.

There is the context of the addressee. To whom is the original passage talking. A promise (or threat) being made may be specific to a group of the people at the time. For example

Phil 4:19. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

This is an unlimited and yet conditional promise. But it is not a promise that just anyone can read and appropriate for themselves. The preceding verse describe to whom the promise is being made:

Phil 4:15-18. Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. {16} For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. {17} Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. {18} Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

Those who are walking with God, obeying and living by the principles of the word can rest upon these verses. But those who live for themselves (saved or unsaved) may find that they will reap what they have sown.

For another example let us consider:

Isa 45:3. I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the LORD, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel.

We like the thought of being given treasures and riches, but when we look at the historical context we see that God was speaking to someone specifically:

Isa 45:1-3. "Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held; to subdue nations before him and loose the armour of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut: {2} 'I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron. {3} I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel.

It is referring to gold and jewels kept safe in foreign kingdoms, which Cyrus would receive.

To the New Testament believer there are also "hidden riches of secret places". The Secret Place is a personal communion with God, the place where we hear God and receive revelation. So we can use this verse in a poetic sense to illustrate the importance of our quite time.

It is also possible that the Holy Spirit could quicken the phrase "*I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places*" to a believer at a particular time. They would then be encouraged to believe that God was about to supply the need that they had been praying for. The

danger is that another believer reading through this passage decides that it is a promise which he will claim for himself.

3.3.3. Exegesis

The problem is our bias, or our subjectivity. We can approach a passage thinking we already understand it, and in doing so we read our own meaning into the passage. This is called eisegesis. (*Eis* is a Greek preposition meaning “into”). In doing this some have produced some really obscure proof texts to back up their ideas.

But interpreting the Bible correctly demands that we listen to what the text itself is saying, and then draw the meaning out of the passage. This is called exegesis. (*Ex* is a Greek preposition meaning “out of.”) If we let a passage be defined by what it and the surrounding verses say, then we have taken a large step toward interpreting the Bible properly. Only by watching the context carefully and by letting the passage speak for itself do we give Scripture the respect it deserves.

3.4. MAJOR ON MAJORS

Mat 23:23. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

The Scribes and Pharisees knew all the rules and requirements about cleaning pots and tithing, but they had overlooked the foundational principles of mercy and justice. They were majoring on minors. Similarly it is important that we keep the first things first. There are major principles in Scripture, fundamental issues and foundational truths. These are our priority.

There are also little known things, issues that the Scripture may only hint at. This should indicate how important we should consider the topic. It's not worth falling out over such things.

Deut 29:29. "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

There were those in the New Testament church who believed that not eating meat was an important issue. Paul reminded them that church unity and loving each other was more important than being proved right or seen to be more spiritual.

3.4.1. Breadth of Opinion

There are some issues, concerning which there is a breadth of opinion, even among born-again, Spirit-filled believers and even though some of these may be important. For example: The Last Days, The Account of Creation, The Book of Revelation, issues such as healing.

Most of us believe what we believe simply because that is what we have been taught. We need to know what we believe and why we believe it.

Acts 17:10-11. Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. {11} These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

There are, and there always have been false teachers who seek to draw disciples after themselves.

It is no bad thing to read wider opinions than our own. We should know how to answer any questions that arise from such discussion.

3.4.2. Contend for the Truth

Jude 1:3. Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

The saints of God must contend for, fight for, the faith. This faith was delivered to the saints. We have a responsibility to keep the doctrine pure, unsullied and available. "Once for all" means that nothing is missing, nothing needs to be added.

Although we are to earnestly contend for the faith, the servant of the Lord must not be contentious, but gentle and Christ-like.

3.5. PARALLEL TRUTHS

Scripture contains apparently opposing truths, which from a human perspective are held in tension. For example the Sovereignty of God and the Free Will of Man.

In describing God and eternity to finite human beings, the Bible seeks to give us an insight. There are many things which we will never fully grasp or understand.

Some people on failing to understand the reasons behind a passage, draw a false conclusion about the character of God, and go off in a huff. For example, why did God order the slaughter of all living creatures when Israel invaded Canaan? People have fallen away over that issue, failing to believe the principle "God is love".

God wants to bring us to faith through his word, before he wants to bring us to understanding.

Some things in Scripture are hard to understand:

2 Pet 3:15-16. and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, {16} as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

Our lack of understanding should not mean that we cannot believe them to be true.

Heb 11:3. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

3.6. THREE WITNESSES

Important issues within Scripture will be clearly supported. Obscure issues which are only referred to once are secondary issues. A good rule of thumb is that if something is important it will be supported by two or more references.

The Law described the good practice of having two or more witnesses when seeking to establish facts in a dispute. This is a good principle to follow with reference to issues in Scripture.

2 Cor 13:1. This will be the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

Deut 19:15. "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.

Mat 18:16. "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'

3.7. ASK QUESTIONS

When reading a passage we have to ask certain questions.

3.7.1. Who is saying this?

For instance if it is the Pharisees or Job's comforters speaking, then we are not going to consider their word carries as much weight as when Jesus is speaking. Part of Psa 53:1 says "there is no God". Does the Bible say "There is no God." No of course not. The Bible records:

Psa 53:1. The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God"...

3.7.2. What would the original hearers have understood by this passage?

In interpreting a passage there have been those who have proposed a fanciful solution which the original hearers could have in no way known.

The following verse was taken by a small group of Christians some years ago to mean that the Lord was returning to the particular mountain in Wales where they were located.

Isa 25:6. And in **this mountain** the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees.

This is an eschatological passage referring to events in Israel. This small error led to spiritual pride and the group became more and more cult like before disbanding.

3.7.3. What's the theme of the passage?

Verses should be understood in relationship to the surrounding verses.

3.7.4. What's the unchanging principle the passage is teaching?

Certain passages have been superseded, for example the dietary law of the Old Testament. That does not mean that New Testament believers should not read them, nor does it mean that they have no relevance. We could conclude that it is important to God that we take care of, and not take for granted, our bodies.

3.7.5. What is the application?

Is there anything I should do, or should not do, as a result of understanding this passage?

4. SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

John 5:38-40. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. {39} You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. {40} But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

The Scribes and the Pharisees searched the Scriptures, but they did not have the word living in them (v38).

Bible study is a spiritual exercise, the aim of which is to hear God with spiritual ears. It is easy to allow this to degenerate into a cerebral exercise, particularly in our Hellenistic / scientific culture. We mistakenly gather all the Scriptures on a topic, categorise them, weigh them and then draw conclusions from them. The natural mind cannot receive the things of God.

1 Cor 2:14. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Paul mentions three categories of people: the natural man, who cannot recognize, discern or understand spiritual truths: the spiritual man (verse 15), who is regenerated and spiritually mature and is able to discern all things: and the carnal man (3:1), who although regenerate is immature and lives according to the flesh, being motivated by personal and human opinion rather than the Spirit of God, judging situations and people by natural standards.

Rom 10:17. So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The word of God is truth. Faith awakens at the voice of truth. Faith doesn't come by study, reason or logic; but solely by receiving the word of God. The Greek word for WORD is Rhema, meaning the quicken portion of the total word, or a word.

5. INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

Scripture, like any other book, uses figures of speech as well as different types of literature that can be difficult to understand.

5.1. HYPERBOLE

A hyperbole is an exaggeration used for effect—an overstatement. “I’m so hungry I could eat a horse” obviously is not literally true. It is an exaggeration used to convey the idea of extreme hunger.

Most hyperboles are easily recognized because we use them all the time. But sometimes they are not. For example, the apostle John made a statement something like this in his gospel: If everything Jesus ever did was written down, the world could not hold all the books that would be written (John 21:25). Surely John expected us to see that he was overstating his point. It is a graphic picture of how much Jesus did, but one painted in hyperbolic fashion.

Jesus used a hyperbole when he said

Mat 19:24. "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

5.2. METAPHOR

A simile makes a comparison by using a word such as “like”: “Life is like a circus.”

A metaphor is a similar comparison, except that it omits the word “like”: “The world is a stage.”

Metaphors in the Bible such as “I am the door” (John 10:9) are easily recognized, but some are not:

Mat 5:29-30. "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. {30} And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."

Did Jesus teach that we are to literally dismember our selves? No. He teaches elsewhere that it is our heart that causes us to sin, not our limbs. Drastic action is required to combat sin, but self-effort, whether by working to achieve a legalistic code, or self-harm cannot help. We have to be crucified with Christ, be buried with him and raised in newness of life.

Mat 26:26-28. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." {27} Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. {28} "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

John 6:51-56. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." {52} The Jews therefore quarrelled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" {53} Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. {54} "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. {55} "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. {56} "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

The Jews thought that Jesus was talking about literal cannibalism, which shocked and offended them. But Jesus was not speaking literally. In saying that they had to drink His blood, He was saying that His life had to become their own. To eat living bread means that our lives have to be united with Christ. The Roman Catholic Church in believing that these verses should be literally understood, have produced their doctrine of Transubstantiation.

How do we know they are not right? Something so very important would have been described by the apostles in their letters to the various churches. Paul teaches a lot on communion, but never mentions the emblems of bread and wine becoming the literal body of Christ.

5.3. ANTHROPOMORPHISM

Anthropomorphisms in the Bible describe nonhuman objects as though they have human characteristics.

Psa 98:8. Let the rivers clap their hands; Let the hills be joyful together before the LORD,

Isa 55:12. "For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Do rivers or trees have hands to clap?

In describing God's attributes the Bible utilises *anthropomorphism*, that is, descriptions of God in language drawn from human life. God is said, for example, to have an arm, a hand, a finger, hearing and even smelling.

When the Scripture says that man was created in the image of God, we should realize that this is not the *exact* image of God but a vastly scaled-down reflection of His being.

Ezek 1:26-28 And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. {27} Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the colour of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. {28} Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.

Ezekiel had to try and describe his indescribable vision of the Almighty using terms that would be familiar to his readers. It is here that human language and experience break down. He saw what looked something like a throne, but was so different from any throne he had seen that he could only say that it was the "likeness of a throne". Similarly, the appearance of the Almighty bore a vague resemblance to the form of a man, but was so unlike a man that Ezekiel could only say that it was the "appearance of a man".

Consider the following:

Jer 18:8. "If that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

The authorized version used the word *repent* rather than *relent*. Then we read

Num 23:19. "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

But how do we understand those verses that say God changes his mind (AV - repents)? Does God change His mind? Or do these verses describe God from a human point of view?

Sometimes God shows a person what is the determined course of action, if they do not change their way. When they do change then a differing course of action results. Has God changed his mind? No, but His grace made a way for the sinner to repent and experience forgiveness.

Exo 32:10-14. "Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation." {11} Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

{12} "Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people.

{13} "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" {14} So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.

5.4. PARABLES

"Once upon a time in a far-away land there lived a fairy princess." We do not understand this sentence in a scientific or literal sense. We recognize that it comes from a certain type of literature, and thus we

do not interpret it historically. Different types of literature fall into different categories, each of which has its own rules of interpretation.

Parables are one type of literature in the Bible. We interpret them properly by picturing the story in our minds as if we lived in Jesus' day, finding the one main point, and not giving meaning to all the details. The difference between allegory and parable is important to understand. An allegory is a totally made-up story. Even the details of an allegory may be significant. *Pilgrim's Progress* is the classic example of allegory in which even minute details refer to other things. But a parable is a story taken from everyday life. In a parable the speaker may not treat the details as important. They may be given to help the reader picture the situation more clearly.

Although a few parables have allegorical elements, most parables teach only one main point. The parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3–23) is part allegory because the sower, seed, ground, birds, sun, and weeds all stand for something else.

But what about the parable of the judge?

Luke 18:1-7. Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, {2} saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. {3} "Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' {4} "And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, {5} 'yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" {6} Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. {7} "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?

If the woman represents the disciple, is God the unjust judge? But Jesus is not saying that God is unjust, but that we must persevere in prayer.

As a general rule, don't formulate doctrine from parables. Parables illustrate a point. The epistles and teaching passages in the gospels are where doctrine is expounded and explained.

Also don't add meaning to every article within a parable. Some have preached that a simple parable is really a complex allegory, and having lost sight of the intended and simple meaning have declared fantastical meanings. For example the Parable of the Good Samaritan, where even the donkey takes on the role of an evangelist.

5.5. PROPHETIC PASSAGES

Passages in the Old Testament which record prophetic statements can be difficult to interpret, as they can refer to differing events and differing times all in the same portion. When Jesus sent out the twelve he said to them:

Mat 10:5-7. These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. {6} But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. {7} And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

In the same instruction he also said:

Mat 10:17-22. "But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. {18} You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. {19} But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; {20} for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. {21} Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. {22} And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."

These events were not fulfilled until much later. Equally Jesus' description of the signs of the times, describes events that would happen at various times over a long period, some referring to the days immediately prior to Jesus' return and referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Prophetic passages can be two edged, having more than one meaning.

Isa 7:10-16. Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, {11} "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above." {12} But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!" {13} Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? {14} Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. {15} Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. {16} For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.

In the immediate time frame Isaiah was foretelling of the birth of Hezekiah. Matthew attributes a second fulfilment of the message to the birth of Christ.

5.6. POETRY

Hebrew poetry does not concentrate on rhythm or rhyme, instead it expresses itself by parallelism.

Two phrases are joined so that the second repeats the first with different words;

Psa 95:2. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

Or the second phrase states the opposite of the first;

Prov 15:5. A fool despises his father's instruction, but he who receives correction is prudent.

Or the second phrase adds a new thought to the first;

Prov 15:3. The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

Sometimes the couplet will be arranged with the second phrase reversing the order of the first;

Prov 15:21. Folly is joy to him who is destitute of discernment, but a man of understanding walks uprightly.

Therefore, when interpreting poetry, the Bible student must recognize the type of parallelism being used, since the phrases interpret each other. In addition, poetry often stresses emotional flow rather than logical precision.

5.7. APOCALYPTIC

This type of literature in the Bible is the most misunderstood by interpreters today because it is no longer used. It has specific rules of interpretation. Its most noticeable characteristic is its use of strange, symbolic figures, such as those in the Book of Revelation.

Some people might object that this is not understanding the Bible literally. But since the Book of Revelation interprets its own images in figurative terms, the images must serve as figurative descriptions of real things. Therefore, to understand the book literally, we must understand it figuratively.

5.8. WISDOM

Old Testament wisdom literature is found mainly in Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Since wisdom gives practical hints on how to cope with life and its problems, it often consists of rules of thumb rather than universally applicable promises.

For example, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"¹ is not a categorical imperative that works in every situation.

Biblical wisdom sayings must therefore be used with due caution and great discernment².

6. TRANSLATING THE BIBLE

Translations of the Bible are made from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. Many translations are performed by committees of scholars, each a specialist in an area, and their work is checked by two or more editing committees.

The believer may wonder what is the best translation to read. The answer is "more than one". We can compare differing versions, and this can give fresh insight to a familiar passage or a deeper understanding of the meaning.

Some versions may be better for public reading. Other versions have maintained the technical language of the authors and are better for understanding doctrine. For example Paul uses words from the law courts (advocate) and the market (redeem) to describe the theology of the cross and salvation.

Bible translators may have slightly different translation philosophies.

6.1. LITERAL TRANSLATIONS

Some Bibles, like the King James Version, the New King James Version are called *literal* translations.

The purpose of a literal translation is to convey the word-for-word meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts as closely as the English language will allow. When English words have to be added in order to complete a sentence they are shown as italics.

6.2. DYNAMIC EQUIVALENT TRANSLATIONS.

Some Bibles, like the New International Version, are called *dynamic equivalent* translations. Their purpose is to convey the (perceived) thought behind the text as opposed to the word-for-word meaning of the text.

¹ Prov. 22:6

² Prov. 1:1-6

Thought patterns and syntax differ from language to language. In order to communicate the intended meaning of a passage, translators may have to modify the structure of sentences.

6.3. LORD

Neither Hebrew, Aramaic or nor Greek uses special pronouns for the persons of the Godhead. Some English translations have added capital letters to the male possessive pronoun (His), the objective male pronouns (He and Him). This may be helpful at times in understanding a passage, but the distinction does not exist in the original.

The divine name *YHWH* is rendered as LORD in most English versions. This distinguishes it from *Adonai*, which is rendered Lord. Wherever the two names stand together in the Old Testament as a compound name of God, they are rendered Sovereign Lord.

In some modern translations the phrases "Lord of hosts" and "God of hosts" are rendered as Lord Almighty and God Almighty. The thought being that the word hosts has little meaning to most people.

6.4. CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

The books within the Bible are not placed in chronological order but rather in sections such as history, prophetic, wisdom etc.

Not all the books of the Bible are written in a Chronological order. This type of ordering is very much part of our western, scientific mind-set, but it was not so important to Jewish authors or compilers. Some of the Books of the Prophets contain history and the prophetic intermingled.

For example consider the Book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 39 describes the fall of Jerusalem. Events continue to unfold in chapter 43 and 44 until Jeremiah is taken prisoner by the Jews and taken to Egypt. Chapters 46 to 51 then deal with Oracles against various nations, which had been given years before. Finally chapter 52 is a historic appendix which summarises historic events.

6.5. CHAPTER & VERSE

The chapter divisions familiar in English Bibles were first made by Archbishop Stephen Langton in 1551.

The Geneva Bible (1560) was the first Bible to divide the Scriptures into verses. This was the work of Robert Estienne, a Parisian printer of Greek New Testaments.

7. MANUSCRIPTS³

7.1. THE OLD TESTAMENT TEXT

The Hebrew Bible has come down to us through the meticulous care of ancient scribes who copied the original text in successive generations. By the sixth century a.d. the scribes were succeeded by a group known as the Masoretes, who continued to preserve the sacred Scriptures for another five hundred years in a form known as the Masoretic Text. Babylonia, Palestine, and Tiberias were the main centres of Masoretic activity; but by the tenth century a.d. the Masoretes of Tiberias, led by the

³ Bibliography:

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible

family of ben Asher, gained the ascendancy. Through subsequent editions, the ben Asher text became in the twelfth century the only recognized form of the Hebrew Scriptures.

7.2. THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT

There is more manuscript support for the New Testament than for any other body of ancient literature. Over five thousand Greek, eight thousand Latin, and many more manuscripts in other languages attest the integrity of the New Testament.

Some variations exist in the spelling of Greek words, in word order, and in similar details. These ordinarily do not show up in translation and do not affect the sense of the text in any way.

There are manuscript differences such as the omission or inclusion of a word or a clause and two paragraphs in the Gospels. But these should not overshadow the overwhelming degree of agreement which exists among the ancient records.

Bible readers may be assured that the most important differences in English New Testaments of today are due, not to manuscript divergence, but to the way in which translators view the task of translation: How literally should the text be rendered? How does the translator view the matter of biblical inspiration? Does the translator adopt a paraphrase when a literal rendering would be quite clear and more to the point?

The King James New Testament was based on the traditional text, first published in 1516, and later called the *Textus Receptus* or *Received Text*. Although based on the relatively few available manuscripts, these were representative of many more which existed at the time but only became known later.

Since the 1880s most contemporary translations of the New Testament have relied upon a relatively few manuscripts discovered chiefly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Such translations depend primarily on two manuscripts, *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Sinaiticus*, because of their greater age. The Greek text obtained by using these sources and the related papyri (our most ancient manuscripts) is known as the *Alexandrian Text*. However, some scholars have grounds for doubting the faithfulness of *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*, since they often disagree with one another, and *Sinaiticus* exhibits excessive omission.

A third viewpoint of New Testament scholarship holds that the best text is based on the consensus of the majority of existing Greek manuscripts. This text is called the *Majority Text*. Most of these manuscripts are in substantial agreement. Even though many are late, and none is earlier than the fifth century, usually their readings are verified by papyri, ancient versions, quotations from the early church fathers, or a combination of these. The *Majority Text* is similar to the *Textus Receptus*, but it corrects those readings which have little or no support in the Greek manuscript tradition.

It is most important to emphasize that eighty-five percent of the New Testament text is the same in the *Textus Receptus*, the *Alexandrian Text*, and the *Majority Text*.

Where significant variations occur in the New Testament Greek manuscripts, textual notes are classified as follows:

1. NU-Text

These variations from the traditional text generally represent the *Alexandrian* or *Egyptian* type of text described previously in *The New Testament Text*. They are found in the *Critical Text* published in the twenty-seventh edition of the *Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament* (N) and in the *United Bible Societies* fourth edition (U), hence the acronym, *NU-Text*.

2. M-Text

This symbol indicates points of variation in the Majority Text from the traditional text, as previously discussed in The New Testament Text. It should be noted that M stands for whatever reading is printed in the published *Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, whether supported by overwhelming, strong, or only a divided majority textual tradition.

7.3. SEPTUAGINT

The oldest Bible translation in the world was made in Alexandria, Egypt, where the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek for the benefit of the Greek-speaking Jews of that city. The first section of the Hebrew Bible to be translated into Greek was the Pentateuch, some time before 200 b.c. Other parts were translated during the next century.

This version is commonly called the Septuagint, from, *septuaginta*, the Latin word for 70 (LXX). This name was selected because of a tradition that the Pentateuch was translated into Greek by about 70 elders of Israel who were brought to Alexandria especially for this purpose.

When Christianity penetrated the world of the Greek-speaking Jews, and then the Gentiles, the Septuagint was the Bible used for preaching the gospel. Most of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament are taken from this Greek Bible.

The Septuagint was based on a Hebrew text much older than most surviving Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament. Occasionally, this Greek Old Testament helps scholars to reconstruct the wording of a passage where it has been lost or miscopied by scribes as the text was passed down across the centuries. An early instance of this occurs in Genesis 4:8, where Cain's words to Abel, "*Let us go out to the field*", are reproduced from the Septuagint in the NRSV⁴, NIV, and other modern versions. These words had been lost from the standard Hebrew text, but they were necessary to complete the sense of the English translation.

7.4. VULGATE

The task of producing one standard Latin Bible was entrusted by Damasus, bishop of Rome, to his secretary Jerome. Jerome undertook the task unwillingly, knowing that replacing an old version with a new is bound to cause offence, even if the new is better. He began with a revision of the gospels, followed by the Psalms. After completing the New Testament, Jerome mastered the Hebrew language in order to translate the Old Testament into Latin. He completed this work in a.d. 405.

Jerome's translation of the Bible is known as the Latin Vulgate. It did not win instant acceptance. Many were suspicious of it because it varied so much from the version with which they were familiar. But in time its superior merits caused it to gain popularity.

The Latin Vulgate is especially important because it was the medium through which the gospel arrived in Western Europe. It remained the standard version in this part of the world for centuries. Until the 20th century no translations of the Bible except those based on the Vulgate were recognized as authoritative by the Roman Catholic Church.

⁴ New Revised Standard Version

7.5. DEAD SEA SCROLLS

800 scrolls (leather and Papyrus⁵ manuscripts) and fragments of scrolls that were found in 11 caves near Khirbet (ruin of) Qumran on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea in 1947 and shortly thereafter.

The Scrolls were written between 250 b.c. and a.d. 68, they offer an invaluable source for understanding the beliefs, community life, and use of the Bible of one group of Jews, probably the Essenes, who were active during the time Jesus lived.

8. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

8.1. THREE VERSIONS COMPARED

Three of the older English translations are compared for their rendering of two verses.

- Job 14:1

Coverdale - Man that is born of a woman has but a short time to live and is full of diverse miseries

Geneva - Man that is born of a woman is for short continuance and full of trouble.

AV - Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

- Psalm 46:1

Coverdale - In our trouble and adversity, we have found that God is our refuge, our strength, and help.

Geneva - God is our hope and strength and help in troubles, ready to be found.

AV - God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

8.2. COVERDALE (1535)

This was the first edition of the Bible issued by Miles Coverdale (1488-1568), one of Tyndale's friends and associates. This English version reproduced Tyndale's translation of the Pentateuch and the New Testament; the rest of the Old Testament was translated into English from Latin and German versions. Coverdale's Bible of 1535 was the first complete English Bible in print. A second and third edition appeared in 1537.

8.3. GENEVA BIBLE (1560)

During the reign of Mary Tudor of England (1553-1558), many English Reformers sought refuge in other parts of Europe because of her policy of persecution. One community of English refugees settled in Geneva, Switzerland, where John Knox was pastor of the English congregation and where John Calvin dominated theological study. Many of these English refugees were fine scholars, and they began work on a new English version of the Bible.

A preliminary edition of the New Testament (Whittingham's New Testament) was published in 1557. The whole Bible appeared in 1560.

This Geneva Bible was the first English Bible to be translated in its entirety from the original biblical languages. Widely recognized as the best English version of the Bible that had yet appeared, it quickly became the accepted version in Scotland. In England it also attained instant popularity among the

⁵ Primitive paper

people, although it was not accepted by church officials. After the publication of the King James Version in 1611, the Geneva Bible remained popular. This was the Bible which the Pilgrims took with them to the New World in 1620; to them the King James Version was a compromise and an inferior production. The Geneva Bible was printed until 1644 and was still found in use 30 years later.

8.4. KING JAMES VERSION (1611)

Shortly after James VI of Scotland ascended the throne of England as James I (1603), he convened a conference to settle matters under dispute in the Church of England. The only important result of this conference was an approval to begin work on the King James Version of the English Bible (KJV).

A group of 47 scholars, divided into six teams, was appointed to undertake the work of preparing the new version. Three teams worked on the Old Testament; two were responsible for the New Testament; and one worked on the Apocrypha. They used the 1602 edition of the Bishops Bible as the basis of their revision, but they had access to many other versions and helps, as well as the texts in the original biblical languages. They relied upon ben Hayyim's edition of the ben Asher text. For the New Testament they relied upon the Greek text of Erasmus and a bilingual Greek-and-Latin text of the sixth century, found by Theodore Beza.

When the six groups had completed their task, the final draft was reviewed by a committee of 12. The King James Version was published in 1611.

The new version won wide acceptance among the people of the English-speaking world. Nonsectarian in tone and approach, it did not favour one shade of theological or ecclesiastical opinion over another. The translators had an almost instinctive sense of good English style; the prose rhythms of the version gave it a secure place in the popular memory. Never was a version of the Bible more admirably suited for reading aloud in public.

Although there was resistance to the King James Version at first, it quickly made a place for itself. For more than three centuries it remained The Bible throughout the English-speaking world.

8.5. REVISIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

There have been a number of attempts of revising the KJV, including the English Revised Version (RV) and the American Standard Version (ASV) and the New King James Version.

Besides revising the KJV, modern scholars have produced several totally new translations of the Bible. These include the Revised Standard Version, New English Bible and the New International Version.

8.6. PARAPHRASES

8.7. J. B. PHILLIPS PARAPHRASE.

J. B. Phillips *New Testament in Modern English* appeared in 1957, bringing together a series of paraphrased New Testament books that Phillips began in 1947 with his *Letters to Young Churches*. Phillips rendered the text very freely, often departing entirely from the Greek manuscripts. His paraphrase attracted considerable attention because of its vivid (and sometimes earthy) language. But serious Bible students do not use it as their basic version because it takes such liberties with the New Testament text.

8.8. GOOD NEWS BIBLE

Uses the dynamic equivalence method more liberally than the earlier translations. It departs radically from the precise lexical meaning of the Hebrew and Greek at many points.

8.9. LIVING BIBLE

Kenneth Taylor (1917), an editor at a Chicago publishing house, began writing this version, an avowed paraphrase, in an effort to make the Bible more understandable to his children.

The Living Bible is marked by great clarity and simplicity, and thousands of readers find that they can understand the LB more easily than the KJV or other translations. But Bible scholars and religious leaders have criticized the LB for its free handling of many passages.

9. QUALITIES OF THE WORD

9.1. THE WORD

Prov 30:5. Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

The Bible does not just contain the word of God, but it is the word of God. It is wholly and solely the word of God. The scriptures are divinely inspired.

2 Pet 1:20-21. knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, {21} for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

The word can be entirely trusted upon. The author of this word is unchanging and outside time, and His word is appropriate for all people in any time.

It is this word of God that makes the man of God complete.

2 Tim 3:16-17 (NIV). All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

There are two Greek words used in the New Testament for word. The first is *logos* and the second is *rhema*.

Rhema is an utterance which is said or spoken, in contrast to *logos* which refers to a message, a discourse or an expression of thought. In reference to the Scriptures the whole Bible is the *logos* and a verse from the Bible is the *rhema*.

In Ephesians 6 verse 17 *rhema* is used in reference to the word of God.

Eph 6:17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

The Sword of the Spirit is a portion of Scripture that the believer takes and uses in the battle.

In Hebrews 4:12 *logos* is used:

Heb 4:12. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

It takes the whole word of God to fully equip and arm us and to transform our own heart and mind.

9.1.1. The Breath of God

2 Tim 3:16-17 (NIV). All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Some versions says that "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God", but the Greek literally says "God breathed". In trying to describe what the verse means - inspired by God, such translation misses something of the essence of the process described. When God made man he formed him out of the dust of the earth and then breathed on him:

Gen 2:7. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Adam played no part in his creation. He only became alive when God breathed on him. Similar the Scriptures were written through clay vessels, but their only author is God; men's intellect, reasoning or memory played no part in the authorship.

9.1.2. Alive

The word of God is a living entity. Some people consider books to be a dusty collection of old words and thoughts. The Bible has a life imparting, revelation giving quality.

John 6:63. It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

Heb 4:12. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Different people respond in different ways both to the person of Christ and to the word of God. To some they smell of death, to others, they smell of life.

2 Cor 2:15-16. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. {16} To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

9.1.3. The Revelation of God

John 5:38-40. "But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. {39} You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. {40} But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

Everything that we can know about the person of God is revealed to us by the Scripture.

Rom 10:17. So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The word of God is truth. Faith awakens at the voice of divine truth. Faith doesn't come by study, reason or logic; but solely by receiving the word of God. The Greek word for WORD is Rhema, meaning the quicken portion of the total word, or a word.

9.1.4. The Word of God

The title, the Word of God, is also given to the Lord Jesus Christ.

- John 1:1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- John 1:14. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have beheld his glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
- Rev 19:13. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God.

The Greek word here is Logos. Christ is the complete thought and total revelation of the God head.

The Bible is the Word of God and Christ is Word of God. Each is a perfect revelation of God and His will and ways. Each is divine, each is authoritative and each agrees with the other. The scriptures perfectly reveal Christ and Jesus perfectly fulfils the scriptures. The Bible is the written Word of God, and Jesus is the incarnate eternal Word of God. The same Holy Spirit who reveals Jesus, the Word of God, also reveals the Scriptures to men's hearts.

Our attitude to God's word is our attitude to God himself. We do not love God more than we love His word; we do not obey God more than we obey His word; we do not honour God more than we honour God's word.

9.1.5. Authoritative

- Isaiah 8:20. To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.
- Psalms 138:2. "...For You have magnified Your word above all Your name"
- Eph 6:17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.
- Mat 4:4. But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Jesus countered the temptations by referring to the written word of God. He uses the authority of the scriptures rather than His personal authority of his divinity. This illustrates that the highest spiritual authority for men on earth is the Scripture.

The phrase "it is written" appears 61 times in the New Testament.

9.1.6. Eternal

- John 10:34-36. Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say to Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"
- Matt 24:35. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.
- Psa 119:89. Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.
- Is 40:8. The grass withers, the flower fades. But the word of the Lord stands forever.

10. THE USE OF NUMBERS IN THE BIBLE

10.1. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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10.2. NUMBER SYSTEMS IN BIBLE DAYS

10.2.1. Old Testament Period

In all the existing manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament numbers are written down as words rather than using special numeric characters such as is used in English today.

Israel shared with most of her Mediterranean and Near Eastern neighbours (Assyria, Egypt, Greece, Rome and Phoenicia) the decimal system of counting. There are separate words for numbers one to ten. Combinations of the word for ten and the unit values were used to denote 11 to 19. After 20 the tens are formed in a pattern similar to that used in English, ie 3, 30. A separate word denotes 100; 200 is the dual form of 100. From 300 to 900 there is a pattern similar to that found in English. The highest number expressed in one word is 20,000, the dual form of 10,000.

There are ordinal numbers in biblical Hebrew from 1 to 10 (1st, 2nd, 3rd etc). There are also words for fractions from a half to a fifth.

There are inconsistencies in numeric values between various manuscripts and between certain passages of that text itself. This suggests that some shorter mode of writing was originally in vogue, liable to be misunderstood, and in fact misunderstood by copyists and translators. For example, H L Allrick proposes the lists in Nehemiah chapter 7 and Ezra chapter 2 were originally written in the early Hebrew-Aramaic numeral notation, and the differences between the lists are due to this.

There is historic evidence dating from the 6th and 4th centuries BC that provide evidence of an early system of numeric notation within the Old Testament period. Vertical strokes were used for digits and horizontal strokes for tens, written one above the other for multiples of ten, often with a downward stroke on the right.

Even today we recognise that the keeping of tallies is more easily performed using marks (such as vertical lines for one to four, and a diagonal line for five), than it is using either words or characters for numbers.

10.2.2. Inter-Testament Period

During the period between the Old and New Testaments, a system of writing numerals using the characters of the Hebrew alphabet was used. This appears to have originated from Greek influence. The practice may have started in post-Babylonian times, but the earliest evidence known is in the Maccabæan coins.⁶

In this system the first nine letters were used for figures 1 to 9, the tens from 10 to 90 were represented by the next nine and the hundreds from 100 to 400 by the remaining four letters. Other numbers were denoted by a combination of letters.

The number 15 was denoted by a combination of *teth* (9) and *waw* (6), as the two letters *yod* (10) and *he* (5) were constants of YAH, a form of the sacred name Yahweh.

⁶ The Maccabees reigned in Judea from 167 to 37 BC.

The Bible contains examples of addition⁷, subtraction⁸, multiplication⁹, and division¹⁰. Numerous fractions were used including a tenth¹¹, a fifth¹² and a sixth¹³.

10.2.3. The New Testament

In the Greek New Testament numbers are written out as words, although at that time the letters of the alphabet are used as symbols for numbers. The first nine characters represent 1 to 9, the next eight 10 to 80 and the rest 100 to 800.

10.3. NON LITERAL USE OF AND INTENDED ACCURACY OF NUMBERS

Apart from their literal usage, numbers can also be used within Scripture in an symbolic, poetic or rhetoric sense.

Numbers may indicate such concepts as few or many, or they may be used to intensify a point.

Amos 1:9. Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.

Prov 6:16. These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:

The quantity itself, in such cases, is often indefinite.

Most of the numbers in the Bible indicate specific quantities. But in some cases writers of Scripture give an estimate of the total, which was rounded off. An example of this is found in Numbers chapter 2, where the number of the fighting men in each tribe has been rounded to the nearest 50.¹⁴

In certain passages it is evident that numbers are used in an approximate sense, in a similar way to the way to the way we might say "1 or 2" or "several". The numbers "2", "2 or 3", "3 or 4" and "4 or 5" are sometimes used with the meaning of "a few".

1 Ki 17:12. So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering **a couple** of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

The number 10 is used as the equivalent of "a number of times". Jacob accused Laban of changing his wages "ten times".

⁷ Num 1:45-46. So all who were numbered of the children of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and above, all who were able to go to war in Israel; {46} all who were numbered were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.

⁸ Lev 27:18. "But if he dedicates his field after the Jubilee, then the priest shall reckon to him the money due according to the years that remain till the Year of Jubilee, and it shall be deducted from your valuation.

⁹ Mat 18:22. Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

¹⁰ Num 31:27. and divide the plunder into two parts, between those who took part in the war, who went out to battle, and all the congregation.

¹¹ Exo 16:36. Now an omer is one-tenth of an ephah.

¹² Gen 47:24. "And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones."

¹³ Ezek 4:11. "You shall also drink water by measure, one-sixth of a hin; from time to time you shall drink.

¹⁴ Num 2:1-4, Num 2:32

Gen 31:41. "Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times.

The number 40 is used to stand for a generation, or quite a considerable number. 100 would equal a large number¹⁵ and 1000¹⁶, 10000¹⁷ and 40000¹⁸ (Judg 5:8) provide instances of round numbers which indicate an indefinitely large number. Large numbers for the strength of armies are approximate estimates.

The Hebrew word for a thousand (*elep*) can be translated "family", "tent group" or "clan".

Judg 6:15. So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my **clan** is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

It is believed that the word *elep* can also be used to represent officer or captain, and this may explain some of the extremely large numbers used to describe the fallen in battle in various passages.

Let us consider

2 Chr 14:9-12. Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and he came to Mareshah. {10} So Asa went out against him, and they set the troops in battle array in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. {11} And Asa cried out to the LORD his God, and said, "LORD, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!" {12} So the LORD struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled.

Where the NKJV uses "a million men", the NIV uses "a vast army". The actual Hebrew either says: *an army of a thousand thousands* or *an army of thousands upon thousands*.

10.4. NUMBERS WITH MEANING

There are some numbers within Scripture which are seen to have a symbolic or representative meaning, and such notation is common among eastern nations.

Care is needed when looking for deeper meaning to numbers, so as to avoid fanciful interpretations. But here are some of the common numbers and their meanings.

10.4.1. One

This is a divine number:

Deut 6:4. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

¹⁵ Eccl 6:3 If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he;

¹⁶ Deut 32:30 How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had surrendered them?

¹⁷ Lev 26:8 Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.

¹⁸ Judg 5:8 They chose new gods; Then there was war in the gates; Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.

10.4.2. Three

Three was regarded, by both the Jews and other nations, as a specially complete and mystic number. For the Christian it is seen as a divine number because of the Trinity.

10.4.3. Four

Four is synonymous with completeness or totality. It is used in phrases such as four corners and four winds.

- Rev 20:8. and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.
- Jer 49:36. Against Elam I will bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and scatter them toward all those winds; There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go.
- Ezek 37:9. Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.'" "
- Dan 7:2. Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.
- Ezek 40:47. And he measured the court, one hundred cubits long and one hundred cubits wide, foursquare. The altar was in front of the temple.

10.4.4. Six

Six is known as the number of man, since Adam was created on the sixth day.

10.4.5. Seven

Seven is another divine number and signifies completeness or perfection, such as seven days in the week.

- Psa 12:6. The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.
- Rev 1:4. John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne
- Rev 5:6. And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Sevenfold is used in regard to vengeance and judgment:

- Gen 4:15. And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.
- Gen 4:24. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

Psa 79:12. And return to our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach with which they have reproached You, O Lord.

Prov 6:31. Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; He may have to give up all the substance of his house.

Isa 30:26. Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people and heals the stroke of their wound.

Similarly the seventy years exile represented complete judgement against Israel:

2 Chr 36:21. to fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil seventy years.

10.4.6. Ten

The Ten plagues upon Egypt designating total and thorough judgment.

The Ten Commandments came to represent the *complete and perfect* law of God.

10.4.7. Twelve

Twelve is a foundational number, such as the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve apostles of the Lamb and the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem.

Rev 21:14-17. Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. {15} And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. {16} The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. {17} Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.

The city is a perfect cube. And its dimensions are all twelve or multiples of twelve. This speaks of governmental perfection.

10.4.8. Forty

Forty generally represents a generation. Forty years judgement in the wilderness were completed whilst God waited for a generation to die.

10.4.9. 666

Rev 13:18. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Rather than being the number of man, this is the number of a man - that is the anti-christ. Scripture says that this man of sin will only be revealed after the church is raptured (2 Thess 2:7), and so speculation about who the man will be is futile.

This is the only mystical use of a number in the Bible. In some manuscripts 616 appears rather than 666. In the Greek this is written using numbers rather than words.

10.5. THE VALUE OF PI (II)

The ratio of the circumference of a circle and its diameter is known as Pi ($c=\pi d$), and this fact has been known for so long that it is quite untraceable. The oldest known values for π are Egyptian and Mesopotamian values of $\frac{25}{8} = 3.125$ and $\sqrt{10} = 3.162$ respectively.

The first theoretical calculation seems to have been carried out by Archimedes (287-212 BC). Using trigonometry he obtained the approximation

$$\frac{223}{71} < \pi < \frac{22}{7}.$$

Today most people use the approximation $\frac{22}{7}$ which is 99.959750 % accurate.

An interesting quality about π is that it cannot be wholly expressed as a decimal number, since it never resolves to an exact number of decimal places, and neither is there any recurring pattern.

Historically various people have sought to calculate the value of π to greater accuracies.

Ptolemy	(c. 150 AD)	3.1416
Zu Chongzhi	(430-501 AD)	$\frac{355}{113}$
al-Khwarizmi	(c. 800)	3.1416
al-Kashi	(c. 1430)	14 places
Viète	(1540-1603)	9 places
Roomen	(1561-1615)	17 places
Van Ceulen	(c. 1600)	35 places

1699: Sharp used Gregory's result to get 71 correct digits

1701: Machin used an improvement to get 100 digits and the following used his methods:

1719: de Lagny found 112 correct digits

1789: Vega got 126 places and in 1794 got 136

1841: Rutherford calculated 152 digits and in 1853 got 440

1873: Shanks calculated 707 places of which 527 were correct

There is one place in the Bible where the value of π is implied.

2 Chr 4:2. Then he made the Sea of cast bronze, ten cubits from one brim to the other; it was completely round. Its height was five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference.

On the face of it this would give a value of 3 for π , which is a very inaccurate value, even for ancient times (around 950 BC). Some people have therefore suggested that this proves that science is far more reliable than the Bible, which, they say, is proved to be fallible and cannot therefore be divinely inspired.

The fact is that the text requires closer examination, because a few verses later we are told:

2 Chr 4:5. It was a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It contained three thousand baths.

The measurements given in verse 2 are the diameter of the internal circle and the circumference of the external circumference. When this is taken into account the value of π is calculated to be 3.1395348837, and is 99.934499 % accurate.

The Bible is therefore seen to be scientifically accurate.

11. WORD STUDIES

11.1. HELL

The King James Version of the Bible indiscriminately used the English word Hell as a translation of numerous words from the Hebrew and Greek. Thankfully modern versions of the Bible use transliterations¹⁹ of some of the original words to assist the reader.

We will look at some of these words and see what they mean.

11.1.1. Gehenna

The Greek word *gennan* is a transliteration of the Hebrew Ge-Hinnom, which means Valley of Hinnom, a place also known as the valley of Tophet. This is a deep narrow valley south of Jerusalem and is where kings Ahaz²⁰ and Manasseh²¹ made children pass through the fire in worship of Molech. After the restoration of true religion by king Josiah the place became a refuse dump for the city. Not only household waste was dumped and burned there but also the bodies of criminals and the carcasses of animals.

Gehenna's association with wicked practises, spiritual uncleanness and the burning of rubbish meant the place became synonymous with the future punishment of the wicked. As such this is usually translated in English Bibles by the word Hell – the final abode of the unbelieving dead.

In prophesying about the destruction of Assyria, Isaiah says:

Isa 30:33. For Tophet was established of old, yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made it deep and large; its pyre is fire with much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it.

Tophet literally means “hearth” or “fire pit”, but is used as a proper noun in this verse.

Gehenna is used twelve times in the New Testament, eleven times by Jesus Himself. For example:

Mat 5:22. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

Mat 5:29-30. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. {30} "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

¹⁹ A word is transliterated when the various foreign letters in the word are changed into the respective equivalents in English.

²⁰ 2 Chr 28:1-4

²¹ 2 Kings 21:1-7

Mat 18:8-9. "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. {9} "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

Verse nine's fire of Gehenna is described in verse eight as "everlasting fire". Gehenna exists for all eternity.

During this life the believer will experience times of trial, testing or persecution, things which are symbolised by a refiner's fire. The refiner's fire has value in cleansing, purifying or sanctifying, such that the believer is brought forth precious and proven.

The fire in Gehenna has no refining properties such that those who suffer its flame should be changed and released. The flames of Gehenna are purely punitive.

Mark's gospel further describes the torment of this eternal place.

Mark 9:43-44. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched; {44} where 'Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'

Verse 44 quotes the final verse in Isaiah, which is a reference to the state of the lost viewed by the redeemed in the eternal age.

Isa 66:22-24. "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. {23} And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. {24} "And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

Whatever the meaning of the worms in this context, the inference is that it is an experience that should be avoided at all cost. With this in mind people should determine how they should respond to their Creator.

Luke 12:4-5. "And I say to you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. {5} But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!

Jesus describes that this everlasting fire was prepared for the devil and his angels. They will not be performing the tormenting in Gehenna.

Mat 25:41. Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

Jesus lambasted the scribes and Pharisees whose empty religion would never save them from the fate of Gehenna.

Mat 23:15. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

Mat 23:33. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

James uses Gehenna with regard to the tongue.

James 3:6. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

We must note that Gehenna is not the current abode of evil spirits, but their destiny. James is using the word to stand for the powers of darkness, whose characteristics and destiny are those of hell.

The Book of Revelation the everlasting fire prepared for the devil as a “lake of fire and brimstone”. This is Gehenna, the true hell.

Rev 19:20. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Rev 20:10. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Rev 20:13-15. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. {14} Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. {15} And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

11.1.2. Hades

Hades is a transliteration of the Greek word which could mean “The Unseen” but may be derived from *hado*, which means “all-receiving”. In Greek philosophy the virtuous dead went to Elysium whilst the wicked went to Tartarus, but these were both part of Hades, which was the final abode of the dead.

Although Greek thought differs from Biblical revelation, nevertheless the word Hades is used in a similar way within Scripture. In the Bible Hades refers to the place where the unrighteous dead are temporary kept awaiting the judgement at the Great White Throne. Prior to Jesus’ resurrection there was another portion of Hades, known as Paradise or Abraham’s Bosom where the righteous dead went. Since Christ’s ascension the spirits of those who know Jesus go to be with Christ when they die.

Hades does not refer to the grave, although some Bible translations have mistakenly translated it as the grave.

Jesus told a story which illustrated the division of Hades prior to His resurrection.

Luke 16:22-26. "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. {23} And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. {24} Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' {25} But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. {26} 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

The rich man is seen to be a place of conscious torment, with no relief and no hope of escape. Jesus told the dying thief that "this day you will be with me in paradise". But Jesus did not immediately ascend into heaven, but rather he descended into Hades. This paradise is synonymous for Abraham's Bosom.

Hades is the equivalent to the Hebrew word *Sheol* which is used in the Old Testament and the Septuagint used Hades as the translation of Sheol.

Rev 1:18. "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

Jesus has authority over the place of the dead, to bring people forth in their right order.

In the following verse some manuscripts have *thanatos* in the 2nd part of the verse, instead of Hades, which the KJV wrongly rendered grave. *Thanatos* which means death.

1 Cor 15:55. "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

In one verse Jesus used the word *hades*, not to refer to the place of the dead but rather as the councils of the *unseen* realm, that is, Satan and his kingdom.

Mat 16:18. "... I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

In his second letter Peter uses the Greek term Tartarus to refer to the prison where God confined certain demons²². Tartarus was considered to be the deepest abyss of Hades.

2 Pet 2:4. For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgement;

11.1.3. Sheol

The Hebrew word *Sheol* is used in various ways in the Old Testament, some of which are poetic. Sometimes the word means simply the state of death or the grave, which is an experience of the physical body.

Psa 6:5. For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks?

The Scripture clearly teaches that both the righteous and the wicked have a conscious and eternal experience after their body dies. But David here is simply contrasting scenes of life and the silence of the graveyard.

²² Jude 1:6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgement of the great day;

Hannah recognises that it is the LORD that brings all men down to sheol. So like Hades, sheol is a common experience to all men.

1 Sam 2:6. "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up.

Sheol is also used to describe the experience of the soul in its conscious existence after the death of the body. David prophesied of the Messiah's experience of death and resurrection.

Psa 16:10. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

We notice from this last verse that translators are inconsistent with their dealing with Sheol, using a transliteration here rather than a translation. Similarly in the next passage Sheol is translated as pit.

Num 16:28-33. And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. {29} "If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. {30} "But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD." {31} Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, {32} and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. {33} So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly.

In similar manner to Hades, Sheol was a place of punishment for the wicked²³, and reward and rest for the righteous²⁴.

Sometimes translators mistakenly use hell as a translation for sheol.

Psa 139:8. If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

This verse describes the omni-presence of God: He is everywhere and knows everything. In the context of this verse it tells us that even in death God's people are in His care and the wicked cannot escape his judgement.

11.1.4. Abyss

Another word that is used of the place of the dead is abyss, sometimes translated as the deep.

Rom 10:7. or, "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

Abyss means bottomless pit or the chaotic deep. The word is used in several ways in the Bible.

It is the prison of disobedient spirits and is where Satan will be bound for 1,000 years.

Luke 8:31. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

²³ Psa 9:17. The wicked shall be turned into hell, And all the nations that forget God.

Deut 32:22. For a fire is kindled by my anger, And shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, And set on fire the foundations of the mountains.

²⁴ 2 Ki 22:20 "Surely, therefore, I will gather you [Josiah] to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place."...

Rev 20:1-3. Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. {2} He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; {3} and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

11.1.5. Abaddon

Another Hebrew word that is used of the place of the dead is abaddon, which literally means destruction, but is used as a proper noun to refer to the place of destruction or a destroying angel.

Prov 15:11. Hell and Destruction are before the LORD; So how much more the hearts of the sons of men.

Prov 27:20. Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied.

Rev 9:11. And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

Abaddon means "destruction" and Apollyon means "the destroyer". Generally this is believed to refer to Satan himself.

11.2. LOVE

The English word "love" is an overworked word and is used to describe:

- a passing desire for an ice-cream;
- a deep-seated coveting for a sports car;
- an act of sexual intercourse - even when performed for selfish gratification;
- a dependency upon another person born out of insecurity;
- the tender care felt by a mother towards her baby;
- or the a strong, positive devotion to and care of another.

It is a pity that in our society a word that should mean something so positive and excellent has been debased to mean nothing more than covetous lust.

In the Greek²⁵ a number of words are used to express these various ideas. These are used more discerningly in the New Testament.

11.2.1. Thelo

Thelo means to will, have in mind, intend; to be resolved or determined, to purpose; to desire, to wish. To love; be fond of doing something; to take delight in, have pleasure. There are 210 occurrences in the New Testament. Translated in the AV as "will/would" 159 times, "will/would have" 16 times, "desire" 13 times, "desirous" three times, "list" three times, "to will" twice, and translated miscellaneously four times.

In Mark 12:38 the AV translates *thelo* as love. The Revised Version changed this to desire.

²⁵Strong, J. - *Strong's guide to Bible words*.

Mark 12:38. Then He said to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes, who desire [thelo] to go around in long robes, *love* greetings in the marketplaces,

11.2.2. Phileo

Phileo, a verb, means to love, to approve of, to like, sanction, to treat affectionately or kindly, to welcome, befriend. It also means to show signs of love, to kiss or to be fond of doing. There are 25 occurrences in the New Testament. Translated in the AV as "love" 22 times, and "kiss" three times.

This is an important word which shall be considered more fully below. When combined with other words, phileo describes many types of love. Here are some of them.

11.2.3. Philadelphia

Philadelphia, a noun, means love of brothers / sisters, brotherly love. In the New Testament there are six occurrences and it is used of the love which Christians cherish for each other. It is translated in the AV as "brotherly love" three times, "brotherly kindness" twice, and "love of the brethren" once.

11.2.4. Philadelphos

Philadelphos, an adjective, also means loving brother or sister, but it is used in a broader sense when someone is loved like a brother, or loving your fellow countrymen. There is one occurrence in the New Testament. Translated in the AV as "love as brethren".

11.2.5. Philandros

Philandros²⁶, an adjective, means a wife's affection to her husband. There is one occurrence in the New Testament, translated in the AV as "love their husbands".

11.2.6. Philanthropia

Philanthropia²⁷, a noun, means love of mankind, benevolence. There are two occurrences in the New Testament. It is translated in the AV as "kindness" once, and "love toward man" once.

11.2.7. Philarguria

Philarguria, a noun, means avarice, greedy love of possessions. There is a single occurrence in the New Testament, and is translated in the AV as the "love of money".

11.2.8. Philoteknos

Philoteknos, an adjective, means loving one's children. There is a single occurrence in the New Testament.

Titus 2:4. that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

11.2.9. Agapao (verb) and Agape (Noun)

When talking about people agapao means to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly. When talking about things agapao means to be well pleased, to be contented with the thing. There are

²⁶ Consider "Philanderer" – a womanizer.

²⁷ Consider "Philanthropist" - Someone who makes charitable donations intended to increase human well-being.

142 occurrences in the New Testament. It is translated in the AV as "love" 135 times, and "beloved" seven times.

Agape means brotherly love, affection, good will, love, benevolence. It is also used for "love feasts". There are 116 occurrences in the New Testament and it is translated in the AV as "love" 86 times, "charity" 27 times, "dear" once, and "feast of charity" once.

Although agapao and agape were existing Greek words, they are used in the New Testament to describe previously unknown concepts. We might consider that they have been high-jacked by the writers of the New Testament. There is therefore little use in examining Greek literature in hoping to define their meaning.

Agapao is used in the Septuagint in the following verses:

Lev 19:18. "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD.

Deut 6:5. "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

This type of love is defined as being unconditional, a love by choice and by an act of the will. This is a robust, strong love that endures and overcomes abuse, and ultimately never fails.

1 Cor 13:8. Love [agape] never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

Rom 12:21. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Agapao and *agape* are the words for God's unconditional love. This type of love is not initially prompted by an emotion and neither is it performed to receive anything back, not even a good feeling. This kind of love shows love to the undeserving because that is the right, or godly thing to do. This kind of love takes risks and makes it self vulnerable.

John 3:16. "For God so loved [agapao] the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

This kind of love describes the very nature of God.

1 John 4:8. He who does not love [agapao] does not know God, for God is love [agape].

John 17:26. "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love [agape] with which You loved [agapao] Me may be in them, and I in them."

Agape is known by the actions it takes, the works it does and the sacrifices it makes.

Rom 5:8. But God demonstrates His own love [agape] toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

It is a primary characteristic of the mature Christian, being a feature of Christ.

Gal 5:22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love [agape], joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Agapao love is not generated from feelings, but rather is birthed in the will. We choose to demonstrate *agapao*, even if we feel like doing the opposite.

Rom 13:8-10. Owe no one anything except to love [agapao] one another, for he who loves [agapao] another has fulfilled the law. {9} For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love [agapao] your neighbour as yourself." {10} Love [agape] does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love [agape] is the fulfilment of the law.

11.2.10. Comparison of Agapao and Phileo

The word phileo means to have ardent affection and feeling a type of impulsive love. The word agapao means to have esteem or high regard. Both are used to describe the Father's love for Jesus; Jesus' love for John and God's love for the saints.

- John 3:35. The Father loves [agapao] the Son, and has given all things into His hand.
- John 5:20. For the Father loves [phileo] the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.
- John 13:23. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved [agapao].
- John 20:2. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved [phileo], and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."
- John 14:21. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves [agapao] Me. And he who loves [agapao] Me will be loved [agapao] by My Father, and I will love [agapao] him and manifest Myself to him."
- John 16:27. For the Father Himself loves [phileo] you, because you have loved [phileo] Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.

This is good news! There are those believers who know that God loves them with agapao, but they are not sure if God likes them. They somehow have the inkling that agapao is some sort of stoic love, which means that God is good, kind and forgiving - even though he doesn't like us. But here it is in the word; those who believe are assured that God feels emotional phileo love towards them.

God wants all believers to have hearts that are filled with both phileo and agapao. Throughout the New Testament a clear distinction exists between the two verbs and they are never used indiscriminately or as synonyms.

Phileo more nearly represents tender affection. It is never used in a commandment to love God, but it is used in the following verse.

1 Cor 16:22. If anyone does not love [phileo] the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!

Agapao, a verb and so requiring action, is used in commandments:

- Mat 22:37. Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love [agapao] the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'
- 1 John 4:21. And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves [agapao] God must love [agapao] his brother also.
- Rom 8:28. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love [agapao] God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Let us consider some examples from the New Testament of the difference between agapao and phileo.

- **Example 1**

A famous example of a passage where the two words are used is the discussion Jesus had with Peter at the lake after the resurrection.

John 21:15-17. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [agapao] Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love [phileo] You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." {16} He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [agapao] Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love [phileo] You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." {17} He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [phileo] Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love [phileo] Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love [phileo] You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.

Twice Jesus asks if Peter loves and esteems Him with a love that is sacrificial and does not count the cost. Peter, unsure of himself after his denial of Christ, replies that he has great affection for Jesus.

- **Example 2**

Consider the following verses:

John 12:25. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

1 Pet 3:10. For "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit.

Is there a contradiction here? Jesus uses the word phileo and warns that so cherishing this life will mean that we will not endure the hardships of discipleship and could fail to experience the life that God offers us.

Peter uses agapao and having this attitude about life is commendable.

- **Example 3**

1 Pet 1:22. Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

Why does Peter command that these pure, obedient believers to "*love one another fervently*" when they are already displaying "*sincere love of the brethren*"?

The answer is that this verse uses two different words that are translated as love. Whereas Peter recognises that they are successfully displaying one type of love [phileo], he is encouraging them develop their relationships and move into a deeper type of love [agapao].

This is very important in the practical context of belonging to a church and working out our salvation in this real world. We can feel a love for the people of God with whom we worship and break bread. We enjoy the services and the presence of God and as a result we love being with the people with whom we share the experience. This is phileo, a warm emotion based on a corporate experience.

But then there comes the time in church life when we are challenged by differing personalities and differing levels of maturity. In that time of pressure there is no feeling of love; no longer are the emotions warm and cosy. Phileo is nowhere to be found. In that challenging time we choose to love or we chose to harden our heart and walk away. The call of Scripture is to choose to prefer others, not to defend our self, to choose to deny our self and take up our cross. This is the call to agapao; this is what the love of God demands and the Scripture commands.

Phileo can be very powerful and very good. The two soldiers who have shared the same experience of danger and struggle, have experienced deep comradeship and have a respect and warm feelings for each other. This is phileo. The uniting power of the shared experience being the basis of this love. A third soldier who was not there, who did not share the struggle, cannot share the same feelings.

Carnal believers value and seek to maintain phileo. The Spirit of Christ wishes us to mature so that whether or not phileo is present, we always demonstrate agapao love.

Phileo love can also be dangerous. The respect and warm emotion that is felt towards the man with whom a lady shares the office and so much time at work, can be a very strong force. This affection is strengthened with his kind compliments and gentle mannerisms, where as her husband never seems to notice her or talk to her. The realisation that she feels love, brings the temptation of an affair. Something that felt so good, conceives sin which is so destructive and fatal.

How many believers have there been who have sought to justify an affair because they felt love and, they say, "God is love". What they felt was phileo, but God is agapao.

Agapao is choosing to love even if it is contrary to feelings.

Rom 5:5. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love [agape] of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

11.3. THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

According to Kenneth Wuest (*Treasurers from the Greek New Testament*), the following rule of construction applies in the Greek language:

When two nouns which are in the same case are connected by the Greek word "and" and only the first noun is preceded by the article "the", then the two nouns refers to the same person or thing.

An example of this is in Eph 4:11,

Eph 4:11. And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

In the Greek the words "pastors" and "teachers" are in the same case, but only the word pastor is preceded by the article "the". Their connection by the "and" therefore means that they refer to the same person and not two separate people. We could more clearly show this in the English by putting "teaching pastors".

The Greek word for "and" can be translated as "and", "even" or "also" depending upon the context.

This same rule of construction applies in numerous verses which apply to the persons of the Godhead. There are many verses where the words "God" and "Father" are the same case, connected by "and" and only the first is preceded by the article "the". The two words are therefore referring to the same person. The English translations do make this clear.

For example²⁸:

Eph 5:20. giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Gal 1:4. who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

²⁸ Also see Rom 15:6, 1 Cor 15:24, 2 Cor 1:3, 2 Cor 11:31, Phil 4:20.

The same construction is used when talking about “Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”. Jesus is both the Lord and He is the Saviour that the writer is talking about.

2 Pet 1:11.²⁹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Importantly we have the same construction in the following verses, which show without any doubt the intention of deity being recognised in Christ Jesus:

2 Pet 1:1. Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ:

Titus 2:13. looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,

Jesus Christ is the God / Saviour the apostles are writing about, they were not writing about God the Father and the Saviour Jesus Christ.

11.4. PEACE

Isa 52:7. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

A dictionary definition of the English noun *peace* could be:

- The absence of war
- Harmonious relations
- The absence of mental stress or anxiety

The Hebrew word translated as peace is the well known *shalom*. *Shalom* comes from the root verb *shalam*, meaning to be complete, perfect, and full. *Shalom* means much more than the absence of war, harmonious relationships or the absence of anxiety; it speaks of wholeness.

A full definition of *shalom* is; completeness, wholeness, peace, health, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquillity, prosperity, fullness, rest, harmony; the absence of agitation or discord.

In Israel today, people greet each other with the words, *mah shalomka* (what is your peace, how are you doing,) and they ask about the peace (well-being) of ones family.

The Septuagint translates *shalom* with the following Greek words: *eirene* (peace; welfare; health); *eirenekos* (peaceable; peaceful); *soteria* (deliverance; preservation; salvation); and *hugiainein* (be in good health; sound).

Another Hebrew word from the same root is *shalem*. This occurs 27 times on the Old Testament and is translated as “perfect”, “whole”, “full”, “just” and “peaceable”.

The Greek word for peace used commonly in the New Testament is *eirene*. This word means; a state of rest, quietness, and calmness; an absence of strife; tranquillity and well-being. It occurs in every New Testament book with the exception of 1 John.

The various facets of meaning can be seen in different uses of the words in Scripture.

- Ready for Eternity

²⁹ Also See 2 Peter 2:20, 2 Peter 3:18

Gen 15:15. "Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.

God spoke to Abraham that he would be buried in peace meaning that he would die with a sense of tranquillity. How true it is that the believer, knowing the imminent homeward call of His Master, can rest in the assurance of a certain hope.

- Stress Free

Psa 4:8. I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Isa 26:3. You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

The believer doesn't need tranquilizers to reduce the effects of various concerns upon his mind. Like Peter in prison the night before his scheduled execution, the believer can enjoy sleep. Rather than fixing his mind upon his troubles, or possible troubles, he fixes his mind upon the Lord. This is the positive discipline of deliberately mediating upon God and seeing Him as caring, concerned and in control.

- In Good Health

Gen 43:27. Then he asked them about their well-being [*shalom*], and said, "Is your father well [*shalom*], the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?"

Joseph is asking about his father's health, as the English translation correctly interprets.

- Harmonious Relationships

Psa 41:9. Even my own familiar friend [literally - *friend of my peace*] in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.

The phrase David uses speaks of a friendship that had been harmonious, comfortable and easy. Such a friendship adds to and shares in the sense of well-being in a person's life.

- Prosperity / Success

Psa 35:27. ... "Let the LORD be magnified, who has pleasure in the prosperity [*shalom*] of His servant."

- Full

Ruth 2:12. "The LORD repay your work, and a full [*shalem*] reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

- Completed

1 Ki 9:25. ... So he finished [*shalem*] the temple.

Shalem is used to describe the completing of the building and furnishing of the temple.

Josh 8:31. ... "an altar of whole [*shalem*] stones over which no man has wielded an iron tool." And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.

Here *shalem* is used of stones which had never been broken or reduced by human hand.

- Wholeness

2 Ki 4:26. "Please run now to meet her, and say to her, 'Is it well [shalom] with you? Is it well [shalom] with your husband? Is it well [shalom] with the child?' "And she answered, "It is well [shalom]."

In English we would say "Is everything okay?"

Isa 48:18. Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

Jer 29:11. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

- Spoken as a Benediction

Num 6:24-26. "The LORD bless you and keep you; {25} The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; {26} The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

Psa 125:5. ... Peace be upon Israel!

- Go in Peace

The blessing "go in peace" is used by the Lord Jesus towards those who have received a salvation grace.

Luke 7:48-50. Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." {49} And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" {50} Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Luke 8:48. And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

- The Author of Peace

The God of peace is a title in the New Testament.

1 Thes 5:23. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah prophesied concerning the prince of peace, whose kingdom was to introduce a government of peace.

Isa 9:6-7. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. {7} Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end...

Ezekiel foretold of the New Covenant that God would make with His people, a covenant of peace.

Ezek 37:26. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.

- Be at Peace

For the believer peace is to be in our heart and mind, and the defining attribute in our relationships.

John 14:27. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

- Rom 5:1. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- Mark 9:50. Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavour, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another."
- Rom 8:6. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.
- Rom 14:17. for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- Rom 14:19. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.
- 1 Cor 14:33. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.
- Eph 2:14. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,
- Phil 4:7. and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
- Col 3:15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.
- 1 Thes 5:13. ... Be at peace among yourselves.
- Heb 12:14. Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:
- 1 Pet 3:11. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.

11.5. GRACE

The Greek word *Charis* is translated into English as *grace*. It has various uses and can be used to mean:

That which causes pleasure, delight, or favourable regard.

In the giver it is a loving, kind and friendly disposition.

In a recipient it is a sense of the favour bestowed which produces a feeling of gratitude.

It is also used with regard to the spiritual state of believers.

Lets look at some of the uses of the this beautiful word.

- Refers to the blessing and favour of God

Luke 2:40. And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

- Refers to an establishing and foundation work in the life of the saints

2 Cor 8:6. So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well.

- Refers to an anointed and authoritative manner or speech.

Luke 4:22. So all bore witness to Him, and marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

- Refers to controlled, godly speech

Col 4:6. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

- Refers to favour with God and men

Acts 2:47. praising God and having favour [*charis*] with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Acts 7:10. "and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favour [*charis*] and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

Acts 14:26. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.

- It emphasises the gift of God's favour and salvation towards the morally bankrupt and undeserving.

Eph 2:8-9. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, {9} not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Rom 4:16. Therefore it [the promise] is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

- It used for thankfulness

1 Tim 1:12. And I thank [*charis*] Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,

Luke 17:9. "Does he thank [*charis*] that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

- It is used as a greeting

2 John 1:10. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet [*chario*] him³⁰;

- The State of Grace refers to the position of being recipient of the benefits of God's gracious favour.

Rom 5:2. through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

1 Pet 5:12. By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.

- The recipients of God's grace should manifest grace in generosity

1 Cor 16:3. And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift [*charis*] to Jerusalem.

2 Cor 8:6. So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well.

³⁰ The Authorised Version used the phrase "God-speed".

2 Cor 8:19. and not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift [*charis*], which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind,

- Power and Equipping for Ministry

Rom 1:5. Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,

Rom 12:6. Having then gifts [*charisma*] differing according to the grace [*charis*] that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

Rom 15:15. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God,

1 Cor 3:10. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

Gal 2:9. and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Eph 3:2. if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

Eph 3:7. of which I became a minister according to the gift [*dorea*] of the grace [*charis*] of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

- Grace is given both from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus.

2 Cor 1:12. For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

Gal 1:6. I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,

Rom 5:15. But the free gift [*charisma*] is not like the offence. For if by the one man's offence many died, much more the grace [*charis*] of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

The Greek word *charisma* refers to the article given to the recipient through the grace of the giver. It is therefore an underserved gift. It can refer to salvation, deliverance from evil, a call to ministry, ability and a spiritual gift.