

Finding Light in Darkness – Session 3

How to Find Stuff in the Bible

By Sonny Bowman

What Do You Want to Find, and Why?

Think about it for a minute. In our western culture, we often think that getting an answer to solve a problem is the purpose of learning. However, in God's view, the purpose of learning is to fundamentally change the learner, instilling wisdom and understanding while developing godly character.

Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *Therefore* get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. — Pr 4:7

This is the reason that Jesus sometimes answered questions with a question (Matthew 19:16-17). It's also why Jesus sometimes responded in ways that did not seem to address the statement or question asked (John 3:2-3).

Wisdom (the ability to judge and act according to God's ways) ...

- Is the most valuable of assets (Pr 4:7, 8:35)
- Is available to anyone, but the price is high (Pr 2:1-6, 8:12,17, 9:4-6)
- Originates in God, not self (Pr 1:7, 2:6, 3:5-6)
- Comes by attention to instruction (Pr 4:13, 8:33,

(from the *New Spirit Filled Life Bible*, p 803)

We must get beyond simply reacting to life's problems, trying to just survive one day to the next. In that mode, we tend to just look for quick answers to solve immediate problems. We cannot afford to relate to God and His Word that way!

We must take a proactive and intensive approach to knowing God and His Word, letting that transform our entire being.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. — Ro 12:1-2

What Do You Know Now?

- Draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper to form two columns
- On the left side, number the lines from 1 to 10.
- Write the name of the section or book of the Bible where you would begin when looking for the following passages?

Pre-Questions

1. When King David danced before the Lord while bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem
2. Jesus' teaching about the good Samaritan
3. The Ten Commandments
4. When the early Church began preaching to the Gentiles (non-Jews)
5. God's promise to bless Abraham
6. Teachings about wisdom (in general)
7. Instructions from the apostles on living a Christian life
8. The description of the final judgment of sinners
9. The story of the prophet Jonah being swallowed by a big fish
10. The story of the crucifixion of Jesus

Composition of the Bible

- Bible from Greek *biblia* meaning *books*
- 66 Books (OT 39, NT 27)
- More than 40 different human authors
- Written over 1,500 year period
- Composed on 3 different continents
- Written in 3 different languages
- Yet a unified message!

The Bible was written over a period of about 1,500 years by more than forty different human authors from a variety of backgrounds. (Joshua a military general, Daniel a prime minister, Peter a fisherman, Paul a religious leader, and Nehemiah a cupbearer.)

The biblical writings were composed on three different continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe), and in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek).

It is not just a collection of books. Though it speaks on many controversial subjects, there is a unified message and completed purpose throughout that reveals the hand of God in the writing and compilation of these works. From beginning to end, there is one unfolding story of God's plan of salvation for mankind through Jesus Christ.

In comparison, try to take ten people from your local area having similar backgrounds and speaking the same language. Separate them and ask them to write on only one controversial subject such as the meaning of life. When they finish, compare what they have written. Do they agree with each other? Of course not. Yet the Bible is internally consistent even though it speaks on many controversial subjects.

It can be helpful to understand the breakdown and arrangement of the various books of the Bible. This is especially helpful when you are searching for information in it. For example, if you want to find a verse about something that Jesus said, you would start with the four Gospels that record the life and teachings of Jesus.

Organization of the Bible

- Old Testament (39 books)
- New Testament (27 books)

Old Testament Organization

- The Law (5 books, Pentateuch, Torah)
 - ♦ Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- History (12 books, Former Prophets)
 - ♦ Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
- Poetry (5 books, Wisdom)
 - ♦ Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
- Major Prophets (5 books, longer)
 - ♦ Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
- Minor Prophets (12 books, shorter)
 - ♦ Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

The Law: Also called: Torah, Pentateuch, Five Books of Moses

—Almost entirely written by Moses. Covers history from the creation through the time of Moses and the establishment of the nation of Israel. Includes the revelation of God to man along with the laws of God. It lays the foundation of God’s purposes, plans, and love for all of creation.

History: Also called: Former Prophets

—Documents the rise and fall of the nation of Israel. Covers the time when the Israelites enter the promise land (Canaan), through the divided kingdom (Judah and Israel) and to the return of the Israelites from Babylonian captivity.

Poetry: Also called: Wisdom

—instructive songs, poetry, and wisdom. Also deals with the problem of suffering. Much of it (except Job) was written by David and Solomon.

Major Prophets: [longer works]

—The prophets called the people back to the Lord while challenging ungodly beliefs and practices. They also announced God’s judgment when the people refused to repent. The “major” prophets are so designated because of the large physical size of their writings.

Minor Prophets: [shorter works]

—The prophets mainly called the people back to the Lord while challenging ungodly beliefs and practices. They also announced God’s judgment when the people refused to repent. The “minor” prophets are so designated because of the smaller physical size of their writings.

Between the Testaments

- About 400 years
- Rome conquered Israel and surrounding area

—There was a period of about 400 years from the time the last Old Testament book was completed until the birth of Jesus Christ. During this time, the Roman Empire conquered the nation of Israel setting the stage for the coming of the promised Messiah.

New Testament Organization

- Gospels (4 books, Synoptic plus John)
 - ♦ Matthew – to Jews, Jesus is Messiah, emphasized what Jesus taught

- ♦ **Mark – to Romans/Gentiles. Emphasized what Jesus did**
- ♦ **Luke –to Greeks. Accurate record of historical events.**
- ♦ **John – emphasized deity of Jesus.**
- **Acts (1 book)**
 - ♦ **Acts – history of the early Church**
- **Epistles (21 books, letters)**
 - ♦ **Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2, Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude**
- **Revelation (1 book, Apocalypse)**
 - ♦ **Revelation**

Gospels

—Four different accounts of the birth, life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Each is written from a different perspective to provide a more complete picture when taken together.

Matthew – primarily written to the **Hebrews** (Jews) to demonstrate that Jesus is the **prophesied Messiah**. Matthew emphasized Jesus’ Jewish roots and what He taught.

Mark – Written by John Mark. primarily written for **Roman** (gentile, non-Jewish) **readers who appreciated government and power**. Mark emphasizes more of what Jesus did than what He said. It is an action-packed Gospel and often the first one translated into a new language.

Luke – primarily written for the **Greeks** who **appreciated culture, philosophy, wisdom, reason, beauty, and education**. Luke was especially careful to accurately record the historical events associated with Jesus.

John – John emphasized the **deity of Jesus**—that He is God in human form. More attention is given to the things Jesus said than what He did.

Acts: (History of the Early Church)

—Covers the activities of the Apostles and early Christians as the Church begins to take shape. It documents the spread of Christianity in Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the end of the earth. It includes the life and work of Paul.

Epistles: (Letters to the Church and Christians)

—provide explanation and instruction for Christian living. Most were written by Paul (**Pauline Epistles**: Romans through Philemon). The traditional view is that **Hebrews** was also written by Paul, possibly in Hebrew, then translated into Greek by one of his aides. There are many who believe that Paul did not write Hebrews.

Pastoral Epistles: 1 & 2 Timothy plus Titus – instructions useful for church pastors

Revelation: Also called: Apocalypse (“destruction” or “revelation”)

—written by the Apostle John recording a vision in which Jesus revealed to him information about things to come. It includes details about the final days of the earth and universe, the judgment of sin, and eternity.

The Apocrypha

• **Group of 14 writings included in the Old Testament in the Septuagint and the Vulgate (also Roman Catholic versions)**

• **Not considered inspired by the Jews or Protestants**

• **Never quoted by Jesus or writers of the New Testament**

• **Should not be used in Bible study**

Also used of early writings not included in the New Testament

—The Apocrypha includes extra writings that are included in the Roman Catholic version of the Bible. They are not in the Hebrew version of the Old Testament, **nor were they ever quoted by Jesus and the writers of the New Testament.** They should not be considered as inspired Scripture.

Apocrypha from Greek words that mean *obscure* or *to hide away*.

According to Merriam-Webster (www.merriam-webster.com), apocrypha means...

Etymology: Medieval Latin, from Late Latin, neuter plural of *apocryphus* secret, not canonical, from Greek *apokryphos* obscure, from *apokryptein* to hide away, from *apo-* + *kryptein* to hide — more at crypt

Date: 14th century

1 : writings or statements of dubious authenticity

2 *capitalized a* : books included in the Septuagint and Vulgate but excluded from the Jewish and Protestant canons of the Old Testament ... **b** : early Christian writings not included in the New Testament

Bible Survey: Post Questions

- 1. When King David danced before the Lord while bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem**
History: 2 Samuel 6:12-15
- 2. Jesus' teaching about the good Samaritan**
Gospels: Luke 10:30-36
- 3. The Ten Commandments**
The Law: Exodus 20:1-17 & Deuteronomy 5:6-21
- 4. When the early Church began preaching to the Gentiles (non-Jews)**
Acts: Acts 10:24-48
- 5. God's promise to bless Abraham**
The Law: Genesis 15-17
- 6. Teachings about wisdom**
Poetry: Proverbs 1-4 (and others)
- 7. Instructions from the apostles on living a Christian life**
The Epistles: various
- 8. The description of the final judgment of sinners**
Apocalypse: Revelation 20:11-15
- 9. The story of the prophet Jonah being swallowed by a big fish**
Minor Prophets: Jonah 1:17
- 10. The story of the crucifixion of Jesus**
The Gospels: Matthew 27:31-56, Mark 15:20-41, Luke 23:26-49, and John 19:16-37

Bible Covers

- Paper
- Hard Back (good value/cost)
- Vinyl
- Bonded Leather (deteriorates)
- Genuine Bonded Leather (deteriorates)
- Genuine Leather (most durable cover)
- Leather Lined (most expensive)

- **Zippered Cover (protects any)**

Bonded leather is a similar process to making particle board or pressed wood like that used in cheaper furniture. Wood particles mixed with glue and shaped into boards. In time, it begins to come apart. Using the term “genuine bonded leather” is similar to saying “genuine wooden particle board”.

Common Bible Translations

- **CSB – Christian Standard Bible (2004)**
- **NLTse – *New Living Translation* (1996/2007)**
- **NKJV – *New King James Version* (1982)**
- **NIV – *New International Version* (1984)**
- **NASB – *New American Standard Bible* (1977)**
- **KJV or AV – *King James Version* (1611)**

Appears that Jesus and disciples read and quoted from a translation – the Septuagint – a Greek version of the Hebrew/Aramaic Bible (our Old Testament)

Bible Paraphrases (“Free” Translation)

- ***The Message* (1995)**
- ***Today’s English Version* (Good News Bible)**
- ***The Living Bible***

Specialty Bibles

- ***Amplified Bible* (1965)**
- **Parallel Bible (various)**
- ***One Year Bible***
- **Interlinear Greek New Testament**
- **Harmony of the Gospels**
- **Topical Bible (not true Bible)**

Examples of Study Bibles

- ***New Spirit Filled Life Bible* (NKJV)**
- ***The NIV Study Bible* (NIV)**
- ***Thompson Chain Reference* (NKJV, NIV, NASB, & KJV)**
- ***Ryrie Study Bible* (NASB, NIV, KJV)**
- ***The NASB New Inductive Study Bible***
Discover God Study Bible (NLT)
- **And others...**

There are other good study Bibles available with special themes or purposes. Notes reflect the philosophies and beliefs of the editors and contributors.

New Spirit Filled Life Bible – Charismatic, Past Foursquare President, Jack Hayford, was general editor

Discover God Study Bible – Calvinist leanings

Bibles Not Recommended (My personal opinion!)

- **New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**
 - ♦ Promotes Apocrypha
- **Dake Annotated Reference Bible**
 - ♦ Primarily a single person's comments
- **Scofield Study Bible**
 - ♦ Primarily a single person's comments
- **MacArthur Study Bible**
 - ♦ Primarily a single person's comments
- **TNIV & NIRV**
 - ♦ Politically correct, gender neutralized

TNIV – Today's New International Version

NIRV – The New International Reader's Version for children

What Makes a Study Bible?

- **Concordance**
- **Cross References**
- **Topical Reference**
- **Maps**
- **Tables and Charts**
- **Commentaries and Notes**

Highlighting Tips

- **Liquid highlighters bleed**
- **Soft, dry markers designed for Bibles**
- **Art pencils (good variety, inexpensive)**
- **Map colors (generally too hard)**

Possible Highlighting Colors

- **Brown – Jesus and God**
- **Red – Messiah (OT) & Salvation (NT)**
- **Purple – Identification with Christ**
- **Yellow – Holy Spirit**
- **Blue – Christian Living & General Info**
- **Orange – Blessings & Promises**
- **Green – End Times & Future**

Thumb Tabs

- Cut-in Tabs
- Add-on Tabs
- Advantages
 - ♦ Find books quicker
- Disadvantages
 - ♦ Interfere with page turning
 - ♦ Tend to deteriorate with time
 - ♦ Can damage pages

Concordances

- Inside study Bibles
- Strong's Exhaustive Concordance (KJV)*
- Cruden's Complete Concordance*
- Others

Will be specific to a particular translation, often the KJV

Concordance Exercise

- Find: where Jesus tells Peter to feed His sheep.
 - ♦ What section do you expect to begin with?
 - ♦ What word looked up? feed, sheep, Peter, Jesus
- Find: to live is Christ to die is gain
 - ♦ What section do you expect?
 - ♦ What word looked up? die, gain, live, Christ
- Find: love one another
 - ♦ What section do you expect?
 - ♦ What word looked up? Love, another, one

Expect to find in Gospels since Jesus is talking with Peter

Some words will provide a smaller list to review.

If remember surrounding words, can also search for them: lamb

John 21:15-17

#2 Epistles

Phil 1:21

#3 (harder) Gospels or Epistles

search "another" NKJV (1): John 13:34

Search "love" NKJV (5): John 13:35, John 15:12, Rom 13:8, (1 John 4:7), 1 John 4:12

With computer (NKJV) — found 13 verses

John 13:34, John 15:12, John 15:17, Romans 13:8, 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 John 3:11, 1 John 3:23, 1 John 4:7, 1 John 4:11, 1 John 4:12, John 5

Cross References

- **Two Types**
 - ♦ Cross Reference
 - ♦ Chain Reference (*Thompson's...*)
- Useful for finding related verses.
- Helps determine what else the Bible says about material in the passage

Topical Bibles

- *Nave's Topical Bible*
- *The New Compact Topical Bible*
- Inside Bibles (e.g. Thompson Chain)

Audio Bibles

- **Go Bible & My-iBible**
 - ♦ MP3 player with Bible pre-loaded
 - ♦ NIV, NKJV, KJV, Spanish available
 - ♦ Selectable by verse
 - ♦ As low as \$50
- **Faith Comes by Hearing**
 - ♦ Free download (MP3)
 - ♦ Load into your own MP3 player
 - ♦ Many versions and languages
 - ♦ www.faithcomesbyhearing.com
- CD sets

Great for listening to the Bible.

Will hear things that you miss in reading.

Generally will listen to more than will read at a single sitting.

Can listen in the car, exercising, or doing other things.

Electronic Bibles

- **Computer Bibles**
 - ♦ eBible
 - ♦ QuickVerse
 - ♦ Others
- **Free Computer Bible with KJV**
 - ♦ www.e-sword.net/
 - ♦ Can buy other translations
- **Be sure it has your favorite translation!**
 - ♦ KJV, NKJV, NLT, and others in most
 - ♦ NIV often requires additional cost

Cheaper than buying all the books and Bibles in hard copies.

Much easier to find stuff than with a hard copy.

Look for discontinued editions. Often get them fairly inexpensively

Generally, get the Basic edition – it contains most books needed

Can pay and unlock other books if needed, but cheaper to buy premium set if very many need to be unlocked.

Be sure that it includes your translation of choice in the unlocked set.

Phone & PDA Bibles

- **Olive Tree (free reader & many free Bibles)**

- **Hendricksons Bundle (\$30)**

- ♦ Strong's Concordance
- ♦ Nave's Topical Bible
- ♦ Expository Dictionary of Bible Words
- ♦ Torrey's New Topical Textbook
- ♦ Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary
- ♦ Gray's Commentary
- ♦ Smith's Bible Dictionary
- ♦ International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
- ♦ Edershiem's 4-volume History of OT
- ♦ Young's Literal Translation, maps, etc.

- **Also by eBible & QuickVerse**

Available for iPhone, Blackberry, Android, Windows Mobile, and Palm

Also programs by others such as QuickVerse, eBible, etc.

When buy NKJV, NIV, NLT, and other translations, have to pay a royalty fee.

Mine has...

twelve Bible translations including NKJV, NLT, KJV, Amplified, and one in Greek

Hendricksons Bundle

Online Bible Resources

- **Olive Tree – search & lots of features**

- ♦ www.olivetree.com/bible/

- **Crosswalk – search several versions and tools**

- ♦ <http://biblestudy.crosswalk.com/>

- **Bible Gateway – search several versions**

- ♦ www.BibleGateway.com

- **ebible.com (not same as eBible program)**

- ♦ www.ebible.com

Cheapest route if have internet already

Caution: Can find teachings on Internet to support almost anything!

Electronic Search Tips

- For electronic Bibles & Internet searches...
 - ♦ Life Foursquare Church (62,700)
- AND = all words, any order
 - ♦ Life AND Foursquare AND Church (378,000)
- Phrase = all words, precise order
 - ♦ “Life Foursquare Church” (7,460)
- Not = eliminate parts
 - ♦ “Life Foursquare Church” –angleton (42,600)
- Plus = add parts
 - ♦ “Life Foursquare Church” +angleton (1,150)

Parenthesis show found pages when the indicated search string was entered into Google (2010).

Phrase search (with quote marks) is often the most helpful

Commentaries and Notes

- Section headings and bottom of pages
- Often helpful, especially in explaining the historical setting and related traditions
- May contain references to other related verses
- Not infallible – use sparingly!

Section headings are not part of the inspired Scripture. They are commentaries that summarize the section immediately following.

Chapters and verses were not in the originals, added later to help locate passages. In the OT, verses were added fairly early, but chapters not until 13th century. Added to NT in 16th century by Robert Stephens while on horseback from Paris to Lyons.

Additional Helps

•Dictionaries (Lexicons)

- ♦ English
- ♦ Bible
- ♦ Greek
- ♦ Hebrew

•Bible Encyclopedias

Vine’s Greek definitions

Caution: Some opinions expressed in Vine’s do not agree with Scripture.

Internal in the New Spirit Filled Life Bible (selected)

Homework

- Use a concordance to find...
 - ♦ Saved through faith... it is the gift of God
 - ♦ Don't lean on your own understanding
- Use a cross reference to find the...
 - ♦ OT prophecy about Bethlehem in Matt 2:6
 - ♦ Stoning of Paul mentioned in 2 Cor 11:25
- Use a concordance, topical Bible, Bible dictionary, or Bible encyclopedia to find...
 - ♦ At least two passages about the Trinity

Answers next week...