

How to Study the Bible to have Sound Doctrine.

By Everett L. Anderson / 2009

1SM 410 Nothing frightens me more than to see the spirit of variance manifested by our brethren. We are on dangerous ground when we cannot meet together like Christians, and courteously examine controverted points. I feel like fleeing from the place lest I receive the mold of those who cannot candidly investigate the doctrines of the Bible.

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Keep an open mind as you study and remember what God said in *Isa. 1:18* **“Come now, let us reason together.”** God is **reasonable** and his character can not change. *Mal.3:6* **I your God do not change.** Please consider and believe what the Bible says. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you before you read any further.

Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans (the people reading this message) were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the scriptures everyday (you are too) to see if what Paul (Mr. Anderson) said was true.

1 Thess. 5:20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt. 21) Test everything. Hold to the good.

Keep in mind what Christ said about future events.

John 14:29 Christ said: **I have told you now before it happens**, so that when it does happen you will believe.

15:15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for **everything** that I learned from my Father **I have made known to you**.

1Thess. 5:1 The Coming of Christ: Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2) for you know very well that the day of Christ will come like a thief in the night. 3) While people are saying **“Peace and safety,”** **destruction** will come on them **suddenly**, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4) But **you**, brothers **are not in darkness** so that **this day should surprise you** like a thief. 5) You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

Christ is our best friend and best friends share secrets. Unfortunately, most people are not friends with Christ and therefore, *‘the day of Christ will come like a thief in the night’* for the majority of them. Most people are afraid of studying the time when Christ will come, but we all believe He will come soon. What we really want to know is, **“How soon is soon”**. The above statement, *1Thess. 5:1~5*, tells us that the times and dates are not to be written down for everyone to know but we who study the Bible will know the signs of the end of the world. It will be when people around the world are saying ***“Peace and Safety”*** *1Thess. 5:3*, then sudden destruction will come. If we study about this sudden destruction in the Bible we will know *“the day of Christ”* *1Thess. 5:2* (Second Coming) because we are ***“sons of the light”*** *1Thess. 5:5* and **this day will not surprise us**. However, we will not know the date until the start of the sudden destruction and that's what we are going to study but **first we must know “How to Study the Bible”**.

What is “Sound Doctrine”?

How should the Bible be **properly interpreted**?

What are sound **hermeneutical principles**?

How can we tell if a Biblical passage is **literal, symbolic or a parable**?

To what **time frame** are we to apply the Biblical passages?

Does the Biblical passage have **multiple applications** and/or times frames?

Be Prepared

Before we can start any Bible study we must have *sound* principles of biblical interpretation. We must **obey what the Bible commands** us to do and that is to **‘be prepared’**, 2 Tim. 4: 2. That means **you and not your preacher** or anyone else. You are responsible for what you believe. Prayerfully consider this study.

2 Tim. 4: 2 Preach the Word; **be prepared** in season and out of season; (all the time) correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction. ³⁾ For the time will come when men will not put up with **sound doctrine**. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴⁾ They will turn their ears away from the truth **and turn aside to myths**.

In the last days, the final effort of **the devil will be to deceive the whole world**.

Rev. 13:14 Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he **deceived the inhabitants of the earth**.

Mat. 24:12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of **most** (the majority) **will grow cold**, ¹³⁾ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

This confirms that ‘most’ people will not have the truth during the end times. Only a few fully surrendered Christians will remain loyal to God.

Rev. 12: 17 Then the **dragon was enraged** at the woman (God’s people, Rev. 12:1, 19:7) and went off to **make war** against the rest of her offspring, **those who obey God’s commandments** and hold to the testimony of Christ.

So be prepared; study this lesson prayerfully.

God’s truth is progressive

Prov. 4:18 The path of the just is as the shining **light, that shineth more and more** unto the perfect day.

Christ gave us His example

Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses (*Always start at Genesis and the rest of the first 5 books of Moses*) and all the prophets, (*The rest of the Old Testament*) he expounded unto them in all the scriptures (*This confirms that the whole Bible is to be used.*) the things concerning himself.

He used one subject and every text in the whole Bible and came to one conclusion.

Sound doctrine can not be based on one sentence or even a few random sentences.

You have to study the complete passage to know the proper context and time frame plus every other passage on that one subject in the entire Bible to have sound doctrine on every Biblical verse.

Hermeneutics

What are sound **hermeneutical principles**?

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (internet)

The Golden Rule of Hermeneutics

“If the plain sense, makes common sense, seek no other sense.”

Hermeneutics according to E.L. Anderson:

I’m a firm believer in keeping explanations short and therefore I quote a lot from the Bible. We must be able to explain any subject (doctrine) from the Bible only. Historical records will confirm the statements in the Bible too. I believe that Biblical truths can and should be explained in simple language that all people can understand. If an explanation has to go into too much detail and few scriptures, then people may rightfully doubt it. The Bible has over 40 authors which was written by man as directed by God. None of the authors contradict each other; therefore, if any other person writes about a Biblical subject, their statements should never contradict the other authors of the Bible. All doctrine must be filtered thought the character of God; God is Love.

We know Christ does not change; He is the same yesterday, today and forever. We must take what the Bible states literally unless it can be proven otherwise. The must take the meaning of “forever” as literal unless the context is conditional, eg “if” or like words are used.

Hermeneutics according to George W. Reid, Former SDA Director Biblical Research Institute.

The Bible is to be understood a literal unless coercive evidence suggested otherwise, e.g., obvious poetic constructions, allegorical passages, literary figures of speech, prophetic symbols, and typological structures.

Use the Entire Bible

- 2Tim 3:16** All scripture is God-breathed (*God is the Author of the Bible, God approved what man wrote, otherwise it would never have been put into His Bible*) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training righteousness.
- Prov. 30: 5** Every word of God is flawless.
- Psa. 119: 11** I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.
- Psa. 119: 105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.
- John 17:17** Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.
- 1Thes. 5:20** Do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹⁾ Test everything. (*Prove it from the Bible*) Hold to the good.
- Mat. 24:14** Christ said: **And this gospel** (*Christ only had the Old Testament, this means all of the Bible.*) **of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**
¹⁵⁾ So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ spoken of through the prophet **Daniel; let the reader understand;** then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

These are some New Testament commands to study prophecies, not only the New Testament but the Old Testament as well, especially the book of Daniel. These commands are not just for Preachers; they are also for you. **You are God’s child and His ambassador and you must know the word of God!**

Parables

It is generally understood that parables are designed to teach one fundamental truth, and that the details of the parable need not necessarily have significance in themselves, except as “props” and/or emphasis for the story. In other words, the details of a parable must not be pressed as having a literal meaning in terms of spiritual truth unless the context makes clear that such a meaning is intended.

Out of this principle grows another:

It is not wise to use the details of a parable to teach doctrine. Only the fundamental teaching of a parable as clearly set forth in its context and confirmed by the general tenor of scripture, together with details explained in the context itself, may legitimately be considered as a basis for doctrine.

Symbolic Prophecy

In the interpretation of symbolic prophecy it is important to permit the same spirit that dictated the vision to identify its symbols; namely the rest of the inspired Bible. Where such identification is lacking, the interpreter is left to guess as to the application; hence one’s own opinion must be weighed with much evidence. Further, as in parables, the various features of symbolic presentations have varying degrees of significance and importance. Parables and symbolic prophecies must not be made to stand on all four feet. Equal importance must not be attached to every detail of their pictures. Some features may be introduced merely to round out the presentation, or to provide a consistent background. As in the case of parables, **we must learn the over-all objective of the vision,** and what features of the pictorial presentation are intended **to convey divine truth**

Time Frame

We must always consider the 'Time Frame' in which the chapter and verse is applied. It could have applications to (1) the people and/or the church of the time it was written and/or (2) the people and/or the church throughout the ages and/or (3) a historical and/or a futuristic application and/or (4) an application to the Second and/or the Third Coming. Never take the chapter or verse out of context by taking it out of its proper time frame and placing it in the wrong time frame. Don't restrict the word of God to your own belief; the context may have more than one application.

Revelation an Open Book

Many servants of God have said that the book of Revelation is a sealed book or at the very least cannot be understood. The very name "Revelation" contradicts the statement that it is a sealed book. **'Revelation' means that something of importance is revealed.**

Rev. 22:10 "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book"

(Revelations can be understood.)

Rev. 1:1 **The revelation of Christ**, *(The purpose of the Book of Revelation is just that; the revealing of Christ, look for Christ and His plans in it.)* which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. ... ³⁾ Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

When John wrote the book of Revelation, approximately 95 AD, he had only the Old Testament for reference. **To understand the New Testament, especially the book of Revelation, God has given us the Old Testament to refer to its examples and types.**

Be blessed and read this study carefully and completely.

What does "soon, Rev. 1:1; the time is near, Rev. 1:3" mean? Our lifetime is only about 80 years. When you die the next thing you know and see is Christ coming; that's soon, a short lifetime.

Start at the Beginning

To have a firm foundation of any Bible study you must understand the truth of about how sin started in the universe. We have to view the Bible as a whole and rate all its parts to the one central theme, **the great controversy over the character and government of God.** Without having sound understanding of the past we can't understand the future.

Before we can study about the end time events, just prior to the Second Coming, and the end of sin events, the Third Coming and the Lake of Fire, we must have a clear understanding about the start of sin events. We must also know how and why sin started and why sin was permitted to grow without punishment. If we don't have a firm foundation on these topic we will be lead astray by many end time events stories that sound good but are not based on the whole truth, which has **to be consistent with God's character.**

SOP and How to Study Doctrine

RH, Dec. 20, 1892

“No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.”

GC p 599

The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed.

GC p 371

One saying of the Saviour must not be made to destroy another.

Ed 189

We are to search its pages, not for proof to sustain our opinions, but in order to know what God says.

ISM 410

Nothing frightens me more than to see the spirit of variance manifested by our brethren. We are on dangerous ground when we cannot meet together like Christians, and courteously examine controverted points. I feel like fleeing from the place lest I receive the mold of those who cannot candidly investigate the doctrines of the Bible.

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Those who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs, are not fit to teach in any department of God's cause.

MR Vol 2 p 58

“There is much light yet to shine forth from the law of God and the gospel of righteousness. The message, understood in its true character and proclaimed in the Spirit, will lighten the earth with its glory.”

Summary

- **Self Study**: We must be prepared, **study** the Bible for **ourselves** or we may be deceived.
- **Clear Truth**: We begin with texts that **even a child can understand** that are clear statements of truth. Then we can compare other scriptures with those that are easily understood.
- **Christ's example**: Use the whole Bible on one topic; *Luke 24:27*. By using **more scriptures** brought into line on a **single subject**, the **safer the interpretation**.
- **Literal Interpretation**: The Bible verses are to be interpreted as **literal** unless it can be proven otherwise.
- **Time frame**: must be considered in which the chapter and verse is to be applied.
- **Parables** and **Symbolism**: are to be viewed for the message that they are giving which is consistent with the over all theme of the Bible.
- **Context**: Read the whole chapter to get the proper time frame, setting and context.
- **God's character**: All **doctrine** must be **filtered through His character**; God is Love, Love is patient and kind, Love never gets angry, because God knows the beginning from the end and thus there is no need for Him to get angry, sad yes, angry never. *1 Cor. 13*. We know Christ does not change; He is the same yesterday, today and forever.
- **Short Explanations**: We must be able to explain any subject (doctrine) from the Bible only. If an explanation has to go into **too much detail** and **few scriptures**, then people may rightfully **doubt it**. Historical records will confirm the statements in the Bible too.
- **No Contradictions**: The Bible has over 40 authors which was written by man as directed by God. None of the authors contradict each other; therefore, if any other person writes about a Biblical subject, their statements should **never contradict the other authors** of the Bible.
- **Truth is Progressive**: God's **truth is progressive**. *Prov. 4:18*