



How To Study The Bible

By Charles Willis

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PREFACE

Many Christians do not know where to begin when they attempt to study their Bible. I understand. I was once in that same position. This workbook has been created to assist the young and old in learning how to study profitably.

Study should not be confused with reading. "Study" is a deeper way of examining the text than a cursory reading. Through study, a deeper understanding is gained which creates more faith and produces a confidence to share the truth with others.

I hope you will seriously work through each lesson and understand the importance of why we should study diligently to show ourselves approved unto God. A copy of Strong's Concordance is strongly recommended as an excellent tool for Bible study.

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Attitudes Toward Study

Lesson # 1

As with all endeavors, some have good motivations and some have bad. Some have good attitudes and some have bad. This is also true of Bible study. We should be studying to learn, grow and apply Scripture, yet in this process we must be certain to examine our motivations and attitudes for studying. Consider some thoughts based on 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Scripture is profitable for doctrine. Scripture is not the source of doctrine, Scripture IS doctrine. Many denominational errors of occurred because men have looked at Scripture as the source of doctrine rather than seeing Scripture as unchangeable doctrine. A doctrinal sermon is the only kind of sermon there is. A non-doctrinal sermon would have no Scripture in it. "Doctrine" is a "teaching", so by studying the Bible we are taught the will of God.

Scripture is profitable for reproof. Reproof means: "to rebuke another with such effectual wielding of the victorious arms of truth, as to bring him, if not always to confession, yet at least to a conviction of his sin" (Trench, *Synonyms of the N.T.* p.13). Some do not enjoy reading or studying the Bible because it reproves them, pointing

out their sin. For those who desire righteousness, this is a positive reason to study. For those who desire to offer God less than their best, this is a negative which often discourages their study.

Scripture is profitable for correction. After being reprovved we need to be corrected. The greek means: "restoration to an upright or right state; setting right" (Vine's). The Bible not only points out our sin by tells us how to make correction. The example of Simon the sorcerer is a prime example. This baptized believer sinned, and was told to repent and pray the Lord would forgive the intention of his heart (Acts 8:22). We profit in learning how we (as Christians) can correct our stumbling into sin.

Scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness. Jesus says we should seek first the kingdom of God "and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). For those who are living faithful unto God, Scripture is profitable in helping them become more and more righteous. They continue to study and learn how to walk in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:7). The adoption of godly attitudes and motives are part of His righteousness. Thus we learn that the Scriptures are profitable to all men.

Some study the Bible for poor reasons. Their motives are not in tune with pleasing God. Some who are enemies of the cross know a great deal about the Bible, but have failed to apply it to themselves. They use Scripture as a weapon of attack to destroy faith, pointing to supposed contradictions or failed prophecies. Others want to focus on the difficult sayings trying to definitively understand the meat of the word, when they probably still need to partake of the milk (see 2 Peter 3:16).

Some study to impress others. Perhaps to impress a preacher, or to be known in a congregation as knowledgeable. Remember, Diotrophes loved to have the preeminence (3 John 9). We must study, but not for doing our righteousness before men (Matt. 6:1).

Some study to find a "proof text". Many believers search the Scriptures to find a passage that matches their belief. Instead we all ought to be matching our belief to what Scripture says! One attitude uses Scripture as a proof text, the other views all Scripture as Doctrine.

In the following questions, examine yourself about why you study the Bible.

Questions

Define the word “inspired” as used in 2 Timothy 3:16. Why is this word significant to our understanding of the Bible?

The Scriptures are profitable that “*the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work*” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Please explain this phrase.

What does it mean to ‘accurately handle the word of truth’ (2 Timothy 2:15)?

How do the following passages indicate we grow in faith?

Psalm 119:104

2 Peter 1:3-4

Romans 10:17

Matthew 4:4

2 Timothy 3:15

James 1:21

The parable of the sower (Luke 8:10-18) indicates the importance of the heart of the hearer when listening to the truth. Jesus concludes by saying “*take care how you listen*” (Luke 8:18). Try to list 3-4 attitudes of heart we must possess which will enable us to profit from our time studying Scripture.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Study Ephesians 4:28-29. Explain what part of the verse is reproof and what part is correction.

When our faith is questioned by a friend we may offer a “proof text”. Relate the proper way to use a proof text and be prepared to discuss how “proof texts” are abused by many.

Translations

Lesson # 2

The Bible is originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. What we read in English is a translation made by men, and as such will at times do a disservice to the original meaning. Concepts do not always translate well from one culture to another, nor do figures of speech or imagery. Couple with this the idea that words change meaning over time and it is not difficult to see just how hard the translators job can be. Understanding there is some limitation to any translation, the Bible has nonetheless been very well translated into the English.

Not every translation into English is well done. In fact, some are very poor. When beginning to study the Bible it is necessary to begin with a consideration of which translation we are determined to study.

The best translations will always use a group of language experts who examine carefully the oldest copies of the Bible which exist. The worst translations will be done by one man or a very small group with little or no concern about the ancient manuscripts. The modern "Bible selections" have best sellers translated by one man (*The Message*), and by a board of more than fifty language experts (*The New American Standard*). Additionally, it

must be understood that some copies of the Bible are not a translation but are a paraphrase. A translation is an attempt to bring each word from the original language into the English. A paraphrase is an attempt to bring the thought into English with no concern if different words are used. Unless we do our homework, we will not know which translation should be studied, and which would be better left on the shelf.

The Bible has more surviving ancient manuscripts than any other text. While 643 ancient copies of Homer's *Iliad* exist, around 25,000 manuscripts exist for the Bible (*The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, Josh McDowell, p.34). A good translator will refer to the oldest and best preserved documents available. Some of these oldest copies are themselves a translation into Latin, which (as a dead language) actually helps, in that the meaning of words no longer change. Other manuscripts exist in Syriac, Coptic (Egyptian), Armenian, and a fewer number in various other languages dating to the fourth through sixth century. We can have confidence that our oldest manuscripts are reliable, some of which date to within just a few decades of the events described.

Having a few different but good

translations can be very beneficial when engaged in study. For this reason I have copies of several translations to which I can refer. Sometimes the quickest way to aid the understanding is to simply read the same passage from three or four translations. Again, knowing which translations are good will impact our study.

No greater discovery has impacted the science of translation than has the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Discovered in March of 1947, the manuscripts came to light at a time when scholars were questioning the accuracy of the Hebrew in the Old Testament, since it had been copied by hand so many times. The oldest Hebrew manuscripts in existence prior to 1947 were from about 900 A.D. The scroll of Isaiah was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls and has been dated to 125 B.C. When compared with the 900 A.D. manuscripts "it demonstrates the unusual accuracy of the copyists of the Scripture over a thousand year period" (McDowell, p.78). We can be very confident of our understanding of the original languages, and therefore some of the translations on the market; however, we must study from a reliable translation.

Questions

1. Describe the differences between a translation and a paraphrase.
2. What languages are used in writing the original manuscripts translated into our Bible?
3. Give evidence as to why we can believe the ancient manuscripts and therefore our English translations are reliable and should be studied "word for word". Be prepared to relay to the class some information not included in this outline.
4. What was the significance of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls?
5. Study **five** of the following passages comparing each from more than one translation. Tell what impact additional translations have added to your understanding. *If you do not have more than one translation, you can visit the following websites which have several: www.Biblegateway.com OR www.Blueletterbible.org OR www.Bibles.net*
 - A. Acts 2:38
 - B. Psalm 23
 - C. Genesis 3:1-8
 - D. Hebrews 7:1-14
 - E. Colossians 3:1-2
 - F. Matthew 6:1
 - G. 1 Samuel 13:8-14
 - H. Luke 2:36-38
 - I. Ephesians 5:21-33
 - J. 2 Peter 3:7-11

Research Project

Pick four translations of the Bible from the list in the **Supplemental** section in the back of this workbook. Learn all you can about each translation and be prepared to share findings with the class. In this way we hope to determine which are good translations, which are not, and why.

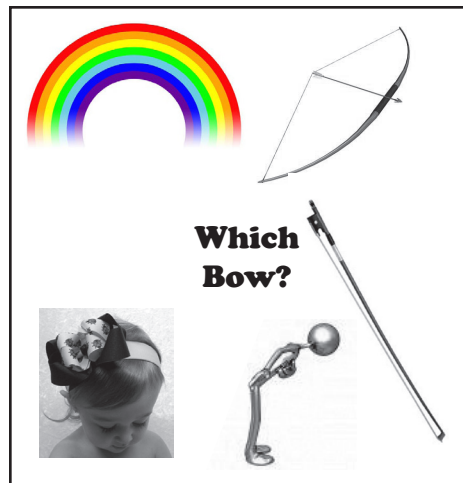
Contextual Study

Lesson # 3

No greater abuse of Scripture is ever made than to ignore the context in which a verse is found. Through this poor means of study many erroneous doctrines have sprung. They are easily disproved by staying in the context, yet many persist in error because of their own desires. They have, in many instances, made Scripture say what they want it to say. We must be diligent in our Bible study to never remove a verse from the context in which it is embedded.

Language is always understood within the context. In the 1960's it was the goal of every teen to be "cool". We know this was not referring to temperature because of the context. Words change meaning (such as the word "gay") which means the literary context must be addressed in the historical context. Not just "what does the word mean" but "what did the word mean when it was written". The failure to consider the meaning at the time has led to additional errors in doctrine.

Many examples could be considered, but we will limit this article to two. Let us first consider the text of James 1:27: "*Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their*



distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world." Many in the Lord's Church argued in the 1950's (and still argue today) that this passage authorizes the congregation to take money from the treasury to support orphan homes. This abuse of the passage is the result of not staying in the context. To keep "oneself" unstained by the world cannot ever be considered a reference to the church. Beyond this is the bizarre notion of a congregation visiting orphans and widows?! Surely it must refer to the individual. If we back up in the context the meaning is made even clearer. James 1:26 says, "*if anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless*". James then goes on (in this context) to explain what pure religion is for the individual. Supporting orphan homes from the treasury is not

authorized from this text (nor any other).

John 15:1-8 is another passage which has statements frequently taken out of the context to derive a wrong teaching. Denominationalism has long used this passage to demonstrate the Lord intended many religious bodies which all comprise the church. Pictures are painted of the church being a huge umbrella and each spine of the umbrella pointing to a different denomination. All are in "the church" in this false teaching. This is easily disproved by the context of the passage. Jesus claims to be the "*true vine*" (v.1) which has branches. Those branches are not denominations, "*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing*" (v.5). Just an examination of the pronouns demands the understanding that the individual is a branch. No where in this context is a group of people even considered.

The context will often tell us the meaning of words and explain itself. We must never fail to consider the context. The result will always be poor Bible study which will frequently result in false conclusions.

Questions

Study each of the following passages being sure to understand the context.

Answer the

Romans 5:12-21

1. Does “death” refer to physical or spiritual death in this context? Support your answer with phrases and arguments used in the context.
2. Calvinist doctrine teaches we inherit Adam’s sin and are thus born in sin. They point to verse twelve’s statement that “death spread to all men”, verse fourteen’s “death reigned”, and verse eighteen’s “through the one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men”. How does this context disprove this false doctrine?
3. If Calvinist teaching is correct from this passages about “death” and “condemnation”, what **MUST** also be true according to verses 19-21? (Let’s be consistent in looking at the context.)
4. What is meant in verse fourteen when it says Adam “is a type of Him who was to come”?

Luke 23:39-43

This passage is often cited as an example of how we today are saved by faith alone. What contextual proof demonstrates this is a false doctrine?

Exodus 20:1-26

What evidence is embedded in this context to demonstrate we are not required to keep the ten commandments?

Research Project

Read **Mark 16:14-20** and tell who will be able to pick up serpents and not get hurt. You may go to other passages in Scripture in answering this question, but do your best to stay within just this context.

Contextual Study - Application

Lesson # 4

Several times in this series of studies we will have “application” lessons. These lessons are intended to provide more “hands on” practice in learning and understanding the previous lesson.

You are encouraged to study each context carefully in this lesson, trying to observe all that it says.

Matthew 16:13-19

What proof in this text demonstrates Peter was NOT the first Pope of the Catholic church? That in fact Jesus did NOT build His church upon Peter?

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

1. When will miraculous spiritual gifts end? Please explain in the context.

2. Identify the “perfect” and “partial” from the context.

1 Peter 3:18-22 (Noah & Baptism)

Explain how baptism “corresponds” to the great flood.

Romans 14: 1-23

This passage has been used by some to authorize different doctrines among believers. Specifically that a person in an adulterous marital state is approved of God once they are baptized and does not need to leave the adulterous marriage. In essence the teaching says baptism forgives the adultery and they are allowed to remain in that relationship. Proponents of this doctrine point to verses 10-12, 19, and 22-23. Relay what the context IS teaching and how it is NOT teaching this false doctrine.

More Applications...

1 Timothy 5:23

Why can this verse (contextually) not be used in support of casual social drinking?

Hebrews 6:4-8

Why is it “impossible” to renew some again to repentance?

1 John 3:6 “No one who abides in Him sins”.

It appears men are to live sinless. Please explain in the context.

Revelation 2:1

How does the context prove this is speaking of Jesus?

Matthew 4:5-6

How did Satan take these verses out of context when he quoted them to Jesus? (Psalm 91:11-12) What was the Psalm really about?

What dangers are there in taking a verse out of the context?

Word Study

Lesson # 5

Many methods of study will overlap. As we consider the benefits of a word study, we must not violate the context of a passage. The context may sometimes require a meaning to a word that could be different in other contexts. For example the word “day” could refer to a period of daylight, or a 24 hour cycle. Any word study must be accomplished within the parameters of the context in which the word is embedded.

A fault of many new believers is to apply the current meaning to a word, forgetting that words change meaning and vary from culture to culture. This problem can sometimes be overcome by simply reading from more than one translation for the words that have changed meaning will often be the words that are different in the translations. Having thus identified a source of potential misunderstanding, we can turn to a reliable source for the meaning in the original language. We will give some consideration to some of those good sources in lesson twelve.

More often is the problem when the English and Greek have a different number of words: one Greek word being translated with several English words, or several Greek words translated with one

English word. Subtleties of meaning are the rewards of a good word study. Occasionally the understanding will be greatly driven by the learned meaning of one word. The good Bible student makes a regular habit of studying words to check comprehension.

One of the easiest places to understand the point of a word study is to examine the word baptism. If you go to an English dictionary you will find: immersion, pouring or sprinkling. Many might feel good for having looked up the word and feel content in their understanding, but they would be wrong. You will find Greek words in the New Testament that mean pour and sprinkle, but they are never translated baptize. “Baptizo” and its various tenses are always rendered baptize, in every translation. If we examine the Greek word (from a reliable authoritative source), we learn “baptizo” always referred to an immersion.

There are three Greek words translated into English as “world”. John 3:16 says, “God so loved the world”. The Greek is *kosmos* meaning the unsaved people living in the world. Romans 12:1 says, “do not be conformed to this world”. The Greek for “world” is *aion* meaning the particular age we live in with

it’s false ideas which influence us. Matthew 24:14 has Jesus saying, “this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world”. The Greek for “world” is *oikoumene* which means the inhabited world.

Another example of the importance of a word study is seen in the word “love”. One English word is placed for four different Greek words. This is evident from an examination of John 21:15-19. Twice Jesus asks Peter if he loved Him, and He used the word *agape* which refers to a self-sacrificing love. Peter answers, “you know that I love you”, Peter using the Greek word *phileo* meaning fondness like a brotherly love. A third time Jesus asks, “do you love Me”, Jesus using the Greek word *phileo*. Jesus intentionally changed words, but we don’t even see this in the English.

Word studies are of great benefit to our understanding of scripture. For most, the difficulty is in knowing which word to examine in any given verse. The more study that is done the easier it becomes to know where additional study is needed. Any study will be helpful to Christians of any age.

Questions

A CONTEXTUAL WORD STUDY

Read 2 John 9-11

Give the meaning for each of the following words or phrases:

	Your understanding	Definitions (if you know resources to examine)
Too Far (v.9)		
Abide (v.9)		
Teaching (v.9, 10)		
Receive (v.10)		
Greeting (v.11)		
Participates (v.11)		

A DEFINITIONS WORD STUDY

Read Galatians 5:22-24 Define each of the words described as the fruit of the spirit.

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-control

Passions (v.24)

Desires (v.24)

A WORD USAGE STUDY

Use a concordance (in the back of your Bible, or a full concordance) to find references that use the following words. Using the context of each passage and any other tools at your disposal, give the meaning of each word and the importance for our understanding.

Propitiation

Sanctification

Justification

Word Study - Application

Lesson # 6

This lesson is intended to give more opportunity for a “hands on” approach to learning.

You are encouraged to read the article in the **Supplemental Section** entitled: *How Not To Do A Word Study*.

OUGHT

Define this word in the Greek as used in Ephesians 5:28, 2 Corinthians 2:7 and James 3:10 (all these passages use “ought” in the King James translation).

Using a concordance, find all the uses of the word “ought” in the New Testament and list them below. Study each passage and tell how our understanding of the teaching changes when we understand the Biblical use of “ought”.

After studying the use of this word in Scripture, ask yourself “so what?”. What have you learned from your study? What was the benefit?

More Applications...

READ ROMANS CHAPTER 5

In the space below create a list of words from this chapter that would be helpful to study. Look for words about which your understanding is weak. Try to define each word placed on your list using your own knowledge, then any definitions or aids to understanding which you have examined. You are encouraged to examine these words as they are used in other places in Scripture. Be prepared to share your study with the class.

Please give an overview of Romans Chapter 5. How has the word study helped your understanding?

What is the teaching of Jesus in John 12:48? Why is this important in light of our study?

Topical Study

Lesson # 7

One of the simplest forms of study, and one that is most frequently used is a topical study. When our friends ask us a question which we have trouble answering, we must go to Scripture to find the answer, and that will usually entail a topical study on the subject. Topical studies examine a host of Scripture, even ALL the Scriptures on a given topic. In this way we incorporate all the teaching of the Word into our understanding. We are assured there are no false concepts or understandings in our mind which will enable us to convey the truth to our friends.

Topical studies are much easier in our age with the advantage of books and the internet. Most Bibles have a concordance in the back which lists topics. Understanding this is not a complete list, we may need to examine a full concordance. Even then our list may be incomplete for some Greek words are translated with several different English words. Language must always be carefully considered. An internet search may also readily produce a list of Scriptures on a given topic. Publishers have even been producing a "Topical Bible" in recent years. This is a list of topics with Scripture printed out that

addresses the topic. We are blessed to live in this time.

Consider a topical study on conversion in the New Testament. Just examining one case of conversion may result in a misunderstanding. For example, Peter told the Jews in Jerusalem to *"repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord"* (Acts 3:19). This is the gospel truth, even when examined in the context. Some may contend a person is converted and their sins are wiped away at the point of repentance. From this verse, nothing else is required. This is a misunderstanding of Scripture for it does not consider other passages on the topic. All the cases of conversion must be examined if we are going to handle accurately the word of truth (2 Tim. 3:15).

One of the biggest dangers inherent in a topical study is to carefully consider every passage in it's context. It is easy to gain a wrong understanding by examining just one verse from a context which might touch on the topic. It takes diligence to understand the context of each opening, yet this is the job of the good Bible student. This is often the sad case from the account of the

Philippian jailer who, when he asked *"what must I do to be saved"* and was told, *"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household"* (Acts 16:30-31). Many who believe in "faith only" will point to this passage and IGNORE the context. This is very poor Bible study for the very next verse tells us *"they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household."* Clearly more was taught than simple belief, and baptism was a culmination of the teaching that very hour. The abuse of this passage by some underlines the inherent danger in a topical study: understanding every context.

Most beginning Bible students will find topical studies to be the easiest, primarily because references are easy to gather and answers to questions can be found. You are encouraged to utilize this method of study frequently for it will bear fruit. You will find help in answering your own questions, and those coming from your friends. The thirst of curiosity can be quenched. It is a very satisfying method of study.

Questions

For each of the following topics create a list of pertinent passages which impact or aid our understanding. Be certain to understand the context of each passage you list. What do you know about each of these topics?

ANGELS

ATONEMENT

FELLOWSHIP

Helpful Aids

Make a list of any books, web sites or computer software which you used in preparing this lesson which you found especially helpful. Put things here that others would like to know about.

Topical Study - Application

This lesson is intended to give more opportunity for a “hands on” approach to learning.

Fill in the following chart as an aid to a topical study on:

“Saved by...”

as in “saved by faith”, “saved by grace”, “saved by washing”

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Truth Taught</i>	<i>Comments</i>

From this study, how would you respond to a friend who is promoting the concept of being ‘saved by faith’ meaning faith only?

In your own words relay a more complete answer to: how are we saved?

More Applications...

For each of the following topics create a list of pertinent passages which impact or aid our understanding. Be certain to understand the context of each passage you list. What do you know about each of these topics?

PREDESTINATION

INSPIRATION

SCRIBES

THE BAPTISM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Figurative Language

Lesson # 9

The Bible is confusing to many, not because the Bible is unclear, but because they fail to understand how to interpret figurative language. The Bible is rich with this sort of language, and anyone who wants to understand God's will must of necessity learn how to recognize and interpret figurative language.

In our society prominent voices are heard promoting extreme views about the Bible. Some state the Bible is nothing but figures and everything needs to be interpreted. Others state the Bible is totally literal, which is why some look to the prophecies of Daniel and point to modern events. Both of these views, when compared side by side, present very different teachings from the Bible, especially from the book of Revelation. It is no wonder many are confused about what God wants, and they do not believe they can understand the Bible. The truth is there are literal portions and figurative portions of Scripture.

God chose to include figurative language in Scripture because that is how men communicate on a regular basis. Figures of speech abound in everyday language and if they had been missing from the Bible it would have made it a strange and unusual book. Instead figurative language is

used to make the message plain and memorable. David's great 23 Psalm tells us the Lord is my "shepherd". This is not literal, but the figure helps both the understanding and is easy to remember. Many will additionally look to figurative passages such as this Psalm and see great beauty. Another great example of this is Jesus' parable of the Sower in Matthew 13. We easily remember the different kind of hearts men have because they are represented as different types of soil.

D.R. Dungan in his book on *Hermeneutics* (p.195), suggests the following rules through which we can identify when language is figurative:

1. The sense of the context will indicate it (see Luke 13:31)
2. When the literal meaning of a word or sentence involves impossibility (see Jer. 1:18; Matt. 18:22)
3. If the literal makes a contradiction (see 1 Sam. 20:39: "knew not any thing")
4. When the Scriptures are made to demand that which is wrong (see Jer. 25:27-28; Luke 14:26)
5. When it is said to be figurative (see John 2:18-22; 7:37-39)
6. When the definite is put for the indefinite (see Dan. 1:20).
7. When it is said in mockery (see 1 Kings 18:27)
8. By the use of common sense (see Jer. 51:7; 1 Cor. 3:2).

In this lesson and in lesson 9 we will examine the following types of figurative language: Parables, Allegories, Fables, Similes, Metaphors, Metonymies, and Hyperbole.

Through all of these types of language we must be careful. We must allow the writer to give his own explanation. Many explanations have been given about the meaning of the vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37), yet the prophet explains it in verse 11 saying it referred to the house of Israel.

We must harmonize the figurative with the literal. Many times the same subject is addressed in a very clear way in another passage. They cannot contradict for God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).

Interpretation should be accomplished according to the thing compared. When Jesus calls disciples "light" and "salt" (Matt. 5), we can easily understand the figure by comparing it to what we know of light and salt.

Finally, interpretation of figurative language must consider the context in which it is found. It is possible to push a figure too far. Be careful to not go beyond the context. This has resulted in many misunderstandings about the book of Revelation.

Questions

What is the difference between literal and figurative language?

Using an English dictionary, define each of the following uses of figurative language.

Parable

Allegory

Fable

Simile

Metaphor

Metonymy

Hyperbole

Identify which type of figurative language is used in the following Biblical phrases:

1. "This is my blood" _____
2. "Let your light shine" _____
3. "All flesh is like grass" _____
4. "Reading Isaiah the prophet" _____
5. "Go and tell that fox..." _____
6. "A sower went out to sow..." _____

Identify which type of figurative language is used in the following passages:

1. 2 Samuel 12:1-7 _____
2. Judges 9:7-15 _____
3. John 2:19-22 _____
4. Psalm 119:136 _____
5. 1 Corinthians 11:26 _____
6. Galatians 4:21-24 _____

Read and explain the following figurative passages:

1. John 6:48-58
2. Matthew 16:5-12
3. Psalm 23
4. John 10:7-10

Figurative Language - Application

Lesson # 10

This lesson is intended to give more opportunity for a “hands on” approach to learning.

The Bible uses parables frequently. They did not originate with Jesus, though he made great use of them, for “He did not speak to them without a parable” (Matt. 13:34). The Hebrew word “*mashal*” means proverb, similitude, parable. Because of the wide range of meaning it is variously translated in the English.

From the following passages, examine how Scripture translates the word “*mashal*” from the Hebrew. Try to describe in each instance what is called a “parable”.

Numbers 23:7, 18

1 Samuel 10:12

Proverbs 26:7,9

Examine the following Old Testament passages and give the meaning of the parable.

Isaiah 5:1-7

Isaiah 28:24-28

Ezekiel 37:15-22

In the New Testament there are two Greek words rendered “parable”. The most common is “*parabole*”, found 48 times in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark & Luke). It is easy to see in this Greek word that the English is a transliteration - the Greek word was literally brought into the English language. The Greek word comes from two parts: “*para*” meaning “beside”, and “*ballein*” meaning “to throw”. A parable then is a throwing alongside, a comparison. The other Greek word translated “parable” in the English is “*paroimia*” and is almost peculiar to John who uses it four times. The Greek means “adage, dark saying, wayside saying, proverb, a presentation deviating from the usual meaning of the word” (Lockyer, *All The Parables Of The Bible*, p.12). Bond, in *The Master Teacher*, explains a parable as being “a rhetorical figure that translates through contrast and similitude the natural facts and laws into terms of the spiritual life”. The more simplistic explanation often heard in children’s Bible classes, which is very accurate, is: an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

More Applications...

←—————→
Examine each of these parables from the New Testament, indicate any figure of speech which you recognize, and give the meaning.

Matthew 13:33

Matthew 13:34-35

Matthew 21:28-32

Matthew 25:1-13

Luke 7:41-43

Luke 14:16-24

One of the most figurative books in the Bible is the book of Revelation. Many parts of it are figurative, and some are literal. The good bible student must discern the difference to understand the message from God. **Examine the following portions of Revelation and tell whether it is literal or figurative, and if figurative try to give the meaning.** Be prepared to discuss apocalyptic literature.

Revelation 1:4-6

Revelation 3:7-13

Revelation 5:4-10

Revelation 14:1-5

Revelation 17:1-6

Revelation 21:10-27

The Historical Setting

Lesson # 11

Our understanding of a passage may be greatly enhanced when we gain a better understanding of the historical setting. Many times the Bible will relay enough information to inform us, but looking at non-Biblical sources can also help. Consideration of maps, the current reigning kingdom, the accepted social norms, a city's reputation and more are important and at times will be the only means that will bring understanding to our mind. The historical context must be maintained.

Think for a moment about the trials of Jesus in the light of their historical settings. The Jews had been conquered by the Romans and their laws were imposed. Jesus was first examined by the Jews: Annas, the true High Priest of the Jews (John 18:12-14), then Ciaphas (the Roman placed High Priest, the legally recognized ruler) and the Sanhedrin (John 18:24-27; Matt. 26:57-68).

Jesus was then delivered to Pilate, the Roman Governor of the region encompassing Jerusalem (Matt. 27:1-2, 12-14; John 18:28-38; Luke 23:1-5). The Jews sought a death sentence, for under the Roman rule they were forbidden to pass a death sentence. Only the Roman ruler

could dictate such a sentence.

Pilate sent Jesus to Herod Antipas who was the Roman recognized king of the Jews, ruler of the region of Galilee. Pilate hoped to rid himself of a political hot topic and allow Herod to deal with Jesus because Jesus was from Galilee (Luke 23:6-12). Herod sent Him back to Pilate who was forced to pass a sentence by the political threat of the Jewish leaders who said, *"If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar"* (John 19:12). The threat was to go over Pilate's head and give a report about him that not only would ensure the end of his political career, but likely cost him his life. At this point Pilate washes his hands of Jesus and delivers Him over to be crucified (John 19:13-18). It is because of our understanding of the political environment and the Roman government that these four examinations of Jesus make sense.

The letters to the Thessalonians make much more sense when we read of the start of the congregation in Acts 17. For example, 1 Thessalonians 2:14 says, *"For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the*

hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews".

This reference is enough to get the understanding in 1 Thessalonians, but our understanding grows when we view the history to which he refers. Acts 17 relates how a mob of jealous Jews could not locate Paul, so they captured Jason (his host) and took him before the Politarchs and accused him of harboring traitors to Rome. After receiving a "pledge" from Jason and the others that were taken prisoner, they were released. This was the beginning of sufferings from the hands of their countrymen because of their faith.

Special significance is seen about some statements when the history of the geographic region is considered. When Jesus told the church in Laodicea they were "blind" and needed "eye salve" to anoint their eyes so they could see (Rev. 3:17-18) we could stop and understand what He is teaching. But the understanding grows deeper when we learn that the city was close to a very important hospital which specialized in a Phrygian powder used as a salve to help eyesight.

The historical setting must be understood in some cases, and generally will greatly aid our study.

Questions

How does an understanding of the historical setting help us when we examine the following passages?

Daniel 2:44

Acts 1:8

Romans 16:16

John 13:5-11

Luke 23:43

Matthew 28:14

How does an examination of a map help in understanding these passages and concepts?

Acts 8:5 *“Philip went down to the city of Samaria...”*

Acts 16:9

Why was the land of Canaan (and subsequently the Israelites) seemingly always embroiled in battles and wars?

Research Projects

What was a “roman colony” (Acts 16:12)?

Explain the “long rule” of King Herod since he is mentioned in Matthew 2:1-23 and Acts 23:31.

Where in Scripture do we read of the events described in Galatians 2:1-10. Explain Galatians 2:1-10 in light of that historical setting.

Reference Materials

Lesson # 12

We live in a blessed age of much information which is conveniently available. Many wonderful resourceful books are inexpensive, and the internet provides a host of free resources which make examination of linguistic studies a reality for those of us who do not speak or read the foreign language. I do believe that the Bible is all we need to understand the word of God. It should remain as our primary study, regardless of how many books of men we might reference.

Because the Bible is translated into the English, we benefit from examining the original language. The subtleties of meaning (which are not carried over into English) bloom in our mind enhancing and improving our understanding. This is important for it also aids in our application of the text to our own lives.

There is a difference between reference works and commentaries. The reference works are limited to the meanings of the words and their use in classic Hebrew and Greek. Rarely will a reference work indicate a religious doctrine or work to sway a person's thinking. Commentaries, on the other hand, will often include linguistic comments but will go on to include theological discourses

which attempt to prove a doctrine. It is for this reason reference materials are preferred study aids for they do not attempt to sway, but merely to inform about the language.

There are a few reference books which I strongly recommend that will improve your understanding and aid in your study. James Strong compiled an *Exhaustive Concordance* in 1894.

It was not the first concordance, but it was the most complete and accurate. It has come to be the standard to which all others are compared. A concordance lists every word in the Bible in alphabetical order and gives a listing of every passage in Scripture which uses this word. Strong's concordance is based on the King James version, so a student should look to the King James for the word in question before examining Strong's concordance. Perhaps the biggest benefit of Strong's concordance was the assigning of dictionary numbers to each word in the original language. At the end of each passage listing is a four digit number for the word being examined. Hebrew words are in italics, Greek words are in a normal font. In the back of the book you will find both dictionaries which are listed in numerical order. This enables the Bible student to examine the definition for the original word

in every verse if they so desire. If I could only have one book other than my Bible from which to aid in my study, I would choose a Strong's Concordance. If you do not have a copy I would encourage you to obtain one. If you use the internet, there are many free sources for looking up "Strong's numbers" and definitions. What a blessing!

Additionally there are some very good dictionaries being published which aid in our understanding. These also rarely promote doctrine, but will tend to have more passages listed which compare teachings and provide cross references. Among the best are *Vine's Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words*, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, the *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Vincent's *Word Studies In The New Testament* and *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. For those who desire some truly deep linguistic study I would recommend *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (coded with Strong's Concordance numbers).

Baker's Bible Atlas is a good map reference book which would be a good addition to your library. Many of these books are available in our church library for your examination.

Questions

If you do not have access to the following reference materials, a pertinent entry from each source is located in the *Supplementary Material* located at the end of this workbook.

Strong's Concordance

1. Examine Isaiah 53:5 by defining the following Hebrew words as found in the King James Version:
 - a. Transgressions
 - b. Iniquities
2. Examine the use of "burden" in the King James. How does this information impact our understanding?
 - a. Galatians 6:2
 - b. Galatians 6:5
3. Give the meaning of "the like figure whereunto" (1 Peter 3:21) and explain its use in the context.

Bible Dictionaries

Be prepared to discuss *from Scripture* the following topics. Preparation can include use of a Concordance, but you will find Bible dictionaries the most helpful.

1. Genealogy / Genealogies
2. Molech
3. Sheepfold
4. The Sanhedrin

Research Project

Use any reference materials available.

Relate the importance of the word "transformed" in Romans 12:2.

From Matthew 5:22, explain the use in the King James of: "angry", "Raca", and "thou fool".

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Lesson Two - Translations

The following list of translations and their abbreviations are among the most popular used today.

KJ	King James	NKJ	New King James
NAS	New American Standard	NIV	New International Version
ABV	Amplified Bible Version	ESV	English Standard Version
HCS	Holman Christian Standard	NCV	New Century Version
CEV	Contemporary English Version	NRS	New Revised Standard
RSV	Revised Standard Version	MES	The Message
NWT	New World Translation	TLB	The Living Bible

Lesson Six - How Not To Do A Word Study, by Tom Hamilton

One of the most common errors people make in doing a word study is to assume that each word has a single, basic meaning, which is preserved in any usage of that word. These folks insist on each word having a fundamental, inherent, literal meaning that is found anywhere the word is used. Linguists and other word experts refer to this as the "root fallacy" - that is, the wrongheaded fixation on a word's root as indicating the word's "real meaning", instead of simply seeing how the speakers and writers of the language actually use it.

We need to remember that the basic rules for language do not vary from one language to another - that is, all down through human history, people have used language in the same basic way. You would find that Hebrew and Greek words are basically no different from English words. Therefore, if an argument sounds fishy when applied to how English functions, it is probably just as surely an incorrect argument to make for Greek or Hebrew words. The root fallacy is one such error that is obvious in English.

Consider etymology, one of the root fallacy's most common manifestations. Etymology is the study of a word's original meaning. However, when one insists that a word's etymological or original meaning never changes, this is plainly not so. Of course, there are many words whose original meanings and usages remain unchanged down through the centuries of English usage, but there are also many others whose meanings have changed. To insist that every word preserves its original meaning, even in some small way, is clearly wrong.

For example, the word "nice" was formerly used to indicate stupidity. However, you would be hard-pressed to find anybody who would argue that when we tell someone today that they

are nice, we are even hinting at anything about their intelligence. No English speaker today uses "nice" in regard to stupidity, and in fact, most are ignorant that this was how the word was formerly used. We understand that "nice" means what we use it to mean.

Likewise, we have pointed out to our religious friends that it is irrelevant that PSALLO, the Greek word for "sing", originally referred to playing a musical instrument. The issue is not what the word meant originally, but how it was used a thousand years later in the New Testament, and there can be no doubt that the word no longer retained its meaning of playing an instrument. Incidentally, if we recognize how much English as a young language has changed in just a few centuries, we can well imagine how much Greek could change over a millennium.

Yet some brethren who argue against the etymological meaning of PSALLO are the first to insist on the etymological meaning of EKKLESIA, the word commonly translated "church". These brethren think that the truth is well-served by insisting the EKKLESIA means "the called out" and uniquely identifies God's people. However, one could just as easily argue that God also intended for the word to convey what government and organization He wanted the church to have, because the word didn't originally mean simply "the called out", but those males summoned to vote in a democratic legislative assembly. Instead, we should use the word as it was intended, a word that simply mean "group", sometimes assembled and sometimes not.

Another manifestation of the root fallacy is the insistence that every usage of a word preserve some "core" or "root" idea. This idea is commonly used to argue that synonyms must always of necessity refer to different things, and any change in wording is proof of a fine distinction in meaning.

The most common occurrence of this error with New Testament words is in the argument that the Bible uses different words for love which always refer to different types of love. Of course, the Bible does speak of different types of love, but this must be determined from the context and from how it uses its words, and not from the mere fact that a different word is used.

Consider a simple English example. The word "tank" is used of a type of military vehicle, as well as having many other usages in English. But you would be mistaken to find a "root" or "core" idea behind "tank" that is common to all meanings of this English word. The tank got its name simply because the top secret crates in which this new weapon was shipped in WWI were marked "tank", indicating that a simple water container was inside.

Let us see how the words themselves are used and not fall into the root fallacy.

Focus Magazine, #77, pp.11-12

Editors note: Tom has a Masters Degree in Biblical Languages

Lesson # 12

Isaiah 53:5 (Strong's Concordance, computer version with Strong's numbers imbedded after the word)

5) *But he was wounded <02490> for our transgressions <06588>, he was bruised <01792>*

for our iniquities <05771>: the chastisement <04148> of our peace <07965> was upon him; and with his stripes <02250> we are healed <07495>.

#6588 *pesha` peh'-shah* from 6586; a revolt (national, moral or religious):--rebellion, sin, transgression, trespass. see HEBREW for 06586

#5771 *`avon aw-vone' or oavown* (2 Kings 7:9; Psalm 51:5 (7)) *aw-vone'*; from 5753; perversity, i.e. (moral) evil:--fault, iniquity, mischief, punishment (of iniquity), sin. see HEBREW for 07 see HEBREW for 05753

Burden (Strong's Concordance)

Galatians 6:2

2) Bear ye <941> one another's <240> burdens <922>, and <2532> so <3779> fulfil <378> the law <3551> of Christ <5547>.

922 *baros bar'-os* probably from the same as 939 (through the notion of going down; compare 899); weight; in the New Testament only, figuratively, a load, abundance, authority:--burden(-some), weight. see GREEK for 939 see GREEK for 899

Galatians 6:5

5) For <1063> every man <1538> shall bear <941> his own <2398> burden <5413>.

5413 *phortion for-tee'-on* diminutive of 5414; an invoice (as part of freight), i.e. (figuratively) a task or service:--burden. see GREEK for 5414

"The Like figure whereunto"

21 The like figure <499> whereunto <3739> even baptism <908> doth <4982> also <2532> now <3568> save <4982> us <2248> (not <3756> the putting away <595> of the filth <4509> of the flesh <4561>, but <235> the answer <1906> of a good <18> conscience <4893> toward <1519> God <2316>,) by <1223> the resurrection <386> of Jesus <2424> Christ <5547>

499 *antitupon an-teet'-oo-pon* neuter of a compound of 473 and 5179; corresponding ("antitype"), i.e. a representative, counterpart:--(like) figure (whereunto). see GREEK for 473 see GREEK for 5179

3739 *hos hos, including feminine he hay, and neuter ho ho* probably a primary word (or perhaps a form of the article 3588); the relatively (sometimes demonstrative) pronoun, who, which, what, that:--one, (an-, the) other, some, that, what, which, who(-m, -se), etc. See also 3757. see GREEK for 3588 see GREEK for 3757

BIBLE DICTIONARIES

1. Genealogy / Genealogies (From the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - ISBE)

1). Definition:

The Old Testament translates (once, Ne 7:5) the noun *yachas*; *cepher ha-yachas*, "book of the genealogy"; also translates a denominate verb in *Hithpael*, *yachas*, "sprout" "grow" (compare family "tree");

hithyaches, “genealogy”; the idea is conveyed in other phrases, as *cepher toledhoth*, “book of the generations,” or simply *toledhoth*, “generations.” In the New Testament it transliterates *genealogia*, “account of descent,” 1Ti 1:4; Tit 3:9. In Mt 1:1, *biblos geneleos*, “book of the generation” of Jesus Christ, is rendered in the American Revised Version, margin “the genealogy of Jesus Christ”; a family register, or register of families, as 1Ch 4:33, etc.; the tracing backward or forward of the line of ancestry of individual, family, tribe, or nation; pedigree. In Timothy and Titus refers probably to the Gnostic (or similar) lists of successive emanations from Deity in the development of created existence.

2). Biblical References:

According to the Old Testament, the genealogical interest dates back to the beginnings of sacred history. It appears in the early genealogical tables of Ge 5; 10; 46, etc.; in Ex 6:14-27, where the sons of Reuben, Simeon and especially Levi, are given; in Nu 1:2; 26:2-51, where the poll of fighting men is made on genealogical principles; in Nu 2:2, where the positions on the march and in camp are determined by tribes and families; in David’s division of priests and Levites into courses and companies (1Ch 6-9); is referred to in the account of Jeroboam’s reign (2Ch 12:15 margin, “the words of Iddo, after the manner of genealogies”); is made prominent in Hezekiah’s reforms when he reckoned the whole nation by genealogies (1Ch 4:41; 2Ch 31:16-19); is seen in Jotham’s reign when the Reubenites and Gadites are reckoned genealogically (1Ch 5:17). Zerubbabel took a census, and settled the returning exiles according to their genealogies (1Ch 3:19-24; 1Ch 9; Ezr 2; Ne 7; 11; 12). With the rigid exclusion of all foreign intermixtures by the leaders of the Restoration (Ezr 10; Ne 10:30; 13:23-31), the genealogical interest naturally deepened until it reached its climax, perhaps in the time of Christ and up to the destruction of Jerusalem. Josephus, in the opening of his *Life*, states that his own pedigree was registered in the public records. Many families in Christ’s time clearly possessed such lists (Lu 1:5, etc.). The affirmed, reiterated and unquestioned Davidic descent of Christ in the New Testament, with His explicit genealogies (Mt 1:1-17; Lu 3:23-38); Paul’s statement of his own descent; Barnabas’ Levitical descent, are cases in point. *Davididae*, descendants of David, are found as late as the Roman period. There is a tradition that Herod I destroyed the genealogical lists at Jerusalem to strengthen his own seat, but more probably they persisted until the destruction of Jerusalem.

3). Importance of Genealogies:

Genealogical accuracy, always of interest both to primitive and more highly civilized peoples, was made especially important by the facts that the land was promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, that the priesthood was exclusively hereditary, that the royal succession of Judah lay in the Davidic house, that the division and occupation of the land was according to tribes, families and fathers’ houses; and for the *Davididae*, at least, that the Messiah was to be of the house of David. The exile and return, which fixed indelibly in the Jewish mind the ideas of monotheism, and of the selection and sacred mission of Israel, also fixed and deepened the genealogical idea, prominently so in the various assignments by families, and in the rejection in various ways of those who could not prove their genealogies. But it seems extreme to date, as with many modern critics, its real cultivation from this time. In the importance attached to genealogies the Hebrew resembles many other ancient literatures, notably the Egyptian Greek, and Arabic, but also including Romans, Kelts, Saxons, the earliest history naturally being drawn upon genealogical as well as on annalistic lines. A modern tendency to overestimate the likeness and underestimate the unlikeness of the Scripture to its undoubtedly cognate literatures finds in the voluminous artificial genealogical material, which grew up in Arabia after the time of the caliph Omar, an almost exact analogue to the genealogical interest at the time of the return. This, however, is on the assumption of the late date of most of the genealogical material in the older New Testament books, and

rests in turn on the assumption that the progress of religious thought and life in Israel was essentially the same as in all other countries; an evolutionary development, practically, if not theoretically, purely naturalistic in its genesis and progress.

2. **Molech** (From the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - ISBE)

MOLECH; MOLOCH:

mo'-lek, mo'-lok (ha-molekh, always with the article, except in 1Ki 11:7; Septuagint ho Moloch, sometimes also Molchom, Melchol; Vulgate (Jerome's Latin Bible, 390-405 A.D.) Moloch):

1). The Name:

The name of a heathen divinity whose worship figures largely in the later history of the kingdom of Judah. As the national god of the Ammonites, he is known as "Milcom" (1Ki 11:5,7), or "Malcam" ("Malcan" is an alternative reading in 2Sa 12:30,31; compare Jer 49:1,3; Ze 1:5, where the Revised Version margin reads "their king"). The use of basileus, and archon, as a translation of the name by the Septuagint suggests that it may have been originally the Hebrew word for "king," melekh. Molech is obtained from melekh by the substitution of the vowel points of Hebrew bosheth, signifying "shame." From the obscure and difficult passage, Am 5:26, the Revised Version (British and American) has removed "your Moloch" and given "your king," but Septuagint had here translated "Moloch," and from the Septuagint it found its way into the Ac (7:43), the only occurrence of the name in the New Testament.

2). The Worship in Old Testament History:

In the Levitical ordinances delivered to the Israelites by Moses there are stern prohibitions of Molech-worship (Le 18:21; 20:2-5). Parallel to these prohibitions, although the name of the god is not mentioned, are those of the Deuteronomic Code where the abominations of the Canaanites are forbidden, and the burning of their sons and daughters in the fire (to Molech) is condemned as the climax of their wickedness (De 12:31; 18:10-13). The references to Malcam, and to David's causing the inhabitants of Rabbath Ammon to pass through the brick kiln (2Sa 12:30,31), are not sufficiently clear to found upon, because of the uncertainty of the readings. Solomon, under the influence of his idolatrous wives, built high places for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom, the abomination of the children of Ammon. See CHEMOSH. Because of this apostasy it was intimated by the prophet Ahijah, that the kingdom was to be rent out of the hand of Solomon, and ten tribes given to Jeroboam (1Ki 11:31-33). These high places survived to the time of Josiah, who, among his other works of religious reformation, destroyed and defiled them, filling their places with the bones of men (2Ki 23:12-14). Molech-worship had evidently received a great impulse from Ahaz, who, like Ahab of Israel, was a supporter of foreign religions (2Ki 16:12). He also "made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations, whom Yahweh cast out from before the children of Israel" (2Ki 16:3). His grandson Manasseh, so far from following in the footsteps of his father Hezekiah, who had made great reforms in the worship, reared altars for Baal, and besides other abominations which he practiced, made his son to pass through the fire (2Ki 21:6). The chief site of this worship, of which Ahaz and Manasseh were the promoters, was Topheth in the Valley of Hinnom, or, as it is also called, the Valley of the Children, or of the Son of Hinnom, lying to the Southwest of Jerusalem (see GEHENNA). Of Josiah's reformation it is said that "he defiled Topheth that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire

to Molech” (2Ki 23:10).

3). The Worship in the Prophets:

Even Josiah’s thorough reformation failed to extirpate the Molech-worship, and it revived and continued till the destruction of Jerusalem, as we learn from the prophets of the time. From the beginning, the prophets maintained against it a loud and persistent protest. The testimony of Amos (1:15; 5:26) is ambiguous, but most of the ancient versions for *malkam*, “their king,” in the former passage, read *milkom*, the national god of Ammon (see Davidson, in the place cited.). Isaiah was acquainted with Topheth and its abominations (Isa 30:33; 57:5). Over against his beautiful and lofty description of spiritual religion, Micah sets the exaggerated zeal of those who ask in the spirit of the Molech-worshipper: “Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” (Mic 6:6). That Molech-worship had increased in the interval may account for the frequency and the clearness of the references to it in the later Prophets. In Jeremiah we find the passing of sons and daughters through the fire to Molech associated with the building of “the high places of Baal, which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom” (32:35; compare 7:31 ff; 19:5 ff). In his oracle against the children of Ammon, the same prophet, denouncing evil against their land, predicts (almost in the very words of Amos above) that *Malcam* shall go into captivity, his priests and his princes together (Jer 49:1,3). Ezekiel, speaking to the exiles in Babylon, refers to the practice of causing children to pass through the fire to heathen divinities as long established, and proclaims the wrath of God against it (Eze 16:20 f; 20:26,31; 23:37). That this prophet regarded the practice as among the “statutes that were not good, and ordinances wherein they should not live” (Eze 20:25) given by God to His people, by way of deception and judicial punishment, as some hold, is highly improbable and inconsistent with the whole prophetic attitude toward it. Zephaniah, who prophesied to the men who saw the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah, denounces God’s judgments upon the worshippers of false gods (Ze 1:5 f). He does not directly charge his countrymen with having forsaken Yahweh for *Malcam*, but blames them, because worshipping Him they also swear to *Malcam*, like those Assyrian colonists in Samaria who feared Yahweh and served their own gods, or like those of whom Ezekiel elsewhere speaks who, the same day on which they had slain their children to their idols, entered the sanctuary of Yahweh to profane it (Eze 23:39). The captivity in Babylon put an end to Molech-worship, since it weaned the people from all their idolatries. We do not hear of it in the post-exilic Prophets, and, in the great historical psalm of Israel’s rebelliousness and God’s deliverances (Ps 106), it is only referred to in retrospect (Ps 106:37,38).

4). The Nature of the Worship:

When we come to consider the nature of this worship it is remarkable how few details are given regarding it in Scripture. The place where it was practiced from the days of Ahaz and Manasseh was the Valley of Hinnom where Topheth stood, a huge altar-pyre for the burning of the sacrificial victims. There is no evidence connecting the worship with the temple in Jerusalem. Ezekiel’s vision of sun-worshippers in the temple is purely ideal (Eze 8). A priesthood is spoken of as attached to the services (Jer 49:3; compare Ze 1:4,5). The victims offered to the divinity were not burnt alive, but were killed as sacrifices, and then presented as burnt offerings. “To pass through the fire” has been taken to mean a lustration or purification of the child by fire, not involving death. But the prophets clearly speak of slaughter and sacrifice, and of high places built to burn the children in the fire as burnt offerings (Jer 19:5; Eze 16:20,21).

The popular conception, molded for English readers largely by Milton’s “Moloch, horrid king” as described in *Paradise Lost*, Book I, is derived from the accounts given in late Latin and Greek writers, especially the account which Diodorus Siculus gives in his *History of the Carthaginian Kronos or Moloch*. The image of Moloch was a human figure with a bull’s head and outstretched arms, ready to receive the children destined for sacrifice. The image of metal was heated red hot by a fire kindled within, and the

children laid on its arms rolled off into the fiery pit below. In order to drown the cries of the victims, flutes were played, and drums were beaten; and mothers stood by without tears or sobs, to give the impression of the voluntary character of the offering (see Rawlinson's *Phoenicia*, 113 f, for fuller details).

On the question of the origin of this worship there is great variety of views. Of a non-Sem origin there is no evidence; and there is no trace of human sacrifices in the old Babylonian religion. That it prevailed widely among Semitic peoples is clear.

5). Origin and Extent of the Worship:

While Milcom or Malcam is peculiarly the national god of the Ammonites, as is Chemosh of the Moabites, the name Molech or Melech was recognized among the Phoenicians, the Philistines, the Arameans, and other Semitic peoples, as a name for the divinity they worshipped from a very early time. That it was common among the Canaanites when the Israelites entered the land is evident from the fact that it was among the abominations from which they were to keep themselves free. That it was identical at first with the worship of Yahweh, or that the prophets and the best men of the nation ever regarded it as the national worship of Israel, is a modern theory which does not appear to the present writer to have been substantiated. It has been inferred from Abraham's readiness to offer up Isaac at the command of God, from the story of Jephthah and his daughter, and even from the sacrifice of Hiel the Bethelite (1Ki 16:34), that human sacrifice to Yahweh was an original custom in Israel, and that therefore the God of Israel was no other than Moloch, or at all events a deity of similar character. But these incidents are surely too slender a foundation to support such a theory. "The fundamental idea of the heathen rite was the same as that which lay at the foundation of Hebrew ordinance: the best to God; but by presenting to us this story of the offering of Isaac, and by presenting it in this precise form, the writer simply teaches the truth, taught by all the prophets, that to obey is better than sacrifice--in other words that the God worshipped in Abraham's time was a God who did not delight in destroying life, but in saving and sanctifying it" (Robertson, *Early Religion of Israel*, 254). While there is no ground for identifying Yahweh with Moloch, there are good grounds for seeing a community of origin between Moloch and Baal. The name, the worship, and the general characteristics are so similar that it is natural to assign them a common place of origin in Phoenicia. The fact that Moloch-worship reached the climax of its abominable cruelty in the Phoenician colonies of which Carthage was the center shows that it had found among that people a soil suited to its peculiar genius.

3. **Sheepfold** (From the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - ISBE, listing under "sheep")

In the mountains the sheep are gathered at night into folds, which may be caves or enclosures of rough stones. Fierce dogs assist the shepherd in warding off the attacks of wolves, and remain at the fold through the day to guard the slight bedding and simple utensils. In going to pasture the sheep are not driven but are led, following the shepherd as he walks before them and calls to them. "When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice" (Joh 10:4).

4). Old Testament References:

The sheepfolds of Reuben on the plain of Gilead are referred to in Nu 32:16 and Jud 5:16. A cave is mentioned in 1Sa 24:3 in connection with the pursuit of David by Saul. The shepherd origin of David is referred to in Ps 78:70:

"He chose David also his servant,

And took him from the sheepfolds."

Compare also 2Sa 7:8 and 1Ch 17:7.

4. The Sanhedrin (From the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - ISBE)

san'-he-drin (canhedhrin, the Talmudic transcription of the Greek sunedrion):

1). Name:

The Sanhedrin was, at and before the time of Christ, the name for the highest Jewish tribunal, of 71 members, in Jerusalem, and also for the lower tribunals, of 23 members, of which Jerusalem had two (Tosephta' Chaghighah] 11 9; Sanhedrin 1 6; 11 2). It is derived from sun, "together," and hedra, "seat." In Greek and Roman literature the senates of Sparta, Carthage, and even Rome, are so called (compare Pausan. iii.11, 2; Polyb. iii.22; Dion Cassius xl.49). In Josephus we meet with the word for the first time in connection with the governor Gabinius (57-55 BC), who divided the whole of Palestine into 5 sunedria (Ant., XIV, v, 4), or sunodoi (B J, I, viii, 5); and with the term sunedrion for the high council in Jerusalem first in Ant, XIV, ix, 3-5, in connection with Herod, who, when a youth, had to appear before the sunedrion at Jerusalem to answer for his doings in Galilee. But before that date the word appears in the Septuagint version of Proverbs (circa 130 BC), especially in 22:10; 31:23, as an equivalent for the Mishnaic beth-din = "judgment chamber."

In the New Testament the word sometimes, especially when used in the plural (Mt 10:17; Mr 13:9; compare Sanhedrin 1 5), means simply "court of justice," i.e. any judicatory (Mt 5:22). But in most cases it is used to designate the supreme Jewish Court of Justice in Jerusalem, in which the process against our Lord was carried on, and before which the apostles (especially Peter and John, Stephen, and Paul) had to justify themselves (Mt 26:59; Mr 14:55; 15:1; Lu 22:66; Joh 11:47; Ac 4:15; 5:21 ff; 6:12 ff; 22:30; 23:1 ff; 24:20). Sometimes presbuterion (Lu 22:66; Ac 22:5) and gerousia (Ac 5:21) are substituted for sunedrion.

See SENATE.

In the Jewish tradition-literature the term "Sanhedrin" alternates with kenishta', "meeting-place" (Meghillath Ta'-anith 10, compiled in the 1st century AD), and beth-din, "court of justice" (Sanhedrin 11 2,4). As, according to Jewish tradition, there were two kinds of sunedria, namely, the supreme sunedrion in Jerusalem of 71 members, and lesser sunedria of 23 members, which were appointed by the supreme one, we find often the term canhedhrin gedholah, "the great Sanhedrin," or beth-din ha-gadhol, "the great court of justice" (Middoth 5 4; Sanhedrin 1 6), or canhedhrin gedholah ha-yoshebheth be-lishek-hath hagazith, "the great Sanhedrin which sits in the hall of hewn stone."

2). Origin and History:

There is lack of positive historical information as to the origin of the Sanhedrin. According to Jewish tradition (compare Sanhedrin 16) it was constituted by Moses (Nu 11:16-24) and was reorganized by

Ezra immediately after the return from exile (compare the Targum to So 6:1). But there is no historical evidence to show that previous to the Greek period there existed an organized aristocratic governing tribunal among the Jews. Its beginning is to be placed at the period in which Asia was convulsed by Alexander the Great and his successors.

The Hellenistic kings conceded a great amount of internal freedom to municipal communities, and Palestine was then practically under home rule, and was governed by an aristocratic council of Elders (1 Macc 12:6; 2 Macc 1:10; 4:44; 11:27; 3 Macc 1:8; compare Josephus, *Ant*, XII, iii, 4; XIII, v, 8; Meghillath Ta'anith 10), the head of which was the hereditary high priest. The court was called Gerousia, which in Greek always signifies an aristocratic body (see Westermann in Pauly's *RE*, III, 49). Subsequently this developed into the Sanhedrin.

During the Roman period (except for about 10 years at the time of Gabinius, who applied to Judea the Roman system of government; compare Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, I, 501), the Sanhedrin's influence was most powerful, the internal government of the country being practically in its hands (*Ant.*, XX, x), and it was religiously recognized even among the Diaspora (compare *Ac* 9:2; 22:5; 26:12). According to Schurer (*HJP*, div II, volume 1, 171; *GJV*4, 236) the civil authority of the Sanhedrin, from the time of Archelaus, Herod the Great's son, was probably restricted to Judea proper, and for that reason, he thinks, it had no judicial authority over our Lord so long as He remained in Galilee (but see G.A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, I, 416).

The Sanhedrin was abolished after the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD). The beth-din (court of judgment) in Jabneh (68-80), in Usah (80-116), in Shafran (140-63), in Sepphoris (163-93), in Tiberias (193-220), though regarded in the Talmud (compare *Ro'sh ha-shanah* 31a) as having been the direct continuation of the Sanhedrin, had an essentially different character; it was merely an assembly of scribes, whose decisions had only a theoretical importance (compare *Sotah* 9 11).

3). Constitution:

The Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem was formed (*Mt* 26:3,17,59; *Mr* 14:53; 15:1; *Lu* 22:66; *Ac* 4:5 f; 5:21; 22:30) of high priests (i.e. the acting high priest, those who had been high priests, and members of the privileged families from which the high priests were taken), elders (tribal and family heads of the people and priesthood), and scribes (i.e. legal assessors), Pharisees and Sadducees alike (compare *Ac* 4:1 ff; 5:17,34; 23:6). In *Mr* 15:43; *Lu* 23:50, Joseph of Arimathea is called bouleutes, "councillor," i.e. member of the Sanhedrin.

According to Josephus and the New Testament, the acting high priest was as such always head and president (*Mt* 26:3,17; *Ac* 5:17 ff; 7:1; 9:1 f; 22:5; 23:2; 24:1; *Ant*, IV, viii, 17; XX, x). Caiaphas is president at the trial of our Lord, and at Paul's trial Ananias is president. On the other hand, according to the Talmud (especially *Haghighah* 2 2), the Sanhedrin is represented as a juridical tribunal of scribes, in which one scribe acted as nasi', "prince," i.e. president, and another as 'abh-beth-din, father of the judgment-chamber, i.e. vice-president. So far, it has not been found possible to reconcile these conflicting descriptions (see "Literature," below).

Sanhedrin 4 3 mentions the cophere-ha-dayanim, "notaries," one of whom registered the reasons for acquittal, and the other the reasons for condemnation. In the New Testament we read of huperetai, "constables" (*Mt* 5:25) and of the "servants of the high priest" (*Mt* 26:51; *Mr* 14:47; *Joh* 18:10), whom Josephus describes as "enlisted from the rudest and most restless characters" (*Ant.*, XX, viii, 8; ix, 2). Josephus speaks of the "public whip," Matthew mentions "tormentors" (18:34), Luke speaks of "spies" (20:20).

The whole history of post-exilic Judaism circles round the high priests, and the priestly aristocracy always played the leading part in the Sanhedrin (compare Sanhedrin 4 2). But the more the Pharisees grew in importance, the more were they represented in the Sanhedrin. In the time of Salome they were so powerful that “the queen ruled only in name, but the Pharisees in reality” (Ant., XIII, xvi, 2). So in the time of Christ, the Sanhedrin was formally led by the Sadducean high priests, but practically ruled by the Pharisees (Ant., XVIII, i, 4).

4). Jurisdiction:

In the time of Christ the Great Sanhedrin at Jerusalem enjoyed a very high measure of independence. It exercised not only civil jurisdiction, according to Jewish law, but also, in some degree, criminal. It had administrative authority and could order arrests by its own officers of justice (Mt 26:47; Mr 14:43; Ac 4:3; 5:17 f; 9:2; compare Sanhedrin 1 5). It was empowered to judge cases which did not involve capital punishment, which latter required the confirmation of the Roman procurator (Joh 18:31; compare the Jerusalem Sanhedrin 1 1; 7 2 (p. 24); Josephus, Ant, XX, ix, 1). But, as a rule, the procurator arranged his judgment in accordance with the demands of the Sanhedrin.

For one offense the Sanhedrin could put to death, on their own authority, even a Roman citizen, namely, in the case of a Gentile passing the fence which divided the inner court of the Temple from that of the Gentiles (BJ, VI, ii, 4; Middoth 11 3; compare Ac 21:28). The only case of capital punishment in connection with the Sanhedrin in the New Testament is that of our Lord. The stoning of Stephen (Ac 7:54) was probably the illegal act of an enraged multitude.

5). Place and Time of Meeting:

The Talmudic tradition names “the hall of hewn stone,” which, according to Middoth 5 4, was on the south side of the great court, as the seat of the Great Sanhedrin (Pe’-ah 2 6; `Edhuyoth 7 4, et al.). But the last sittings of the Sanhedrin were held in the city outside the Temple area (Sanhedrin 41a; Shabbath 15a; Ro’sh ha-shanah 31a; Abhodhah zarah 8c). Josephus also mentions the place where the bouleutai, “the councilors,” met as the boule, outside the Temple (BJ, V, iv, 2), and most probably he refers to these last sittings.

According to the Tosephta’ Sanhedrin 7 1, the Sanhedrin held its sittings from the time of the offering of the daily morning sacrifice till that of the evening sacrifice. There were no sittings on Sabbaths or feast days.

6. Procedure:

The members of the Sanhedrin were arranged in a semicircle, so that they could see each other (Sanhedrin 4 3; Tosephta’ 8 1). The two notaries stood before them, whose duty it was to record the votes (see 3, above). The prisoner had to appear in humble attitude and dressed in mourning (Ant., XIV, ix, 4). A sentence of capital punishment could not be passed on the day of the trial. The decision of the judges had to be examined on the following day (Sanhedrin 4 1), except in the case of a person who misled the people, who could be tried and condemned the same day or in the night (Tosephta’ Sanhedrin 10). Because of this, cases which involved capital punishment were not tried on a Friday or on any day before a feast. A herald preceded the condemned one as he was led to the place of execution, and cried out: “N. the son of N. has been found guilty of death, etc. If anyone knows anything to clear him, let him come

forward and declare it” (Sanhedrin 6 1). Near the place of execution the condemned man was asked to confess his guilt in order that he might partake in the world to come (ibid.; compare Lu 23:41-43).

RESEARCH MATERIAL

Romans 12:2

Strong’s Concordance

2And <2532> be <4964> not <3361> conformed <4964> to <165> this <5129> world <165>; but <235> be ye transformed <3339> by the renewing <342> of <3563> your <5216> mind <3563>, that <1519> ye <5209> may prove <1381> what is <5101> that <2307> good <18>, and <2532> acceptable <2101>, and <2532> perfect <5046>, will <2307> of God <2316>.

3339 *metamorphoo* *met-am-or-fo'-o* from 3326 and 3445; to transform (literally or figuratively, “metamorphose”):--change, transfigure, transform. see GREEK for 3326 see GREEK for 3445

Vine’s Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words

“to change into another form” (*meta*, implying change, and *morphe*, “form:” see *FORM*, No. 1), is used in the Passive Voice (a) of Christ’s “transfiguration,” Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:2; Luke (in Luke 9:29) avoids this term, which might have suggested to gentile readers the metamorphoses of heathen gods, and uses the phrase *egeneto heteron*, “was altered,” lit., “became (*ginomai*) different (*heteros*);” (b) of believers, Rom. 12:2, “be ye transformed,” the obligation being to undergo a complete change which, under the power of God, will find expression in character and conduct; *morphe* lays stress on the inward change, *schema* (see the preceding verb in that verse, *suschematizo*) lays stress on the outward (see *FASHION*, No. 3, *FORM*, No. 2); the present continuous tenses indicate a process; 2 Cor. 3:18 describes believers as being “transformed (RV) into the same image” (i.e., of Christ in all His moral excellencies), the change being effected by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 5:22

Strong’s Concordance #’s (3710, 4469, 3474)

Angry

3710. *orgizo* *or-gid'-zo* from 3709; to provoke or enrage, i.e. (passively) become exasperated:--be angry (wroth).

VINES - Verb, 3710, *orgizo* > “to provoke, to arouse to anger,” is used in the Middle Voice in the eight places where it is found, and signifies “to be angry, wroth.” It is said of individuals, in Matt. 5:22; 18:34; 22:7; Luke 14:21; 15:28, and Eph. 4:26 (where a possible meaning is “be ye angry with yourselves”); of nations, Rev. 11:18; of Satan as the Dragon, Rev. 12:17. See *WRATH*.

Raca

4469. *rhaka* *rhak-ah'* of Chaldee origin (compare 7386); O empty one, i.e. thou worthless (as a term of utter vilification):--Raca.

VINES - is an Aramaic word akin to the Heb. *req*, “empty,” the first “a” being due to a Galilean change. In the AV of 1611 it was spelled *racha*; in the edition of 1638, *raca*. It was a word of utter contempt, signifying “empty,” intellectually rather than morally, “empty-headed,” like Abimelech’s hirelings, Judg. 9:4, and the “vain” man of Jas. 2:20. As condemned by Christ, Matt. 5:22, it was worse than being angry, inasmuch as an outrageous utterance is worse than a feeling unexpressed or somewhat controlled in expression; it does not indicate such a loss of self-control as the word rendered “fool,” a godless, moral reprobate.