

Fourteen Rules for Bible Study

by Fred R. Coulter

JESUS CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL SCRIPTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Jesus Christ is the crowning glory of God's plan, the supreme expression of God's love for each individual He calls. Through Jesus Christ and Him alone, God's marvelous love will ultimately be manifested to all mankind--past, present and future. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who is believing in Him shall not perish, but may have eternal life" (John 3:16, AT). This often quoted Scripture is the undergirding of all that God does, but few understand how it applies to understanding the Scriptures.

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one is coming to the Father, except through Me" (John 14:6, AT). All Scriptural truth comes from God the Father through Jesus Christ. In order to properly understand the Scriptures, we must go to the Father through Jesus Christ, Who is the way, the truth and the life. It is the Father Who imparts the Holy Spirit to us to guide us in understanding His Word, which is the Truth (John 17:17).

JESUS CHRIST REVEALED THE ONLY WAY TO SCRIPTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Jesus clearly taught that it is the Holy Spirit--the Spirit of Truth--that enables us to come to a true and full understanding of the Word of God (John 16:13). The words of Jesus Himself, as recorded by the apostle John, show that in order to receive the Spirit of Truth, we must love God the Father and Jesus Christ and be keeping Their commandments. Fulfilling these requirements is absolutely essential for any individual to receive the Holy Spirit and be able to come to a correct understanding of the Scriptures!

"If you love Me, you will be keeping the commandments--namely My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give another Helper to you, that it may be with you throughout the age [until Jesus Christ returns]; even the Spirit of the Truth, which the world does not have the power to receive, because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it, because it dwells with you and shall be within you.... In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you.

"The one who has My commandments and who is keeping them, that is the one who loves [Greek '*o agapwn*', "who is loving"] Me; and the one who loves [Greek '*o agapwn*', "who is loving"] Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot, said to Him, 'And Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?'

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will be keeping My word [the entire message], and My Father will love him; and We will come to him, and We will make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me is not keeping My words; and the word [the entire message] that you are hearing is not Mine, but the Father's Who has sent Me 1" (John 14:15-24, AT).

These words of Jesus Christ reveal the loving, personal spiritual relationship of God the Father and Jesus Christ with every true Christian. These words also reveal the wholehearted obedience that God the Father requires of all who profess to love and believe in Jesus Christ. This teaching is the heart and core of the

love that God the Father gives to us through His Son, and the love that we, as true believers in Jesus Christ, show toward God. It is the daily way of life for a true Christian. If we love Jesus Christ, we will be keeping His commandments, and those commandments are from God the Father!

Not many professing Christians, whether ministers or laymen, are living in obedience to all the commandments of God. Jesus gave this warning for those who would be using His name and claiming His promises and blessings, professing to be His followers and teachers of the Word, but who would not be keeping the commandments of God: "Not everyone who is saying to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father Who is in heaven.

"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied through Your name? And through Your name have we not cast out demons? And through Your name have we not done many wonderful works?' And then I will profess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who are working lawlessness'" (Matt. 7:21 -23, AT).

The word "lawlessness" is translated from the Greek word '*anomoV*', *anomos*, which means against law, or against law and commandment keeping. This kind of pseudo-Christianity, which uses Jesus' name but refuses to do the will of God, is not accepted by God the Father and Jesus Christ. The result of this pseudo-Christianity is death, not eternal life. And many, the vast majority of people, are following the broad path that leads to death-- exactly as Jesus said (Matt. 7:13 -14).

Those who are teaching and practicing a lawless pseudo-Christianity are doing the exact opposite of what Jesus said those who love Him will be doing: "If you love Me, you will be keeping the commandments-- namely My commandments" (John 14:15, AT). The one who truly loves Jesus Christ will be keeping His commandments--yes, every one of His words, which He received from God the Father. That is the standard by which we can identify those who love God and those who do not.

Every commandment that God has given is based on love. Here is the greatest commandment of all: "You shall LOVE the Lord your God with ALL YOUR HEART, and with ALL YOUR SOUL, and with ALL YOUR MIND. This is the FIRST and GREAT commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS" (Matt. 22:37 -40, AT). Without these two commandments, there would be no law, there would be no prophets, there would be no covenants, old or new. EVERYTHING GOD DOES IS BASED ON LOVE!

The apostle John expresses the love of God so clearly in his first epistle: "Beloved, we should be loving one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves [Greek *o agapwn*, "who is loving"] has been begotten by God, and knows God.

"The one who does not love does not know God, because GOD IS LOVE! In this way the love of God was manifested unto us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.

"In this act is THE LOVE: not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son as the propitiation for our sins.... And we have known and have believed the love that God has imparted unto us. GOD IS LOVE, and the one who is dwelling in love is dwelling in God, and God in him" (I John 4:7-10,16, AT).

This is the attitude of love, faith and obedience that we must show toward God the Father and Jesus Christ in order to understand the Word of God. Without this love for God and His Truth, a full understanding of the Scriptures can never be achieved!

FIVE VITAL KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING THE WORD OF GOD

In addition to a loving, faithful and obedient attitude toward God, there are five major principles that are essential to a correct understanding of Scripture. These vital keys to understanding must always be kept in mind when we study the Word of God.

The first vital key is this: "All Scripture is God-inspired [God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; so that the man of God is thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Tim. 3:16 , AT).

Many who profess to study the Bible completely disregard this vital principle. Rather than seeking the truth of Scripture, they look for verses that appear to support their personal beliefs, but ignore those verses that clearly contradict their beliefs. This approach to study can never lead to understanding because it denies that every part of Scripture is inspired. Those who use this approach are exalting their own beliefs above the authority of Scripture.

When we study the Scriptures, we should always be careful to seek the true meaning of the words that were inspired by God. No study of the Scriptures should be designed to support the position of a doctrinal board, or to justify a time-honored church doctrine, or to "prove" a personal interpretation of the Scriptures. None of these motives are acceptable. And if these motives are involved, for whatever reason, do we think that God overlooks such deceptive use of His Word? If we think that we can fool God, we are only deceiving ourselves.

Let us not be guilty of such a presumptuous and self-righteous attitude toward the Word of God. Rather, let us humbly allow the inspired words of Scripture to correct us and instruct us in the true righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The second vital key to Scriptural understanding is clearly taught in Isaiah 28: "Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts [that is, fully grounded in the Word of God and not a spiritually immature Christian feeding only on the milk of the Word]. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:9-10, JPSA).

The book of Isaiah tells us that in order to understand doctrine, we must study the Scriptures line upon line and precept upon precept. This is exactly how we should study every doctrinal question. The New Testament confirms this approach to understanding the Word of God and establishing sound doctrine! "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a workman [in the Word of God], not being ashamed, straightly cutting [rightly dividing--precept upon precept, and line upon line] the Word of Truth" (II Tim. 2:15 , A T).

In order to come to the knowledge of the Truth, we must always follow the Biblically outlined method of study--"straightly cutting" or "rightly dividing" the Word of God. Any other type of study is useless and all in vain! As Paul instructed Timothy, "Of these things put them in remembrance: I charge you before the Lord not to dispute about words to no profit, but to the subversion of those who are hearing" (II Tim. 2:14, AT).

This is exactly what many ministers and scholars have done in their doctrinal teachings because they have not rightly divided the Word of God! Whole congregations have been subverted by strivings and disputings over the meaning of key words that are used in Scripture. Some teachers and ministers have even engaged in redefining words--attaching their own personal interpretations and rejecting the authoritative definitions that are found in Hebrew and Greek lexicons. Anyone who undertakes such practices is "using the law unlawfully," as Paul said, and will end up teaching false, satanic doctrines that subvert the minds of their followers. Unfortunately, the landscape of religious history is filled with the bodies of people who have taught false doctrines, and the bodies of people who have embraced their teachings. Only by learning to rightly divide the Word of God will we be able to recognize and resist these false doctrines.

The third vital key to understanding the Scriptures is found in the second epistle of Peter, where we read, "Knowing this first [Greek protos--meaning the primary, or first and foremost thing], that no prophecy of Scripture is of one's own interpretation; because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet 1:20-21, AT).

In today's world, we find many pseudo-teachers who are twisting the Scriptures and deceitfully using their own personal interpretations in order to persuade others to believe their false doctrines. To support their teachings, they may quote numerous Scriptures. To their listeners, their teachings sound very authoritative, but the way that they apply the Scriptures exposes their craftiness. They are using the same subtle methods of deception that Satan the devil uses.

Yes, even Satan the devil quotes Scripture! When Jesus Christ was being tempted by the devil in person, Satan did not hesitate to quote the Scriptures. "If You be the Son of God, cast Yourself down: for it is written, 'He shall give His angels charge concerning You, and in their hands they shall bear You up, lest at any time You dash your foot against a stone'" (Matt. 4:6, Psa. 91:11-12).

Satan correctly quoted this Scripture, but misapplied it in a crafty effort to tempt Jesus to jump from the pinnacle of the temple. Jesus resisted Satan's deception by rightly applying the Scriptures. He said, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'" (Matt. 4:7).

What is the lesson for us in this account? It is this: Those who quote the Scriptures correctly, but twist and misapply the meaning, are following Satan--not serving God! This example is recorded in Scripture as a warning for us to be on guard. The fact that a minister or teacher may continually quote the Scriptures does not guarantee that he is teaching the truth. **SCRIPTURE THAT IS QUOTED ACCURATELY IS OFTEN MISAPPLIED TO TEACH FALSE DOCTRINE!**

True servants of God do not use such deceitful tactics. The apostle Paul wrote of his ministry, "Rather, we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness [that is, having a hidden agenda], nor handling the Word of God deceitfully [falsely applying the Scriptures], but by the

manifestation of the Truth, we are commending ourselves to everyone's conscience before God" (II Cor. 4:2, AT).

Those who are truly serving God will not deceitfully use Scripture to promote their own ideas and personal interpretations. They will seek to understand and teach the true meaning of the words that God inspired by the power of His Holy Spirit.

The fourth vital key to understanding the true teachings of Scripture is found in Paul's instructions to the Thessalonian believers: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21).

The command to "prove all things" is a lifelong responsibility for every true believer. We, as individual Christians, must continually be testing every teaching that we read or hear by carefully studying the Scriptures. The Bereans were commended because they diligently searched the Scriptures: "And these were more noble minded than those in Thessalonica [the unbelieving Jews, who immediately rejected the apostle Paul's teaching that Christ was raised from the dead], who [the Bereans] received the word with all readiness of mind and were examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11, AT).

The account in the book of Acts reveals that the Bereans were diligently studying the Scriptures to prove whether or not the things they had heard were true. They did not react with blind emotion and refuse to consider the teachings of Paul. Rather, they carefully examined the Scriptures and proved to themselves that Paul was, in fact, preaching the true message of God.

We, like the Bereans, must diligently search and examine the Scriptures in order to discern true doctrine from false doctrine. As we apply our minds to this effort, we will become skillful in using the Scriptures--no longer feeding on the "milk" of the Word but able to handle "strong meat." If we do not exercise our minds and learn to discern truth from error, we will not become spiritually mature Christians. "For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:13 -14).

Too many Christians have remained as spiritual infants because they have transferred their God-given responsibility to discern truth from error to a minister or church board. Their ministers have told them that they, the laity, are incapable of understanding the Scriptures and must submit to the doctrinal decisions of their church leaders, who alone can interpret the Scriptures. But it was never God's intention that we, as individual believers, place our trust in human leaders who claim sole authority to establish doctrine. Christians who have done so have left themselves open to grievous deception. They have forgotten the many warnings throughout the New Testament to be on guard against false teachers and false apostles who make a pretense of serving God. The apostle Paul warned, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29 -30).

Likewise, the apostle Peter strongly admonished the brethren. "But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies, denying the Lord who bought them and bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many people will follow as authoritative their destructive ways; and because of them, the way of the Truth will

be blasphemed. Also, through insatiable greed they will with enticing messages exploit you for gain; for whom the judgment of old is in full force, and their destruction is ever watchful" (II Pet. 2:1-3, AT)

True to the warnings of Paul and Peter, many Christians in the New Testament churches were subverted and drawn away from the true doctrines of Scripture because they neglected to "prove all things" and did not test and try the teachings of these false apostles. But the church at Ephesus did not forget the warnings and admonitions of Paul and Peter, as well as the other true apostles. In the book of Revelation, Jesus Christ commended the Ephesian believers because they tried and tested those who falsely claimed to be apostles and proved them to be liars. "I know your works, and your labor and your endurance, and that you cannot bear those evil ones; but you have tested those who declare themselves to be apostles, and are not, and you discovered them to be liars" (Rev. 2:2, AT).

Since these false apostles professed to be ministers of Jesus Christ, we can be sure that they quoted the Scriptures. Their false doctrines must have sounded very authoritative and very convincing, because they succeeded in undermining the faith of many New Testament Christians. How was the church at Ephesus able to withstand this powerful deception? If the Ephesian brethren had not been exercising their senses to discern truth from error, they would not have recognized these men as false apostles. But because the brethren at Ephesus were skillful in using the Scriptures, they were able to discern that these men were not teaching the true doctrines of Jesus Christ.

Like the brethren at Ephesus, Christians today must constantly be on guard against false ministers whose Scriptural-sounding teachings are actually a perversion of the true doctrines of Scripture. It is our personal responsibility as Christians to test and try the teachings of every minister, teacher or scholar by carefully examining the Scriptures. By following the Scriptural command to "prove all things," we can learn to recognize and reject false doctrine, and we will be able to stand fast in the true doctrines of Jesus Christ.

The fifth vital key to remember when we study Scripture is that we must be led by the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is called the Word of Truth. Furthermore, it is the Spirit of Truth that teaches us all things. The Bible makes it clear that the Spirit of Truth works hand in hand with the Word of Truth to give us the understanding God wants us to have. Jesus said, "But the Helper, the Spirit of Truth, which the Father will send in My name, that one will teach you ALL THINGS, and will bring to your remembrance all things that I have told you" (John 14:26, AT). This is the promise Jesus gives to all who repent and are converted in their hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit.

It is not possible for the unconverted human mind, which is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9), to come to the knowledge of the Truth of God. In fact, the carnal mind is enmity (that is, hostile) toward God and is not willing to be subject to God's laws (Rom. 8:7). The Word of Truth and the Spirit of Truth cannot work hand in hand with the carnal mind of deceit. Regardless of how brilliant or how great the intellect may be, God's Truth is not understood through human wisdom and rationale. It is only through the Spirit of God that the Word of God can be understood.

Paul taught that it is not through human rationale or intellect that we are able to come to the knowledge of the Truth, but by and through the SPIRIT OF GOD. "But according as it has been written, 'There are things that the eye has not seen, and the ear has not heard, and have not entered into the heart of man, but which God has prepared for those who love Him.'

"But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit; FOR THE SPIRIT SEARCHES ALL THINGS, EVEN THE DEPTHS [the deep things] OF GOD. For who of men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him? In exactly the same way also, the things of God no one knows, except by the Spirit of God.... Which things we also speak, not taught in words of human wisdom, but in those words taught of the Holy Spirit, comparing [communicating] spiritual things by spiritual means. But the natural man [the carnal mind without the Holy Spirit of God] receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, BECAUSE THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED AND UNDERSTOOD" (I Cor. 2:9-14, AT).

Without the Holy Spirit of God, no human being--no matter how intelligent--can understand His Word! And even individuals who have received the Holy Spirit from God are beset by obstacles that can keep them from coming to a full understanding of the truth. Too many Christians become caught up in the politics of religion, or the power structure of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, or the approved doctrines of their church, or they have submitted to humanly devised church authority, or they have blindly accepted the teachings of so-called Biblical scholars, and they are not able to open-mindedly study and completely understand the spiritual truth of God's Word.

The Holy Spirit cannot guide us into all truth unless we diligently study the Scriptures with an open mind, unhindered by the ideas and doctrines of men. Christians who look to the authority of men rather than to Scripture are easy prey for ministers and teachers who profess to serve God but are not obeying His commandments and are not teaching the Truth.

A DIRE WARNING AGAINST THE DISOBEDIENT AND THOSE WHO TEACH FALSE DOCTRINE

The book of Deuteronomy contains a prophecy of Jesus Christ's ministry coupled with a dire warning against those who refuse to obey His words and those who teach false doctrine in His name: "I will raise them up a Prophet [Jesus Christ] from among their brethren, like unto you [Moses], and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My words [listen attentively to obey] which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him [hold him accountable unto judgment]" (Deut. 18:18-19). This warning applies to every human being, but particularly to those who are claiming to follow Jesus Christ!

The following verse pronounces even more severe judgment upon those who are teachers, or claim to be teachers, of the Word of God. Notice what God warns: "But the prophet [anyone who is teaching], which shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods [false doctrines palmed off as true teachings of God], even that prophet shall die" (Verse 20).

Jesus Himself, the Prophet Who was to come, repeated the same warning! "Now if anyone hears My words and does not believe [to obey], I do not judge him, because I did not come [at that time] to judge the world, but that I might save the world. The one who is rejecting Me and who is not receiving My words, has one who judges him. The word [the entire message--all the words of Jesus Christ] which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken from Myself [He taught nothing on His own initiative], but the Father Who has sent Me, He Himself gave Me commandment, what I

should say and what I should speak. Now I know that His commandment is eternal life" (John 12:47 -50, AT).

God Himself inspired Jesus Christ to speak these words and caused them to be preserved for us today. Anyone who presumptuously rises up against God and His Word, by misapplying the Scriptures and teaching false doctrine, already has the judgment of God pronounced against him.

Today, the churches of God--and all professing Christians in the world--are being assaulted with false teachings. These teachings are being received and believed because people cannot endure sound doctrine. They cannot sit still and listen to the wholesome words of Jesus Christ.

This decadent spiritual condition was prophesied by the apostle Paul. "For the time will come [and the time is now] when they will not endure [be willing to listen to] sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts they will heap to themselves many teachers because of having itching ears for unsound doctrine. Now on the one hand, they will turn away their ears from the Truth [God's Word is the Truth]; and on the other hand, they will turn aside [from the way of the Lord] unto fables [deceptive false doctrines]" (II Tim. 4:3-4, AT).

Many in the churches of God today are falling prey to this deception. At the present time a great number of members and ministers are being swept away with every new wind of doctrine. Although some have attended and served in their churches for many years, they are not spiritually grounded because they have not been diligently studying the Scriptures. As a result, while they may think that they are able to discern truth from error, they are woefully ill-equipped to recognize these clever, subtle, "truth-sounding" false doctrines. While they should have been trained and grounded in the Scriptures, they have not been. They have only been feeding on the milk of the Word and consequently have remained in a state of spiritual infancy. As Paul admonished, "For truly when you ought to be teachers by this time, you again have need for someone to teach you what are the elements of the beginnings of the oracles of God, and have need of milk and not strong meat. For everyone who is partaking of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, because he is an infant" (Heb. 5:12 -13, AT).

Christians who are not spiritually mature are ripe to be carried about with every wind of doctrine. They are like dry leaves, caught up in a whirlwind, swirling and spinning around. Because they are oblivious to their weak spiritual condition, it is easy to get caught up in false doctrines that seem to be right but in reality are so wrong. The most clever deception that Satan has devised is false doctrine that sounds blessedly true.

This is what Christians are facing today--many cleverly devised false doctrines, more fitly called fables or myths. It is not sufficient simply to proclaim that a doctrine is true, or to denounce a doctrine as false. Those who truly want to follow Christ need to study sound doctrine and know and understand the Truth and why it is true. And we must know and understand false doctrine and why it is false.

Unless we are able to discern truth from error, we will end up straying from the narrow pathway of God's Word, that leads to eternal life. To keep from following the broad way to destruction, as so many have, we need to be diligently studying the Word of God, following all the Biblical principles and rules for discerning the true meaning of Scripture. Please read the Fourteen Rules for Bible Study in the next section. These present a step-by-step, systematic method for proper Bible study.

Few Christians think of themselves as students, but every true Christian is a disciple of Jesus Christ. The word "disciple" means "learner," or "student." As students of Jesus Christ, we should be daily studying His teachings. We should not be following the doctrines and traditions of men, regardless of how authoritative they may appear to be. Nor should we base our beliefs on Biblical commentaries or other writings of men. We should strictly follow the Word of God, rightly dividing it and putting line upon line and precept upon precept. Only by studying the Scriptures in this manner can we come to a full understanding of the Truth.

Knowing that we must engage in serious, in-depth study of the Scriptures, we may have questions as to which version of the Bible we should use, especially for doctrinal study. Numerous translations of the Scriptures are available to us today, and new versions continue to be published. The modern versions may be very attractive because they are easier to read than the older versions with their archaic words and expressions. However, these modern versions generally cannot be relied on for doctrinal study because they do not closely follow the original text. In some of these versions, thousands of words have been omitted.

In spite of repeated claims, the King James Version is promoted as the most accurate English Bible. However, that is not correct. The most accurate English Bible today is [The Holy Bible In Its Original Order—A Faithful Version with Commentary](#). All the errors of the KJV, of which there are hundreds, have been corrected in this new version of the Bible.

In undertaking a Scriptural study of any doctrinal subject, we should thoroughly examine every verse and passage concerning the subject. If the meaning of the text is questionable or the English phrasing is unclear, it may be necessary to pursue a detailed study of the original language, Hebrew or Greek, in order to determine the precise meaning of the original inspired words. This approach will give us a clear understanding of what the Bible is actually teaching and will enable us to arrive at a correct understanding of any doctrinal subject. The Fourteen Rules for Bible Study listed below will provide a systematic method for understanding all the essential doctrines of Scripture--even the most difficult ones.

FOURTEEN RULES FOR BIBLE STUDY

- 1) Begin with Scriptures that are easy to understand.
- 2) Let the Bible interpret and prove the Bible. Don't look for what you want to prove; look for what the Bible actually proves.
- 3) Understand the context--the verses before and after, the chapters before and after. Does your understanding of a particular verse harmonize with the rest of the Bible?
- 4) Understand the original language, Hebrew or Greek. Never try to establish dogmatic doctrine or teachings by using Strong's Concordance. It can be helpful at times, but it is extremely limited.
- 5) Ask, what does the Scripture clearly say?
- 6) Ask, what does the Scripture not say?

- 7) Ask, to whom was the book written?
- 8) Ask, who wrote it?
- 9) Ask, who said it?
- 10) Understand the time frame in history when the book was written.
- 11) Don't bring your own personal assumptions and preconceived notions into your understanding or conclusions.
- 12) Base your study on Scriptural knowledge that you already understand. What do you know up to this point in time?
- 13) Do not form conclusions based on partial facts or insufficient information, or the opinions and speculations of others.
- 14) Personal opinions or convictions, regardless of how strong they may be, don't necessarily count. Scripture must be your standard and guide.

This is the complete study approach. When undertaking a study of the Bible, we should always use this approach, coupled with prayer, trusting God to lead us with His Holy Spirit of Truth. We know that He will fulfill His promise to lead us into ALL TRUTH, if we are diligently seeking to understand His Word.