



HIGHER GROUND
CALVARY CHAPEL

SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

Bible 101
Class 03
How to Read a Bible Verse

1 Peter 3:15:

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:”

The Bible demands that we know what we believe

This puts a responsibility on the believer to comply with Paul’s instruction...

II Timothy 2:15:

“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Notice what this verse says:

We are required to study
God approves of us studying
As we study we should no longer be ashamed
We should correctly analyze the Bible

Now what I just did was a very simple legal analysis of the verse

There is a rule in law:

Read the law

If there are no ambiguities

Then that is what it says

I read the verse
Now there were some
ambiguities in it that I did not
know
What did I do?
I tracked down the meaning of
those words

II Timothy 2:15:
“Study to show yourself
approved unto God, a
workman who needs not be
ashamed, rightly dividing the
word of truth.”

There was an ambiguity at first
when I was commanded to
study
What should I study?
But as I read on that was
answered
I was to study the Word of
Truth

What is the Word of Truth?

That would be the Bible

What is my goal in studying the Bible?

1. I should not be ashamed
2. I can understand what the Bible says

This is a simple skill anyone can learn

You look at what is written

You take it apart word-by-word or phrase-by-phrase

You research until you understand each part

Then you put it back together and check to see if it makes sense

If not, go back and do the same with whatever part is not making sense

This is something those
working with the law must
learn to do
They become legal analysts
They analyze the law to
understand what it is saying
We will do the same with the
Bible

There was actually a court
decision that tells us how to do
this:
“Every word, every phrase and
every provision is there for a
reason...”

So we take a sentence apart
down to each word
Do we know what that word
means?
Does this word have more
than one meaning?

We break the sentence down into its phrases [groups of words making a statement]
Do these make sense?
Do we understand?
Can we repeat this thought in an easy to understand way?

Now be careful...
Every word is there for a reason
Specific words were chosen for a reason
It serves a purpose
That purpose is to avoid any incorrect interpretation

When you change the meaning of a word;
Does it change the meaning of the statement?
Laws are written by law-makers to make their intention as clear as possible

This is why they train in learning to read the law and follow the rules

This way, when multiple people do this with the same law, they will get the same meaning

There is a verse in the Bible that gives us the same instructions as the legal decision

II Timothy 3:16:
“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

The Bible is a legally-binding contract that God wrote to offer salvation to the human race

As a legally-binding contract, it should be treated the same way that a law is treated

Every word, every phrase and every provision is there for a reason

Each word, phrase and provision serves a purpose

You cannot ignore any word, phrase or provision or you will come to the wrong conclusion

Notice that this applies to ALL SCRIPTURE

If the information is part of God's message, it applies to the over-all understanding of what God is trying to say

We cannot ignore any part of it

This is why scholars debated
for years trying to make sure
that all the books that God
inspired were identified
And those not written by God
were removed
It must be inspired by God

Now we are lucky
We are on this side of the
debates
We have the Bible which has
been tested for centuries by
thousands of experts
We know what God has
inspired

So let us practice this skill
Let us take sentences apart
Let's identify what we do not
understand
Let's do our research
Answer our questions
And then put it back together

We can do this with Bible verses
We can do this with logic
We can do this with external evidence

But the process is a slow systematic review of all evidence
And following the evidence to its logical conclusion

There are rules that apply
You cannot ignore the rules and get the right answer
Let's take a moment and look at the rules

God cannot lie
Hebrews 6:18:
“That by two immutable things,
in which it was impossible for
God to lie, we might have a
strong consolation, who have
fled for refuge to lay hold upon
the hope set before us.”

God does not change
Malachi 3:6:
“For I am the Lord, I change
not...”

In your studies, one passage of
Scripture cannot contradict
another
If this appears the case, then
you need to conduct more
research
You must “harmonize” the text

II Timothy 2:15:

“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

I Peter 3:15:

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:”

As we do this, we must always consider that we might have fallen into deception and may not realize it...

II Corinthians 13:5:

“Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves. Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?”

And we do it because we love the people we are teaching, and do not want them to be led off into deception.

It is important to understand that Christianity is not a religion
Christianity it is not a matter of opinion

If Christianity were a religion
then it is simply a matter of
personal beliefs and opinions
People can believe whatever
they want to believe

But Christianity is actually a
legally-binding contract
between God and man
It is based upon laws and how
to apply these laws to our lives

It is controlled by:
Logic,
Evidence; and
Legal Theory
These can be proven

I want to spend a few moments discussing how to read the Bible and realize what it says
I was trained to investigate claims based upon the evidence

I trained to prepare cases before a legal system
This will be my approach when teaching this class

II Timothy 3:16 – 17:
“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

This is our legal authority
In building any legal argument,
we need a legal authority to give
us permission to use various
resources

We cannot just use anything we
want
With this verse, Paul has just
given us permission to use each
and every passage in the Bible

Some will question if this is
circular reasoning if we use the
Bible to prove the Bible
It is not
The Bible is not a single book

It is a collection of books
66 of them to be exact
They were written by over
forty authors

They were written over a period
of two thousand years
Someone has just collected all
these resources into one place
for us to use

Think of the Bible as a portable
library
In our case it will be a legal
library

Any book in that library can be used to make a legal argument
There will be some guidelines and restrictions in how to use them

So we can take verses that speak of the same topic and cross-reference one verse with another to interpret the passage

By doing this, we increase our pool of knowledge in understanding the verse
Keep in mind:
The Bible does not contradict itself

The only limit on pulling in multiple verses from throughout the Bible is that we must keep them in context
Are they all really talking about the same thing?

If we remove the context [that portion of the Bible the verse comes from]
We can create a teaching that is never intended by the Bible

The classic abuse of pulling verses out of context is the following:
“Judas went out and hanged himself”
“Go you and do likewise”
“What you do, do quickly”

These verses have little in common
The first discusses the fate of Judas

The second is Jesus on an unrelated topic
The third is Jesus speaking to Satan who had just possessed Judas

In context, these verses have nothing in common
We cannot draw additional information from any one of them to better understand any one of the verses

Putting the verses back into their context makes this fact very obvious

When you pull something out of its context in the Bible, you can create any teaching you want

This is why we always compare each verse with the Bible as a whole

This is called *harmonizing the Bible*

We have to “harmonize” – make that passage agree with the rest of the Bible

There is a rule in logic:
“If you accept a party’s
premise...
Then you are obligated
to accept that party’s
conclusion.”

To maintain the truth, we have
to recognize the point where
someone first presents a
premise that is untrue

And begin to challenge the
falsehood at that point
This way they have nothing to
build on

Although there are over 40 authors, it is God speaking through each one of them

Therefore, it should have a single voice; a consistent message...

God does not change
God does not lie
God does not contradict Himself

If you come across a verse that appears to contradict another, this is a Red Flag by the Holy Spirit that you need to stop and do a more detailed analysis of the verses

Legal theory uses a multiple-step process to ensure you are correctly interpreting and applying a law

We will follow their example:
Step One: Read the law [Bible verse] – give the words their usual and ordinary meaning
If that is what it says; then that is what it means

If this does not resolve the conflict then go to Step Two:
Step Two: Do an analysis of the Law/verses

Take them apart:
Every word, every phrase, every provision is there for a reason and serves a purpose

Check words in their original language for original meaning
Most of us use the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance to do this since we are not Greek or Hebrew linguists

If this fails to resolve the conflict, use Step 3:
Consider external [non-Biblical] resources:
Experts and Commentaries
Someone may have already dealt with this problem and found the solution

Put this into context of when it was written and by whom:
This passage may have a very limited application

Pull together all the passages that speak on this subject and use them to “harmonize” the teaching
Again, the Bible will not contradict itself

There is a concept in Fraud Investigation
We “drill down” into documents
We “mine the data” that is in each document

People leave information behind without realizing it
Many of the fraud cases I worked on started by doing this

The difference is that God does not leave information behind by accident
God leaves information behind on purpose
We need to “drill down” and “mine the data” God has put in each verse

We all have a habit of
skimming a document or
passage and just pulling out
the main idea

We need to train our eyes and
mind to stop ignoring what is
right in front of us

Pay attention to details

As an example, let me submit
Job 19:25 – 27:

“For I know that my redeemer
lives, and that He shall stand
at the latter day upon the
earth:

And [even though worms]
destroy this body, yet in my
flesh shall I see God:

Whom I shall see for myself,
and my eyes shall behold,
and not another; though my
[organs] be consumed within
me.”

If we settle for a basic surface
reading of this verse we gather
the following information:
Our redeemer is alive

Our Redeemer is going to be
on the earth near the Last
Days
We shall see our Redeemer
for ourselves

That is what it says...
But, what does it mean?
How is this information
important to you?

We “Drill Down”
We start to “Mine the Data”

First of all, notice that the
declaration is in Present Tense
mode
“My redeemer lives” [at this
time]

It is not that my Redeemer is
going to live
My Redeemer is living now –
At the time of Job

Pay attention to the details:
Who said this?
When was it said?

Does this person know
something we do not know?
How does this person know it?

Is this person correct?
(The Bible is an accurate
account of events)
If they say something wrong,
the Bible still records it

This is Job speaking
Job lived 400 years before
Moses gave the Law of God to
mankind
This makes this book God's
first revealing of Himself to the
human race

It appears that this was
common information at the
time Job spoke
There was no special
revelation given before he
made this declaration

What does this piece of information tell us?
Why is it important?
Our Redeemer was alive at the time of Job
He will also be alive in the Latter Days

This means our Redeemer was alive before He was born at Bethlehem
Our Redeemer pre-existed His birth
Our Redeemer must be God

This Redeemer is a male
He was a male before He was born into this world
He is going to physically be present upon the earth in the Latter Days

As this is the first revealing of this information to the rest of the world by recording it in the Bible it gives us a basis to test new revelations – new information

Any account of the End Times must have the Redeemer physically returning to the earth

The Redeemer must be God
The Redeemer must be male

God does not lie
God does not change
Therefore, any revealing of the
Last Days must teach that the
Redeemer will return
physically to the earth

It must teach this, or it should
be silent on the subject
Any other teaching should be
considered false

Now notice what Job declares
about his personally seeing
his Redeemer upon the earth:

In his flesh – not spirit – he
shall see the Redeemer
He will be in his own flesh

He will be in his own flesh
He will see with his own eyes

The body he is in at the time
of the declaration shall
somehow be restored and
function for him
Even if his body is completely
destroyed

This is teaching about a
physical resurrection from the
dead
Even if there is nothing left of
your body

God can – and will – still
restore your original body to
life

It will be the same body you
had in this life

So any teaching regarding a
spiritual resurrection other
than a physical resurrection...

Any teaching of being given a
different body...

Any teaching about God
creating a different body for
you...

...Is not a teaching of God

This is how we “Drill Down”
into a Bible verse
This is how we “Mine the Data”
God has placed in the Bible
verse

This is just a surface reading
But at this point you have to
ask the hard questions
You have to be willing to
challenge the traditional
interpretation
Test it to make sure it is true
If not, continue until you find
the truth

We can also “drill” and “mine”
further by going to the original
language
We can also “drill” and “mine”
further by cross-referencing
this verse with other verses on
the same subject

We can read a verse and take away only the information that is there on the surface...

The information that is obvious

But we need to train our eye and mind to go deeper
To ask more questions

Deception is one of Satan's greatest weapons

It works because:
People are not looking for it
People do not know the truth

People who are deceived do
not know they are deceived
They do not even think that
they are deceived

So the Bible instructs us to
come back every so often
and examine what we believe
Test it against the truth
God's Word is the truth

The Bible is our defense
against deception
We need to test what we
believe
We test it by comparing it to
the Bible
We need to do this for our self

We need to adjust what we
believe based upon the truth
God's Word is truth
If what we believe is wrong, we
are the ones who need to
change
We do not change the Bible

II Timothy 2:15
"Study to show yourself
approved unto God, a
workman who needs not to be
ashamed, rightly dividing the
word of truth."

You need to know what you believe
You need to know why you believe it
You need to be able to defend your position

1 Peter 3:15:
“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear:”

QUESTIONS


