

Bible For Beginners

- I. This study assumes that the individual has a regenerated spiritual nature to enable understanding. **JOH 8:43, 47 c/w 1CO 2:14.**
- A. Do not conflate spiritual death with spiritual immaturity which lacks understanding. **ACT 8:30-31 c/w LUK 24:45.**
 - B. Knowledge and understanding are progressive. **PRO 4:18.**
 - C. Even an unregenerate man can derive some benefit from reading Scripture inasmuch as it can acquaint him with what motivates spiritually-minded men, with historical information, with things that concur with what he knows naturally, with literary and poetic excellency, even with the mechanisms of basic religion. **MAT 23:23.**
- II. The issue of authority is paramount: does man have authority over Scripture or does Scripture have authority over man? Is an institution infallible or is Scripture infallible?
- A. “The text of Scripture must not be fused with the mind of the interpreter, whether that of church or individual. It is to stand over us. Denial of clarity reflects a refusal to be bound by Scripture and a determination to follow one’s own inclinations. Whenever a church or a theologian takes it upon himself to define truth without reference to the objective authority of God’s word, he becomes demonically solipsistic. The Roman Catholic and liberal Protestant theologies are not so far apart as they seem at first glance. In one case the papal ego and, in the other, the theologian’s are the lights which lighten Scripture. In each case something human is placed above Scripture. It is vital, therefore, for them to hold to the obscurity of Scripture, lest its truth should break forth and challenge the interposed human authority. We have no right at all to place anything above God’s Word. These ‘Bibles to the second power’ do not exist.” (Pinnock, Clark; *Biblical Revelation*, pp. 99-100)
 - B. Jesus rebuked religious leaders who had assumed authority over Scripture as having *taken away the key of knowledge*. **LUK 11:52.**
 - C. The gospels show us that Jesus always argued from Scripture, not from tradition nor even from famous men of old (secular or ecclesial). **MAT 21:42; 22:29; JOH 10:35.**
 - D. Paul, upon conversion, abandoned tradition (**GAL 1:14**) and thereafter always brought matters back to the authority of Scripture. **ROM 4:3; GAL 4:30.**
 - E. There is an important principle of ruling and being ruled that this issue speaks to.
 - 1. Those who rule by law must be subject to the same law, and those who are ruled are therefore not only bound by that law but empowered by it as a check against error or overreach of power.
 - 2. In a secular sense, an informed citizenry is necessary for the preservation of liberty and order.
 - a. “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.” (Thomas Jefferson)
 - b. This is particularly true of the supreme law of the land: a citizenry that is well-acquainted with the nation’s foundational law is best equipped to check usurpations of authority and spurn double-standards at law or a dual-class citizenry.
 - 3. In a spiritual/ecclesial sense, the average saint with the scriptures is able to check his teacher/leader with the same law the teacher/leader is supposed to represent. **ACT 17:10-11.**
 - a. A church system which is regulated by Scripture empowers all who are in it.
 - b. A church system which discourages its adherents’ utility of Scripture by contrast establishes a rule by the elite who presume themselves above

challenge. **HOS 4:6 c/w JOH 7:45-49; 9:30-34.**

4. Depending on others to do your thinking for you may be easier than thinking for yourself but it is also a path of bondage.
5. Avoid the assumption that the Bible is too difficult to understand. **2PE 3:15-16.**
 - a. God's children have His spirit for knowing. **1CO 2:12; 1JO 2:20.**
 - b. Some, not all things are hard to be understood.
 - c. Peter does not say they are impossible to be understood.
 - d. The difficult portions are particularly difficult for the unlearned, so build your understanding from the plain portions. Spiritual milk is best for spiritual infants, not spiritual meat. **1PE 2:2 c/w HEB 5:12-14.**
 - e. The most common obstacles to understanding the scriptures are lack of effort and discipline, pride which resists God and the fear of man.
 - f. Reading analysis tests have shown that the KJV Bible is written at a fifth grade level. With a basic grasp of grammar and a good dictionary to define terms, the average believer can gain much profit.

III. Here are some considerations and recommendations for beginners in the Bible.

- A. Scripture is your necessary spiritual food (**MAT 4:4**) and your soul needs nutrition. Read!
- B. Obtain a good quality KJV Bible like a Cambridge which has center-column cross-references. The references are not perfect but they can be very helpful in comparing scripture with scripture, per **1CO 2:13.**
 1. A good concordance or Bible program is helpful to look up words and find texts.
 2. Keep a good non-bleeding fine-tipped pen handy to jot references and notes down.
- C. Assume that God wants you to know and understand Scripture which reveals Him through Jesus Christ, Who is the Central Person of Scripture and history. **JOH 5:39.**
- D. Isolate yourself unto God for a little while each day for meditation. **PSA 1:1-2; 119:15.**
 1. Desire plays a key role. **PSA 19:7-10.**
 2. God knows your heart and will give you what you desire in reward or in judgment. **PSA 37:4; 2TH 2:10-12.**
- E. Believe that you are reading God's words or they will not have the effect they should have on your spiritual life. **2TI 3:16-17 c/w 1TH 2:13.**
- F. Wisdom is something that must be sought and asked for, so pray and dig in. **JAM 1:5-6; PRO 2:1-5.**
- G. Fear God since this is the beginning of wisdom, knowledge and understanding. **PRO 1:7; 9:10.**
 1. This healthy fear is a hatred of evil. **PRO 8:13.**
 2. Sin is a barrier to understanding (**1PE 2:1-2**) so repent of *known* sin and be ready to repent of *ignorant* sin as it is brought to your attention.
- G. The Bible consists of 66 books and epistles (letters) in two major divisions: the Old Testament (39 books) and the New Testament (27 books and letters).
 1. The O.T. consists of the Pentateuch/Books of Moses (**GEN to DEU**), the historical books (**JOS to EST**), the Writings (**JOB to SON**), and the Prophets (**ISA to MAL**).
 2. The N.T. consists of the four gospels which are the record of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ (**MAT to JOH**), the **Acts of the Apostles** of Jesus Christ, the epistles/letters of the apostles (**ROM to JUDE**) and the **Book of Revelation**.
 3. The O.T. is Christ *veiled*; the N.T. is Christ *revealed*.
 4. The N.T. is the clearer, superior revelation from God; the O.T. must be interpreted according to the explanations given of it in the N.T. **2PE 1:19-21; 1JO 4:6.**
 5. Another way to describe the two testaments is that the O.T. is the Mosaic Covenant

and the N.T. is the Messianic Covenant.

a. The *message* of the Mosaic Covenant is “do and live” righteousness.
ROM 10:5.

b. The *message* of the Messianic Covenant is “Christ did, you live.”
GAL 2:20-21.

- H. Read **GEN 1-11** and accept it as historical narrative. It sets forth creation, the entrance of sin by Adam, and a worldwide flood which wiped out everyone except Noah and his family.
1. It establishes the proper pattern of marriage.
 2. It establishes morality.
 3. It establishes the need for clothing.
 4. It establishes cosmology, geology, anthropology, biology and paleontology, etc.
 5. If you can't believe what God tells you of earthly things, on what basis can you believe what He tells you of heavenly things? **JOH 3:12.**
- I. Read the four N.T. gospels which set forth the arrival, ministry, sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pay attention to the things He stressed, and the O.T. scriptures He related to Himself and put to use for every dialogue with disciples and detractors. This is where your cross-references will come in handy.
- J. Go back and read the rest of Genesis, then Exodus (where the Law Covenant was given to Israel). Then read through the rest of the New Testament, but do not get hung up on difficult figurative and prophetic portions like the Book of Revelation. Let the plain information lay the groundwork for good understanding and build upon that.
- K. Pay particular attention to the Pauline epistles. Above all writers of Scripture, Paul has the clearest understanding of the mystery of God in Christ and sets forth the best example of how to live as a Christian.