

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Lesson 1

History and Organization of the Bible

- The word *Bible* comes from the Greek word *biblion*, meaning “book.”
- The Bible is a book made up of 66 books and is broken into two testaments, the Old and the New. The birth of Jesus Christ signified the beginning of the New Testament.
- Forty different men wrote the 66 books of the Bible over a period of 1,600 years, through 40 generations of mankind.
- The writers had various backgrounds and educational upbringings, including kings, priest, prophets, judges, shepherds, fishermen, scholars, statesmen, poets, even a medical doctor.
- The Bible was not divided into chapters until 1228 AD.
- The Old Testament was divided into verses in 1488 AD, followed by the New Testament in 1551. (This is important to keep in mind when you study the Bible, for the Bible was not written with chapter headings.)

The Bible is not arranged chronologically, but categorically. The Old Testament can be broken down into five categories:

Law: The first five books were written by Moses and are collectively called the Torah by the Jews, or the Pentateuch. These books cover the creation of man to the giving of the Law to the Jews, or about 1600 years. These include:

- **Genesis-** The Book of Beginnings. This book covers from the creation of man until Israel settles and begins to flourish in Egypt.
- **Exodus-** This is a continuation of the story of God’s people that left off in Genesis. Exodus includes both the historical aspects of the Exodus and the giving of the Law by Jehovah to Moses on Mount Sinai.
- **Leviticus-** Leviticus establishes the rules and regulations for Israel’s religious leaders, the Levites and priests.
- **Numbers-** The Book of Numbers is a historical book that documents some of the experiences of Israel while they were in the wilderness.
- **Deuteronomy-** Deuteronomy is also called the Second Giving of the Law. It can be thought of as a refresher course given before Moses dies.

History: These books cover the history of Israel, from the entering into the Promised Land, through the times of the judges and kings, into Babylonian Captivity, and then the partial return from that captivity. About 1,100 years of history are covered. These books include:

- **Joshua-** Tells the story of Joshua’s leadership as he led Israel into the Promised Land.
- **Judges-** Covers the lives of the judges that preceded Joshua after his death. This

book covers about 400 years of history and the leadership of the Twelve Judges as Israel settled Canaan, also known as the Promised Land.

- **Ruth**- This book is the history of the family of Elimelech during the time of the judges. It tells the story of a widow who leaves all to serve the God of Israel. The story of Ruth is a foreshadowing of Christ's redemption.
- **I & 2 Samuel**- These two books cover the lives of Samuel, the last judge; Saul, Israel's first king; and David, Israel's second and most famous king.
- **I & 2 Kings**- These two books cover the history of the kings from the end of King David's reign until the Babylonian Captivity.
- **I & 2 Chronicles**- These two books cover the history of the kings beginning with the end of King Saul's reign until the Babylonian Captivity.
- **Ezra**-Ezra and Nehemiah are considered to be one book by the Jews. They tell the story of the men that began the return to Jerusalem from Exile to begin the rebuilding of Israel. Ezra was a scribe and priest who brought back some of the Israelites from captivity.
- **Nehemiah**- Nehemiah returned from Exile to rebuild the wall around the now completed Temple that Zerubbabel rebuilt.
- **Esther**- This book covers part of the history of Israel's 70 years of captivity. Esther was a Jewess who won the heart of the Persian King, Xerxes, and became queen. This book reveals God's faithfulness to Israel during their exile from Israel.

Poetry: These are called the books of poetry because of some of their writing styles. They include:

- **Job**- Job is the oldest book of the Bible and records the tragedies that befell Job at the hand of Satan. In the end, Job is healed and his wealth is restored. Job was not an Israelite. He only knew God by His name, "The Almighty."
- **Psalms**- This is a collection of "praises" that were originally set to music. David is the author of most the Psalms; however, other authors did contribute. Studying the Psalms will teach you how to relate to God.
- **Proverbs**- This is a collection of maxims, parables, or proverbs given to produce wisdom in the reader. Solomon was the author. Studying Proverbs will fill you with wisdom and teach you how to relate to people.
- **Ecclesiastes**- This is a collection of proverbs given by Solomon after his life fell apart in sin. These tend to have a darker tone as Solomon was reflecting on how nothing in life really matters if you don't have God in your life.
- **Song of Solomon**- Also called **Canticles**; this is a poetic book that discusses romantic love and marital intimacy.

Major Prophets: These books reveal God calling His people back to Himself through His prophets. Isaiah succeeded, Jeremiah did not. Ezekiel and Daniel prophesied from captivity. These prophecies were not just limited to their day. Many of the prophets foresaw the coming Messiah and even the Church Age. These books include:

- **Isaiah**- Prophesied for 40 years during the reign of King Hezekiah (740-701 B.C.).

- **Jeremiah**- Prophesied for 40 years, from before the Exile and into the Exile (626-586 B.C.).
- **Lamentations**- These are Jeremiah's observations of and mourning for the ransacking of Jerusalem after the invasions by foreign armies.
- **Ezekiel**- Prophesied from captivity for about 22 years (592-570 B.C.).
- **Daniel**- Prophesied from captivity as prominent governor of Babylon. His visions and prophecies foresaw thousands of years of history to come.

Minor Prophets: These books continue to demonstrate God's desire to have His people serve Him. These are considered "minor" prophets because the books are shorter in length, not because of their significance. They are:

- **Hosea**- Prophesied during the time of King Jeroboam II (781-711 B.C.). He prophesied against the northern kingdom's sin and their moral decline.
- **Joel**- The time of Joel's prophesy is not specifically known, perhaps as early as 850 B.C. (King Joash) or even after the return from Babylon (500 B.C.).
- **Amos**- Prophesied during the days of King Uzziah (750-740 B.C.).
- **Obadiah**- Prophesied the fall of Edom during the reign of King Jehoram (848-844 B.C.).
- **Jonah**- Prophesied during the time of King Jeroboam II (853-824 B.C.). Jonah was sent to preach repentance to the Gentile city of Nineveh. Jonah shows us God's love for the entire world.
- **Micah**- Prophesied during the time of King Hezekiah (772-722 B.C.). Micah prophesied against sin and foretold the judgment to befall Israel and Samaria.
- **Nahum**- Prophesied against Nineveh about 100 years after Jonah (786-757 B.C.). Nineveh apparently only repented for a season.
- **Habakkuk**- Prophesied during the time of either King Josiah or King Jehoiakim (About 600 B.C.). He prophesied against Judah's sin and that punishment would come by the hands of the Chaldeans.
- **Zephaniah**- Prophesied during the time of King Josiah (639-608 B.C.) of the impending judgment coming to Israel for her sins.
- **Haggai**- Prophesied and preached during the time of Ezra (520 B.C.) and encouraged Zerubbabel to keep rebuilding the Temple. Haggai is called a prophet of restoration.
- **Zechariah**- Prophesied and preached during the time of Ezra (520-518 B.C.). Zechariah is called a prophet of restoration.
- **Malachi**- Prophesied about 550 B.C. His major theme was honoring God. Malachi is called a prophet of restoration. After his writings, the heavens were sealed until Jesus Christ.

The New Testament can be broken down into five categories:

Gospels: These are the books that document the life of Jesus Christ, covering approximately 33 years. They include **Matthew, Mark, Luke, John**. The Gospel according

to St. Matthew was the first to be written in about 37 A.D. Mark and Luke's gospels were written about 60 A.D. Many believe Luke's gospel to be Peter's account. John's gospel was written last in about 90 A.D.

History: *Acts (of The Apostles)* is only historical book in the NT. It chronicles the history of the early Church, covers a period of approximately 30 years and was written by Luke.

Pauline Epistles: These are letters that Paul wrote to the many churches he established and pastored for a season. The books of Timothy, Titus, and Philemon are epistles written to those individuals. They establish Church doctrine, protocol, prophesy about the last days, and teach us who we are in Christ Jesus. They include *Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews.*

General Epistles: These are epistles written by apostles other than Paul. They also establish doctrine and include some prophecies about the last days. They include *James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude.*

Prophecy: *The Revelation* is considered by some to be the most "exciting" of the books of the Bible, it can also be the hardest to understand because one must have a good working knowledge of the rest of the Bible in order to somewhat grasp what is being communicated.

Do not be overwhelmed. Obey the letter of Paul to young Timothy and "**study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed . . .**" (2 Timothy 2:15a).

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Lesson 2

Dispensationalism

Dispensationalism is the system of historical progression, as revealed in the Bible, consisting of a system of stages (or dispensations) in God's self-revelation and plan of salvation. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), an Irish Bible teacher, is considered the father of dispensationalism. His teachings were then taken and made popular in America by Cyrus Scofield in the Scofield Reference Bible, and later propagated by modern famed teachers Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye.

The Bible can be broken down into seven dispensations of time. These breakdowns are based on God revealing Himself to man and how He is interacting with man. God never changes, but how He has dealt with man has changed. Each dispensation is marked by an event preventing a return to the former timeframe.

It is critical to understand dispensationalism when studying the Bible so that scriptures can be kept in proper context and doctrine can be accurately developed.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Understanding the various dispensations is key to developing accurate Bible doctrine.
- Dispensationalism will help to sort out the various commandments we keep and don't keep and answer questions like: How come Israel got to kill their enemies and I have to love mine? Why don't we have to offer up animal sacrifices? How could David have multiple wives and it was not considered sin?
- Dispensationalism will help to keep scriptures in proper context. Many scriptures can be easily interpreted when you realize who is being spoken to and in what dispensation.

THE SEVEN DISPENSATIONS

1. **Innocence (Genesis 1:1-3:21)** *From the creation to the fall of man.* We don't know how long this period lasted. Man could not die until sin entered in, so it may have been days, weeks, months, or even years before he rebelled. In this dispensation God revealed His desire to walk with man and to fellowship with him. He also revealed His desire to work with man and even delegate to man authority over the rest of creation.
Transition: Original Sin. Adam and Eve are kicked out. An armed angel prevents Adam and Eve from returning to the garden.
2. **Conscience/Antediluvian (Genesis 3:22-7:33)** *1,656 Years—From the fall of man to the flood.* Man became aware of his nakedness and sinfulness. Here, God began to reveal His plan for salvation. The conflict between Satan and God over man intensifies and the world grows exceedingly wicked until God must send a flood to

destroy sinful man. Man's consciousness of sin is not enough to restrain the sin. He must have a savior.

Transition: Man becomes exceedingly wicked. The great flood destroys the earth. There is no former world for Noah and his family to return to.

3. **Human Government (Genesis 8:20-11:9)** *429 years—From the flood to Abraham.* As the earth repopulates, cities and communities develop along with governments and societies. Babel is the most noted. The early Babylonians, led by King Nimrod, decide to reach God by works (a man-made tower). God confounds the languages and the people are scattered.
Transition: Abram is called out from the world and away from Babel's influence. He is promised a son. He leaves Ur of the Chaldees. Abram can never return to his former life.
4. **Promise (Genesis 11:9-Exodus 19)** *430 years—From Abraham to the giving of the Law.* God calls a man named Abram out of a city called Ur to follow after Him. He promises to make Abram the father of many nations. Abram obeys and Isaac, the promised son, becomes the beginning of a new people: Israel, the lineage through which Jesus Christ will come into the earth. As prophesied, Abraham's seed becomes a great nation while in captivity. Israel cries to God for deliverance and Moses delivers them.
Transition: Abraham's seed flourishes in Egypt for 430 years. Moses and Israel flee Egypt. Egypt is judged. Israel crosses the Red Sea and can never return to slavery.
5. **Law (Exodus 20-Gospels)** *1,524 years—From the giving of the Law until the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* God wanted Israel to be different among the fallen world so He gave them His standard—His Word, in the form of the Law and the Ten Commandments. God related to His people through the Law of Moses. Israel went through many cycles of obeying the Word and then obeying idols. Eventually they were taken captive by their enemies; The Northern Kingdom by Assyria, the Southern Kingdom by Babylon. They remained in slavery for 70 years. Upon returning home to Israel, they became the subjects of the Roman Empire until well after the resurrection of Jesus.
Transition: Jesus is born, crucified, and resurrected. Sin is judged, the Law is fulfilled and the Church is born. We cannot go back under the Law.
6. **Grace/Church Age (Acts 1-present)** *2,000 years—From the Resurrection until the Rapture.* The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are transitional books. They transition mankind from the dispensation of the Law to the dispensation of Grace. Jesus Christ ministered as a prophet under the Law, but prepared the Jews for the Church Age. We are currently in the Church Age, commissioned to go into all the world and preach the Gospel of Salvation to every creature. We are no longer under the Law, but under grace.

Transition: The Church is raptured away to Heaven to be with the LORD and receive glorified bodies. The Church Age ends. The World is judged by God throughout the Tribulation. We cannot return.

7. **Millennial Kingdom/Reign of Christ** *1,000 years—The 1,000 year reign of Christ.* This Millennial Kingdom is Christ's Kingdom. He will reign as King from Jerusalem. His reign will be defined by peace and righteousness. Christians will play varying roles in His Kingdom as rewards for how they lived in the Church dispensation. **Transition:** Satan is judged, the living rebels are judged, and the wicked-dead are judged. Death and Hell are cast into the Lake of Fire. The "ages to come" begin. We will not go back.

THE TRANS-DISPENSATIONAL QUALITIES OF GOD

The following qualities and acts of God can be found in every dispensation; further proving that God does not change, but how He interacts with man, based on how He has revealed Himself to man does change:

- Mercy
- Love
- Forgiveness
- Grace
- Provision
- Communion with man
- Hatred of sin
- Healing
- Deliverance
- Salvation

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Lesson 3

Study Tools and How to Use Them

Many tools are available to the Bible student. Some you may use on a regular basis. Some you may only use occasionally. Some you may never use. It is important that you are familiar with these tools and how to use them.

BIBLE

The most important tool is your Bible.

- Translations: KJV, NAS, NIV, NLT, Amplified, etc. Having different translations in your library can help you understand what is being communicated.
- Study Bibles- These Bibles have notes and commentaries built in to them. Commentaries are another man's interpretation and may not always be accurate. Several different types of study Bibles are available, e.g., Scofield, Dake, Spirit-Filled, MacArthur, Prophecy, etc.
- Many Bibles contain limited concordances and dictionaries and gazetteers (maps).
- Many Bibles contain cross-referencing margins and footnotes. Make sure you know how to use these valuable tools.

CONCORDANCE

Perhaps the second most valuable study tool is a good concordance. A concordance is a reference book that lists the scriptural addresses for all the words used in the Bible. This tool helps you locate any verse in the Bible if you know the word or words used in the verse.

By far, the most well known concordance on the market is *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. It is set up for the KJV of the Bible. It also contains an abbreviated lexicon for both the Greek and Hebrew.

LEXICON

A lexicon is a dictionary of Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic or other ancient languages. In the case of Bible Lexicons, it is a dictionary defining only the Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic words used in the Bible. There would be no purpose in defining words that are not used in the Bible.

A lexicon separate from Strong's Concordance would be more thorough in its definitions and would therefore be conducive to deeper insight into the original language. While *Strong's* will give you a paragraph of definitions, a thorough lexicon would be likely to give you a page or two of definitions, etymology, and historical uses of the entry word.

HALLEY'S/EERDMAN'S BIBLE HANDBOOK

These Bible handbooks include a concise Bible commentary, important discoveries in

archaeology, related historical data, church history, and maps. It provides a historical background and setting for each book of the Bible. The handbook can be purchased for both the King James Version and the New International Version.

BIBLE DICTIONARY

A Bible Dictionary will give you definitions and even pictures of objects found in the Bible that we as modern-day Christians may have no concept of. What's a chariot? A Bible dictionary will tell you and show you pictures and even give you Bible references to chariots. Cisterns? Fleshhooks? Tabernacles? Hart? Etc. Most have pictures and descriptions to better illustrate the Bible narrative.

COMMENTARIES

Commentaries are volumes of books in which theologians have given their interpretation and explanation for the entire Bible narrative. A commentary is capable of helping a Bible student, but it is also capable of hurting a Bible student. Much care should be taken when reading commentaries for they are admittedly only man's opinion, conjecture, and understanding. Many are written way beyond the understanding of most Christians.

INTERNET

Much of Christendom's understanding, theology, archaeology, and commentary are now online on countless websites. Students of the Word need only ask Google any question and thousands of results can be found. **ONE MASSIVE WORD OF CAUTION:** Just because it's on the Internet doesn't make it true. Be very careful when using the Internet to study the Bible. Useful online tools and apps include *Blue Letter Bible* and *Youversion*.

Now that you have the tools, let's study the Bible!!

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Lesson 4

Hermeneutics (Interpreting the Bible)

Hermeneutics is the theory or science of text interpretation, in our case, the interpretation of biblical texts. Hermeneutics comes from the Greek word *hermeneuo*, meaning *to translate or interpret*. The term is often used synonymously with exegesis or biblical exegesis. Exegesis is limited to a critical interpretation or explanation of texts, whereas hermeneutics includes the interpretation of all forms of communication.

There are five major analyses that can be used in biblical hermeneutics:

- **Lexical-syntactical analysis:** Simple interpretation looks at the words used (lexical) in the verse and how they are used (syntax). This can be an advanced technique usually left to the Bible linguist. A more simple study can be done with a lexicon to determine the full definition of a particular word.
 - **Examples:**
 - Word study on Greek words for love: *agape, philos, eros, etc.*
 - Word study on Greek words for judge: *krino, diakrino, katakrino, anakrino, krisis, etc.*
 - Word study on the triune nature of man: *pnuema, psuche, soma*; then a further word study on the difference between *soma* and *sarx*.
- **Contextual analysis:** You must evaluate a verse in its context to fully interpret its intention. This method will study everything before and after the verse in question, and even look at the overall theme of the chapter and book. Taking a scripture out of context can be very dangerous, e.g., “What you must do, do quickly.”
 - **Examples:**
 - Critical for short passages: “And Jesus wept,” “Remember Lot’s wife,” “Go and do likewise.” etc.
 - Critical for building accurate doctrine: “I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me,” “But if he [thief] be found, he shall restore sevenfold,” “. . . and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold.”
- **Theological analysis:** To completely understand a biblical subject and thereby build doctrine, you must evaluate all of the verses pertaining to it.
 - **At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. Deuteronomy 19:15b**

This can also be called the law of witnesses. This verse is quoted again in **Numbers 35:30; Matthew 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19, and Hebrews 10:28**. These verses teach us that we can’t base doctrine on only one

verse. We must have the witness of at least two or three to establish any word or doctrine. We are to build doctrinal premises based upon text. Too often, however, many doctrines can be described as a premise in search of a text.

○ **Examples:**

- **Communion**- 7 New Testament passages totaling 35 verses. Numerous Old Testament allusions (see Genesis 14:18).
- **Water baptism**- 7 New Testament passages totaling 16 verses. No Old Testament examples.
- **Tongues**- 1 Old Testament passage with 2 verses and 14 New Testament passages totaling 108 verses.

Every biblical doctrine is a beautiful, multi-faceted gem. Each facet (scripture) of the gem (doctrine) is critical to defining the gem and producing the radiance that reflects God's glory.

- **Historical/cultural analysis:** Often the historical or cultural setting must be understood and accounted for to fully understand what the Bible is trying to communicate. If misunderstood, cultures, customs, and social settings can invariably produce erroneous doctrines.
 - **Examples:**
 - Understanding the first century Corinthian culture can help to interpret Paul's insistence that women pray with their heads covered.
 - Understanding the social status of a publican or Roman soldier can help reveal the heart behind what Jesus said to them.
 - Understanding the Levitical code can help reveal the significance of David walking into the Holy of Holies to eat the showbread; while understanding the regional culture of Canaan can help one to appreciate the Levitical call for no shaved heads, growing out one's hair at the sides, and not clipping the corners of your beards.
- **Literary analysis:** The Scriptures are written in several different literary styles. These styles must be kept in mind when seeking to interpret the text. These styles include: histories, prophecies, narratives, poetry, psalms, and letters. Furthermore, these literary styles themselves incorporate allegory (parables), metaphors (*under his wings thou shalt trust*), similes (*your neck is like an ivory tower*), figurative language (*the young lions and the adders*) and literal language (*In my name they shall cast out devils*).

See Henry A. Virkler's *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (1981) for a deeper study on Biblical Hermeneutics.

Trajectory Hermeneutics (WARNING**)**
(AKA: Redemptive-movement hermeneutics)

Trajectory hermeneutics is an exegetical approach that seeks to interpret the Bible voice as a progressive trajectory that, in the end, requires the Scriptures to be interpreted in light of modern culture. In essence, this approach endeavors to calculate the trajectory (direction and velocity) the Bible narrative and doctrines were headed (read: evolving) when the canon was closed and then extrapolates its landing site and presumed target. The current end result is the approval of modern sin-fads.

In its interpretive method, Trajectory Hermeneutics is the opposite of the historical interpretive device known as *modernism*, but produces the same result. Modernism erroneously endeavors to interpret historical events and people through the filter and understanding of the current cultural climate. Modernism assumes man's heart stays the same. Trajectory Hermeneutics assumes God's heart changes. In the end, both work to promote and justify modern perversion. They are both promoted by the spirit of the world.

Trajectory hermeneutics, or "redemptive-movement hermeneutics" as it is sometimes called, is the predominant framework used by those who would argue that we should not obey all New Testament instructions, since God's "ultimate ethic" is beyond what the text actually says. In essence, "we should wait to see where this thing shall land."

Stick with the Bible and study it to know God!!

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Lesson 5

The Nitty Gritty

First and foremost, our primary motive for studying the Bible must be to know God.

- **Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15**

Do not be intimidated by the Bible. Often the size of its sheer volume can be overwhelming. Questions like “Where do I begin?,” “Will I be able to understand it?,” or “Will I ever know as much as the preacher?” often hinder believers.

Be encouraged! The author of the Bible—GOD—lives in you and He has promised to lead you and guide you in to all truth. The Word is truth, so you can expect Him to lead and guide you through the Bible and speak to you through it.

The Bible is God speaking to us. Let us study what He is speaking. Study for no other reason, but to know God.

Studying is different from reading. Just because you have read the Bible does not mean you have actually studied any of it.

- Reading passes time. Reading makes you well-read.
- Studying takes time. Studying makes you a workman.

THREE NEEDFUL INGREDIENTS

Effective Bible study takes three elements:

1. **Mental Assertion**- You can't just “mindlessly” read the words on the page. You must be actively engaging your mind into what you are reading. No dozing off.
2. **Self-discipline**- Only you can discipline yourself. Improvement and advancement comes one day at a time. Here a little, there a little. Let your Bible study be as important to you as eating, sleeping, bathing, etc.
3. **Time**- Bible Study takes time. You must make time for it. If you do not make time for it, the world will make sure you are always too busy for it.

STUDY TECHNIQUES

There are three main ways in which you can study the Bible:

1. **Topically** - This may be the easiest way to study the Bible. To study the Bible topically means that you research a particular topic in the Bible such as:
 - Doctrinal topics like salvation, forgiveness, healing, demons, etc.
 - Characters like King David, Samson, Rahab, Paul, etc.
 - Events like the Exodus, the Flood, the construction of the Temple, etc.

This method of Bible study can have you searching the entire Bible for different scriptures related to your topic of interest. This will require the use of the extra-biblical tools covered in Lesson 3. This style of study can make you a veritable expert on any given topic. As you study multiple topics, you'll begin to build your knowledge database of the heart of God concerning the things of life and godliness.

2. **Exegetically** - This is a fancy word that simply means the student studies a passage of scripture and interprets it. The passage could be:
 - three or four verses in a row
 - a whole chapter
 - a whole book of the Bible

When you're done with an exegetical study, you'll have a good understanding of that particular passage of scriptures, its context, its meaning, its setting, etc. New Testament epistles or portions of the epistles make for good exegetical studies.

3. **Textual** - This type of study means that the Bible student only focuses on one verse. Perhaps a certain verse really has you stumped, or you perceive there's more to it than what you currently understand. You may want to stop and thoroughly study that one verse. You may have to dissect the words used with the help of a lexicon, or you may be able to find a similar verse and compare the two. This type of Bible study is often incorporated into the other two types.

WHAT IS THE GOAL?

The goal of any and all Bible study is to get to know our God better and to have Him reveal Himself to us by His Holy Spirit through the Bible. When God supernaturally reveals something to us during our Bible study, we call that "revelation." Personal revelation is the act of God revealing to someone something they had never seen before. We may have read a particular verse 50 times before and had never "seen it." But on that 51st reading, a light came on within us, and we saw something we had never seen before. Revelation is part of the reward of seeking God and studying His Word.

NOTES, NOTES, and more NOTES

Make sure you write things down. Take notes. Write down your questions when you study. "Who is Tychicus?" "Why did Saul send the ark back?" Great biblical insight comes from asking God questions. Good Bible study produces lots and lots of notes.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

The Gospel of John, Ephesians, or 1 John are good starting places for the new students. After that, what topics interest you? What characters? Let God lead you.