

Knowing Your Bible

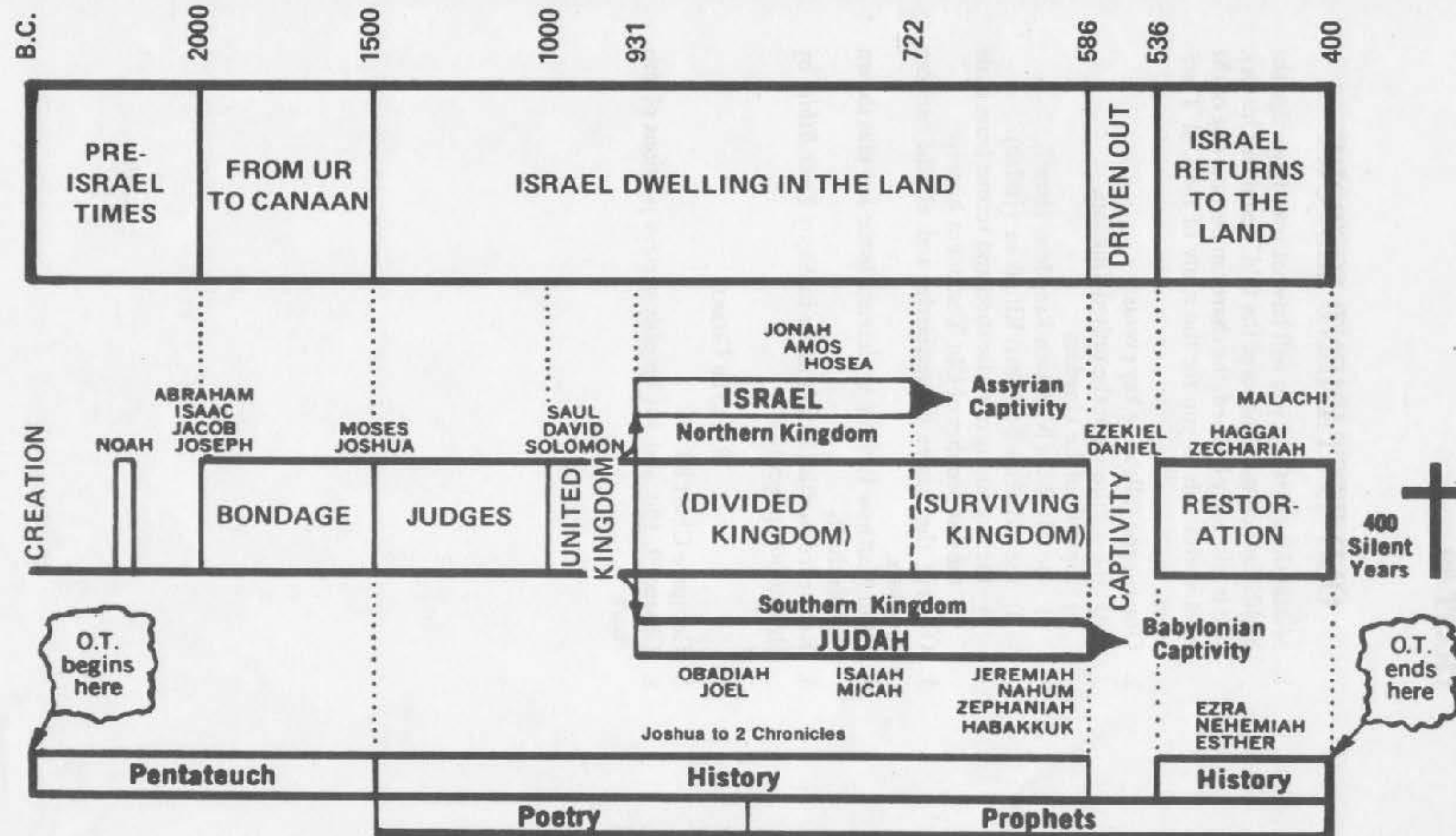
A QUICK AND HISTORICAL GUIDE TO NAVIGATING
THROUGH THE BIBLE

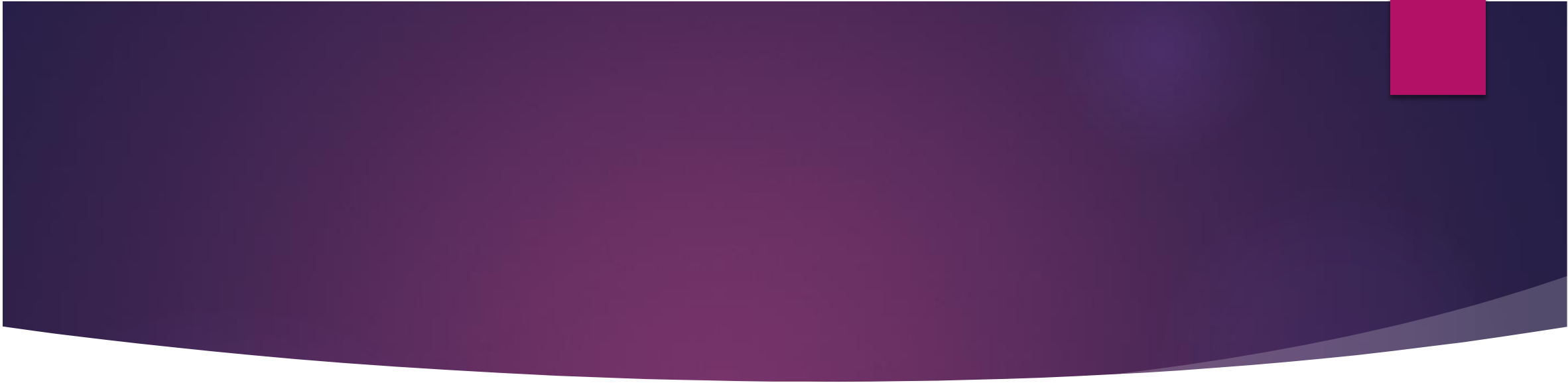
REV. LISA MAYE

The Story of God

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

Chart 89



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- ❖ **66 Books**
 - ❖ **Divided into Old and New Testaments**
 - ❖ **Different forms of writing**
 - ❖ **Different versions: New International Version (NIV), King James Version (KJV), New King James Version (NKJV), English Standard Version (ESV), etc.**

The Old Testament:

5 Books of the Law (Genesis to Deuteronomy)

12 Books of Israel's History (Joshua to Esther)

- ❖ 5 Books of Wisdom and Poetry: (*Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*)
- ❖ 5 Major Prophets: (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel)
- ❖ 12 Minor Prophets: (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Miah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

“Major/Minor” prophets refers to size of book not to importance.

The New Testament

5 Books of History

- ❖ 4 Gospels of Jesus Christ
- ❖ Acts of the Apostles

21 Epistles (Romans to Jude)

1 Prophecy (Revelation)

DIVISIONS OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

Chart 87

5 LAW

—TORAH—

GENESIS
EXODUS
LEVITICUS
NUMBERS
DEUTERONOMY

8 PROPHETS

—NEBIMIM—

4 FORMER

JOSHUA
JUDGES
SAMUEL
KINGS

4 LATTER

ISAIAH
JEREMIAH
EZEKIEL
THE TWELVE

MAJOR
MINOR

11 WRITINGS

—KETHUBHIM—

3

PSALMS
PROVERBS
JOB

POETICAL

5

SONG OF SOLOMON
RUTH
LAMENTATIONS
ECCLESIASTES
ESTHER

THE FIVE ROLLS

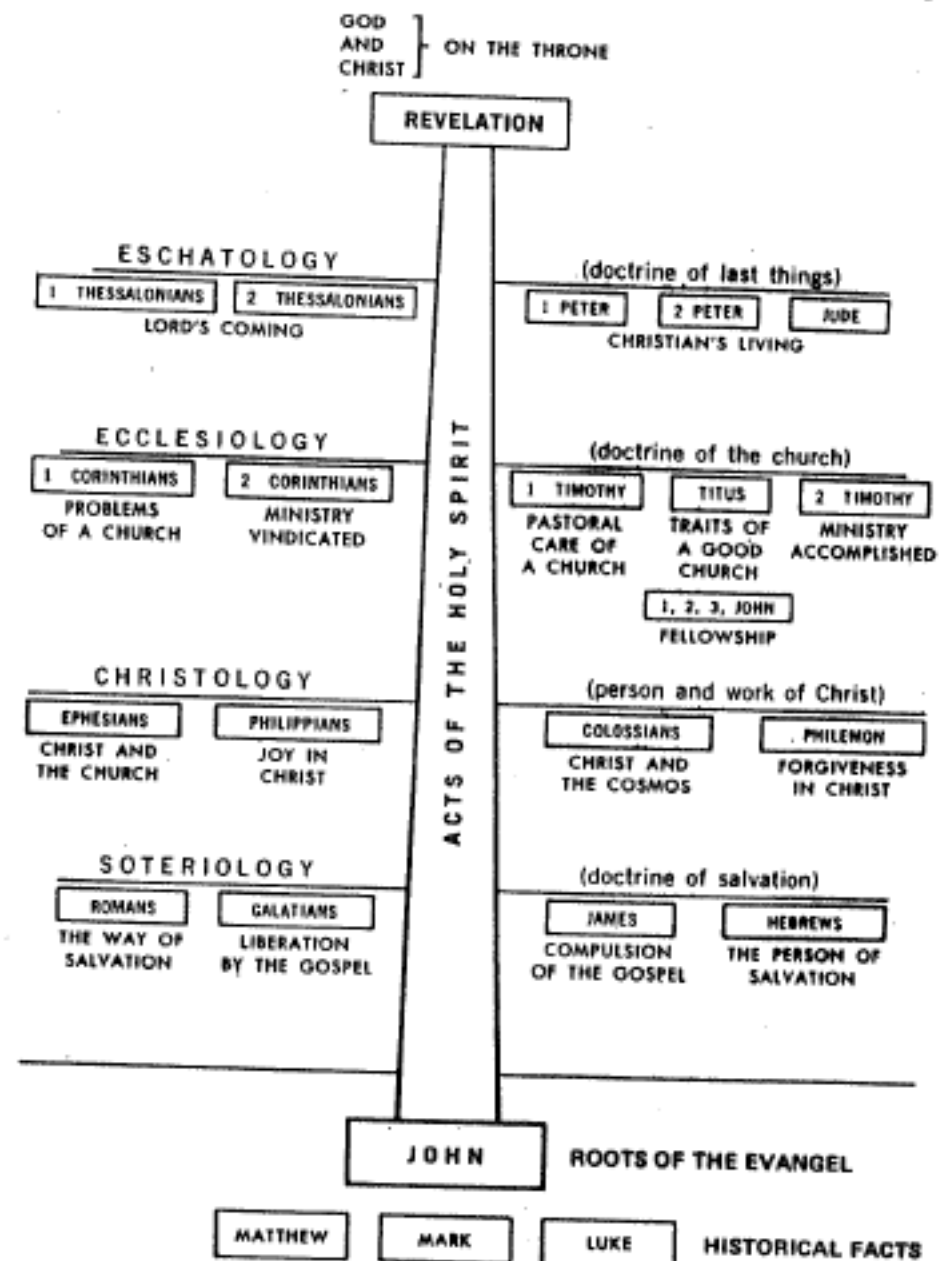
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3

DANIEL
EZRA-NEHEMIAH
CHRONICLES

HISTORICAL

MAIN SUBJECTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS



How We Got the Bible (1500 BC-AD 1881)

- ▶ **1500 BC** God tells Moses to write down the Law for the people. The first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) are called the "Law of Moses." Written in Hebrew.
- ▶ **1500-400 BC** Books of history, prophecy, and poetry are written by Samuel, King David, King Solomon, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Amos, and others, in Hebrew (portions in Aramaic).
- ▶ **1500-400 BC** Scribes copy books as originals wear out.
- ▶ **450? BC** Ezra collects and arranges the books, according to Jewish tradition. These books make up the Hebrew Scriptures also called the "Old Testament."
- ▶ **250-100 BC** Hebrew Scriptures translated into Greek by Jewish scholars. This Greek translation is called the Septuagint, meaning "seventy," for the tradition that 70--or 72-men translated it.

How We Got the Bible (1500 BC-AD 1881) con't.

- ▶ **100 BC -AD 100?** Dead Sea Scrolls: copies of portions of Old Testament books and other writings are sealed in *clay* jars and hidden in caves.
- ▶ **6? BC-AD 30?** Life of Jesus
- ▶ **AD 45?-100** Jesus' followers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, Jude, and James, write letters and historical accounts to churches and friends throughout the Roman Empire. ***They quote from all but eight of the Old Testament books.***
- ▶ **AD 100-500** The writings of Jesus' followers are copied and translated from Greek into other languages and spread across the world as far as India and China.
- ▶ **AD 200-300** Christianity reaches Britain.

How We Got the Bible (1500 BC-AD 1881) con't.

- ▶ **AD 250-350** Church fathers accept the writings of the Gospels and Paul's letters as canonical (from a Greek word referring to the rule of faith and truth). The Council of Carthage lists 27 books as authentic. These 27 books make up the New Testament today.
- ▶ **AD325** Codex Vaticanus: A fine, early handmade copy of nearly all of the Bible. It has resided in the Vatican Library from 1481 and was released to scholars in the late 1800s.
- ▶ **AD350** Codex Smaiticus: **A** fine, early handmade copy of all of the New Testament and part of the Old Testament. It was discovered in 1844 in St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai by Constantin VonTischendorf, and acquired in 1859.

How We Got the Bible (1500 BC-AD 1881) con't.

- ▶ **AD410** Jerome is commissioned by Pope Damasus to translate the Bible into Latin. This translation is called the Latin Vulgate and took 22 years to complete. It is the Bible used for the next 1000 years.
- ▶ **AD430** Patricius (St. Patrick) evangelizes Ireland.
- ▶ **AD 450-600** Roman Empire falls. Angles and Saxons overrun Britain. Pope Gregory sends missionaries.
- ▶ **AD 500-900** Jewish scribes, the Masoretes, develop a meticulous system of counting words to insure the accuracy of each copy of the Hebrew Scriptures.
- ▶ **AD 676?** Caedmon, a monk, paraphrases portions of scripture into Old English (Anglo-Saxon).

How We Got the Bible (1500 BC-AD 1881) con't.

- ▶ **AD 735?** Bede, a monk and scholar, makes a common English translation of portions of scripture for uneducated monks who cannot read Latin.
- ▶ **AD 1382** First whole Bible in English is translated from Latin and named the Wycliffe Bible, after John Wycliffe, Oxford theologian and preacher.
- ▶ **AD 1408** It becomes illegal to translate the Bible into common English without permission.
- ▶ **AD 1455 First printed book!** Gutenberg prints Latin Bible.
- ▶ **AD 1516** Erasmus, priest and Greek scholar, publishes a new Greek translation of the New Testament.

How We Got the Bible (1500 BC-AD 1881) con't.

- ▶ **AD 1525** William Tyndale, a Cambridge scholar, translates New Testament from Greek. The Bible is printed in *Germany* and smuggled into England. Tyndale is strangled and burned at the stake for heresy in 1536.
- ▶ **AD 1535** The Coverdale Bible, the first printing of the complete English Bible.
- ▶ **AD 1537** The Matthew's Bible is the first Bible to receive the king's permission. The New Testament is almost an exact copy of Tyndale's. Printed by his friend John Rogers (pen name "Thomas Matthew").

How We Got the Bible (1500 BC-AD 1881) con't.

- ▶ **AD 1539** The Great Bible. Also called the 'chained Bible" because copies were chained to church pillars to avoid theft.
- ▶ **AD 1555** Queen Mary Tudor outlaws English Bible versions by Protestants. Persecutes Protestant leaders.
- ▶ **AD 1560** Geneva Bible. Hundreds of people flee to Switzerland to avoid persecution. A new English translation is printed in Geneva, and contains theological notes by Protestant scholars.
- ▶ **AD 1568** The Bishops Bible is translated in answer to the Geneva Bible, but with "no bitter notes."

How We Got the Bible (1500 BC-AD 1881) con't.

- ▶ **AD 1582/1609** The Rheims-Douai Version becomes the official English translation of the Catholic church.
- ▶ **AD 1611** King James Version. James I commissions 54 scholars to translate a Bible without theological notes. The scholars used the Bishops Bible and Greek and Hebrew texts.
- ▶ **AD 1881** Revised Version, a revision of the King James, reflecting linguistic and manuscript discoveries.
- ▶ **AD 1850-present** Many new English translations. Dead Sea Scrolls discovered (earliest portions of the Old Testament), prove remarkable reliability of the transmission of the Old Testament.

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

Historical Information:

1. Authorship - Ex. Mark, all available testimony from the early church fathers place Mark as the attendant of Peter. (Acts 12:12; 1 Pet. 5:13) The background information you gain about the author will help you to understand his style of writing and give you insight into God's methods of calling men into service. i.e., Paul

2. Date - Dates will help you to fit the events recorded into its historical context. This gives us a clearer view of God working in human history to bring about His will.

3. Where the book was written - Ex. Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians were all written by Paul when he was in prison.

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

Historical Information:

4. Who was the book written to - The better we understand the people that the book was given to, we will better understand the contents of the book. Ex. Romans and Galatians

5. The conditions that prompted the writing - This will disclose much about the books' meaning and shed light on difficult passages. Ex. The city of Corinth was one of wealth, luxury and immorality.

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

II. Form of the writing:

1. History - What was the historical background?

- ▶ What actually happened?
- ▶ Who was involved?

2. Law - Is the message moral law, dealing with matters of behavior?

- ▶ Is the passage social or state law?
- ▶ Is the passage domestic law, dealing with matters of hygiene?
- ▶ Is the passage religious law, dealing with worship & sacrifice?
- ▶ What was the main aim of the law at the time it was given?
- ▶ Was it superseded in the New Testament? If so, what was the principle involved?

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

3. Poetry- Is it a drama?

- ▶ Does it express one person's feelings that we can share?
- ▶ Is it highly symbolical?
- ▶ Is the language from the worship or the history of Israel? If so, what is referred to?
- ▶ Is there a historical setting which will help us understand the poem?
- ▶ Is there repetition or contrast within the poem? If so, what emphasis is being made?

4. Proverbs - Is it a saying that can stand alone or is there a common theme?

- ▶ Is it a witty comment on life?
- ▶ Is it a statement of what happens as a general rule?
- ▶ Is it expressing the situation of man without God?

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

5. Prophecy - What was the historical background?

- ▶ Is the language highly symbolical? If so, what is the imagery taken from? Does the author himself provide the meanings to the symbols within his writing?
- ▶ What was the original purpose of the prophecy in its time?
- ▶ What is the universal principle involved?
- ▶ Are there specific claims to its fulfillment in the New Testament?

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

6. Parable - Was the parable told to answer a question or to illustrate a point?

- ▶ What was the one main point of the parable?
- ▶ Are the details given meaning in the passage itself, or are the details just part of the story?
- ▶ Is there an explanation of the parable given?

7. Letters - What was the purpose of the letter?

- ▶ What was the argument or theme of the book as a whole?
- ▶ How does each passage fit into this theme?

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

III. Word Study

- ▶ 1. Because we are dealing with material that is nearly 2000 years old or older, the precise meaning of some words can be vague as it is so far removed from our present day. So we must question what the historical meaning of the word was when it was spoken. Ex. "Eye of the needle" (Mt. 19:24; Mk. 10:25)
- ▶ 2. Because we do not read our bible in the original language that it was written in, we must rely on translations. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in Greek. It is helpful to use a present day recognized literal translation of the scriptures. This will shed light on words that appear contradictory or vague. Ex. The word "tempt" in Gen. 22:1 (KJV) should read "test". It is the same Hebrew word used in 1 Sam. 17:39 (Proved). This solves any problems with James 1:13.

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

IV. Grammatical:

- ▶ 1. The meaning of a word depends not only on what it is in itself but on its relationship with other words and the other sentences which form its context.
- ▶ 2. Look for the literal meaning of the words and phrases in a normal natural reading.
- ▶ 3. Avoid looking for hidden and symbolic meanings. ***Historical note:** The dark ages of history began when the Bible held ONLY hidden and symbolic meanings that only the "learned" or "spiritual" understood. The scriptures were written for all men true meaning can be found by any one who will turn to God and honestly search for Him with their whole heart. (Jer. 29:13) Literal interpretation is the check upon all irresponsible interpretation whether it be found in history or in some contemporary cult.
- ▶ 4. The grammatical method pays very strict attention to the context of a passage.

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

IV. Grammatical:

- ▶ 5. Remember to also look at the context of the Old Testament or New Testament, the context of the book, the context of the chapter, and the context of the paragraph.
- ▶ 6. Cultural elements: references to persons, events, social practices, geography (cities, towns, rivers, mountains) and plants - understanding these elements will help your understanding of the passage. This is not only a matter of learning the particular items in the text, but attempting to RECREATE the political and sociological world of the past.

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

IV. Grammatical:

- ▶ 7. Remember * the writer of scripture had a meaning that was most often literal. He was writing in terms of reality not symbols. The events happened in time and space, to real people in real places.
- ▶ 8. Grammatical interpretation PRECEDES theological interpretation.

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

V. The Scripture is truthful and it does not change:

- ▶ 1. Scripture is truthful:
 - ▶ a. The trustworthiness of God's character. God cannot lie. (Isa. 65:16; Titus 1:2)
 - ▶ b. The consistency of the Holy Spirit. (Heb. 9:14; Malachi 3:6)
 - ▶ c. The teaching of Jesus. (Mat. 5:17f; Jn. 10:35; Heb. 13:8)
- ▶ 2. The Word of God does not change and it is not to be added to or taken away from. It must be accepted as it stands. (Ps. 119:89; Rev. 22:18; Prov. 30:5,6; Deut. 4:2)
- ▶ 3. The Bible is completely without error because it was given to us by God. The very words were guided by God that we may learn from all that He has given us. (2 Tim. 3:16,17)

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

VI. Canonization:

Canon means "rule" or "measuring stick". The books that we have are those that passed the test of authority and authenticity (39 in the O.T. and 27 in the N.T. - see pg.4)

▶ **1. Canonization Criteria:**

- Claims Divine Authorship

- Written by recognized spokesmen for God

- Agrees with previously accepted Revelation

- Universally accepted by believers

▶ **2. Canonization Process:**

- Immediate recognition by believers

- Authentication within other scriptures

- Recognition by Church Fathers of the 1st century

General Principles in How to Understand the Word of God

VII. Application

- All scripture is to bring us into contact with Jesus Christ. (Jn. 5:39,40) If we do not come into contact with the Living God through Jesus Christ and learn to love Him and respond to His love in obedience; we will ever be learning and never come into the knowledge of the Truth, Life or the Way of Salvation. (Jn. 14:6) As we look at scripture, we are searching for more understanding of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we are to live in response to Him. (Ps. 119:59; 2 Tim. 2:15)

Some Questions to Ask:

1. What does the passage mean today?
2. What is an equivalent situation today to that of the original reader?
3. Does the passage have some specific teaching about God, man, the world, the church...?
4. Is there an example to follow, or a warning, or a promise?
5. Is there any action to be taken in light of the passage?
6. Does it lead to prayer or praise?
7. Can we make the writer's words or expressions of feeling our own?
8. What does the passage teach me to believe?
9. What does the passage teach me to become?
10. What does the passage teach me to do?

Citations Noted From:

- ❖ **1996 Rose Publishing Torrance CA – *How We Got The Bible***
- ❖ **Moody Bible Institute of Chicago**
- ❖ **His Love Ministries, Inc.**
- ❖ **The Lockman Foundation**