



The Answer Bible Studies – December 1st, 2005

How to Read Your Bible... and Understand It

Prelude

Why do we study the Bible?

Can you give me any passages which tell us to study the Bible?

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Part One – What is the Bible Anyway?

Let's Brainstorm for a minute... What is the Bible?

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But how do we truly know what the Bible is? Let's look at some proofs of what the Bible is...

- _____ - **2 Timothy 3.16-17** – “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
- _____ - **Matthew 22.29** – “Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.”
- _____ - **John 5.38-40** – “nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”
- _____ – **Acts 17.11** – “Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”

Part Two – Which Bible is the Right Bible?

How do you know which Bible is the “right” Bible to be reading???

- ✓ _____ **Language:** the language being translated from, in this case typically Hebrew, Aramaic, or and Greek
- ✓ _____ **Language:** the language that the text is being translated into, in our case, English
- ✓ _____ **Distance:** This is the amount of time and space which has come between the original text and our present day. It includes but is not exclusively concerning language, metaphors, idioms, and cultural changes.

3 Categories of Translation

- ✓ _____ **Equivalence** – This mode of translation takes the original language (Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek) and translates it as close to Word-for-Word as it can, keeping all the original metaphors and stuff intact. For example, here is a passage from **1 Corinthians 7.36** from the NKJV and the NASB:

“But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry.” (NKJV)

“But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry.” (NASB)

- ✓ _____ **Equivalence** – This method translates close to the Word-for-Word style like the Formal Equivalence, but it will change idioms, metaphors, and cultural differences to make it more understandable .Take the same passage (1 Corinthians 7.36) read from the NIV and the NLT:

“If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married.” (NIV)

“But if a man thinks he ought to marry his fiancée because he has trouble controlling his passions and time is passing, it is all right; it is not a sin. Let them marry.” (NLT)

✓ _____ **Translation** – This method Translates ideas rather than words. It is more concerned with the fact that the reader understands the thinking behind the passage more than it concerns itself with the technical measurements and whatnot. Read the Corinthians passage from *The Message*:

"If a man has a woman friend to whom he is loyal but never intended to marry, having decided to serve God as a "single," and then changes his mind, deciding he should marry her, he should go ahead and marry. It's no sin; it's not even a "step down" from celibacy, as some say." (The Message)

Each translation has its faults and shortcomings. KJV, NIV, NLT, *The Message*, all of them! They all fall short because it is fallen humans who are doing the translating. But most have a lot to offer, so read as many as you can!

Part Three – The Real Technical Stuff

Exegesis

Hermeneutics

There are lots of helpful tools for you to use if you want to truly study and perform exegesis and hermeneutics successfully. Commentaries and Bible Dictionaries are great resources and are of great use to us young scholars today.