

Hermeneutics:

Principles of Bible

Interpretation

Part 2 of 2

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Interpreting Figures of Speech

I. Figures of Speech

A. *A definition* The laws of grammar describe how words normally function. In some cases, however, the speaker or writer purposely sets aside those laws to use new forms, forms we call figures of speech. As Bullinger wrote, 'A figure is simply a word or a sentence thrown into a peculiar form, different from its original or simplest meaning or use.' Or, in other words, "Figurative speech . . . is a picturesque, out-of-the-ordinary way of presenting literal facts that might otherwise be stated in a normal, plain, ordinary way" (Zuck, p. 147).

B. *Use of figures in the Bible* "The Bible contains hundreds of figures of speech. E.W. Bullinger grouped the Bible's figures of speech into more than 200 categories, giving 8,000 illustrations from the Scriptures, with the table of contents taking 28 pages to list the 200 categories!" (Zuck, p. 143).

C. *Examples*

1. Ex. If we say "It is raining hard," we are using a normal, plain statement. But if we say, "It is raining cats and dogs," we have used a sentence that means the same thing but is an unusual, more colorful way of expressing the same thought.
2. Ex. Calling someone who deceives others "a snake."
3. Ex. Calling your companion "Sweetheart" or "Honey."
4. Ex. "Get off your high horse."
5. Ex. A long pass in football is "a bomb."
6. Ex. "Chicago Bulls"
7. Ex. "He's flipped his lid."
8. Ex. "She has a green thumb."
9. Biblical ex. Jesus is "the lamb of God" (John 1:29).

D. *Why use figures of speech?* (Taken from Zuck, pp. 144-45)

Figurative speech . . . is a picturesque, out-of-the-ordinary way of presenting literal facts that might otherwise be stated in a normal, plain, ordinary way.

1. Adds color and vividness "To say, 'The Lord is my rock' (Ps. 18:2) is a colorful, vivid way of saying the Lord is One on whom I can depend because He is strong and unmovable" (Zuck, p. 144). Figures of speech express truths in vivid and interesting ways.
2. Attracts Attention "A listener or reader immediately perks up because of the uniqueness of figures of speech. This is evident when Paul wrote, "Watch out for those dogs" (Phil. 3:2), or when James wrote, 'The tongue is a fire' (James 3:6). When a comparison is made between two things that are normally not alike or normally not compared, then surprise occurs" (Ibid. pp. 144-45).
3. Makes the abstract more concrete "Underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27) is certainly more concrete than the statement, "The Lord will take care of you and support you." (Ibid. p. 145)
4. Aids in retention "Hosea's statement, 'The Israelites are. . . like a stubborn heifer' (Hosea 4:16), is more easily remembered than if Hosea had written, 'Israel is terribly stubborn'. . . Figures of speech are used in many languages because they are easily remembered and make indelible impressions" (Ibid.).
5. Abbreviates an idea "They capture and convey the idea in a brief way. Because they are graphic, they eliminate the need for elaborate description. They say a lot in a little. The well-known metaphor, 'The Lord is my Shepherd' (Ps. 23:1), conveys briefly many ideas about the Lord's relationship to His own" (Ibid.).

E. *Figures of speech consistent with the literal method of interpretation* It must be remembered that figures of speech convey literal truths and, therefore, do not argue against a literal interpretation of the Bible. "Behind every figure of speech is a literal meaning, and by means of the historical-grammatical exegesis of the text, these literal meanings are to be sought out" (Earl Radmacher). To argue for a mystical, allegorical or spiritualizing method to interpreting Scripture based on figures of speech is fallacious. "Figurative language then is not antithetical to literal interpretation; it is a part of it. Perhaps it is better not to speak of 'figurative versus literal' interpretation, but of 'ordinary-literal' versus 'figurative-literal' interpretation" (Zuck, p. 147).

1. Ex. Herod a fox Jesus, in calling Herod a "fox," (Luke 13:32) could have said, "Herod is sly and cunning." But by using "fox" He conveyed the same literal truth in more vivid terms.
2. Ex. Revelation Many want to spiritualize the book of Revelation and other portions of Scripture because of the many symbols used. But, even in apocalyptic literature, each symbol conveys a literal truth.

II. Examples of figures of speech

A. *Simile* "A simile is a comparison in which one thing explicitly (by using *like* or *as*) resembles another" (Zuck, p. 148).

1. Ex. "All men are like grass" (1 Pet. 1:24).
2. Ex. "And he will be like a tree. . . ." (Psalm 1:3).
3. Ex. "And his feet were like burnished bronze" (Rev. 1:15).

B. *Metaphor* "A comparison in which one thing is, acts like, or represents another (in which the two are basically unlike). In a metaphor the comparison is implicit, whereas in a simile it is explicit. A clue to identifying a metaphor is that the verb will always be in the form of "to be" ("is," "are," "were," "have been")" (Zuck, p. 149).

1. Ex. "All flesh is grass" (Isa. 40:6, KJV).
2. Ex. "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).

Anthropomorphism—The attributing of human features or actions to God.

C. *Hypocatastasis* A comparison in which the likeness is implied by a direct naming.

1. Ex. "Dogs have surrounded me" (Ps. 22:16).
2. Ex. "Look, the Lamb of God" (John 1:29).

D. *Personification* The ascribing of human characteristics or actions to inanimate objects or ideas or to animals.

1. Ex. "The moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed" (Isa. 24:23).
2. Ex. "And all the trees of the field will clap their hands" (Isa. 55:12).

E. *Anthropomorphism* The attributing of human features or actions to God.

1. Ex. God's fingers (Ps. 8:3)
2. Ex. God's ear (Ps. 31:2)
3. Ex. God's eyes (2 Chron. 16:9)
4. Ex. "So the Lord changed His mind. . . ." (Exodus 32:14).

F. *Apostrophe* "Addressing a thing as if it were a person, or an absent or imaginary person as if he were present" (Hendricks, p. 266).

1. Ex. "O death, where is your victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55).
2. Ex. "Listen, O Earth, and all who are in it" (Micah 1:2).

G. *Hyperbole* "A hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration, in which more is said than is literally meant, in order to add emphasis" (Zuck, p. 154). A common example: "I told him a thousand times to clean up his room."

1. Ex. "The cities are large and fortified to heaven" (Deut. 1:28).
2. Ex. "Every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears" (Ps. 6:6).
3. Ex. David said of Saul and Jonathan after their deaths, "They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions" (2 Sam. 1:23)

H. *Euphemism* This is the substituting of an inoffensive or mild expression for an offensive or personal one. In English we speak euphemistically of death by saying that a person "passed on," or 'went home.' For example, the Bible refers to death for the believer as a falling asleep (Acts 7:60; 1 Thess. 4:13-15).

III. Interpreting Figures of Speech "Generally an expression is figurative when it is out of character with the subject discussed, or is contrary to fact, experience, or observation" (Zuck, p. 145).

- A. *Use the literal sense unless there is some good reason not to* "If the literal sense makes common sense, seek no other sense." For example, "When John wrote that 144,000 will be sealed, with 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel, there is no reason not to take those numbers in their normal, literal sense (see Rev. 7:4-8). And yet in the following verse John referred to "the Lamb" (v.9), clearly a reference to Jesus Christ, not an animal, as indicated by John 1:29" (Zuck, p. 146).
- B. *Use the figurative sense when the passage indicates doing so* "Some passages tell you up front that they involve figurative imagery. For instance, whenever you come across a dream or a vision, you can expect to find symbolic language because that's the language of dreams" (Hendricks, p. 260) (Exs. Daniel 2, 7, 8, 11; Ezek. 1; Revelation).
- C. *Use the figurative sense if a literal meaning is impossible or absurd* "This is where we need some sanctified common sense. God does not shroud Himself in unknowable mysticism. When He wants to tell us something, He tells us. He doesn't confound us with nonsense. However, He often used symbolism to make His points. Yet He expects us to read them as symbols, not absurdities" (Hendricks, p. 261). Examples include, the Lord having wings (Ps. 57:1) or trees clapping their hands (Isa. 55:12).
- D. *Use the figurative sense if a literal meaning would involve something immoral* For example, since it would be cannibalistic to eat the flesh of Jesus and to drink His blood, He obviously was speaking figuratively (John 6:53-58).
- E. *Use the figurative sense if the expression is an obvious figure of speech* The biblical text often signals its use of figures of speech by terms such as "like" or "as" For example, "Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion" (Prov. 11:22).

Interpreting Parables

I. Introduction to Parables

- A. *Where does the term “parable” come from?* “The Greek word is a compound of two words, *para* (beside) and *ballo* (to throw or cast). The idea, then, is that facts in one realm which the hearers know are cast alongside facts in the spiritual realm so that they will see, by analogy or correspondence, what is true in this realm” (Rosscup, p. 82).
- B. *Definition* A parable is a true-to-life story that illustrates a spiritual truth. “Thus, a parable is something placed alongside something else for the purpose of comparison. The typical parable uses a common event of natural life to emphasize or clarify an important spiritual truth” (Virkler, pp. 162-63).
- C. *Used by Jesus* “Jesus, the master teacher, used parables regularly as He taught. The Greek word for parable occurs nearly fifty times in the synoptic gospels in connection with His ministry, suggesting that parables were one of His favorite teaching devices” (Virkler, p. 163).
- D. *Purpose of parables*
1. To conceal truth from those who would not believe (Matt. 13:10-12)
 2. To reveal truth to believers (Matt. 13:10-12) “While these purposes may seem contradictory, the answer to this dilemma may lay in the nature of the hearers. Since the teachers of the Law had already demonstrated their unbelief and rejection of Jesus, they revealed the hardened condition of their hearts. This made them unable to comprehend the meaning of His parables. Blinded by unbelief, they rejected Him, and so as He spoke in parables they normally would not comprehend their meaning. On the other hand His followers, open to Him and His truths, would understand the parables.” (Zuck, p. 197) “It may be that as a man resists truth and yields to sin, he becomes less and less able to understand spiritual truth. Thus the same parables that brought insight to faithful believers were without meaning to those who were hardening their hearts against the truth” (Virkler, pp. 164-65).
 3. To give new truth concerning the Kingdom “If Bible students do not recognize the emphasis on the kingdom in the parables, they overlook an important key to understanding those stories and why Jesus told them” (Zuck, p. 211).

II. Guidelines for interpreting parables

- A. *Note the story’s natural meaning* “To understand the spiritual truth properly, it is essential first to comprehend fully the true-to-life incident. . . . As you understand the true-to-life incident of the parable in its full cultural setting, you are better prepared to understand the message of the parable” (Zuck, p. 211).

What is a Parable?

Examples “A fishing net, a vineyard, a wedding banquet, oil lamps, talents of money, a fig tree still barren after three years, the value of a single coin to a housewife, the people’s despicable attitude toward tax collectors, the meaning of pounds or minas - understanding these elements sheds light on the significance of the parables and helps make the right transition to the spiritual truth” (Zuck, p. 211).

B. *Determine the specific problem, occasion, question, need or situation that prompted the parable* Seeing why Jesus told certain parables when He did helps us understand the truth He is making in the parable.

1. Answering a question “For example, in Matthew 9:14, the disciples of John ask, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples fast not?’ So Christ gives the parables of the wineskins and the garment to show that His ministry is one of joy (when He is present), and He is not reforming Judaism but replacing it with a new phase of His program” (Rosscup, p. 85).
2. Answering a request “The Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-21) followed the request made by someone in the crowd that Jesus tell the man’s brother to divide their father’s inheritance with him (v. 13). Jesus declined to be an arbitrator in that situation and, urging people to be on guard against greed (vv. 14-15). He then told the Parable of the Rich Fool” (Zuck, p. 212).
3. Answering a complaint When Jesus was criticized for associating with a sinful woman, He gave the Parable of the Two Debtors (Luke 7:40-43).
4. Stating a purpose Jesus told the Parable of the Unjust Judge to show His disciples ‘that they should always pray and not give up’ (Luke 18:1).
5. Parables of the Kingdom because of Israel’s rejection of Jesus Seven kingdom parables are given in Matthew 13. These parables are significant in that they follow Matthew 12, which records the rejection of Jesus by the Pharisees and the accusation that He was doing His miracles in the power of Satan. The parables of Matthew 13 describe the conditions that will take place between Christ’s first coming, His second coming and the establishment of the Kingdom.
6. Parables following an exhortation or principle “Several times Jesus gave an exhortation or principle and then followed it with a parable to illustrate or illumine the point just made. For example Mark 13:33 records that Jesus said, ‘Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.’ Then He gave the Parable of the Doorkeeper (vv. 34-37)” (Zuck, p. 213).
7. Parables followed by an exhortation or principle “Sometimes Jesus gave a parable and then followed it with an exhortation or principle. For example the Parable of the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5-8) is followed by His exhortation for them to persist in prayer (vv. 9-10)” (Zuck, p. 213).
8. Parables to illustrate a situation “Jesus introduced the Parable of the Two Houses by pointing up that anyone who heard His words and put them into practice was like the man building a house on a rock (Matt. 7:24)” (Zuck, p. 214).

9. Parables with the purpose implied but not stated “The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly (Mark 4:26-29) is not stated, but it seems to suggest rapid numerical growth of believers during the present age” (Zuck, p. 215).

C. *Determine the one main point or central truth the parable is attempting to teach* “This might be called the golden rule of parabolic interpretation. . . .” (Ramm, p. 283). As Rosscup says, “If I can ascertain the one great and comprehensive idea of a parable. I have fixed a reference point or obtained a master key for the interpretation of each detail which serves it. I can see how the details lend to or fit in with that main thrust. This anchors me within a certain defined area so that I am not so likely to wander off on my own tangents or blind alleys” (Rosscup, p. 86).

1. Ex. Parable of Sower (Matt. 13 3-9; 18-23) The main point of this parable is during the present age there will be four different responses to the Gospel.
2. Ex. Parable of the Dragnet (Matt. 13:47-50) The main point here is that when Christ comes to set up His kingdom, the wicked will be gathered and judged.

D. *Do not make a parable walk on all fours* “In every parable, many circumstances and details are introduced which are intended merely to complete the similitudes in the parable. The interpreter should not attempt to interpret all such details. A parable. . . has but one central truth. Therefore, discover the central truth or theme which the parable is setting forth, and then explain the main circumstances of the parable in light of this truth, leaving out details incidental to its central idea” (Tan, p. 148). “To hunt for meanings in every detail in the parables is to turn them into allegories” (Zuck, p. 216).

1. Ex. The Good Samaritan In the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) the main point is that a neighbor is one who actively helps someone in need. But according to Origen: “The man who fell among thieves is Adam. The robbers are the Devil and his minions. The priest stands for the Law; the Levite for the prophets. The Good Samaritan is Christ; the beast, Christ’s body; the inn, the Church; the two pence, the Father and the Son; and the Samaritan’s ‘When I come again,’ Christ’s second coming” (Tan, p. 149). This is reading too much into the parable. As Zuck says, “Jesus did not give any interpretation of the robbers, the man’s clothes, the man’s wounds, the oil and wine, the donkey, the two silver coins, or the innkeeper. These were elements needed to complete the story and to put it in its proper cultural setting” (Zuck, p. 216).
2. Ex. Wheat and the Tares “When Christ interprets the Parable of the Tares (Matt. 13:36-43), He explains only the field, the good seed, the tares, the enemy, the harvest, the reapers, and the final events of the harvest. He attaches no significance to the men who slept, the wheat’s yielding fruit, the servants, and the question of the servants” (Tan, p. 149).
3. How do we know what is relevant and incidental in the parable? “Unhappily, there is no determinative key as to what represents relevance in a parable and what is incidental. ‘No special rule can be formed that will apply to every case, and show what parts of a parable are designed to be significant, and what parts are mere drapery and form. Sound sense and delicate discrimination are to be cultivated and matured by a protracted study of all the parables, and by careful collation and comparison’” (Tan, p. 149).

- E. *Determine how much of the parable is interpreted by the Lord Himself* “After reciting the parable of the Sower (Mat. 13:18 ff.) Our Lord interprets it. After stating the parable of the enemy’s sowing darnel among the wheat, our Lord interprets it later in the house. . . . In such instances we have the definite word of Christ concerning the meaning of the parable, which further conveys to us the spirit of his teaching for help in parables that are not interpreted” (Ramm).
- F. *Interpret by proper time periods* “There are three main time periods in parabolic prophecies: (1) the interadvent age, (2) the second coming of Christ, and (3) the millennial age. The prophetic parables are geared to these different time periods. The interpreter should not try to fit them arbitrarily into one general period, such as the present church age” (Tan, p. 149).
- G. *Be careful with doctrine* “Parables do teach doctrine, and the claim that they may not be used at all in doctrinal writing is improper. But in gleaning our doctrine from the parables we must be strict in our interpretation; we must check our results with the plain, evident teaching of our Lord, and with the rest of the New Testament. Parables with proper cautions may be used to illustrate doctrine, illumine Christian experience, and to teach practical lessons.” (Ramm, p. 285) For example, the parable of the Ten Virgins does not prove that a person can lose their salvation.

Interpreting Types

I. Normal meaning of “type”

A. *Meaning of type* “The word *type* (tuπος) “has the basic idea of an impression, a blow, or a stamp. New Testament writers use it to designate a pattern, a model, or an example” (Tan, p. 167). This term is used 15 times in the New Testament often in different ways. But the idea common to all these occurrences is *correspondence* or *resemblance*.

B. *A definition* “Since the word *type* is thus used quite loosely in the New Testament, an exact definition of a type based on the Scriptures is hard to make. Donald K. Campbell’s definition however seems to be a successful one: ‘A type is an Old Testament institution, event, person, object, or ceremony which has reality and purpose in Biblical history, but which also by divine design foreshadows something yet to be revealed’” (Tan, p. 167).

“Typology is based on the assumption that there is a pattern in God’s work throughout salvation history. God prefigured His redemptive work in the Old Testament, and fulfilled it in the New; in the Old Testament there are shadows of things which shall be more fully revealed in the New” (Virkler, p. 184).

C. *Type/Antitype* The prefigurement in the OT is called the *type*; the fulfillment in the NT is called the *antitype*.

1. OT type: Passover (Exodus 12); NT type: “Christ our Passover” (1 Cor. 5:7)

2. OT type: bronze serpent that when looked upon brought healing; NT type: Jesus’ death that brings salvation (John 3:14)

D. *Difference between prophecies and types* “Prophecies and types both point to things future and are predictive in their natures. Types, however, are to be distinguished from prophecies in their respective forms. That is, a *type* prefigures coming reality; a *prophecy* verbally delineates the future. One is expressed in events, persons, and acts; the other is couched in words and statements” (Tan, p. 168).

II. Determining Types

A. *Different views on interpreting types* Bible interpreters differ widely on the extent to which types are to be seen in the Bible.

1. Liberal view “Some say types are evident throughout much of the Old Testament. Numerous objects and events are said to be pictures of New Testament truths.” (Zuck, p. 169) “The fanciful typologists see types lurking everywhere and anywhere in Scripture” (Tan, p. 170).

- a. **Ex.** “For example the hinges in the door to Solomon’s temple are said to be a type of the two natures of Christ” (Zuck, p. 169).
 - b. **Danger** “If a man is out to get a type for a quick spiritual ‘truth’(?) And is not too concerned about his methods -- just so he gets that nice point -- then it is an easy thing. Any little matter can easily be magnified and stretched so that it will correspond to something somewhere. In fact, he can turn his types out as though they were cheaper by the dozen” (Rosscup, *Hermeneutics*, p. 101).
2. No types anywhere view Some overreacted to the excesses of the liberal group and denied types altogether.
 3. Strict view According to this view “nothing may be considered a type unless it is *explicitly stated* to be one in Scripture [i.e. Rom. 5:14]” (Virkler, p. 186).
 - a. **Herbert Marsh** “Bishop Herbert Marsh (1757-1839), the writer usually referred to as the champion of this group, said that the New Testament must claim an Old Testament item to be a type before we may rightly say it is” (Rosscup, p. 102).
 - b. **Advantage** This view curbs excesses and stops every analogy from becoming a type. Plus, it gives certain criteria for establishing whether something is a type.
 - c. **Disadvantage** It is not clear as to what specific “claim” must be made to make something a legitimate type. There is no formal “type formula” given in Scripture.
 4. Moderate view (preferred view) According to this view, “For a resemblance to be a type there must be some evidence of divine affirmation of the corresponding type and antitype, although such affirmation need not be formally stated.” (Virkler, p. 186) “Others, though also wishing to be restrained do not feel that certain more direct New Testament statements specifying types exhaust the list of possible types. Still more may be detected by sensible interpretation that looks critically and responsibly for solid, natural correspondences between a possible Old Testament type and its possible New Testament antitype” (Rosscup, p. 103). According to this view a type can exist when:
 - a. **The Scripture explicitly states a type exists** “. . . Adam, who is a type of Him [Jesus] who was to come” (Rom. 5:14)
 - b. **An interchange of names exists** “Christ our Passover” (1 Cor. 5:7)
 - c. **Some evidence of divine affirmation exists** “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness [Numbers 21:8-9], even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life” (John 3:14-15).

B. *Principles for determining types* “The determination of a type is one of the most debatable areas of the subject and, therefore, one of the most difficult. What is clearly a type in the thinking of one interpreter is not a type at all to another who may choose to designate it as a parable, an allegory, a symbol, or only an analogous illustration. Obviously, the critical question that is really determinative here is: What are the criteria for what constitutes a valid type? That is, what qualifications, guidelines, or essentials must be present to demonstrate that one item is truly a type and another is not?” (Rosscup, p. 111) The following are principles that will help in determining what a type is.

1. There must be a resemblance, similarity or correspondence between the OT type and the NT antitype. “This should not be thought of as some superficial relationship, but rather a genuine and substantial counterpart. It should be natural and not forced.” (Zuck, p. 172) “The analogy should be obvious, not obscure, direct, not round-about, the central idea easily recognized and not contrived” (Rosscup, p. 104).
 - a. **Ex. Lamb without blemish** The sheep required for the burnt offerings in Leviticus 1 prefigure the greater Lamb, Jesus Christ (John 1:29).
 - b. **WARNING:** “not everything that has correspondence or resemblance is a type, though all types must have the element of correspondence. Numerous things in the Old Testament are similar to things in the New Testament but they are not necessarily types. A type has resemblance to that for which it is a type, but it has more than resemblance” (Zuck, p. 172).
2. Do not look for hidden meanings in the Old Testament text. “Persons, events, or things in the Old Testament that are types of things in the New Testament had historical reality. A type in the Old Testament is not something without reality. . . . Seeing types in the Old Testament does not mean the Bible student should look for hidden or deeper meanings in the text. He should stick with the historical facts as recorded in the Old Testament. In other words, the type should rise naturally out of the text, and should not be something the interpreter is reading into the text. The tabernacle is a type (Heb. 8:5; 9:23-24), but that does not mean that every small item in the construction of the tabernacle in some way depicted a New Testament truth” (Zuck, pp. 172-73).
3. A type must have a predictive or foreshadowing element to it. It must look ahead and anticipate the antitype. “A type is a shadow that points ahead to another reality. . . . To be an official type, the correspondence or resemblance must have a predictive element, a foreshadowing and anticipation of the antitype. The type, in other words, has a forward focus” (Zuck, p. 173).

Did the people in the OT recognize that various things were types? For example, did Melchizedek know he was a type of Christ (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 6:20)? “It seems unlikely that they would be aware of the antitypes. Possibly they had some awareness that these items were typical of forthcoming realities, but it seems unlikely they had any full awareness of the relationships between the types and the antitypes. As Mickelsen explains, ‘Even though a person, event, or thing in the Old Testament is typical, it does not mean that the contemporaries of the particular person, event, or thing recognized it as typical. More likely these were prophetic from God’s standpoint, and when the antitypes were revealed, then it was evident that the predictive element was present. What God saw as prospective, man later saw as retrospective. . . . Types were signposts pointing toward persons, events, or things yet to come’ (Zuck, p. 173).

4. Look for a heightening of the type. In typology, the antitype is greater than and superior to the type. There is an increase, a heightening, an escalation. The antitypes were on a higher plane than the types. “Many aspects of the Old Testament illustrate truths in the New Testament, but without the heightening they are not types” (Zuck, pp. 173-74).
 - a. **Ex.** Christ is superior to Melchizedek (Hebrews 10:11-17).
 - b. **Ex.** Christ’s redemptive work is greater than that of the Passover (1 Cor. 5:7).
5. There must be evidence that the type was appointed by God to represent the thing typified. “The type was designed in such a way that it carried a likeness to the antitype, and likewise was planned by God to be the ‘fulfillment’ and heightening of the type” (Zuck, p. 174).
6. Scripture must indicate in some way that an event, person, object or institution is a type In other words, the New Testament must make some point of comparison for there to be a type. This principle stops us from making every point of similarity between the testaments a type. For example, many conclude, because of the many similarities between them, that Joseph is a type of Christ. But some point of similarity with Christ can be shown of many OT characters. Why make Joseph a type but not Samuel, Jeremiah and Daniel?

C. *Other points to keep in mind when determining types*

1. Not every incidental detail of the type and antitype was intended by the author to be a point of correspondence.
 - a. **Ex. Tabernacle** Some “commentators have found in the acacia wood and gold of the tabernacle a type of the humanity and deity of Christ. . . . Such practices seem dangerously akin to the allegorism of the Middle Ages, imputing meaning to the text which is highly unlikely to have been intended by the biblical author” (Virkler, p. 190).
 - b. **Ex. Aaron** Aaron’s priesthood was typical of Christ’s, but that does not mean every incidental detail of Aaron’s life (i.e. the Golden Calf incident) is typical of Christ.

- c. **Ex. Adam** Adam is a type of Christ in that he represented the human race. This one point of similarity makes him a type (Rom. 5:14) even though there are many other points of dissimilarity.
2. Keep types and illustrations (analogies) separate. “An illustration. . . may be defined as a biblical person, event, or thing having historical reality, that pictures or is analogous to some corresponding spiritual truth in a natural and unforced way and is not explicitly designated in the New Testament as a type. In this definition an illustration has three of the six elements necessary for a type: correspondence or resemblance, historical reality, and divine design. However, illustrations are not predictive, they do not include a heightening or escalation, nor are they called types” (Zuck, pp. 176-77).
 - a. **Holy temple** When Paul referred to the Church as a “holy temple” (Eph. 2:21), he was drawing an analogy between Solomon’s temple and the Church since both were the dwelling place of God.
 - b. **Chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation** These designations that described Israel also, in this age, describes the church made up of Jewish and Gentile believers (1 Peter 2:9-10). “Peter. . .used similar terms to point up similar truths. As Israel was ‘a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God,’ so too believers today are chosen, are priests, are holy, and belong to God. Similarity does not mean identity” (Roger M. Raymer, “1 Peter,” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, v. 2, pp. 845-46).

III. Classification of Types

A. Persons

1. Melchizedek is a type of Christ’s perpetual priesthood (Heb. 7:3, 15-17).
2. Adam Adam is a type “Adam is mentioned as a type of Christ (Rom. 5:14); Adam was the representative head of fallen humanity, while Christ is the representative head of redeemed humanity” (Virkler, p. 187).
3. Aaron is a type of Christ’s priestly ministry (Heb. 5:4-5).
4. Israel at the time of the Exodus typifies Jesus’ coming out of Egypt (compare Matt. 2:15 with Hosea 11:1). “Israel, as the national son of God coming out of Egypt becomes a type of the individual Son of God, the Messiah coming out of Egypt” (Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, p. 843-44).

B. *Events*

1. The Passover feast is a type of Christ's sacrifice (1 Cor. 5:7).
2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread typifies the believer's holy walk (1 Cor. 5:7-8).
3. The Day of Atonement is a type of Christ's sacrifice on the cross (Heb. 9:19-28).
4. Jonah's three days and nights in the belly of the fish typifies Jesus in the tomb (Matt. 12:40).
5. Noah's flood typifies baptism (1 Peter 3:20-21).

C. *Institutions* The Sabbath is a type of the believer's eternal rest (Col. 2:17; Heb. 4:3, 9, 11).

D. *Things*

1. The Tabernacle typifies Christ—the believer's access to God and basis of fellowship with God (Heb. 8:2, 5; 9:23-24).
2. The Tabernacle veil typifies Christ as the believer's access to God (Heb. 10:20).
3. The Burnt Offering is a type of Christ's offering of Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sins (Lev. 1 and Heb. 10:5-7).
4. The Brazen Serpent typifies Christ's death on the cross (John 3:14).

Interpreting Symbols

I. What are symbols?

A. *A definition* “A symbol is a sign which suggests meaning rather than stating it.” (Mickelsen, p. 265) “A symbol is a representative and graphic delineation of an actual event, truth, or object. The thing that is depicted is not the real thing but conveys a representative meaning” (Paul Lee Tan, *Literal Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 55). Symbols usually take the form of objects or actions.

B. *How do symbols differ from types?* Symbols and types both represent something else. However, a type represents something that is yet to come while a symbol has no essential reference to time. A symbol may represent something past, present or future.

C. *Symbols have basis in reality* Symbols are based on literal objects or actions such as a lion, a bear, a dove or tearing one’s clothes.

D. *Elements of symbols*

1. The object—the symbol itself. (Ex. a lamb in John 1:29)
2. The referent—what the symbol refers to. (Ex. Jesus Christ)
3. The meaning—the resemblance between the symbolic object and the referent. (Ex. Christ is a sacrifice just as lambs were used for sacrifice)

E. *Examples of symbols*

1. Bread and wine are symbols of Christ’s body and blood (Luke 22:19-20).
2. Dragon symbolizes Satan (Rev. 12:3-17).
3. The four beasts of Daniel 7 represent four major world empires (Lion=Babylon; Bear=Medo-Persia; Leopard=Greece; Dreadful beast=Rome).
4. Dry bones given new flesh symbolizes Israel’s restoration (Ezek. 37).
5. Water is used to symbolize the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39), the Word of God (Eph. 5:26) and regeneration (Titus 3:5).
6. A lion symbolize both Christ as King (Rev. 5:5) and Satan (1 Pet. 5:8).
7. Sheep in Isaiah 53:6 symbolize wayward humanity.
8. Tearing one’s clothes represents anger (Mark 14:63) and grief (Job 1:20).
9. Sitting in dust and ashes (Job 42:6) symbolizes repentance.

II. Principles for interpreting symbols

- A. *Identify the symbolic object or action, the referent and the connection between the symbol and the referent.*
- B. *See if the Scripture explicitly describes the meaning of the symbol.*
1. Ex. Ten horns The ten horns of the dreadful beast of Daniel 7:7 symbolize ten kings as revealed in Daniel 7:24.
 2. Ex. Serpent Revelation tells us that the Serpent is Satan (Rev. 20:2).
 3. Ex. Fine linen Fine linen in Revelation 19:8 symbolizes the righteous acts of the saints.
- C. *If Scripture does not explicitly reveal the meaning of the symbol, consult parallel passages, search out the nature of the symbol and try to determine what major characteristic the symbol and the referent have in common.* For example, “the preservative character of salt is common knowledge, as is the ferocity of lions, the docility of doves, the meekness of lambs, and the filthiness of pigs” (Ramm, p. 234).
- D. *Look for the one major point of comparison between the symbol and the referent and thus avoid attributing wrong characteristics to the referent.* A lion is both ferocious and kingly in nature, but only its furious nature points to Satan (1 Pet. 5:8), and only its royal attributes point to Christ (Rev. 5:5).
- E. *Realize that one referent may be depicted by several objects.* “Christ, for example, is said to resemble a lamb, a lion, a branch, a root, and others. The Holy Spirit is symbolized by water, oil, wind, and a dove” (Zuck, p. 186).
- F. *In prophetic literature do not assume that because a prophecy contains some symbols everything else in that prophecy is symbolic.* “In Revelation 19:19 the ‘beast’ is a symbol, but that does not mean that ‘the kings of the earth and their armies’ in the same verse are to be taken as symbols. In verse 15 the sword from Christ’s mouth is a symbol (of His judging by His words), but that does not mean that the nations referred to in the same verse are a symbol of something else” (Zuck, pp. 186-87).

- G. *With prophetic literature do not symbolize descriptions of the future that are possible or plausible.* For example, the locusts of Revelation 9 could be literal locusts or some demonic beings. They are not a symbol of some famine that has already taken place.
- H. *Be reluctant to symbolize the numbers of Scripture.* “Like prophetic words, prophetic numbers are to be accepted as literal” (Paul Lee Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy*, p. 165). As John Davis has said, “It is our conclusion that the mystical or symbolical interpretation of numbers has little place in a sound system of hermeneutics” (John J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology*, p. 124).
1. Ex. 144,000 The 144,000 of Revelation 7:4-8 is literal since 12,000 people are said to be sealed from the 12 tribes of Israel.
 2. 1000 years There is no reason to take the six references to a “thousand years” in Revelation 20:1-6 to refer to anything other than a literal thousand years.

Interpreting Allegories

I. What are allegories?

A. *Definition* An allegory is a narrative or word picture which may or may not be true-to-life, with many parts pointing symbolically to spiritual realities.

B. *Different from parables* “An allegory differs from a parable, as noted before, in that a parable typically keeps the story distinct from its interpretation or application, while an allegory intertwines the story and its meaning” (Virkler, p. 173).

1. Parable: Has one major point of comparison / Allegory: Has many points of comparison

2. Parable: True to life / Allegory: True to life or fictitious

3. Parable: Interpretation, if given, usually occurs after the story (or sometimes at the beginning) / Allegory: The interpretations of the points are intertwined in the story.

4. Parable: Is an extended simile (like or as) / Allegory: Is an extended metaphor (is)

C. *Does the presence of allegories justify allegorical interpretation?* “The interpretation of allegories should not be confused with ‘allegorizing’ or the allegorical method of interpretation. Allegorizing is an approach that searches for deeper meaning than are apparent in the text, ideas that differ from those clearly identified in the Bible passages” (Zuck, p. 226).

D. Examples of allegories

1. Armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-17) “In the allegory of the Christian’s armor (Eph. 6), there are several points of comparison. Each part of the Christian’s armor is significant, and each is necessary for the Christian to be ‘fully armed’”(Virkler, p. 174).

2. Jesus as the true Vine (John 15:1-6) The allegory of Christ as the True Vine (John 15:1-17) is analyzed here to show the relationship of the several points of comparison to the meaning of the passage. There are three foci in this allegory:

- a. The vine as a symbol of Christ.
- b. The vine-dresser symbolizes the Father.
- c. The branches symbolize disciples.

3. The Lord as Shepherd (Psalm 23:1-4) (John 10:1-16)

4. Israel as a destroyed vine (Psalm 80:8-16) and as an unproductive vine (Isaiah 5:1-7)

5. Samaria and Jerusalem as two prostitutes (Ezekiel 23)

II. Principles for interpreting allegories

A. *Note the points of comparison that are explained or interpreted in the passage.*

1. Ex. Jesus the Shepherd In John 10 the Shepherd is Jesus because He call Himself the Good Shepherd (vv. 11, 14). The sheep in this passage are believers since He “lays down His life for the sheep” and His sheep know Him.
2. Ex. Jesus is the Vine In the allegory of the vine Jesus says, “I am the true Vine” (John 15:1).

B. *Do not attempt to interpret details in allegories that are not explained.* “In the allegory of the house built by wisdom (Prov. 9:1-6), we need not ask what the meat, wine, table, or maids resemble. They simply add local color to complete the idea of a sumptuous meal being prepared, which of course, is likened to wisdom in verse 6” (Zuck, p. 225).

C. *Determine the main point of the teaching* “As in parables, so in allegories the interpreter should look for the major point of analogy or resemblance. Though there are many points of comparison, the reader should ask, what is the major truth being taught by the allegory?” (Zuck, p. 226). For example, the main point of Psalm 23 (allegory of the Shepherd) is that God cares for those who are His.

III. Paul’s allegorization in Galatians 4:21-31 “One passage that has caused a great deal of perplexity for evangelicals is Paul’s allegorizing in Galatians 4. Liberal theologians have been quick to seize on this as an illustration of Paul’s adoption of the illegitimate hermeneutical methods of his day. Evangelicals have often retreated in embarrassed silence, for it does seem in these verses Paul used illegitimate allegorization” (Virkler, p. 175).

A. *The historical situation (21-23)* Paul refers to real historical people and events in making his point against Jewish legalists who promoted strict adherence to the Mosaic Law.

1. Abraham
2. Two mothers—Sarah and Hagar
3. Two sons of Abraham—Isaac and Ishmael
4. Ishmael’s birth through Abraham and Hagar was natural.
5. Isaac’s birth through Abraham and Sarah was based on the promise of God and involved supernatural activity by God.

B. *The allegory announced (24)* After establishing the historical facts as given in Genesis, Paul announces that he is going to make an illustration or analogy. “Paul to be sure allegorizes here, for he says so himself. But with the very fact of him saying this himself, the gravity of the hermeneutical difficulty disappears. He means therefore to give an allegory, not an exposition; he does not proceed as an exegete, and does not mean to say (after the manner of the allegorizing exegetes) that only what he now says is the true sense of the narrative” (Quote from Schmoeller cited by Milton Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 233).

- C. *Hagar's spiritual descendants represent apostate Judaism (24-25)* Hagar represents the Old Covenant, the earthly Jerusalem and those who are enslaved to the Law.
- D. *Sarah represents the Covenant of Freedom (26-28)* Sarah represents the Covenant of Promise, the Jerusalem above and those who are free in Christ.
- E. *Ishmael's persecution of Isaac represents the Jewish legalists' persecution of Christians who do not adhere to the Mosaic Law (29).*
- F. *The casting out of Ishmael represents God casting away those involved in the old Jewish system (30)*
- G. *Believers are free in Christ. They are not tied to the Old Jewish system that Hagar represents (31)*
- H. CONCLUSION: "Paul's allegory was an illustration or analogy in which he was pointing out that certain facts about Hagar correspond to non-Christians and that certain facts about Sarah correspond to facts about Christians" (Zuck, p. 47).

I. *Why does Galatians 4:21-31 not support the method of allegorical interpretation?*

1. The historical situation Paul used was true.
2. Paul did not say the allegory was the true meaning or exposition of Genesis 16.
3. When Paul allegorized, he said he was doing so. "Paul differed from the typical allegorist when he admitted the historical validity of the text, rather than saying that the words of the text were only a shadow of the deeper meaning. He admitted that these events happened historically and then went on to say that they can be allegorized. He did not say 'this is what the text means' nor claim that he was giving an exposition of the text" (Virkler, p. 178).
4. Nowhere else does Paul use allegorization "If Paul regarded allegorizing as a legitimate method, then it seems almost certain that he would have used it in some of his other epistles, but he did not" (Virkler, p. 178).

Interpreting Prophecy

I. Introductory matters concerning prophecy

- A. *Definition* The term prophecy comes from two Greek words meaning “to speak for or before.” Thus, prophecy is the speaking and writing of events before they occurred (Zuck, p. 227).
- B. *Prophecies are from God* Since prophecies involve the foretelling of unseen events, they cannot be result of human ingenuity—they must find their origin in God. “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:20-21).
- C. *Number of prophecies* A significant amount of the Bible is predictive prophecy. It has been estimated that of the Bible’s 31,124 verses, 8,352 (27 percent) were predictive at the time they were first spoken or written (J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*, p. 13).
- D. *Range of prophetic subjects*
1. Gentile nations
 2. Nation Israel
 3. Individual people
 4. Messiah
 5. Planet Earth
 6. The Tribulation
 7. The Millennium
 8. The Eternal State
 9. Life after death
- E. *Prophecy ranges* Some Bible prophecies predicted events that were soon fulfilled (near prophecies). Other prophecies predicted events that took dozens, hundreds or even thousands of years to be fulfilled (far prophecies). Some prophecies still await a future fulfillment.

1. Near prophecies

- a. Ex. Jeremiah's prophecy of the 70-year captivity (Jer. 25:11).
- b. Ex. Daniel's prophecy that Belshazzar's kingdom would be taken over by the Medes and Persians (Dan. 5:25-30).
- c. Ex. Elijah's prediction of drought (1 Kings 17:1).
- d. Ex. Jesus' prediction that He would be crucified and raised from the dead (Matt. 16:21).

2. Far prophecies

- a. Ex. Daniel's prediction of four consecutive world powers (Dan. 2 and 7).
- b. Ex. Daniel's prediction concerning timing of Messiah's death (Dan. 9:26).
- c. Ex. Micah's prediction of Messiah's birth being in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
- d. Ex. Tribulation and Second Coming (Matthew 24 and 25).
- e. Ex. Millennial Kingdom and eternal state (Rev. 20-22).

II. **Principles for interpreting prophecy**

A. *Take words of prophecy in their normal, grammatical sense* "Nowhere does Scripture indicate that when we come to prophetic portions of Scripture we should ignore the normal sense of the words and overlook the meanings of words and sentences. The norms of grammatical interpretation should be applied to prophetic as well as to nonprophetic literature" (Zuck, p. 241-42).

1. Ex. Isaiah 65 "Fulfillment should be seen in accord with the words of the prediction. In speaking of the Millennium, Isaiah wrote that many people will live well beyond 100 years of age (Isa. 65:20). There is no reason to take this in any sense other than its normal, grammatical meaning. The following verse (v. 21) states, 'They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.' Again no hint is given in this passage that the building of houses is to be taken figuratively." Of course figurative language and symbolic language is used extensively in prophetic passages, but this does not mean that all prophecy is figurative or symbolic. We should begin with the assumption that the words are to be taken in their normal sense unless a figure of speech or symbol is indicated. Deeper and mystical senses should not be sought" (Ibid. p. 242).
2. Ex. Revelation 20 There is no reason not to take the six references to "a thousand years" in Revelation 20 to be anything other than a literal thousand years.

B. *Recognize the place of unconditional covenants* “While it is true that some prophecies are conditioned on the response of the persons addressed, other prophecies are unconditional. When God made His covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15, He alone contracted the obligation, passing between the pieces of the animals He had cut in two (vv. 12-20). No condition was attached to the Lord’s words that He would give Abraham’s descendants that land. Reaffirmations of this Abrahamic Covenant indicate that it was ‘an everlasting covenant’ in which ‘the whole land of Canaan’ would be theirs ‘as an everlasting possession’ (17:7-8). Also note the references to the everlasting nature of the covenant in verses 13, 19; 26:2-4; 28:13-15; 1 Chronicles 16:16-17; Psalm 105:9-10. Therefore since Israel has not yet possessed the land to the boundaries specified in Genesis 15:18-21, we should take the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant pertaining to Israel’s land as being unconditional and yet future” (Zuck, p. 242).

1. Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3)

2. Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-17)

3. New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

C. *Recognize the place of figurative and symbolic language* “The heavy symbolic content of much of prophetic literature makes interpreting prophecy difficult. It also has caused many Bible students to assume that because some things in prophecy are symbolic, everything in prophetic passages is to be taken symbolically. This, however, is an error. If we follow the basic hermeneutical principle of normal, grammatical interpretation, then we should understand prophetic literature, as well as other forms of biblical literature, in their normal, ordinary-literal sense, unless there is reason for taking the material figuratively or symbolically. For example no reason exists for not taking literally the reference to silence in heaven ‘for about half an hour’ (Rev. 8:1), nor there any reason for not taking literally the references to ‘hail and fire mixed with blood’ (v. 7). And when John wrote in that same verse that ‘a third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up,’ again there is nothing in the immediate context to indicate that those words should not be taken in their ordinary sense. However, in verse 8 of that same chapter we read that ‘something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea.’ The wording suggests that John was not referring to a literal mountain” (Zuck, pp. 243-44).

D. *Interpret numbers literally in prophetic literature* “What about numbers in prophetic literature? One writer suggests ‘in a book where almost all the numbers seem to have symbolic value (7 seals, trumpets, bowls, etc.; 144,000 Israelites; 42 months/1260 days/ 3 _ years) should not 1,000 years indicate a long period of time rather than a number of calendar years?’ But are all the numbers he mentions to be taken as symbols? Do they not have meaning as ordinary, literal numbers? If 7, 42, 1,260 are not to be taken literally, then what about the reference to the 2 witnesses in 11:3? And if 1,000 means simply a large number, then what the reference to 7,000 people in verse 13? On what basis do we say that 7,000 does not mean a literal 7,000? And if 1,000 is a large indefinite number, do the references to 4 angels (7:1) and 7 angels (8:6) mean simply small numbers? If these numbers in the Book of Revelation have no normal, literal numerical value, then what has happened to the principle of normal, grammatical interpretation? How can we say that 144,000 is a symbolic number, when 7:5-8 refers specifically to 12,000 from each of 12 tribes in Israel?” (Zuck, pp. 244-45).

- E. *View prophecy as focusing primarily on the Messiah and the establishing of His reign* “His first coming was for the purpose of establishing His reign on the earth, but the nation Israel rejected Him (John 1:11) so He said the kingdom would be taken from them and given to a future generation (Matt. 21:43). . . . Scripture makes it clear that Jesus will return to establish His reign on the earth” (Zuck, pp. 245-46).
- F. *Recognize the principle of “Foreshortening”* “Looking ahead, the prophets often envisioned the two advents of Christ as two mountain peaks, with a valley in between. They could see the peaks but not the valleys. From our perspective, however, as we look back we see the time gap between the First and Second Advents. Often the Old Testament blends the two comings of Christ in one passage” (Zuck, p. 246).
1. Isaiah 61:1-2 “The Lord read from this chapter in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21), and stopped in the middle of verse 2 with the words ‘to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ He did not add the words ‘and the day of vengeance of our God,’ obviously a reference to the Lord’s return when He will take vengeance on His enemies” (Ibid.)
 2. Isaiah 9:6-7 “The first part of verse 6 refers to Jesus’ birth, but the middle part of verse 6 along with verse 7 point to His second advent by speaking of the government being on His shoulders and His reigning on David’s throne” (Ibid, pp. 246-47).
 3. Zechariah 9:9-10 Matthew 21:5 quotes Zechariah 9:9 referring to the Messiah’s humble entrance into Jerusalem, but Matthew does not quote verse 10 which refers to Christ destroying His enemies and setting up His kingdom. Thus, Zechariah 9:9 was fulfilled when Christ entered Jerusalem, but Zechariah 9:10 awaits a future fulfillment.
- G. *Look for God’s built-in interpretations* Sometimes the images given in prophetic literature are explained within the text.
1. Ex. Dan 2 Head of gold = Nebuchadnezzar (“You are the head of gold.”)
 2. Ex. Revelation Seven stars are the angels of the churches (1:20). The seven lampstands are the seven churches of Asia Minor (1:20). The bowls of incense are the prayers of the saints (5:8).

Comparison of Prophetic Views

“In conservative theology there are three major views concerning last things: amillennialism, postmillennialism, and premillennialism. The word *millennium* comes from the Latin *mille*, meaning ‘thousand,’ and relates to the statement in Revelation 20:4, ‘They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.’ Should this statement be understood literally or symbolically? The answer determines in part one’s doctrine of last things” (Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, p. 380).

I. Amillennialism

A. *Definition* “The prefix *a* means *no*. Amillennialism is the view that does not believe in a future literal reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years in fulfillment of the Old Testament promises of God.” (Robert P. Lightner, *The Last Days*, p. 72) “Amillennialists do not deny the literal return of Christ, but they reject a literal thousand year reign of Christ on the earth. According to amillennialism, the kingdom of God is present in the church age, and at the consummation of the present age, the eternal state is inaugurated without any intervening millennium” (Enns, p. 380).

B. *Basic views of Amillennialism on:*

1. The Kingdom (Millennium) “The kingdom is in existence now between Christ’s two advents. Since Christ is ruling from heaven, He will not reign on the earth for 1,000 years. ‘We are in the millennium now’” (Zuck, p. 231). Among conservative amillennialists two views exist concerning the Millennium:
 - a. *The church on earth* (Augustine, Allis, Berkhof) “The amillennial position on the thousand years of Revelation 20 implies that Christians who are now living are enjoying the benefits of this millennium since Satan has been bound for the duration of this period” (Anthony A. Hoekema, “Amillennialism,” in *The Meaning of the Millennium*, ed. Robert G. Clouse, p. 181).
 - b. *The saints in heaven now* (B.B. Warfield) “Amillennials also teach that during this same thousand-year period the souls of believers who have died are now living and reigning with Christ in heaven while they await the resurrection of the body” (Hoekema, p. 181).
 - c. *No 1000 year earthly kingdom* Both views agree there will be no future earthly kingdom and that “1,000” is a symbolic number indicating a long period of time.
 - d. *Can both views be right?* Within amillennialism there appears to be two conflicting and mutually exclusive views. Is the Kingdom the Church on earth or the saints in heaven?

2. Present reign of Christ “Christ is ruling now in heaven where He is seated on the throne of David, and Satan is now bound between Christ’s two advents”(Zuck, p. 231).
3. Tribulation Tribulation is experienced in this present age.
4. Second coming of Christ “Amillennialists understand the second coming of Christ as a single event; in contrast, dispensationalists understand Christ’s coming in two phases” (Enns, p. 381).
5. Resurrection There will be a general resurrection of believers and unbelievers at the second coming of Christ.
6. Final judgment When Christ comes again there will be one general judgment for believers and unbelievers.

C. *Hermeneutical basis of Amillennialism*

1. The Kingdom is the Church “The interpretive system of amillennialism begins with the assumption that God’s kingdom is being manifested today in the church. . . .” (Zuck, p. 236).
2. Israel and the Church are the same The Church is the new Israel. There is no distinction between the two. The promises to Israel, therefore, are applicable to the Church. “The traditional Reformed position as illustrated in Calvin is that the church takes Israel’s place as its spiritual successor” (Walvoord, p. 101).
3. Spiritualizing of prophecy “The promises to Israel about a land, nationality, and throne (Gen. 12:2; 15:18-20; 2 Sam. 7:12-16) are being fulfilled now in a spiritual way among believers in the church.” (Zuck, p. 231) “Amillennialists see the church as fulfilling God’s promises in an antitypical and spiritual way” (Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 445).
 - a. *Church inherits Israel’s promises* “God’s promises to Israel were conditional and have been transferred to the church because the nation did not meet the condition of obedience to God.” (Zuck, p. 231) “Amillennial ecclesiology denies to Israel any future as a nation. Israel is never to be a political entity in the world in fulfillment of the promises of a glorious kingdom period” (John Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, p. 100).
 - b. *Premillennial response* “Premillennialists point out that if the yet unfulfilled part of that covenant is to be fulfilled literally (the promise of the land of Palestine), this will have to occur in a future Millennium, since there has been no place in past or present history for a literal fulfillment. Amillennialists say that we need not expect a future fulfillment because (a) the promises were conditional and the conditions were never met; or (b) the land promise was fulfilled in the time of Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45); or (c) it was fulfilled under King Solomon (1 Kings 4:21); or (d) it is now being fulfilled by the church; or (e) it is fulfilled in the heavenly Jerusalem. I only observe that each of those five suggestions negates the validity of the other four. One receives the impression that the amillennialist does not really know how or when the Abrahamic Covenant should be fulfilled. He is only certain that it will not be in a future, earthly Millennium” (Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p.

447).

D. Evaluating the term “amillennialism.”

1. Positively “The term amillennial is a good descriptive term used to describe an attitude toward the millennium put forth by the premillenarian or by the postmillenarian. For amillenarians admittedly do not believe in any such millennium” (Cox, *Amillennialism*, p. 10).
2. Negatively “A word should first be said about terminology. The term *amillennialism* is not a happy one. It suggests that amillennialists either do not believe in any millennium or that they simply ignore the first six verses of Revelation 20, which speak of a millennial reign. Neither of these two statements is true” (Anthony Hoekema, *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, p. 155).
3. An alternative term “For this reason, some amillennialists suggest a term such as *realized millennialism* to indicate that they do not deny a millennium but believe it is fulfilled entirely in the present age” (Enns, p. 380) (This is the opinion of Jay Adams and Anthony Hoekema. See Hoekema, p. 155).

E. History of Amillennialism

1. Origen (185-254) Up until Origen the church fathers were premillennial. Origen, however, spiritualized the future kingdom and understood it to be the present church age (see Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 448).
2. Augustine (354-430) “With the contribution of Augustine to theological thinking amillennialism came into prominence. While Origen laid the foundation in establishing the non-literal method of interpretation, it was Augustine who systematized the non-literal view of the millennium into what is now known as amillennialism” (Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 381).
 - a. “. . . there are no acceptable exponents of amillennialism before Augustine. . . . Augustine is, then, the first theologian of solid influence who adopted amillennialism” (John Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, p. 47).
 - b. “. . . his viewpoint became the prevailing doctrine of the Roman Church and it was adopted with variations by most of the Protestant Reformers along with many other teachings of Augustine” (Pentecost, p. 381).
 - c. “In his famous work, *The City of God*, Augustine set forth the idea that the church visible was the Kingdom of God on earth” (Ibid.).

3. Reformation period (1500-1600's) “The great leaders of the Reformation were amillennial in their eschatology. They were content to follow the Roman church’s teaching which in turn followed Augustine” (Ryrie, p. 448).
 - a. Calvin
 - b. Luther
 - c. *Evaluation of the Reformers* Though the Reformers broke with Roman Catholic soteriology, they did not break with Roman Catholic eschatology. “The gift of the Protestant reformers to the Christian church consists not only in an open Bible but also in the literal method of interpreting the Bible. Unfortunately, however, the reformers refused to be involved in the issue of prophetic interpretation, and so the whole of Protestantism went the way of Roman Catholic amillennialism by default. This omission of the reformers is probably explainable by the fact that truths such as justification by faith and the problems of ecclesiology were claiming the immediate attention of the reformers as the latter sought to sift through the Roman debris” (Paul Lee Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy*, p. 54).
4. Modern period
 - a. Warfield
 - b. Allis
 - c. Hoekema

II. Postmillennialism

- A. *Definition* “Postmillennialism may be defined as ‘that view of the last things which holds that the Kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the Gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals, that the world eventually is to be Christianized, and that the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace commonly called the Millennium.’” (Enns, p. 384) “The term postmillennialism means that Christ will return *after* the Millennium. The present age will develop morally and spiritually until it issues in the millennial age, with Christ returning to earth at the conclusion of the Millennium” (Enns, p. 384).

B. *Basic view of Postmillennialism on:*

1. The Millennium (kingdom) “Postmillennialism adopts an optimistic view with respect to this present age, envisioning a golden age of progress in the church age that affects every dimension of life: economic, social, cultural, and political. Postmillennialism envisions a church triumphant, spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth with the result that ‘evil’ in all its many forms eventually will be reduced to negligible proportions, that Christian principles will be the rule, not the exception, and that Christ will return to a truly Christianized world” (Enns, p. 384).
 - a. “The present age will gradually give way to the Millennium as a result of the progress of the gospel, but life will continue in its present form. Christ will return at the conclusion of the Millennium” (Enns, pp. 384-85).
 - b. “The church is not the kingdom but it will bring the kingdom (a utopian, Christianized condition) to the earth by preaching the Gospel” (Zuck, p. 231).
 - c. The millennium for postmills is not a literal 1000 year period but rather a long period of time.
2. Second Coming / Resurrection / Final Judgment Postmills like amills would see one phase of Christ’s second coming, a general resurrection and a general judgment followed by the eternal state.

C. *Postmillennialism in history*

1. Not taught in apostolic age “All seem to agree that postmillennialism is quite foreign to the apostolic church. There is no trace of anything in the church which could be classified as postmillennialism in the first two or three centuries” (Walvoord, p. 19).
2. Beginnings “Postmillennialism was first taught by Daniel Whitby (1638-1725) and was held by Jonathan Edwards, Charles Wesley, Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, Augustus H. Strong, James Snowden, and Lorraine Boettner. Postmillennialism virtually died out a number of years ago. The impact of two world wars led many to renounce postmillennialism because of its optimistic view that the world is getting better. But in recent years postmillennialism has been revived. Present-day ‘dominion theology’ is postmillennial. Dominion theologians maintain that Christians should ‘take over’ (have dominion or leadership) in every aspect of society, including government. In this sense they teach that the church should Christianize society and thus ‘bring in the kingdom.’ Proponents of this view include Greg L. Bahnsen, David Chilton, Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., James B. Jordan, Gary North, Rousas J. Rushdoony, and Douglas Wilson” (Zuck, p. 232).

- D. *Is the World getting better?* Postmills point to many areas to show the world is progressively getting better -- the spread of the gospel, advances in medicine, the status of women, the near disappearance of slavery and polygamy. (See Loraine Boettner, "Postmillennialism," in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*) However as George Ladd says, "The argument that the world is getting better is a two-edged sword. One can equally well argue from empirical observation that the world is getting worse." (George Ladd's response to Boettner in the same book, p. 143) "As postmillennialism had risen in an atmosphere of scientific and educational progress, so it declined in an atmosphere of war and world chaos" (Walvoord, p. 35).
- E. *Hermeneutical basis of Postmillennialism* In order to find fulfillment of millennial promises in the present age, it is necessary for them to follow an allegorical or figurative system of interpretation in great areas of Biblical prophecy" (Walvoord, p. 24).

III. Premillennialism

- A. *Definition* "Premillennialism is the view that holds that the second coming of Christ will occur prior to the Millennium which will see the establishment of Christ's kingdom on this earth for a literal 1,000 years." (Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 450) "Unlike postmillennialism (and amillennialism), premillennialism sees Christ as physically present during this time; it believes that he will return personally and bodily to commence the millennium. This being the case, the millennium must be seen as still in the future" (Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 1209).
- B. *History of Premillennialism*
1. Early church "In the earliest centuries of the church a general premillennial scheme was widely held, though chronological details were not always clear." (Ryrie, p. 451) "The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millennarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment" (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 2:614).
 2. Medieval and Reformation periods "In the medieval period most doctrines, including eschatology, were eclipsed by the darkness of those centuries. . . . The reformers were generally amillennial in their eschatology, though Anabaptists and Huguenots were chiliasts" (Ryrie, p. 452).
 3. Modern period The modern period has witnessed the rise of premillennial teaching.
- C. *Two main views* Within premillennialism exists two divisions— Dispensational Premillennialism and Historic Premillennialism.

IV. Dispensational Premillennialism (Preferred View)

A. *Basis for Dispensational Premillennialism* Within the premillennial position, dispensational premillennialism is the majority view. The following are the foundational elements on which dispensational premillennialism is built:

1. A consistent use of the literal hermeneutic (including prophecy) “According to premillennarians the normal approach to Scripture means that the promises about Christ’s returning to establish His millennial reign on earth of 1,000 years are to be taken literally.” (Roy B. Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation*, p. 238) “Because prophecies concerning Christ’s first coming were fulfilled literally, it makes good sense to expect the prophecies concerning His second coming to be interpreted literally.” (Enns, p. 389) One amillennialist, Floyd Hamilton stated, “Now we must frankly admit that a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies gives us such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures. That was the kind of Messianic kingdom that the Jews of the time of Christ were looking for, on the basis of a literal kingdom interpretation of the Old Testament promises” (Floyd Hamilton, *The Basis of the Millennial Faith*, p. 38).
2. Unfulfilled unconditional covenants God made with Israel must be fulfilled “Since the promises to Israel—about being a nation and being regathered to and having possession of the land with their Messiah-King ruling over them—are unconditional and have not yet been fulfilled, they therefore yet remain to be fulfilled” (Zuck, p. 238).
 - a. **Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3)** “Described in Genesis 12:1-3, the Abrahamic covenant promised a land (v.1; cf. 13:14-17; further developed in the Palestinian covenant); numerous descendants involving a nation, dynasty, and a throne (v. 2; cf. 13:16; 17:2-6; further developed in the Davidic Covenant); and redemption (v. 3; cf. 22:18; further developed in the New covenant)” (Enns, p. 390).
 - b. **Palestinian Covenant (Deut. 30:1-10)** This covenant guarantees Israel’s permanent right to the land.
 - c. **Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-16)** “The provisions of this covenant are summarized in v. 16 by the words ‘house,’ promising a dynasty in the lineage of David; ‘kingdom,’ referring to a people who are governed by a king; ‘throne,’ emphasizing the authority of the king’s rule; ‘forever,’ emphasizing the eternal and unconditional nature of this promise to Israel” (Enns, p. 390).
 - d. **New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34)** “This covenant provides the basis by which God will bless Israel in the future—Israel will enjoy forgiveness of sins through the meritorious death of Christ” (Enns, p. 390).
 - e. **POINT:** “If these covenants are understood according to their normal meaning, then they call for a future blessing of believing, national Israel in the land under Messiah’s rule. These covenants await a fulfillment in the Millennium” (Enns, p. 390).

3. Israel and the Church are distinct entities “Since Israel is yet to possess the land under her Messiah-King, the promises to the nation have not been transferred to the church. Since the church began on the Day of Pentecost, the church is separate from the nation Israel and therefore is not inheriting Israel’s promises. Grammatical interpretation thus makes a warranted distinction between Israel and the church. The church does not now possess the land of Palestine, promised to Israel. And in the New Testament Age, since the church began, there is still a distinction between unsaved Jews, unsaved Gentiles, and the church (1 Cor. 10:32)” (Zuck, p. 238).

4. Premillennial beliefs

a. **Second Coming** The second coming has two phases: 1) a rapture for the church; 2) a second coming to earth seven years later.

b. **Resurrections** Distinctions exist in God’s resurrection program: 1) Church at rapture; 2) OT and Tribulation saints at second coming; 3) Unbelievers at the end of the Millennium.

c. **Judgments** Distinctions exist in God’s judgment program: 1) The church faces the Judgment Seat of Christ after the Rapture; 2) Jews and Gentiles face a judgment to see who enters the Kingdom at the end of the Tribulation; 3) Unbelievers face the Great White Throne judgment in order to be sentenced to the lake of fire.

d. **Church’s relation to the Tribulation** The church is raptured prior to the Tribulation (Pretrib.)

e. **Millennium** At second coming Christ inaugurates literal 1,000 year Millennium on earth.

V. **Historic Premillennialism** “One type of premillennialism is nondispensational. It is known as covenant [historic] premillennialism. Its adherents often prefer to be called ‘historic premillennialists.’ That is because much of their position was the view that was held by many of the church fathers during the first several centuries of the church” (Paul Benware, p. 93).

A. *Hermeneutics of Historic Premillennialism* The foundation of historic premillennialism is built on the following:

1. Church is spiritual Israel “The hermeneutical system of historic premillennialism distinguishes it from dispensational premillennialism. In historic premillennialism a distinction between Israel and the church is not maintained nor is a consistently literal interpretive method demanded” (Enns, pp. 386-87).

a. “Ryrie correctly identified myself as a nondispensationalist because I do not keep Israel and the church distinct throughout God’s program” (George Ladd, *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, Robert Clouse ed., p. 20).

b. “I do not see how it is possible to avoid the conclusion that the New Testament applies Old Testament prophecies to the New Testament church and in doing so identifies the church as spiritual Israel” (Ladd, p. 23).

(1) Ex. The application of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34) to the church (Hebrews 8; 2 Corinthians 3:6) supposedly means that the Church fulfills the promises made to Israel.

(a) REBUTTAL 1: Though the church may *participate* in the blessings of the New Covenant, the eternal and unconditional nature of the New Covenant demands a *fulfillment* with literal Israel.

(b) REBUTTAL 2: “The crucial point is *how we know* whether something in the OT (especially prophecy about Israel’s future) is still binding in the NT. . . . If an OT prophecy or promise is made unconditionally to a given people and is still unfulfilled to them even in the NT era, then the prophecy must still be fulfilled to them. While a prophecy given unconditionally to Israel has a fulfillment [application] for the church if the NT *applies* it to the church, it must also be fulfilled to Israel. Progress of revelation cannot cancel unconditional promises” (John Feinberg, *Continuity and Discontinuity*, p. 76).

2. Priority of the New Testament over the Old Testament “Here is the basic watershed between a dispensational and a nondispensational theology. Dispensationalism forms its eschatology by a literal interpretation of the Old Testament and then fits the New Testament into it. A nondispensational eschatology forms its theology from the explicit teaching of the New Testament. It confesses that it cannot be sure how the Old Testament prophecies of the end are to be fulfilled. . . .” (Ladd, p. 27).
 - a. **Concerning the Millennium** “A millennial doctrine cannot be based on Old Testament prophecies but should be based on the New Testament alone. The only place in the Bible that speaks of an actual millennium is the passage in Revelation 20:1-6. Any millennial doctrine must be based upon the most natural exegesis of this passage” (Ladd, p. 32) (emphasis mine).
 - (1) REBUTTAL: The concept of a kingdom of God on earth is well-grounded in the Old Testament (Gen. 13:15; Isaiah 2:1-4; Daniel 2:44; Zech. 14:9). It does not rest on Revelation 20:1-6 alone. “It is unfortunate that he [Ladd] cannot see that the Old Testament supplies the vast portion of material for putting the picture in full perspective” (Herman Hoyt, *The Meaning of the Millennium*, p. 44).
 - b. **New Testament Reinterpreting the Old Testament** Ladd states that often the New Testament reinterprets the Old Testament: “*The Old Testament is reinterpreted* in light of the Christ event.”
 - (1) Ex. Matt. 2:15 reinterprets Hos. 11:1
 - (2) Rom. 9:24-26 reinterprets Hos. 1:10; 2:23.
 - (a) REBUTTAL 1: “In passage after passage Ladd insists that the New Testament is interpreting the Old when the New Testament is simply applying a principle found in the Old Testament. Rushing to the conclusion that these references identify the church and Israel as the same body of the saved is wholly gratuitous. Even though ‘the New Testament applies Old Testament prophecies to the New Testament church,’ it does not do so in the sense of identifying the church as spiritual Israel. It makes such application merely for the purpose of explaining something that is true of both.”
 - (b) REBUTTAL 2: “NT application of the OT passage does not necessarily eliminate the passage’s original meaning. No NT writer claims his new understanding of the OT passage cancels the meaning of the OT passage in its own context or that the new application is the only meaning of the OT passage. The NT writer merely offers a different application of an OT passage than the OT might have foreseen; he is not claiming the OT understanding is now irrelevant” (Feinberg, p. 77).

B. *Views of Historic Premillennialism concerning:*

1. Second Coming Rapture and second coming happen simultaneously.
2. Resurrections A resurrection of believers takes place at the beginning of the Millennium. The resurrection of unbelievers takes place at the end of the Millennium.
3. Judgments Judgment for believers takes place at second coming. Judgment for unbelievers takes place at end of Millennium.
4. Church's relation to the Tribulation The Church goes through the future Tribulation (Posttrib)
5. Millennium Millennium is both present and future (already/not yet). Christ is presently reigning in heaven but there will also be a future earthly aspect to His reign.
6. Israel's relation to the Millennium "All premillennialists also anticipate that Israel will have a special place in the millennium. They disagree, however, as to the nature of that special place. Dispensationalists hold to a continuing unconditional covenant of God with national Israel, so that when God has completed his dealings with the church, he will return to his relations with national Israel. Jesus will literally sit upon David's throne and rule the world from Israel. All of the prophecies and promises regarding Israel will be fulfilled within the millennium, which will therefore have a markedly Jewish character. *Nondispensationalists put much less emphasis upon national Israel*, holding instead that Israel's special place, being spiritual in nature, will be found within the church. Israel will be converted in large numbers during the millennium" (Erickson, p. 1211) (emphasis mine).

C. *Evaluation of Historic Premillennialism* Historic Premillennialism has three main weaknesses:

1. Nonliteral approach to prophecy "It spiritualizes the prophecies of the Old Testament, applying them to the church, which is viewed as spiritual Israel" (Benware, p. 94).
2. Does not do justice to God's eternal covenants with Israel "Second, it fails to give the nation of Israel its proper place in the program of God. The unconditional, eternal biblical covenants ratified by God require that Israel as a nation be the recipient of certain blessings" (Ibid.).
3. Faulty view of progressive revelation "Third, there is some inaccuracy in its view of progressive revelation. It is true, of course, that God has revealed more and more truth progressively over the years. And it is true that the New Testament reveals new truth and develops truth previously given in the Old Testament. However, it fails to recognize that many of the Old Testament prophecies should be understood on their own merit because they are clear in their meaning. The idea of progressive revelation does not mean that the Old Testament cannot be understood apart from the New Testament. It does not mean that clear Old Testament prophecies must be reinterpreted, changed or altered" (Ibid.).

The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament

I. Introductory issues

- A. *NT use of the OT* “. . . more than 10 percent of the New Testament text is made up of citations or direct allusions to the Old Testament” (Roger Nicole, “New Testament Use of the Old Testament,” in *Rightly Divided*, p. 183).
- B. *The problem* “The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament is one of the most difficult aspects of Bible interpretation. As you read the New Testament, you are no doubt struck by the numerous times it quotes or alludes to the Old Testament. Examining the quotations closely, you notice they are not always exact word-for-word quotations” (Zuck, p. 250).
- C. *Important questions* “Does this overturn all we have said about the principles of normal interpretation? As the New Testament writers exercised freedom in the way they quoted the Old Testament, were they abandoning normal, grammatical, historical interpretation? . . . Were the New Testament writers interpreting the Old Testament by a different standard as they quoted from it? And if so, does that give us liberty today to do the same?” (Ibid.).

II. How the NT uses the OT

- A. *Variations in wording of quotations* Many quotes of the OT in the NT are verbatim, but many are not. “When citing the Old Testament, the New Testament writers often changed the wording or omitted words. They used freedom in changing points of grammar, in paraphrasing, omitting selected portions, giving partial quotations, using synonyms, and recognizing new aspects of truth” (Ibid., p. 254).
 - 1. Substitute pronoun for a noun “The New Testament writers sometimes substituted a pronoun for a noun. When Matthew quoted Isaiah 40:3, ‘make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God,’ he wrote, ‘Make straight paths for Him’ (Matt. 3:3), substituting ‘Him’ for ‘our God’” (Ibid.).
 - 2. Nouns in place of pronouns “Nouns were sometimes used in place of pronouns. ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord’ (Luke 19:38) makes more specific the words of Psalm 118:26, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’” (Ibid, pp. 254-55).
 - 3. Plural noun in place of singular noun “A plural noun is sometimes used in place of a singular noun. Matthew referred to Jesus speaking ‘parables’ (Matt. 13:35), but the verse he quoted (Ps. 78:2) has the singular ‘parable’ in the Hebrew” (Ibid, p. 255).

4. Substituting a pronoun “Sometimes the writers changed a pronoun. Isaiah said, ‘The virgin. . . will call Him Immanuel’ (Isa. 7:14). When Matthew quoted this verse, he said, ‘They will call Him Immanuel’ (Matt. 1:23).
5. Personal reference in quote “Occasionally the speaker is identified in the quotation. John the Baptist quoted Isaiah 40:3, but included in it the fact that he was the one Isaiah referred to. . . . ‘I am the voice of one calling in the desert’ (John 1:23)” (Ibid.).
6. Direct changed to indirect discourse “Sometimes direct discourse is changed to indirect discourse. This is seen in Hosea 2:23, ‘I will say to those called “Not My people,” “You are My people,”’ which is quoted in Romans 9:25 as follows: ‘I will call them “My people” who are not my people’” (Ibid.).
7. Indirect changed to direct discourse “Other times an indirect discourse is changed to direct discourse. ‘He’ in Isaiah 29:16 (‘He did not make me’) is changed to ‘You’ in Romans 9:20” (Ibid, p. 256).
8. Verbal forms altered “The verbal form is sometimes altered slightly. The commands beginning with the words ‘You shall not’ in Exodus 20:13-16 are changed to the imperative ‘Do not’ in Mark 10:19” (Ibid.).
9. From general to more specific reference “A general reference is occasionally made more specific in the New Testament quotations. Amos 5:26 refers to ‘the shrine of your king. . . the star of your god.’ When Stephen quoted this in Acts 7:43, he referred to the ‘shrine of Molech and the star of your god Rephan’ (Acts 7:43).” (Ibid.).
10. Change extent of reference “Sometimes the extent of the reference is changed. Amos 5:27 referred to ‘exile beyond Damascus,’ but Stephen extended it to refer to ‘exile beyond Babylon’ (Acts 7:43)” (Ibid.).
11. Order rearranged “The order of the clauses is sometimes rearranged. When Jesus quoted five of the Ten Commandments in Luke 18:20, He gave them in an order that differs slightly from the order in Exodus 20:12-16” (Ibid.).
12. Combining of quotations “Sometimes two quotations are combined and assigned to the more prominent of the two Old Testament authors. This is the case in Mark 1:2-3. Verse 2 quotes Malachi 3:1 and verse 3 quotes Isaiah 40:3, and yet Mark introduced the verses with the words, ‘It is written in Isaiah the prophet.’ Isaiah obviously is the more prominent of the two authors, and his book begins the section in the Hebrew Old Testament known as the Prophets, which concludes with Malachi” (Ibid.).
13. Paraphrase “Sometimes the New Testament writers rendered the sense of an Old Testament passage loosely as a paraphrase. An example is Matthew 13:35, ‘I will utter things hidden since the Creation of the world,’ which paraphrases Psalm 78:2, ‘I will utter

- B. *Omitting certain portions of verses* “Writers of New Testament books occasionally shortened Old Testament verses they quoted.” (Zuck, p. 257) “Zechariah wrote regarding the Lord’s triumphal entry, ‘Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem!’ When John cited the passage he changed the imperative to a negative, ‘Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion’ (John 12:15). Also it is interesting to note that Zechariah 9:9 has six lines, but John selected only three to quote. Matthew, however, cited four of the lines (Matt. 21:5)” (Ibid.).
- C. *Partial quotations* “When Jesus read from Isaiah 61:2, as recorded in Luke 4:18-19, He stopped in the middle of verse 2 of Isaiah 61, not reading the words, ‘and the day of vengeance of our God.’ This was because His carrying out of the day of vengeance is yet future and was not relevant to His first advent” (Ibid.).
- D. *Using synonyms* “The word ‘highway’ in Isaiah 40:3 is replaced by the word ‘paths’ in Matthew 3:3. Apparently John the Baptist felt this word was more appropriate as he quoted this passage to his audience in the desert of Judea” (Zuck, p. 258).
- E. *Summary* “All of this above material illustrates that the New Testament writers often preserved the thought of the Old Testament passages cited, rather than always giving verbatim quotations (though they often did that as well). We should not conclude that verbal variations we have noted are inaccurate” (Zuck, p. 259).

III. Ways the New Testament Uses the Old Testament

- A. *To point up the accomplishment or realization of an Old Testament prediction.* According to Matthew 1:22-23, Jesus’ virgin birth was in fulfillment of the prophecy given in Isaiah 7:14: “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet. ‘The virgin shall be with Child and will give birth to a Son, and they will call Him Immanuel which means, God with us.’” Matthew also referred to Jesus’ birthplace in Bethlehem as being in fulfillment of the prophecy in Micah 5:2.
- B. *To confirm that a New Testament incident is in agreement with an Old Testament principle.* For example, in Acts 15, the issue that faced the Jerusalem Council was Gentile salvation and whether Gentiles needed to be circumcised in order to be saved. James quoted Amos 9:11-12, a reference to when the tabernacle of David will be rebuilt (which takes place in the millennium). He did so, not to show that Amos 9:11-12 is being fulfilled in this age, but to show that Gentile salvation is in harmony with what the Old Testament prophets said. Since Gentiles will be a part of God’s kingdom program in the millennium, there should be no problem with God calling Gentiles to be His people in this age. Nor did Gentiles need to be circumcised to be saved. “James’ main point is clear: Gentile salvation apart from the Law does not contradict the Old Testament prophets” (Stanley Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 394).

C. *To support a point being made in the New Testament*

1. Ex. God of the living “A good number of Old Testament citations are used to give support to the points being made in the New Testament. In Matthew 22:32 Jesus quoted Exodus 3:6, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,’ to support His point that God is the God of the living and that the resurrection will therefore be a reality” (Zuck, p. 261).
2. Ex. Divorce “In speaking against divorce Jesus emphasized that a husband and wife ‘are no longer two, but one’ (Mark 10:8). In support of this statement he quoted Genesis 2:24, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh’” (Zuck, p. 261).

D. *To illustrate a New Testament truth* “The truth that the ‘message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing’ (1 Cor. 1:18) is illustrated by the Old Testament verse, Isaiah 29:14, which is cited in 1 Corinthians 1:19: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise’” (Zuck, p. 262).

E. *To apply the Old Testament to a New Testament incident or truth*

1. Ex. Object of God’s mercy “In Romans 9:15 Paul quoted Exodus 33:19: ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’ In Exodus God spoke these words to Moses to assure him of His presence and blessing (see Ex. 33:14-20). But in Romans 9 Paul applied these words to a different situation, namely, God’s election of Jacob rather than Esau (Rom. 9:11-13). Paul was pointing up the fact that those whom God chooses are based not on their efforts but on God’s mercy (v. 16)” (Zuck, p. 263).
2. Ex. Support of church leaders “In 1 Corinthians 9:9 Paul quoted Deuteronomy 25:4, ‘Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.’ Paul was applying that Old Testament verse, set in the context of kindness and justice to the poor and the needy, to his argument that those who serve the Lord have a right to be supported by those they serve” (Ibid.).

F. *To summarize an Old Testament concept*

1. Ex. Jesus the Nazarene “The example is found in Matthew 2:23. . . . *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, that He should be called a Nazarene.* However, no such statement is found anywhere in the OT. Since Matthew used the plural *prophets*, one should be able to find at least two, yet there is not even one. (This is) a summary of what the prophets actually said. The plural use of *prophets* is a clue to this category. In the first century, Nazarenes were a people despised and rejected and the term was used to reproach and to shame (John 1:46). The prophets did teach that the Messiah would be a despised and rejected individual (e.g. Isa 53:3) and this is summarized by the term, *Nazarene*” (Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology, The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, pp. 945-948).

2. **Ex. Persecution of the Messiah** “Another example of this category is Luke 18:31-33. Using the plural for prophet again, Jesus states that the time for fulfillment has come and He states what is to be fulfilled: the Messiah will go to Jerusalem, be turned over to the Gentiles; the Gentiles will mock Him, treat Him shamefully, spit on Him, scourge Him, and kill Him, but He will rise again the third day. Not one prophet ever said all this, but the prophets together did say all this. Hence, this is a summation” (Fruchtenbaum, pp. 945-48).

G. *To draw a parallel with an Old Testament Incident* “In speaking of ‘a remnant chosen by grace’ (Rom. 11:5), that is, a remnant of believing Jews, Paul said this was redolent of Elijah’s day when a remnant of 7,000 people did not worship Baal (v. 4, quoting 1 Kings 19:18). The situation in Paul’s day paralleled the Old Testament incident” (Zuck, p. 266).

H. *To relate an Old Testament Situation to Christ* “On a number of occasions the New Testament writers referred to statements in the Old Testament and then enlarged or extended those statements beyond their original historical setting to refer to Christ. Though the passages in the two Testaments refer to entirely different historical situations, parallels or analogies were seen by the New Testament writers in reference to Christ. The Old Testament situations were ‘heightened’ in the New Testament to speak of Christ. The New Testament references did not contradict the passages quoted from the Old Testament. Nor were they unrelated. Instead, they were expansions of related truths” (Zuck, p. 267).

1. **Ex. Matthew 2:15 and its use of Hosea 11:1** “. . . that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled saying, ‘Out of Egypt did I call My Son.’” “A problem arises when we note the context of Hosea 11:1. That verse is clearly speaking of Israel. Since the ‘son’ in Hosea 11:1 is Israel and the ‘Son’ in Matthew 2:15 is Christ, how can Matthew have said that Jesus’ being in Egypt as a Child till the death of Herod was a fulfillment of Hosea 11:1?” (Zuck, p. 267).
 - a. **A non-dispensational interpretation (George Ladd)** “In Hosea this is not a prophecy at all but a historical affirmation that God had called Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus. However, Matthew recognizes Jesus to be God’s greater son and deliberately turns a historical statement into a prophecy. This is a principle which runs throughout biblical prophecy. *The Old Testament is reinterpreted* in light of the Christ event” (Ladd, *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, p. 21).
 - b. **A dispensational interpretation (Zuck)** “One answer is to recognize that the word *fulfilled* does not *always* mean the realization of a prediction. This has already been seen in Matthew 2:23. The Greek words translated ‘that it might be fulfilled’ *do* indicate accomplishment of a prophecy, as in Matthew 1:22; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; and 21:4. On the other hand ‘fulfilled’ in 2:15, 17, 23; 13:14, 35; and 27:9 points to an enlarging or a heightening of the Old Testament statements to refer to Christ. In these verses the Old Testament incidents or statements were ‘fulfilled’ not in the sense of prophecies being realized but in the sense that they were ‘filled with more (higher) meaning.’”

“When God the Father ‘called’ His Son ‘out of Egypt,’ it was analogous to His calling Israel out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus. What was in one sense incomplete is now filled up or brought to a climax. Several analogies are evident between Jesus and Israel: both were in ‘exile’ in Egypt; both, being the objects of God’s love, were delivered; both came out of Egypt; both passed through the waters (Ex. 13:17-14:31; Matt. 3:13-17); both were tested in the wilderness (Ex. 15:22-17:15; Matt. 4:1-11); in both cases the multitudes were fed with ‘manna’ from heaven (Ex. 16; Matt. 14:13-21; 15:29-39). From these parallels it is evident that Jesus was seen as the ideal Israel. His experience was an enlargement of the experience of the nation” (Zuck, pp. 267-68).

- (1) “When God calls His son ‘out of Egypt’ in Hosea 11 the event is history not prophecy. Hosea is looking back 700 years to the first Exodus from Egypt. He is not looking forward 700 years to Christ’s return from Egypt following the death of Herod” (Charles Dyer, “Biblical Meaning of Fulfillment,” in *Issues in Dispensationalism*, p. 55).
 - (2) “The mere presence of *pleroo* (“fulfilled”) in Matthew 2:15 does not require one to force a prophecy of Christ into Hosea 11:1. One must first look at Hosea 11:1 to see what the passage means in its own context. Only after determining the meaning in its context should one go to the New Testament to see how the writer is using the passage. Matthew used Hosea 11:1 because his purpose was to show that Christ succeeded as God’s Son while Israel failed as God’s son. Christ ‘realized the full potential’ or ‘filled completely’ God’s designs for Israel when He called them out of Egypt. Thus, Matthew was not using *pleroo* to point out a veiled prophecy in Hosea. Instead, he was looking back and focusing on the contrasts between Israel’s failures as God’s son and Christ’s obedience as God’s Son” (Dyer, p. 56).
2. Ex. Matthew 2:17-18's use of Jeremiah 31:15 “Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled saying, A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; And she refused to be comforted, because they were no more” (Matt. 2:17-18). “In the original context, Jeremiah is speaking of an event soon to come as the Babylonian Captivity begins. As the Jewish young men were being taken into captivity, they went by the town of Ramah. Not too far from Ramah is where Rachel was buried and she was the symbol of Jewish motherhood. As the young men were marched toward Babylon, the Jewish mothers of Ramah came out weeping for sons they will never see again. Jeremiah pictured the scene as Rachel weeping for her children. This is the literal meaning of Jeremiah 31:15. The NT cannot change or reinterpret what this verse means in that context, nor does it try to do so. In this category, there is a NT event that has one point of similarity with the OT event. The verse is quoted as an event that has one point of similarity with the OT event. The verse is quoted as an application. The one point of similarity between Ramah and Bethlehem is that once again Jewish mothers are weeping for sons that they will never see again so the OT passage is applied to the NT event.” (Fruchtenbaum, pp. 945-48) “The only point of comparison is the sadness felt in the hearts of both groups of women. . . . He is not saying that Jeremiah was predicting the death of babies in Bethlehem. Instead, he is indicating that the measure of grief experienced by the women in Ramah who watched their sons being carried off into captivity was ‘seen in full’ for ‘filled completely’ by the women in Bethlehem who watched their sons being slaughtered” (Dyer, p. 57).

- I. *Summary* Of the many ways the New Testament writers use the Old Testament, “only one relates to the fulfillment of prophecy. In the other nine the New Testament writers quote or allude to Old Testament people, events, and actions and use them to illustrate or illuminate their own messages to the church. These points of comparison relate more to the literary purposes of the New Testament writers than they do to prophetic purposes hidden in the pages of the Old Testament. One cannot determine the fulfillment of Bible prophecy merely on the basis of New Testament allusions to the Old Testament” (Dyer, p. 61).

IV. Tips for Interpreting the NT’s use of the OT

- A. *Be careful with the term “fulfilled.”* “. . . the word *pleroo* [fulfilled] can mean far more than the ‘fulfillment’ of a prophecy, and the New Testament writers use the word in a variety of ways when citing the Old Testament.” (Dyer, p. 62) “*Pleroo* (fulfill) occurs ninety times in the New Testament, but only twenty-eight occurrences seem to be part of an introductory formula. Most of the remaining sixty-two occurrences have no connection with prophecy. *Pleroo* has five separate ranges of meaning in the New Testament. Only one of these five refers to the fulfillment of prophecy” (Dyer, p. 52).
 1. To fill something with content “When (the net) was full (*pleroo*), the fishermen pulled it up on the shore” (Mt. 13:48).
 2. To fulfill a demand or claim “He who loves his fellowman has fulfilled (*pleroo*) the law” (Rom. 13:8).
 3. To fill up completely a specific measure “Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (*pleroo*)” (Luke 21:24).
 4. To complete “When Jesus had finished (*pleroo*) saying all this in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum (Luke 7:1).
 5. To complete or to fulfill prophetic sayings which were spoken with divine authority “. . . less than one-third of the occurrences of the word *pleroo* in the New Testament fit this category. The mere presence of *pleroo* is not enough to indicate fulfillment of prophecy. ‘Clearly, to apply our English denotations of the word fulfill to its occurrences in the biblical text will sometimes result in an interpretation unintended by the author’” (Dyer, p. 53).
- B. *Look for OT meaning first* “What then is the proper approach to discovering the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy? It is this writer’s contention that the proper approach to discovering the biblical fulfillment of a prophecy must begin in the Old Testament. One cannot determine the fulfillment of prophecy until one first knows whether a passage is prophetic and, if it is, what the parameters are that will constitute a biblical fulfillment” (Dyer, p. 62). For fulfillment, look for exact correspondence between OT and NT. “Biblical fulfillment occurs when the meaning of a specific Old Testament prophecy finds its exact correspondence in a New Testament person, activity, or event. If the New Testament writer looks back to the Old Testament and draws significance from the Old Testament for his specific audience, this is application of the Old Testament, not fulfillment of the Old Testament.” (Ibid, p. 67) “The process for determining the fulfillment. . . is (a) determine what each prophecy meant in its original, historical context and (b) look for a historical incident that corresponds to the meaning of the text. When the particulars of the text are paralleled in a historical event, then the prophecy is fulfilled” (Dyer, p. 66).

Appendix 1: Why Study the Bible?

I. Reasons people give for not studying their Bibles

- A. *“The Bible is not relevant to everyday life.”* **Answer:** The timeless principles and instructions of Scripture apply to every person in every age. “Sadly, some of us carry the mistaken impression that the Bible is a dry, irrelevant collection of impractical information—beautiful on a coffee table, but certainly not ‘must’ reading for our busy lives. When things go wrong in life, we’re often prone to by-pass God and go everywhere else for help. We go to psychiatrists, psychologists, advisers, and friends. We take tranquilizers and try talk-yourself-out-of-it therapies. We consult God only as a last resort—but, if we were really wise, we would run to Him at the first sign of trouble” (Irving L. Jensen, *Enjoy Your Bible*, pp. 16-17).
- B. *“The Bible is hard to understand.”* **Answer:** A good plan can make Bible study enjoyable and understandable.
- C. *“I’ll just let my pastor teach me what I need to know.”* **Answer:** Pastors are to teach believers the Word but not to the exclusion of personal Bible study. All Christians must be like the noble Bereans who examined “the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). “Unfortunately, most Christians have the idea they cannot understand the Bible. They think it was written for theologians or ministers so all they do is listen to ‘Bible scholars’ lecture and preach. . . but spend very little time studying it for themselves. The thing that is so sad about this is that the Bible wasn’t written for theologians, it was written for people just like you! For example, the Lord said through the apostle John, ‘I write unto you, *little children*, because your sins are forgiven. . . and because ye have known the Father’ (1 John 2:12-13). Evidently then, ‘little children’ or brand new Christians can understand the Bible. That means *you* can understand the Bible! Oh you may not be able to go down into the depths of Bible truth the way the scholars do, and there will be things you won’t understand, but you will find there is far more in the Scriptures you can understand than what you cannot” (Tim LaHaye, *How To Study The Bible For Yourself*, pp. 11-12).
- D. *“I am busy and do not have enough time to study the Bible.”* **Answer:** People will always make time for what is important to them. Since Bible study for the Christian is not optional, but mandatory, believers must make time for it. “Where does one *find* time to read the Bible? Free time is so scarce for most Christians that it is never found. So we must *take* time to read the Bible, scheduling it at a regular time, if possible. . . . We can easily set time aside for the daily newspaper and the weekly reading of periodicals. We should, likewise, develop the taste for daily Bible study” (Jensen, *Enjoy Your Bible*, p. 32).
- E. *“The Bible is boring.”* **Answer:** This statement is more of a reflection on the person than the Bible. “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edge sword. . . .” (Heb. 4:12). “My experience is that the Bible is dull when I am dull. When I am really alive and set upon the text with a tidal pressure of living affinities, it opens, it multiplies discoveries, and reveals depths even faster than I can note them” (Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*, p. 13).

- F. *“I do not have the training to be effective in Bible study.”* **Answer:** All that is required for Bible study is the ability to read and a good plan. There are too many good helps and resources to use lack of training as an excuse.
- G. *“It’s not that I don’t want to read the Bible, I just don’t like to read period.”* **Answer:** God did not give us His Word on video tape. He gave it to us in written form. If we desire to know Him better, we will learn to read. “Our culture has made a radical shift in the last century from a word-based society of readers to an image-based society of viewers. The medium of our time is television, not books. As a result, unlike our forebears of a few generations ago, we don’t know how to read. To a large extent, we’ve lost that art. And yet the Bible is a book, which means it must be read to be understood and appreciated. We’ve got to recapture the skills of reading if we want to become effective Bible students” (Howard Hendricks, *Living by the Book*, p. 64).

II. Reasons Christians should study their Bibles

- A. *Bible study is essential for growth* “Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Peter. 2:2).
- B. *Bible study is essential for spiritual maturity* “Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil” (Hebrews 5:11-14).
- C. *Bible study is essential for correct doctrine and godly living.* “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). “How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word” (Psalm 119:9).
- D. *Bible study helps us make right decisions.* “Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). “Life is filled with decisions! Little ones, big ones and many in between. When the principles of God are well known to a Christian it simplifies the process of decision making” (LaHaye, p. 20).

III. Who can study the Bible?

- A. *Those who are believers* To understand the Bible, a person must be a true Christian, a believer, born again. “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor. 2:14).

- B. *Those who rely on the Holy Spirit* “We have to see our need of Bible study, or incentive and inspiration will be lacking. Convinced of our need to study the Bible, and knowing also our inability to understand it without help, we should depend on the Holy Spirit who indwells us (Romans 8:9) and who was given to guide us into all the truth (John 16:13). We must study the Bible under his influence, for as D.L. Moody said, ‘The Bible without the Holy Spirit is a sun-dial by moonlight.’” (Jensen, *Enjoy Your Bible*, p. 27) “Two extremes are to be avoided regarding the Holy Spirit’s ministry. The first is that of an extreme passivity in which the student avoids the disciplines of toil and sweat and equates Bible study only with an ‘inner voice’ teaching him. The other error is associated with an intense mental activity, involving much time and study, in which the Spirit’s illuminating ministry is not recognized or depended on. . . . If the earnest Bible student comes to the Scriptures in reverence, being continually aware of his need for help and of God’s offer for help, he will find himself engaged in fruitful labor” (Irving L. Jensen, *Independent Bible Study*, p. 62).
- C. *Those who recognize the Bible’s authority* Deep conviction concerning the infallibility and authority of the Bible is a must.
- D. *Those who are diligent* “Scripture does not yield its fruit to the lazy. Like any other discipline of life, Bible study pays in proportion to how much of an investment you make. The greater the investment, the greater the reward” (Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living By The Book*, p. 30).
1. “Now these [Bereans] were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).
 2. “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).
- E. *Those who have a great desire* “It is one thing to know that we need to study the Bible. It is another thing to desire to study it. Such a desire isn’t forced, but should come naturally to the one who knows the Author personally, and loves his fellowship” (Jensen, *Enjoy Your Bible*, pp. 28-29).
1. “Like newborn babes, *long* for the pure milk of the word” (1 Pet. 2:2).
 2. “O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Ps. 119:97).
 3. “How sweet are Thy words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Ps. 119:103).
- F. *Those who are receptive* “This is the attitude of submission and ‘mold-ability.’ We approach the Bible not to do something to it, but to let it do something to us. Someone very wise once said, ‘Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself but because it contradicts them.’ With an open heart and mind, we are prepared to understand the Scriptures (cf. Luke 24:45)” (Jensen, p. 28).

IV. Attributes of the Bible

- A. *The Bible is infallible* “The Bible in its entirety, has no mistakes. Specifically, in its original autographs it is without errors. In Psalm 19:7 the Bible says of itself, ‘The law of the Lord is perfect.’ It is flawless because it was authored by God— and He is flawless. Therefore, if God wrote the Bible, and if He is the ultimate authority, and if His character is flawless, then the Bible is flawless and is the ultimate authority. You see, the fact that God is perfect demands that the original autograph, the original giving of the Word of God, must also be perfect” (John MacArthur, *How To Study the Bible*, p. 8).
- B. *The Bible is inerrant* “In order to be authoritative, the Bible must be true, that is, without error. As someone has noted, ‘Either the Bible is without error in all, or it is not without error at all.’ There’s really no middle ground. A ‘partially inerrant’ Bible is an errant Bible” (Hendricks, p. 25).
- C. *The Bible is inspired by God* “All Scripture is inspired [God-breathed] by God” (2 Tim. 3:16). “The great theologian B.B. Warfield said, ‘The Bible is the Word of God in such a way that when the Bible speaks, God speaks.’ That’s a good description of inspiration. The reason we call the Bible the Word of God is because it is indeed the very words that God wanted communicated” (Hendricks, p. 25).
- D. *The Bible is complete* Since the Bible is complete, we need no further revelations (See Rev. 22:18-19; Jude 3).
- E. *The Bible is a unit* “The Bible is not only one Book, it is sixty-six books collected in one volume. These sixty-six separate documents were written over a period of more than sixteen hundred years by more than forty human authors who came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Yet the Bible is a single unit, bound together by the theme of God and His relationship to humankind. Each book, section, paragraph, and verse works together with the others to reveal God’s truth. That’s why Scripture is best understood by relating its individual parts to the integrated whole” (Hendricks, p. 23).

Appendix 2: Developing a Bible Reading Plan

I. **The importance of reading** Since the Bible is a book, it must be read to be understood. Therefore, we must learn good reading skills in order to become good Bible students.

A. *Reading is foundational* “For all practical purposes, reading is the foundation of all learning. Someone has said, ‘If you can read you can learn anything.’ If you are going to learn the Bible, you will have to develop the habit of reading large portions [at least several chapters] of the scriptures. . . . It has been my observation that unless a person has the regular habit of reading the Bible, he will never develop a regular study habit. In fact, it is usually the consistent practice of reading the Scriptures that inspires a person to become a student of the book. I have never met a person who enjoyed studying the Bible who had not first developed the habit of regular reading” (LaHaye, pp. 24-25).

1. Bible study begins with reading “Bible study begins with reading it. But quite frankly, a lot of people never get to that point. They sort of nibble at it, but they never really read it. They may read a lot of books about it, but they don’t really read the Bible, and there is no substitute for reading the Scripture. We must be totally committed to reading it because that’s where it all begins” (MacArthur, p. 62).

2. Troubling statistics “A survey taken. . . by the Barna Research Group among those claiming to be ‘born-again Christians’ disclosed these disheartening numbers: Only 18 percent—less than two of every ten—read the Bible every day. Worst of all, 23 percent—almost one in four professing Christians—say they *never* read the Word of God” (Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian Life*, p. 28) (see Hendricks chart p. 10).

B. *Reading the Bible is possible* “Perhaps one of the main reasons Christians never read through the entire Bible is discouragement. Most people have never read a thousand page book before and get discouraged at the sheer length of the Bible. Do you realize that tape-recorded readings of the Bible have proven that you can read through the entire Book in seventy-one hours? The average person in the United States watches that much television in less than two weeks. In no more than fifteen minutes a day you can read through the Bible in less than three years. And yet the majority of Christians never read the Bible all the way through in their whole life” (Whitney, p. 29).

C. *Improving your reading in general* “There is a direct correlation between your ability to observe Scripture and your ability to read. So anything you can do to improve your reading skills will be a quantum leap in the direction of improving your observation skills as a student of the Bible” (Hendricks, p. 65).

Consult a book that helps you to read better. (Mortimer J. Adler—*How to Read a Book*; Ron Fry—*Improve Your Reading*; Nila Banton Smith—*Speed Reading Made Easy*)

D. *Tips for getting started*

1. Read daily “Daily Bible reading is to your spiritual life what daily eating is to your physical life. . . . Just as the body needs a regular feeding time to maintain its energy level, so the spiritual man must regularly be fed the Word of God” (LaHaye, p. 25).
2. Be consistent “Doubtless more Christians have gone down the spiritual drain or failed to grow in their Christian lives through inconsistency in their daily devotional lives than any other one thing. . . . It is absolutely essential to get into the Word daily, to keep fresh and filled with the Spirit, but unfortunately, only a small percentage of God’s people have found this key” (LaHaye, p. 40).
3. Set a regular reading time “Whatever the time, it has been my observation that if you don’t set one, your good intentions will never be realized and you will only occasionally read your Bible.” (LaHaye, p. 26) “Where does one *find* time to read the Bible? Free time is so scarce for most Christians that it is never found. So we must take time to read the Bible, scheduling it at a regular time, if possible” (Jensen, *Enjoy Your Bible*, p. 32).
 - a. **How long?** In order to work through the Bible in a reasonable period of time it is suggested that a minimum of 20 minutes be set aside each day for Bible reading.
 - b. **Be fresh** Choose the time when you are freshest to do your Bible reading. “Try to make it the same time every day. Try to make it a time other than just before you go to sleep. There’s value in reading the Bible just before you drop off, but if this is the *only* time you read Scripture then you should try to find another time. There are at least two reasons for this. First, you will retain very little of what you read when you’re so tired and sleepy. And second, if you’re like me, you probably do very little evil in your sleep. You need to encounter Christ in the Scriptures when it will still have an impact on your day” (Whitney, p. 29).
 - c. **Avoid distractions** Close the door; Shut off the TV. Read while everyone else is still in bed.
 - d. **No exceptions** Once you commit to reading your Bible everyday make no exceptions.
 - (1) “Once you give in the vow is broken and it becomes easy to repeat your inconsistency. The refusal to make exceptions is a fundamental requirement to consistency in anything” (LaHaye, p. 45).
 - (2) Read even when you don’t feel like reading. Granted, there will be times when sleeping in will seem much preferred to getting up and reading. Or there will be days when circumstances make it hard to read. But fight through those temptations. Make your body and emotions captive to your will.

4. Set a regular place to read “It will help your concentration and consistency if you set a regular place to do your 15 [20] minutes or more daily reading. All speed reading experts recommend that reading be done in a sitting position and preferably at a desk, as it aids in concentration. Another thing it does is eliminate other visual distractions. The less you have on your desk besides your Bible while reading the better. Coming regularly to this ‘quiet place’ helps establish the devotional mood” (LaHaye, p. 27).
5. Choose a passage length Determine how many chapters as a minimum you are going to read. You may exceed that number but don’t go under it. (We will discuss more on passage length in the next section.)
6. Read with a purpose Reading should not just be flipping pages. It does no good to read a lot of pages if you do not comprehend what is being said. When reading ask yourself the following:

- a. **Who are the people in the text?** Who are the people and why are they important?

Ex. Matthew 16:28—17:14. The people involved with the Transfiguration experience in this passage are important. Jesus is present to show the glory that will accompany His coming again and His Kingdom. Peter, James and John were the disciples closest to Jesus and are the “some” referred to in Matt. 16:28. The appearance of Moses and Elijah is very significant in that Moses represents the OT Law and Elijah represents the OT prophets.

- b. **What is happening in the text?** “What are the events? In what order? What happens to the characters? Or, if it’s a passage that argues a point: What is the argument? What is the point? What is the writer trying to communicate?” (Hendricks, p. 93).

Ex. The main point of Matt. 16:28—17:14 is that in light of the recent prediction of Christ’s sufferings (16:21), God’s Kingdom program was still intact. The Messiah would suffer and die but He also would come again in glory in accordance with the OT Law and Prophets.

- c. **Ask where?** “This gives you the location. Where is the narrative taking place? Where are the people in the story? Where are they coming from? Where are they going? Where is the writer? Where were the original readers of this text?” (Hendricks, p. 93).

(1) *Ex.* The transfiguration took place on a “high mountain” with only three of the disciples present.

(2) *Ex.* Paul was in prison when he wrote Philippians.

(3) *Ex.* John was on the island of Patmos when he wrote Revelation

- d. **Ask when?** This is the question of time. When did the events in the text take place? When did they occur in relation to other events in Scripture? When was the writer writing?

Ex. Matt. 13:1. The parables concerning the delay in the Kingdom program came on the same day the leaders claimed Christ was doing His miracles in the power of the devil. Only when it became clear that the leaders had rejected His kingship did Jesus declare that the Kingdom would be delayed until a future day.

- e. **Ask Why?** “There is an infinity of Why? questions to ask the biblical text. Why is this included? Why is it placed here? Why does it follow that? Why does it precede that? Why does this person say that? Why does someone say nothing? Why? is a question that digs for meaning” (Hendricks, p. 94).

Ex. Why does Matthew begin his Gospel with a genealogy? He wants to show that Jesus has the bloodline necessary to be the Messiah.

II. Suggested Bible Reading Plans

- A. *One year plan* “Many of us feel exhausted just looking at the Bible. We figure we’ll be in our rocking chairs by the time we read the entire thing. But the truth is that it’s possible to read through the whole Book in a year’s time if we read a few chapters a day” (Hendricks, p. 84). There are 1,190 chapters in the Bible, 929 in the Old Testament, 261 in the New Testament. Reading three to four chapters a day will get you through the entire Bible in a year. The following give a detailed layout of how to read the Bible in a year:
1. John R. Kohlenberger III—*Read Through the Bible in a Year* (Sound Word’s price—\$2.75)
 2. *Ryrie Study Bible*—chart entitled “Read Through the Bible in a Year” (same plan as Kohlenberger)
- B. *Three and a half year plan* (See MacArthur, *How To Study The Bible*, pp. 62-66) With this plan, within three years you can be through the Old Testament three times and the New Testament thirty times. This may sound like a long time to complete. But as a believer you will be reading your Bible for the rest of your life. Those who stick to this plan will have a tremendous familiarity with the Scripture.

1. **Old Testament** Read two to three chapters a day. Roughly 15 minutes a day will get you through the OT in a year. Try to get through the OT once a year.
 - a. **Old Testament in simpler language than NT** “Now the Old Testament is written in the Hebrew language, which is a very simple language. It doesn’t have the lofty concepts of the Greek thinking; it isn’t a theoretical language, it isn’t a conceptual language, and it isn’t a philosophical language with a lot of abstraction. It’s a very simple, very concrete language. . . . So you can read through the narrative of the Old Testament, for the most part, year after year, and all the while build a comprehension as you read” (MacArthur, p. 62).
 - b. **Suggested plan** Consult Kohlenberger’s or Ryrie’s section on the OT. You may wish to modify the OT sections into smaller portions. If you stay at their pace, you will finish the OT in 272 days.

2. **New Testament** Read a section of the NT 30 days in a row. For the shorter letters (i.e., 1 John, 1 and 2 Thessalonians) read the entire letter for thirty days. For the longer letters, Gospels, Acts and Revelation, divide them into sections. For example, since the Gospel of John has 21 chapters, divide John into three seven chapter sections. It will, then, take three months to go through John. The benefit of this method is that after 30 days, you will own the book you have just read. You will even see the pages and columns in your mind.
 - a. **The benefit** John MacArthur -- “I remember when I started using this method it was really amazing how fast I began to retain the things in the New Testament. I had always wanted to make sure that I didn’t wind up a concordance cripple, never being able to find anything in the Bible and having to look up verses in the back. And to this day, the gospel of John, 1 John, and the other books of the New Testament have stuck in my mind. Why? Because this is how we learn. . . . When you study for a test, you don’t pick up your book, read through the notes once, and say, ‘I’ve got it.’ At least, not if you’re normal. *You learn by repetition, repetition, repetition.* That’s the way to learn the Bible” (Emphasis mine) (MacArthur, p. 64).
 - b. **Suggested plan** (flexible) (Read each 30 days in a row):

Year One

- (1) 1st month— 1 John
- (2) 2nd month— John 1-7
- (3) 3rd month— John 8-14
- (4) 4th month— John 15-21
- (5) 5th month— Philippians
- (6) 6th month— Colossians
- (7) 7th month— Matthew 1-7
- (8) 8th month— Matthew 8-14
- (9) 9th month— Matthew 15-21
- (10) 10th month— Matthew 22-28
- (11) 11th month— 1 Thessalonians
- (12) 12th month— 2 Thessalonians

Year Two

- (13) 1st month— James
- (14) 2nd month— Acts 1-7
- (15) 3rd month— Acts 8-14
- (16) 4th month— Acts 16-21
- (17) 5th month— Acts 22-28
- (18) 6th month— 1 Timothy
- (19) 7th month— 2 Timothy
- (20) 8th month— Titus
- (21) 9th month— Luke 1-8
- (22) 10th month— Luke 9-16
- (23) 11th month— Luke 17-24
- (24) 12th month— Ephesians

Year Three

- (25) 1st month— Galatians
- (26) 2nd month— Romans 1-8
- (27) 3rd month— Romans 9-16
- (28) 4th month— 1 Peter
- (29) 5th month— 2 Peter
- (30) 6th month— Mark 1-8
- (31) 7th month— Mark 9-16
- (32) 8th month— 1 Corinthians 1-8
- (33) 9th month— 1 Corinthians 9-16
- (34) 10th month— 2 and 3 John
- (35) 11th month— 2 Corinthians 1-7
- (36) 12th month— 2 Corinthians 8-13

Year Four

- (37) 1st month— Philemon and Jude
- (38) 2nd month— Hebrews 1-7
- (39) 3rd month— Hebrews 8-13
- (40) 4th month— Revelation 1-7
- (41) 5th month— Revelation 8-15
- (42) 6th month— Revelation 16-22

- C. *Other approaches* The above two methods are not the only ones. There are many variations you can apply. Some people rotate between reading an OT book and a NT book. Others read a Proverb a day for each day of the month. Some read a Psalm a day. The main thing is that you get yourself into a regular routine of reading the Bible.

- D. *Listening to tapes of Scripture* Another great way to get through the Bible, in addition to your daily reading, is to listen to the Bible on audio cassette. You can listen to the Bible in your car, while jogging, walking around the neighborhood, working on your car, or soaking up some rays. “A . . . benefit of audiotaped Scripture is that you can play the tapes over and over to gain the value of repetition. I mentioned the man who had read a particular passage at least a hundred times. Imagine hearing a passage one hundred times. You think you might remember something of the truth in that passage” (Hendricks, p. 83).
- E. *Avoid the “Hunt and Peck” method* “Many use the ‘hunt and peck’ system. They open the Bible at random and hope they find something for the day. This method is better than nothing, but not much, and sometimes it is dangerous. The story is told of one person using the ‘hunt and peck’ method who opened to Matthew 27:5, ‘and Judas hanged himself.’ He then opened to another passage and discovered ‘Go and do likewise’; still a third peck produced the advice, ‘and what thou doest, do quickly’” (LaHaye, p. 39).

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