

Understanding the Bible — Biblical Survey

A survey of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation

**From the UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE
STUDY SERIES**

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WELCOME

Welcome to this study entitled UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE — BIBLICAL SURVEY. This study deals with the progressive revelation of God's Word to His people. It begins in Genesis and works through the Prophets, the Gospels, the Epistles and ends in the Book of the Revelation, giving you the big picture of Scripture. This study will allow you to make earnest biblical application in your own life so that you might be more equipped to understand the ramifications of your actions in your present walk with the Lord as it relates to your future.

The goal of this study is to present a great challenge to you, a challenge that should not be taken lightly. Throughout God's Word there are many warnings given to God's people — warnings that need to be heeded today in light of the coming age. The challenge before us is that we should heed these warnings, as they are spelled out in Scripture.

As you begin this study, it is vitally important that you ask the Holy Spirit to be your Teacher. Many times we come to the Scriptures with pre-conceived ideas — ideas that we believe because “that's what we've always been taught.” It can be dangerous to lose our teachability when it comes to God's Word. Pray that you would remain teachable, not just in this study, but all throughout your life.

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for **teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness**, in order that YOU may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).* Take a moment right now and ask God the Holy Spirit to work in you — to teach you more about God and His plan and purpose for your life. Ask Him to rebuke you in the areas of need, to correct you in your understanding and to train you in righteousness, *so that* you may accomplish the goal God has for your life. Then remain open to the Holy Spirit so that He might reveal more of God and His plan to you.

My prayer for you is that you study well. Understanding *the big picture of Scripture* has changed my life. As well it should! But the big picture is not always an easy concept to grasp. I challenge you to commit yourself to the Lord as perhaps never before. He desires His children to know the detail *concerning His plans and purposes for the ages*. But for the most part, Christians today do not have a grasp of God's plans and purposes for time and eternity, nor their part in it. We have been blinded by the enemy of our souls, and for good reason on his part. Satan knows what effect this knowledge would have on the lives of God's people. He has seen it in times past. (A thorough study of the Hebrews chapter eleven would reveal what this knowledge does in a person's life.) Once someone is saved, Satan realizes that he cannot steal away the free gift of eternal life, so the next best thing is to blind God's child to the truths concerning *God's plans and purposes for the ages*, and his/her part in it.

Therefore, you must continually commit yourself to the Lord, asking the Teacher of your soul to teach you One on one. He will do that for you. But you must seek Him with all of your heart! This overall message is very dear to the Heart of the Lord, therefore, we must have seeking hearts if we desire to know Him on this more intimate level. We must always yield ourselves totally to Him, diligently searching the Scriptures to see if what is being taught is correct or not.

Yes, I have studied in earnest, and have cried to the Lord for understanding. I take teaching very seriously, as I know that one day I will stand before the Lord with a stricter judgment (Jas. 3:1), having to give to Him an account of all that I taught. But remember our Father Who is in heaven is no respecter of persons. He will teach you One on one as you fervently seek Him. So I encourage you — SEEK HIM!

May I ask you something? Is having a more intimate knowledge of the Savior a desire of your heart? Do you desire to yield totally to Him? If you do, will you stop right now and tell Him? Your prayer will bless His heart. He will be happy, through His Holy Spirit, to reveal His Revelation to you, as you diligently seek Him.

Matthew 6:33 says that if you *seek first His kingdom and His righteousness*, then He will grant to you all that you need. My prayer for you — even as I type these words — is as Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus:

*I keep asking that
the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father,
may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation,
SO THAT you may know Him better.
I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened
IN ORDER that
you may know the hope to which He has called you,
the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints,
and His incomparably great power for us who believe.*

Ephesians 1: 17-19 (NIV)

May the Lord richly bless you as you seek Him.

Cindy

Becoming Familiar with this Workbook

(It would be beneficial for this section to be discussed at the first class meeting by the class facilitator *prior* to the class viewing the *Introductory Lecture Video*.)

Let's spend a few minutes becoming familiar with this study book. It has been carefully designed to be the greatest help to you in your study. First, glance through the workbook. Notice how the weeks are divided up into five days of study. I strongly urge you to separate your lessons into five days as opposed to doing your entire week's study in one day. Think of it in terms of gathering manna daily! Daily activity will give you time to meditate on the different facets of Scripture, and give the Lord time to speak to your heart concerning the truths taught. **I also ask that you make every effort possible to do your weekly homework *prior to coming to class*.** Experience has shown time and time again, that when a person consistently fails to do their homework, their questions and doubts interrupt the flow of class discussion. **It is vitally important that you actively participate *on the basis of personal study*.** Getting to know God and learning what His will is for you can be done in no other way. We must study His Word! It is the only means He has given us.

In this notebook the Scripture passages are printed from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted. The purpose of having the passages printed out for you in the workbook is twofold: 1) for consistency in class and, 2) for saving time in study. But please feel free to check your Bible for the context of any given passage whenever you desire. In fact, I encourage this! (Context is vitally essential to a proper understanding of any passage.) One reason I encourage you to refer to your Bible whenever you wonder about the context of any given passage is that it is not my intention to take a passage out of context to "make it say what I want it to say." I have tried to use passages to reflect the original author's intent, but it is good for you to check things out for yourself whenever possible.

These printed passages have also been provided for you to mark up and make notes within your work pages. This will be very helpful to you when you are called upon do a review or summary.

In this study course, you may progress through the work at *one of three different intensity levels*, even changing from week to week if necessary, as your schedule allows:

Level I — This is the most basic daily study. Your work at this level would simply be to read through the entire day's lesson *without a pencil in hand*. You will simply *think through* the

answers to the questions, but will not take the time to write down anything. (Reading the lesson through two times would be most beneficial!) This level will *minimally* equip you to learn further from the discussion and lecture portions of your class time. Again, I cannot stress enough the need for **every person attending class to have at least completed their lesson at this level of study.**

Level II — At level II, you will work through the lessons on a daily basis, not just thinking through the answers to the questions as you come to them, but *you will write the answers down.* As allowed, you may want to re-phrase the study passage in your own words in the space allowed for NOTES. However, at this level, you do not have to look up all the word definitions in the Appendix, nor will you have to work through the charts in the Appendix. Rather you simply read the lesson, answering all the questions in written form.

Level III — Level III students will do all of the above, as well as look up all the lexicon numbers and definitions in the Appendix. Then you will carefully write out what the passage says, answer the questions in detail, writing down the definitions as you come to them and fill in all the charts. It is at this level that most learning will take place.

If you are working at Level III, you will notice that within some of the passages there are numbers in these brackets < >. The numbers are from STRONG'S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE, and are found reprinted in the Appendix of this study workbook. Because we will be using Strong's numbering system, these will be the same numbers you can use to study the definition in other concordance books that use Strong's numbering system. As time allows in your study, I encourage you to look beyond the Appendix for further help in any given definition. It may be helpful to use VINE'S EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY. Sometimes I will make notes in the Appendix from Vine's work, but if you want further study, please feel free to do so. I encourage it. However, it is good to remember as you look up these definitions in any of these sources, that these definitions are, in themselves, not inspired, but rather a sort of commentary. Only God's Word is inspired. (At the beginning of each lexicon section in the Appendix, I have an explanation describing the etymology of these definitions.) Many people have found that looking up the words in the lexicons becomes quite easy and is very rewarding in their study.

While using the Hebrew and Greek lexicons in the Appendix, you must be careful to note whether your study word is an Old Testament word or a New Testament word. The Strong's numbering system has the numbers for the Old Testament words *always beginning* with a zero, and the New Testament words *never beginning* with a zero. So if a number begins with a zero, be sure to use the Old Testament lexicon, and if the number does not begin with a zero use the New Testament lexicon.

Personally, I have not studied either the Hebrew or Greek languages. I only offer this study help (the lexicons) for the personal study of those who would like to look up the words in a few of the passages throughout this workbook. Lexicons are readily available today in bookstores and on computer programs, and can prove to be very beneficial in personal study. The lexicon used in this workbook was taken directly from the computer program¹ I use. At the beginning of each lexicon section in the Appendix, I have placed the source of the Lexicon used in this software as the software designers state it. Read it if you like.

Throughout this workbook many of the passages are printed out as shown below. Just take a moment to see what you are to do when you come to a passage such as this. Read the passage, then I will explain what you are to do. The explanations are placed here to show you step by step what you are to do.

¹ For information on purchasing this complete and inexpensive program, you may call 1-800-243-7124 or email www.powerbible.com. You can purchase either a PowerBible CD.

Obviously, you will not find these steps continuously printed throughout the study notebook. I will assume that Level III people will follow this process throughout the study.

Let's practice. This is how many of the passages will appear. First, simply read through the verse.

John 3

16 “For God so loved <25> the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes <4100> in Him should not perish, but have eternal life...”

NOTES:

loved <25>

believes <4100>

If anything in particular strikes you about the verse as you read it through this first time, make notes as to that fact in the space provided. Then move on to the next step. (There will not always be a space provided for NOTES — only on selected passages.)

Now in the Appendix, look up the numbers found in the brackets and write out the Greek *transliteration* (a Greek word written in the English alphabet), along with the definition(s) which you feel best describes this *word as it appears in context*. (As time allows, this is where you might want to read the passage in your Bible to check the context.) Remember, our example passage is from the New Testament, so you will be in the New Testament lexicon — numbers that *do not* begin with a zero. So look up the number 25 first, and make note of the definition, writing it in the space provided.

Now repeat this process for the second word and set of brackets found in the example passage.

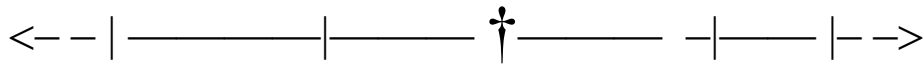
You may want to sum up what you have just learned by re-phrasing the passage in your own words in the space provided in NOTES, or jot down thoughts in the margin. This will be a great tool for review and remembrance.

In the Appendix there is a sheet entitled HOW TO DO THOROUGH OBSERVATION. You may want to peruse this sheet now. This technique is helpful in observing a passage.

Frequently you will come to places in which you are to write a summary. I cannot encourage you enough to take the time to do these summaries. I know it is very tempting to skip this part, as it is tempting for me. But summaries are very important for a couple of reasons — writing a summary causes you to think through in a detailed, logical fashion what you have just learned, and writing it down causes you to remember it better. Also you will have something upon which you can look back, helping you to better remember what you have studied.

Sometimes you will even be asked *to summarize your summaries*. This will be very helpful in building the big picture by taking the little puzzle pieces and putting them together. I have had people who have studied through the workbook, step by step, not grasping the *big picture* until they summarize the summaries. Then all of a sudden, it clicks, and that section of the puzzle falls into place.

Oh yes, and one more thing! In the back of your book, there should be a folded sheet with a timeline printed on it. (If for some reason the timeline sheet is not present, it is easy enough to make one for yourself on an 11 x 14 sheet of paper. See the diagram below.) We will refer to this timeline frequently throughout the study. It is only a tool in placing important events in a time-perspective way, and it will become helpful to see the Biblical perspective of history in relation to prophecy as we work through it. This is what the timeline looks like —



I want to encourage you — this is a very exciting way to study Scripture. If you are feeling at this point that you have “bitten off more than you can chew,” take courage, you have not! We will walk through this one step at a time. If you will be faithful, God will meet you where you need Him.

I pray for you to be diligent! You can do it!