

FEELING AN ELEPHANT

The story is told about an experiment that was conducted using two men who had completely lost their sight in their later teenage years. The men had been carefully chosen for this experiment. Although they had seen and heard of many things before they lost their sight, neither one had ever heard of an elephant nor had they ever seen an elephant before they lost their sight.

The first blind man was led to the elephant by an assistant who carefully maneuvered him to one of the elephant's legs. The blind man was allowed to examine the leg carefully. He reached as high as he could as he felt the rough texture of the skin. He wrapped his arms around the leg. He bent down and felt the toes as the elephant stood patiently. When the blind man finished his examination, he was asked to define, in his own words, an elephant.

"An elephant resembles some of the trees I saw before I lost my sight," he replied. "An elephant is covered with rough bark and I could feel the roots only on one side that were exposed above the ground before entering the earth. I reached as high as I could but I could not reach any of the limbs that must be growing from its trunk so it must grow very high."

After the first blind man was escorted from the arena, the second blind man was led to the elephant by an assistant who carefully aided him up the steps of a scaffold that was set up beside the elephant. The blind man was allowed to examine the side of the elephant carefully and could even feel part to the elephants hide as it sloped up toward its back. The blind man continued to touch as he walked from one end of the scaffold to the other, stopping only when he was halted abruptly by the guard rails on each end. Because he was on an elevated scaffold, he was not able to feel all the way down the elephants side. When the second blind man finished his examination, he was asked to define an elephant.

"An elephant must be some kind of house or perhaps some kind of cylinder," he said. "Although I could feel the roof where it began to slope up from the side, I was not able to reach the peak of the roof so an elephant must be very large. I could not feel any windows so an elephant must have some other sort of illumination inside. The outer surface is very rough and I

could not feel any joints or cracks so the entire structure must be covered with a seamless material from the peak to the ground."

HOW COULD TWO MEN HAVE TWO DIFFERENT OPINIONS OF AN ELEPHANT?

Because each had only examined part of the elephant! It has been our experience that most of the error that people embrace about the Living God and His plan for mankind is a result of a partial examination of their own translation of the Bible. In many cases, they have relied on what someone they highly respect tells them their translation says rather than examine, for themselves, what their translation teaches about the subject they are studying.

Let us haste to point out, however, that we must be careful when we consult any translation of the Bible. Before we get further into this paper, there are a few facts we would like to review about the books that compose the library of books under one cover that we call "the Bible". First, the books that compose that library were recorded over a period of approximately 1,500 years and recorded by about 40 different writers. The Living God told them what to write but He allowed them to use their own way of expressing themselves as they recorded the words. Except for a few passages in the book of Daniel, the books of the Old Testament were written in the Hebrew language and the books of the New Testament were written in the Greek language. God communicated with the writers of the original manuscripts and revealed to them tenets He wanted written. Even though the Lord allowed each recorder to use their own way of expressing themselves, He made sure they did not record error or contradictions. Therefore, the **original books** were perfect, complete and without error. The **original manuscripts** did not just contain the words of God. **They were** the inspired words of God.

"¹⁶ All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

"²¹ For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21 (King James Version)

"⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4 (New King James Version)

The sixty-six books were recorded without any divisions. The copies of them were divided into chapters and verses at a later date. While dividing the Bible into chapters and verses sometimes furnishes a convenience in study, some of us have a tendency to think that the information always concludes at the end of a chapter. As a result, we do not consider that the verses in the new chapter, in many cases, are contiguous and congruent to the preceding chapter.

The Bible is the only book that tells us, accurately, who we are, what we are doing here and where we are going in the future.

Unfortunately, often times we base our understanding of God's word upon a key scripture that was clouded or corrupted when it was translated into our native language. Sometimes we erroneously base our understanding on comments that a "great church theologian" or some other writer has added next to a scripture in our Bible even though the writer may not have examined all the scriptures that deal with that particular subject. The autographed manuscripts by the original writers were the perfect words of God. God inspired the men who penned them. God did not inspire either the translators or those who write commentaries. The translators and the commentators may have worked under aspiration but they did not do their work under inspiration. That is why it is so important that we read all the scriptures dealing with a particular subject before we come to a conclusion about what God is sharing with us.

The original autographed manuscripts that made up the Bible were a divine blueprint. They explained how God will one day live and fellowship with perfect people who will inherit a new, perfect earth.

*"¹ Then I saw a new heaven and **a new earth**. The former heaven and **the former earth had passed away**, and the sea was no more." Revelation 21:1 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)*

These residents will have chosen to return love to God of their own free will as they obey His call to (1) come to Him in prayer, (2) repent of their sins and while looking in faith to Calvary, (3) ask that the payment Jesus Christ gave on the cross pay for the sin debt they owe.

"¹⁰ Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him this man standeth here before you whole. ¹¹ This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. ¹² Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:10-12 (Confraternity–Douay Version, Saint Joseph New Catholic Edition)

"⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: ⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. ¹¹ As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:8-13 (New International Version)

Being a member of God's creation does not make a person a member of the family of God. Each of us has a material body that has material parents. Having a material body qualifies us as a creation of God. In order to become a member of the family of God, however, our spiritual body must be restored to fellowship with the Holy Spirit of God. It must be "born again". This is done when we go to God in prayer, ask God to forgive us of the sins we have committed and we ask that the payment Christ provided on the cross, pay for the sin debt that we owe.

"¹⁹ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. ²¹ But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; ²² Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: ²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ²⁶ To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:19-26 (King James Version)

At the moment of salvation, it is the spiritual body (the inward body) that is "saved", not the material body. Our material bodies have an old sin nature and they will never lose it. That is why our material body will never get out of this world alive. Our material body has never wanted to do the will of God in the past, our material body does not want to do the will of God now and our material body will never want to do the will of God in the future. That's the reason Paul said in 2nd Corinthians 5:1-10 that God will give the spiritual bodies that have been "born again" a heavenly, glorified body at the catching up or the Rapture.

"¹ For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: ³ If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. ⁴ For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. ⁵ Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. ⁶ Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: ⁷ (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) ⁸ We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. ⁹ Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 (King James Version)

³⁵ But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" ³⁶ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain--perhaps wheat or some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. ³⁹ All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. ⁴⁰ There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. ⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. ⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. ⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 (New King James Version)

God's plan of salvation has always been the same. The only difference has been that the redeemed people who lived before the crucifixion looked forward in faith. They asked that the payment Christ would give one day in the future be applied to the sin debt they owed God. The

redeemed who have lived since the cross have looked backward in faith and have asked God to apply the payment Christ has given on the cross to the sin debt they owe. Salvation is obtained through faith. The people who were saved before the crucifixion did not need to exercise any more faith to believe He would die than we exercise by believing He has died.

We are comfortable using almost any translation of the Bible into English whether, for example, it's the Confraternity–Douay Version, (Saint Joseph New Catholic Edition), the New International Version, the King James Version or the New American Bible by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, just to name a few. The wording in most of the translations is different. Sometimes the chapters and verses may be divided differently. Some of the books may have a different name or may be spelled differently. But if you will examine all the scriptures that deal with a particular subject, you will find that the truth taught is the same. One translation might say, for example, “The Holstein cow ate green grass and gave white milk”. Another translation might say “The green grass was eaten by a Holstein cow and she then gave white milk”.

When many of us face the reality that the book we hold in our hand is not the pure word of God, our first impulse is to throw it all away. Do not despair. All is not lost. Would you quit eating grapes just because you have to watch out for the seeds and spit them out? Do gardeners forsake the potato crop when they discover they must search for the potatoes by digging so they might enjoy potato salad?

May I offer a few suggestions that will enable you to glean the truth from God's Word while you stay away from the seeds of error in your favorite translation and your favorite commentary?

First, and most important, be sure you are one of God's children. Have you ever gone to God in prayer and asked God to forgive you of the sins you have committed? Have you asked that the payment Christ provided on the cross, pay for the sin debt you owed? Have you made your appeal through saving faith, that is, confessing to God there is nothing you can do to earn eternal life? We are not exercising saving faith in Christ until we admit there is nothing we can do to help gain eternal life. There is not one saved person mentioned in the Old Testament who was baptized or who belonged to a local church.

"²¹ Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor." Galatians 3:21-25 (New King James Version)

"⁸ But what saith the scripture? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart. This is the word of faith, which we preach. ⁹ For if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰ For, with the heart, we believe unto justice; but, with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the scripture saith: Whosoever believeth in him, shall not be confounded. ¹² For there is no distinction of the Jew and the Greek: for the same is Lord over all, rich unto all that call upon him. ¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. ¹⁴ How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear, without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they be sent, as it is written: How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things! ¹⁶ But all do not obey the gospel. For Isaias saith: Lord, who hath believed our report? ¹⁷ Faith then cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of Christ. ¹⁸ But I say: Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world. ¹⁹ But I say: Hath not Israel known? First, Moses saith: I will provoke you to jealousy by that which is not a nation; by a foolish nation I will anger you. ²⁰ But Isaias is bold, and saith: I was found by them that did not seek me: I appeared openly to them that asked not after me. ²¹ But to Israel he saith: All the day long have I spread my hands to a people that believeth not, and contradicteth me." Romans 10:8-21 (Confraternity–Douay Version, Saint Joseph New Catholic Edition)

"¹ What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? ² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³ What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a

gift but as an obligation.⁵ However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.⁶ David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:⁷ “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.⁸ Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”⁹ Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness.¹⁰ Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before!¹¹ And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.¹² And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.¹³ It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.¹⁴ For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless,¹⁵ because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.¹⁷ As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.¹⁸ Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”¹⁹ Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead.²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.²² This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.”²³ The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone,²⁴ but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.²⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” Romans 4:1-25 (New International Version)

"⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." *Ephesians 2:8-10 (New Living Translation)*

The thief who was saved on the cross did not receive baptism nor did he become a member of a local church. "³⁵ And the people stood beholding, and the rulers also [with them] sneered, saying, He has saved others; let him save himself if this is the Christ, the chosen one of God. ³⁶ And the soldiers also made game of him, coming up offering him vinegar, ³⁷ and saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. ³⁸ And there was also an inscription [written] over him in Greek, and Roman, and Hebrew letters: This is the King of the Jews. ³⁹ Now one of the malefactors who had been hanged spoke insultingly to him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. ⁴⁰ But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost thou too not fear God, thou that art under the same judgment? ⁴¹ and we indeed justly, for we receive the just recompense of what we have done; but this [man] has done nothing amiss. ⁴² And he said to Jesus, Remember me, [Lord,] when thou comest in thy kingdom. ⁴³ And Jesus said to him, Verily I say to thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. ⁴⁴ And it was about [the] sixth hour, and there came darkness over the whole land until [the] ninth hour. ⁴⁵ And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rent in the midst. ⁴⁶ And Jesus, having cried with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. And having said this, he expired." *Luke 23:35-46 (Darby)*

Why is it necessary to know Christ as our Savior in order to understand the Bible? The Bible can only be understood through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The only message a lost person will receive from the Holy Spirit of God contains a call to come to God in prayer, repent of their sins and accept Christ as their Savior -- their only hope of salvation.

"⁹ That is what is meant by the Scriptures which say that no mere man has ever seen, heard, or even imagined what wonderful things God has ready for those who love the Lord. ¹⁰ But we know about these things because God has sent His Spirit to tell us, and His Spirit searches out and shows us all of God's deepest secrets. ¹¹ No one can really know what anyone else is thinking or what he is really like except that person himself. And no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. ¹² And God has actually given us his Spirit (not the world's

spirit) to tell us about the wonderful free gifts of grace and blessing that God has given us. ¹³ In telling you about these gifts we have even used the very words given to us by the Holy Spirit, not words that we as men might choose. So we use the Holy Spirit's words to explain the Holy Spirit's facts. ¹⁴ But the man who isn't a Christian can't understand and can't accept these thoughts from God, which the Holy Spirit teaches us. They sound foolish to him because only those who have the Holy Spirit within them can understand what the Holy Spirit means. Others just can't take it in. ¹⁵ But the spiritual man has insight into everything, and that bothers and baffles the man of the world, who can't understand him at all. ¹⁶ How could he? For certainly he has never been one to know the Lord's thoughts, or to discuss them with him, or to move the hands of God by prayer. But, strange as it seems, we Christians actually do have within us a portion of the very thoughts and mind of Christ." 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 (The Living Bible)

The second suggestion that will enable you to glean the truth from God's word while you stay away from the seeds of error in your translation is, if you are a child of God; make sure you are in fellowship with Him. Have you repented of every known sin in your life and confessed them to God? If you will repent and confess the known sins, God will forgive you of your unknown sins (1st John 1:9). The Scribes and the Pharisees studied the scriptures and were knowledgeable of the verses the scriptures contained but they could not understand the teachings because they were not in fellowship with God.

Third, you must ask God to fill you with the Spirit of Understanding. Jesus tells His disciples, *"Ye shall drink indeed of my cup and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with."* Matthew 20:23 (The New International Version)

Christ could not have been speaking of water baptism since He and His disciples had already been immersed in water. He promised them that soon they were to be baptized or immersed into the same agent into which He had been baptized or immersed. Isaiah tells us about the agent into which Christ was immersed and it does not have anything with "charismatic" gifts.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of His roots: and (1) the Spirit of the Lord {Jehovah} shall rest upon Him, (2) the Spirit of Wisdom, and (3) {the Spirit of} Understanding, (4) the Spirit of Counsel and (5) {the Spirit of}

Might, (6) the Spirit of Knowledge and (7) the Spirit of the Fear {Reverence} of the Lord.”
Isaiah 11:1-2 (King James Version)

This passage in Isaiah 11:1-2 lists the sevenfold power of the Holy Spirit of God. Again, please note that not one of the seven refers to "charismatic" gifts. This is the sevenfold working of the Holy Spirit of God described in other parts of the Bible including Revelation 1:4 and Revelation 5:6.

“John to the seven churches that are in Asia: grace be to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne.... *Apocalypse or Revelation 1:4 (Confraternity–Douay Version, Saint Joseph New Catholic Edition)*

"⁶ And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.
Revelation 5:6 (American Standard Version)

The Spirit of Understanding will help us to understand (1) Gods’ divine word, (2) Gods’ will for our life and (3) Gods’ way. Before we begin our daily study of Gods’ word, we must ask God, in prayer, to illuminate our understanding and to make his will evident. If you desire to know more about what your Bible says about the sevenfold work of the Holy Spirit of God, please contact us. You can find a paper that explains more about the sevenfold power of the Holy Spirit on our website also.

Please let me point out again that God inspired the original manuscripts that make up the Bible. God did not inspire the translators as they translated the Hebrew and Greek books into our native languages. The manuscripts by the original writers were the perfect words of God. God inspired the men who penned them. God did not inspire the translators. The translators may have worked under aspiration but they did not do their work under inspiration. It is important, therefore, to examine all the scriptures that deal with a particular subject. God's intent concerning the subject will be evident after the examination. Every translation has some degree of inaccuracy. Although some of our translations are good, we need to be ever vigilant for those areas that are not properly translated and do not agree with the majority of the scriptures that deal

with the subject we are examining.

A fourth very important suggestion which will enable you to glean the truth from your Bible while you stay away from the seeds of error in your translation is always be aware of (1) who is speaking, (2) to whom are they speaking and (3) what is the subject under discussion, that is, what is the content of those verses.

The fifth suggestion we offer is to always read the verses that precede the scripture being studied and the verses that follow the scripture being studied. Get into the habit of seeing the Bible as a book which usually contains several verses forming a unit of instruction rather than a book containing a single verse with instructions. Understand, also, that the unit of instruction may be spread over one or more chapters with parenthetical verses separating them. The parenthetical verses may add information and instructions but they are not the main subjects. There will be times in your study when you will need to give the utmost attention to the chapters you are reading in order to determine the main unit of instruction because they will contain so many parenthetical verses. There will even be times the writer seems to go off on another unrelated subject before coming back and discussing the main theme. We should, therefore, search the scriptures as if we are on a treasure hunt rather than just reading them as we would read a story.

¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 (Revised Standard Version)

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (English Standard Version)

The second fact we would like to review about the sixty-six books that compose the library of books under one cover that we call "the Bible" is that some of the writers recorded things that are not applicable to you, personally. I repeat, one of the most important things to

practice as we study the Divine Word of God is to always ask ourselves (1) who is speaking, (2) to whom are they speaking and (3) what is the subject under discussion. Many, many errors have been made because the person did not ask those three questions and they have attempted to apply to themselves, the instructions that were given to another person or to another particular group. Also, many times, people attempt to claim promises for themselves, that were made to another person or to another particular group.

One of the best examples of instructions that were given to another person or to another particular group is found in Exodus 12:1-11, "¹ *And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,* ² *This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.* ³ *Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:* ⁴ *And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.* ⁵ *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:* ⁶ *And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.* ⁷ *And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.* ⁸ *And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.* ⁹ *Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.* ¹⁰ *And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.* ¹¹ *And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S Passover.*" Exodus 12:1-11 (King James Version)

Those instructions are definitely in the Bible. Is everyone required to follow those instructions? No! The Lord is speaking. Setting the conditions for the death angel to pass over instead of killing the firstborn in the homes that had blood spread on the doorposts of their dwelling in Egypt was the subject under discussion. But those instructions were only given to the members of the Jewish Theocracy that were delivered from Egyptian captivity and it was only to be followed one time in their lifetime. Although they were to continue observing the Passover at

the same time every year, the instructions they received later did not require them to apply blood to the doorposts of their dwellings after that night. Are the members of the Lord's local, scriptural churches required to follow those instructions because they are in the Bible? No! Do you apply blood to the doorposts of your home every year on the Jewish day of Passover? Why not? Because those instructions do not apply to you even though they are definitely in the Bible.

Another example is the Lord's instructions in Genesis 17:10-11, ¹⁰ *This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.* ¹¹ *And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.* Genesis 17:10-11 (King James Version)

Those instructions are definitely in the Bible. Is everyone required to follow those instructions? No! The Lord is speaking. Setting the conditions for a covenant is the subject under discussion. But the person the Lord was speaking to was Abraham and He was setting one of the conditions for a covenant between Himself and the descendants that made up the nation of Israel, the Jewish Theocracy.

Some of our "scholars" today, in their notes, comments or sermons, sometime mention instructions or promises that were given to one group and have applied them to a group who were never given those instructions or promises. Therefore, one of the most important things to practice as we study the Divine Word of God is to always ask ourselves (1) who is speaking, (2) to whom are they speaking and (3) what is the subject under discussion.

A third fact we would like to share is that some of the books were written on animal skins and others were written on papyrus or other material. **THOSE BOOKS ARE NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE.** They deteriorated long ago. The translations into various native languages were translated from what we consider faithful copies. Those faithful copies were supposed to be compared with each other in order to establish their accuracy and then translated into the different languages. The approximately forty different writers of the original books were inspired by God. **THOSE WHO HAVE SINCE TRANSLATED THE BIBLE INTO NATIVE LANGUAGES WERE NOT INSPIRED.** Sometimes the translators allowed their personal religious beliefs to influence how they translated a particular verse or passage. Because of that, every translation has some degree of error in it. Although some translations have less error than

others, there has never been a perfect, errorless translation. Only the original autographed books were perfect and without error. A person, therefore, should read all the scriptures dealing with a particular subject before they come to a conclusion about what they think God is teaching. It is also imperative to see what the Hebrew word or the Greek word really means in our own language today. That is the reason it is so important, if possible, for you to have access to a good concordance or a good Bible software program. I suggest that before you accept anything, including these papers, that you read **all** the scriptures dealing with the subject and then come to a conclusion about what God is saying. Be careful as you read anything, to make sure the person writing is not propagating "the skin of truth stuffed with a lie".

Again, as we shared in the beginning, it is quite possible for two blind men to have two different opinions of an elephant if each one examines only part of the elephant! It has been our experience that most of the error that people embrace about the Living God and His plan for mankind is a result of a partial examination of their own translation of the Bible. In many cases, they have relied on what someone they highly respect tells them their translation says rather than examine, for themselves, what their translation teaches about the subject they are studying.