

HLH- 820703- Approach to Bible Study

Some years ago, I was asked to speak about here with an essentially different group by a minister who is no longer with us.

And I say that because the reason he asked me to is that he was hoping that I would give a different answer than I did.

I'm not going to present it in the same way for those of you whose memories are good, but I'm going to use the subject matter because I think it will be of value at this time.

The question that he asked me when I said, what subject would you think would be valuable to the group? And he said, why don't you speak on how much of the Bible is required to be understood in order to be saved? Now what he meant was that if you don't require it all, then why do we need the other part? And I will not approach it as might have been expected from the question, but I'm going to ask you how much of the Bible should you understand if you're going to give an account in the resurrection of your responsibilities in this life? And how would you approach getting the maximum mileage in the years that you have ahead? For some of you, in theory, have fewer years than others.

This is an interesting question because in the first place it recognizes immediately that we don't all have to have the same breadth or depth of understanding of all of the Scriptures.

He could ask the question, if God were to call a person who is seventy, and each one were to live out his or her natural life, of whom would God expect more on the assumption that you generally have the same qualities of education? The answer, of course, should be apparent.

If you have upwards of fifty years yet to live, as distinct from five, you have ten times the opportunity to read, to study, and to understand the written revelation that we call the Holy Scriptures.

So let's look at how we would approach understanding the Bible, giving these variations.

I explained the problem this way recently.

There are some who were called whose background is limited in education.

Some of you did not graduate from high school.

Some of you were blessed with having graduated from college, if that's a blessing.

It depends on which one.

Some of you cannot read well because you are either far-sighted, or you have to have glasses to read.

I can count it a blessing in my part that I am not one who has to have glasses to read.

I would find that very stressful.

But I know that there are those who do.

That's probably because I'm slightly nearsighted, my wife says it's short-sighted.

But that's a different point of view.

In any case, you might find it difficult visually.

You might not be in the best of health.

One should realize that there are those whom we baptize, who have come to the knowledge of truth since they were fifty or sixty or seventy.

There was a man one time, a black man who came to a knowledge of the truth of the broadcast, who was approximately seventy years of age and had not yet learned properly to read.

He became so interested in this work that he learned to read English from the time he was age seventy.

I presume he is now deceased.

This man was from the region of the campus in Big Sandy, Texas.

Would God have expected as much of him as he would expect of our college graduates in terms of understanding the Bible? The answer should be apparent.

But how do we go about evaluating these things? First of all, we have to recognize that some of us have jobs.

Where we are responsible, and I'm addressing myself here, perhaps more to women than men, there are some women whose primary work is to support their husbands, there are women whose husbands have abandoned them or have been deceased, and they have to have a job.

There are women who are elderly.

Then we have men who normally would have a job to be responsible for the family.

We have sometimes older people where the children are gone and God calls you and you no longer have a major responsibility with rearing children.

There are younger people who have that as a major responsibility and you know that time is a very important factor.

You not only have the problem of evaluating your own health and strength and ability to read and education, you need to evaluate also the time you have available in your responsibility.

Then in a job, it is rather obvious that some of us here, and since we have a group of ministers and their wives as well as some faculty members, there are some of you who are responsible for teaching the Bible itself.

That's why you are given a responsibility and paid a salary.

In Imperial schools, we obviously have the requirement of understanding in some depth the Bible beyond questions that would be asked.

So we have the profession of those who are supposed to know the Scriptures and God would hold those responsible in far greater depth for understanding than those who are merely to be taught.

That is, Jesus was not judged the same way that Mary is to be judged, but Mary and Martha are going to be judged much more alike.

And I thought that was a very interesting sermonette in terms of this responsibility.

One might think about this, Mary evaluated in one way and Martha evaluated in another.

Yet they each, we presume, had basic opportunities in education.

One was found to be short-sighted.

The other was found to have focused on a goal.

The understanding of one was very likely greater.

The other had to understand about a first resurrection that she might have already have heard if she had listened more carefully to what Jesus was saying.

Instead of that, she had only focused her mind on what, as in the Hebrew community, she might have understood as a resurrection of the great day.

But those things happen.

We sometimes put wrong priorities in our lives that we don't fully evaluate the way life is likely to turn out for us.

Now we recognize, of course, there are always those who die by accidents.

There are things that can happen at any moment.

But there is a logical way of approaching it on the basis that time and circumstance come out fairly even in life.

I like to think that although there are exceptions, you have your bargains and you have those things in life that weren't bargains.

In the same way, with time, we need to use time as it comes and use our strength as we would anticipate its availability.

How might one approach the study of the scripture? Certainly there are two directions that we should be following through in our thinking at the same time.

One, and I will put it first because it is logically first, but you'll see that emphasis will differ a little.

There is the need, if you are going to be the kind of person God expects you to be, the need to read the Bible.

That means from cover to cover.

At some time in your life, the sooner the better.

Now obviously as a young person who is in primary grades or high school, you might be able to start out early or you might decide to postpone the full reading and just read sections of it over a period of time while you are studying other things that the church has.

But I want to say that one thing we all should have as an aim is to have read all of the books of the Bible at one time or another in life so that we are familiar with what the books basically contain as subject matter.

There was a student once who asked me for an answer to a question and I told him, well that's a simple question, it's in this book.

He said, well how would I know where it is if I haven't read it? I said that's the problem, you need to read the book and you could have easily guessed where it might be.

So it is important to read the book but look, that's nice to say for someone who is growing up in the church, someone who is coming to college for the first time, has a bigger ability to read, time enough to read in between over the weekends, what happens when you are called in our age seventy and haven't really understood much about the Bible? Or maybe you are called with a handicap that might be visual or oral.

Now there is another thing we should be considering at the same time, as life grows shorter it is also important to realize that God put the church here as a teacher and as a teacher the church has digested material in the scripture in the form that we call a radio or a television broadcast, in the form that we call a magazine or a newspaper and most importantly in the form that we call booklets, sometimes books.

So I would like to suggest that at the same time you are beginning to learn to read the Bible, now focus on that today, there is the need also to look at the printed literature that the church has and focus on those things that would be most valuable to you.

Not most curious, not most interesting but most valuable.

Maybe your initial question should focus on what is the big issue for you.

What has been the big thing that troubled you most? Why did you take so long to come to the place where you are now listening? What had you been spending your life doing? There are people who came from a secular world where topics such as the unpardonable sin doesn't have much meaning because it never was a question.

But maybe that is a big question in your mind, you would like to get that out of your mind so you can put it on something else.

So you should look over the literature that we have and we do have it on display in the office facilities building.

We should normally have it in local church libraries, I will address it to our visiting ministers here in our local church libraries.

We should have updated copies of the material that we do publish or at least a list if you don't have a local church library where brethren can know what is accessible and available.

So having evaluated essentially your age and your abilities, and I think that in any group such as this that I could say if you were to raise your hand some of you haven't yet read all the Bible, some of you have, some of you have read it more than once.

But let's take a look at how we might approach doing so and getting the most out of it.

Until we have a chance, let's start with a Bible that will be usable and we'd like to use.

Now many of you have started out, you grew up with the King James Version.

Many more of the younger generation will have grown up with a revised standard version.

So let me explain that essentially there are two kinds of Bibles.

Bibles translated by individuals, Bibles translated by groups of men.

We soon will learn what Mr. Armstrong has said from time to time.

Your experience should have told you individual scholars are likely to hit upon more brilliant expressions and understanding of individual verses.

They're likely also to have stumbled more often in their quality.

So therefore it is wise to recognize that the best starting point is to start with a translation that is done by a group of scholars, a group of learned people who have had a knowledge of Hebrew and or Aramaic, Greek and good English.

For a no good translation into any language is any better than the quality of the people using the language into which the Bible is to be translated and that's where many private translations of individuals tend to fall short as distinct from the area in which we often think it would and that's the knowledge of a foreign language or another language, Greek or Hebrew.

Now there are some scholars such as Goodspeed who had exceptional, exceptional command of English.

I think one could say the same of Mafet.

But there are some lesser translations that are more pedestrian English and not the quality that is really befitting the Bible.

So it would be good to take a translation by a group of men as a starting point and take a book where the print is good.

All of these things are elementary but they ought to be said sometime.

I dealt with a man who was left to church and he didn't want a Bible or didn't have red print in it.

Those were Jesus' words as he said, if Jesus said that I'll believe it but you can't be sure about the rest of it.

And we found we couldn't be sure of him either.

The point is you should read a Bible that is easy to use.

Something that you're comfortable with reading because reading can be tedious.

It's a strain for some people, less for others.

So that's common sense.

You don't have to buy a wide margin to start with because you're not prepared to make notes.

You just wanted wide enough to do two things.

To either leave it blank or put a question by what you didn't understand.

So one of the next things now you'll want to do as you go along and I would still suggest that it's one thing to take a booklet and to decide to look into a particular book of the Bible.

But somewhere along the line you should discipline yourself and say I'm going to look at the Bible and I'm going to start where God started and he started with Genesis.

Now you might think that he could have started somewhere else but he decided that was the beginning.

And therefore you should start with Genesis.

I find that the first thing that I discover is that verses don't always link thoughts together and chapters sometimes divide thoughts that should be put together.

So we don't place too much emphasis on chapters and verses in that sense.

But you do tend to divide the book in chapters in your own thinking because by the end of an evening or morning whenever you read you tend to stop at a certain point and chapters were meant to in some way convey natural logical divisions and so we can number them and know where we were.

But what I'd suggest is that you do what I did when I read my first Bible and I still have it.

I did two basic things.

When I found some I'm speaking of reading the Bible in English because I first was taught to read it in another language.

I didn't get too far in that because I soon gravitated to English but I tended to mark lightly material that struck me as highly unusual that I hadn't thought about before that seemed clear.

But that wasn't too bad.

What I think was more important and I'd like to convey to you it would be good for you to learn to put a question mark by a chapter that's obscure by a verse in an otherwise clear chapter if that verse is obscure and that's some later time you go back and look at it.

It will also give you an idea of how much more understanding you will have by the end of the Bible and you start it out at the beginning.

But too often we pass over and have no way of knowing what we did or did not fully understand.

So it should be important to get into the habit of simply putting a question.

Now some of the best faculty members who have been teaching theology over the years and this does not exclude Mr. Herbert Armstrong have put questions by something that wasn't clear because not every translation makes it clear and even if it seems to be clearly translated it isn't always clear in English in the sense that it's so simple an expression without sufficient background you simply wouldn't really know what the issue is.

When you go through you'll notice that Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy will begin to take shape and you'll understand that you are moving through human experience.

Now if you were just to read the King James Version or the Revised Standard Version or any other but the Jewish translation or for our Fenton's Old Testament you would discover that the books of the Bible as you have them are given you in an order that by the time you have finished Kings you are now stumbling through chronicles and you wonder why the Bible was ever put together that way because it has become repetitive.

That is until you realize that after you finished Samuel Kings and Chronicles God never intended you to read chronicles at that point.

He would have said let's go from Samuel the Kings to Isaiah and Jeremiah which brings me now to an important point.

I think every church member should have heard at one time or another that God gave the Old Testament in Hebrew and divided it into three parts.

We call it the law, the prophets and the writings.

And when we stumble on the prophets as we open a Jewish translation they would be available in the local public library in almost all circumstances or very commonly in a Southern California Jewish bookshop or used bookshop.

You would discover and you could do this in some other Bible helps too but let me just summarize it for you.

You would discover that after you finished the first five books of the Bible called the law you go in the Old Testament to the prophets.

Now the prophets mean that you are learning something for the future.

You are learning that here is a message and a thought that should be basic to our understanding of events a prophet foretells.

And the shocking thing is that as soon as you have finished the book of Deuteronomy, the second giving of the law, that's what the name of that book means, that you go to Joshua and then you go to Judges, the stories moving on but suddenly it's described in the synagogue or described in the Old Testament in its original order as it was preserved by the congregation of Israel, the congregation of God, it's called the prophets.

And you discover the astounding thing that the prophets include such books as Joshua in this very order, Judges, first Samuel, second Samuel, first Kings and second Kings.

And you have not yet found Isaiah.

Now most people read these books just as the librarians of Alexandria in Egypt did.

You see our Bible has the order of the Old Testament from the Latin.

The Latin got it from the Greeks.

The Greeks obtained it as a whole from the librarians of Alexandria who organized the books of the Bible that were being then translated from Hebrew into Greek as any librarian would.

There's poetry, there's law, there's history, there's prophecy, there are songs of another sort and so they put these things as if Joshua, Judges, Kings, as well as Samuel and Chronicles were all history but God didn't have us say to you that you're going to be tested at the resurrection in history, you're going to be tested on something else, that's character and to enable you to understand character he's given you some historical books of a prophetic nature.

And I want to stress this because these are various books of the Bible most often overlooked yet fundamental to why our society as a whole is as it is.

And that is when you finished reading the five books of the law and you proceed through these it would be very interesting to see what God wanted you to know from Joshua and Judges and Samuel and Kings.

That is you get the background that would be something like this.

There is the founding of the nation then there is a colonial period then there comes usually a revolution and a period of the maturity of the nation and then there is often following that what we might call civil wars or other forms of internal revolution and that's exactly what you have.

Joshua is the story of the founding of Israel.

Judges is the story of what we might compare with the colonial period of the nation whether in the Latin world or whether the South Pacific or here in North America above Mexico.

And then you come in Samuel to the story of a revolution that led to a kingship and you have finished the story of Solomon and you come to now a civil war that God didn't let get totally out of hand and you discover the remarkable thing.

Consider Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the whole of the new world from Canada, the United States, the Spanish speaking, the Portuguese speaking area of the new world, parts even of Asia, much of Africa.

All of these areas of the world have in some way or another experienced the parallel of the books from Joshua, Judges through Samuel and Kings and it's like saying that no area I don't care how peaceable or otherwise whether it's New Zealand where I've been privileged to be this year at the days of Unleavened Bread or a place such as Bolivia.

You may have problems of minor or major proportion but wherever you have more than one people who have struggled over a land, alien cultures, alien in language and tradition occupying the same region, you will have the kind of difficulties that the children of Israel faced as you read in the story of Joshua and especially Judges.

And if you think there wasn't going to be a problem in the thirteen colonies after the British settled here, you never had read First Samuel.

If you thought there couldn't be a civil war in the United States, you had never read the story of what happened when Solomon was dead.

It is like saying that people read the Bible as if it were dead history and never realized that this was to be living history, that is the story in advance of one people whose record would have many parallels in human experience because this is just the way it is.

The settlement doesn't solve the problem, the colonial period creates new ones and so you have a change in government and the government doesn't satisfy you and you have a conflict that we call either another series of revolutions or a civil war.

And finally, of course, for Israel the remarkable thing was it ended in the captivity of both nations and that's what's going to happen to the children of Israel today.

We have passed through all these stages.

The colonial period and settlement before led to either a separate nation as in the United States or a Commonwealth period and finally we have had our civil wars in one way or another.

In some countries the civil war did not exist but it really was the transition from a colonial period to a Commonwealth and finally as in South Africa, total independence.

And the last step in this sequence for the children of Israel was captivity and the last step that is going to take place in this generation will be the same.

We know where we are.

We passed the time of Solomon.

We're in the period of the last kings of Israel and Judah in terms of experience.

So I think that I wanted to emphasize that because that's one of the portions of the Bible we so often neglect and yet in terms of how God laid it out in Scripture it could be one of the most interesting.

Then we come, as time permits you, to read the rest of the books that we call the prophets and you have these in their basic order Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

And then you come to the twelve.

Now we'll discover that Daniel isn't in this group for the moment.

But you learn the importance as you go through Isaiah you find many chapters that you probably understand completely, very, very clear, especially about the Messiah.

You can hardly avoid understanding those.

Then you will come in Jeremiah to some things that might not be as clear.

You stumble of course in the thirty-first chapter on a reference to a new covenant.

Then you read Ezekiel and there will be even more things that might not be clear and then you go through the minor prophets and some of those books are clear and others may be fully obscure.

Then you should put a question mark so that at some later time you go back and you will look at those questions but we don't want to do that now.

We want to move on.

There are some people who only dwell on questions.

They never find answers.

The best thing is to read the Bible and get as many answers right at the beginning as you go through and leave the questions till later.

When you finish that, if you have compared the scriptures with whatever version of the Bible you're using, then you will note you come to the third group, the writings and here we deal with the Psalms and Proverbs and Job.

Now what you discover is that whereas you've been singing songs called Psalms in church, you're suddenly going to be reading them and you'll note that unlike chapters before that each Psalm is essentially the completed thought.

You proceed through a complete thought chapter by chapter.

These chapters are meaningful because they're the hundred and fifty songs that God had preserved for his people.

Then you come to Proverbs and here you notice something different from any portion of the Bible before.

Suddenly thoughts are in verses.

Maybe one verse is a thought.

Maybe a chapter is a thought.

Maybe two or three verses are a thought.

And you suddenly have little increments all through this book and you should take note therefore of what is clear and what is not so clear.

You have lots of little questions but not big questions because Proverbs doesn't have big questions where whole chapters are not understood.

You might have an obscure proverb that would be unclear because you've never had the background to know why such analogies are drawn.

By the time you've finished the understanding of Proverbs you are prepared to look at Job because in the Bible as God gave it Job doesn't come before but after Proverbs.

Now that you've got a little wisdom in your head you should be able to see what Job's problem is.

That's the way God did it.

And then there are other little books of the Bible that I won't comment on here that you can be reading and you finally come to that book that seemed at first so out of place.

It's called Daniel because Daniel isn't listed in the prophets, he's listed in the writings.

Of course we all know that the prophets wrote all three books.

Moses was a prophet as well as Daniel and David was a prophet.

We aren't telling you that only the prophets wrote the prophets and somebody else wrote law or writings.

Prophets wrote them all.

But in this case Daniel is set aside, it isn't like any of the others.

And you'll note that some things you've heard on the broadcast remind you of what the book of Daniel gives.

We've addressed that a little more than we have perhaps some of the other prophecies.

But you've got a good idea of what the law is, you've got a good idea of what prophecy or what the future should bring and you've learned some wisdom also along the way.

Learned a little bit about life, learned how David thought and others thought in the book of Psalms.

And now you have the summary, following looking at Daniel, you have the summary of all the Old Testament in 1st and 2nd Chronicles and it's a quick trip through the Bible.

Adam, Seth, Enos and just goes right down to Noah and the flood, the founding of Israel, the founding of the priesthood and the story basically of Judah, not of Israel.

The story primarily of Judah, not of Israel.

It's like focusing your mind on one tribe that will have preserved scripture.

Now you're ready for the New Testament and logically you will focus in on the four most important books of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark and Luke and John.

And then you'll look at Acts, the story of the church Jesus founded.

You will then notice that there are letters of the apostles that follow and finally there's a book on prophecy called the Revelation.

And by this time, maybe a year has elapsed and you will think it a very short year, maybe for some of you only months will have elapsed.

That depends on your time and you should evaluate your time.

But what do we do now? In the meantime, you might have looked at some books that we publish as well as books and you've been thumbing back and forth to check out the verses.

That is, you're also concentrating on some subjects.

Maybe the subject that impressed you most was faith and so you examined that.

Or maybe the subject that impressed you most was healing.

That depends on your condition and you wanted to get that straightened out in your mind.

Maybe you'd heard about the United States and British Commonwealth as one of those interesting subjects and the healing was no problem in your case.

So you focused on that and thumbed through the Bible.

But by now you are prepared to look at the rest of the days of your life, hopefully years, but maybe they're just days.

Life can be short.

Some of you are much older than others.

Some of you would have great difficulty reading, even to keep up with all that I have said.

Some of you might not even have been able to read the Bible.

You had to hear the Bible.

We have all those things available.

We do, or at least they are available in spoken words.

What might one do from this point on? I have a suggestion in order to make the Bible most useful while you are studying the literature, while you are listening to the program, while at the same time you are looking at the magazines.

Maybe you've discovered the correspondence course can take you through much of the Bible.

But we don't want you to assume that because we publish all of these things you are not asked to look into the book that we call the Holy Bible or the Holy Scriptures.

So I'd like to suggest the following.

Since this is the New Testament Church, there are two things.

A harmony that might be with the King James Version, a harmony that might be with the Revised Standard.

And you know there are different harmonies, not just one.

The fact is I would suggest that if you use the Revised Standard you might want to take a harmony of the King James.

If you use the King James Version of the Bible you might want to now get a harmony based on the Revised Standard Version.

That way you have a fresh reading of the text and perhaps new insight and at the same time you can flip your Bible that you were using open and you will note that there may have been some questions you even had in the Gospels, especially when it came to Lazarus and the rich men problem.

Maybe you hadn't learned about the booklet, you know you can solve some of the questions by the booklet and then you can mark out your question mark.

But if you have a harmony, you can go through what all of our students have been trained in and all of the ministers and I believe in my judgment that this is the next most valuable thing you can do after having read all of the Bible through.

Preferably through in the order in which God gave those books.

Necessarily you might have enjoyed reading incidentally a book here or a book there first.

I will tell you the story that when our son first became interested in the Bible I asked him why he wanted to start reading the Bible because that would tell me some part of where to go.

Now you have to make decisions.

He said I'd like to know how people lived in Old Testament times.

Well I immediately knew the book that would really hit him a wallop.

I told him to go read Judges.

And he was astounded what people did to each other in that day.

He was thankful in one sense he was living in the 20th century.

He read about concubines.

He read about butchery.

He read about the unbelievable things that people did allow themselves to do.

Some of you would like just to read poetry so I suggest you read the Psalms or some of you would like that wisdom.

You might want to read any one book but you still ought to go through the Bible beginning to end in the way that would convey the most meaning to those books.

Now you proceed and make a special study of the four Gospels.

I think that would be very important so that you're up to date on what Jesus' primary teaching is and you look at the accounts and you really have the feel of putting them all together.

It focuses Jesus' life more succinctly.

Now you don't have to read all the harmony but you can use the harmony.

If I happen to have a book somebody says have you read all the books that you have? The answer is no.

I use them.

There's a big difference between having to read them merely because somebody wrote them and using them because they are valuable tools.

I've never read all the verses in a harmony.

I might have seen that obviously certain things look so much alike and your eyes can cross the column and you'll read perhaps one more than the other.

But in general you could read much of the harmony and have quite an understanding of what was missing, especially let's say when it comes to the ceremony of the Passover with respect to the dividing of the cup, the taking of the unleavened bread and then the wine and the order that that is laid out with respect to foot washing.

When you look at the whole story you will find why the Church does what it does on the Passover.

The order is correct and a true, valid harmony of the Gospels will show that to you, just an illustration.

So you now have a better understanding of that.

You don't have to buy a harmony.

You can take somebody else's who doesn't happen to use one.

You could go to a library, you could go to a book store, save money.

Now there is another section of the Bible, the second one that I think would be most valuable to you and that is to compare two books, Daniel and Revelation.

You've got the message of Christ.

You now get the framework of prophecy.

So you know where you are because in reality we have both the requirement to warn the people as well as the requirement to announce the Gospel.

And this would put you in command of a timeframe.

Those two books then you compare.

Now you compare on the basis and I would suggest on the basis of our printed literature and take the key to the book of Revelation or take instead the book of Revelation unveiled at last or you might want to take the Middle East in prophecy to understand specifically Daniel 11.

Anyway, take that kind of material.

And you will now have a good command of prophecy and by this time you now can proceed in whatever direction seems to be available for you and is best for you.

If you still have time in life while you are proceeding with the booklets that we do publish and taking the correspondence course, there may be something you would like to understand better in some other part of the Bible.

Maybe the question of Jesus being the Messiah that is how to find it in the Old Testament may not be a question to you, but it is a question you would like to be able to answer.

And there you might want to go over the book of Isaiah again, primarily Isaiah, not the only one.

There will be something in Malachi and you will notice by now how many of those questions no longer seem to be questions.

The answers will have been found by reading other places in the Bible.

If you are going to proceed now to study the rest of the Bible from time to time, a book here, a book there, what you need is a concordance and you can get used in new ones.

You should find one that is in good print.

You can get used ones on brown and ugly paper that make it very, very difficult to read.

Since a concordance is so useful, you ought to get one on good quality paper.

I would make that recommendation.

Now by this time, you should get another Bible beside the one you started with.

That way, when you reread sections of the Bible, you take a fresh look because maybe half your problems disappear by having a different translation.

I want to take the time here just briefly to point out that this summer, by August to my knowledge, there will be a new Bible out.

Many of you already know about it.

I just want to mention it again for some who don't.

We had the privilege recently in our editorial office of talking to officials from Thomas Nelson Publishers.

By the month of August, there will be the new King James Version.

The King James Version modernized so we don't have the thesaith, so we don't have the thou and the ye, but an up-to-date use of modern equivalent terms, but preserving the King James Version so that you know you're reading the King James, but you're reading the same impact in the English language without archaisms in grammar and alteration of those words which no longer convey the same meaning or no longer are used.

Now this is not a doctrinal revision since hell is a modern word used and misunderstood and understood.

There's no change there, I just to illustrate a point.

It is, however, the remarkable qualities of King James English updated essentially in a grammatical way so it is very easy to read.

I will take a neutral area of the Bible, we call Psalms, and take the 23rd Psalm.

Ye, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I'm moving down into it.

I will fear no evil.

Now there's nothing wrong, ye is the modern term accepted in literature.

They don't change what is not necessary, but what is no longer standard is removed.

For you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil.

I can remember once I was studying Greek one summer and the custom was as we're not at Ambassador College, I was with another minister and some young man from Pakistan.

Our custom was, it was a student teacher of Greek and we opened with prayer and I would open and address God as you and when they opened, God was addressed as thou.

Now I'm sure God understood both.

But in the hallway once, two of them said, you know, when he prays, meaning me, it doesn't sound like a prayer, he doesn't use thou.

We grew up, if we are older, perhaps hearing these things and the RSV, the Revised Standard Version used it, but the remarkable thing when we thought the Revised Standard Version was modern and we now look at it as the doll, it seems archaic.

Because we simply as a whole, as a nation, and as a religious culture, speaking of Christianity today, we've gradually drifted into the use of the modern vocabulary words.

And in this sense, therefore, the new King James Version, which as far as I know is to be out in August, is available, abbreviated as NKJV and in many instances I do think that the criticism that has validly been given against the plain truth, especially by people in England, why do you use an archaic translation? Well the answer is, frankly, sometimes it still is better even if it's archaically worded.

But now, if it can be improved, I would prefer to use the NKJV, which is the same as saying modern English with the qualities of the King James Version.

It is not the King James II, that was done privately by a person, I think his name was Jay Green, I do not recommend any private work like that.

This is in the continuity of the King James, the Revised Version, the American Standard, the Revised Standard, and now the new King James Version.

Will this have, as an illustration, will this have I John 5-7? Well, of course it will, because that is in the first edition of the King James Version.

If it is the King James Version, it has to have I John 5-7.

But now, happily, there is a little footnote which says, this is important.

The majority text omits the words in Heaven, verse 7, through on earth, verse 8.

Only four or five very late Greek manuscripts contain these words.

This is the King James Version, as an illustration.

It is not some new version, it is a new King James.

So the point is, that you now can have access, if you like the King James, if you like the Revised Standard, whatever you do, I would suggest that when you re-read sections of the Bible, you get another group version, then there is the new international version, which is exceptionally fine in modern English, but not in terms of accuracy, quite up to the standards of the RSV.

The value of the new King James Version is that it emphasizes the majority text, that is essentially the Byzantine or Greek text of the New Testament, whereas all other modern translations vary from it.

Thus, and you will remember some of these things, if you look carefully and mark, one reason why I still regard the accuracy of the majority text, as they use that abbreviation here in the footnote as valid.

Mark 1-1 says, the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written in the prophet, and then we have a quotation from Malachi, then we have a quotation from Isaiah, whereas the RSV says, as it is written in Isaiah, and then you have a quote from Malachi, it isn't true.

Therefore, I am glad to say that we have a modern English edition based on the text of the King James Version, that is the original Greek text that they used.

Now that text wasn't perfect, it has some things that came from the Latin that aren't even in the Greek, but you learn that later, there will be some good footnotes, but at least now you learn that you can read much of God's written word in a new translation to you.

If you like the old King James, you might like to vary it and go all the way to a Catholic version like the Jerusalem Bible, or you might want to go to the RSV.

I would certainly say that the King James and the RSV are the first two.

Then the new international version, and maybe the new English Bible, and then you have the very nice new American Standard Version that even some of our members had a role to play in in terms of its general publishing and making it available to the ministry of the church.

So you now are in a position, in a way you have never been before, you can look up subjects, you can use a concordance, you basically know the content of this book, and as life goes on, you can analyze what you need to know most.

If you are a man having to work with others, you ought to especially read the book of Proverbs.

If you are a woman responsible for children at home that are young, you might like to read what God expects of a young mother rearing children.

If you're an older person, you might like to read any number of other things.

If your children are in a class in biology, in high school, you might want to read Genesis and get that straight in Psalm 104 verses 29 and 30, and different sections of the Bible that were laid out in the article Mr. Armstrong wrote, is there a devil? Did God create a devil, I should have said.

You'll be able to give some clear outline and guidance to children, to young people, whether the subject is evolution and biology, whether the subject would be law.

You should read those portions now that will enable you better to explain the Bible to younger members in the family.

That's another way to look at it.

I found when I first read the Bible, the most fascinating book that I have read, probably more often than any other, is the book of Deuteronomy.

It was the second giving of the law, and it was a remarkable book because it told me all sorts of things that we're asked to do, and it didn't have the Levitical material in the book of Leviticus that was essentially addressed to a priesthood when there was a tabernacle and later a temple, a priesthood and an altar and all those things.

Now, necessarily, there are other books of the Bible that we, and there are whole chapters of course that I've read far more than any one chapter in Deuteronomy, but it all will depend on what you find most valuable.

The older you get, the more you'll want to concentrate.

I think elderly people should have carefully read the epistles of the apostles in the New Testament before you get involved in Zechariah.

That is a general thought.

When you look at that, you should listen to what the church has said.

The place to start reading Paul is not Galatians.

You want to read what Paul clearly says.

It would be good, in fact, if you read what Peter and James and John and Jude wrote, because God had appointed them over Israel, and then when it comes to the Gentiles, read what Paul said and read the book of Romans first.

The order of Paul's epistles to the congregations, the Greek-speaking ones, will be valid in the order in which they are in the King James Version.

If you read the book of Romans, chapters one and two, just start out and reflect on it.

You can't miss the following point, that the Gentiles, without the knowledge of the law as a whole, lived in sin.

And what was wrong with the Gentiles is sin.

And what they needed to quit doing was sinning.

And what is sin, but the transgression of the law? And then you read chapter two, and you discover that the problem with the Jews is not that they didn't have the law, but they didn't keep it.

They said one thing and did another.

And the problem with the Jew was sin, the violation of God's law.

And so the scripture, you see, emphasizes the importance of sin.

And if you properly understand the first two chapters of Romans, no other chapter will need fool you.

But there are people who run to a little verse in Romans, because some evangelists somewhere told them to look at this, that we're not under the law, but under grace.

And all the rest of Romans somehow evaporates.

And they look at Galatians.

Oh, I heard a man years ago, almost every, he hated God's law, almost every single radio broadcast began this way.

Oh, foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? And then he started out in the condemnation of God's law.

What you need to do is know what the scripture has made plain.

When you really understand Genesis, you will be prepared for Exodus.

When you really understand the first two chapters of Romans, you'll be prepared for the rest of the book.

And there are people who simply don't know how to read the Bible.

When you are prepared in Mark one, one, two, and three about the gospel, what the good news is, as first manifested by John, then clarified by Jesus, you will discover that there isn't any other gospel than that which emphasizes the kingdom of God.

So we have come now, as we're near to a close here, to looking at all the interesting things that we can do as we read the Bible to make it interesting to us.

But we need to realize that some of us are young, and some of us are older, and some of us have different needs, and you need to look at the time available and look at your strength.

And I'm addressing, of course, many elderly people, and you need to know how much time you'll likely have available and put it to the most use.

You will be held accountable for understanding the Word of God in accordance with the time you had available, the skills in listening and in reading, and the time of your life.

It may be short or long.

You may be burdened with another job because you do have a major duty to your family.

If you're a man, you may have a job and a half.

There are some who have to have that.

In this work, we hope that most don't, but in our society, that's very common.

We do have obligations, and we should balance them and look at the story of Martha and Mary and know where the priority should be.

And I hope that from this, that any of the ministers can go and encourage the different groups in God's church to successfully get a comprehensive view of the Bible and then learn to get the most mileage out of the time by looking at the correspondence course and the booklets that we publish.

At the same time, you fortify yourself by reading the scriptures as a whole and bear in mind, of course, that when there are contradictions, you don't decide you'll accept one verse instead of the other.

You put a question mark and you'll go back, and when you can't answer them by comparisons or a concordance, then you ask the local minister.

I am astounded how many people write to the personal correspondence course or if they know me right to me with questions that our ministers can't answer and they simply have never asked them.

I think that's what you all should do.

It's good for the ministers.