

book of Acts so that a Gentile, Theophilus, could understand the exact truth about the things he was taught (Luke 1:1-4). Paul wrote to Timothy so that he would know how one should behave himself in the household of God (1 Timothy 3:15), and Jude wrote to encourage his audience to earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3).

One also needs to allow the Bible to define its own terms. The “super” (or eminent) apostles who Paul refers to are not Peter and the true apostles, but “false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:5,13). The seven seals of Revelation chapter six are summed up as “the wrath of the Lamb” (Revelation 6:16). The Bible also uses men’s terms, but has to embellish and further define them in order to fully explain the concepts of God. Thus, “repentance,” which means just to “change the mind,” has to be explained as something that comes of “godly sorrow according to the will of God” (2 Corinthians 7:9-10) and that change turns the mind to God (Acts 26:20).

6. USING A PENCIL & PHRASING

Some people are afraid to mark up their Bibles because it is the Word of God. Actually, it isn’t. Please do not misunderstand. Most Bibles already have notes all over them: in the front, in the back, in columns among the pages, and as notations at the bottom. The real Word of God is Jesus Himself (John 1:1). The Bible is only a means of explaining Him in writing, like teaching. Circling words, underlining thoughts on a page and drawing lines from one point to another **with a pencil**, are all means of asking yourself if you really understand what you’re reading, along with marking down your understanding for future reference.

Phrasing is rearranging the topography of the print so that it makes clearer sense. As an example:

Romans 1:1-3

Paul,
 A bondservant of Christ Jesus,
 called as an apostle,
 set apart for the gospel of God,
 which He promised beforehand
Through His prophets
In the holy Scriptures
 Concerning His Son

7. CRITICAL THINKING

A major problem in analysis of Biblical interpretation is an assumption of believing the first thought that comes into one’s mind as being the correct solution or meaning. It is also a problem to accept, without question, what someone else says a passage of Scripture means.

Good critical thinking considers all the possibilities and scientifically weeds out all the wrong or less weighty solutions. The proper solution should come only after properly defining words from the original language; following grammatical construction; staying with the author’s flow of thinking; comprehending the laws, manners, customs, religion and psychological background of the writer; and a taking in of the context of the Bible as a whole.

Christianity is a thinking man’s religion. Note the meaning and use of the following Greek words in the New Testament:

krino -- Separate, judge, consider, decide.

1 Corinthians 10:15 -- I speak as to wise men; you **judge** what I say.

dialegomai -- Calculate, consider, think through.

Acts 17:2 -- And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths **reasoned** with them from the Scriptures.

logizomai -- Reckon, credit, calculate, consider, deliberate, grasp, draw a logical conclusion, decide.

Romans 2:15 -- In that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their **thoughts** alternately **accusing** or else **defending** them.

syniemi -- Perceive, take notice of, understand, see into, comprehend, grasp.

Ephesians 3:4 -- And by referring to this, when you read, you can under stand my **insight** into the mystery of Christ.

Ephesians 5:17 -- So then do not be foolish, but **understand** what the will of the Lord is.

8. COMMON SENSE RULES

It is alarming how many supposed Biblical devotees treat the Scriptures as if they were not trying to communicate anything and that God is both a fuzzy thinker and inarticulate. To the contrary, the Bible is the mind of the God who knows better than anyone how best to get His thinking across to His creation. The following are