



**TIME
AND
AGAIN
NOT
FOR
SALE**

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FOREWORD

Then the spirit said unto Philip, go near, and join thyself to this chariot, and Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Isaiah, and said, understandest thou what thou reatest? And he said, how can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. Acts 8:29-31.

The man happened to have been reading one of the great prophecies about the coming of Christ and his suffering, and Philip had the privilege of telling the Ethiopian the good news about Jesus. When the Ethiopian in the chariot said, “How can I [understand Isaiah], unless someone explains it to me?” he displayed the curiosity and teach-ability that is essential for all followers of Jesus. In that moment, Philip was a kind of commentary for a man who simply needed help with the historical and linguistic meanings of the text of Isaiah.

A Bible commentary is a series of notes explaining the meaning of passages of scripture. A commentary may explain the language used in a section of text. Or it may discuss the historical background. Almost all commentaries attempt to explain the passage in terms of some system of theology. Since a Bible commentary is written by human authors, it will reflect the beliefs and perspective of those writers.

Through a personal narrative, Bible commentaries provide deeper understanding and insight into the Bible and can be used to assist both casual readers of the Bible and those who pursue serious study.

Commentaries are widely used in personal Bible study. The advantage of a Bible commentary is that one can quickly gain perspective on the text’s meaning, as understood by the commentary’s author. One caution concerning Bible commentaries is that they should not be used instead of personal study; rather, they are designed for use in addition to personal study. Since the commentary itself is not Scripture, it’s important for a reader to weigh what he reads against other sources, as well as his own Spirit-led analysis. As the products of fallible people, commentaries are not necessarily correct in every word.

When we read the Bible, we can have complete confidence that is God speaking and not man. The phrase “thus says the Lord” or “tell the people” appears over a thousand times in the Bible because it is God speaking through the authors of the Bible. Even when a prophet of God spoke, they never once spoke for themselves but only for God. The Apostle Paul knew that “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction,

and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3: 16-17). All scripture includes the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. The Apostle Peter would agree with Paul’s statement as he wrote that “no prophecy of scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever Produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:20-21) peter considered Paul’s writings as Scripture as peter wrote of Paul’s letters or epistles, “there are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other Scriptures” (2 Pet 3:16) so this shows clearly that, Scripture includes the New Testament too. We trust the Bible over anything that anyone else writes but what about study Bibles or Bible Commentaries? Can we trust them?

Bible commentaries are not inspired by God. They might be written by inspired men who have the spirit of God but that is never going to be equal to Scripture. It cannot override Scripture. It is only a man who writes and not God who inspires the words. Their comments might be inspiring but they are not inspired. These commentaries can be written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit but they are not God-breathed like the Bible itself is. Commentaries are never “thus says the Lord” in value. When you are not sure about a subject or need clarity or background on a verse or paragraph in a chapter, commentaries can be a great help in bringing understanding to the verses but their understanding can never contradict what the Scriptures say or you’ve got the wrong Bible commentary. If you’re not sure about a Bible passage and you don’t agree with or aren’t sure about a commentators comments, then it’s best to just wait, move on, or find a trusted Christian mentor, elder, deacon, teacher, or pastor. The reading, understanding, and application of biblical truth have always been functions of the Christian community. The words of the prophets and apostles were directed at God’s people (plural) at the start, and must be a community endeavor now. That is why we do personal Bible study, but we engage with others in Bible studies in homes and office buildings and schools and churches.

It is advisable to have as many Bible commentaries as possible because it is so helpful to see how other men view certain passages and to see if anyone can learn something from them. They might have insight that he doesn’t have. They might have read something in the passage that he missed. Like the proverb that says “Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed” (Prov. 15:22) and in a similar manner, the wise counsel that is often found in study Bible’s or commentaries can help us make better decisions when the Bible appears to be silent on a particular subject. It’s a great idea for those who desire the office of a pastor, deacon, elder, or teacher to have as many Bible study resources as they can get like Bible atlas’, Bible concordances, Bible dictionaries, Greek or Hebrew lexcons, but also a study Bible or Bible commentary. Some call them study Bibles but they are usually the same thing since they have footnotes and comments concerning different Bible verses. Some study Bible’s or Bible commentaries might even include Scriptures to support the commentator’s comments.

In general, there are four types of Bible commentaries, each useful for the intended purpose to aid in the study of Scripture.

1. Expository: expository commentaries are typically written by pastors and expository Bible teachers who teach verse by verse through the Bible. These commentaries usually include teaching notes, outlines, illustrations and practical applications of the authors' study and teaching on the books of the Bible.

2. Exegetical: exegetical commentaries are typically written by Bible scholars and theologians. They are more technical academic in nature, concentrating on the original languages, context or grammar of the text. These commentaries are written by some of the most knowledgeable theologians in church history.

3. Devotional: devotional commentaries are designed to enhance the readers' personal reflection and practical application of the Bible text. They are geared for times of soul-searching and listening for the voice and heart of God through the text.

4. Cultural: cultural commentaries are meant to help readers gain an understanding of the cultural background of the Bible text.

Bible commentaries usually come in massive volumes – one for each book of the Bible! The print version of all volumes of word Biblical Commentary series would take up seven feet on our bookshelf. This is probably one of the biggest reasons that most people are in love with electronic Bible resources.

When we're doing in-depth study of biblical passages, we should read two or three or more commentaries, making notes as we read. We will quickly see where the commentators agree on the meaning and the emphases of texts, and we will gather numerous details not obvious with the simple reading of the text. We collect, for instance, these concise commentaries from Mathew Henry's Complete Commentary (MHC), Albert Barnes' New Testament Notes, Expository Notes with Practical Observations on the New Testament by William Burkitt, Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset and David Brown Bible Commentary (JFB), The People's New Testament (PNT), John Wesley's Notes on the Bible and others.

When it comes to choosing which specific commentaries to use, we note the type of commentary suited to our purpose (above). Then, we should note the theological assumptions of the commentators. Some scholars look at the Bible simply as one more human text, and they analyze it on purely linguistic and historical bases. On the other hand, scholars who believe in the divine inspiration and unique character of scripture will take

things like miracles and the resurrection of Christ as historical realities, and will look for the cohesive themes of the revelation of God in Holy Scripture.

Most commentators agree on many issues; but sometimes they might be even reproached for heresies. For example, Albert Barnes had been tried (but not convicted) for heresy in 1836, mostly due to the views he expressed in Notes on Romans (1834) of the imputation of the sin of Adam, original sin, and the atonement. Therefore, just as we would prayerfully evaluate a sermon, evaluate the contents of any resource we read.

FINALLY, NO MATTER WHICH VERSION OF STUDY BIBLE OR COMMENTARY WE USE TRUST ONLY THE WORD OF GOD. FOR VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, TILL HEAVEN AND EARTH PASS, ONE JOT OR ONE TITTLE SHALL IN NO WISE PASS FROM THE LAW, TILL ALL BE FULFILLED. WHOSOEVER THEREFORE SHALL BREAK ONE OF THESE LEAST COMMANDMENTS, AND SHALL TEACH MEN SO, HE SHALL BE CALLED THE LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; BUT WHOSOEVER SHALL DO AND TEACH THEM, THE SAME SHALL BE CALLED GREAT IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. MATH 5:18-19.

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THE WORD OF GOD ABIDES FOREVER.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The First Book of Moses, Called

Genesis

[Genesis]

GENESIS is the book of beginnings. It records not only the beginning of the heavens and the earth, and of plant, animal, and human life, but also of all human institutions and relationships. Typically, it speaks of the new birth, the new creation, where all was chaos and ruin. With Genesis begins also that progressive self-revelation of God which culminates in Christ. The three primary names of Deity, Elohim, Jehovah, and Adonai, and the five most important of the compound names, occur in Genesis; and that in an ordered progression which could not be changed without confusion. The problem of sin as affecting man's condition in the earth and his relation to God, and the divine solution of that problem are here in essence. Of the eight great covenants which condition human life and the divine redemption, four, the Edenic, Adamic, Noahic, and Abrahamic Covenants are in this book; and these are the fundamental covenants to which the other four, the Mosaic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New Covenants, are related chiefly as adding detail or development. Genesis enters into the very structure of the New Testament, in which it is quoted above sixty times in seventeen books. In a profound sense, therefore, the roots of all subsequent revelation are planted deep in Genesis, and whoever would truly comprehend that revelation must begin here. The inspiration of Genesis and its character as a divine revelation are authenticated by the testimony of Christ (Matthew 19:4-6; 24:37-39; Mark 10:4-9; Luke 11:49-51; 17:26-29,32 ; John 1:5; 7:21-23; 8:44,56). Genesis is in five chief divisions:

Creation (1:1-2:25)

The fall and redemption (3:1-7).

The Diverse Seeds, Cain and Seth, to the Flood (4:8-7:24).

The Flood to Babel (8:1-11:9).

From the call of Abram to the death of Joseph (11:10-50:26).

Genesis -1

The Creation

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

In its epitome, Ge 1:1, where we find, to our comfort, the first article of our creed, that God the Father Almighty is the Maker of heaven and earth, and as such we believe in him.

1. Observe, in this verse, four things:--

(1.) The effect produced--the heaven and the earth, that is, the world, including the whole frame and furniture of the universe, the world and all things therein, Ac 17:24. The world is a great house, consisting of upper and lower stories, the structure stately and magnificent, uniform and convenient, and every room well and wisely furnished. It is the visible part of the creation that Moses here designs to account for; therefore he mentions not the creation of angels. But as the earth has not only its surface adorned with grass and flowers, but also its bowels enriched with metals and precious stones (which partake more of its solid nature and more valuable, though the creation of them is not mentioned here), so the heavens are not only beautified to our eye with glorious lamps which garnish its outside, of whose creation we here read, but they are within replenished with glorious beings, out of our sight, more celestial, and more surpassing them in worth and excellency than the gold or sapphires surpass the lilies of the field. In the visible world it is easy to observe,

[1.] Great variety, several sorts of beings vastly differing in their nature and constitution from each other. Lord, how manifold are thy works, and all good!

[2.] Great beauty. The azure sky and verdant earth are charming to the eye of the curious spectator, much more the ornaments of both. How transcendent then must the beauty of the Creator be!

[3.] Great exactness and accuracy. To those that, with the help of microscopes, narrowly look into the works of nature, they appear far more fine than any of the works of art.

[4.] Great power. It is not a lump of dead and inactive matter, but there is virtue, more or less, in every creature: the earth itself has a magnetic power.

[5.] Great order, a mutual dependence of beings, an exact harmony of motions, and an admirable chain and connection of causes.

[6.] Great mystery. There are phenomena in nature which cannot be solved, secrets which cannot be fathomed nor accounted for. But from what we see of heaven and earth we may easily enough infer the eternal power and Godhead of the great Creator, and may furnish ourselves with abundant matter for his praises. And let our make and place, as men, remind us of our duty as Christians, which is always to keep heaven in our eye and the earth under our feet.

(2.) The author and cause of this great work--GOD. The Hebrew word is Elohim, God (a-4) Heb. Elohim, the plural of Eloah, 'the Supreme'. It is Deity in the absolute sense, which bespeaks,

[1.] The power of God the Creator. El signifies the strong God; and what less than almighty strength could bring all things out of nothing?

[2.] The plurality of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This plural name of God, in Hebrew, which speaks of him as many though he is one, was to the Gentiles perhaps a savour of death unto death, hardening them in their idolatry; but it is to us a savour of life unto life, confirming our faith in the

doctrine of the Trinity, which, though but darkly intimated in the Old Testament, is clearly revealed in the New. The Son of God, the eternal Word and Wisdom of the Father, was with him when he made the world (Pr 8:30), nay, we are often told that the world was made by him, and nothing made without him, Joh 1:3,10,Eph 3:9,Col 1:16,Heb 1:2. O what high thoughts should this form in our minds of that great God whom we draw nigh to in religious worship, and that great Mediator in whose name we draw nigh!

(3.) The manner in which this work was effected: God created it, that is, made it out of nothing. There was not any pre-existent matter out of which the world was produced. The fish and fowl were indeed produced out of the waters and the beasts and man out of the earth; but that earth and those waters were made out of nothing. By the ordinary power of nature, it is impossible that anything should be made out of nothing; no artificer can work, unless he has something to work on. But by the almighty power of God it is not only possible that something should be made of nothing (the God of nature is not subject to the laws of nature), but in the creation it is impossible it should be otherwise, for nothing is more injurious to the honour of the Eternal Mind than the supposition of eternal matter. Thus the excellency of the power is of God and all the glory is to him.

(4.) When this work was produced: In the beginning, that is, in the beginning of time, when that clock was first set a going: time began with the production of those beings that are measured by time. Before the beginning of time there was none but that Infinite Being that inhabits eternity. Should we ask why God made the world no sooner, we should but darken counsel by words without knowledge; for how could there be sooner or later in eternity? And he did make it in the beginning of time, according to his eternal counsels before all time. The Jewish Rabbies have a saying, that there were seven things which God created before the world, by which they only mean to express the excellency of these things:--The law, repentance, paradise, hell, the throne of glory, the house of the sanctuary, and the name of the Messiah. But to us it is enough to say, In the beginning was the Word, Joh 1:1.

2. Let us learn hence,

(1.) That atheism is folly, and atheists are the greatest fools in nature; for they see there is a world that could not make itself, and yet they will not own there is a God that made it. Doubtless, they are without excuse, but the god of this world has blinded their minds.

(2.) That God is sovereign Lord of all by an incontestable right. If he is the Creator, no doubt he is the owner and possessor of heaven and earth.

(3.) That with God all things are possible, and therefore happy are the people that have him for their God, and whose help and hope stand in his name, Ps 121:2,124:8.

(4.) That the God we serve is worthy of, and yet is exalted far above, all blessing and praise, Ne 9:5,6. If he made the world, he needs not our services, nor can be benefited by them (Ac 17:24,25), and yet he justly requires them, and deserves our praise, Re 4:11. If all is of him, all must be to him.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

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3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

We have here a further account of the first day's work, in which observe,

1. That the first of all visible beings which God created was light; not that by it he himself might see to work (for the darkness and light are both alike to him), but that by it we might see his works and his glory in them, and might work our works while it is day. The works of Satan and his servants are works of darkness; but he that doeth truth, and doeth good, cometh to the light, and coveteth it, that his deeds may be made manifest, Joh 3:21. Light is the great beauty and blessing of the universe. Like the first-born, it does, of all visible beings, most resemble its great Parent in purity and power, brightness and beneficence; it is of great affinity with a spirit, and is next to it; though by it we see other things, and are sure that it is, yet we know not its nature, nor can describe what it is, or by what way the light is parted, Job 38:19,24. By the sight of it let us be led to, and assisted in, the believing contemplation of him who is light, infinite and eternal light (1Jo 1:5), and the Father of lights (Jam 1:17), and who dwells in inaccessible light, 1Ti 6:16. In the new creation, the first thing wrought in the soul is light: the blessed Spirit captives the will and affections by enlightening the understanding, so coming into the heart by the door, like the good shepherd whose own the sheep are, while sin and Satan, like thieves and robbers,

climb up some other way. Those that by sin were darkness by grace become light in the world.

2. That the light was made by the word of God's power. He said, Let there be light; he willed and appointed it, and it was done immediately: there was light, such a copy as exactly answered the original idea in the Eternal Mind. O the power of the word of God! He spoke, and it was done, done really, effectually, and for perpetuity, not in show only, and to serve a present turn, for he commanded, and it stood fast: with him it was dictum, factum--a word, and a world. The world of God (that is, his will and the good pleasure of it) is quick and powerful. Christ is the Word, the essential eternal Word, and by him the light was produced, for in him was light, and he is the true light, the light of the world, Joh 1:9,9:5. The divine light which shines in sanctified souls is wrought by the power of God, the power of his word and of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, opening the understanding, scattering the mists of ignorance and mistake, and giving the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, as at first, God commanded the light to shine out of darkness, 2Co 4:6. Darkness would have been perpetually upon the face of fallen man if the Son of God had not come, and given us an understanding, 1Jo 5:20.

3. That the light which God willed, when it was produced, he approved of: God saw the light that it was good. It was exactly as he designed it, and it was fit to answer the end for which he designed it. It was useful and profitable; the world, which now is a palace, would have been a dungeon without it. It was amiable and pleasant. Truly the light is sweet (Ec 11:7); it rejoiceth the heart, Pr 15:30. What God commands he will approve and graciously accept; he will be well pleased with the work of his own hands. That is good indeed which is so in the sight of God, for he sees not as man sees. If the light is good, how good is he that is the fountain of light, from whom we receive it, and to whom we owe all praise for it and all the services we do by it!

4. That God divided the light from the darkness, so put them asunder as that they could never be joined together, or reconciled; for what fellowship has light with darkness? 2Co

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