

APOSTOLIC THEOLOGY

SEVEN TENETS IN HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Apostolic Theology is opening up the Scripture as it is written; understanding context and applying the word as the apostles in the New Testament did.

1. The Bible is the Word of God

Fundamental to studying of the word of God is the acceptance that **the Bible is the word of God.**

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God”
2Tim.3:16.

“For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” 2Pet.1:21.

Jesus overcame the temptations of the devil by knowing ‘what is written’ (Matt.4:1-11, Lu.4:1-14).

Jesus makes it clear that the word of God is our judge (Jn.12:48).

Jesus made it clear that He was not speaking His own word *“but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak ... Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak”* Jn.12:49-50.

Paul is adamant that we should *“not think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the*

other” 1Cor.4:6. Our only authority for faith and practice is the word of God. As soon as we go beyond that, we have no reliable *“plumb line”* to judge the reliability of what is being shared.

2. The New Testament is Found in the Old Testament; the Old Testament is Fulfilled in the New Testament

“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” Lu.24:27. Jesus only had Old Testament Scriptures as did the first apostles, but they were able to preach the gospel powerfully from the Old Testament.

“Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures” Lu.24:44-45.

The key is to have our understanding opened. Paul’s prayer in **Ephesians 1:17-18** is a key: ask God for the spirit of wisdom and revelation and for our understanding to be opened to know Christ in both New and Old Testaments.

“The gospel of God which He promised through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures” Rom.1:1-2. To understand the gospel, we need to understand the teaching and promises

of God from the book of **Genesis** to **Malachi**, and to see that those promises and that teaching is fulfilled in the New Testament.

Philip preached Jesus from the book of Isaiah (**Acts 8:30-35**). He preached so effectively that the Ethiopian man asked for baptism immediately.

3. Compare Scripture with Scripture

The teaching of the Bible on any particular subject is the sum total of all that the Bible says about that subject. Through the use of a Concordance, we are able to do exhaustive studies of words, characters, places and even themes in the Bible. We can find out what the Bible says about a particular subject and preach and teach the word of God with authority.

The character of Enoch, the son of Jared, is a simple example of comparing Scripture with Scripture. Enoch is first mentioned in **Genesis 5:18-24**; he is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in **Luke 3:37**. Then we have the interpretation [fulfilment] in **Hebrews 11:5-6**, and the only other mention is in **Jude 14-15**, where Enoch is shown to be a prophet and having insight into the second coming of Christ. From these few direct references to the man Enoch, the seventh from Adam [not to be confused with Enoch the son of Cain], we are able to preach and teach a wonderful message concerning the glorification of the church.

This short study on Enoch, covers every verse that mentions his name in the Bible. This information comes by looking up the name Enoch in the Concordance.

4. Scripture interprets Scripture

The temptation for Bible students is to rush to look up commentators and what Bible scholars have said about the Scripture or to simply believe doctrines that one has been taught that do not stand the test of Scriptural authority or the true interpretation of Scripture [this is called hermeneutics].

Some examples of Scripture interpreting Scripture:

In **Revelation 1:20**, Jesus interprets the stars and the lampstands. Because of this interpretive verse we can then understand the symbolism of the golden lampstand in the Tabernacle of Moses, and in **Zechariah 4**, and we receive help to understand **Revelation 11:4** which identifies the two witnesses as **“two lampstands”**.

In **John 3:5-6**, Jesus interprets the **water** as **flesh** birth or natural birth. We need no further interpretation of the water in this context!

5. Teach and Interpret Scripture in Context

- Every verse of Scripture always appears in a **passage** – this is the first context;
- every passage of Scripture is in a **chapter**;
- every chapter is in a **book**.
- Each book appears in a **Testament**
- and finally, the complete context is the **whole Bible**.

Someone has said: *a text without a context is a pretext!* Every cultish teaching and

every false doctrine derived from the Bible comes about by taking texts out of context to make a sectarian doctrine.

6. Do not Major on Minor Subjects

Paul told Timothy to not **“give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith”** **1Tim.1:4**. Many want to argue and make laws about women’s head covering. In Paul’s discussion in **1Cor.11:2-16**, Paul finally says that it is only a **custom**.

We need to teach and preach **“all things that I [Jesus] have commanded you”** **Matt.28:20**. We need to **“speak the things that are proper for sound doctrine”** (**Tit.2:1**).

Take heed to preach and teach the things that Jesus and the apostles spoke of. Do not adhere to fanciful ideas and questionable interpretations. To abide by this tenet of apostolic theology, we need to guard against things that do not matter, or particular interpretations – only speak the word.

7. Ask your Questions of Scripture and wait for Scriptural answers

For example, in **Habukkuk 2:1-3**, the prophet wrote the vision but then he had to wait for it to come to fulfilment.

The Bible has all the answers and the Bible will answer itself. If you cannot get your answer from Scripture, then be quiet and wait upon the Lord for Him to answer.

A HELPFUL WAY TO APPROACH THE NEW TESTAMENT IN GENERAL

- In the Gospels Jesus tells us **what to do: “all things that I have commanded you”** **Matt.28:20**.
- In the book of Acts, the apostles show us **how to do it**, that is, how to obey the commands of Jesus.
- In the Epistles the apostles explain or teach **why we do the things** that have been demonstrated in the book of Acts.
- In the book of Revelation there is **the fulfilment of all things** in Messiah Jesus

An example is baptism

- i) Jesus commanded baptism in **Matthew 28:19 & Mark 16:16**.
- ii) In the **book of Acts** the apostles show us how to baptise in obedience to Jesus’ command. Peter commanded them **“to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ”** **Acts 2:38** [also see **Acts 8:16, 16:31 & 33; 19:5; Col.2:11-12**].
- iii) In the **Epistles** we are taught the doctrine of baptism: **Romans 6:3-14; 1Peter 3:21-22**
- iv) As for the fulfilment in the book of **Revelation**, there is **“a great multitude which no one could number of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb”** **7:9**. These ones are true believers who have been baptised into Jesus Christ. They are at one with Him.