

I. Introduction and Review

This morning, we are continuing where we have been going over the last couple of months. When we started out, we talked about how we wanted to really focus on helping build the right kind of relationship with the Lord through the Word of God. We went through a number of different studies in the book of Nehemiah, showing you, first of all, the biblical way to build a church. We talked about the nine gates that are found in that book, the book of Nehemiah being a picture of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the walls, the city without defense. We went through all of that and showed you that there were nine gates in that city. Each one of those gates matches up to something that the local church needs to have today as far as ministry is concerned.

Then we began to focus and define some things for you. There are a number of things that we have to get down on the baseline of understanding before we really begin to put all of it together. My goal is to bring you through all of these concepts. Today, we are going to look at a little bit more of how to pull it together. We talked about the judgment seat of Christ, and I laid out every aspect of that, showing you how it was the most important doctrine in the Bible for the child of God. We even went so far as to look at the questions that God is going to ask at the judgment seat of Christ, found in the book of Job.

Last week, we laid out probably the greatest one thing you have to get in your life as a child of God, and that is balance. Understanding how to balance everything in your life. We focused particularly on the Word of God, showing you that if you are going to learn the Bible and if you are ever going to build a relationship with God to the point where you really have what I call a working relationship with the Word of God—in other words, the Bible doing in your life what God intended for it to do—you are going to have to understand balance when it comes to the Word of God.

We talked about the three applications of Scripture: how the Bible has a historical application, a doctrinal application, and an inspirational application. We focused on what it takes to know the Bible, and we showed you the difference between just knowing a lot of things about the Bible, which many Christians do. You can find a lot of Christians today who know a lot of things about the Bible. You do not find very many of God's people today who know the Bible, and there is a big difference.

So, we have been talking about a biblical format for understanding the Word of God. I do not know why people are so confused when it comes to a biblical way to understand the Bible. God gives us a pattern for everything in our lives. Certainly, He gave us a pattern for studying the Word of God, and that is the pattern that we want to really understand and define, and then help you apply it into your life. Building God's people and building their lives into the Word of God is the only way that you are ever going to really have a relationship with the Lord the way God wants you to have it. Last week, we began to show you how to break it down. Today, we are

going to move into the next level, and I am going to show you what to do with it once you break it down, or how you look at learning the Bible.

II. The Biblical Pattern for Understanding Scripture

Isaiah 28:9-10

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We ask You to bless us today. We thank You for the ones that braved the elements today to be here. We thank You, Father, for our time in the Word of God. We pray that You will bless us. We pray, Father, that not only will You protect the people, Lord, that are ill and sick today and comfort them, but Lord, we pray also that as these people go home today, that You will watch over them and bless them. We thank You for all that You do for us. Holy Spirit of God, show us and lead us into all truth today. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

When you come to the book of Isaiah 28, let me give you a little information here. Historically, this is dealing with the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel is in apostasy. The nation of Israel has departed from the Word of God; they are not doing what is right with the Word of God, and they are suffering the judgment by the other nations coming in and persecuting them, and God is getting ready to send them into captivity.

How many times have I showed you through our Thursday night Bible studies, or our one-on-one time in the Word of God, or even teaching on Sunday morning, how the parallels between the nation of Israel and the church exist? God had a plan for the nation of Israel. God has a plan for the church. They are not the same plan; they deal with two kingdoms. One of them deals with the nation of Israel, which deals with the kingdom of heaven. The plan for the church deals with the kingdom of God. Two different plans, but they are both based on the Word of God, and their success is based on what both people groups do with the Bible. In both cases, the nation of Israel departs from the Word of God, and they go into apostasy. The church departs from the Word of God; they enter into an apostasy, hence what we commonly call the Laodicean church.

So, when we are reading the book of Isaiah, even though it is talking about the nation of Israel in a historical sense and how God wanted to teach them, God uses the same principles today to teach us the Word of God as He has all down through history. The first thing I want you to understand is He starts out by asking two questions: "Whom shall he teach knowledge?" and "Whom shall he make to understand doctrine?"

I do not know how you observe life. I do not know how much in tune you are with the things that are around you. Most of God's people go through life with their head in a fog. I know that most of you are sharper than that, and we have been together for a lot of years, and even the newer ones that have come in—God has given us a host of new people here in the last couple of

months, and we thank God for that—but even those are really wanting to learn the Bible and plug into the Word of God.

Have you ever just stopped and observed the things of life? Have you ever just looked at people and gotten a good perspective of really what is going on in life? I like to listen to what people talk about. If I am in a crowd someplace, whether it is saved people or unsaved people, if I am around and there is a conversation going on, I may say very little unless God gives me an opportunity. But what I will do very greatly is listen. I think it is important to listen to what people say, hear what they talk about. I think it is important to see what they love and what they talk about loving. I think it is important to watch around the world and people what they do.

When it comes to Christians, I like to watch what makes Christians upset. I think that it is interesting, all those things about the way we are and the things that we do, the things that we talk about, the things that make us happy, the things that make us sad. I think it makes a statement about where we are at with the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that, I have answered a lot of questions over the years of why some of God's people really never do much for the Lord.

Take the average child of God in the average church. If they are saved, they are all saved. There is not one that got more of the Holy Spirit of God than the other one. Salvation is not more real than the other. They are all part of the body of Christ. They are all part of the family of God. They are all saved. They are all in Christ. They are all washed in the blood. They all have the same Spirit of God. They all have the same Bible. Why is it that there are some people who learn the Bible, plug into the Bible, build a relationship with God and the Word of God, and some people never do?

I am going to tell you, in the ministry, you are going to find people like that all the time. I used to wonder about it. I used to scratch my head and look and think, "Why did this guy get it and this person did not? Why is this family plugged into the Word of God and doing what is right? Why is this one not?" I used to look. I understand now. God gave me the answer many, many years ago, and I see it and I understand it. The answer is found right here in this passage, and it is very key that you understand that growing in the Word and building a relationship with God, you are going to have to do something. Verse 9 says very clearly that not everybody is going to get it. He asks the question, "Whom shall he teach? Whom shall he make to understand doctrine?" The passage shows the biblical way to learn the Word of God and get understanding in doctrine.

Learning the Bible and building a relationship with God—you cannot do one without the other. You would not even know there was a God if there was not a Bible. The Bible is God's revelation to man. God reveals what He is doing and reveals about Himself. We would not even know there was a God or anything about God if God had not given us the Word of God. Yes, I know the heavens declare the glory of God. Yes, I know that you see God in creation. I understand. But the Bible says, "How shall they hear unless they have a preacher?" You have to have the Word of God.

When God gave the Bible to man, God did not give a book that tells a man how to live his life, though it does. That is not the intent. God gave us a book that reveals God's perspective on everything in life. My job as a Christian is to make God's perspective my perspective. We can

start in the beginning of your life and my life, and we can look at every subject that you want to deal with, and God has something to say about it. We talked about that as part of the balance.

III. Defining Precepts and Doctrine

Learning the Bible and learning a relationship with God is based on two things:

1. Precepts
2. Doctrine

Now, precepts are basic Bible principles. They are rules of action, like the Ten Commandments is a set of precepts. They are principles. The law of sowing and reaping, that is a precept; it is a law of action. So, precepts in the Bible are basic Bible principles.

Now, doctrine in the Bible is something else. Doctrine, on the other hand, are exact, infallible teachings of truth that affect the outcome of life on planet Earth. They are not just basic principles; they are direct truth. In fact, a number of precepts, when you put precepts together, they come and form together a form of teaching called doctrine. When you learn the Bible, you learn precepts, principles, and then you build upon that, and they build into doctrine as you learn them.

When you talk about a doctrine, you talk about the doctrine of the crucifixion, or the doctrine of the deity of Christ, the doctrine of the resurrection, the doctrine of the depravity of man. They are not just basic principles. They are not just bites of truth that you build into. No, no, they are absolute, infallible teachings about life on planet Earth and how it directly affects God and the Word of God.

IV. The Importance of Doctrine

Doctrine is the backbone of the Bible. There is no question about it. Doctrine is the backbone of the Bible. That was the real issue when Christ came the first time. The first time He shows up at the first coming of Christ, in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the real issue the scribes and Pharisees had with Him was His doctrine. They did not like what He taught. Why? Because His teaching went against the teaching of the day.

The scribes and Pharisees had it good. They had everything they could want. They had their own little kingdoms. They had an alliance with the Roman Empire: "You do not bother me, I will not bother you. You allow me to do this, I will do this. I will keep the people in line if you allow me to have my position of power." It was a very neat little organization that they had. When Jesus showed up, He shattered that philosophy. When He showed up, He showed up to bring in a King and a kingdom. When He showed up, He brought in a reign of righteousness and a reign of peace. The Roman Empire, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees, and the religious leaders of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel, they did not want that. The thing that bothered them was His doctrine.

It is incredible to go through. The common man always gets the doctrine; the religious leaders never get it. The common, ordinary man, the Bible says, was astonished at His doctrine. The other crowd was intimidated by it. The common, ordinary man loved His doctrine. The other group hated His doctrine. When you understand how important doctrine is, then you realize that you have to get it down if you are ever going to understand the Bible. There are certain teachings in the Bible that you must get down.

When you look at the Bible, it looks pretty intimidating: 31,171 verses, 1,189 chapters. Believe me, I have been through it a couple of times; I know they are there. It looks intimidating, and you have so many different things. Sometimes, when you come to Sunday morning or you come to Thursday night Bible study, and somebody asks a question, and one little question that maybe you looked at and you never really thought about, but you thought, "Well, that will not take long." We can take three or four hours and talk about it, and you walk away saying, "Wow, how will I ever learn the Bible like that?" Well, you need to, and if you follow the biblical format, you will.

Learning the Bible is not hard. Learning the Bible is no harder than learning to talk or learning to write. I remember years ago, when I was just a kid in grade school, that when I went to class, across that classroom, along the top of the wall in every classroom and every school I was in, all the way up to high school, there was the alphabet: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, all the way around that room. There was the alphabet. I always wondered then why they put it so high. Now I understand, because as a little kid, we are always looking up and looking around. They put it where we could see it.

Then, when I got probably first or second grade, we began to write those words, and they began to show us uppercase and lowercase. I am sure I still have somewhere in all of our minutia at home some second and third grade papers where I put my A's, B's, C's. You know how they did it? You had to, you had little brackets that you put the big one, and they had to make a little loop, and then you made all the other ones, and you did that for what seemed like for months—in my case, to the sixth grade, anyhow. You did it over and over and over.

Then one day, the teacher came up and they said, "Hey, you know those letters we have been learning? They form words." And you know what we did? We made up little bitty sentences. We made up the word "cat." We made up the word "dog." We gave our dog a name, Spot. We called our cat whatever. We did all these things through there, and then we put them in, and then she showed us an amazing thing: "Take the alphabet, make words, and then make sentences out of the words." "Spot saw the cat." "The cat saw Spot." "They all went after the farmer's wife. She came to their tail with a carving knife." And that is the way it went. The better you got, and the longer you got, and the more you learned, pretty soon you were doing paragraphs. In those paragraphs, you were conveying ideas. You were taking basic little ABCs, forming them into words, putting them into sentences, putting them into paragraphs, and through that, you could communicate anything you want.

Same thing. The ABCs are the precepts and the principles. When you learn the precepts and the principles, you build them into words. When you build them into words, you build them into

sentences. When you put them into sentences, you get enough of them together, you form a doctrine. Through the basic fundamental principles of the Word of God, the ABCs of the Bible, you can teach anything you want to teach from the Bible through those biblical precepts and doctrines. Precepts form doctrines. Bible doctrine, when you form them from precepts, you learn the Bible truth in the form of Bible doctrine.

V. The Process of Learning: From Milk to Meat

Now, verse 9 says, "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." Very important. Keep your finger here and turn back to 1 Peter 2:2. I want to show you a great verse, and there are two incredible things we need to see from this, two great principles.

1 Peter 2:2

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Simple verse. Every preacher I have ever heard quote that verse or preach on it, I have heard him quote it wrong or preach it wrong. It is always preached, it is always said like this: "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby," simply saying that newborn babes desire the milk of the word that they might grow. That is not what it says. Look at the comma. The comma is there: "As newborn babes, comma." Study the English language. "As newborn babes, comma." It is not saying newborn babes desire the milk of the word. It is saying you and I, as a child of God, should desire the milk of the Word, just like a baby cannot live without it. A baby has a desire for milk, does it not? A baby desires milk. You and I, as a child of God, should desire the Word of God. He says, "the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

All right, milk of the Word, precepts, principles. Sometimes we call it discipleship. Sometimes we call it just sitting down and teaching the basic Bible. Sometimes it is just going through, learning those principles and those precepts, getting young Christians in the Word of God, explaining the Word of God, breaking it down. That is how you start, but you do not stop there. That is where most Christians stop. That is where most churches stop. That is where most preachers stop. They do not ever want to take the people to a higher level where they invest their time teaching them the Word of God on a deeper level.

Let me tell you what your goal ought to be in life. I do not care where you are at in your spiritual relationship with God right now. I could care less. This needs to be your number one goal, outside of walking with God and all those good things. When it comes to the Word of God, your number one goal in learning that Bible should be simply this: You ought to be so in touch and in tune with that Bible that you could teach any book of the Bible with 20 seconds notice or less.

You ought to be able to go someplace where they say, "Well, we are going to have you preaching our church," and you get to go and you sit down there, and they tell you a week before, "You know, we are going to have a prophecy conference, and boy, could you teach us some things out of the book of Revelation?" Oh, you are all ready to go. Well, you get there that night, and they

call you up. They are saying the last song, you are going to get up to preach. You have got Revelation 19 and 20 all laid out, and you are ready to go. Just about that time, the preacher leans over and says, "Oh, by the way, did I tell you we are not having a prophecy conference? We are talking about a relationship with God this week, and you have been assigned the book of Psalms." Now, what are you going to do?

I will tell you what, if that same scenario happened at work, and you are on your computer and you are doing this, or you are on this, or you are running this machine, or you are doing this, whatever you do for life, and the boss came up and said, "We are pulling you off this machine and putting you on here. Pull that program out and run this one. Take this out and put this in." You know what? You would not even flinch at that. It may call you a little more work. You may have to take a little more time, but you know exactly how to restructure what you are doing in your job. It always amazed me that God's people knew more about their job than they did the Bible that saved them. Your goal ought to be that when that guy leans over and says that, you just say, "No problem," turn over to the book of Psalms and say, "Oh man, well, I got some stuff here," and let her rip.

Learning the Bible, investing your life in learning the Bible. Most of God's people, they get the milk. They get the milk. But he says back in the book of Isaiah, "Whom shall I teach? Whom shall I make to understand doctrine?" You have got to get off the milk. Here, you get saved, come to this church, or you are just a young Christian, hey man, I will feed you with milk, but I will not let you stay there. Our home ministry is designed to bring you through a process that you do not stay with the milk.

Now, this was the problem that the writer talked about in the book of Hebrews. You do not have to turn back to it, but in Hebrews 5, there was a problem, and the writer of Hebrews said:

Hebrews 5:12-14

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

He says there, "You people ought to be teaching the Word of God. You people ought to know more about the Bible. But what we have to do is again begin to teach you the first principle, precept. We have to start over laying out the basic Bible again because you have not grown in the Word." He says milk belongs to somebody that is unskillful in the Word. The next verse, he said, "Strong meat," that is doctrine, "belong to them that are of full age, who by reason of use have their senses exercised." You get off milk as a baby, but you have to get weaned off and get to the meat.

Now, how do you do that? That is very nice, Bob. Good analogy. That is very good, very good. But what is the process? How do I do it? All right, you explained you need to do it. Now, show me how do you do it. Thought you never ask. Back to Isaiah 28. He says, "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." Hey, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word," but you do not stop there.

My job as pastor is not to build a building. I am not into building buildings. I am into building people. God will take care of the buildings. God will take care wherever we have got to meet. We did not have this place; we were looking all around. God gave us right in our life. He will always do that when your priority is not material things, but spiritual. I told you before, a lot of people in this Christian world, a lot of preachers in this world, they invest their whole life in everything in this world. I have learned one thing: there are only two things worth investing your life in on this planet because it is the only two things that are eternal—the souls of men and the Word of God. Everything else is just fluff. Everything else means absolutely nothing to God. Those are the things that God takes care of when we take care of God's business with the Word of God. Training and teaching people gets you off the milk. You are not going to stay there for long.

VI. Building God's Temple: Precepts, Lines, and Doctrine

Isaiah 28:10

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

Now, here is how it works. 1 Corinthians 3 says that you and I are God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:10

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

1 Corinthians 6:19

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Your body is God's building. Your body is God's temple. We saw this when we studied the book of Nehemiah. We will see it again when we move into Ezra and show you how you build your body for the Lord here in the next couple of weeks. But we know that when you get saved, 1 Corinthians 3:10 says you lay a foundation. That foundation is Jesus Christ. When we studied the judgment seat of Christ, we showed you how that when you get saved, that foundation is Christ. The rest of your life, you build upon that foundation: gold, silver, precious stones. Gold, deity of Christ; silver, what is Christ? Redemption; and precious stones, people. A balance, one, two, three, just like we looked at last week. You build upon that foundation the rest of your life: gold, silver, precious stones.

You come to church. You come to Bible study. We meet one hour a week going through the Bible. You read your Bible. You study your Bible. You ask questions. You come on Sunday morning. You hear messages. You buy the tapes. You put it together, and you go home, and you know what you have? You have a bunch of biblical precepts and doctrines. What you do the day you get saved, you lay that foundation, and then you build upon that foundation. Precepts, the precepts, the principles of the Bible are the building blocks by which you lay the course on the walls of this temple. As you build, you move through milk and you move into doctrine, and you learn how to understand doctrine.

Then you have something else. He says, "precept upon precept," then he says, "line upon line." I am not very good at masonry work. I tried to build a foundation one time out of cinder blocks, and they tore it down two days later and did it right. It was not that I was not sincere; I was sincere. It was not that I did not have all the right tools; I did. I had good quality cement. I had good cinder blocks. I had a trowel. I had all the stuff that I needed. But when I started to look at that thing, I looked at that wall, and it was just going every which way. It was not straight. Let me just say to you, there is no strength in an unstraight wall.

So, I had a friend of mine, I said, "What did I do wrong?" And he said, "Well, you did not keep your wall straight." And I said, "How in the world do you keep your wall straight?" He says, "Bob, you have got to put a line on it." And he went down at the end of that thing and drove a little stake in it, and he went down the other end, drove the stake, and he put a real tight line on it, and that line was straight. He laid that course of block along that straight line, and in a half a day, he had the wall twice as far as I got it. It was straight as an arrow.

Years later, I looked back at that when I understood this passage. I read this passage, and I began to realize the importance of it. When you study, the day you get saved, you lay the foundation. You build upon that foundation the building blocks, the precepts. As you build them up, what keeps your wall straight? The line. You know what the line is? It is doctrine. When you build the wall and lay the block, they turn into doctrine. The doctrine is the line that keeps you from getting your wall, building your body for the Lord, crooked. It keeps you straight.

Do not ever forget:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Why? As long as you build on the foundation with the precepts and the principles, and you turn them into doctrines, the doctrine is the line that keeps your wall straight. You will never go astray when it comes to God or the Word of God. The foundation is the day you got saved. The basic precept is the milk and the building blocks. The doctrine is the line that keeps you straight in your walk with God. You will never get screwed up in the Word of God with bad doctrine or lack of doctrine if you understand that principle.

Then verse 10: "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." Here a little and there a little. You build from here and from there. You begin to lay down the foundation. You build the precepts. You learn doctrines. Then, as you come to Thursday night, Sunday morning, you read your Bible, our time in the Word of God, whenever we spend time in the Word of God, you are adding a little here, a little there. You get a little more here. There are things that I am teaching you right now that you are writing down in your notes or putting in your Bible that you do not fully understand. One of these days, two years, three years, maybe five years down the line, you are going to read something in the Bible, you are going to hear somebody preach something, and it is going to be like somebody turned the lights on. You are going to say, "Oh, that is what that is!" You have got to build it here a little, there a little, adding the Word of God to your faith.

I will tell you what we are going to do in time. I decided this. I did not get a chance to talk about it on New Year's Eve because we had some great questions, and we did not get going. But here is my goal right now: We are laying down some basic principles right now. We are laying down some precepts. We are trying to get all the decks covered, give you all the basic material, get you to understand what it is all about, give you enough information, and then show you, like today, how to use that information.

But along the lines here, when we get to a point, here is what we are going to do: Once we get that out of the way and we get that finalized, and you understand it, we are going to start in Genesis. We need to build a resource library that will help build people. We need to have something in our hands that five years down the line, or whenever somebody says, "Hey, I want to learn the Bible. I want to get what you taught back then." How are we going to do that? I am going to tell you how we are going to do it. We are going to start with Genesis, and we are going to take one hour every Sunday morning, and I am going to take in one hour and give you everything about that book that you need to know. When you sit down to read Genesis, you have it already: what you are looking for, what it is about, the key verses, how Christ is typified. Give you everything that you need so that when you study it, it is not just meaningless words and phrases. It has some diagram to it that you can understand what you are reading.

We are going to go through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, right down through the Bible. When we are done, we are going to put them in folders that look like the Bible, and they are going to be set for the Old Testament and set for the New Testament, 66 in all. You will have the Bible at your fingertips where you can sit down and get the basic concepts. I want to tell you something for a test: Go home and read Romans this afternoon or sometime this week. Now, some of you already are because we are studying it together. But the bottom line is this: When you read Romans, if you have never read it before and you have not been around as long as some of you have been around, you are going to come away scratching your head saying, "What did I just read?"

How much better would it be to have a format that shows you exactly what he is trying to get across in Romans, who he is writing it to, every breakdown of the chapter, so that you know what you are dealing with? Then, when you are finished with it, you just say, "Okay, chapter one, I am looking at the Gentiles in a mess. Chapter two, Jews in the same mess. Chapter three, why faith and your conscience will not answer the mess. Chapter four, why the law in the Old

Testament will not solve the mess. Chapter five, why the death of Christ is the answer to the mess." And down you go. We have to have a format by which we break the Bible down into basic principles that you can learn in time, doctrine, because without doctrine, you are not going anywhere. You are not going anywhere. You will be on a platform someplace sometime, and somebody will lean over to you and say, "Oh, by the way, brother, we have changed this format. You are doing Psalms."

We have the paramedics out there. This man just had a heart attack today. You get saved, you lay the foundation. The basic precepts and principles are the basic milk of the Bible, the building blocks. As you build them, you put them together like the ABCs; it makes doctrines. The doctrine is the line that keeps your wall straight. As you grow up and as you get older in the Lord, you build that wall and that temple straight for God, strong for God, by adding to your faith, adding a little the rest of your life, here a little, there a little.

VII. Consequences of Rejecting Doctrine

Now, look at Isaiah 28:12-13. This is how Israel dealt with it.

Isaiah 28:12-13

To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

Notice I did not talk about verse 11, "stammering lips." That is tongues. That is tongues. That is not for us. Somebody said, "Well, tongues is in the Bible, the Old Testament." Tongues is in the Bible, the Old Testament. Look at verse 14: "This people, this people, this people," which is in Jerusalem, the nation of Israel. They are told to look for a sign. Tongues as a sign does not apply to you, but the principles of how to learn the Word of God does.

"To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing." That is the Word of God. That is the precepts. That is the doctrine. It will cause you to rest. Once you learn the Bible, it will refresh you like nothing else will. "Yet they would not hear. But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken."

The Word of God will either cure you or kill you. Your choice. It will be the greatest book in your life or the worst thing you ever got into. The worst thing you can do is get saved and not grow. This is why the average Christian is in the mess that they get in. This is why the average church, they reject the Word of God. They reject doctrine. They will not grow past the milk stage. They will not step out past the milk stage and ever learn the doctrine of the Bible. They still think an apostle and epistles are a husband and wife. They think Noah's wife was Jonah's ark. They have no idea how to put the Bible together and lay the Word of God out.

Because of that, because they have rejected growth—I am going to tell you right now, it says, "Study to show thyself approved, a workman." It is going to take some time. You are going to have to do some things in the Bible. Take some time away from other things. You are going to have to work hard. You are going to have to labor to get it. It is not just going to fall into your mouth. But I am telling you, it is well worth the time spent with God learning that book. I am telling you, your goal ought to be that by the time you are 50, or whatever the case may be, you ought to have all 31,171 verses cross-referenced, laid out, knocked down, and understood. If you do not, I will tell you right now, all you know is a lot of things about the Bible.

Throw you in Genesis 6, you would not know where you are at with a laser beam and a flashlight. But you are in Psalms 104 about the ships in the deep with a vire, then you would be lost as a frog in a hailstorm. Throw you in the book of Proverbs someplace. Throw you over there in the book of Nehemiah or the book of Ezra or Isaiah or Jeremiah, and have you try to explain where you are at, what you are doing. You would be lost. The book was given to keep them straight, but they rejected it.

Look what happens when you take that posture. It is a nice word today: posture.

3. Fall backwards (We call it backsliding).
4. Broken (Lose their will; their will is gone).
5. Snared (Sin overcomes them).
6. Taken (Gone. You do not see them at church anymore).

That is why so many churches run so many people through the doors. I am not just talking about people visiting. I am talking about people supposedly come and get saved and then never see them again. They come for a week, two weeks, and they are gone. I have seen it all my life. All my life, I have heard preachers get up and brag about how many people they got saved last week, and the bottom line is they are not in church today. We have different definitions of what really getting saved means. You can get anybody to make a profession today, but getting them into the Word of God, discipling, and getting them into the church, that is another thing.

I am telling you, the problem is today that people come and they leave, and they do not stay. They do not get grounded simply because pastors, God's people, do not take the time to ever get them past the milk stage. We are too busy doing all the other things of the ministry when the bottom line is the ministry has nothing more than people and that book, and me ministering the Word of God to you however we have to do it. Getting you to the point where you take the milk, and that milk, as you understand the foundation, and you build upon that foundation the building blocks of that temple, and then you turn it into doctrine. The doctrine keeps you straight, and you learn more about the Bible, and you go all the way through it.

That is why this Bible says:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Not finished, all you hear all the time, "thoroughly, thoroughly, thoroughly." It is "throughly." It is not finished; it is furnished. You are building your temple from the inside out, thoroughly, and you are furnishing it with a candlestick. Go back and look at the tabernacle: candlestick, showbread, all of those things in that inner court where the priest did his work are the things that you should have in your life to furnish this temple that the high priest is comfortable ministering.

Instead, we fall backward. We are broken, snared into our sin. They come in. A guy gets out of drugs, or a guy gets out of cigarettes, or a guy gets out of this. He comes to church. The pastor slaps him on the back. Everybody is hooting and hollering. They get all excited. Nobody says, "Let me sit down with you and help you understand." Nobody says, "Let me disciple you." Nobody says, "Are you struggling with anything?" Nobody says, "Let me teach you some basic principles." But it is just, "Come on Sunday, hear my message, and you will be fine." No, you will not. It takes more than that. It takes taking somebody and loving that book and loving them and putting the Word of God into their heart as a baby.

VIII. The Pastor's Role in Discipleship

How many of you ever had a baby, put him in a high chair, put the food in front of him, and said, "Eat it, kid. I will be back later. Why are you not eating it? I prepared it. Why put the milk in the water and stir it up, put it in the oven? Why do you not eat that?" You know why he does not know how to eat it? Because he does not know how to eat it. You know what you have got to do? You have got to pick it up a little bit, put it in his mouth. He will spit half of that out. It is okay. Get a bigger spoon. Put it in. Keep putting it in. Wipe his mouth. He will put more in. Figure out what he wants. He pushes it away. It is a lot. You have four things there. It is just a process of elimination. "You want a drink?" He takes the drink. He cannot tell you what he wants. He just knows he needs something. You are the parent. You are supposed to know what he needs. Do not give him too much of this. Do not give him too much of that.

When he gets a little bigger, you do not have to eat that stuff anymore. Get those little beanie weenies in the cans. I like them myself. He takes those things. You know what? He will stick them in every orifice on his face: up his nose, in his ear, in his eye. But he finally gets the right one and eats them. Then you take him out a little older. He takes him out there, and you go to a restaurant. You do not have to bring the special food. They now have child portions. They can get a little bit of portion. What do you mean? I always got him an adult portion because I wanted to eat what he did not eat. In fact, I would eat the other table if they did not eat, if I could get away with it.

They got there, and what do you do then? Now he can eat meat. He can chew it now. He has got teeth. He is not going to choke on it. But you still have got to cut it up for him because he has got this thing that he takes the steak and sticks the whole thing in his mouth. You have got to show him to eat little pieces. Then there comes a time, there comes a time when he gets past that point, and then he will eat anything that will not eat him first. He will eat anything that walks, moves, anything. You do not eat out anymore. You cut coupons out of the newspaper. You cannot afford

to feed them. They are six feet tall. Legs are hollow, and every time they eat, they think their job in life is to fill up the legs.

God's people are the same way. Young Christians, they cannot cut up the meat. They cannot digest the protein. They cannot just sit down and eat everything the way that you and I eat it, and they do not know how to. Thinking that they do is the worst mistake you can ever make as a Christian. They do not. You and I are older in the Lord. That means we ought to be smarter. Unfortunately, it always is not the case, but we ought to be. We look at a young Christian, we automatically know what he needs. But we are so busy getting him into a little mold, and then we wonder why he falls backward, wonder why he gets broken, wonder why his old sins come up again when his old buddies come around or the girlfriend calls him or the guys at work. One of these days, you look out there and you say, "Well, where is so and so? He has not been at the church for three or four weeks. Where is so and so at?" He is taken. He is taken. He is taken. He is taken.

IX. Conclusion: The Goal of Biblical Understanding

I go back to my original question that I asked you when we started: Why some do not make it and why some do make it. The answer is simple. It is painfully obvious. The answer is very clearly doctrine. My job is to teach you doctrine. My job is to show you the biblical format by which we put the Word of God together. My job is to take basic biblical precepts and principles and work you through them to give you the basic knowledge of the Bible, and then build in time as you build them into doctrines that teach specific truths that are going to affect your life the rest of your life. Then the rest of your life, keep preaching the Word of God so you can get a little here, get a little there, a little there, a little. Add a little, get a little, and pretty soon, you keep building it on top, and you learn your Bible.

Then pretty soon, you do not need me to cut your meat up for you anymore. You are in Ezekiel, and you are saying, "Hey, Ezekiel 1, second coming of Christ. Ezekiel 10, second coming of Christ. We will then, we will then, we will hear second coming of Christ." I know everybody else says that is UFO, but it is second coming of Christ. Jeremiah 1 picks the nation of Israel, tribulation. Jeremiah is the man child. Revelation chapter... and they run on through. That is good there. Okay, book of Song of Solomon. Oh, wow, look at that thing, Solomon. Oh, there is a rapture in springtime in May. Look at that thing over there. Off through you go. You do not need anybody to cut it up for you anymore.

Now, strong meat belongs to them with age. Age in a spiritual sense is a lot different than age just growing old. I know a lot of guys who were 40 years old knew much more about the Bible than somebody who was 80 or 90. It had nothing to do with how old you are. It has to do with how much time you spend in the book. It is like somebody said one time back in the early last days of the Philadelphia church age, back when they had some of the great preachers. They were out there tearing the place up. They wanted this guy to have Moody at this church every year, and Moody was a great preacher. His church is dead now, but he was a great preacher, and he was out there. They said, "Well, who are you going to have this year?" And one guy said, "Well, let us have Moody back again." The deacon that hated Moody because he never wanted to get

right with God and was holding out and did not like good, hard preaching, he said, "Why do we always have to have Moody? Has Moody got a corner on the Holy Spirit of God?" The old deacon said, "No, but I do think the Holy Spirit of God has got a corner on Moody."

It is not how much you have of the Holy Spirit. It never has been. You get all that the day you get saved. You get all there is. It is not a point of how much do you have of the Holy Spirit of God. It is about how much the Holy Spirit of God has of you. That is how you learn it: precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little.

It is going to be a great year. We are going to learn some things. God has already, just in the short time we have been here, God has given us so many good people. This holiday of service goes by. I think one of the last six months we did not have a visitor. I will tell you what, God is going to do some things if we just stand true to the Word of God and keep preaching the Bible. I still believe, you can have all the fancy-dangled things in the world. You can do all the things that have all the pageants and all the things to bring people in today. But you know what? I still have the same mindset that Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." I still believe that is the best way to build a church. When I get in this book, I have one thing I want to do: lift up Jesus and edify you. Everything else will take care of itself. Everything.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You so much. We thank You for the day. We thank You for the message. We thank You for Your Spirit that delivered it to us. Lord, I just ask You, Father, in this next year, to take our hearts and knit them together even more than they already are. Build us, Father. Let me take these young Christians and mold them and make them into everything You want them to be, helping to lay on that foundation all the building blocks that will bring them to be strong and stand for You. Lord, we love You and we thank You for all that You do for us. We pray now that You will dismiss us, take us home with our blessings, and keep us safe. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.