

Guidelines for the Understanding of the Scriptures: Introduction

by J. Vernon McGee

The Bible is the most important book ever written, and its principles are the key to solving the problems of the world.

Scripture: Acts 9:30-31, Romans 9:1, Romans 16:7, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Galatians 1:16, Galatians 2:6, Philippians 1:1, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1

Topics: "Biblical Interpretation", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

John Brown explains that 'prosanatithemi' signifies 'to impose a new burden' or 'to take counsel or advice of a person,' emphasizing the act of consulting with others for guidance. Thayer and Vine elaborate on the meaning of 'prosanatithemi' as 'to consult' or 'to communicate,' highlighting the importance of seeking advice and contributing to others. F.B. Meyer reflects on the significance of God revealing His Son in us, urging believers to surrender their will to God and seek His presence for a deeper understanding of Christ within. Oswald Chambers emphasizes the need to concentrate on God in times of doubt, trusting Him to guide our circumstances and cautioning against becoming contemptuous when others do not share our spiritual enthusiasm.

Transcript

IS THE BIBLE IMPORTANT?

The Bible is probably the most maligned Book that ever has been written. It has been attacked as no other book has ever been attacked. Yet it has ministered and does minister to literally millions of people around the globe, and it has been doing this now for several thousand years. A Book of this nature and with this tremendous impact upon the human family certainly deserves the intelligent consideration of men and women.

Sir Walter Scott, on his deathbed, asked Lockhart to read to him. Puzzled, as he scanned the shelf of books that Walter Scott had written, he asked, "What book shall I read?" And Sir Walter replied, "Why do you ask that question? There is but one book; bring the Bible." There is only one Book for any man who is dying, but it is also the Book for any man who is living. A great many folk do not get interested in the Bible until they get to the end of their lives or until they get into a great deal of difficulty. While it is wonderful to have a Book in which you can find comfort in a time like that, it is also a Book for you to live--in the full

vigor of life. It is a Book to face life with today, and it's the Book which furnishes the only sure route through this world and on into the next world. It is the only Book that can enable us to meet the emergencies and cushion the shocks that come to us in life. The Bible is different from any other book.

That this Book has influenced great men who, in turn, have influenced the world is evident. Let me share with you some quotations.

There was an African prince who came to England and was presented to Her Majesty Queen Victoria. This prince asked a very significant question, "What is the secret of England's greatness?" The queen got a beautifully bound copy of the Bible and presented it to the prince with this statement, "This is the secret of England's greatness." I wonder, friend, if England's decline to a second-rate and then third-rate nation may be tied up in the fact that England has gotten away from the Word of God.

Gladstone, statesman, prime minister, probably one of the greatest legal minds Britain ever produced, said, "Talk about the questions of the day! There is but one question, and that is the Gospel. That can and will correct everything. I am glad to say that about all the men at the top in Great Britain are Christians." That was way back in the 1800s. Gladstone continued, "I have been in public position fifty-eight years, all but eleven of them in the Cabinet of the British Government, and during those forty-seven years have been associated with sixty of the master minds of the century, and all but five of the sixty were Christians." I personally think that part of the problems we are having in the world today is that we have too few Christians at the top, too few who are acquainted with the Word of God.

Michael Faraday, perhaps the greatest scientific experimenter back in the 1800s, said, "But why will people go astray, when they have this blessed book of God to guide them?" Sir Isaac Newton, a scientist in the preceding century, said, "If the Bible is true, the time is coming when men shall travel at fifty miles an hour." And Voltaire, the French skeptic, commented, "Poor Isaac. He was in his dotage when he made that prophecy. It only shows what Bible study will do to an otherwise scientific mind."

It might be interesting to note what some of our early Presidents had to say about the Bible. John Adams, our second President, said, "I have examined all [that is, all of Scripture] as well as my narrow sphere, my straightened means, and my busy life will allow me, and the result is that the Bible is the best book in the world. It contains more of my little philosophy than all the libraries I have seen, and such parts of it I cannot reconcile to my little philosophy I postpone for future investigation." Then President John Quincy Adams said, "I speak as a man of the world to men of the world; and I say to you: search the Scriptures. The Bible is the book above all other to be read at all ages and in all conditions of human life; not to be read once or twice through and then laid aside, but to be read in small portions every day." And the Presidents back in those days, who made our nation great, did not get us into foreign wars and were able to solve the problems of the streets. Someone may counter, "But the problems weren't as complicated then as they are now." They were for that day, friend. Not only England but also the United States has gotten away from the Word of God. And the farther we get, the more complicated our problems become. Right now there are men in positions of authority in this land who are saying that there is no solution to our problems. That is the reason I am teaching the Word of God in its entirety--I believe it is the only solution. And, frankly, friend, we had better get back to it.

Another President, Thomas Jefferson, said this about the Bible, "I have always said, and always will say, that the studious perusal of the Sacred Volume will make better citizens, better husbands, and better fathers." This is something to think over today when our citizens are burning down the cities in which they

live and when divorce is running rife.

It was Daniel Webster who made this statement, "If there be anything in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents for instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures." What about you today, Christian parent? Are you making a Daniel Webster in your home or a little rebel? Webster also made this statement, "I have read it [the Bible] through many times. I now make a practice of going through it once a year. It is the Book of all others for lawyers as well as divines. I pity the man who cannot find in it a rich supply of thought and rules for conduct."

THE BOOK OF BOOKS

Born in the East and clothed in Oriental form and imagery, the Bible walks the ways of all the world with familiar feet, and enters land after land to find its own everywhere. It has learned to speak in hundreds of languages to the heart of man. It comes into the palace to tell the monarch that he is a servant of the Most High, and into the cottage to assure the peasant that he is a son of God. Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight, and wise men ponder them as parables of life. It has a word of peace for the time of peril, a word of comfort for the time of calamity, a word of light for the hour of darkness. Its oracles are repeated in the assembly of the people, and its counsels whispered in the ear of the lonely. The wicked and the proud tremble at its warnings, but to the wounded and the penitent it has a mother's voice. The wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad by it, and the fire on the hearth has lit the reading of its well-worn pages. It has woven itself into our dearest dreams; so that love, friendship, sympathy and devotion, memory and hope put on the beautiful garments of its treasured speech, breathing of frankincense and myrrh.

--Henry van Dyke

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