

PLEASE READ ME FIRST! This book's INTRODUCTION, PREFACE, and FORWARD are intended to be essential components of this course of study.

INTRODUCTION

I believe Satan's present-day tactical attack in obscuring God's communication to man is directed at nullifying the reality of Supernatural Inspiration and need for Spiritual Illumination as a requirement in enabling full comprehension of Scripture. The 17th and 18th Century attacks by literary, historical, and scientific critics against the Authority, Inerrancy, Revelation, and Inspiration of God's Word's were devastating. (Please see Section Seven for a discussion of this period in History.) Conservative Evangelical Theologians¹ have stood their ground and vigorously defended the Authority of God's Revelation and Inerrancy against the overwhelming "evidence" of alleged errors in Scripture. Wherever God's Word is challenged by those who reject the facts of historical events and the recorded Miracles of Creation and Christ's Virgin Birth, Sinless Life, Death, Burial, and Resurrection, these men simply responded by their faith in the Bible's teaching concerning these issues.

Sadly, however, when it came to attacks against the Divine Authorship of all Scripture, many Theologians failed to stand on faith alone. They apparently were intimidated by German higher criticism and, therefore, attempted to develop an apologetic based upon human reason to defend God's direct Inspiration of Scripture through human instruments. This approach (reason instead of faith) left an opening for a gradual descent away from a believer's absolute acceptance of what the Bible provides as information by which he can and must live his life. The most common response today to anything being taught from the Bible is generally, "It does not mean that to me; that is just your interpretation." The apologetics originally developed to recognize the reality of different writers' unique styles and personalities has now degenerated into giving equal credit to these writers as actual authors of Scripture. *Bible-Based Hermeneutics* necessarily rejects any portion of a verbal, plenary position which attributes the creative choice of words or grammar to the human writers independent of God's Influence. *Bible-Based Hermeneutics* specifically rejects the terms: dual-authorship, confluence, concursus, human authorship, or inspiration by a supposed hypostasis of God and Man. Of course, God's Authorship (responsibility for overall content) incorporates the writers' subjective interactions (like their mental and emotional responses to life issues).

Throughout this text the technical distinction between "author" and "writer" will be emphasized. When the term *author*² is used, it means: "the one that creates, founds or originates; or the architect, creator, entrepreneur, father, founder, inventor, maker, originator, parent, or patriarch;" or, "as originator or creator, as of a theory or a plan," or, "to assume responsibility for the content of a published text."³ When the term *writer* is used, it means: "one who writes, especially as an occupation;" or, a scribe, "one who forms letters, characters, or words on a surface with an instrument;" or, recorder, "one who sets down for preservation in writing or other permanent form."⁴ God's Authorship

¹ By Conservative Evangelicals, I refer to those who hold to a Biblically-based Theology, a high view of Inspiration and Inerrancy of all Scripture, and in the necessity of a personal Salvation through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.

² *Roget's II: The New Thesaurus*, 3rd ed., s.v. "author."

³ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed., s.v. "author."

⁴ *Ibid.* s.v. "writer."

will be designated by the term Author/Originator, and the human writer will be designated by the term writer/recorder where appropriate to indicate these distinctions.

The unique characteristic of this position is that it presents an intensified view on the "verbal" portion of the approach to interpreting Scripture called "verbal, plenary Inspiration." One pastor and graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary said, "I think this work is a clarification or advancement on the existing positions of verbal, plenary inspiration. It is truly a word-by-word approach in comprehending the most precise meaning of the Word of God." *Bible-Based Hermeneutics* establishes and substantiates the position that EVERY word used in EVERY passage of Scripture must be studied

- First, for its most distinct characteristics as it is utilized within Scripture,
- Second, to discover each word's most specific meaning in comparison to all other words within that word's semantic domain,
- Third, defined with proper consideration given for its complete grammar⁵ within the specific passage where it is located. The grammatical form⁶ of every word is considered and analyzed in relationship to its interpretation within any passage where utilized,
- Fourth, by its use in prior or contemporary literature--while observing a warily conscious understanding that **none** of these other writings were God Inspired.

I believe this procedure is an essential component of the also imperative position of performing competent grammatical exegesis of the original language prior to concluding the interpretation and exposition of ANY passage of Scripture. This approach in determining word meanings results in a three-dimensional view of God's Word that helps correct and avoid error and brings out the dogmatic depths of God's Revelation to man. Without using the approach that the Spiritually Inspired words and the grammar of Scripture should be defined primarily by means of Scripture itself, we lose an important Divine standard of control. In the resulting vacuum most conscientious exegetes believe they must search for word meanings from various extra-Biblical sources and human logic. As a consequence, the meanings of words used in Scripture have often been determined by their use primarily 1) in the writings of only the writer of the text being exegeted, 2) in non-inspired literature and lexicons, 3) from the opinions of commentaries, or 4) by imposing a vague synonymic or theological meaning as will be demonstrated later in this course.

This presentation is not meant to enable one to understand Scripture by means of his native language in the way a Bible study methods course would. Instead, it presents in-depth procedures for studying the original languages of Scripture—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. It accepts the premise that proper exegesis of the original languages is

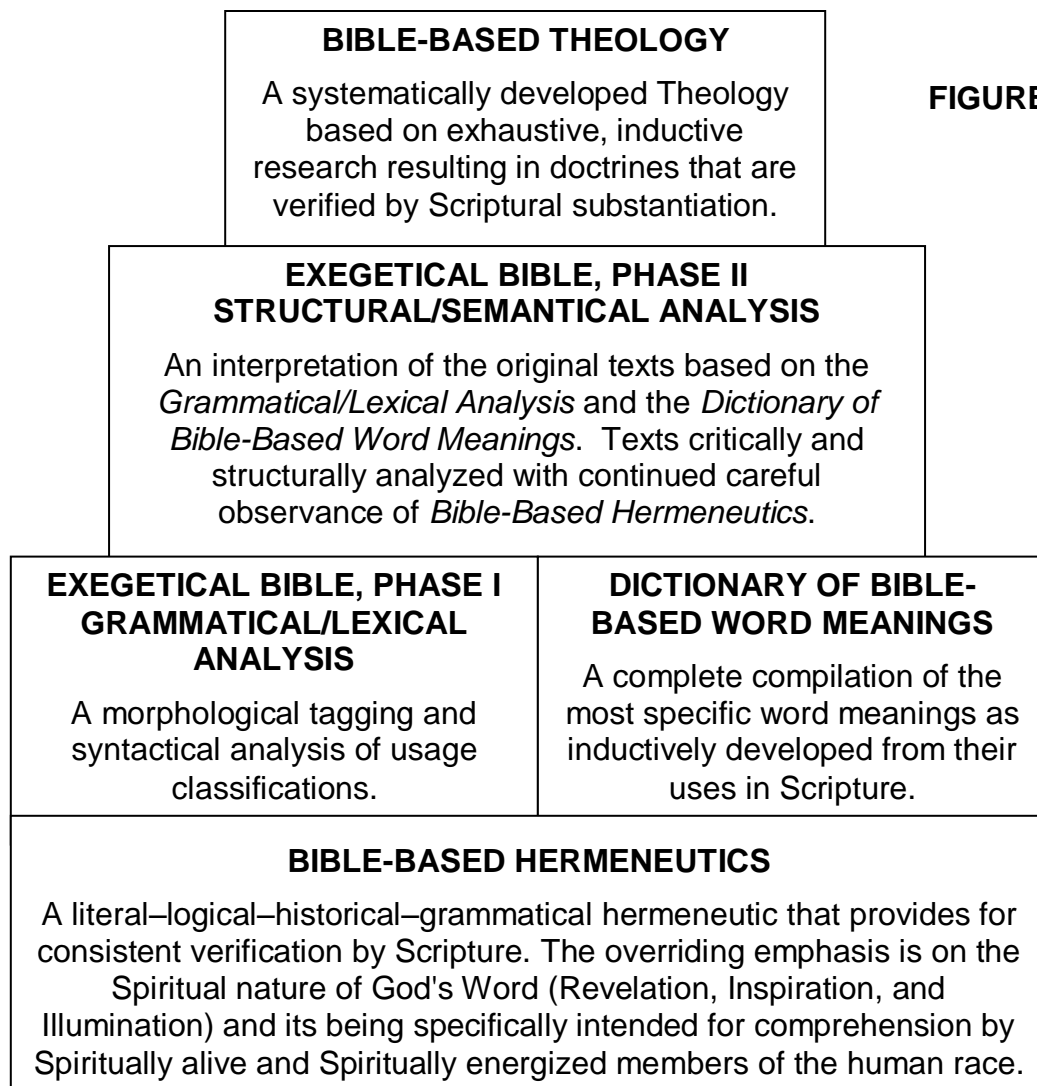
⁵ *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th Edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), s.v. "Grammar, n: The study of how words and their component parts combine to form sentences; The study of structural relationships in language or in a language, sometimes including pronunciation, meaning, and linguistic history; The system of inflections, syntax, and word formation of a language; The system of rules implicit in a language, viewed as a mechanism for generating all sentences possible in that language."

⁶ The influence every part of speech has on the meaning of each word in its context is considered based on the case of the noun or pronoun; the function of a preposition; the class of a pronoun; the use (or absence of use) of the article; voice, person, and number of a verbal form; and the function of an infinitive, participle, adverb, conjunction, particle, or clause.

essential for comprehending God's unique Message. (See Appendix A for an excellent examination of this issue.) A student's understanding and competent implementation of *Bible-Based Hermeneutics* will be proportional to his knowledge of these tools (especially the Koine Greek). However, the most important element for interpreting Scripture is that a student is truly committed to learn what Scripture actually means by what It says. Our objective is learning how to reach accurate conclusions and substantiate them solely from Scripture by relying totally on God's Spiritual provisions—the Word of God and the Inspiration and Illumination of the Holy Spirit. It is acknowledged in principle and in practice that it absolutely must be a Spiritual undertaking to interpret God's Message to man as precisely as possible. (The principles by which this may be accomplished are described later in Sections Two and Three.)

A serious student can begin his progressive journey to know God's Word by first learning the Greek alphabet and then by learning how to use 1) an analytical Greek lexicon (Zondervan or Friberg), a basic Greek grammar (Summers, Dana & Mantey, or Wallace), (an interlinear Greek/English text is also helpful in the beginning) and/or 2) *The Original Languages Library* (LOGOS Bible Software by Libronix), which contains all of these tools and many more synchronously displayed.

Bible-Based Hermeneutics is the foundational tool produced by the Foundation for Biblical Research, whose Statement of Purpose is provided in Appendix B of this text. A chart of all tools to be developed is shown below:



As in any language, a word in Scripture may be used either in its general or in its most-specific sense. The inherent characteristic of a particular word in the mind of the true Author/Originator of all of Scripture is never nullified by its use in varying contexts; although, this characteristic is not always meant to be emphasized. (The fact that I may have a red-headed son does not negate the fact that he can be referred to as my son without reference to his being red-headed.) Paul, the erudite writer/recorder of Ephesians, might use a word in its most-specific sense to communicate an important concept or point of Church doctrine. (This most-specific sense is sometimes referred to as its technical sense.) John, the more passionate writer/recorder of the Gospel of John as well as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John was God's logical choice for conveying the exalted aspect of the Spiritual nature of God and a believer's personal love relationship with Him. It should be no surprise for John's writings to reflect a more general and subjective use of God's vocabulary. The Apocalypse also utilized a writer/recorder such as John to express symbols and visions in majestic, pictorial language.

The following chart displays an example of the type of results that were obtained from a study of one family of words, "Children." A complete explanation of the procedure used to achieve these results is described in Appendix E of this text. This procedure attempts to determine each word's most distinct characteristics as utilized in Scripture alone and as compared with all other words within its family.

**CORRELATION BETWEEN GREEK WORDS (Transliterated)
RELATING TO THE SEMANTIC DOMAIN OF CHILDREN**

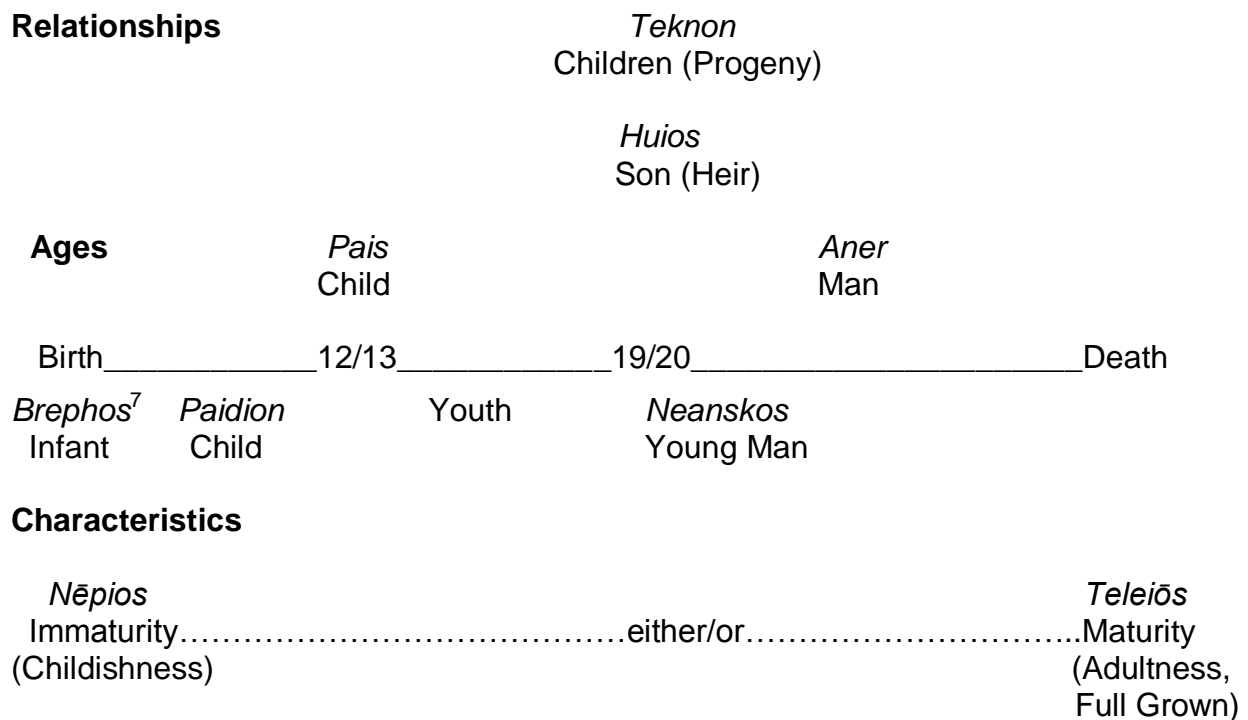


FIGURE 2

⁷ This word covers the period from embryo throughout the period a baby is totally dependent on caregivers.

When this word study procedure is utilized to determine the most-specific meanings of the Hebrew and Greek Words God used to communicate Scripture, Its interpretation can be more comprehensive. An example in English might help illustrate this concept. We might want to describe a room full of furniture. We could just say, "The room had eleven pieces of furniture," and simply stop there. However, each piece has its most-specific name and function distinct and different from the other pieces. The pieces could include a sofa, two occasional chairs, two end tables, two table lamps, a floor lamp, a TV, a coffee table, and a curio case. If someone wants to communicate that a person sat on one of the pieces of furniture, he could just say, "He sat on the furniture." The reader would then need to interpret that as being one of the chairs, the sofa, or even the TV or one of the tables. However, if the communicator uses the word "sofa," he provides a better picture. As a good Bible expositor once said, "Words are simply the clothes that dress one's thoughts for others to see." Words index one's precise thinking. The interpretation of God's precise Thinking requires that we honor His Thinking.

One practical value of the above study was its use in the book, *What the Bible Says About Child Training*,⁸ to describe different stages of human growth in Biblical terms. Much more important was the clear conclusion that *teleiōs* and *nēpios* do not refer to stages of human growth, but instead to characteristics of Spiritual maturity and immaturity. A more accurate interpretation of several key passages of Scripture is possible after understanding those two words' most-specific meanings.

1 Corinthians 3:1b, *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes (nēpios) in Christ.* (NKJV)⁹ The most-specific interpretation of this passage is that *nēpios* refers to these believers' state of Spiritual immaturity, not to their chronological age.

1 Corinthians 13:11, *When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.* Each reference in this verse to "child," and the adjective correctly translated "childish," are all from the Greek word *nēpios*. The more general definition of "babe, or baby" might legitimately describe the contrast to man (*anēr*) for an adult; however, the characteristic of Spiritual immaturity should not be overlooked in interpreting this discourse.

Ephesians 4:13-14, *till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect (teleiōs) man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children (nēpios), tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.* This text is a key passage that defines the contrast between the two absolute states of Spiritual maturity and Spiritual immaturity of a believer. It reveals the importance that God assigns to becoming Spiritually mature and the danger He warns of to those who do not. Here these words are used in their most-specific (or technical sense) to communicate Spiritual truth. (See also, Colossians 1:28; 4:12; and James 1:4.)

Hebrews 5:13-14, *For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe (nēpios). But solid food belongs to those who are of*

⁸ J. Richard Fugate, *What the Bible Says About Child Training*, (Apache Junction, AZ: The Foundation for Biblical Research, 1980; 2nd Edition, 1996).

⁹ All translations throughout this book are from the New King James Version unless noted.

full age (teleiōs). In this passage, the contrast is again made between the "babe," and "full age" (a misleading translation for *teleiōs*.) An accurate interpretation of these passages would be that Spiritual immaturity is being contrasted to Spiritual maturity. "*Teleiōs*" is later translated in Hebrews 6:1 as "perfection," although the absolute state and end result of "Spiritual maturity" is the more correct sense.

Knowledge of the most specific nature of other related words in the "Children" domain will also assist in more accurately interpreting each of those passages where God the Holy Spirit caused them to be used.

- When the most-specific meaning of *teknon* is substituted in all of the passages where it is used, its significance can be appreciated. Even when it is being used in its general sense of progeny, the knowledge obtained from the study of all passages where it is used identifies it as a word that emphasizes family relationship and endearment. This understanding colors every verse with deeper understanding. (See especially John 1:12; Romans 8:16,17; 2 Corinthians 6:13; Ephesians 2:3, 5:1; Philippians 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11; 1 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; 1 Peter 3:6; 1 John 3:1, 2:10; 3 John 4; and most of its occurrences in the Gospels.)
- When the most technical meaning of *huios* is considered in its uses, the specific nature of a legitimate heir is clearly understood. See all, but especially Galatians 4:6, 7; Ephesians 2:2; 5:6; Hebrews 1:5, 8; 5:8; James 2:21; and most of its uses in the Gospels. This word's most specific meaning should indicate that the interpreter should consider what is to be inherited by the heir in context.

Obviously, all of these words should often be translated in their most-specific sense. Nevertheless, if we desire to comprehend God's Word in depth, we need to attempt to discover what was in the mind of the Author/Originator as accurately and as completely as possible. That is exactly what this book intends to provide; the methods to achieve that goal. An exhaustive study of words used in the Greek New Testament for prayer and worship resulted in a clearer understanding of several important passages as shown below:

- The Greek word *aiteō*, normally translated "ask," means most-specifically "petition," as in making a request to one in authority or to one who is respected for having sufficient truth to respond accurately. Knowing this one word's most-specific meaning helps to interpret 1 Peter 3:15. Now, instead of a believer falsely thinking he should defend his faith to everyone who challenges him based upon their unbelief, he finds his responsibility is to be always prepared to provide sufficient answers from the Word to those who request it respectfully.
- The word *erōtaō*, translated "pray" in Christ's many prayers to the Father on behalf of believers, most-specifically means to ask for something from an equal and attests to the very Deity of Jesus Christ (John 14:16, 17; 9, 15, 20, etc.).
- Only one Greek word, *proskuneō*, out of the ten words normally translated worship, actually describes the attitude of true worship. We can also determine what the other nine words mean most-specifically.

Many other key words in Scripture reveal a similar depth of meaning, leading to a more complete understanding of God's Word. Many young men have approached this author after one of his Child Training Seminars was presented in their Churches over the past thirty years. They each have eagerly desired to know **exactly how** I had discovered the specific word meanings taught during the seminar. They were excited to

find that the Bible could be the true source of the stages and characteristics of child development instead of Christians' being dependent on the theories of secular psychology. They were also fascinated with Scripture's carefully defining the differences between disobedience (being the unconscious and/or not willful breaking of a standard) and; rebellion (the knowing and willful act of disobedience). They also saw the importance of parents' knowing the Bible's teaching about the use of appropriate penalties for disobedience, compared to the requirement of chastisement (corporal punishment properly administered) needed to overcome active rebellion.

This reference book sets forth the philosophy and methodology that answers the questions these young men, and I believe many others, would like to know. I, therefore, dedicate this book to all believers who truly desire that they

may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:18-19)

And, so that the Church might eventually

all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (Ephesians 4:13)

A student study guide/workbook is planned to follow the publication of this reference book. It will provide a structured course of study to accompany this *Philosophical and Methodology Bible-Based Hermeneutics* text with work assignments and supplemental reading recommendations for Bible College or entering seminary level students and current pastors who are interested in utilizing the original languages of Scripture.

A Personal Challenge

At this point, there are those who may be challenged by this advanced concept of an intensified word-by-word approach on the "verbal" portion of verbal, plenary Inspiration. Some pastors and professors who are just being introduced to this possibility may have already quit exegeting Scripture from the original languages, use various commentaries to attempt to determine Bible interpretations, or simply think this procedure would be an unnecessary use of their time. My challenge to them is this: Immediately after completing this Introduction, read Appendix E carefully and perform an exhaustive word study on the words for prayer (or worship) exactly as per the procedures given there. If you have not gained much insight into the meaning of the many Scriptures you cover, please return this text to me personally for a full refund of your cost of its purchase and your postage. The rest will continue to receive benefits.

NOTE: This author has chosen the literary license to use capitalization for every grammatical reference to the Bible or the Scriptures not ordinarily capitalized in modern literature. Please do not think that this author means to question or judge any other believer's not using a similar use of capitalization. It is the internal attitude of the believer toward God and His Word that is the measure of his respect and awe of God, not any external observance that counts.

I am not the originator of so honoring the Word of God by capitalization. As late as the middle 1900's, many Christian writers still capitalized all grammatical references to the Bible. Some examples are Dana and Mantey in their grammar published in 1955 (see page 13, where Dana and Mantey and Moulton, who is quoted, each capitalized the adjective, "Biblical"). A. T. Robertson also capitalized the names of doctrines in his popular *Word Pictures in the New Testament* and Roland Chafer's articles on

hermeneutics, published in 1934-1937 in Dallas Theological Seminary's *Bibliotheca Sacra*, utilized the adjectives, Biblically, Scripturally, and even the word, Scripturalness. Perhaps it was these scholars' extreme respect for God's Word, as is mine, which caused their making a point of not observing the standards of academic opinions of the day. These scholars also capitalized all personal pronoun references to God.

For ready identification purposes, and in reverence to our Lord, all pronouns referring to God will be capitalized in this work. Also, specific aspects of God's Character (Love, Omniscience, etc.) and His unique Works (Creation, Revelation, Inspiration, Illumination, etc.) will be capitalized when pertinent to emphasize from Whom they originate. Likewise, the Word, Will, Plan, and Thoughts of God will be capitalized when helpful to emphasize the contrast of those things which also can be common products of humanity. This is done so that the distinction is made clear to the reader (for example, My Thoughts are not your thoughts and My Ways are not your ways). When this book refers to Spiritual maturity as God's Purpose and Goal for every believer, I want the reader to pause for a second to reflect on the fact that ONLY God can enable this type of maturity to occur. This practice may be considered extreme (and not at all compatible with secularly-influenced grammar), but I believe it has a purpose.

Many reputed scholars in even Conservative Evangelical Theological circles today tend not to rely upon, and even to disregard, the Supernatural/Spiritual aspects of God's Inspiration and Illumination of Scripture. They often seek to understand Scripture by cognitive means (intellectual mastery of human language) rather than Spiritual means. This author's contrary position is that without totally relying on the Supernaturally Inspired Word of God and the Illuminating Ministry of the Holy Spirit, it is IMPOSSIBLE to comprehend the Spiritual message of Scripture. Even the disciples who walked with Jesus daily for three years could not understand the full significance of His words prior to their receiving the Holy Spirit to open their understanding to the Spiritual meaning. (See Luke 24:25-32, 45; cf. Luke 9:45; 18:34; 19:42; John 20:24-27; 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4; Ephesians 3:9; etc.)

No amount of linguistic knowledge can replace the need for the Spiritual means of comprehension. Conversely, no amount of Spiritual insight will substitute entirely for a competent knowledge of the original languages, application of sound logic, and adherence to a sound Bible-based hermeneutic. The serious student of Scripture must develop great skill in logical reasoning if he intends to interpret God's Word most accurately. I recommend that any student who is committed to completing this *Bible-Based Hermeneutics* course also begin to master the subject of logic. A good starting point would be Dr. Geisler's introductory book on logic.¹⁰ I suggest initially reading his

- Preface through Chapter 1, pp. 7-20
- Introduction to Induction, Chapter 8, pp. 132-148
- Scientific Thinking, Chapter 9, pp. 149-165
- Fallacies, Chapter 10, pp. 166-179
- Truth Tables, Appendix, pp. 181-186

May God our Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit strengthen you, encourage you, and uphold your commitment to learn how to interpret God's perfect Meaning of His perfect Word.

¹⁰ Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks, *Come Let Us Reason, An Introduction to Logical Thinking* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990).