

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

Malvern Bible Chapel

February 13, 20, 2005

PART ONE: BASIC CONCEPTS

But first, a necessary introductory statement for which no outline data is given: The subject is much larger than we can entertain in these two messages. I will try not to get bogged down with minor matters but---there is no guarantee this will not happen. The listeners will need to be contented with less than total discussions and at any time before or after the presentations, I will be glad to work with questions, suggestions, or advisorial statements. Please allow this caveat to condition your thinking.

I. Getting started

- A. Our study begins in Acts 8:30 ff where Philip meets the official from the court of Ethiopia. The man is reading in Isaiah 53 (although at that time the text had not been divided into chapters and verses) and Philip asks if he understands what he is reading and the response amounts to a rhetorical question....”How can I unless...”
 1. We ask ourselves, “Why could he not understand?” and while this cannot be answered in detail we may assert the following concepts.
 - a. He did have the linguistic equivalence...that is not the problem.
 - b. But he did not know (apparently) the context of the nature of the prophetic emphasis.
 - c. And the language was obscure to him since it was describing a cultural process with which he was not familiar.
 2. How was he helped by Philip?
 - a. The central core of truth was opened to him regarding the Scripture
 - b. The implications of the redemptive message were made clear...as seen by the request for baptism.
 3. So if we are to understand the Bible we must be able to grip its context and intent and see how the central message of redemption is developed through them. A number of items will facilitate this.