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I. INTRODUCTION TO BIBLE SURVEY

A. Bible Survey Provides a Panoramic View of the Bible

The typical Christian is often perplexed when he first begins to read the Bible. He usually begins somewhere in the New Testament and continues reading there more frequently because the content of the Old Testament often seems confusing. He does not see the Bible as a unified whole; he sees it in “bits and pieces” with no meaningful relationship between the parts. This is not the picture that God intends for mankind to have. He wants readers to see His whole plan for mankind as displayed and revealed in all of Scripture.

Every portion of the Bible lends itself well to a detailed study. However, before a study of the parts can attain their full significance, the student must be able to view the whole purpose and content of Scripture. A Bible survey approach provides that overall knowledge of the Bible that is necessary for a correct understanding and interpretation of the individual portions of Scripture.

A panoramic view of the Bible shows God’s redemptive purpose for the human race. Without understanding this purpose, a man could easily regard some portions of the Bible as endless, detailed descriptions with little or no value. With this knowledge, the Bible pages can come alive with meaning to any student.

B. Bible Survey Reveals the Treasures of the Greatest Book in Existence

As previously mentioned, the revelation of God’s Plan of Redemption for mankind is the main theme running through the pages of the Bible. A quick survey of this Book of books gives the diligent student a clear concept of this plan. He sees the God of Creation operating through the course of history to reveal Himself in flesh to become the

God of Redemption. The narratives of the Old Testament are not just fascinating tales to be told, but they are revelations by God of His dealing with mankind that point toward the climactic events of the New Testament. From Genesis to Revelation God reveals Himself, with meaningful picture added to meaningful picture, until the complete panorama of divine redemption stands unveiled. One who surveys the Bible with open eyes finds his vision reaching into the distance to see and to know a great acquaintance with the treasures of the Book of God.

C. Bible Survey Gives a Foundation for All Study

William Tyndale believed that “a ploughboy with the Bible would know more of God than the most learned ecclesiastic who ignored it.” We could add to this that a Spirit-filled believer who knows his Bible will be more effective in sharing God with others than a theological scholar who merely knows intellectual ideas about the Bible rather than knowing the direct and simple message of the Bible.

While a quick survey of the Bible will not give sufficient time for a complete reading of the Bible, a student must waste no time in setting up a consistent schedule that will take him completely through the Bible in direct contact with all the words of Scripture. This important factor cannot be overemphasized. Some of the greatest preachers of Pentecost had no study resources other than the Scriptures. No doubt, this is what made them so great in their knowledge of God. They depended on the Word and the impressions of the Holy Ghost to give them knowledge and understanding. I trust that our day of intellectual pursuit will never cause us to depend on commentaries and various books and authors to the exclusion of the Word itself. May every Pentecostal student determine in his heart with the psalmist: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). May he never depart from a careful attention to the words of his Bible to become enslaved with a consuming fascination for books filled with mere ideas or interpretations of men.

The Christian should always keep the study of his Bible as the foundation of all his studies. He should begin with his Bible and use it as an evaluation guide for any ideas or philosophies he encounters.