

“How to Enjoy Your Bible,” No. 8

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by W. S. Sadler

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Source for “How to Enjoy Your Bible,” No. 8

- (1) Rev. James M. **Gray**, D.D., *How to Master the English Bible: An Experience, A Method, A Result, An Illustration* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1904)

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the Sadlers pointedly differ from one another.
- (e) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake.

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HOW TO ENJOY YOUR BIBLE. No. 8.

BY W. S. SADLER.

The Synthetic Study of the Bible.

II: EXPLANATION OF THE METHOD (Gray 31)

The word “synthesis” suggests the opposite idea to the word “analysis” (G 31).

8.1 THE synthetic study of the Bible is just the opposite of the analytical method.

It consists in building up an idea of what a book or a chapter or a part of the Scriptures teaches, by putting its various leading events and subjects together, so as to make a picture of the whole.

III: THE PLAN AT WORK (Gray 41)

[contd] There are certain simple rules to be observed in the synthetic study of the Bible if we want to master it,

8.2 Before taking up some book of the Bible as an example of synthetic study,

let us consider a few rules that are quite important to the best results along this line.

and the first is to begin to study it where God began to write it, *i.e.*, at the book of Genesis....

The second rule is to **read the book.**

8.3 1. **Read the Bible.**

It is not asked that it be studied in the ordinary sense, or **memorized**, or even sought to be understood at first but **simply read** (G 41, 42).

Simply read.

Don't undertake to **memorize.**

SOURCE

The third rule is, read the book continuously....

But what is the meaning of “continuous” in this instance? ... It stands for two things—the reading of the book uninfluenced by its divisions into chapters and verses, and the reading of the book in this way *at a single sitting* (G 45). [Note: Compare 7.8.]

The fourth rule is to read the book *repeatedly* (G 47).

The fifth rule is to read it *independently*—

i.e., independently, at first at least, of all commentaries and other outside aids (G 49).

The most important rule is the last. Read it *prayerfully* (G 52).

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Don’t especially tax the mind with remembering one line of thought above another. Just carefully and thoughtfully read.

8.4 2. Read the book or the section of the book you are going to study through *at one sitting*.

This is important that you should have a view of the whole section under study brought before your mind at one time.

8.5 3. Read the book *a number of times*.

Each time you will gain some new glimpse of its contents.

8.6 4. Read *independently*.

That is, do not make use of a Bible dictionary, or any work of reference.

Read the Bible, and the Bible alone.

8.7 5. Read it *prayerfully*.

8.8 6. While you do not consult commentaries or works of reference concerning the subjects you are studying, at the same time it will be well to refer to the Bible maps or dictionary, to make clear any points that are not fully understood, such as the location of towns and cities, the meaning of words with which you are unfamiliar, etc.

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[*Note:* Sadler apparently wasn't using a Bible that had descriptive chapter headers. Such a Bible would have defeated the purpose of the student's coming up with chapter descriptions independently.]

8.9 Now, as an example of the synthetic study of the Bible, let us take the book of Genesis. We want to get a picture in our minds of what the book of Genesis teaches, and what it tells about. So we read through carefully the first chapter, and we see that it has to do with the creation of the world and the many things that are in it and about it. In the second chapter, we see the continuation of the same story. In fact, these two chapters tell the story of Creation over, in two different ways.

8.10 Then in the third chapter we read the story of the Fall, and sin, and we find this story continues on in its various details until the conclusion of the fifth chapter. In the sixth chapter, we at once notice a change in the narrative. The terrible condition of sin in the world is described; and from the sixth to the ninth chapters we have the story of the Flood, and events immediately following.

8.11 In the tenth and eleventh chapters we find another change in the subject matter of the book. These two chapters deal with the origin of nations, the peopling of the earth, etc. In the twelfth chapter, we come to the interesting life record of that grand old patriarch, Abraham; and so we continue to read about Abraham as the central figure in the book, until we reach the twentieth chapter.

8.12 Then chapters 21 to 27 deal with the varied and remarkable experiences of Isaac; while chapters 28 to 36 tell us of the life of Jacob. And chapters 37 to 50 pertain to the wonderful experiences and work of Joseph.

8.13 Now, in the synthetic study of the Bible, it is sometimes profitable to make a word outline of the book. That is, name the chapters, or a group of chapters, by a word that expresses the leading thought contained in them. So, in making a word outline of Genesis, and to make it brief, in order to make it easy to memorize, we would make one something as follows:

As to the “single sitting” [*see 8:4, above*], the reason for it is this. Many of the books of the Bible have a single thread running through the whole—a pivotal idea around which all the subsidiary ones revolve—and to catch this thread, to seize upon this idea, is absolutely necessary to unravel or break up the whole in its essential parts. To read Genesis in this way, for example, will lead to the discovery that, large as the book is, it contains but five great or outline facts, viz.:

The history of **creation**.

The history of **the fall**.

The history of **the deluge**.

The history of the origin of the **nations**.

The history of the patriarchs.

It is, then, a book of history, and the larger part of it history of the biographical sort. This last-named fact can be subdivided again into four facts, viz., the histories of **Abraham**,

Isaac,

Jacob,

8.14 1. **CREATION**, Chapters 1 and 2: creation of world, sun, moon, stars, life, Sabbath, marriage, etc.

8.15 2. **THE FALL**, chaps. 3-5.

8.16 3. **THE DELUGE**, chaps. 6-9.

8.17 4. **NATIONS**, chaps. 10, 11.

8.18 5. **ABRAHAM**, chaps. 12-20.

8.19 6. **ISAAC**, chaps. 21-27.

8.20 7. **JACOB**, chaps. 28-36.

SOURCE

and Joseph,

and thus the whole book can be kept in mind in a very practical way in eight words (G 46).

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8.21 8. JOSEPH, chaps. 37-50.

8.22 Now it will readily appear that this outline could be made much more full. Under “Abraham,” the leading events of his life might be tabulated; and in this way made much easier to learn, and their whereabouts in the Scriptures can be easily memorized.

II: EXPLANATION OF THE METHOD (Gray 31)

Now the synthetic study of the Bible means, as nearly as possible, the study of the Bible as a whole, and each book of the Bible as a whole, and as seen in its relation to the other books (G 31).

8.23 Thus the synthetic study of the Bible purposes to take a view of a book of the Bible as a whole,

first, before we take it to pieces as it were, and look it through by chapter and verse. Then, having carefully read and examined the book, we aim to make a word picture of its contents; and in this way we help the mind to more readily grasp the scope of the entire book, and to remember the subjects dealt with in different chapters or different sections of the book.

8.24 As an illustration of how these word outlines can be further worked out, let us take in the outline we have made of Genesis, those chapters dealing with Abraham; and we could very easily make an outline of Abraham’s life, beginning with his call in the twelfth chapter, which might be as follows:

1. The Call.

2. Egypt (referring to his sojourn in that country).

3. Lot (referring to his whole experience with his nephew).

4. The Covenant.

5. The Circumcision.

6. Hagar (referring to Abraham’s experience of doubting God, etc.).

7. Sodom.

8. Isaac.

9. Closing scenes of his life.

10. Death.

8.25 In making a word outline of a book or chapter, always choose a single word, if possible, and in choosing between a number of words that may be suggested to the mind, always select the word which will call to your mind the greatest number of experiences, or remind you of the largest amount of the contents of the chapter you are studying. Thus, in place of choosing the word “Lot,” we might select other words which would be suggested by a study of this chapter, but which would not recall all the experiences connected with Abraham’s separation from Lot, whereas the word “Lot” immediately brings to the mind the entire experience.