

Get In The Game

Drills For Disciples: Part 2

Bible Study Methods

Written By

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When I played ball in High School, I loved away games because we'd frequently stop and pick up some great food at a local Foster Freeze, Dairy Queen or McDonalds. There's nothing better than a fat, juicy hamburger with onions, tomatoes, and lettuce, flanked by some golden fries and a chocolate shake to wash it all down. Yeah, there's just no better way to prepare for an intense, physically demanding game than getting amped up on carbs and sugars. And, believe me; once we all basically took over a given restaurant, no one had to tell us how to feed ourselves. That just came naturally for seventeen and eighteen year old young men.

Spiritually the truth is equally applicable. In order to play well on the Lord's team, to be a strong, healthy athlete, you've got to learn to feed yourself from the Word of God. Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 that spiritual babies start about by feeding on the milk, or elementary teachings of the Scriptures.

¹ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. ² I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. (1 Corinthians 3).

Spiritual babes want to know who Jesus is, what salvation is all about, whether their salvation is secure, what they should do when they sin, and how to pray to name a few food groups.

The unknown author of Hebrews takes Paul's analogy one step further by asserting the importance for maturing players to move from the milk to the meat, or the more complex teachings, of the Bible.

¹¹ Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil (Hebrews 5).

Older, mature believers, by nature, move onto to feeding on more meaty portions from the Scriptures. They read, they dig, they ponder, they analyze, they sift through the inspired pages carefully, seeking to know the authorial meaning so they can, in turn, eat it so spiritual growth can occur. The whole process, of course, makes them a better player on the Lord's team, a player devoted to greater holiness and committed to making a greater impact on this old world for Him.

So, what about your life? As a team-mate I've got to ask you, "Are you feeding yourself on the Word of God or are you relying on others to do all the study in order to feed you?" Reading the Bible is good, being part of a Bible study is spiritually beneficial and necessary as well; however, there is just nothing more important than you feeding you. Let me put it differently. There is nothing more important than you knowing how to study the Scriptures individually, to isolate and secure its meaning, and to, then, determine what God wants to do in your life in light of what you've studied. You might need to read that sentence one more time to let it sink into your soul.

With this in mind, I invite you to ...

Develop The Drill Of Bible Study

In order to achieve this worthy goal, I propose we consider three concepts in this study.

One Purpose

Of the numerous purposes of Bible study, one that Paul mentions in 2 Timothy chapter two should not be overlooked. It happens to be my life verse:

¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth (2 Timothy 2).

Since the Bible is God's only message to mankind on how to secure a relationship with Him and how to live to please Him, it behooves us to realize that Paul's counsel here is not a suggestion,

but a command. “Be diligent” is a command from the verb *spoudason* (σπουδάζω).¹ Literally, this word means to “make every effort, to hasten.” Without getting too far ahead of ourselves, I must state: applied to Bible study, it means it is what you live and plan for during a given week. Just as a successful baseball player wastes no time going through key drills to stay in optimal shape, so we are to give our intensity to digging into God’s revelation. How are you doing with that?

What are we to hasten toward? We are to be passionate about presenting ourselves to the Lord both here and in the hereafter as avid, approved/tested students of His revelation. “Tested” in Greek is from *dokimon* (δόκιμον), which speaks of something which is tested and proved to be genuine. Think of how a soda machine will kick out a slug, even though it’s the same shape of a quarter, and you’ve got the idea. God tests us, constantly, and He’s looking for us to be what He calls “a workman” in the Scriptures. He’s the person who gets down and dirty with a given book or passage. He’s not afraid to really labor hard to unearth the meaning of the text in question. He’s prone to tear apart a given word to ascertain its deeper meaning. Is that you? One thing is true about those who are intense in their commitment to feed themselves spiritual food: they will not be ashamed before God, ever. They’ll grow up too and be even greater players. What we desperately need to day are more players devoted to being students of the good book. This food will change a life and transform a culture.

For those who desire to feed themselves, they must be ever mindful to accurately handle the word of truth. *Orthotomounta* (ὀρθοτομοῦντα), which is a present active participle, literally means to guide along a straight path, as opposed to a crooked or wrong one (can you see the word “ortho” here. If you have orthodontics, then you really understand the concept of straight)²

¹ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature*: 939. **σπουδάζω** (s. three next entries; Soph., X., Pla.+; ins, pap, LXX, Test12Patr, Philo, Joseph., apolog.) fut. σπουδάσω (Polyb. 3, 5, 8; Diod S 1, 58, 4; EpArist 10; Jos., Ant. 17, 203; B-D-F §77; Mlt-H. 259); 1 aor. ἐσπούδασα; pf. ἐσπούδακα Job 21:6; 23:15.

① **to proceed quickly, hurry, hasten** w. inf. foll. (Jdth 13:12 ἐσπούδασαν τοῦ καταβῆναι; ParJer 5:5 εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἐσπούδαζεν *if he were not in a hurry*; Jos., Ant. 8, 202 σπ. καταλιπεῖν) **2 Ti 4:9, 21; Tit 3:12**; IEph 1:2. διὰ τὸ ἕκαστον σπουδάσειν, ὅστις ἄνηται *because each one hastened to touch* MPol 13:2. But mng. 3 is also acceptable in all these places.

② **to speed up a process, expedite** w. acc. τὰ θηριομαχία *the combats with wild animals* (Lat. ludus bestiariorum) AcPl Ha 2, 11.

③ **to be especially conscientious in discharging an obligation, be zealous/eager, take pains, make every effort, be conscientious** w. inf. foll. (X., Ap. 22; Diod S 1, 58, 4; Herodian 1, 1, 1; Jos., Ant. 17, 203, C. Ap. 1, 116; TestDan 6:3; TestNapht 3:1; Ar. 15, 5; Just., A II, 8, 2; Mel., HE 4, 26, 13) **Gal 2:10; Eph 4:3; 1 Th 2:17; 2 Ti 2:15; Hb 4:11; 2 Pt 1:10; 3:14**; 2 Cl 10:2; 18:2; B 1:5; 4:9; 21:9; IEph 5:3; 10:2; 13:1; IMg 6:1; 13:1; IPhd 4. Foll. by acc. and inf. (BGU 1080, 14; PFlor 89, 11 and 13; 131) **2 Pt 1:15**. W. nom. and inf. (Epict. 2, 22, 34) IEph 10:3 (B-D-F 392, 1a; Rob. 1077f).—περί τινος *concerning someth.* (Ath., R. 14 p. 64, 21) and περί τινος, ἵνα of a benefactor *concern oneself about someone, so that* Hs 2, 6. ἐπὶ τι: σπουδάσετε ἐπὶ ... τὴν ἀγάπην AcPl Ha 6, 18=‘be eager for ... [text corrupt] and to show affection’.—S. Larfeld at entry σπουδή. DELG s.v. σπεύδω. M-M. TW. Spicq.¹

² Ibid., 723. **ὀρθοτομέω** (ὀρθός, τέμνω) found elsewh. independently of the NT only Pr 3:6; 11:5, where it is used w. ὁδοῦς and plainly means ‘cut a path in a straight direction’ or ‘cut a road across country (that is forested or otherwise difficult to pass through) in a straight direction’, so that the traveler may go directly to his destination (cp. Thu. 2, 100, 2 ὁδοῦς εὐθείας ἔτεμε; Hdt. 4, 136 τετμημένη ὁδός; Pla., Leg. 7, 810e; Plut., Galba 24, 7; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 309). Then ὀρθοτομεῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας would prob. mean **guide the word of truth along a straight path** (like a road that goes straight to its goal), without being turned aside by wordy debates or impious talk **2 Ti 2:15**. For such other mngs. as *teach the word aright, expound (it) soundly, shape rightly, and preach fearlessly*, s. M-M.—DELG s.v. τέμνω. TW. Spicq.

If you've ever driven on a winding road cut through mountains, you readily know that someone knew what they were doing when they cut this particular road. It's the same with Bible study. We must constantly be working individually at being the best students and interpreters as we possibly can, so we can feed ourselves and feed other teammates. Again, I must ask, "What are you currently doing to make sure you are honing your skill of Bible study?"

In order to help you increase your skill in this crucial area, I propose to give you the basics of the science of biblical hermeneutics. I've never preached on this topic. I've taught it in class settings many times, but since I don't have the pleasure nor time to teach a class in a church of this size, our worship setting can be our team training room. Before we get rolling, let me make a few observations:

- One, the field of Bible Study Methods involves numerous, sometimes intricate, skills. I'm just giving you the basics from which to build. If you choose to study further, I would direct you several key books.³
- Two, this sermon will be more of a teaching methodology than an oratorical one, so don't expect neat, tidy, personalized principles.
- Three, I will give you the study approach I received from the late Dr. Howard Hendricks and then apply it to a passage to show you how it works. It will be up to you to take this simple, elementary grid and develop it to better suit your needs and ability.

And, please, don't lose sight of our goal in all of this. To improve as God's players through feeding ourselves from His playbook.

Next, let's take a quick look at what I call ...

The Process

After studying hermeneutics for four years at Azusa Pacific University, I thought I had the process down pat. I didn't. I discovered how much I had to learn when I took the mandatory Bible Study Methods class from Dr. Hendricks. The simple grid, or approach, he gave us is one I still employ today, but it morphed and changed as I advanced in my Greek and Hebrew skills. I'm sure you can benefit from it as well. It involves three easy to remember steps.

³ Milton Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Robert Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*. Howard Hendricks, *Living By The Book*.



Observation. At this level you are merely stating what you see in a given passage. Like a batter will analyze a pitcher to see if he can determine when he is going to throw a four-seam fastball, a curve ball, or a sinker, you are observant as you read. What are you looking for? Anything and everything. You note key or unusual words, commands, promises, contrasts, figures of speech, repetition, emphatic words, important connectives, structure, the literary form of a passage (viz., is it narrative, prophetic, parabolic, apocalyptic), verbal tenses, and so forth. And don't ever forget, the more time you spend in observation, the less time you'll have to spend in interpretation. Observation is hard work, and sometimes it is, well, boring, but it is always exciting because all that hard work pays off as God speaks in a profound fashion.

Interpretation. At this level you are merely bombarding the text with questions. If you want to stick with who, what, when, where, why, and how questions, that's fine. Go get 'em.

When I study, that's what I do. My note pages are literally covered with questions which arise from my reading and analysis. Believe me, you cannot ask enough questions. So, ask away, and then circle back later and start digging to find answers to those questions. Look for answers in the book you are studying, get a concordance and see how key words you are studying are used elsewhere in Scripture, read some entries in a good Bible encyclopedia like *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*, check out R.A. Torrey's *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* which moves through the Bible verse by verse, tying key words to key passages elsewhere in the Bible.

Application. This final part of your drill simply asks: What am I supposed to do with what I've learned? Hendricks boils all this down to nine applicational questions:

- Is there an example to follow?
- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a prayer to repeat?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a condition to meet? This is typically denoted by "if" "then" clauses.
- Is there a verse to memorize
- Is there an error to mark?
- Is there a challenge to face?

This is the most important part of Bible study. Why? Application is crucial because doesn't just want to inform you, He wants to transform you into a more mature player on His team. As Paul states in Romans 12:

¹ Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Transformation. That's what Bible study should led to. It should change your thinking from the temporal to the eternal, from the worldly to the spiritual.

One more thing I'd say about application is this: In observation you are stating the facts as you see them. In interpretation you are determining the answers which arise from the text, and then you are developing a principle tied to the text in question. In application you are deciding on your response as you make the principle applicable to you. For instance, let's read 1 Thessalonians 5:18:

¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Some of our observations here are clear: As believers, we should be thankful in every situation. By way of interpretation we can ask, why should we be thankful? The answer can't be missed: When we do this we are actually fulfilling God's will for our lives. The historical principle applied, first and foremost, to the Thessalonians: Thessalonian believers should be thankful in every situation. The timeless principle is easy to see: Christians today should be thankful regardless of personal circumstances. All of this leads to a pointed application: What am I going to do or say this day to show I am thankful? Principles are designed to lead to better life practices ... and maturity in Christ.

So, there you have it, an elementary approach to Bible study. I challenge you to take a book, get a notebook, and start reading and taking your own notes. As you give yourself to this drill, you will be amazed as the Spirit of God will teach you and speak to you in profound ways.

How does this process actually look? Let me show you. I am asked constantly to preach through the book of Revelation, so I think it appropriate to apply our drill to this magnificent book about God's final plan to reclaim the cosmos for Himself and His saints. For our purposes, I would like to direct you to the throne room of God as pictured in Revelation chapter 4. We'll spend the next two weeks seeing how our three-fold drill plays out in this intriguing, instructive passage.

The Passage

Personally, I copy the passage under study and drop it in the middle of several blank pages. My observations, interpretive questions/answers, and illustrations are written all around the perimeter.

¹ After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." ² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

Let's move through these two verses with our three-fold drill.

Observation

- 4:1 “After these things” is a prepositional phrase which appears at the beginning and end of the verse.
- 4:1 “After these things” (*meta tauta*) occurs ten times in Revelation. Six times it occurs with verbs of perception and four without.
- 4:1 “After these things” points back to the discussion of the state of the churches in Asia Minor in chapters 2 through 3.
- 4:1 “I” speaks of John, who is exiled on the Isle of Patmos.
- 4:1 John visually saw a door in heaven above him.
- 4:1 “Behold” is emphatic, designed to arrest our attention. It is used 26 times in Revelation.
- 4:1 The door lacks the article making it indefinite “a door.”
- 4:1 “Standing” is italicized because is not in the original Greek text. Grammatically, this is called ellipsis.
- 4:1 The door was open, suggesting it could/can close.
- 4:1 The door was located in heaven, making it an unusual door into God's dimension.
- 4:1 John heard a voice in a language he could understand.
- 4:1 The voice, by means of simile sounded like a trumpet, thereby pointing to its definitive sound and musical quality. The voice stands as the figures of speech
- 4:1 The voice commanded John to come up through this door.
- 4:1 It says what God will disclose about the future “must take place” after these things. This underscores there is no way the events of the ensuing chapters will not occur in time and space.
- 4:1 The voice promised to show him what would transpire “after these things.”

Interpretation

- 4:1 Why does the phrase “After these things” occur six times with verbs of perception (4:1a; 7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1) and four without these types of verbs (1:19; 4:1b; 9:12; 20:3)? This grammatical nuance probably demonstrates that the four latter uses point to definite chronological distinctions between future eschatological events. The former merely introduces order/movement in the vision itself. Applied to the structure of the book, with the close of the Church Age with chapter 3, chapter 4 and 5 introduce us to the throne room of God as He prepares the twenty-one judgments to reclaim the earth for the Messianic king. The fact that the word church, *ekklesia*, doesn't appear from chapters 4:1-22:15 seems to validate this interpretation.
- Since there was just “a door” into God's presence, could it be possible there are other entrance points? Jesus does say in His Olivet Discourse of Mark 11 that when you see the prophesied components of Daniel's 70th Week, or the seven

year tribulation, forming, then, you should know His Second Coming is at the doors, plural. Perhaps His coming in judgment will have His angelic troops coming from various heavenly/celestial directions. Interesting, since Satan and his troops are in control of the air (Ephesians 4:1-3). Additionally, in Christ's Olivet Discourse as presented in Matthew 25, He specifically says the day will come when the door is shut to the kingdom, leaving hordes of people outside, forever (Matthew 25:10).

- Which heaven is spoken about here? Cf. the lexical meanings of "heaven," (οὐρανός).⁴

⁴ Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature: 738-739, οὐρανός, οὐ, ὁ 24:31 (Hom.+; 'heaven' in various senses)

① the portion or portions of the universe gener. distinguished from planet earth, *heaven* (so mostly in the sing.; s. B-D-F §141, 1)

ⓐ mentioned w. the earth

α. forming a unity w. it as the totality of creation (Pla., Euthyd. 296d οὐρανός καὶ γῆ; Gen 1:1; 14:19, 22; Tob 7:17 BA; Jdth 9:12; Bel 5; 1 Macc 2:37 al.; PsSol 8:7; ParJer 5:32; Just., D. 74, 1; PGM 13, 784 ὁ βασιλεύων τῶν οὐρανῶν κ. τῆς γῆς κ. πάντων τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐνδιατριβόντων; Orig., C. Cels. 6, 59, 6; Theoph. Ant. 1, 4 [p. 64, 13]) ὁ οὐρανός καὶ ἡ γῆ **Mt 5:18; 11:25; 24:35; Mk 13:31; Lk 10:21; 16:17; 21:33; Ac 4:24; 14:15; 17:24** (on the absence of the art. s. B-D-F §253, 3); **Rv 14:7; 20:11**; Dg 3:4; AcPICor 2:9; 19.

β. standing independently beside the earth or contrasted w. it: **Mt 5:34f; Ac 7:49** (cp. on both Is 66:1). ἐν (τῷ) οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ (τῆς) γῆς **Mt 6:10; 28:18; Lk 11:2** v.l.; **Rv 5:13**.—**1 Cor 8:5; Rv 5:3**; ISm 11:2. τὸ πρόσωπον τ. γῆς καὶ τ. οὐρανοῦ **Lk 12:56**. Cp. **Hb 12:26** (Hg 2:6); **Js 5:12**.—τὰ ἔσχατα τ. γῆς as extreme contrast to heaven 1 Cl 28:3. By God's creative word the heaven was fixed and the earth founded on the waters Hv 1, 3, 4. Neither heaven nor earth can be comprehended by human measure 16:2 (Is 40:12). On ἀπ' ἄκρου γῆς ἕως ἄκρου οὐρανοῦ **Mk 13:27** s. under ἄκρον. ὁ πρῶτος οὐρ. καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ will give way in the last times to the οὐρ. καινός and the γῆ καινή **Rv 21:1** (cp. Is 65:17; 66:22).

ⓑ as firmament or sky over the earth; out of reach for humans Hm 11:18. Hence ἕως οὐρανοῦ (ApcEsdr 4:32) **Mt 11:23; Lk 10:15** or εἰς τὸν οὐρ. Hv 4, 1, 5 as an expr. denoting a great height. Likew. ἀπὸ τ. γῆς ἕως τ. οὐρανοῦ 1 Cl 8:3 (scripture quot. of unknown origin); GPt 10:40 (for a transcendent being who walks on the earth and whose head touches the sky, s. II. 4, 443). Since the heaven extends over the whole earth, ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρ. *under (the) heaven = on earth, throughout the earth* (Pla., Tim. 23c, Ep. 7, 326c; UPZ 106, 14 [99 B.C.]; Eccl 1:13; 3:1; Just., A II, 5, 2) **Ac 2:5; 4:12; Col 1:23**; Hs 9, 17, 4; m 12, 4, 2. ὑποκάτωθεν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ *throughout the earth* 1 Cl 53:3 (Dt 9:14). ἐκ τῆς (i.e. χώρας) ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρ. εἰς τὴν ὑπ' οὐρανόν *from one place on earth to another* **Lk 17:24** (cp. Dt 29:19; Bar 5:3; 2 Macc 2:18 ἐκ τῆς ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρ. εἰς τὸν ἄγιον τόπον).—In the last days there will appear τέρατα ἐν τ. οὐρανῷ ἄνω *wonders in the heaven above* **Ac 2:19** (Jo 3:3 v.l.). σημεῖον ἐν τῷ οὐρ. **Rv 12:1, 3** (cp. Diod S 2, 30, 1 τὰ ἐν οὐρανῷ γινόμενα=what takes place in the heavens; Ael. Aristid. 50, 56 K.=26 p. 519 D., where the statue of Asclepius from Pergamum appears ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ). The sky can even be rolled up; s. ἐλίσσω.—Rain falls fr. heaven (X., An. 4, 2, 2) and heaven *is closed* to bring about a drought **Lk 4:25**.—**Rv 11:6; Js 5:18** (cp. 2 Ch 6:26; 7:13; Sir 48:3). Lightning also comes fr. heaven (Bacchylides 17, 55f ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ... ἄστραπὴν [=Attic-ἦν]) **Lk 10:18**. Likew. of other things that come down like rain to punish sinners: fire **Lk 9:54** (cp. 4 Km 1:10; TestAbr A 10 p. 88, 14 [Stone p. 24]); **Rv 20:9**; fire and brimstone **Lk 17:29** (cp. Gen 19:24); apocalyptic hail **Rv 16:21**; AcPI Ha 5, 7.

ⓒ as starry heaven IEph 19:2. τὰ ἄστρα τοῦ οὐρ. (cp. ἄστρον and s. Eur., Phoen. 1; Diod S 6, 2, 2 ἥλιον κ. σελήνην κ. τὰ ἄλλα ἄστρα τὰ κατ' οὐρανόν; Ael. Aristid. 43, 13 K.=1 p. 5 D.; TestAbr A 1 p. 78, 1 [Stone p. 4]; JosAs 2:11) **Hb 11:12**. οἱ ἀστέρες τοῦ οὐρ. 1 Cl 32:2 (Gen 22:17); cp. 10:6 (Gen 15:5). In the time of tribulation at the end of the world the stars will fall fr. heaven **Mt 24:29a; Mk 13:25a; Rv 6:13; 12:4**. Cp. **8:10; 9:1**. ἡ στρατιά τοῦ οὐρ. (s. οὐράνιος) *the host of heaven*, of the stars, which some Israelites illicitly worshipped **Ac 7:42** (worship of the στρατιά τοῦ οὐρ. in enmity to Yahweh also Jer 7:18; 19:13; Zeph 1:5; 2 Ch 33:3, 5). These are also meant by the δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν **Mt 24:29b; Lk 21:26**; cp. **Mk 13:25b** (cp. δύναμις 4).

ⓓ as place of atmosphere (cp. TestAbr A 9 p. 87, 15 [Stone p. 22] εἰς τὴν αἰθέρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ); clouds hover in it, the νεφέλαι τοῦ οὐρ. (s. νεφέλη) **Mt 24:30b; 26:64; Mk 14:62**; D 16:8. Likew. the birds, τὰ πετεινά τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (Gen 1:26; Ps 8:9; Jdth 11:7; ParJer 7:3; cp. Bar 3:17) **Mt 6:26; 8:20; 13:32; Mk 4:32; Lk 8:5; 9:58; Ac 10:12; 11:6**; 6:12 (Gen 1:26), 18; Hs 9, 24, 1; GJs 3:2 codd.; 18:2 codd.—πυρράζει ὁ οὐρανός **Mt 16:2, 3**.—In connection

w. τὸν σατανᾶν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεσόντα **Lk 10:18** the atmosphere may well be thought of as an abode of evil spirits. On Satan as the ἄρχων τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἄερος, s. ἄηρ. Cp. also the λεγόμενοι θεοὶ εἶτε ἐν οὐρ. εἶτε ἐπὶ γῆς **1 Cor 8:5**. In any case **Rv 12:7f** speaks of the dragon and his angels as being in heaven.

© The concept of more than one heaven (the idea is Semitic; but s. FForm, ZNW 33, '34, 48–50, who refers to Anaximander and Aristot. Also Ps.-Apollod. 1, 6, 1, 2 ms. and Achilles Tat. 2, 36, 4 and 37, 2 ms. have οὐρανοί; Himerius, Or. 66 [=Or. 20], 4 οὐρανοί as the abode of the gods; also Hesychius Miles. [VI A.D.] c. 66 JFlach of the 'godless heathen' Tribonian.—Schlatter, Mt² p. 58 on **3:2**: 'The pl. οὐρανοί is found neither in Philo nor Joseph.' Cp. PKatz, Philo's Bible '50, 141–46; Mussies 84) is also found in our lit. (s. 1aα; Theoph. Ant. 1, 4 [p. 64, 15]), but it is not always possible to decide with certainty just where the idea is really alive and where it simply survives in a formula (in J's Gospel the pl. is entirely absent; Rv has it only **12:12** [fr. LXX]. Eph always has the pl. In others the sing. and pl. are interchanged for no apparent reason [cp. **Hb 9:23** w. 24 or Hv 1, 1, 4 w. 1, 2, 1; also GPt 10:40f; Ps. 113:11 lines 1 and 2; TestAbr, TestJob, Just., Tat.]): *the third heaven* (cp. Ps.-Lucian, Philopatris 12 ἐς τρίτον οὐρανὸν ἀεροβατήσας [s. ὀν ἀνακαινίζω and πνεῦμα 8]; PSI 29, 2ff [IV A.D.?] ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε τὸν καθήμενον ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ οὐρανῷ ... ἐν τῷ β' οὐρ. ... ἐν τῷ γ' οὐρ.; Simplicius, In Epict. p. 100, 13 Düb. ὀκτὼ οὐρανοί; TestLevi 3:3; GrBar 11:1 εἰς πέμπτον οὐ. Combination of the third heaven and paradise, GrBar 10:1ff; ArcMos 37. S. τρίτος 1a) **2 Cor 12:2** (s. JohJeremias, Der Gottesberg 1919, 41ff; Ltzm., Hdb.⁴ '49, exc. on **2 Cor 12:3f** [lit.]). ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν **Eph 4:10**. τ. πάντα ἐν τ. οὐρανοῖς κ. ἐπὶ τ. γῆς **Col 1:16**; cp. vs. **20**. ἔργα τ. χειρῶν σου εἰσὶν οἱ οὐρ. **Hb 1:10** (Ps 101:26).—**4:14; 7:26; 2 Pt 3:5, 7, 10, 12f** (of the heavens, their destruction in the final conflagration, and their replacement by the καινοὶ οὐρ.); 1 Cl 20:1; 33:3. τακῆσονταί τινες τῶν οὐρανῶν 2 Cl 16:3.—S. also Lampe s.v. 2.—From the concept of various celestial levels a transition is readily made to

② **transcendent abode, heaven** (the pl. is preferred for this mng.: B-D-F §141, 1; Rob. 408)

ⓐ as the dwelling-place (or throne) of God (Sappho, Fgm. 56 D.² [=Campbell 54] of Eros; Solon 1, 22 D.³ of Zeus; Hom. Hymn to Aphrodite 291 [all three οὐρ. in the sing. as the seat of the gods]; Pla., Phdr. 246e ὁ μέγας ἐν οὐρανῷ Ζεὺς; Ps.-Aristot., De Mundo 2, 2; 3, 4 ὁ οὐρ. as οἰκητήριον θεοῦ or θεῶν; Dio Chrys. 19[36], 22 θεῶν μακάρων κατ' οὐρανόν; Artem. 2, 68 p. 159, 13 ὁ οὐρανὸς θεῶν ἐστὶν οἶκος; Ael. Aristid. 43, 14 K.=1 p. 5 D.; Maximus Tyr. 11, 11b; ins from Saïtaï in Lydia [δύναμις 5]; IAndrosIsis, Cyrene 8 p. 129.—On the OT: GWestphal, Jahwes Wohnstätten 1908, 214–73) **Mt 23:22; Ac 7:55f; Hb 8:1; 16:2b** (Is 66:1); Dg 10:7. ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρ. Hv 1, 1, 6 (cp. Tob 5:17 S). ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρ. (Gen 24:3) **Rv 11:13; 16:11**. ὁ κύριος ἐν οὐρανοῖς **Eph 6:9**; cp. **Col 4:1**. ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν (μου, ἡμῶν) ὁ ἐν (τοῖς) οὐρ. (silver tablet fr. Amisos: ARW 12, 1909, 25 ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ μέγας ὁ ἐν οὐρανῷ καθήμενος) **Mt 5:16, 45; 6:1, 9; 7:11, 21b; 10:33; 12:50; 16:17; 18:10b, 14, 19; Mk 11:25f; Lk 11:2** v.l.; D 8:2 (here the sing. ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρ. Cp. PGM 12, 261 τῷ ἐν οὐρανῷ θεῷ). ὁ πατὴρ ὁ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ *the Father who* (gives) *from heaven* **Lk 11:13** (Jos., Ant. 9, 73 ἐκχέαι τὸν θεὸν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ). God dwells in τὰ ὕψη τῶν οὐρ. 1 Cl 36:2. Therefore the one who prays looks up toward heaven: ἀναβλέπειν εἰς τὸν οὐρ. (s. ἀναβλέπω 1) **Mt 14:19; Mk 6:41; 7:34; Lk 9:16**; MPol 9:2; 14:1. ἀτενίσας εἰς τὸν οὐρ. εἶδεν δόξαν θεοῦ **Ac 7:55**; ἐπάρας τ. ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν οὐρ. **J 17:1**.—The Spirit of God comes fr. (the open) heaven **Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:21; J 1:32; Ac 2:2(–4); 1 Pt 1:12**; AcPlCor 2:5. The voice of God resounds fr. it (Maximus Tyr. 35, 7b Διὸς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ μέγα βοῶντος, the words follow) **Mt 3:17; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22; J 12:28; Ac 11:9**; MPol 9:1 (cp. Just., D. 88, 8), and it is gener. the place where divine pronouncements originate **Ac 11:5** and their end vs. **10**. The ὀργή θεοῦ reveals itself fr. heaven **Ro 1:18** (s. Jos., Bell. 1, 630 τὸν ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ δικαστήν). Also, a σημεῖον ἐκ (ἀπὸ) τοῦ οὐρ. is a *sign given by God* **Mt 16:1; Mk 8:11; Lk 11:16**; cp. **21:11**.—Lampe s.v. 4.

ⓑ Christ is ἐξ οὐρανοῦ *from heaven, of a heavenly nature* **1 Cor 15:47** (s. ἄνθρωπος 1d. On this HKennedy, St. Paul and the Conception of the 'Heavenly Man': Exp. 8th ser., 7, 1913, 97–110; EGraham, CQR 113, '32, 226) and *has come down from heaven* **J 3:13b, 31; 6:38, 42, 50** (Ar. 15, 1 ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ καταβάς; Mel., P. 66, 467 ἀφικόμενος ἐξ οὐρανῶν), as ὁ ἄρτος ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (s. ἄρτος 2). Cp. **Ro 10:6**. He returned to heaven (τὴν ἔνσαρκον εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺ ἀνάληψιν Iren. 1, 10, 1 [Harv. I 91, 2]; on the ascension s. CHönn, Studien zur Geschichte der Hf. im klass. Altertum: Progr. Mannheim 1910; EPfister, Der Reliquienkult im Altertum II 1912, 480ff; HDiels, Himmels u. Höllenfahrten v. Homer bis Dante: NJkLA 49, 1922, 239–53; RHolland, Zur Typik der Himmelfahrt: ARW 23, 1925, 207–20; JKroll, Gott u. Hölle '32, 533 [ind.: Ascensus]; WMichaelis, Zur Überl. der Hf.s-geschichte: ThBl 4, 1925, 101–9; AFridrichsen, D. Hf. bei Lk: ibid. 6, 1927, 337–41; GBertram, Die Hf. Jesu vom Kreuz: Deissmann Festschr. 1927, 187–217 [UHolzmeister, ZKT 55, '31, 44–82]; HSchlier, Christus u. d. Kirche im Eph 1930, 1ff; VLarrañaga, L'Ascension de Notre-Seigneur dans le NT '38 [fr. Spanish]. S. also at ἀνάστασις 2 end, and διὰ A 2a) to live there in glory: **Mk 16:19; Lk 24:51; Ac 1:10f** (AZwiep, The Ascension of the Messiah in Lukan Christology '97); **2:34; 7:55f; 9:3; 22:6; 1 Pt 3:22**; 15:9. Christians await his return fr. heaven: **Ac 1:11; Phil 3:20; 1 Th 1:10; 4:16; 2 Th 1:7** (Just., A I, 51, 8 al.).—When Messianic woes have come to an end, τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ

- How do you make sure you go through the door into heaven? Will you, will I, go through the heavenly door? Jesus said that He was/is the door in John 10:1, 2, 7, 9. To enter heaven you must come, by faith, through Him as the door, not attempting to come through a door of your own making. What's keeping you from coming through the door?
- Who else has been given a peek into heaven? Jacob (Genesis 28:12), Moses (Exodus 19-34), Daniel (Daniel 7), Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-4), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1), Stephen (Acts 7:55-56), Paul (2 Corinthians 12).
- Was the voice that of an angel or of God? The trumpet voice is probably that of Christ who speaks in this fashion in Revelation 1:10-11.
- Why does it emphasize the voice was trumpet-like? How were various trumpets used in Israel?

Application

- Christ wants you to go through the door in heaven into His glorious presence. What arguments are you currently leaning on so you don't enter that heavenly door? What's keeping you from making this decision of all decisions?

υιοῦ τ. ἀνθρώπου ἐν οὐρανῷ *then the sign of the Human One (who is) in heaven will appear*; acc. to the context, the sign consists in this, that he appears visibly in heavenly glory **Mt 24:30**.—Lampe s.v. 10b.

© as the abode of angels (Gen 21:17; 22:11; Ps.-Clem., Hom. 8, 12; TestAbr A 4 p. 80, 34 [Stone p. 8]; ParJer 3:2; ApcMos 38; Just., D. 57, 2) **Mt 18:10a; 22:30; 24:36; 28:2; Mk 12:25; 13:32; Lk 2:15; 22:43; J 1:51; Gal 1:8; Rv 10:1; 18:1; 19:14; 20:1**. Cp. Eph 3:15.—Lampe s.v. 7.

Ⓞ Christians who have died also dwell in heaven (cp. Dio Chrys. 23 [40], 35 οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ θείων κ. μακαρίων αἰώνιον τάξιν; Libanius, Or. 21 p. 459, 9 F. πόρρω τοῦ τὸν οὐρανὸν οἰκοῦντος χοροῦ; Oenomaus in Eus., PE 5, 33, 5; 12; Artem. 2, 68 p. 160, 25 τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπαλλαγείσας τῶν σωμάτων εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνιέναι τάχει χρωμένας ὑπερβάλλοντι; Himerius, Or. 8 [=23], 23: the daemon of the dead holds the σῶμα of the dead person, τὴν ψυχὴν ὁ οὐρανός; Quintus Smyrn. 7, 88; TestAbr A 20 p. 103, 26 [Stone p. 54]; TestJob 39:13; ApcEsdr 7:3). Their life, τὸ ἀληθῶς ἐν οὐρανῷ ζῆν, stands in strong contrast to the ὄντως θάνατος, that leads to the everlasting fire Dg 10:7b. Rhoda, who *greet*s Hermas *from heaven* Hv 1, 1, 4, need not have died (s. MDibelius, Hdb. ad loc.), and still she shows us that heaven is open to the devout. Furthermore, the true citizenship of Christians is *in heaven* (Tat. 16, 1 τὴν ἐν οὐρανοῖς πορείαν; s. πολίτευμα) **Phil 3:20**; cp. Dg 5:9. Their names are enrolled *in heaven* (s. βιβλος 2) **Lk 10:20; Hb 12:23**. In heaven there await them their glorified body **2 Cor 5:1f**, their reward **Mt 5:12; Lk 6:23**, their treasure **Mt 6:20; Lk 12:33**, the things they hoped for **Col 1:5**, their inheritance **1 Pt 1:4**. It is a place of peace **Lk 19:38**.—ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ the New Jerusalem (s. Ἱερουσόλυμα 2) will come down to earth **Rv 3:12; 21:2, 10**.

© The concept of a heaven in which God, attendant spirits of God, and the righteous dead abide, makes it easy to understand the taking over of certain OT expressions in which heaven is personified εὐφραίνεσθε οἱ οὐρανοί (cp. Is 44:23; 49:13; Mel., P. 98, 747) **Rv 12:12**; cp. **18:20**; 9:3 (Is 1:2); 11:2 (Jer 2:12); 1 Cl 27:7 (Ps 18:2).

③ **an indirect reference to God, God** fig. ext. of 2 (s. βασιλεία 1b).—A common Hebrew practice, but not unknown among polytheists: Philippiades Com. [IV/III B.C.] 27 νῆ τὸν οὐρανόν. Acc. to Clem. Al., Protr. 5, 66, 4 Θεόφραστος πῆ μὲν οὐρανόν, πῆ δὲ πνεῦμα τὸν θεὸν ὑπονοεῖ=Theophrastus at one time thinks of God as heaven and at another time as spirit; Appian, Hann. 56 §233 σημεῖα ἐκ Διός [ln. 14 Viereck-R.] = ἐξ οὐρανοῦ [ln. 16]; JosAs 19:2; SEG XXVIII, 1251, 3 [III/IV A.D.; s. New Docs 3, 49f]. ἀμαρτάνειν εἰς τὸν οὐρ. *sin against God* **Lk 15:18, 21**. ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἢ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων **Mt 21:25; Mk 11:30f; Lk 20:4f**. βασιλεία τῶν οὐρ. (GrBar 11:2) in Mt=βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ **3:2; 4:17; 5:3, 10, 19f; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 11:11f; 13:11, 24, 31, 33, 44f, 47, 52; 16:19; 18:1, 3f, 23; 19:12, 14, 23; 20:1; 22:2; 23:13; 25:1; J 3:5** v.l.; AcPl Ha 8, 31 (restored)=BMM verso 3.—B. 53; 1484. DELG. M-M. DLNT 439–43. EDNT. TW. Sv.

- God comforts us when He shows us how close His dimension is to ours. Even when exiled on a dusty, lifeless, rock-quarry of an island like Patmos, God's pristine, unimaginable abode was but a door away.
- When God calls you home, it would be just like Him to do with a beautiful, melodic sounding voice, wouldn't it?
- John was listening when God called His name. Do you listen for the Lord to call your name? How about the old hymn, *I'll Be Somewhere Listening,*"

I'll Be List'ning
Arr. by V.O. Stamps
Copyright 1937 by The Stamps-Baxter Music Co.

Vs. 1
When the Savior calls I will answer
When He calls for me I will hear
When the Savior calls I will answer
I'll be somewhere listening for my name

Chorus
I'll be somewhere listening
I'll be somewhere listening
I'll be somewhere listening for my name (yes for my name)
I'll be somewhere listening
I'll be somewhere listening
I'll be somewhere listening for my name

Observation

4:2 The adverb “immediately” (ευϋα, wj) tells us John’s transportation after the command was instantaneous.

4:2 John was transported because he was “in the Spirit.” The prepositional phrase points to a sphere of existence.

4:2 John saw “a throne,” indefinite as opposed to definite. This suggests there were other thrones for the person in question.

4:2 The KJV reads that “a throne was set in heaven,” while the NAS reads “throne was standing in heaven.” The verb “to set” (ε;κειτο) is an imperfect middle indicative and can be classified as an ingressive imperfect. This underscores the fact this particular throne was being set up for a special occasion.

4:2 The one on the throne was a personal as opposed to impersonal.

4:2 The verb “sitting” (καqh, meno j) is a present participle denoting perpetual action. The grammatical point is well-taken: God on His throne is not going anywhere. He is going to fulfill His wrath.

Interpretation

4:2 Is the entrance into the heavenly sphere at quick, sudden event? This appears to be the case when you study other cases like that of Enoch (Genesis 5:24), Elijah (2 Kings 2:1), the translation of the believer's body (2 Corinthians 5:8-9), the Rapture of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

4:2 What does it mean that John was "in the Spirit." Predominately, when the preposition "in" is used with the word "spirit" in the New Testament it speaks of the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; Ephesians 3:5; 5:18). In Revelation, the phrase speaks specifically of heavenly transportation (Revelation 17:3; 21:10).

4:2 Does God have more than one throne? From this text it appears He does. This particular throne is one designed just for the period of the Tribulation ... it is His throne of judgment and He has been waiting for thousands of years to sit on it.

Application

4:2 Are you ready for the day God transports you into His presence? At that point you will not have the opportunity to choose Him as Lord and Savior. At that point all the excuses in the world will not hold water. At that point all your arguments against God will fall flat for all eternity.

4:2 The fact God is pictured as sitting on His throne of judgment gives me hope that He will hold the nations to account and He will come and erect His glorious kingdom, as prophesied. The decay and destruction we see now are but a prelude to His plan to completely defeat the Devil and bring His kingdom of true, lasting, perfect peace.

All of this Bible study of Revelation makes you want to study, which I challenge you to do, and to sing, doesn't it? I can think of nothing better than Martin Luther's famous number, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*.

1. A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper he amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
doth seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.
2. Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,
were not the right man on our side,
the man of God's own choosing.

Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth, his name,
from age to age the same,
and he must win the battle.

3. And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God hath willed
his truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure,
for lo, his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.

4. That word above all earthly powers,
no thanks to them, abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours,
thru him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill;
God's truth abideth still;
his kingdom is forever.

