**Understanding The Revelation of Jesus Christ**

1. **The Bible is God's Word**—"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17). (See also 2 Peter 1:20‑21). The Word should be respected as coming from God and, therefore, authoritative and valuable to our lives.

2. **As God's Word, the Bible is wholly true** (Matthew 5:18 and Luke 21:33; see also 1 Kings 8:56, Psalm 111:7, and Ezekiel 12:25). Just as God cannot contradict Himself nor lie (see Numbers 23:19 and 1 Samuel 15:29), the Bible is not contradictory. If we perceive a contradiction, we can know for certain that we are receiving a misinterpretation. If a writing of men contradicts the Bible (including all those neat marginal notes added by translators and publishers), we must receive the Bible as being the standard of truth. If we receive "a word of knowledge" that contradicts the Bible, we know that it is not from God.

3. **The Bible's message is spiritual.** God is spirit (John 4:24), and we are all spiritual beings. God addresses us in a way that we can grow spiritually and be prepared for our spiritual life in eternity. If we seek out the spiritual message, we will see its application in our lives (including our physical life). The spiritual message will always be true. (Often, because of the limitations of our languages that are constructed for our physical life, the spiritual message is obscured by a physical-life interpretation. The Bible uses and defines many words in a unique way, which reveals the spiritual message.)

4. **God’s Word is authoritative.** We need authority over our lives. (See Romans 1:16-32). We need to live as our Creator intended rather than in the futile speculations of our mind given over to the flesh. We can only be successful human beings by submission to His Will. The Bible expresses His Will for us. All authority comes from God. We can only escape His judgment by submission to His authority. (See Romans 13:1-2).

5. **All other sources of authority are inadequate**. (See 1 Corinthians 1:18-31).

6. **We receive the authority of the Bible by faith, knowing it is good**. (See Romans 10:17, Romans 8:28, Hebrews 12:1-13). We need to see that every word in the Bible is there to profit us personally. There are no idle words. (Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4). If some bit of information seems to be missing, we do not need to know that information. Faith to receive the authority of the Word must be founded on the Living Word, Jesus Christ. (See also Isaiah 55:1-5).

7. **Study with purpose**. **...To know God**. The Bible reveals God to us. He is present on every page, showing us His nature, His attributes, His perfection, His total godliness. In Isaiah 55:6-13, God tells us His purposes will be accomplished, knowing Him leads to good fruits in our lives. **...To know ourselves**. We are spiritual beings temporarily caught in a physical body. The Bible teaches us about our spiritual nature and about the spiritual realm in which we truly exist. We are challenged to grow spiritually (see Ephesians 4:14-16); the spiritual growth comes about as we are obedient to the Word (see Psalm 111:10). **...To receive direction and discipline**. (See Deuteronomy 8, especially verses 1-10, and James 1:22‑27). **& avoid ungodly purposes**.

8. **Recognize that the Bible is addressed to you personally**. Receive, study, understand, and obey the Word. Then you will experience the power of God’s Word in your life.

9. **Interpret the Bible in the light of the entire Bible.** "...man does not live by bread alone but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of God." (Deut. 8:3b). The dedicated study of God's Word promises ever-increasing fruit. The more you learn, the greater your under-standing will be of that you have learned already. (See Rev 22:10-21).

10. **Interpret the Bible within its immediate context**. Understand a passage like you would any other book or magazine or paper, paying attention to grammar and word meanings in context. What is being conveyed in the sentence, the paragraph, and the book which contains it (i.e., Revelation)?

11. **Ask the “newspaper questions”** – Who is speaking? Who is being addressed? Is the message intended for a specific individual, a special group, a general group at a specific time, or all people for across all of time? What does the passage reveal about God and the character of mankind? What is God’s purpose for including it in the Bible? How does it apply to me? What am I being told to do? It also helps to note whether the passage is Old Testament, New Testament, or Old Testament being cited in the New Testament and whether the passage is historical or prophetic. Doing this will help you understand culturally unique or different situations that apply only to that culture but which contain truths being conveyed to everybody in every culture by example.

12. **Read and study in submission to the Holy Spirit**. HE is the best teacher and is readily available to all of us who have trusted in the work of Jesus for our salvation.

These 12 items are basic principles of interpretation. They apply to the study of any Bible text. The following points are specific “must do” items needed to properly understand Revelation:

A. If you don’t understand a passage or a symbol, don’t be discouraged but keep on reading. Every essential point is explained within Revelation. It does help if you know Old Testament prophesies about the end times (especially the book of Daniel starting in Chapter 7 through the end, and certain passages from Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah dealing with the future of Israel) and the teachings of Jesus, especially in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:3 to 25:46). It is also helpful to pay attention to Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians, especially 1 Thessalonians 4:18. However, it is not essential that you know all these books since Revelation explains itself more than any other book of the Bible. You may need to read Revelation more than once to “get everything in context.”

B. If a passage seems to be loaded with spiritual symbols but can be interpreted as being literally true in the physical realm, assume that it will be fulfilled in the physical realm unless a symbol must be accepted as spiritually true alone by the context. (As we study the prophesies we know God provided and we know have been fulfilled (as in the birth of Christ), we should note that they were all fulfilled with astounding precision in the physical realm. There is no reason to expect that God has changed His way of communicating to us in Revelation.) When we do this, many interpretations must be excluded.

C. Pay careful attention to the warning provided in Revelation 22:18-19. The bottom line is … DO NOT SPECULATE. If God is silent on something, don’t try to answer by guessing and don’t pay attention to someone else’s guesses (as in a commentary or study note). God says what He means and means what He says, providing everything needed for our Spiritual life with Him.