The Bible is the infallible Word of God. It is God’s revelation of Himself addressed to man’s responsibility. So, in other words, within the Bible God has provided the knowledge of who He is and how we are to live in a way that pleases Him. Up until now we have been interpreting the Bible through our own casual reading and listening to other peoples views. We are now going to advance to the next step. Instead of just reading the Bible we are going to study it. God actually commands us to seriously and diligently study His Word (Deut 6:6-9; 2 Tim 2:15).

Introduction to Hermeneutics:

Correctly interpreting and understanding Scripture can be a complex task with many difficult tensions. Consider just a few:

1. The Bible is divine, yet it has come to us in human form. The commands of God are absolute, yet the historical context of the writings appears to relativize certain elements.
2. The divine message must be clear, yet many passages seem ambiguous.
3. We are dependent only on the Spirit for instruction, yet scholarship is surely necessary.
4. The Scriptures seem to presuppose a literal and historical reading, yet we are also confronted by the figurative and non-historical (e.g., parables).
5. Proper interpretation requires the interpreter’s personal freedom, yet some degree of external, corporate authority appears imperative.
6. The objectivity of the biblical message is essential, yet our presuppositions seem to inject a degree of subjectivity into the interpretive process.

To help us in this most gratifying journey of Bible exploration is the tool of hermeneutics. What is hermeneutics? Hermeneutics is the art and science of Biblical interpretation. Its purpose is to establish guidelines and rules to enable one to properly interpret the Bible. In Greek mythology the god
Hermes was the messenger of the gods. It was his task to interpret the will of the gods. The Greek verb *hermeneuein* means “to explain, interpret or to translate,” while the noun *hermeneia* means “interpretation” or “translation.” Using the verb, Luke informs us that Jesus *explained* to the two disciples on the Emmaus road what the Scriptures said about Him (Lk 24:27). Paul uses the noun in 1 Cor 12:10 to refer to the gift of *interpretation* of tongues. In essence, then, hermeneutics involves interpreting or explaining. In fields like biblical studies or literature, it refers to the task of explaining the meaning of a piece of writing.

Over the next few months we will examine and learn to apply established rules to help us gain a deeper understanding of the Bible. Since the Bible is the Word of God, and God is a God of order, we will study the Bible, with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, in an orderly and systematic manner. Each of the rules we will be addressing falls into one of three categories. They are:

1. **Observation**: which answers the question: What does the passage say? (Acts 17:11)
2. **Interpretation**: which answers the question: What does the passage mean? (Prov 2:3,5)
3. **Application**: which answers the question: How does the meaning of this passage apply to me? (2 Tim 3:16-17; Rom 15:4)

You will undoubtedly have someone tell you the Bible can be interpreted anyway one pleases. That is why accurate *interpretation* and correct *application* rests on the accuracy of your *observations*. Martin Luther stated, “We must not make God’s Word mean what we wish. We must not bend it, but allow it to *bend us*, and give it the honor of being better than we can make it.” So we must take great care not to expound our own minds instead of God’s. (2 Pet 1:20)

**Rule 1: Prayer**

Since the Holy Spirit reveals truth, it follows that prayer must be an integral part of Bible study. We must continually seek God’s wisdom, counsel, and revelation. So we come before the Lord, praying that our minds will be illuminated by the Holy Spirit, that we will have an impartial spirit, a humble mind, and a praying heart (Ps 119:18,33,34; Isa 48:17; James 1:21; Jude 20).
Rule 2: Context

One of the most important principles in handling the Word properly is interpreting Scripture in light of its context. The word context means “that which goes with the text.” Context gives meaning to the particular word, phrase, or sentence and helps you understand what the author is saying. Let’s look at the word leaven for example, if we were to define leaven as always referring to sin, and not define it according to the context in which it is used in Matthew 13:33 we would completely misunderstand the meaning of a Kingdom parable.

We need to read the text in a “plain sense”, and look for the obvious. Such as to whom a passage is addressed, the circumstances and occasion when spoken, the central design or concept of the speaker or writer. And also by looking at the full scope, what passage proceeds and follows, we can begin to identify who was being addressed, their culture and the situation they were in. Sometimes the Apostle Paul is misunderstood or accused of teaching in contradiction to Jesus. This is because the expositor does not take into consideration the church he’s addressing, and what their specific problems or needs were at that time. Many a Christian, who has had a bad fall or been in a course of backsliding, has, after his repentance, needlessly tortured himself by Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-31. This epistle was written to Christians who were raised in Judaism, who after confessing the Gospel, were still looking for an earthly kingdom, and were tempted because of persecution and suffering to abandon their Christian profession and return to Judaism. In the passages mentioned above they were plainly warned that such a course would be fatal. So to apply those passages to backslidden Christians is entirely unjustified, making a use of them, which is foreign to their scope and design. Also be on the lookout for words that are often overlooked. Every verse beginning with the word “For” requires us to trace the connection. Likewise the expression “For this cause” and words like “wherefore and therefore” call for close attention, so that we may have before us the promise from which the conclusion is drawn. Example 2 Cor 5:17.

Rule 3: Scripture interprets Scripture

The technical term is “the analogy of faith.” This means that no part of Scripture can be interpreted in such a way as to render it in conflict with what is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture. Since all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, there are no contradictions. For example, if a given verse
is capable of two renditions and one of those interpretations goes against the rest of Scripture while the other is in harmony with it, then the latter interpretation must be used. That is why we compare all the passages, which have a definite, bearing on the verse or passage we are reading. We always interpret the obscure in light of the clear, and never the other way around. No doctrine is to be founded on a single passage. Care is to be taken that no important teaching is based alone on any type, figure of speech, or even a parable. Instead, they are to be used only in illustrating plain and literal passages. In John 14:28 Christ is saying, “My Father is greater than I”. On this one verse we may come to the conclusion that Christ was inferior. But, if we pay attention to His previous statement, “I and My Father are one” (John 10:31), and we interpret Scripture with Scripture (Isa 9:6; 1 John 5:20), we understand John 14:28 must refer to Him as mediator, where He was subservient to the Father’s will, yet still fully God and co-equal in the Godhead. Again, such words as “be baptized, and wash away your sins” (Acts 22:16) must not be understood in a way that conflicts with “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7), but is regarded as a symbolic washing only. Cross-reference is vital in obtaining the full rendering of doctrines.

Rule 4: Type of Literature
The type of literature or “genre” determines the way in which you interpret the text. For instance, Hebrew poetry (such as the Psalms) is different from the historical narratives (such as Kings and Chronicles), and the historical narratives are different from the epistles, both in style and content. We would not look to Psalms for the history of actual events that have taken place in actual time and space, but we would look to the historical narratives for that information. And we would not look to historical narratives for doctrine, but get most of the doctrine for the church from the epistles. So, recognizing the type of literature you’re studying is important. Here are very brief descriptions of the different genres found in the Bible:

*Historical Narratives:* These describe actual historical events from God’s perspective. They tell us what God is like (His character and nature), what God likes/dislikes, how He deals with people who obey and honor Him, and how He deals with those who disobey and hate Him. Narratives give us principles and lessons, not commands, patterns or laws. Historical Narratives are found in Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Joshua through

*Poetry and Songs*: These are expressions of emotion to God. They allow us to express to God our feelings of happiness, joy, trust, hope, security, as well as feelings of discouragement, guilt, suffering, fear, anger, despair and repentance. They also assist us in expressing our love and appreciation for God or our need for forgiveness. Poetry and Songs allow us to relate to God on our own level. They show us how to communicate with God and how to honor and worship Him. In the Old Testament, these writings are found primarily in the Psalms and Song of Songs.

*Legal Writings*: These writings indicate God’s high moral standard, His idea of justice, principles of common sense government, principles of common sense health and safety, and His pattern and order for acceptable worship. These laws are NOT directly applicable to Christians today (they are not meant to be legalistic instructions and commands to Christians). Such legal writings can be found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

*Wisdom/Wise Sayings*: These writings indicate God’s view of wisdom as opposed to man’s view of wisdom. They contain wise sayings, and practical advice on how to live life and avoid trouble and hardship. Wisdom literature can be found primarily in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job. Note: Proverbs teach probable truth, not absolute truth.

*Prophecy*: Prophecy is God’s message to a particular person, a particular group of people and sometimes to all humanity. It is not necessarily foretelling the future- in fact the vast majority of prophecy in the Bible speaks of the present (at the time of the prophet). Prophecy is found primarily in the Old Testament, from Isaiah to Malachi.

*Teachings of Jesus*: These are direct statements of truth from Jesus concerning the nature and character of God, the kingdom of God, heaven, what God expects of us, principles of righteous living, and the ways in which Jesus fulfills the OT prophecies. They are not exhaustive Do’s and Don’ts’, but rather, serve as examples and patterns from which we can derive underlying principles to apply in other situations. These teachings are found in parts of the Gospels.

*Parables*: Parables are stories with a punch line. Parables are not so much illustrative, but rather, provocative. They are designed to draw people in and hit them with something unexpected, in the same way a joke does. Most parables have only one message or central idea, and even if multiple messages are present, one of them will be the chief idea. Note also that they are not perfect analogies. They are found in parts of the Gospels.
Epistles: These are letters that were written with a clear purpose to an well-identified audience. However, some epistles were written to a larger people group. The epistle writer presents arguments to correct, rebuke, defend, instruct, praise and encourage their readers. Epistles form the vast majority of the NT from Romans to Jude.

Apocalypse: These describe prophecies in which God “reveals” His hidden future plans and is a view of God’s relationship to human history. Rather than work within it, God radically intervenes from outside it. This includes the book of Revelation, and also large parts of Ezekiel and Daniel. Revelation is a vision of warning and encouragement to the early church as it was going through immense persecution.

Rule 5: Determining the Theme and its Meaning

To determine the theme of the passage you are studying, read and re-read the text objectively. Pay close attention to particular key words or phrases that are repeated. These key words and phrases are vital to understanding the meaning of the text. A key word might be a noun, a descriptive word, an action word, or a synonym. Key words reveal the subjects. Subjects reveal the theme. The more a word is repeated, the more obvious it becomes that the word represents a subject. The more that subject is repeated, the more obvious it becomes that the subject represents a theme. For example, let’s look at Hebrews 4:14-16: “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Since the key word is High Priest, we come to the conclusion that Jesus our great High Priest is the subject, and therefore our theme. Note: most study Bibles has outlines in the beginning of the each book. They usually state the theme for each section, and are very helpful, but try to establish the theme for you first, then check with the outline.

Now that we have determined the theme, we are going to ask questions to understand its meaning. What is the significance of a particular key word, phrase or sentence? Does the element carry any special significance given the historical and social context? What does it contribute to the overall meaning of the text? How would the meaning of the text be effected if this particular element was left out?
It is also extremely helpful to determine the relationships between the key words and phrases. One way is by identifying the connectives. Connectives occur at the beginning of sentences to link them with what precedes and within sentences to indicate the relationship between the words, phrases, and clauses through which ideas are communicated. Although connectives are often small and seemingly insignificant, they exert an influence on meaning that far exceeds their size.

Rule 6: Inter-Relation and Mutual Dependence of the OT and NT

The similarity of the two Testaments is much greater and more vital than their dissimilarity. The same triune God is revealed in both; the same way of salvation, the same standard of holiness, and the same eternal destinies of the godly and the ungodly. The New has all its roots in the Old, so much; in fact, one is incomprehensible apart from the other. It would be completely off base to say the message proclaimed by the Lord Jesus was something new or radically different from what God had spoken earlier by the Law and the Prophets. “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matt 5:17). In other words, to vindicate and substantiate them (the Law and the Prophets), to free them from human perversions and misrepresentation, and to make good what they demanded and announced. Jesus did not teach against the OT, and in turn the testimony of the apostles did not conflict with their Master (Rom 1:1-2; Rom 3:21; Gal 4:22-31).

In many respects the NT is a continuation of and a complement to the OT. The contrast is not really between two opposites, but rather between a graduation from the lower to the higher plane, the one preparing for the other.

Whether the speaker is Christ or one of His apostles, at almost every vital point he clinches his argument by an appeal to the OT scriptures. There are innumerable examples that we could examine to see the continuance of ideas and language, in fact, there are more than six hundred expressions of the Old occurring in the New (over 350 in Revelation alone). We must give equal attention to both, not just familiarizing ourselves with the first, but really drinking in the Spirit of the OT and in doing so our hearts will be prepared for understanding of the NT. We need to have knowledge of the types to comprehend the anti-types. For example, what would “Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1 Cor 5:7) mean if we were unacquainted with Exodus 12: and how much in Hebrews 9 and 10 is intelligible apart from Leviticus 16? Many important words of the NT can be correctly defined only by
referring back to their usage in the OT: such as “firstborn, redeem, propitiation,” etc.

The primary differences we can note are: the OT was addressed more to the outward man, with its earthly sanctuary and earthly inheritance, which were all a “shadow of heavenly things” (Heb 8:5; 10:1). Whereas, in the NT, we have a higher exhibition of truth and duty. The principal variations appear that in one we have promise and prediction, and in the other, performance and fulfillment: first, types and shadows, then the reality and substance. The NT surpass’ the OT with a clearer and fuller manifestation of God’s perfection’s (1 John 2:8), in a more abundant pouring out of the Spirit (John 7:39; Acts 2:3), in its expanded inclusion (Matt 28:19-20), and in a larger measure of liberty (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:2-7).

When studying a passage from either Testament cross-reference to the other one. For instance, while in the NT, search the OT for the origins of ideas, languages, and customs. Pay close attention to the manner in which and the purpose for which the OT is being quoted. When in the OT, look for illumination in the NT for prophecies fulfilled themes developed, and the progression of God’s people. Word studies will be most helpful. One thing you will discover is how God’s attributes do not change. His holiness, love, compassion, justice, mercy, etc. are very much present throughout the entire Bible.

Rule 7: Interpreting Prophecy

Probably no part of Scripture mystifies and frustrates readers more than the prophets. An understanding of the nature of prophecy is the foundation for its interpretation. Basically, prophets conveyed messages from God to His people. Prophecy assumes that God has something important He wants people to understand. In other words, prophecy means to speak forth the mind and counsel of God through human speakers or writers. In Hebrew, nebooaw means “prediction”, and in Greek it is propheteia that actually comes from two Greek words, pro means "forth" and phemi “speak”.

Traditionally, one describes the content of prophecy under the terms foretelling and forth-telling. Foretelling is better known and refers specifically to predictive prophecy—the prophets’ predictions about the future. Contrary to popular belief very little of OT prophecy is predictive prophecy. Instead, most of it involves forth-telling—messages for a prophet’s own audience about their own day or the near future.

With the completion of the canon of Scriptures, prophecy apparently passed away (1 Cor 13:8-9). The teacher has taken the place of the prophet
in 2 Peter 2:1. The difference is that, whereas the message of the prophet was a direct revelation of the mind of God for the occasion, the message of the teacher is gathered from the completed revelation contained in Scripture. Many evangelicals (Charismatic) would disagree with this understanding. This is secondary issue not a primary one, so there is no need to break fellowship, but, this question should be carefully addressed considering there are a number of Christians today saying they have a word or a new revelation from God (Ezekiel 13:6).

When Israel grievously strayed into idolatry, God sent prophets to announce His future plans for His people. The prophets used a variety of genres to deliver their divine message. Here is just a brief explanation of each genre:

Prophecy of disaster: The most common genre among the prophets is the prophecy of disaster. In this form, a prophet announces imminent or future disaster either to an individual or to an entire nation (2 Kings 1:3-4; Jer 28:12-16; Mic 1:2-7).

Prophecy of salvation: The prophecy of salvation announced restoration for individuals and nations (Isa 2:1-5; Amos 9:11-15).

Woe Speech: The prophets announced doom through what is called the woe speech. Its distinguishing feature is the opening interjection “Woe to those who/you who…” Then describes the details of the evil deeds that make them worthy of woe. The woe speech concludes with a prediction of divine punishment (Isa 5:8-9; Mic 2:1-5).

Propheitic Dirge: Along similar lines, the prophets occasionally recited a dirge or funeral lament over Israel. The prophets addressed the nation as if she were a corpse ready for burial (Amos 5:1-3; Ezek 26:17-18).

Prophetic Hymn: The prophets would draw from Israel’s worship practices. Examples of the hymn appear occasionally in the prophetic books (Amos 4:13; Isa 12:4-6).

Prophetic Liturgy: They also used various kinds of liturgies as part of their message. A liturgy is a text used in worship in which two or more speakers participate in response to each other (Isa 63:7-64:12; Jer 14:1-22).

Prophetic Disputation: In a disputation, the speaker tries to persuade the audience to accept the validity of some truth (most of the book of Malachi; Amos 3:3-8).

Prophetic Lawsuit: In the lawsuit speech a prophet speaks as if Israel were on trial accused of a crime. God seems to play the dual role of both prosecutor and judge (Hos 4:1-3; Ps 50).
Prophetic Vision Report: Vision reports are autobiographical reports of things the prophet saw in a vision that conveys God’s message (Zech 5:1-4; Dan 8, 10-12).

Prophetic Narratives: Two narrative literary types appear in the prophets. The vocation reports narrate the personal experience by which God called and commissioned someone as a prophet (Isa 6; Jer 1; Ezek 1-3). The second narrative is divine instruction about symbolic actions that the prophet is to perform (Hos 1:2-9; Jer 19).

We also, need to be aware of several general characteristics of prophecy. This will help us interrelate OT prophecies with their fulfillments in the NT:

1. Telescopic view of the future. The prophets saw future events as a succession of events without an awareness of the large time gaps between them. Isaiah 9: 6-7 provides a good example. They understood that history had two major periods, the present age and the age to come, although they did not always make a distinction between the two.

2. Two fulfillments, one near the prophet’s lifetime and one long past it. We know of these multiple fulfillments because the NT reapplies an already-fulfilled prophecy to a later event. The prophecy in 2 Sam 7:12-16 is fulfilled in 1 Kings 1-2, but Heb 1:5 also applies 2 Sam 7:14 to Jesus. Sound theology supports the idea of such multiple fulfillments, belief that God rules all human history and can bring about two fulfillments.

3. NT teaching associates all prophetic fulfillments with Christ’s first and second comings. That teaching leads us not to expect fulfillments in between those two events. We should not suggest that a certain contemporary event “fulfills biblical prophecy” unless we can also demonstrate that current events also imply the imminent return of Jesus. We should treat such alleged fulfillments as speculations, not biblical interpretation.

4. Many prophecies are conditional. For example; Jonah’s message spoke of judgment to come if the Ninevites did not repent. They did and God compassionately spared the city (Jonah 3:4-10). Another example is Jeremiah 18:7-10).

Assuming we understand what a prophecy says, what can we say about its fulfillment? Fortunately, the Bible’s treatment of prophecy in both testaments suggests some guidelines on the matter. The biblical pattern indicates that prophecy finds fulfillment in many ways.
1. Prophecies commonly find literal fulfillment in succeeding events. Some prophecies involve immediate predictions whose fulfillment follows a short time later (Jer 38:17-18). Other prophecies find literal fulfillment within their respective biblical periods (Mat 16:21; Lk 19:41-44). Some OT prophecies reach literal fulfillment in the NT period. Example, the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2; Mat 2:5-6).

2. The NT also indicates that literal OT prophecies may reach figurative fulfillment. In the case of John the Baptist coming in the spirit of Elijah (Mal 4:5-6).

3. The NT also shows that other literal OT prophecies have what is called a literal/spiritual fulfillment. This is where an OT prophecy was fulfilled literally in the OT and spiritually in the NT (Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:16-17).

4. Some OT prophecies receive unexpected fulfillment in the NT. They may not only take on new meaning in time but their fulfillment may also involve a surprise, something that goes beyond the original prophecy. The best illustration of this form of prophecy is one concerning the coming of the Messiah. The contemporaries of Jesus were not prepared for His crucifixion instead they expected a literal fulfillment of a conquering Messiah (Isa 11) not a suffering one. So they stumbled over the cross of Christ; meant to be a bridge, it became a barrier to their belief (1 Cor 1:23). Similarly, in the NT the OT promise of land to Abraham takes on new meaning. For Christians the Promised Land is not earthly Palestine but “a better country—a heavenly one” (Heb 11:16; cf. vv. 8-15). Enough continuity exists between the original prophecy and its unexpected fulfillment for reader to recognize their connection.

**Specific principles for interpreting prophesy:**

1. The clarity of the text determines the degree of confidence we may hold in its interpretation. The clearer the text, the greater the certainty about what it means. On the other hand, the more obscure a text, the more humbly and tentatively we must approach its interpretation.

2. The Bible itself offers the best guide to the interpretation of prophecy. It indicates which prophecies were fulfilled during the OT and NT periods and suggests patterns for interpreting OT prophecies today.

3. Seek the most likely time for the fulfillment of a prophecy in history. Here we must apply knowledge of biblical history as well as of the NT’s teaching about the future. The question is, given its nature, when
did/will given prophecies most likely reach fulfillment? In the OT or NT periods? In the future?

4. Unless the NT indicates otherwise, we should relate OT prophecies about Israel and Zion to those whose fulfillment the NT specifically teaches. Again, we follow the pattern that the NT writers set out in their use of the OT. In most cases such prophecies find their fulfillment spiritually in the Church. Those that seem more physical in scope may anticipate literal fulfillment.

5. We should strive to understand a text’s major points rather than all of its symbolic details. Ask, for example, what is the purpose of a prophecy (i.e., to encourage perseverance, to warn of coming accountability, etc.)? Also, what does it say about the nature of God or about Israel’s sin?

6. Longer prophetic books should be read in small sections (i.e., a context of verses, a whole chapter, or several chapters, etc.). God did not intend the prophets to be read through at one sitting. The goal is to understand the major point(s) that each section stresses.

Rule 8: Figures of Speech
Idioms or figures of speech are combinations of words whose meaning cannot be determined by examination of the meanings of the words that make it up. Or, to put it another way, an idiom uses a number of words to represent a single object, person or concept. Unless you recognize when an idiom is being used you can easily misunderstand the meaning of a text. Now we will look at the definitions and examples of various figures of speech.

Figures of comparison

Simile Definition: The likening of one thing to another (usually translated using the English words “like” or “as”).
Example: For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has gone by, or like a watch in the night (Ps 90:4).
“When calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over your like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you.” (Prov 1:27).
Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full or dead men’s bones and everything unclean (Matt 23:27).
His head and hair were white like wool, as white a snow, and His eyes were like burning fire (Rev 1:14).

*Metaphor* Definition: An implied comparison between two objects without the use of “like” or “as”.

But You are a shoulder around me, O Lord; You bestow Your glory on me and lift up my head (Ps 3:3).

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again (Matt 5:13)?

And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy (Col 1:18).

**Idioms of Overstatement**

*Hyperbole* Definition: An exaggeration to make or reinforce a point. Or, a conscious exaggeration for the sake of effect. “Perhaps the most famous (and most misunderstood) hyperbole is found in Matt 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25. “…it is easier for an camel to go through the eye of needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” After all, it is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, and that was precisely Jesus’ point. It is impossible for one who trusts in riches to enter the kingdom. It takes a miracle for a rich person to get saved, which is quite the point of what follows: “All things are possible with God.” Jesus was very found of hyperbole, and used it frequently in His teaching.

If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters yes, even his own life he cannot be My disciple (Lk 14:26).

If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell (Matt 5:29).

*Hendiadys* Definition: The combination of two or three things to express the same meaning.

The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life of whom shall I be afraid (Ps 27:1).

May the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 5:23).
While we wait for the blessed hope the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Idioms of Understatement

**Irony** Definition: Stating one thing while meaning the exact opposite. When used to taunt and ridicule irony is called sarcasm.
Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble (Judges 10:14)!
…And they twisted together a crown of thorns and set it upon His head. They put a staff in His right hand and knelt in front of Him and mocked Him. “Hail, King of the Jews” they said (Matt 27:29). At noon Elijah began to taunt them. “Shout louder!” he said. “Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.” (1Kings 18:27)

**Meiosis** Definition: A phrase that understates or lessens one thing in order to magnify another.
We saw the Nephilim there. We looked like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them (Num 13:33).
Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I Myself will help you, declares the Lord (Isa 41:14).
Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1 Pet 2:10).

**Euphemism** Definition: The substitution of a cultured or less offensive term for a harsh one.
Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain (Gen 4:1).
You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age (Gen 15:15).
After He had said this, He went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up” (John 11:11).

**Antithesis** Definition: Direct opposites.
So, justice is far from us and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows (Isa 59:9).
Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned (Rom 5:12).
But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ (Phil 3:7).

Ellipsis Definition: A grammatically incomplete expression that requires the reader to add concepts in order to finish the thought.
May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and (may the Lord cut off) every boastful tongue (Ps 12:3).
Don’t we have the right to food and drink (1 Cor 9:4)?

Idioms of Association or Relationship
Metonymy Definition: The substitution of a word or idea for one closely associated with it.
He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever (1 Chron 17:12). Here Kingship is replaced by the word “throne”. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Matt 16:19). Here authority is replaced “keys”. Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment (Prov 12:19). Lips and tongues represent the speakers who lie or tell the truth, and suffer the consequences each deserves.

Synecdoche Definition: A figure of speech in which the part stands for the whole or the whole for the part.
He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false (Ps 24:4). Clean hands and a pure heart stands for the whole person
Blessed are you, Simon son Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven (Matt 16:16).

Idioms Stressing the Personal Dimension
Personification Definition: The representation of an object or concept as if it were a person.
Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out, in the gateways of the city she makes her speech (Prov 1:20,21).
A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head (Rev 12:1).

*Apostrophe* Definition: A development of personification in which the writer addresses the object or concept that he has personified.
The mountains of Bashan are majestic mountains; rugged are the mountains of Bashan. Why gaze in envy, O rugged mountains, where the Lord Himself will dwell forever (Ps68:15,16).

“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting” (1Cor 15:55).