

# The Comparative Principle

## Lesson 3

**Intro:** It has been stated that the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. The truth of God's Word is self-contained within its pages. The correct interpretation and application of Scriptural passages is best realized by performing comparative and contrasting studies.

### Goals:

1. To promote the study of passages, topics, words, etc. in light of all that God has said.
2. To discourage the use of single verses or passages in the determination of correct Biblical interpretation.

**Resources:** There are many resources but here are a few to point you in the right direction.

Thompson Chain Reference Bible: \$23.00 Christian Book Distributers.

The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge: \$12.49 CBD

Strong's Concordance: \$13.99 CBD

Nave's Topical Bible: \$14.79 CBD

Vine's Bible Dictionary: \$13.99 CBD

### 1. Using the Bible to Teach the Bible:

#### A. Interpretation

2 Peter 1:20 *"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any \_\_\_\_\_."*

This verse teaches us that there is no declaration of truth separate from the entire message of the Word of God. The revelation of truth concerning any subject in the Bible is inter-woven to form a complete picture.

**B. Self-Consistency:** "The fact that there is in the Bible perfect agreement among the parts that comprise the whole revelation of divine truth." *How to Interpret the Bible*, Floyd Barackman.

- a. "There is, in the Bible, perfect agreement among the parts that comprise the whole revelation of divine truth." Barackman
- b. People who hold an unbiblical view of doctrine often do so because their view is based on only part of what the Bible says about the doctrine, not on ALL that it says.

**C. Applying the Concept:** Barackman lists the following procedures.

1. After studying the passage in its context, list the truths, or topics, of the passage as they are expressed by key words or ideas.
2. See how these topics, expressed by their key words or ideas, occur elsewhere in the Bible and what additional information these passages give about these topics.
  - a. Consult a complete concordance to learn if these topics expressed by key words occur elsewhere.
  - b. Use a topical concordance for references to the ideas that express these themes.
  - c. Look up cross-references
  - d. Study these references in their complete contexts to learn what light they cast on the topics that are mentioned in the passage you are interpreting.
  - e. Decide what facts particularly relate to the topics expressed in the passage being interpreted.

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f. Select the interpretation which best fits the topic and its context.

g. Consider the understanding this selected biblical data gives to the topics in the passage. Be sure that your interpretation is in harmony with its context.

### D. Applying the Rules of Correct Interpretation: John 3:5

Step 1- List the Topics or Truths

a. Find key words or ideas. “\_\_\_\_\_”, “\_\_\_\_\_”, and “\_\_\_\_\_” are the key words.

b. Using a Topical Bible, Strong’s Concordance, Thompson’s Chain Reference Bible, etc. Find scriptures containing these words, dealing with the subject of the new birth.

Step 2- Determine the context of the Scripture.

a. What is the immediate context? \_\_\_\_\_.

b. What is the theme? \_\_\_\_\_.

c. What is the larger context? \_\_\_\_\_.

d. Who is speaking? \_\_\_\_\_.

e. Who is being addressed? \_\_\_\_\_.

f. What is verse 5 an answer to? *“How can a man be \_\_\_\_\_ when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s \_\_\_\_\_, and be born?”*

Step 3- Ask questions concerning the meaning and application of the key words “born”, “water”, and “Spirit.” The question in this verse is what is the meaning of “be born of water” and “Spirit”?

(Circle the correct meaning(s) at the end of our lesson)

a) Do these words refer to water baptism and teach that baptism is necessary for the new birth?

b) Do they speak of natural and spiritual birth?

c) Do they picture the dual work of the Word of God and the Spirit of God?

Step 4- Compare Scriptures on the subject.

a. The following verses of Scripture deal with new birth and show no need for baptism in the new birth. See \_\_\_\_\_, 1 Peter 1:2, 23; 1 John 2:29, 4:7, 5:1, 14, 18. None of these indicate the need for baptism. The question of the need for baptism can now be eliminated.

b. By studying parallel Scriptures we find that the use of the capitalized name “\_\_\_\_\_” refers to the third person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit.

c. Now let us look at the term water. By comparing Scriptures we find several different possibilities.

1) Some teach that if the passage is to be taken literally, then the Lord must be referring to water baptism, except for this one fact we have found, the need of baptism for salvation does not agree with the general teaching of Scriptures. (Acts 10:43, 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9.

2. Others teach that two families are mentioned here. There is an earthly family and a heavenly family. We are born of water into an earthly family and born of the Spirit into a heavenly family.

3) Others teach that the statement “born of water” is talking about John the Baptist’s baptism unto repentance. Repentance and faith are necessary for salvation.

