

# *Hints for the Art of Bible Marking*



## A WORTHWHILE HABIT!

**T**HIS article is designed to highlight the importance of Bible marking and to introduce you to its practical aspects — even though you may have already developed a system of your own. Your Bible is your most precious possession; it represents the Word of God in your hand, and you should daily open your mind to its message. Bible marking is designed, not merely to provide explanations of difficult portions of Scripture, but that the Book as a whole might present a more personal, intimate record, and become a close friend in time of need. It requires effort, toil and attention to detail, to really succeed as a Bible student, and one feels the power of Jeremiah's exhortation, to search for the "secret of Yahweh," to "perceive," "hear," and "mark" His Word (Jer. 23:18). When this is done regularly and diligently, your Bible becomes a unique means of co-operation between the Deity and yourself. Writing your comments in the margin links yourself and the Inspired Word. It speaks to you from its pages, with an intimacy, power and illustration like no unmarked book can!

In fact, as kings in prospect (Rev. 5:9-10), we are to follow that which was urged upon the kings of Israel. Moses commanded: *"It shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear Yahweh his God, to keep all the words of this law, and His statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel"* (Deu. 17:18-20). This was the first duty of the king when ascending the throne. He had to personally write for himself a copy of the law. He could not command his scribes to do it for him; he could not take it from his father's library and use it for himself! It had to be his own work, and he had to continue to read from that copy, so that he might be impressed by its teaching. Thus he would learn to "fear Yahweh," to "obey His laws," to avoid the folly of conceit; and, in so doing, prolong his days in the kingdom.

There is a particular reason, among many others, why the king had to *write* his own Bible. You may have experienced a common phenomenon: that it is actually possible to be reading aloud and, at the very same time, to be thinking of something else. This demonstrates not only the amazing ability of the human brain, but also the danger of failing to concentrate properly on the reading of the Word. But try writing down what you read, while thinking of another matter — it just cannot be done! Soon you would find yourself writing what you are thinking, and not what you are reading.

Thus when the king of Israel *wrote* his copy of the Law, he put himself in a position of greater responsibility than if he had merely read the Law. He would have *had to think* about it at the time of writing — hence the value of Bible



marking is not merely a help to memory, nor merely an enjoyable exercise in spiritual application, but it also fixes such comments in the mind. This is a great benefit when dealing with the eternal things of Truth!

We must be prepared to study the Book, to give our time to its research, that our "profiting may appear to all" (1Tim. 4:15). Thus, as the king was required to write his own copy of the Law, so we will benefit greatly if we are prepared to expend the time and labour involved in properly marking up our Bible.

#### What Kind of Bible is Best?

Because you use it so frequently, you need a good Bible with a binding that will last. An investment in a first-class Bible will pay good dividends both in this life, as well as in preparing for that which is to come (1Tim. 4:8).

A first-class Bible is all the more necessary if you intend to mark it. To do so along the lines we are going to suggest, will occupy some time, but the pleasure and profit that shall result will make it well worth while.

Your Bible should have a reasonable margin around the text, wide enough to take brief notes adequate for the explanation or amplification of any part of the Bible including such difficult books as *Song of Solomon* and the *Revelation*. It should have a sufficiently opaque paper, so as to permit the use of coloured pencils, or a similar means of defining different parts of the text.

Oxford wide-margin Bibles are obtainable from *Logos Publications*, and are particularly recommended. They come in various bindings, and it will pay to obtain a good one that stands up to the hard work any true Bible student will give it. In the *Logos Oxford Wide Margin Bible*, additional

pages of blank sheets are found, enabling you to set out further, more comprehensive notes, or to include various analyses, and background information on sections of the Word.

For your Bible notes use only good quality Indian ink. Ballpoint pens should never be used under any circumstances. Ordinary ink fades, rubs, and sometimes works through a page, making marking of notes difficult to read. We have found *Pelikan brand* Indian ink extremely good. Purchase it in the smallest bottles, as Indian ink has a tendency to dry up if kept too long. You can also obtain from *Logos* a number of different pen systems that have been proven of great value. *Rapidographs* and similar types are helpful, and some are listed at the conclusion of this article. They will enable you to print with a fine, clear line.

Further, using different coloured inks provide variety in your marking. A system that has been used with great success is the following: **Underline** the word or phrase you intend to comment upon in **GREEN** ink, and number it in the same colour, recommencing the numbers at the beginning of every page. Then place the corresponding number in the margin in the same colour. Use **BLACK** for writing your comments in the margin against this green number. **Any**





supporting references add in RED ink.

The variety of colour enables each aspect of your Bible marking to stand out from the other, and is a great aid for quick reference. If only one colour is used, the notes will appear as a solid unbroken mass of writing, and it will become difficult to pick out one comment from another.

It is also helpful to set out a chapter in a series of sub-headings which can be placed in the margin of your Bible at the beginning of your comments on those verses. These sub-headings provide a general outline of the chapter, whilst your verse by verse notes give a more detailed explanation of the actual text of Scripture. Our suggestion is to divide each subsection of the chapter with a line in YELLOW ink, and a corresponding yellow line in the margin at the end of the appropriate section.

Coloured pencils are also a great help. They can be used to identify the same original Hebrew or Greek word, that might be translated by different English words, or to indicate where different original words are translated by the same English word. For example the word "world" in the New Testament, can originate from the following Greek words: *oikoumene*, *ge*, *aion*, or *kosmos*. Each has a different meaning, but this is not indicated in the translation. If each occurrence is indicated in a different colour, a quick recognition is revealed.

Similarly, coloured pencils can highlight important repetitive sections of the text. Take, for example the phrase: "*He that overcometh...*" which appears in each of the Seven Letters of the Apocalypse. Highlighting these in a singular colour brings them instantly to attention.

The same can be said for different

time periods. Genesis 1 can be ideally coloured using the following process: vv. 1-2 in black lead (to indicate darkness); vv. 3-5 leave clear (light); vv. 6-9 in blue (water); vv. 9-13 in green (grass); vv. 14-19 in yellow (sun); vv. 20-23 in red (blood life); vv. 24-31 in brown (mankind), and ch. 2:1-3 in purple (royalty).

You will also find the Song of Solomon is greatly enhanced by this means of distinguishing different speakers. The Song contains the voices of the Bridegroom, Bride, Virgins, Observers, Commentators, and so on. When each voice is coloured to indicate the speaker, the whole book comes alive with significance and meaning. A helpful exposition to use in this regard is *Christadelphian Expositor: Song of Solomon*.

Many other ideas can aid in the pursuance of Bible marking. Should you find additional ideas in your own marking project, we would appreciate the benefit of your suggestions. Alternately, we would be glad to receive enquiries or questions that might assist you in your studies, and such should be addressed to *Bible Marking, Logos Office, Box 220, Findon, South Australia 5023*.

#### A Final Suggestion

Having purchased Bible, ink and pens, where do you start?

It is helpful to set aside a place in your home where you can conveniently put your Bible marking equipment, and have it ready for a quick start every day. Having a clear plastic ruler for underlining, and your inks, blotting paper, and other facilities handy, you will find it easier to progress on your marking project.

You might decide to study a specific book of the Bible — such as Daniel, Revelation, Malachi or Acts of

## A Section from the Prophecy of Haggai

In the left column is the Bible text, whilst personal comments are in the right column. The Bible text is underlined in green, and a number in green placed at the beginning of the text. In the comments column, the reference numbers are in green; explanations are in black; quotations from Scripture are in red, and a yellow line divides the sections. Subheadings can be indicated in capitals, using, perhaps, a green coloured ink.

### CHAPTER 1.

### HAGGAI 1

#### A MESSAGE TO AROUSE — vv. 1-11

#### INTRODUCTION — v. 1

1. In the second year of Darius the king, in the <sup>1</sup>sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the <sup>2</sup>word of the LORD by

<sup>3</sup>Haggai the prophet unto <sup>4</sup>Zerubbabel, the son of

<sup>5</sup>Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to

<sup>6</sup>Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

1. Zechariah commenced to prophesy 2 months later, so that they were contemporaries. **Zech. 1:1.**

2. Thus the message is authoritative. **Isa. 55:11; 2Pet. 1:20; Jer. 20:9; Neh. 9:20.**

3. Signifies "Festival," from *hag*, "a feast." **cp. Exo. 12:14; 13:6.** Related particularly to the Passover, thus signifying a gathering together to rejoice in deliverance. Haggai called the people together for that purpose.

4. Sig. "Shoot of Babylon" indicating that he was born in captivity. In **Ezra 3:2-8; 5:2; Neh. 12:1; Matt. 1:12; Lk. 3:27** he is given as son of Shealtiel, but in **1Chr. 5:19** his father's name is given as Pedaiah. Thought to have been the son of the latter, but adopted by Shealtiel, Pedaiah's brother. **1Chr. 3:17-18.**

5. Sig. "I have asked, or enquired of El" (God). Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel signifies: "The Seed of Promise sown in Babylon." With Joshua he was a type of Christ. **cp. Zech. 3; 8 mg.** He repr. Christ as king, whilst Joshua repr. Christ as priest. He was typical of the Branch shooting forth from the withered stem of Jesse.

6. Sig. "Yahweh shall save for Yahweh hath cleansed." Typical of Christ the saviour.



the Apostles. This is an excellent procedure. If you have a sound comprehension of only one book of the sixty-six books of the Bible, you will at least become a specialist in one phase of the Scriptures, and be surprised how that understanding extends, embracing other sections. As the Bible forms one united whole, this program must play a part in your general appreciation of all other subjects.

Commence your investigations, limiting your comments upon each verse, and phrase or word, until the briefest possible notes are made. At the same time be careful to see that they are not so condensed, that in six months' time you will wonder what the annotation means. Bear in mind that we are writing for the future, and our comments must be sufficiently complete to give us an elucidation or amplification of the verse or word at any time in the future, when we are not specifically engaged upon the study of its content.

In commencing this practice, it is often beneficial to work with a notebook by your side, and to jot down therein the comments you intend to place in your Bible. Let the matter rest for a few days before you go back to your handwritten notes to check if they are sufficiently clear to express and convey the relevant thoughts. Then mark them in your Bible. The few days that elapse between noting them, and transferring them to the Bible, will not only permit you to more thoroughly "masticate" the matter, but, in

addition, determine as to whether your comment is sufficiently clear to be instantly understood in the years to come.

After having become more familiar with the process of Bible marking and your own ability to condense your comments satisfactorily, you might feel free to dispense with your notebook system, and to mark directly into your Bible.

### **Do Not Ignore Helps!**

*Logos* produces a number of Bible verse expositions, under the series of *The Christadelphian Expositor*. These are ideal for supportive use in your Bible marking project, and are set out conveniently in a verse-by-verse exposition. They make it easy to examine the text through brief explanations, so as to put your own conclusions into your Bible — eliminating any points not absolutely essential. Remember, your marginal notes are not to be comprehensive: merely aids to the explanation of the particular words of the verse or phrase. Do not try to cram in too much; only have sufficient to help you in reading or speaking from your Bible notes.



### Be Diligent!

Use determination and persistence in Bible marking. Set aside a regular time each day — 15 minutes, for example. Do not make the scheduled time too long, so that you can easily fit in the period every day without exception. If you commence with too high an ideal (in the matter of the time provided), you might find it impossible to maintain this on some days, and the exercise might cease. But a little each day will allow you to accomplish quite a lot in the course of a year, with pleasure and profit accruing to you.

If you wish to ask any further questions on this matter, do not hesitate to direct your enquiry to the editor of **Logos, Box 220, Findon Road, Kidman Park, South Australia 5023**, and we will gladly assist in any way possible.

### Working with God

Remember, too, that Yahweh has promised His blessing upon such study. James writes: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:5-6).

Therefore, before you open your Bible to study, utter a short, silent prayer that your reading of His precious Word might be blessed. Manifest the same attitude as David who prayed: "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Psa. 119:18). Proverbs tells us: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter" (Pro. 25:2). As kings in prospect (Rev. 5:9-10), it is our honour to search out the

wisdom of God that He has concealed in His Word.

He has promised to help us:

*Good and upright is Yahweh;*

*Therefore will He teach sinners in the way.*

*The meek will He guide in judgment:*

*The meek will He teach His way.*

*The secret of Yahweh is with them that fear Him;*

*He will shew them His covenant.*

— Psalm 25:8-9, 14.

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Inks: For Rotring, Isograph Refillable	
(Colours: Black, Green, Red,	
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(Colours: Black, Red & Blue)	
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