

**LB 103 Biblical Interpretation
(Interpreting Scripture)**



Diploma Level

**Leader's Handbook
Nazarene Theological Institute
Church of the Nazarene
Africa Region**

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Church of the Nazarene - Africa Region

LB 103 Biblical Interpretation (Interpreting Scripture)

Diploma Level
Syllabus

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Description

This course will address the history of biblical interpretation and present how to study and interpret the inspired and authoritative canon of Christian Scriptures. It also looks at various methods of interpretation that allows the Bible to speak to the life and the experience of the church.

Course Rationale

Narration

The work of the Christian minister in the Church of the Nazarene in Africa understands the necessity of presenting the Bible as the Word of God to members of the church, new converts, and to all who seek new life in Jesus Christ. Given the diversity of basic teachings between various branches of Christianity, and the many, and sometimes bizarre, ways of interpreting certain biblical passages, the Christian minister must have a solid base for practicing biblical interpretation.

Each person who reads the Bible also interprets it in one way or another. Throughout the world, wrong interpretations of the Bible have created divisions among Christians and some religious movements and cults have misguided faithful Christian believers from true Christian belief and even from their faith in Christ. The solution to these wrong interpretations will be through the ability to correctly interpret the Bible.

This course will help students to understand the history and principles of Bible interpretation and practice accurate biblical interpretation, within the confines of the limited resources available for Biblical study and interpretation in West Africa.

Program Outcomes

The following program outcomes assigned to this module are identifiable competencies required of the student in this course.

CON 3	Knowledge of the principles of Biblical interpretation
CON 4	Knowledge of the theological foundations for the Christian faith from the Biblical point of view when read from a Wesleyan perspective.
CON 8	Knowledge of the position and teaching of the Church of the Nazarene concerning religious phenomenon
CON 10	Knowledge of the basic theory and art of communication, especially that which concerns preaching and teaching
COM 2	Ability to preach a Biblical sermon that can then be applied to life
COM 4	Ability to teach the Word of God and make disciples that can make other disciples
COM 10	Ability to interpret and apply the Bible according to the best principles of Biblical interpretation
CAR 4	Ability to allow Christ's character to form the attitudes and actions of one's daily life
CAR 9	Ability to engage in continuing formation and education
CXT 3	Ability to understand the principles of cross-cultural ministry
CXT 4	Ability to understand the differences between the worldviews of the Western world, that of Africa, and that of the Bible

Course Outcomes for this module

For achieving the competencies listed above, this module organizes several learning activities and requirements around the following intended learning outcomes for this course†:

1. An attitude ready to receive the Bible as the Word of God. (CAR 4).
2. A knowledge of the development of the canon including the sixty-six books of the Bible. (CON 3).
3. An understanding of biblical texts according to their genre and form. (CON 3, CON 10; COM 10).
4. An understanding of the general content of several books of the Bible. (COM 10; CAR 9).
5. An understanding of the worldview of Biblical authors. (CXT 4).
6. A comprehension of the organization of certain books of the Bible. (CON 10; COM 10).
7. The ability to analyze the arguments and train-of-thought in certain Biblical books, including the questions to which the books respond. (COM 10).

8. Accept with humility that one's study of the Bible is limited, and that one's interpretation will only partially approach the original meaning of the biblical writer. (CAR 4, CAR 9).
9. The ability to transform one's interpretation of a biblical passage into a Bible study or sermon. (CON 10; COM 2).
10. Develop a comprehension regarding biblical interpretive issues that are of significance to the church in Africa today, such as speaking in tongues. (CON 3, CON 8, COM 2, COM 4).
11. The ability to identify the type of literature found in a passage, analyze lexical-grammatical aspects of the passage, and show an understanding of how this literary analysis affects exegesis. (CON 3, CON 4, COM 10)
12. The ability to identify evidences of historical context – author, date, audience, place, etc. – in the biblical books and describe how they shape the meaning of the text. (CON 4, CXT 4)
13. The ability to evaluate and articulate the theological concepts present in a biblical passage (CON 3; CON 4; COM 10)
14. Explain how the inspiration and authority of Scripture relate to Article 4 of the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene. (CON 3)
15. Identify historical traditions of biblical exegesis (COM 10)
16. Ability to move through the process of exegesis of a biblical text to contemporary application in preaching, formation, and Christian education (COM 2, COM 4, COM 10; CXT 3)
17. Recognize the importance for sound hermeneutical method for Wesleyan theology (CON 8, COM 2, COM 10, CXT 4)

The following sessions and exercises of this course offer the following percentages of the four Cs:

Content	35%
Competence	25%
Character	20%
Context	20%.

Course Resources

Required:

1. The Bible, a recognized translation.
2. Student handbook which includes lecture outlines and course exercises.

Recommended:

1. Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth. (En francais: Un Nouveau Regard # la Bible)* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

2. *Interpreting Scripture*. RIIIE course module. Clergy Services. 2002.
3. Truesdale, Lyons, and Eby, *Dictionary of the Bible and Christian Doctrine in Everyday English*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1986.

Course Requirements

1. Regular attendance to all course sessions and preparation of all assignments prior to their deadlines. A student that misses eight hours of class sessions will have a reduced final mark by 25%. If the student misses two full days of class, they will not be able to pass the course. The means of measuring attendance may be adjusted according to the needs of the teacher or the local class environment.

2. The student will complete exercises found in the student handout. Certain exercises will be completed individually while others will be conducted in small groups (course outcomes 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17)—15% of the final grade.

3. Participation in the class individually and in groups will be emphasized, employing personal observations and insights learned in the class or through outside ministry and life opportunities (course outcomes 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17)—12% of the final grade.

4. The student will memorize the steps of the inductive method and will recite them to the instructor or her designated assistant. These include the three main steps of Observation, Interpretation, and Application. Under the main step of Interpretation, there should also be memorized the following analyses in order: historical-cultural, contextual, literary, theological, biblical, and summary of meaning for its original audience (course outcome 17)—15% of final grade.

5. In small groups, the students will move through these steps for a selected passage of Scripture together, after which each student will compose a short written report. (course outcomes 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17)—7% of final grade for each report X 4 reports = 28% of final grade.

6. On the last day of class, the student will present the historical meaning of the biblical passage used for the inductive study, then present an application of that passage for preaching or teaching today. (course outcomes 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17).—15% of final grade.

7. The student will take a final exam that covers the course materials (course outcomes 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17) —15% of final grade.

The above percentages may be adjusted to meet the needs of the individual teacher and of the local class. The course requirements will be modified for those taking the course at the Certificate Level in order to demonstrate understanding of the materials without undue reliance upon written assignments and textbook completion.

Course Evaluation

	Percentage	Points
Class Participation	12%	120
Handbook Exercises	15%	150
Inductive Method Memorization	15%	150
Small Group Written Exegesis Reports (4 reports X 7% each)	28%	280
Presentation on Application For preaching/teaching	15%	150
Final Exam	15%	150
Total for course:	100%	1000 points

Course Schedule

This course meets as an intensive for a duration of five days with the final exam taking place the morning of day six. The student should complete Requirements No. 2 and No. 3 prior to the first day of the course. All other assignments and responsibilities will be conducted during the course. Requirement No. 5 may be completed before the first day of the course if the student chooses to do so.

The topics for each session (not necessarily in order) are as follows:

- Session 1: Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction
- Session 2: Introduction, continued: Basic Principles for the Interpretation of Scripture
- Session 3: The History of Biblical Interpretation
- Session 4: History continued: Modern Approaches to Biblical Interpretation
- Session 5: Useful Bible Tools and Aids
- Session 6: Inductive Bible Study: Historical-Cultural Analysis
- Session 7: IBS: Contextual Analysis
- Session 8: IBS: Literary Analysis of Genres
- Session 9: IBS: Literary Analysis of Special Literary Forms
- Session 10: IBS: Literary Analysis: Lexical-Syntactical Considerations
- Session 11: IBS: Theological and Biblical Analysis
- Session 12: Application of the Bible to Present Day Issues
- Session 13: The Historical Development of the Canon
- Final Exam

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION WORKS CITED

Compiled by Dr. Mary Spaulding

List of Abbreviations

BBC-OT Walton

BBC-NT Keener: *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*

ISBE Bromiley

Keener *The Gospel of John*

NBC Wenham: *New Bible Commentary*

NIDNTT Verbrugge

NIDOTTE Van Gemeren

Arnold, Bill T. *Encountering the Book of Genesis*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.

Beasley-Murray, George R. *John*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987.

Bromiley, Geoffrey W., ed. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.

Bruce, F. F. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977.

Coloe, Mary L. *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001.

Elwell, Walter A., and Robert W. Yarbrough. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998.

Feinberg, Charles L. "Jeremiah." Vol. 6 (Isaiah-Ezekiel) of *Expositor's Bible Commentary*. General editor Frank E. Gaebelin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.

Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. 2 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003.

Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

LaSor, William Sanford, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic William Bush. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.

Moloney, Francis J. *The Gospel of John*. Sacra Pagina. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998.

- Roncace, Mark, and Patrick Gray, eds. *Teaching the Bible: Practical Strategies for Classroom Instruction*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.
- Van Gemeren, Willem A., ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Vaughan, Curtis. "Colossians." Vol. 11 (Ephesians-Philemon) of *Expositor's Bible Commentary*. General editor Frank E. Gaebelin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- Verbrugge, Verlyn D., ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology: Abridged Edition*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Walton, John H., Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 1-15*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987.
- Wenham, G. J., J. A. Motyer, D. A. Carson, R. T. France, eds. *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*. Downer's Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994.
- Zucker, David J. *Israel's Prophets: An Introduction for Christians and Jews*. New York: Paulist Press, 1994.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION A NOTE TO THE INSTRUCTOR

I thank you for your interest in this module of instruction and pray that it will be of benefit to you and your students. May God be glorified through your efforts!

You will find the following documents of help to you:

- Syllabus – this syllabus is designed for the West African field and will need to be adjusted for other areas of Africa when used elsewhere
- Course lectures – the lectures are presented in full, with examples and side comments specified in red. Green exercise titles placed in the lecture notes give indication as to where the exercises will be most effectively used.*
- Lecture outlines – this will provide outlines on all the lectures for the students so that the major points and ideas are already printed out for them (found in the student handbook)
- Exercises – this is the set that you will give to each student so that each student has his/her own copy (found in the student handbook)
- Exercise Answers – this set of the exercises has the answers designated for the instructor. Usually the answers are marked in red but when two colors are needed, then the second color is blue.*
- Inductive Bible Study (IBS) – this is the outline for the process that each student should use in order to study a particular passage of scripture.
- Final examination based upon the lecture material; Final Exam Answer key for the exam is also provided. There is a Final Exam Study Guide included to help the students prepare for the final exam.
- Two Charts: "Circles of Context" to be drawn on the board by the instructor in conjunction with the lecture *Introduction: Basic Keys for the Interpretation of Scripture*, and "OT Canon" which is found in both the student and leader handbook for the lecture *The Development of the Canon*.
- Appendix with student resources for the "Concordance and Dictionary Worksheet," and for the 4 scripture passage analysis reports. Also contains "Digging Deeper," optional enrichment activities for further study or extra credit. The course leader will need to copy these resources for students as they are not contained in the student guide.

Every student should receive the course handbook (composed of the Syllabus, Lecture Outlines, Exercises and Inductive Bible Study) This course is presently set up to fit a five-day intensive format, with the final exam taking place after the end of the fifth day of classroom work. The following lecture schedule may be used.

Day One: Introduction/History of Interpretation/Historical-Cultural Analysis.

Day Two: Bible Aids/Contextual Analysis/Literary: Genres/Literary: Special Forms if time.

Day Three: Literary: Special Forms continued/Literary: Lexical-Syntactical/begin Theological Analysis if time.

Day Four: Theological and Biblical Analysis/Application.

Day Five: Canon Development

During the first day of class, you will need to assign a passage of scripture to groups of around 3-6 individuals. In the Appendix, at the back of the teacher's handbook, entitled "Inductive Bible Study Resources" are 4 sections of materials based on 4 different passages. These contain the resource materials that will allow a full study of the 4 passages. (A copy of the materials should be made available to each group for "in-class" use. Note that each group will study and receive materials for only one of the passages which they will analyze throughout the week. The passages are:

Genesis 11:1-9

John 4:4-30

Colossians 2:6-15

Jeremiah 7:1-15

I chose Genesis for its insights regarding humanity's desire to usurp God's authority and position by attempting to build their own tower to heaven in order to make a name for themselves through their own efforts (How do we try to build our own monuments and gain recognition under our own power apart from God?). The Gospel of John deals with the issue of how Jesus crossed multiple boundaries/barriers in order to touch the life of a single Samaritan woman (an example for all Christians to follow today). Colossians deals with the confusion of syncretism when other powers and authorities are wrongly given equal or greater importance than God in our lives (ancestor worship, witch doctors, demons, etc.). Jeremiah deals with the many sins of a people who think, by worshipping the right God in the right location, they can avoid punishment from that God for their sins. These sins cover many that we encounter among Christians today: not practicing justice for all, oppressing the foreigner/the orphan/the widow, shedding innocent blood, stealing, adultery, lying, and following after other gods (idols, wealth, power, etc.). You may decide to use different passages but then it will be important to have resources available for those passages on the interpretive steps of historical-cultural, contextual, literary, and theological analysis. I would recommend the following resources, though there are many others that are excellent as well:

For historical-cultural analysis:

- Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*.
- Walton, John H., Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*.
- Wood, D.R. W., I. Howard Marshall, et al, eds. *New Bible Dictionary*.

For literary/word studies:

- Exhaustive concordance(s) based on the Bible translation(s) used most commonly by your students (i.e., Goodrick-Kohlenberger for NIV, Strong's for KJV or NASB)
- Verbrugge, Verlyn D., ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*.

For secondary sources/commentaries:

- Wenham, G. J., et al, eds. *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*.
- A multi-volume commentary set can also be very helpful, though very old ones may not have as accurate information as more recent publications

As each lecture is given on the specific steps in Interpretation (historical-cultural, contextual, literary, theological, biblical, outside sources, and summary), the students should be given time to study those aspects of their passage as outlined in the Inductive Bible Study (IBS) by using the appropriate library resources. This course should always be taught with the help of Bible dictionaries/encyclopedias, commentaries, lexicons/word dictionaries, Bible survey books, etc. such as those listed above.* Otherwise we are only perpetrating our personal biases and perspectives, not learning how to research and gain biblical understanding from other Christians and scholars from around the world.

After each kind of analysis is presented by the instructor and studied in the passage by the students using the IBS outline, the Diploma students need to prepare and submit individual written reports of their analysis for credit. Because of time limitations, the following analyses should be covered in these written assignments (one per day for four days): historical-cultural, contextual, literary, theological. You may choose which of the IBS questions under each of those categories you will want the students to complete for their daily writing assignments so that there is sufficient time in class for them to conduct each study. In this way, all the students will become familiar with how to analyze a passage from these various perspectives.

Then the students should be given time on the final (fifth) day of class to present to the class the summary of meaning of their passage for the audience at the time it was written, followed by an application for today to a particular group of people, whether a congregation, a classroom of students, a youth group, a children's program, etc. In order to prepare the students properly for this final presentation, you will want to have given the lecture on Application by the end of the fourth day of class.

As you lecture to the students, please add personal examples and stories to explain and enliven the material in the lectures. You may rearrange the order of the lectures depending upon your class schedule but be aware that certain items may not make sense when taken out of order. I have placed the first lecture on Interpretation (Historical-Cultural Analysis) before the lecture on Useful Bible Tools and Aids because I wanted to give the students the opportunity to perform their first analysis of a passage

by the end of the first day of class. There would not have been time to do so if I had tried to present the Useful Bible Tools lecture before the Historical-Cultural lecture, even though it would be ideal to discuss Bible Tools before performing the first analysis. A different course timeline might allow for a different sequence of lectures.

You will probably not have enough time to complete all the exercises with your class unless you have greater than 40 hours to devote to classroom time. Therefore, reviewing the exercises in advance and deciding which ones you feel will be most effective will help you eliminate exercises that you will not have time to complete. Try to do many of the exercises in groups rather than as individual assignments since that will help develop camaraderie and community among the students. I would recommend mixing up the groups in size and constituency periodically so that everyone has the opportunity to get to know each other.

Also, it would be helpful to the students if you personally review the Final Exam in advance of the course so that you can help to emphasize some of the test points/ideas as you teach those points/ideas to them (without giving them the actual test questions in advance, of course). Going through the Final Exam Study Guide in class with everyone on the last day will help the students know what to study for the exam as well. It is supposed to be a closed book/outline/note exam.

As you teach this course, please pass on corrections and suggestions for improvement to your church superiors so that they may relay the information to me. I will keep track of necessary changes and make periodic updates as needed.

I pray that this course will aid every student to understand better the divine message placed in our holy scriptures by our Lord. May God be exalted and praised as a result of these efforts – to Him be the glory forever and ever!

Rev. Dr. Mary Spaulding

**Editor's note - In the original lecture notes a red font, as well as blue and green, were used to indicate examples, exercises answers, etc. As color cannot be used for printing, at this time, the original notations were preserved by using the font illustrated in this note. Where blue or green were used within the red font, I have used this bold type.*

*Additionally, because we are currently in the process of building our library resources and do not yet have many of the above mentioned commentaries and dictionaries, a few pages of Inductive Bible Study Resources will also be included at the back of the teacher handbook for teachers to copy and give to the students to complete the historical-cultural, contextual, literary and theological analysis during class.

LIST OF DEFINITIONS

Hermeneutics - the study of the methodological principles of interpretation of the Bible.

Exegesis – an explanation or critical interpretation of a text, based upon what is present within the text itself.

Eisegesis – an explanation or interpretation of a text, based upon what we bring to the text ourselves.

From a Plymouth Brethren elder in Ireland: "Wonderful things in the Bible I see, most of them put there by you and me."

Two abbreviations used frequently: OT = Old Testament; NT = New Testament

OUR GOAL AND PURPOSE

Our goal in hermeneutics is to determine as accurately as possible the historical meaning of a text, the meaning that the text's author or final editor meant to communicate to his intended audience.

Ultimately we want to discern God's message accurately, avoid or dispel misconceptions or erroneous perspectives and conclusions about the Bible, and be able to accurately apply the Bible's message to our lives. We accomplish this through the following:

BASIC STEPS FOR STUDYING THE BIBLE

- Observation – looking at the facts contained in the passage and what is happening.
- Interpretation – studying the text to determine the author's meaning and purpose.
- Application – discovering the relevance of this passage for contemporary faith and life.

Exegesis consists of the above observation and interpretation, while hermeneutics usually includes application as well in its definition. This is our definition. Fee and Stuart use the term hermeneutics to specify only the modern relevance and application of the Bible.

Lecture: INTRODUCTION

Though these ancient documents are at least 2000 years old, the Bible has affected the entire world and continues to exert its influence daily in its power and authority over all humanity. If there is anything good about Western Society, it is because of the influence of the words of Scripture upon civilization. In England and America, it was Scripture that convicted people like William Wilberforce that slavery needed to be ended for all time. But biblical influence is not just ethical or moral. Judeo-Christian worldview in which God's creation is historical and understandable through natural laws is the ground for modern science, not possible in Eastern cultures where life is viewed as repeating cycles which one cannot escape or change. A deep desire to uplift all peoples through education and social improvements is basic to Christian beliefs and has changed the face of the entire world for the better through schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc. The Bible is foundational to Western cultural literacy, and is significant for the life of our minds as well as our souls. Finally, in a bewildering world of quickening societal changes, political complexity, and moral confusion, the Bible brings meaning, reality, and truth. The Spirit uses these words to shed light and life into stone-cold hearts, that they may become alive.

WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS STUDY THE BIBLE?

There are two important answers to this basic question.

1) God wants us to come to know Him and to grow in that knowledge.

He is the living Word behind the written word, and the authority and perfection lies in the Living Word behind the written one. And the connection between the two is the Holy Spirit. He is the one who convicts and informs through the written Word, who has preserved it over the centuries as holy writ, and ascertained that the correct books were included in the canon. He is the one who inspired the original writers and illumines us today with their record. Our purpose in seeking the written Word should always be our desire to know the Living Word better. Praise be to God for His indescribable gift!

2) God wants to change our lives through His Word. D.L. Moody, said, "Scriptures were not given for our information, but for our transformation." 2 Tim 3:16 states: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; **for what reason?** so that the man of God may be adequate (complete, capable, proficient, able to meet all demands), equipped for every good work."

WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR THIS TO TAKE PLACE?

Observation and **Interpretation** are vital steps to stripping away the subjective aspects of what we are doing when we study the Bible. The majority of this course's instruction will concern observation and interpretation, since application is more individualized for persons and for cultures. I cannot tell you how God will apply what you have learned about His word into your life or even into your culture. Only the Spirit knows that, as He is the one doing the application. We will discuss application further at the end of our week, but right now I want to mention one important aspect of application, if we are to acquire this knowledge of God and this change in our lives.

Obedience is that necessary element. We cannot get to know the word of God or God Himself if we are not willing to be obedient to His word. We cannot have our lives changed if we are not willing to apply Scripture to our lives through our obedience. Isn't that true? As John Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, so rightly stated, "**All true knowledge of God is born out of obedience.**"

WHY DO WE NEED TO STUDY THE BIBLE? (not just read it)

All Christians should be reading the Bible for devotional purposes and for personal application. For many Christians, all that they need to know is that Christ died for them and they love God. They don't need to study Scripture more deeply. But the scriptural message is not always clear and we ALWAYS bring our own pre-understandings to the text. As leaders of other Christians, we are held to a higher accountability. James 3:1 is very clear about that: "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment." If we do no further study of Scripture, we can't differentiate between our own preconceived beliefs and those of the writer, we can't explore the text to answer questions that it raises, and we may come to wrong conclusions about what the text is saying. Let's talk about these three issues (of why we need to STUDY the Bible) further—

- **Preconceptions.** We all stand in danger of seeing in the Bible only those things our prior experiences or convictions dispose us to see. While it is good and necessary to approach any book with convictions and **preconceptions**, it is dangerous for those convictions to suppress and hinder the text's **message** to us. We cannot learn what God is trying to teach us if we simply read into it the prejudices we already have. Our openness to hearing a new message and obtaining a new understanding of the Bible will make true learning possible at the feet of our Savior.

"We need to repent of the haughty way in which we sometimes stand in judgment upon Scripture and must learn to sit humbly under its judgment instead. If we come to Scripture with our minds made up, expecting to hear from it only an echo of our own thoughts and never the thunderclap of God's, then indeed he will not speak to us and we shall only be confirmed in our own prejudices. We must allow the Word of God to confront us, to disturb our security, to undermine our complacency and to overthrow our

patterns of thought and behaviour.” –John Stott, in Authentic Christianity as quoted in “Christianity Today”: September 6, 1999

- **Proper dependence on the Holy Spirit.** A related danger is the notion that because the Spirit is active in our lives, He will somehow fill us with knowledge about the Bible without our having to work at mastering it ourselves. When the text presents us with something with which we are unfamiliar, we may pass over it without understanding its importance or we may assume we know what it means when in fact we are wrong. Spiritual **illumination does not provide data, factual information, or an automatically correct understanding of the meaning** of the passage. The ministry of the Spirit cannot replace careful analysis or sound exegesis, but He does assure us that in conjunction with such diligence, the believer can better comprehend the significance, scope, and veracity of the Bible. God does not normally reveal new information about a passage directly to us, but will bless our human efforts to understand what the passage is saying. *An example would be if we don't know what a denarius is when Jesus says "show me a denarius. What likeness and inscription does it have?" When we read this in Lk 20:24, God doesn't whisper in our ear it's a coin worth a day's wage with Caesar's picture on it - we need to look it up or ask someone! Then the reference to rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar makes more sense.*

Yet the full purpose of the Bible can only be realized by the work of the Spirit. Given the spiritual nature of the Bible, only a spiritual interpreter can accurately interpret its contents since it holds spiritual truths (1 Cor 2:15f). The Spirit will use your hard work and effort to learn more about the Scriptures in order to grow you in your understanding and implementation of God's truths.

- **Historical-cultural information.** Another important reason to *study* the Bible is that such study provides the historical-cultural dimension by which we can better comprehend the Bible's theology and application for our lives. The words of God come to us in earthly dress and through human agents. People living at a particular time, in a particular place, surrounded by a particular culture were chosen by God to transmit His message, and they did so without God removing them from their surroundings, because their message needed to be understood by the people of their time. Elements of geography, political and military history, literature, and languages are important to our understanding of Scripture. **Grasping the Bible's redemptive message to people *then* as a means of receiving and sharing its message *now*** is probably the most fruitful way of approaching the Bible that we can attempt.

- And perhaps most importantly, we need to *study* the Bible because the **Bible itself admonishes us to seek the knowledge of God**, and that the knowledge may in fact one of the foundations of our security in Christ: 2 Pet 3:17-18: *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* Col 1:9-10: *Paul prays that the Colossians would be "growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power...so that you may have great endurance and patience..."* Proverbs 2:1-5: *"My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God."* 2 Tim 2:15: *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.* 2 Tim 3:16-17 : *"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 (thoroughly equipped), equipped for every good work."*

So we can see there are very good reasons for **STUDYING** Scripture, not just reading it for its immediate personal message. Now, once you have completed this course you will not automatically be an expert in biblical interpretation. I am like a **coach helping to train a team** of runners. I don't teach you how to run (you are all interpreting Scripture every day that you read it!) but I teach you how to run better. So hopefully this course will sharpen your skills as an interpreter and give you the tools to continue to grow in your knowledge and love of Scripture. It is always a journey – the more years you spend studying Scripture well, the deeper will be your study and the more rewarding the work.

Let's see how we compare in our Bible knowledge to some other Christian folk around America. *Have students fill out "The Greatest Story Never Told" in the exercise section of the student handbook and, afterwards, explain percentages.*

BASIC KEYS or PRINCIPLES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

The following are keys to interpretation for the body of Christ. Do these matter? Sometimes for individuals, no. But sometimes hundreds of thousands of people are led astray if these keys to interpretation are not followed, such as by the cults. Sometimes not following these guidelines can rob individual Christians of their great joy and reward. So, yes, these keys are very important!

Look for the author's intended meaning as conveyed by the text. He had an original meaning in mind when he first spoke or wrote the words, and we should not be imposing our own meaning on the text without first determining what the original author meant. The more we know about the author, his audience, and the background of the passage, the better we will be able to determine the passage's meaning for the original author. A basic principle of hermeneutics (the science of interpretation) is that **a passage cannot mean what it could never have meant.** (at the original time of its writing – its original context gives it its true meaning- though God may also have further meaning in it for future generations).

Consider historical customs and culture of time. The Bible was written at a time far distant from ours and in cultures quite strange to us. As we read it, we need to be trying to read the writing through the eyes of those who would have been its first readers, but we can only do that as we know something about their times and their customs. *As an example, is Paul advocating for slavery when he says to obey one's master in Eph 6:5 and Col 3:22? No, but it was so prevalent (estimates are that 85-90% of all Rome and Italy's population were slaves or of slave origin) in the society and his purpose was to change individual hearts and small groups of people in order to affect society, not change all of society with more laws so as to affect individual behaviors.*

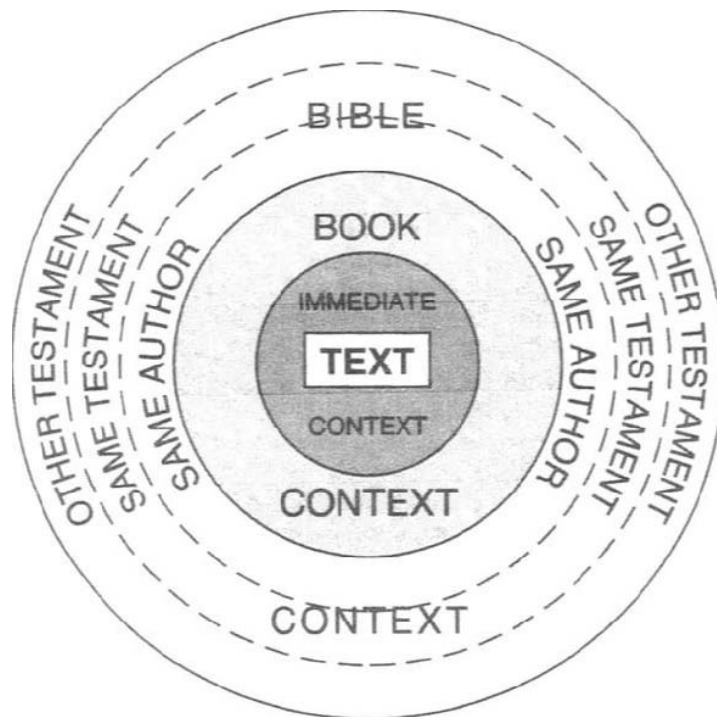
There are several **gulfs or gaps** present between ourselves and the Bible texts. The people of the Bible lived in a time far distant than ours (historical gulf), their culture and society was quite different than ours (cultural and social gulfs), their language had different structures and idioms than our own (linguistic), they looked at life and the world differently than we may (philosophical), they inhabited a different region of the world than do we (geographic). Many of these gaps are also present here today between you and me. We cannot remove ourselves from our own backgrounds; we can only become more aware of our own preconceptions and worldview as well as learn more about the other person's preconceptions and worldview.

An example: We could not fully understand the story of Zaccheus in Lk 19, if we do not understand how the Jews of Jesus' time felt about tax-collectors.

Read a passage in context. When we read little bits and pieces of Scripture, we must exercise great caution. As an example, we would do well to carefully consider 1Cor 7:27 “are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife.” Without understanding Paul’s advise in v. 9 and 28, as well as the general hope of the time for Christ’s immediate return, we might conclude that the Bible commands celibacy, which it does not.

How do we learn to read in context? Avoid reading only small sections and individual verses, but read instead by chapters or whole books. Look at other parts of the Bible to explain and inform the passage you are studying. Is my interpretation consistent with the theme, purpose and structure of the book in which it is found and with other Scriptures about the same subject? *Present the “Circles of Context” chart on the following page, going from text (at center) to immediate context of the surrounding verses before and after the text itself (next circle) to book context (next circle) to same author but other books by him (next circle) to same testament (next circle) to other testament (outer most circle). Then give an example, such as text = Gospel of John ch. 5 / chs. 4 and 6 / all of Gospel of John / other books by same author such as 1, 2, 3 John / NT / OT (whole Bible).*

Circles of Context



Klien, W.C. Bloomberg, and R. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word, 1993. Page 162.

The MOST important context is the immediate context of the passage itself.

That determines most directly how a word or idea in the passage is being used by the author. **The rule of context is that context rules!** Never take a Scripture out of its context to make it say something that is contrary to the text, even if it is in order to bless someone, or comfort them in a time of grief, etc. Also, understanding the different types of passages helps here, as certain types of literature can indeed be safely read in small sections, such as Proverbs. This brings us to the next point.

Identify the type of literature in the passage you are reading. The Bible is a fascinating collection of various types of literature. We encounter history, poetry, prophecy, proverb, gospel, parable, epistle, and apocalypse. Knowing the type of literature you are reading is essential to understanding it. Different types evoke different expectations and interpretive strategies. An entire book of the Bible can be misinterpreted if this is not understood correctly. *An example would be the Song of Songs (or Solomon).* It was interpreted as allegory of the relationship between Jesus and the church for centuries. Most people today would say that the Song is a love poem, however. Of course, since human love reflects Christ's love for the church, the older interpreters were not entirely wrong. They just missed the most obvious meaning of the text because they refused to see it as love poetry.

Another example is Proverbs. These sayings are based on creation wisdom and general revelation, available to all peoples (that is why similar sayings have been found within other Ancient Near East sources). They tell us what is common sense, rather than what is directly commanded or promised by God, though our biblical proverbs always have God in the background and the knowledge of God as basic to their wisdom. We will study this aspect of Proverbs in greater detail later.

Interpret experience in the light of Scripture, not Scripture in the light of experience. All too often, we distort Scripture by allowing our experience to shape our understanding of Scripture rather than the other way around. We may do this in a number of ways. We may let experience dictate our interpretation by **imposing our desires upon it**. We may go to Scripture looking for what we want to find. We may take a passage out of context in order to support our desire, ignoring what else is said in the rest of Scripture on that subject. *As an example,* if we are uncomfortable sharing our faith with others, we might excuse ourselves by reasoning that if God is love (1 Jn 4:8), then He can't possibly condemn people to hell. (Of course the more accurate understanding is that God's love is a *holy* love that abhors evil and sin.) We can distort Scripture in a mighty way in our attempts to make it say what we want it to say.

Another way experience can warp our interpretation is **through our own cultural/political backgrounds**. If we are seeking freedom for the poor, there are plenty of passages that indicate Jesus' care for the poor, which can be used to promote

our own agenda. But do we then take those passages and preach that we are to fight (literally, with guns and wars) to bring freedom for the poor? The freedom of Jesus is of quite a different sort, isn't it? When we pick and choose passages to support our view, we are **proof texting**.

Always seek the full counsel of Scripture. We should not read a passage of Scripture in isolation from the whole Bible. God is the ultimate Author of the whole, and there will be nothing found within its pages which will be confusing in regard to our salvation, if we look at its whole counsel. This is particularly helpful if we follow these guidelines: *a)* We should avoid basing doctrine or moral teaching of Scripture on an **obscure passage**. The most important ideas of the Bible are stated more than once and often in very clear and concise ways. *Example:* 1 Cor 15:29 "What will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?" Mormons base a major doctrine of their church (baptism for the dead) on this obscure passage. *b)* If one passage seems to be teaching one thing but another passage seems to be contradicting it, we must understand the unclear passage by using **the clear passage** to interpret the unclear. *c)* Also, we should understand the OT in light of the events and teachings of the NT since the **NT brings us further revelation** and clarification. *d)* It is best if we can study the themes and important concepts that run throughout the Bible, for then we will be better able to pick them up in individual passages.

If finally we are unsure about our interpretation, we should check our particular understanding and application with other mature Christians and authority figures whom God has placed around us. *Can you name some of these other authority figures he has placed around us? (spouse, extended family, church, pastor, etc.)* God has given us a **community** so that we do not have to be lone interpreters of Scripture. Often **church tradition** has spent years wrestling with an issue so that we can now live by and apply that issue to our lives. We should be wary of anything in our own study that no one else has ever seen or understood before, since God is not likely to blind seeking people for 2000 years only to reveal it now to you. Too many pastors will stumble upon an interesting "new" idea and make it into a sermon before they check other scholars, only to find later (if they are honest with themselves) that they have misled those whom God has placed in their care.

An example of how a lone interpretation can be an incorrect one was the case of a woman who read Mt 19:29 "everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children for my name's sake, shall receive many times as much and shall inherit eternal life." She became convinced God was saying she should leave her large family of young children who were dependent upon her. She refused to listen to the Bible concerning responsibility to one's dependents (1 Tim 5:4, 8) and she refused to listen to other authority figures such as her husband, pastor, friends, etc. who tried to

correct her false interpretation. She left her family and never returned. How sad! We are not to believe every spirit, but are admonished to test the spirits in various ways in order to ascertain whether they are from God (1 Jn 4:1).

Yet we are to retain the **Bible as final authority**, should the other authority figures in our lives disagree or hold an incorrect viewpoint, as might a non-Christian spouse.

Remember that nothing we think we are hearing from the Spirit of God will directly contradict the written Word of God.

Three Aspects to Studying a Text

Let me explain a little further how we can begin to have a clearer view of the overall context of a writing, and also make our best attempts to be as objective as possible with that text.

There are three aspects to studying a text (any text) of which we need to be aware:

make a drawing of an open book, then label to the left of the book "behind the text", label inside of the book "the text itself", and to the right of the book label "in front of the text."

Behind the Text

- Geography of the location of the text
- History of the people and/or the land – may not be in the text itself, but will certainly influence the text
- History of the text itself – when was it written, over how many years, by whom
- Culture of the people
- Language of the people – which then must be interpreted into our own language

The Text Itself

Various functions of the text itself include:

1. historical – information on the history found in the text
2. ideological = theological in Bible. Why was this written? What is its point about God, humans, salvation, etc.?
3. aesthetic – artistic value in the beauty of the elements. *Read John 1:1-5 as an example.* God is a creative God and has made us so that we enjoy creativity

These three functions are like three overlapping circles. Depending on which book of Bible we are looking at, one circle may enlarge while another may get smaller. *Give example of these two:*

Kings – biggest circle on history, 2nd sized circle ideological, and 3rd aesthetic
Psalms – biggest aesthetic, 2nd ideological, 3rd historical

In Front of the Text

- All the interpretations and church tradition on the meaning of the passage that have accumulated since the text was written
- My own reading of the text – influenced by my background:

What are some of these influences?

Race
Gender
Culture
Morals
Faith
Doctrine of the church I attend
Economics
Family history

Particular church, Sunday school, previous preaching and teaching

These are called **pre-understandings**, the body of assumptions and attitudes which a person brings to the perception and interpretation of reality.

*Let's do a little practical listing of some of those influences in our lives. **Then have students perform the group exercise on PERSPECTIVES.***

The more that we are aware of our own subjectivity, the better we are at taking it into account and lessening its affect on our reading of the Bible. We cannot remove ourselves from who we are. But we can be as conscious of this aspect as possible. What we are ultimately seeking: that we allow the Bible to question us rather than visa versa. This results in what scholars call the **hermeneutical spiral**. Our preunderstandings/presuppositions and intellectual background/learning are brought to the Bible; the Holy Spirit uses the Bible to critique those preconceptions – affirm the right ones, throw out the wrong ones; we are then in a new position (hopefully moving up towards God) to again approach the Bible; and so on. *Draw Hermeneutical Spiral presented on p. 114 of Klein. Draw a person to the left, a Bible to the right, then draw a curving line going from person to Bible, back to person, back to Bible, ever moving upward towards God at the top of the drawing.* We remain open to correction by the Bible's message because we accept the Bible's authority in our lives. We all have presuppositions and that is OK. But it is important that we allow them to inform but not control our investigation. We want the truth, not just our presuppositions, to surface as we study Scripture and the Holy Spirit helps if we are but willing and open to Him.

Lecture: HISTORY OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Why is it important to study how others have interpreted the Bible in the past? **First**, what we discover is that our view is not the only view. So we overcome the temptation to believe that our system of interpretation is the **only** system that has ever existed or the **only** system that makes any sense. **Second**, we discover that many of the modern day approaches to Scripture are based upon methods used for centuries, even millennia, so we see that our present system has a very long history supporting it. **Third**, we observe the mistakes of those who have preceded us and therefore can be aware of possible dangers with our own form of interpretation. Santayana said: "He who doesn't learn from history is bound to repeat it." This statement is applicable to many fields of study, including this one. **Fourth**, we discover that many great Christians understood and taught better hermeneutical principles than they practiced. That reminds us that just knowing a principle does not mean that we are using it properly. **Fifth**, we become more aware that popular forms of exegesis are often the result of historical-cultural happenings of the time – this is true for our time period as well as all who have preceded us.

Ancient Jewish exegesis

Remember that it was not until after the exile that we can be sure there was at least part of the written OT. This is when we first see true interpretation and application taking place directly from the text. On their return from Babylonian exile, people requested Ezra read from the Torah. While Ezra read, other leaders explained the law to the people. Neh 8:8: "and they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they (the people) understood the meaning." It appears that the Israelites had lost their understanding of Hebrew during the exilic period and Aramaic was becoming the common language of the people. So Ezra and his helpers translated the Hebrew text and read it aloud in Aramaic, then added explanations to make the meaning clear. Sounds just like what we do today, doesn't it? That's hermeneutics! This oral interpretive practice among Jews continued for centuries, later to be written down as the Jewish Targums.

Those who followed Ezra took great care to copy Scripture accurately, with a profound reverence for the text. This meant that for any particular version of the OT, it was being copied accurately from one generation to the next – a great advantage to us today. But it also happened that since they saw the Scripture to be from God, they felt that there must be numerous meanings in a given text and that every incidental detail possessed significance, to the extent that every word and even letter of each word could hold hidden meanings.

Various forms of Jewish interpretation are found at the time of Christ, with great emphasis on rabbinic interpretive tradition, the most common being:

Literal or peshat, served as basis of other forms. The plain sense of a passage could sometimes become quite wooden in its interpretation. *Example - Dt 21:18-21 legislated legal recourse for Israelite parents with a rebellious son. Literal peshat would define further than Scripture the circumstances under which an accused son could escape condemnation: If either of them (son's parents) was maimed in the hand or lame or dumb or blind or deaf, he cannot be condemned as a stubborn and rebellious son, for it is written **Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him** - so they were not maimed in the hand; **and bring him out** - so they were not lame, **and they shall say** - so they are not dumb; **this is our son** - so they are not blind, **he will not obey our voice** - so they were not deaf.*

Midrashic - a form of exegesis in which one text is supported/supplemented by other texts to explain a further meaning. This was used frequently and could be very helpful in employing Scripture to explain Scripture, but sometimes Jewish scholars ignored context and combined texts that contained similar words or phrases even if they were referring to entirely different ideas. It also took incidental aspects of grammar and gave them great significance. The result could lead to hidden meanings and contrived numerical speculations. *Examples*

Each letter in the Jewish alphabet represented a number. The sum of letters of the name Eliezer (Abraham's servant) in Gen 15:2 = 318, the number of trained men in Gen 14:14. This shows Eliezer alone was worth a host of servants.

These Jews wanted Scripture to be able to answer specific questions of all kinds, about all aspects of life.

Pesher – Pesher borrowed from midrashic practices, but included a significant eschatological focus. Everything the prophets wrote had veiled prophetic meaning being fulfilled through the interpretative community now or in its immediate future. This form was popular at Qumran. *Example: Hab 1:6 "I will use the Babylonians, those cruel and wild people." This verse predicted the Babylonian army coming to punish sinful Judah. But according to pesher, "this refers to the Kittim (Romans) who are indeed swift and mighty in war..." so the prophecy of the coming of Babylon now becomes a prophecy for the local Qumran community of the coming of the hated Romans in their day.*

Allegorical – beneath the literal meaning lay the "true" spiritual meaning. First developed by Greeks to reconcile their philosophies and mythic religions, it became more prominent in Judaism at this time because Jews wanted to remain faithful to Mosaic tradition yet adopt Greek philosophy, so some Jews allegorized Mosaic tradition to fit

Greek thought. Philo of Alexandria was well known in this regard. The literal meaning was considered immature, while allegorical meaning was the mature view of Scripture.

Example: Philo's interpretation of Gen 2:14 "A river flowed through Eden and watered the garden. From there the river branched out to become four rivers." He determined that the Edenic river represented goodness, while the other 4 represented the 4 great virtues of Greek philosophy - prudence, temperance, courage, and justice, based upon the use of the number 4 in the biblical passage.

Often Jews would mix these 4 forms of interpretation in their exegesis. Hillel (around the time of the birth of Jesus) established 7 rules for interpreting Scripture. One in particular, called Qal vahomer, states that issues found in less important cases will therefore apply to more important ones (from lighter meaning to heavier meaning). We see this used by Jesus and I will give you an example of it below.

New Testament interpretation of OT by Jesus and the apostles

OT was (and is today) understood to be the inspired word of God, who is the ultimate author of the text. NT writers accepted the historical accuracy of OT.

When a NT writer quotes the OT, we see frequent modification of wording compared with the OT texts that we have today. Why is this?

1) There were several Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek versions circulating in Palestine at the time of Christ. It wasn't till later that a particular Hebrew version became considered the "most accurate"; in the meantime, the Greek LXX became the most common version used by Christians. So a quote from one version might be different than a quote from another. Jesus did not make any comment that one version was more accurate than another – it was apparently not important to him.

2) It was not considered necessary for writers to quote OT passages word for word, unless they state it is an exact quote. This was particularly true since the NT authors were writing in a different language from the original OT texts.

3) Freedom from quotation indicated mastery of one's material – so the more certain one was of his understanding of the text, the less afraid he was to expound those ideas without using exact wording.

4) A common practice among rabbis was to quote only the first line of a passage but everyone would naturally think of the rest of the passage and its meaning. *Ps 22:1 "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ends very positively - see Jesus' use of this quote in Mt 27:46.*

5) They sometimes grouped two or more prophecies from different prophets together but ascribed all to the most important prophet. *(Mt 27:9-10 uses quotes from Jer 32:6-9 and Zech 11:12-13 and ascribes it to Jeremiah)*

How did the early Christians interpret the OT? Our first and most important starting point is to look at **how Jesus used the OT**. We discover that Jesus used methods of

interpretation that were commonly used among Jews of His day. Hence, for example, He uses *peshar* in Luke 4:16-21 to ascribe words from Isaiah as being fulfilled by Himself in the presence of those at that synagogue. Again using *peshar* methodology, He extensively employs the "Son of Man" term to describe Himself in apocalyptic, end-time ways. In John 7:23 He defends his Sabbath healing by referring to an approved Sabbath act of circumcision that is of lesser value vs. the act of healing a whole man which is of greater value and therefore must be approved by God on the Sabbath as well, employing Hillel's rule of moving from lighter to heavier meaning. In John ch 6 Jesus also uses Midrashic exposition to discuss the OT quote, "He gave them bread out of heaven to eat." Jesus uses a very literal, *peshat* interpretation of OT quotations in rebutting Satan's clever but twisted use of OT passages when Jesus is being tempted in the wilderness.

Though Jesus was using techniques recognized by Jews of the time, he took His exegesis one step further than did other Jews. He **claimed personal authority** in His interpretation of Scripture. Whereas Jews would normally allude to other rabbis before them when arguing different understandings of a text, Jesus said, "you have heard it said....but **I** say to you...." (Mt 5:21-22). He claimed to know God's intention behind OT references and events in ways that would indeed have been very unnerving for other Jews of His time!

What methods of interpretation did the **early Christians employ**, which we can see in the NT itself? First, Christians saw **Jesus' fulfillment of OT** as a fundamental hermeneutical principle, following Jesus' own example. So they looked to the OT to describe Jesus and his meaning for them. They did so in various ways:

1. They often used **typological interpretation** – in which former OT events, objects, and ideas were divinely inspired types or patterns that anticipate God's activity later in history, usually through Christ. We see this most often in Mt, Jn, and Hebrews. *Example: the bronze serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness prefigured the crucified Christ in Jn 3:14. The high priest Melchizedek is a type or representative of Jesus in Hebrews 7.*
2. They also used **literal-contextual interpretation**, interpreting OT Scriptures according to their normal meaning, much like the better forms of **peshat**.
3. They used **peshar** like Jesus, seeing the fulfillment of the OT prophecies by Jesus through His words or deeds (often found in Mt and Jn). *Example: Acts 8:32: Jesus being a sheep led to slaughter for all of us as described in Isaiah.*
4. Occasionally they used **allegory**, as with the vine analogy in John 15. Another method previously listed by Hillel was **principle/application**, in which one applies the principle in an earlier passage of Scripture to something in a different situation but comparable in principle taking place now. Paul does this. *Example: Paul's defense of a Christian worker's right to earn a living from the ministry of the gospel (1 Cor 9:9; 1 Tim 5:17-18). Apparently this practice needed justification because Jewish custom prohibited rabbis from receiving*

payment for their services. He quotes Dt 25:4 "when an ox is working in the grain, do not cover its mouth to keep it from eating", taking the principle that "when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in hope of sharing in the harvest" (v. 10), and applying it to Christian workers. The principle is: if human labor benefits anyone, it should at least benefit those who perform it. Paul takes a farming principle and applies it to payments to Christian ministers and thus provides a scriptural basis for this practice.

One can see that the early Christians (most of whom were Jewish) used methods familiar to Jews at the time to explicate and contextualize Jesus, His life, ministry, and death, so that those familiar with the OT could also understand the person and work of Jesus, as God's answer to the Jews and to all humanity.

*Have students complete **Exercise: Forms of Jewish interpretation***

Early church (Patristic) exegesis (100-600)

Scriptures were used for instruction and pastoral care of Christian communities, defense of the faith against pagan attacks and false Jewish claims, and to attack heretical teachings arising within the church.

Early on, NT not yet established. Church fathers considered traditional teachings of apostles as authoritative, since these teachings came to the apostles directly from Jesus. Church leaders became the guardians of the traditional interpretation. Later in the Medieval period, tradition became equal in authority with Scripture itself.

During 200-600, three great schools emerged.

1. Alexandrian School: Allegorical interpretation arose from the desire to understand the OT as a Christian document, so the school imposed Christian views upon it while using Jewish techniques, especially that of Philo. This view was centered in Alexandria, Egypt. It often neglected the author's intended meaning and literal understanding of the text in order to develop the moral and spiritual hidden meanings behind the literal. When the literal understanding was abandoned, then the text could have any meaning the interpreter wanted to impose on it.

2. Antiochan School: A group of scholars in Antioch in Syria attempted to avoid the letterism of the Jews and the allegorization that was centered in Alexandria. This view defended the principle of **grammatical-historical** interpretation, that the text should be interpreted according to the rules of grammar and the facts of history. *For example, according to Alexandrian allegorists, Abraham's departure from Haran signified rejection of knowing things by means of the senses, while for the Antiochans, Abraham's departure represented an act of faith and trust as he followed God's call to go to the land of Canaan.* This exegetical framework of the Antiochans lay the foundation for modern evangelical hermeneutics, but because of a controversy over the

person of Christ and other historical circumstances, this view was rejected as the foundational interpretive method by the majority of the church for centuries to come. 3. Later, the **Western school** developed, emphasizing the authority of tradition in interpreting the Bible. This school borrowed elements from both 1 and 2 and became dominant in western Christianity (Jerome and Augustine).

Medieval exegesis (600-1500)

By this time interpretation was bound by tradition and the allegorical method was prominent. It consisted of a **fourfold sense of Scripture**:

The letter shows us what God and our fathers did;

The allegory shows us where our faith is hid;

The moral meaning gives us rules of daily life;

The anagogy shows us where we end our strife.

Example: city of Jerusalem = literal (historical) - historical city // allegory (doctrinal) - church of Christ // moral (tropological) - indicates the human soul // anagogical - (eschatological) points to heavenly Jerusalem. This fourfold sense was the Medieval allegorical method. Hence, good interpretation became not just what the Bible says, but what **church tradition** also says about it (with equal authority to the Bible). Whereas Judaism gave equal authority to important rabbis, Christians gave it to the Catholic Church tradition. Various other forms of interpretation were also swirling around during these years.

Biblical study in monasteries and church schools was almost solely conducted by church leaders and monks who were some of the few who could read and write. They depended heavily upon the Patristic Fathers and traditional interpretation but also developed the discipline of *lectio divina* – spiritual reading done prayerfully, listening for the Holy Spirit. This is still practiced today by many Christians and is a valuable form of devotional reading.

Reformation exegesis (1500s)

You can imagine how confusing allegorical and traditional interpretation would seem to the average person who could not even read, much less have time to study the Bible. It implied that the Scriptures were so obscure that only the church could discover their true meaning. It put tremendous power in the hands of the churchmen who had such time and had access to the church tradition of interpretation. Some of them got to the point that they barely read the Bible, but concentrated their time on church interpretation alone. The Renaissance was to change all that. The Renaissance first called attention to the necessity of knowing the original languages in order to understand the Bible. This began a quest for a better understanding of the Bible in interpretation as well as in the original languages.

During this time, a more literal, historical method arose and with advances such as the printing press, more common people learned to read the Bible for themselves. At the same time, the Catholic Church was undergoing criticism of its leadership and its materialism, ultimately leading to the Reformation.

With the advent of the Reformation (1517-1648), the fourfold sense of Scripture was abandoned by Reformers and replaced with the principle that Scripture has a single **plain sense** available to all. Luther began this process by maintaining that the church should not determine what the Scriptures teach and say, but rather that Scripture should determine its own meaning and that that meaning was the plain sense of the text. He rejected the allegorical method as empty speculation, and stated that Scripture was its own best interpreter: ***sola scriptura*** (Scripture alone). He emphasized importance of faith and the illumination of the Holy Spirit to proper interpretation. He did use extensive typological interpretation, even more so than the apostles, because he claimed that the whole Bible, including the OT, taught directly about Jesus. This led Luther to some interesting interpretations that would not be classified today as "plain sense." Calvin had tremendous impact on this movement, stating "it is the first business of an interpreter to let the author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say." He wrote the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the most influential systematic approach to Christian doctrine of the Reformation. Calvin did not see Jesus in every verse of the Bible as did Luther.

The Protestant movement forced the Roman Catholic Church to become more specific in what it believed. This led to:

Post-Reformation exegesis (1650-1800)

Confessionalism. Once the Roman Catholic Church drew up a list of decrees establishing the dogmas of the church at the Council of Trent and criticizing Protestantism, it didn't take long for Protestants to develop their own creeds. In fact, nearly every important European city had its own favorite creed, and supported it biblically with proof texting. This led to bitter arguments of theological hatred against fellow Christians which resulted in persecution and even death. *In sixteenth century Holland, the Mennonites were outlawed and, whenever they were caught, executed. One of them, Dirk Willens, was being chased across an icefield (explain frozen ice layer on the top of a lake) when his pursuer broke through and fell into the bitterly cold waters. This would have killed his pursuer within minutes. When Willens heard his cries for help, he returned and saved the man from the deadly waters. The pursuer was grateful and astonished that he would do such a thing, but he nevertheless arrested him because he believed it was his duty to do so. A few days later Willens was executed by being burned at the stake. It was precisely his*

christlikeness that had brought on his death by execution! (from Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy, p. 213).

Spiritual offspring of Reformation: Pietism. In reaction to this, Philipp Jakob Spener called for an end to needless controversy, a return to mutual Christian concern and good works, and better Bible knowledge on the part of all Christians. Those who followed this view wanted to revive the practice of Christianity as a way of life, as a result of an intimate personal relationship with God (sound familiar?). At its best, pietism combined a deep desire to understand the word of God and appropriate it for one's own life through prayer, study and moral development, with a sound grammatical-historical interpretation. Its weakness lay in placing more dependence on an "inward light" or "an unction from the Holy One" of subjective impressions to interpret Scripture, which could lead to interpretations that had little to do with the author's original intended meaning. John Wesley was strongly influenced by the positives of pietism and its emphasis on prayer and study. He believed in the importance of the literary context, the role of reason, the role of the Holy Spirit, and using Scripture to interpret Scripture, all of which is still important to us today.

Intellectual offspring of Renaissance: Rationalism. Rationalism, emerging during this period, is the philosophical position of accepting reason as authority for determining one's opinions or course of action. At first it still held secondary authority to Scripture, as John Wesley contended during his lifetime and as many Christians still do today. But as science progressed in its empiric study of nature, so some scholars progressed in their empiric study of the Bible, to the point that they claimed that reason rather than revelation was to guide our thinking and actions, and that reason would judge which parts of revelation were still acceptable. Hence a trend developed in which reason replaced revelation as authoritative.

Modern Hermeneutics (1800-present)

Liberalism. Rationalism in philosophy laid the basis for liberalism in theology. Whereas previously, revelation had determined what reason ought to think, now reason determined what parts of revelation were to be accepted. Over time, this mutated into the fact that no parts of revelation were to be accepted without a rational basis of proof. How does one prove a miracle? One cannot, by its very definition. Much of the Bible's authoritative witness to divine events was thrown out as a result and scientific study was applied to the Bible as the *only* form of authority.

An objective, scientific approach developed during this time that was known as the **historical-critical method**. Study focused on the social, historical, and religious factors that produced the biblical text, but it often rejected all revelation, miracles, and divine inspiration of the Bible in the process. This method produced two significant approaches during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the **history of religion** approach which assumes existing Ancient Near East and Greco-Roman religions influenced ideas found in the Bible and **Form criticism** which looks for different literary

types of material in Scripture. The latter approach is still very useful to us today. The historical-critical method also became the basis for several other critical approaches to Scripture that we find commonly today among biblical scholars. Some of these criticisms challenge the historical-critical method because it cannot bring about a coherent understanding of the text by itself nor determine application of the text for today's world. But some complement and supplement this method.

During the past two hundred years, what we have seen is a shift in the **centers of meaning**. All communication involves three aspects: a sender (author/speaker) who sends a message (text/speech) to a receiver (reader/listener). (*Diagram this relationship*). The Bible is one specific form of communication. When biblical study first became more scientific in its approach, scholars sought to learn what the original author meant to communicate. This is called the **author-centered** approach. But there is a great distance between us and that author and often in the Bible the author is not even known. So study shifted to the text which we do have in our hands today. This is called the **text-centered** approach. Even here we have issues of distance and understanding that is difficult to overcome. So most recently some biblical scholarship has shifted to a **reader-centered** approach, since communication doesn't take place without a recipient. But if one only centers on the reader to determine the meaning of a text, it suddenly can mean all sorts of very different possibilities, since every reader brings his/her own preconceptions and ideologies to the text.

All three aspects (author, text, and recipient) are important when we seek to determine the meaning of a biblical text. Because the text itself is available and is less subjective than a dependence upon multiple readers, this remains the **primary focus** of Christian scholars' study today. But we take into account what we can learn about and from the original author and from the recipients of the text, whether those recipients are located in the past or in our own time. That includes you as one group of recipients!

MODERN APPROACHES TO BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

One aspect of modern hermeneutics that Christian scholars refuse to accept, however, is the rejection of divine revelation of and miracles in the biblical text. So let's talk a little more about:

Today's criticisms

We in the Nazarene Church, along with many other biblical scholars, do not agree with the rejection of miracles, divine inspiration and revelation; we find excellent historical and theological reasons for fully accepting the biblical record as inspired by God for our faith and salvation. Having said this, it is important to understand that biblical criticism does not have to have a negative connotation among us. The Bible was written in ancient times in another language, reflecting customs different from our own. So we need to proceed with diligent, thorough study if we wish to glean from the Bible the

message its authors sought to convey and not risk imposing our views on it instead of discerning its claims on us. We are all involved in some form of biblical criticism if we are searching the Scriptures diligently for their meaning.

But the strength of modern criticism becomes a weakness when the methods are dominated by assumptions inappropriate to the data being interpreted. These false assumptions have included such travesties as a rejection of the possibility of miracles, a rejection of Jesus as the Son of God, a rejection of divine inspiration of Scripture. The result has been that the word "criticism" may carry the connotation of someone who has no faith in God, tearing apart the word of God in order to prove some unbiblical theory or over simplistic viewpoint. Sadly for Christianity, there are scholars who fit this description accurately!

But we who are Christian should not run in the opposite direction to sink our heads in the sand like the ostrich, but we should look for whatever truths we find to help us in our study, even among these misled efforts. Though we will object to the use of the Bible by **radical liberationists** to justify violent revolution in order to free the poor from the yoke of tyranny, Christ did come to free the poor nevertheless. Though we may feel uncomfortable around **aggressive feminism** seeking to usurp the roles of men in society, Christ did treat women as human beings of equal worth in the midst of a society which did not do so. We can learn of our own blind spots and interpretive weaknesses from others, whether Christian or not.

Definition of biblical criticism: the scientific investigation and art of analyzing documents of the Bible. If we are studying our Bible, we are all doing biblical criticism in some form!

Various forms of criticism we use today include:

Literary criticism – study of literary features in the Bible as an artistic production.

Subsets of literary:

Rhetorical – art of composing discourse aimed at persuasion *An example is Paul's writings*

Form – examination of texts with respect to recognizable forms or patterns (genres) *We will study Biblical genres shortly*

Source – examination of biblical texts for evidence of multiple sources behind the texts

Traditio-historical – identifying and describing the history of transmission of a text (oral transmission, early editions, larger units, final form)

Redaction – contribution of final writer/editor who composed a literary work based on its sources (both oral and/or written)

Textual – seeks to establish the most accurate text possible, by seeking the text that is closest to the original form as possible

Grammatical – study of vocabulary, morphology (word formation and forms), and syntax (sentence structure) *We will study this further as well.*

Canonical – focus on the Bible as a whole in its final state of composition

New hermeneutic – language communicates unique truths in light of the hearer's own experience – this leads to Reader Response Criticism, in which the reader decides the meaning of the passage (very relative and subjective)

Subsets of human sciences:

Sociological – social context, especially economic and institutional studies, how people interacted in groups

Psychological – study of individuals in Scripture

All methods and approaches are merely tools for the purpose of understanding a text. To the extent that a method aids us to understand the original message God intended for the passage through its original author to its original audience, it is most valuable to the Christian exegete.

Let us diligently pursue that divine truth wherever it may be found, and foster its growth as we apply it to our Christian walk. Our intellectual abilities are to be used for the glory of God as we study the Bible, being molded by and built upon the solid foundation of faith.

What have we learned from this history?

1. The best is to determine what was the text's original intent and meaning, then find application for us today based on its application when it was written. This requires us to use various critical approaches to the text, some of which we will study shortly.

2. Second, there is a plain sense of Scripture that we should be looking for, unless Scripture itself indicates it is dealing with symbolism or allegory. When we go beyond this plain sense, we enter into subjective territory that requires other authorities besides Scripture itself.

3. Third, we can learn much that is useful from previous work, but we must weigh it all against our present understanding of the Bible as **inspired by God**.

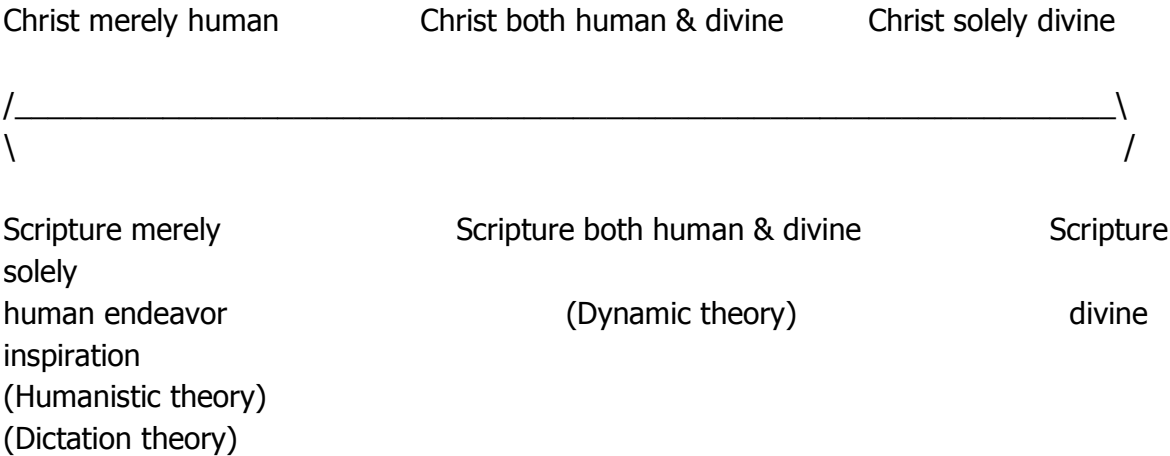
Why do we still sometimes end up with different interpretations of Scripture even among evangelical conservatives who are all using a basic historical-cultural method of biblical study? *Example: women as teachers, preachers or leaders in the church. #1* This is because we are still influenced by our own backgrounds, even when we look at Scripture as objectively as we can. *#2* We may have different understandings of the historical and cultural milieu of the original writings. *Example: 1 Tim 2:11-12. Some would say that Paul meant this statement for all women for all time. Others see that there is enough information in the text about false teachers that Paul's concern is that women who have not been trained adequately should not be in positions of undue authority. Since women at that time rarely were allowed to learn to read and therefore would be unable to study Scripture well, they should not be given roles of leadership in the church. #3* Also we may have a different basic view of God's

inspiration even within the evangelical tradition, though all agree that the Bible is inspired by God.

Hence, do we see Scripture as being word-for-word dictation by God, or is there an element of human influence in the words that were inspired by God and given to a human being?

Explain this further with diagram and the accompanying discussion.

DIVINE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE – differing views



The position of the Church of the Nazarene is somewhere in between the two extremes, tending more towards the right than the left. After all, no evangelical believer would consider the Bible as no more inspired than Shakespeare (the left extreme)! To those who have come to know the sweet fruit of salvation, there is no question that it is a holy, authoritative, and divinely inspired book indeed. But that understanding does not require us to believe that each word was directly dictated by God.

If God dictated the words of the Bible one by one to each biblical author, we cannot take into account the **human element** that is so clearly seen as we read from one book to the next. The dictation theory also does not coincide with our view of **human freedom** in God's interaction with humanity. We do not see God treating humans as mere robots or dictation machines. If the Biblical authors were only dictation machines, how can we make sense of the **variations among the Gospels**? When Jesus spoke at a particular time on a specific subject, all Gospel authors recording that event should have recorded the exact same words for that event if God were dictating the message word for word, and that is simply not the case. Instead, we sometimes see variations in the words of Jesus, just as we would expect if each writer were flavoring the words from his own viewpoint or from differing inspired human sources. The idea and message behind what Jesus said remains the same, but the precise words may vary.

Of course, one who adheres to a strict dictation theory always has the further problem that we **do not have the original manuscripts** for any of the books of the

Bible. Copying errors and slight changes in wording through the centuries have resulted in many different forms of each book, and there is no method available to reclaim the truly original words of Scripture. Again, if God were so concerned as to dictate every word precisely and this was important for our salvation and our walk with Him, how could He allow these errors and changes to enter the written record as they so clearly have? Also, we know there were **several different versions of Scripture** at the time of Jesus. If precise wording were important to God, why did Jesus not specify which version was the correct one?

Instead of struggling with these dilemmas associated with the dictation theory, most Wesleyans have chosen a via media, **a middle way**. Scripture reveals **elements which are both human and divine**. We believe the Holy Spirit inspired the writers with thoughts that they then wrote down in their own words (rather than the words themselves being divinely dictated), flavoring them with their own individual personalities. The Scripture was historically conditioned by the writer's intellectual, cultural, and societal environment. This understanding requires our present endeavors in exegesis to center on the study of those words in order to discover the original intention of the writer so that we may accurately recover the truth that he was intending to convey (H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, 1988, 71). As we gain an understanding of the writers' intentions, the Holy Spirit can then apply God's meaning for us today directly into our lives, our society, our culture, and our intellect.

This understanding is the basis for our Article of Faith #4: Holy Scriptures:

"We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith." ("plenary" means full, complete)

WHEN CHRISTIANS DISAGREE

If there is so much division just among those who are agreed that the Bible is inspired by God, how can we ever determine what is good interpretation and good application? We have already discussed solid interpretation of specific passages, particularly that it should be consistent with all of Scripture and with its grand themes. I would add the following additional guidelines when we are dealing with interpretation for a broad spectrum of Christianity:

- a. Seek out what others have said – thoroughly study the wisdom of Christians through centuries
- b. Ask the believing community (best if world-wide) to check conclusions
- c. Is it workable (applicable) in believers' lives and practical in their experiences?
- d. What are its results? Does a particular interpretation result in division and less love for other Christians or more unity and love? (*this is a common problem with speaking in heavenly tongues*)
- e. Even allow unbelievers to critique it though true significance belongs to believers (*they can comment on archeological finds or historical facts, as an example*)

Finally:

When sincere Christians have two different interpretations, we must allow both interpretations as being possible, "agree to disagree," and love each other as brothers and sisters in Christ (*Calvinism vs. Wesleyanism as an example*) as long as it is not a foundational issue to all Christian belief or practice.

Can Skip: Explain dogma, doctrine, and opinion differences here

Dogma: major biblical themes and Nicene creed – the agreed-upon foundation for all Christianity

Heresies and cults fail to uphold Christian dogma

Doctrine: particular denominational views

Opinion: freedom to interpret according to personal preferences within the above two categories

Lecture: BASIC STEPS FOR INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Let's review:

- Observation – looking at the facts contained in the passage and what is happening there.
- Interpretation – studying the text to determine the author's meaning and purpose for his original audience. Includes analysis in these areas:
 - Historical-cultural
 - Contextual
 - Literary: genre/forms, syntax, word studies
 - Theological
 - Biblical
 - Summary of historical meaning
- Application – discovering the relevance of this passage for contemporary faith and life.

PRAYER

Always begin and end your time of study in prayer. John Wesley taught a simple prayer that he used each day, since he believed as we do that Scripture can only be understood through the same Spirit whereby it was given:

"Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou has given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Also, be aware that the **specific** steps taken to interpret Scripture will vary from one textbook to the next, from one professor to the next, but that the **basic** steps will remain largely the same: Historical-cultural /contextual /literary /theological studies.

COMMENCEMENT AND OBSERVATION

Confirm the pericope

First we must determine the limits of the passage we will be studying. We need to find a genuine, self-contained unit (called a pericope). Don't cut a poem in half or a narrative in the middle of a paragraph. Does the passage have a beginning and an end? Is there a cohesive, meaningful content to it, with a clearly defined theme or central idea? Do not trust the chapter and verse divisions since they were added MUCH later than the original writing.

Read and compare

When you think you have established your pericope, be sure to read the whole book if possible at one sitting, then return to that section and read the surrounding passages with it included several times. Pick a translation for reading the passage that is NOT a paraphrase. Now read it in more than one translation if other translations are available. Re-adjust your pericope if necessary.

Ask questions of the text

Now we need to observe what is within the text itself. We should begin by reading the book completely, then the passage and its surrounding context several times. After the first couple of general readings, we begin to ask questions of the text itself. Does it give us information such as Who? What? When? Where? Why? How is it written – how is a truth or principle illustrated? What can I pick up in way of ideas and themes from the words being used and from the surrounding context of the passage? *Discuss the homework assignment on Acts 2.*

Then we begin the process of interpretation. This takes several steps in order to conduct a complete study. We will be analyzing the text via several useful forms of biblical criticism.

INTERPRETATION

HISTORICAL-CULTURAL ANALYSIS CONSIDERATIONS

Why does a correct interpretation of a passage need to be consistent with the historical-cultural background?

1. Perspective of the original communicators:

The circumstances in which communication takes place affect, if not determine, meaning so we must understand each passage consistent with its historical and cultural background.

Understanding the perspective of original communicators helps us understand their message. *What is your association concerning hot and cold with Christian belief? Example: Letter to Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22). The Lord condemns that church for being "neither cold nor hot." He goes on to state "I wish you were either one or the other" v. 15. In America, how we understand cold or hot would indicate that no one wants to be cold for the Lord! Warm would be better than cold. But we must interpret hot and cold in light of the historical context of Laodicea, which was located close to both hot springs (by Hierapolis) and a cold stream (by Colossae). Now both hot and cold waters are desirable, both are useful for distinct purposes. But the spiritual state of this church more closely resembled the tepid lukewarm water that eventually flowed into Laodicea pipes. Neither hot nor cold, it was putrid and emetic. Jesus is not saying that active opposition to him (our "cold") is better than being a lukewarm Christian.* So we study the background of the text in order to gain an understanding of the text itself.

If more than 1 interpretation, ask which interpretation fits the historical-cultural setting best.

Our present life setting differs radically from anything in the Bible –

Sitz im Leben: life situation – horizontal relationship, the human environment

Sitz im Glauben: faith situation – vertical relationship, people's relation to God and how they perceive their faith

2. Mindset of the original communicators and audience:

We must determine the impact that the biblical message would have had in its original setting. Statements communicate facts and ideas but also have emotional impact and connotation for the culture.

Each culture has a system of values. *Example: Jesus calling Herod Antipas a fox in Lk 13:32. In America, our definition today (besides an animal) has very different emotional connotation than did theirs. We see someone who is "foxy" as being sexually alluring. In rabbinic literature a fox typified low cunning, but it was also an insignificant creature in comparison to a lion. So most commentators point to either cunning or insignificance as the point of Jesus' fox reference. Not the same meaning as today!*

All human language is culturally conditioned and most has emotive value of some kind.

We want to determine the original impact that biblical message had on original audience.

Example: the Good Samaritan. What would be the equivalent of the good Samaritan today in your culture?

The more we understand the mindset and worldview of the original writer and audience, the better we can understand what the words meant back then so we can better find appropriate words for today. This leads us to...

3. Contextualization of the message.

We must express biblical truth in our language, in ways that most closely correspond to the ideas in the biblical culture.

We need a lens to look back at the biblical world to see the intended message back then (1 and 2 above), then another lens to see forward to determine how best to express the same meaning behind the message, the truth for today.

We have to know both the biblical and modern world to bridge the differences:

Not just the modern world in general but which group of people we want to reach- Teens, elderly, inner city, country, America, Africa, a particular tribal group, etc.

Danger for us is syncretism with the culture around us - *Example: the story of the first missionary to India who felt the church should accept the caste system as it was - others realized that was precisely what God wanted to change.*

Also we need sensitivity to the Holy Spirit on what to change – *Example: early missionaries to Uganda noted that multiple wives for one husband were common in*

marriages and began to teach and preach about that issue. But as the Ugandans committed to Christ, they became more and more concerned about their despicable treatment of the poor. It became clear that the Holy Spirit was speaking to that group about the poor among them, not about multiple wives!

GENERAL WARNING

Keep historical-cultural background details secondary to content and intended message, don't allow them to change the message that is clearly there. *Example from Malina and Rohrbaugh, Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John, p. 145, where the authors describe how in an honor and shame society, Jesus lies to and dishonors His brothers at John 7:1-9 because they are not part of His in-group. This may be true for the society in general, but is this true of Jesus? Does He lie to those who are not part of His in-group? I do not believe so!*

So what are we to look at when we study historical-cultural context?

1. determine the general historical-cultural context of the time:

a. historical situation: what has happened in that region's past?

b. culture

includes **worldview**: general values or outlook of those in text or in society at large //

societal structures: marriage-family patterns, roles of men and women, *example from OT: married women without children scorned* racial issues //

physical features: climate, weather, means of transportation //

economic structures: means of making a living, wealth vs. poverty, slavery, economic mobility //

political climate: governing structures, loyalties among groups and leaders //

behavior patterns: customs, dress //

religious structures: practices, power centers, beliefs, rituals, affiliations.

We gain information on the above #1 and #2 over time. Secondary sources like surveys, introductory books, Bible dictionaries/encyclopedias, commentaries all help with this.

2. determine the specific historical-cultural context of the book

a. writer – who? What do we know about him?

b. audience

characteristics, circumstances, community, and religious commitment

c. date of writing

When was the book written and how does its historical setting affect what was written?

Jonah takes place in 8th century BC during the reign of the mighty Assyrians. The Assyrians were known for their bloody and brutal actions toward their vanquished enemies. They would impale prisoners on stakes, tear out their

tongues, cut off ears and noses, gouge out eyes, and skin prisoners alive. This helps explain Jonah's reluctance to go prophesy to them and God's heart in the matter.

Romans written during the early years of Nero (around 56) so submitting to governing authorities in ch 13 was not a problem at that time - Romans is not presenting the problem that arose when authorities exhibited anti-Christian persecution and cruelty later in Nero's reign when he commanded vast numbers of Christians to be killed.

3. When looking at a specific passage:

- a. Does any historical-cultural information learned in general (re: for the book) apply to this particular passage?
- b. Are there historical-cultural references in the passage itself that I need to explore in order to understand it better?
- c. Do not try interpreting it without first understanding the author's purpose in writing the book which contains the specific passage

***Lecture:* CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS CONSIDERATIONS**

Basic principle of hermeneutics: the intended meaning of any passage is the meaning consistent with the sense of the literary context in which it occurs.

The **context** of a passage is the material that comes immediately before and after it.

People complain of frustration at having their words taken out of context. Context is important to proper interpretation because:

1. otherwise we violate a writer's/speaker's flow of thought and ideas in their natural sequence.
2. context provides the most accurate and likely meaning of particular words and phrases.
3. most biblical books written as complete documents meant to be read as unit. We need to keep this in mind when studying individual passages.

Remember that chapter and verse numbers were not added until much later:

Chapter numbers – around A.D. 1200

Verse numbers - mid 1500s

Sometimes these were poorly placed – *Example: Servant Song begins at Isa 52:13, and should not be broken at 53:1.*

Important to NOT elevate individual verses to independent units of thought: *Example: Romans 8:28 needs verse 29 to be a complete thought.*

3 principles here:

1. Each statement must be understood according to its natural meaning in the literary context in which it occurs – context is the heart of all language communication

This is the #1 most important aspect in all exegesis and hermeneutics!!

2. a text without a context may be a pretext (an alleged interpretation that only appears valid)

Example: sometimes even a nation's president can get this wrong! Jeanne Bignall reported in a newspaper article that after tornadoes and high winds ripped through the state of Florida, killing over 40 people and destroying homes of thousands, President Clinton gave a speech on the site of the destruction. He quoted Scripture, Isaiah 9:10, in this speech: "The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down but we will change them into cedars" (meaning building planks). The president was making the point that out of the rubble where he stood, the United States would use its strength of spirit to rebuild what was destroyed by "an act of God." It was obvious that neither he nor his speech writers had bothered to check the context from which the verse was taken. These words were spoken in pride and conceit against God by the king of Israel. If we read Isa

9:11-16, we discover that the Lord will set up adversaries against him to devour Israel. Whereas Clinton thought he was using Scripture to support what the U.S. government was going to do for the unfortunate people of Florida, he was in fact using words of defiance against God! Checking the context of the Isaiah verse would have saved him this serious mistake.

This article is a warning for all of us to avoid doing invalid proof texting where we quote individual verses to prove a point, a doctrine, or a standard for Christian living. This is a common mistake made by many today. Hence before using a verse to prove a point, we should check context to determine if it is on the same subject and has the meaning we intend!!

3. the smaller the passage being studied, the greater the chance of error.

Large passages have a built-in literary context, small passages do not.

General purpose of book

How do we approach the context of our text? First we must determine the overall purpose of the author in writing the book.

Often the purpose is understood only after we study the historical-cultural background. That is why we started our study with historical-cultural analysis.

Example: Colossian heresy. Without understanding the heresy, we would have a difficult time understanding what points Paul is trying to make in his letter to the Colossians. The same issue arises with the Judaizer problem in Galatians.

Epistles are occasional writings often addressing/answering specific problems in local churches. These problems were already known by the churches at the time but we have to piece information together from the answers being given by the person who is writing the letters to those churches.

It is more difficult to determine the purpose for OT; often we must infer from its general contents and identify its dominant themes. In large OT books, look for both general themes of the entire book and specific themes of the surrounding passages. We want the interpretation that explains the passage in a way consistent with the theme of the section. *Example: themes in the story of Joseph vs. all of Genesis.*

(Joseph: what was intended for evil was used by God for good / Genesis in general: Primeval History establishes the problem of humanity's sin while the Patriarchal History gives God's plan to answer the problem through a chosen people.)

To determine author's purpose, look for explicit statements (like Acts 1:1; Jn 20:31 *these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, etc.*), repetition of specific phrases, exhortations, issues that are highlighted by the author.

Immediate context of passage

When looking at a specific passage:

1. Identify the major blocks of material throughout the book (a brief outline) and how they fit into a coherent whole. To develop a book outline, you can see how other scholars have outlined the book, look at the paragraphs and chapters (with their headings) which have been placed there by your Bible translators, and compare your own ideas with those of others. Then return to the biblical text to see if your developing outline makes sense. Often as you study a particular book of the Bible more deeply, your outline will change over time. That is perfectly fine!

2. Study the immediate context of the passage (*remind students of the Circles of Context presented in the lecture: "Introduction"*)

- a. theme – the passage's own theme as well as the before/after sections – how does the passage fit the author's ongoing argument/idea?
- b. Plan/Structure – how does the passage connect structurally with the before/after sections?

3. Study the context of the entire book – how does the passage fit with the purpose and plan of the whole book?

4. Look at parallel passages – parallels are the same or similar words, phrases, or ideas from your passage found in other passages. First we look in the rest of the book for parallels, then in other books by the same author, then different authors but same testament, then the entire Bible (again, Circles of Context). *Be careful that these are true parallels. For example, water can mean different things in different parts of the Bible: Genesis flood vs. John's Holy Spirit (7:38-9).*

The purpose here is to see light shed on the subject of the passage without twisting the meaning of the passage to conform to ideas found elsewhere.

5. final conclusion – how does its context shed light on the meaning of the passage?

Do exercise on the Importance of Context.

Here is a brief example of historical-cultural and contextual analysis of a passage that can be given in class if there is time. Note that it follows the numbering system of the IBS outline.

Book of Ruth chapter 4

Historical-cultural Analysis

1a. Time of judges 1:1, in Promised Land for most part. No central authority, as repeated in Jdg 21:25. "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in their own eyes."

1b Agrarian society – not a lot of wealthy vs. poor – those with more were expected to help those with less. In Hebrew OT, placed with Megilloth and read during Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), a harvest festival, since story takes place during the harvest.

1c for most part, book of Judges indicates poor spiritual commitment on part of the audience in general. Part of the reason for Ruth was to show that there was a remnant of strongly committed believers. Much of what happens in the book of Ruth is positive regarding belief in God, proper care for widows, etc.

2a unknown author

2b written to the people of Israel – it assumes knowledge of land, blood relations, God of Naomi, etc.

2c written possibly during the early monarchy since David spoken of at end and genealogy spelled out in detail. Written AFTER time of Judges because 1:1 is in the past. Implies splendor of reign so either near end of David's reign or during Solomon or written within Southern Kingdom after the split.

2d. historical-cultural in chapter

This section is first of all based on the ancient Israelite custom that ownership of ancestral land always had to remain in the family and the nearest next of kin needed to buy it back into that ownership rather than allow it to be sold to anyone outside of the immediate family (Lev 25:25ff//25-31, 47-55). The other relative said "yes" to buying the land.

But then Boaz adds a further condition, which prompts the other relative to give up his right to the land. Boaz reminds the relative that he must also marry Ruth in order to provide Elimelech an heir. Tho buying the land by itself would be OK because the land would produce profit over time, and marrying Ruth by herself might have been acceptable since the land would produce support for her children until the eldest was old enough to inherit it. But the man cannot accept the dual duty of land and marriage. An heir born to Ruth and him would inherit Elimelech's land, and he would be out the money he paid Naomi for it. Obviously he was not as wealthy a man as Boaz, who could afford to do both.

Boaz going to gate where decisions would be made and judgment rendered by town elders. (v. 1 and also vv. 9, 11)

Story itself explains taking off the sandal at 4:7.

3. Conclusion: Historical-cultural analysis reveals why Boaz carried out the actions the way that he did and that he was doing so hoping to help Ruth and Naomi, not to reject them. It reveals his compassion and his desire to follow God's laws.

Contextual Analysis

1 Purpose:

- a. loyalty emphasized 1:16-17
- b. none- all narrative so must read between the lines
- c. omitted till later- Naomi's family owns land and that this was the

continuation of David's bloodline

Focus on positive character traits of Ruth and Boaz in particular.

Purpose of book:

God's providential guidance in the lives of His loyal servants results in the continuation of a lineage important to the entire nation.

2a Major Blocks of Material the problem – negative turn of events

- 1) The problem: famine so family goes to Moab, 2 sons marry, all men die with no offspring (understand that in that culture, this was devastating to women and to the continuation of family lines in general)
- 2) Ruth's loyalty to stay with mother in law
- 3) divine providence brings 2 together as Ruth gleans in Boaz' field
- 4) encounter on threshing floor and plan of action – understand that this was to remind Boaz of his responsibilities as kin
- 5) carrying out the plan:
 - offer of land to closest relative
 - offer of marriage to closest relative
 - deferral to Boaz
 - marriage and child
 - lineage of David

2b i. Previous passage = making Boaz aware of his responsibilities

Passage itself = Boaz' plan and its execution

No following passage

2b ii. Overall theme of immediate context:

Boaz redeems Ruth as his wife.

2b iii. How does it relate to the author's plan and purpose for entire book?

God's plan for the continuation of this important lineage is carried out through the obedience, loyalty and compassion of a Jew and a non-Jew.

Conclusion: Context places the events of the chapter in a positive light of obedience to God and compassion for the poor, which results in the continuation of a very important Jewish lineage.

Lecture: USEFUL BIBLE TOOLS AND AIDS

The Bible was written in which languages? *Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic*. So how do we study the biblical languages if we don't know them ourselves? We depend upon other scholars' work, don't we? Also, how do we find the answers to questions about the history and cultures of the time, if the Bible itself doesn't give us that information? That's where we want to know what other aids are available to us, and we will begin with the most obvious aid itself – our translations of the original Bible.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Now if you don't know the original Biblical languages, the first place to look at a passage is in your particular translation. But if you are in a group Bible study, there will probably be several translations present. What do you say if someone says, "my Bible says this, which is not the same as you just read" or "which translation SHOULD we be using (or should I buy, etc.)?"

Lots of translations are available to us today – which translation is best to use? Basic answer: it depends upon your purpose or occasion for reading the Bible. There is such a broad range because there are so many needs out there. But first let's look at how we can classify Bibles into categories. (If possible, illustrate this using the *Line diagram* from the book by Fee and Stuart *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*.)

Most literal = **interlinear** Bibles, often unintelligible because literally going from one language to the next word by word. (*give an example from an Interlinear*).

Formally equivalent translations- these try to adhere as closely to Hebrew or Greek grammar and syntax as possible, while still being understandable in English. NASB prime example. KJV (1611) is an antiquated example because of antiquated English no longer used today, and discovery of many new Bible manuscripts that are much older than those available when KJV was being written. No KJV in print reads exactly like the original KJV since there have been numerous revisions to date. NKJV is a good rewrite but retains the feel of the earlier editions. It did not reassess the original textual basis of the KJV, however, so is not accurate to the best textual witnesses we now have. (approx. 20% of its material does not agree with our best NT manuscripts). RSV is similar here though its theology more ecumenical than evangelical; NRSV uses inclusive language.

Dynamically equivalent – seeks to produce the same effect on readers today that the original produced on its readers. These translations will reword a sentence in several ways, changing idioms and figures of speech or awkward phraseology. Often they present the translation as thought-for-thought rather than word-for-word. NIV sits between the above two categories. Today's English Version of NT and Good News Bible in this category.

Paraphrases take an additional step – they add explanatory words or phrases that do not correspond to anything in the original text and are not necessary to preserve the sense of the passage, but which, nevertheless, give the text added freshness and impact. Living Bible Paraphrased is an example.

"you are a lamp unto my feet" becomes "Your words are a flashlight to light the path ahead of me". Also, "Joseph...surname Barnabas" becomes "Joseph...nicknamed "Barney the Preacher" (Acts 4:36)

New English Bible, Revised English Bible (updated NEB) fall between dynamic equivalence and paraphrase.

Pros/cons: So with those closest to the original text, we encounter the problem of not being able as easily to understand what is being said. Those that are easiest to read (Paraphrases) run the greatest risk of departing from the text's original meaning and in quickly losing their effectiveness/liveliness in culture as the culture continues to change.

So we go back to our original question- which translation is best? It depends on how and why you are using a translation. If you are doing close study of the text, word studies, outlining a passage to understand it better, etc. then use formally equivalent Bibles like NASB or NRSV. If you are looking for a translation with fresh thoughts and insights for a young or beginning reader/Christian in simple and vivid language, consider a paraphrase such as the Living Bible. For easy reading closer to the original and not quite so innovative, use the GoodNews Bible, or others like it. For a good mixture of readability and overall accuracy, (and why it is so popular) is NIV. For dramatic and poetic readings in classic Elizabethan English, read from the KJV.

When studying a passage in depth and teaching/leading others, be sure to consult several translations if you do not know the original languages and **do not use** those translations that are tending toward the paraphrase. You can use your small group study to do this – just ask which translations are at a meeting and you will probably have at least a few there at any one time. Or there also are books that list several translations side by side, like the **Comparative Study Bible**. Reading several translations will reveal quickly those words, phrases and ideas which are controversial and need further study.

BIBLE DICTIONARIES/ENCYCLOPEDIAS

How do we answer the background and historical-cultural questions we run into as we study the Bible? Often dictionaries and encyclopedias are the best resources for that.

Most popular ones among conservatives are International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (4 vol) and the Anchor Bible Dictionary (6 vol), perhaps a bit more scholarly and ecumenical than ISBE. There are many others out there. Be aware that when it says "Bible" dictionary or encyclopedia, it means just that – it is covering topics found in the

Bible, but you will not find items like church history since AD 100, or information on important Christians through the ages, as an example.

One volume dictionary. Hopefully your library has a one-volume dictionary that can be used periodically during this week of study.

Use: extraordinary range of information, these are helpful on anything to do with background, history, people, events in the Bible, or for the particular subject to which they are geared. Be aware: because dictionary articles are written by scholars with particular theological positions, they will present their subjects based on their own preconceptions and beliefs.

CROSS REFERENCES

How many of your Bibles have cross references listed? What are they there for?

Cross references will be present where similar quotes, ideas, or events take place in other parts of the Bible. They are not always accurate – they are human inventions and may be flawed, so do not take them as absolute truth! *Have students with cross references look up a particular verse and see what references are listed there.*

Besides cross-references in your Bibles themselves, you can find them online (www.zondervanbiblesearch.com) or do your own cross referencing with a concordance.

Word Studies: CONCORDANCES

Have students break into groups and look at concordances. What are they useful for?

Concordances are organized according to the alphabetical order of the words occurring in the Bible or a particular testament. Usually a concordance quotes the specific line in which a given word occurs and identifies the reference where the line may be found. They are found in both original and English languages. Some of those in the English language will then give you the Greek or Hebrew word and may even have a brief dictionary to define it for you. They can be used to study the biblical use of individual words as well as phrases. You need to have a concordance that **parallels the particular translation** of Bible you are using, otherwise the words will not line up. There are also different kinds of concordances, including:

Analytical – words are presented alphabetically, but under the main word it is divided among the Hebrew, Latin, or Greek word which is the equivalent term.

Exhaustive – lists all passages in biblical sequence and not by original language; it is exhaustive in that every occurrence of every significant word is listed, but not words such as “and” “the” “a”.

Complete – every word is cited and at least one passage is indicated for the word, but not all the passages where a particular word is located. This kind of concordance is much less “complete” than an exhaustive concordance.

Use:

- 1) **find in a moment the location of any passage, if only a leading word is recalled.** *Give example: being a letter of Christ - where is it located? (2 Cor 3) it is easy to find if one looks under the word "letter"*
- 2) **systematizes words and key phrases so that one can do a word or theme search** – very helpful to pastors preparing a sermon, Bible study leaders looking for topical or word studies to do with their group, or anyone wanting to know what the Bible says and where it talks about a particular word or word grouping. *(Example: someone asks you to give them advice about divorce - you can look that up and see where it is discussed very easily)*
- 3) helps in looking up **key words** in a passage when one is doing an in-depth study, to compare to where else they are used by the author or by other writers. What does the word mean? One does **not** use a concordance in order to define an English word one does not understand – use an English dictionary for that! You can use multiple Bible translations to determine which words are not clearly defined/agreed upon, then use a concordance to determine frequency. *Look at Eccl 1:2-3 in a couple of translations. Explain how different Bible versions can help indicate which words are important to study.*
- 4) gives us the opportunity to compare various semantic fields of meaning. There is a **range of meaning** for every single word. *Example: the word "board". Draw a circle, then give other words that are equivalent such as lumber, a surface for posting notes with a piece of chalk or a magic marker, the row of keys on a piano, a group of persons who meet for managerial or supervisory powers in a larger organization, a sheet of insulating material carrying circuit elements to be inserted in an electronic apparatus, daily meals (room and board) provided by someone else, EVEN VERB USE, such as to come up against or alongside a ship, to get onto an airplane, boat, train, etc. to cover with boards, etc.* We can find the range of meaning of a particular word at the back of a concordance.
- 5) Disadvantage: does not discuss the meanings of the words themselves in detail, only lists them as single words or gives you a very brief couple word meaning, determined by how the word is already translated in your particular Bible version. It also does not give information on where else in the Bible you can find your Hebrew or Greek word. So there is another source which is more like our traditional Webster's Dictionary, the Lexicons.

Word Studies: LEXICONS

So often we are confronted by the distance between ourselves and the original authors of the Bible. How do we determine what a particular word meant in the original language, other than by a single translated word which is the usual form found in a concordance?

Lexicons are basically similar to our Webster's Dictionary, in that they list the biblical words and then their definitions. There are simple lexicons that only give general information on a word and more complete lexicons that go back to the original Greek and Hebrew and give much more detailed information than this one. But this is a good place to go in order to obtain more information than just your concordance.

Unfortunately, you will need to go to a theological library to find lexicons on the original biblical languages! *In your outline you will find steps on how to conduct a word study. We will follow those steps shortly.*

COMMENTARIES AND SURVEYS

These will be a great asset if you are a leader of a small group Bible study, a pastor preparing sermons, or you are trying to study the Bible in greater depth for yourself.

Introductions and Surveys cover overviews of the OT and/or the NT. These are helpful to gain insight into general concepts and comparisons of the various books included in each testament.

Commentaries are more in depth on their subject than introductions and surveys.

There are a multitude of commentaries to pick from. If there is a single-volume commentary available to you in the library, use it for our studies this week. Other commentaries may cover only a single book of the Bible and thus provide you with extensive information on that biblical book.

Remember the following when using commentaries and surveys:

They are **secondary sources of information. Each will reflect the author's particular background, theology, personal knowledge, weaknesses as well as strengths, and they can be quite fallible in their interpretations.** Commentaries are seldom in agreement on any but the most simple passages, so take their words with a grain of salt, and if possible, check more than one out on any particular passage or book. Yet they are vital to in-depth study because they have studied the passages in much greater detail than we are able to on a day-to-day basis.

BIBLE ATLASES

For those of us who are visual learners, atlases can really make a story come alive. It is especially helpful with narratives and histories, since often we cannot understand what is taking place until we understand where it is taking place. *Example to illustrate the*

value of a map or atlas: Amos (written to the northern kingdom of Israel) chs. 1 and 2 - Damascus/ Gaza/ Tyre/ Edom/ Ammon/ Moab/ Judah, then Israel! Show the various locations of each group being described by order in these two chapters. It is like a tightening noose that surprises the audience at the end because they thought God was bringing judgment on all their enemies, not on themselves.

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

Hebrew and Greek Grammars

Histories of the Ancient World

Books on customs and culture of Ancient World

Periodicals and Journals

Do exercise on Concordance and Word Dictionary.

Then do exercise on Our Bible Aids.

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Lecture: PART ONE: THE MAIN GENRES OF THE BIBLE

It is very helpful to understand what kind of literature is found in a particular passage of the Bible, in order to understand how to interpret it. The most basic types of literature are called genres. Different genres have different guidelines for how to interpret them, much like rules of a game. If we try to use the rules of baseball when playing football, we will not be able to play the game properly, right? It's the same with genres.

Genres are then classified further into more specific groups sometimes called forms. We will review the major genres so that you will have a feel for them and the basic rules that go along with interpreting them. Because this is so important to our understanding the Bible, your textbook dealt with this as well. Most of these genres you will already recognize! ***Do CAN YOU GUESS THE GENRE exercise.***

All literature falls into one of two general categories: prose (writings without sense of sentence length or rhyming) and poetry. Of these we will first discuss prose genres.

Old Testament (OT)

Narratives

40% of the OT consists of narratives! These are the story-telling parts of the Bible, recounting people and events. Now, we do not mean "pretend story" when we say story, but the telling of a specific occurrence involving God's interaction with human history, whether it is an historical report of a person, family, clan or nation, description of a prophet's life, a hero's account, or a recounting of a speech being given. With narratives, the ultimate intent of the biblical writers is to reveal God's redemptive actions in human history. Their intent is not to be an "objective" history of the people of God, as no written history is objective, nor can any written history be absolutely complete (only God can know of everything that is happening and it would be humanly impossible to record all those details in writing). So all historians have to make choices about what to include and not include in their histories – we believe that our historians had the help of God through the Holy Spirit to make those decisions.

Some Principles of Interpretation (not all)

1. Place the events within their historical setting. Various segments of Old Testament history (from the Nazarene Clergy Development module):

- Primeval period—creation to 1900 BC
- Patriarchal period—1900-1700 BC
- Mosaic period—13th century BC
- Wilderness wandering period— possibly 1280-1240 BC
- Conquest and settlement—poss. 1240-1225 BC
- Pre-monarchy—Judges—poss. 1226-1025 BC

- Davidic-Solomonic period—1000-922 BC
- Divided Kingdom—922-587 BC
- Babylonian Exile—587-539 BC
- The Period of Restoration—539-450 BC

2. What/who is the focus of the narrative? Look for **facts about people and events/themes/values/storyline**.

3. Are there any major themes being presented? Some narratives will make their points indirectly, others will be more explicit. Not all will have clear themes.

4. Characters: What values are being portrayed by the people? How does this model a positive or negative relationship with God and with other people? Is there any character development during the course of the story? Some characters are simple, used to fill out story, give background, help us imagine it, while other characters are more complex and may surprise or puzzle us with their words and actions.

5. Setting: What is the time, place and situation that is being presented for the story?

6. Plot: the order of events of a story, with a beginning, middle and end. Is there a storyline that includes a crisis, turning point, and climax? This will help you understand the point or theme(s) being presented.

Diagram a basic narrative Plot:

Esther

Characters introduced—problem: Haman's hatred for Mordecai and the Jews—

Crisis: gets king to sign proclamation to kill all Jews—Turning point: dream leading to king's favor of Mordecai/banquets leading to Esther's request—Climax: the one expecting to be honored is hung while the people to be killed are exalted—resolution: feast is instituted and importance of Mordecai is presented

7. Look at how God is being presented in the narrative. What does He do to respond to the crisis? What is He saying to His people? How does His people respond to His actions/words? In faith and obedience or otherwise?

8. Application may come from **analogous situations** between Israel and the Church, or between the main character and ourselves. Be careful **not to make a narrative into a doctrine** or something the whole church should positively follow today, unless it is spelled out as such in the full counsel of Scripture, not just in one particular story or section. As an historical example, Joshua leading the people into the Promised Land and fighting those groups living there became a type for the crusaders attacking the Muslim-held Holy Land. This was a misapplication of the Joshua text.

For a more personal example of possible application, let's look at *Example: Genesis 21: 1-2*. Today's application is not that God will always provide believers with children by

miraculously overcoming infertility if that is needed, but that God has a firm commitment to carry out His salvation plan through those whom He has chosen, even today. Our textbook gives us several excellent warnings with regard to narratives (p. 92-93), including the fact that we should not expect every narrative to have a moral lesson or principle for living as part of its purpose. Remember, narratives were written to show the progress of God's history of redemption, not to illustrate principles.

Law

Dominates the last 4 books of the Torah. There is much in the Ancient Near East legal codes that parallel these codes, but other aspects are decidedly unique.

Two categories of legal material:

- 1) If...,then... (**Casuistic**) of a specific case and its consequence *Example: Dt 15:12*
- 2) absolute command either as prohibition or admonition (positive) (**Apodictic**), legal instruction such as that given to instruct priests or lay people on ritual procedures or personal spirituality. (textbook: pp. 170-75)

Three kinds of laws:

Moral – precepts dealing with interpersonal relationships that often possess a universal, abiding applicability for all humanity

Judicial or civil – laws prescribed for use in Israel's civil government

Ceremonial – ritual observances often focused on the temple, that Christians believe point forward to final fulfillment in Christ

Principles of interpretation

We need to be aware of how these OT laws compared to other Ancient Near East laws such as the Code of Hammurabi. Israelite laws upheld the worth of human beings of all classes and gender, whereas the Code of Hammurabi shows preferential treatment of the nobility over common people and of men over women.

1. Some OT laws retain literal validity for Christians. (Love the Lord with all your heart...) **equal** to its meaning in the OT. The 10 Commandments are this kind of law, meant to elicit love for God and for one's neighbor. MORAL LAWS
2. In some cases, the NT makes the OT law **more strict**. (OT permits divorce and remarriage Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18; 24:1-4 //Jesus permits divorce only when marital infidelity had occurred Mt 19:9 and Paul in case of desertion by an unbeliever) What is in our heart is as important as our actions. MORAL LAWS
3. Some laws are **no longer valid** or have literal validity because of NT teachings (their fulfillment in Christ). We no longer follow the OT sacrificial system, food laws, or requirement of circumcision.
CEREMONIAL LAWS AND CIVIL LAWS
4. But laws no longer literally valid may still teach **timeless truths and principles** (sacrifice shows seriousness of sin in eyes of God, food laws remind us that we

are to be a separate people for God, pure and clean, and circumcision should be of our hearts though no longer required of our bodies)

5. It is good to understand the covenant nature of these laws – God was giving them in order to establish a covenant relationship between Himself and His people. The intent was to establish a holy people modeled after the holiness of God. We have been given a new covenant through Christ that is based upon the old one, sometimes clarifying it, sometimes replacing it with a more perfect way, sometimes continuing it just as it is. Fee and Stuart (165-67) believe that none of the OT's stipulations are binding on us unless they are specified in the NT – it is OK to disagree with them on that but check with the greater church!

Poetry

After narratives, poetry is the most common literary genre in the Bible. It's actually a broader category than these others, since all writing is either prose or poetry. Poetry is used in many of the prophetic and wisdom books of the Bible. In the book of the Psalms, it consists of laments, thanksgivings, praises, royal psalms, liturgies used in worship with dialogue among the participants sometimes describing the history of the people, and wisdom psalms. *See textbook p. 212. Do PSALMS FORMS exercise.*

Principles of Interpretation

2. Poems come as **complete units** and should not be broken down into isolated verses for interpretation. A complaint psalm (the most common biblical psalm) does not merely complain. It includes an address to God and cry for help, description of the crisis, affirmation of trust, series of petitions, vow of praise promising public testimony, and often an advance assurance of being heard. This can help us to understand how we may approach God with our complaints as well.
3. Understanding how the psalm was used in **its historical context** helps us to know how to interpret what is being said. Was it at the death of David's baby? Was it used during an annual national festival? But we often do not have details or dating for many of the psalms.
4. We should take into account what we know about **Hebrew poetic structure** when interpreting it. There is little or **no rhyming** as we find so often in English poetry, but **rhythm** of phrases does take place and **word pairs** are common such as hear//listen to; silver//gold; voice//speech; wine//strong drink; people//nation. **Parallelism** of two lines is very important here (uses these word pairs often) and appears in several forms. Synonymous (similar ideas in both lines), antithetical (opposite ideas) and synthetic (continuation of thought) are common and easily recognized forms. *Give examples:* Synonymous=Ps 103:10 "He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities." Antithetical: Prov 10:1 "A wise child gladdens a father, but a foolish child grieves his mother" Synthetic: Isa 1:16c-17 "Cease the evil, learn the good. Seek

justice, set straight oppression, vindicate the orphan, litigate for a widow." *We will study these in greater detail later.*

5. **Application and use is best when it conforms to the poem's original purpose, occasion, and speakers.** A psalm for communal recitation is best used in community; a psalm of royalty is best used when describing royalty, i.e., Christ as the new David who fulfills the kingship represented in many psalms.
6. Your textbook has excellent information about the psalms, including the fact that they **represent the people speaking to and about God**, not a record of God speaking to His people. The psalms convey the human hunger to hear from God, the trust in the One who cannot be seen, the joy of deliverance from tribulation and hardship. As Martin Luther so aptly wrote, *"In the Psalms one looks into the hearts of all the saints."* Psalms are not a record of God's words to His people, as prophecy is. Those psalms that are harsh, vindictive, bitter and vengeful reveal the heart of the psalmist in all honesty before God. The psalmist is coming to God as the ultimate Judge in all creation for the answer to his problem, the right place to come. This is much better than previous cultures that would take their own vengeance and meet out justice as they sought fit. Let's read Ps 137:8-9; 79:12; 109:6-13. What is missing in these psalms that we find in the NT? Is our real enemy the human being who does evil and who therefore needs to be destroyed? *Our real enemy is evil itself, demonic forces at work. We are to pray for our enemies, not against them, to repay their evil with good and turn them from the power of Satan to God.* So the one additional point I would make that your textbook does not touch upon when describing these vengeful psalms is that we have experienced additional revelation since the time of the Psalms, brought to us by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The term for this is progressive revelation.

Wisdom

Wisdom literature deals with instruction on right living according to God's desire for us. The roots of wisdom lie in creation theology. One records observations about what works or fails to work in daily life in the world created by God. This is why some of our OT proverbs may have come to us from elsewhere (Example: Words of Agur (ch 30) and Lemuel may be of the tribe of Massa, descendants of Ishmael who settled in northern Arabia) and other Ancient Near East cultures presented wisdom in very similar terms to what we find in the book of Proverbs. *Which books contain wisdom literature?*
Proverbs, Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes, Gospels (sayings of Jesus), James

Two basic categories of wisdom in OT:

- 1) Wisdom teachers dealt with universal life issues and complex human problems for which there were no clear-cut answers. Why do the righteous suffer? Is there a moral order and system of divine justice that measures out blessings to the righteous and punishment to the wicked? What is the purpose and meaning of life and human existence? This category is called speculative/philosophical/higher wisdom.

2) Wisdom was also imparted through short, pithy, meaningful statements and instructions of day to day practicality. This is called proverbial or practical wisdom. Which books deal with which kind of wisdom?

Principles of Interpretation

These principles are largely **based upon which type of wisdom literature** we are studying since there are several forms of wisdom writing, including proverbs, instruction, example stories/reflections, and persuasive speeches.

Proverbs are concise, memorable statements of probable truth, rather than absolute truth. They do not deny that exceptions occur, they merely omit talking about the exceptions. Hence, we do not interpret them as commands or promises given to us directly by God, as we already have discussed.

Instruction gives more direct teaching on a subject and should be understood as a demand for obedience, an urgent plea that we should seriously contemplate. *Prov 22:22-23*

When a story or reflection is being given for our wisdom, we should be looking for the main point, and particularly any concluding morals given. *Prov 24:30-34*

A beautiful example of persuasive speeches in biblical literature is the main section of the book of Job. There we must decipher which speakers are speaking God's wisdom and which are not. Job's friends say they are speaking for God but Job disagrees. Who is right? Is Job innocent? What is the purpose of his suffering? The ending of the book helps us make up our minds. The book's lesson may be that the ultimate root of some human suffering lies in the mysterious, hidden plans of God for His people.

Be sure to take into account the entire counsel of Scripture when dealing with what is "wise". *Example: do the righteous always prosper and never suffer?* Look at Job, Ecclesiastes, Psalms, and the NT on this issue, in addition to the usual proverbs.

Prophecy

1) This consists of both foretelling and forthtelling. Foretelling – predictions about the more distant future

We assume this is common but it actually is found quite infrequently:

under 2% of OT is messianic

under 5% describes New Covenant (NT and church) age

under 1% concerns events yet to come (after NT period)

2) forthtelling – message about their own day (how God sees it and wants them to change) or the very near future, therefore the preaching and proclamation of what God desires for His people. **This is much more common than foretelling!**

Also, conditional vs. unconditional foretelling

1) conditional : if/then; based on the people's response to God (*Jer 26:1-6*) Goes back to Dt 27 and Lev 26 with the blessings and curses specified there as well.

- 2) unconditional: other prophecies contained no conditional phraseology and included promises of everlasting significance (*Nu 25:12; Ez 37:24-28; Jer 33:20-22: I will write my law upon your hearts; Mt 28:20: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*) Nevertheless, a positive relationship with God was always a prerequisite for enjoying the blessings of God's everlasting prophecies, obviously even till this present day. Prophecy was not just information about future events, but God's method of changing human thinking and behavior through a deeper understanding of His mighty acts in the past, present and future.

Principles of Interpretation

1. What is the **historical setting** of the book and the prophecy? It is important to know that Amos is speaking to the northern kingdom of Israel before it is exiled, not the southern kingdom of Judah, for example.
2. The **clarity** of the text itself determines the degree of confidence we have in its interpretation. If it is an obscure prophecy, we must approach its interpretation very carefully.
3. The **form** of the prophetic writing helps our understanding as well. These include the lawsuit or legal dispute, the woe oracle, the promise of salvation, the enactment prophecy, the messenger speech. *See textbook p. 194-97. Do PROPHETIC FORMS exercise.*
4. The **Bible is itself our best guide**. It often indicates whether or not a prophecy was fulfilled during the OT and/or NT periods. Mt good example of this. Many of the OT prophecies do find their fulfillment spiritually in the Church or directly in Jesus.
5. There can be **multiple fulfillments or applications** of prophecy. Most prophecy spoke about the present or immediate future rather than the distant future (such as the Israelites being warned to live godly lives or they would be sent into exile). If there is a real historical situation that fulfilled the prophecy and no indication in the NT that there is any application beyond the OT fulfillment, we should be careful not to make up a future prophecy and fulfillment of our own. However, the NT does indicate several prophecies that had immediate fulfillment in OT times that also were fulfilled by Christ or the Church. (*Example: 2 Sam 7:12-16, see v. 14, and Heb 1:5*). What we are seeing here is the phenomenon that God allowed the prophets to see both near and far at the same time, even though they might not have recognized the distant prophecies themselves. When the NT writers give us specific examples of fulfillment by Jesus of OT prophecy, we can believe those to be part of God's plan. But as I said, we must be very wary of finding our own fulfillment of OT words in Christ or in our future if it is **NOT** specified clearly in the Bible.
6. Look for the text's **major points rather than all of its symbolic details**. Avoid looking for hidden meanings in its symbols. Instead, we can ask the following questions: What human crisis is God responding to and how do the people

respond to God? What are the enduring theological lessons in the passage? Application then can be made to analogous modern life situations. What might this section of prophecy say about our particular analogous situation?

New Testament (NT)

Four basic genres are present in the NT: gospels, historical narrative, letters, and apocalyptic.

Gospels

Not like modern-day biographies that usually follow a chronological order to someone's life, but always with the intent of presenting the good news concerning the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the gospels are in a class by themselves. The life of Jesus is biography and history; the good news is the all-important theology behind the biography. Perhaps the best way to think of them is **theological biographies**.

Principles of Interpretation

1. The four gospels were **written by four individuals** to real groups of people, whether specified or not. Hence, each has a different flavor and different emphases. That's why God gave us four, so that we could have a broader, more complete picture of the life of Christ than we would through only one writer's eyes. Do not be surprised that there **is some variation** in style, chronology, intent, and wording among the four. *Have students draw something in class and compare their drawings as an illustration of differing perspectives.*
2. **Three of the four gospels have significant sections of material that are the same** and hence, are called the **Synoptic Gospels**. Mark and additional material referred to as Q provide much of the basic materials for Luke and Matthew, each of which has independent material of its own as well. John is uniquely and decidedly different from the other three. In the Synoptics, Jesus' message is portrayed as the announcement of **the kingdom** of God. This kingdom refers to the power and the reign of God, more than a physical location or specific nation. It is a kingdom which has been made manifest with this first arrival of Jesus, and yet awaits its full consummation at His return in the future. Hence it is already, but not yet here. Look for this theme whenever studying the Synoptics.
3. Within the gospels, there are several **other forms of literature**, including parables (an extremely important method of teaching on the part of Jesus), miracles, pronouncement stories (which usually end with a climactic saying by Jesus), and other OT parallels such as narratives, prophecy, etc. Parables are particularly interesting because Jesus used them so often in His teaching. To interpret them correctly, it is best to look for a central theme or idea. Look for the explanation of the parable in the surrounding context – sometimes Jesus interprets the parable directly, other times it is explained by its context. *We'll*

discuss parables in greater detail later. It has been estimated that over 90% of Jesus' teaching is in poetic or figurative language, so it must be interpreted in that light. (*"Pluck out your eye" as an example of speech that should not be taken literally.*)

4. We need to understand the culture of the time (Jewish, Roman, Greek influence, etc.), the historical context of the gospel writer and his community he was addressing, and the specific surrounding context of the particular passage, whether a teaching of Jesus or a story about him, in order to gain its intended meaning. With regard to the historical circumstances of the gospel writer's community, for example:

- Matthew and John address the emerging Church as the true Israel established on the teachings of Jesus the Messiah. These Gospels show a particular concern about the Judaism of His day that rejected the gospel. Mt also is a challenge to the New Israel to preach the gospel to all nations, while John deals often with affirming belief among Jewish Christian disciples.
- Mark presents Jesus as the Suffering Servant and the exalted Lord, to address the issue of true discipleship in the context of persecution carried out by Emperor Nero.
- Luke attempts to present the gospel to gentiles as a gospel for all humankind, the gospel of joy and peace God initiated through the coming of Jesus. (from Nazarene Clergy Development module)

5. Hence, you will want to think both **vertically** (studying the context of the passage in its own book and its own historical-cultural setting), as well as **horizontally** (studying how the same event or saying is used in the other Gospels) when looking at any passage in the Gospels. Is it used in the same way? How is it presented differently? *Draw on the board the distinction between vertical and horizontal reading.*

Acts

Acts has a very specific purpose in mind: to present how the Holy Spirit moved the early church out into the world. There is great emphasis upon the Holy Spirit's actions as a result, indicating that the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit is available to all believers, Jew and Gentile alike. It is an historical narrative of interrelated events from a given place and time, chosen to communicate certain theological truths. Hence, we can call it a **theological history**.

Principles of Interpretation

The most difficult question to ask when interpreting the events in Acts is: How much of Acts is normative (*prescriptive*) for Christianity in all times and settings vs. merely *descriptive* of what took place in the early church which we do not have to strictly adhere to today? We must study and reflect upon each individual passage in the light of all of Scripture and other relevant information available to us. Whatever correlates to the above-stated purpose of Acts (spreading the gospel throughout the world) is likely to be

faithful to the theological intent of the universal church. Ambiguous or incidental patterns are seen as descriptive, not normative for the church as a whole. There appears to be three main types of events in Acts:

1. Those events that were incidental to the time and place. As an example, Christian worship every day in the Jewish temple, as Peter and John did, is no longer normative for the church and is only descriptive of Christian practice in Jerusalem before the destruction of the temple.
2. Those events that were descriptive of happenings in the early church but not necessarily required of all churches everywhere (normative). Speaking in tongues – known foreign languages – as took place in chapter 2 does not accompany *every* manifestation of the Spirit, though it was present again in chs. 10 & 19.
3. Consistent or repeated patterns are more likely to be prescriptive and normative for the entire church, such as baptism of believers or the message of faith in Christ as necessary for salvation, both of which the Nazarene Church believes to be normative for all Christians. Other denominations may draw the line between prescription and description at other points than do we. What Christians have discovered is that much of what is described in Acts has at least indirect and often very direct analogies with Christian experience in all times and places.

Epistles

Epistles are the letters of the NT. They are the most “occasional” of the NT writings, since the authors **wrote the epistles for specific occasions to address individual audiences who were facing unique problems**. Interpreters must reconstruct these original occasions and purposes in order to separate timeless principles from situation-specific applications. The more we know about the particular historical context, the better we will be able to understand the message the writer gave to his audience and the one God would have us take to heart for ourselves. There are two major divisions of the letters, the ones which are believed to be written by Paul and the Catholic (broad church audience) or General Epistles written by other writers.

Principles of Interpretation

1. Learn something about the **background, author, audience, and specific purpose** for each letter before undertaking a study, as this will reap tremendous rewards. For instance, knowing something about the Colossian Heresy explains why Paul must present Christ as exalted in that book. Knowing what the Judaizers were teaching explains the controversy behind Paul’s words to the Galatians. Knowing about the threat of gnosticism explains the admonitions in 1 John. I could go on and on.
2. Be prepared to study the **specific issues** being presented and what they signified within the particular Greek or Jewish culture. Then wrestle with the

issue: **Is it to be brought directly into our culture without any re-interpretation because it so directly applies to us? Are we to determine the principle behind the issue/admonition so that we can understand a different, contemporary application of the same principle?** Is it merely an issue found only locally in time and place? *We will practice with some examples of this later.*

3. Look for any **patterns** within a particular author's letters. Paul often begins his letters with theology (the indicative statements of what God has done for us), then proceeds with ethical instruction (the imperative statements of what we are to do and how we are to live as Christians, because of what God has done for us). *(An example of this: Rom 1-11 vs. 12-16)*
4. Because these are **letters** they follow a particular **Greco-Roman format**: opening salutation including name of writer and recipient/thanksgiving-blessing/main body including paraenesis-exhortation/closing greetings-benediction. It is interesting to see where some letters deviate from this standard format, such as Hebrews which does not begin as a letter, James which does not end like one and 1 John which has neither an opening salutation nor a closing.
5. Be aware that sometimes we cannot fully understand what is trying to be communicated by these letters. This is because of their "**occasional**" nature—they are responding to specific issues within a particular church already known to those who will receive the letter. So the author does not need to explain the situation to them, though we wish he would explain it to us today!

Revelation

Revelation combines parts of three distinct genres: epistle, prophecy, and apocalyptic. It even has songs included! *(Example: 5:9-10)* We can see in Rev 2-3 seven mini-letters for seven different churches and prophetic calls to change among those churches. The prophecies which infiltrate the major part of Revelation seem to predict literal events, though the descriptions are often symbolic and do not portray the events literally. Finally, the last section of the book includes a description of events surrounding the end of world history by the in-breaking of God. It is this that the book is named after, for apokalypsis means revealing, uncovering, unveiling. Revelation is the English translation for the Greek word Apokalypsis – the genre that deals with the end times after the in-breaking of God is called Apocalyptic literature. Where do we see apocalyptic writing in the OT? *End of Daniel, the Prophets when they talk about the Day of the Lord and what will happen after that (Example: Zech ch 14, parts of Ezekiel and Isaiah).*

CHARACTERISTICS OF APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE in general (Leon Morris)

1. writer tends to choose some great man of the past and make him the hero of the book (Moses, Enoch, Abraham)
2. hero often takes a journey, accompanied by a celestial guide
3. information often communicated through visions

4. visions often use strange, even enigmatic, symbolism
5. visions often pessimistic with regard to human intervention ameliorating the present situation
6. visions usually end with God's bringing the present state of affairs to a cataclysmic end and establishing a new kingdom/world
7. apocalyptic writer often uses pseudonym, claiming to write in the name of his hero
8. writer often takes past history and rewrites it as if it were prophecy
9. focus of apocalyptic is on comforting and sustaining the "righteous remnant"

COMPARISON BETWEEN PROPHECY AND APOCALYPTIC (Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* pp 86-87, copied in Henry Virkler, *Hermeneutics* p. 193) Textbk: p. 251-2

1. initial presentation of prophecy usually spoken and then written later; apoc usually written from the beginning
2. prophecy spoken or written in the name of its author; apoc written pseudonymously
3. prophetic utterances often separate, brief oracles; apoc often longer and may have cycles of material repeated in parallel form
4. prophecy has less symbolism; apoc tends to contain more symbolism
5. apoc places greater stress on dualism (God/angels/Messiah vs. Satan/antichrist)
6. prophecy castigates the nominally religious; apoc comforts and encourages the Righteous Remnant
7. prophecy focuses on the importance of human change; apoc is pessimistic about human intervention and the ability to change the present
8. prophecy may say little or nothing about end-times and God's ultimate intervention; apoc often deals with God bringing a cataclysmic end to the present world

Principles of Interpretation

1. With any apocalyptic writing, we must **tread carefully when interpreting events still to come.**
2. **Let Revelation explain its own symbols**, whenever it chooses to do so.
3. Do not get "bogged down" in the **unexplained symbols – look for the main themes** of:
 - God and Christ are victors over death and evil; the victory is already achieved and guaranteed in Christ and, thus, there is genuine hope for the future.
 - Yet evil is real in this world and opposes God. The people of God suffer, experience difficulty, defeat, and death.
 - In the midst of this, the people of God are called to be faithful and true witnesses. The Book of Revelation is ultimately a call to discipleship.
 - Evil will ultimately be judged and the people of God will finally be vindicated; they will know the glory of fellowship with God and Christ for all eternity.
4. Revelation may **not** give a systematic, detailed, and chronological sequence of the end time events, though many Christians interpret it that way. The concern of the author *is* for the Church and God's sovereign control over human history. The sequence of events in general moves from suffering and persecution to the coming of the triumphant Christ, judgment of the enemy, and the establishment of His heavenly kingdom for His people.

5. It is best **not to play the “end times” guessing game**, as so many generations have already predicted that they were the last and they knew when the final times were coming. *Ask if this is kind of prediction is seen in your students’ churches. It is seen among certain groups of American Christians.* What is most important for us to remember is not exactly how or when Jesus is coming back, but that He *is* going to come. Martin Luther said we ought to live as though Christ were crucified yesterday, risen today, and coming tomorrow. With that kind of expectancy, we will be ready for whenever He does return. (Elwell, 376, 381) **(be ready for Jesus today, even if He should tarry another millennium)**

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Lecture: PART TWO: SPECIAL LITERARY FORMS

General literary forms of larger sections of material = genres

Literary forms of a passage

- May include dialogue, monologue, narrative, instruction, exhortation, song.
- Is its intent to edify, encourage, admonish, warn, instruct, persuade or present information on God's interaction with human history?

To understand some of these literary forms found in individual passages, we must first discuss shorter forms of speech common to language in general (figures of speech) and found in Hebrew poetry in particular (word pairs and parallelism).

SHORT FIGURES OF SPEECH

A figure of speech is a word or a sentence used in a particular way that is different from its original or simplest meaning or use. Some figures are common to many languages, other are peculiar to only a single language, which makes translation sometimes very difficult. The density of these devices in the psalms tells us something important about how we are to interpret them. *Psalms are not to be read in a literal way.* As with poetry in general, a psalm is highly figurative, indirect, and evocative (evoking emotions and thoughts). *We see this all the time in poetry - it describes things in unexpected ways:*

"The moon was an ivory saber, snared on an ebony gown." (Beverly Lewis)

It makes us think in unexpected ways, to see our world through different eyes:

"Earth's crammed with heaven

And every common bush afire with God:

And only he who sees takes off his shoes-

The rest sit around it and pluck blackberries." (Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

Are we talking about a literal bush? No, the whole earth is like that!

Some common short figures of speech:

Simile: an expressed or stated comparison of 2 different things or ideas that uses connecting words "like, as, such as." *Example: "As the deer panteth for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God." Ps 42:1*

Metaphor: a direct comparison, in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another word or phrase, suggesting likeness between the two. *"God is my rock of salvation."*

For the above two, both objects that are being compared are in the statement (vs. "implication" when one of the objects is absent)

Personification/anthropomorphism: objects are represented as people, or personal characteristics are attributed to objects that do not have them, ascribing human characteristics or form to things that are not human.

"The trees clap their hands and the mountains sing for joy" Is 55:12

The sea looked and fled; the Jordan turned back. Ps 114:3

Hyperbole: a deliberate exaggeration or overstatement for emphasis, in which more is said than is actually meant in order to make a point. *Example: Mt:23:24 "You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" or John 12:19: "So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how **the whole world** has gone after him!"*

Metonymy: figure of association, when the name of one object or concept is used for that of another to which it is related, usually based on a known relationship existing between them. *Example: tongue for voice; "All the country of Judea was going out to Him." Mk 1:5 Country= people also note hyperbole "all" // "Moses" meaning all five books of the Torah*

Merismus: using words with opposite meanings to indicate inclusiveness of everything in between. *(day & night, plains & mountains, morning & evening, heaven & earth) From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised. Ps 113:3*

Rhetorical question: a question that can only have one answer because the answer is obvious. It is used to focus thought on a main idea. *He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see? Ps 94:9*

Irony: a statement which says the opposite of what is meant. Used for emphasis or effect. *You gladly put up with fools **since you are so wise!** 1 Cor 11:19*

Have them read 1 Cor 4:8. If you read that out of context, you would think the Corinthians were doing great, when in fact just the opposite was taking place!

Synecdoche: whole can refer to the part or the part to the whole. A more inclusive term is used for one less inclusive or vica versa. An individual for a class or a class for an individual. A singular for a plural or vica versa. A part stands for the whole. *Their feet rush into sin (Prov 1:16) = people /they ate bread every day=food*

Symbols: picture or object that stands for or represents another thing. It is not always going to represent the same thing throughout the Bible, e.g., water =Word of God (Eph 5:26) and Holy Spirit(Jn 7:37-39). But whatever it stands for in a particular passage, its meaning will usually not change within that passage. We should look for what a symbol meant to the time and place of the writer rather than a present day meaning.

Do exercise on short FIGURES OF SPEECH #1.

How do we go about interpreting figures of speech?

The moon was an ivory saber, snared on an ebony gown. (Beverly Lewis)

We identify words used figuratively. *Ivory saber*

We identify the kind of figure of speech. *metaphor*

We interpret the meaning of the figure by looking first at its literal meaning, then determining its figurative meaning. *Not as a weapon but as a shape (like the moon) with flashing light*

We then see how our understanding of the figurative word affects the meaning of the entire passage. Why did the author use this particular figure of speech here? *In the poem, it presented a ghostly effect of a fairly dark night.*

Worksheet: FIGURES OF SPEECH #2 if time. This may be too advanced for most students.

HEBREW POETRY:

Rhythm

There is not rhyming but a similar cadence from one line to next.

Word pairs

Seen throughout the psalms, these are fixed pairs of synonyms (or antonyms). These word pairs form the basis for synonymous parallelism. Examples: hear//listen to; voice//speech; people//nation; reside//dwell; earth//dust. They do not always literally mean the same thing, but with parallelism they have the same figurative meaning. Example: silver//gold; serve//bow down. Look for a parallel concept in the two words. Antithetic parallelism uses words that are opposites: the righteous//wicked, wise//foolish, rich//poor. Word pairs are implied comparisons and contrasts.

Parallelism

Synonymous: a second, parallel line enhances the thought of the first line by way of a closely related statement. The words do not have to mean exactly the same thing.

When Israel went forth from Egypt,

The house of Jacob from a people of strange language... Ps. 114:1

He has not dealt with us according to our sins,

Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 103:10

Antithetic: second, parallel line may complete a thought by presenting a contrast or opposite to the first line. May have a few verses in antithetic relationship with a few other following verses, not just one verse at a time.

The wicked borrows, and cannot pay back,

But the righteous is generous and gives;

*For those blessed by the Lord shall possess the land,
But those cursed by Him shall be cut off. Ps 37:21-22*

*Many are the pangs of the wicked;
But steadfast love surrounds him who trusts in the Lord. Ps 32:10*

Synthetic: second, parallel line carries further, expands upon, or completes the idea of the first line. Again, may occupy several lines, not just two of them.

*I will hear what God the Lord will say;
For He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones. Ps 85:8*

*The Lord knows the thoughts of man,
That they are a mere breath. Ps 94:11*

The following you won't have to know for a test, but they are useful to know in general.

Chiasm: the parallel line reverses the order of units found in the initial line. If connected with lines, the similar members would form an X or Greek "chi", hence the name chiasm. Not just in poetry, this can also be found in prose. Whole paragraphs and sections can be in chiastic order.

*His mischief returns upon his own head,
And on his own pate his violence descends. Ps 7:16*

*Praise the Lord with the lyre,
With the ten-stringed harp make melody to Him. Ps 33:2*

Ellipsis: In Hebrew poetry, the second line omits an element from the first that is still implied in the second, and would be needed to make the second line grammatically complete. Second line is itself lengthened with a new clause in order to compensate for the loss. In prose, a word or phrase is omitted on purpose by the author for affect.

*What ails you, O sea, that you flee?
O Jordan, that you turn back? Ps 114:5*

*He declares His words to Jacob,
His statutes and His ordinances to Israel. Ps 147:19*

There are other types as well, but these are the most common ones, and the easiest to recognize. We must realize that this is not an exact science, but a beautiful art. There is a lot of variation among and different interpretations of Hebrew poetry.

Worksheet on PARALLELISM PRACTICE (Exercises, Student Handbook)

Longer literary forms:

PROVERBS

Definition: a concise, memorable statement of truth learned over extended human experience. These are instructions for right living.

These sayings are based on creation wisdom and general revelation, available to all peoples (that is why similar sayings have been found within other Ancient Near East sources). They tell us what is common sense, rather than what is directly commanded or promised by God, though our biblical proverbs always have God in the background and the knowledge of God as basic to their wisdom. If we were to take individual proverbs as promises or commands of God, we could become confused indeed. Does God promise us that everyone who is righteous shall prosper (and sinners find only adversity), as declared in Prov 13:21? Will every true Christian have riches, honor, and long life (Prov 22:4)? Is a man's enemies always going to be at peace with him when his ways please the Lord (Prov 16:7)? This certainly did not happen to Jesus, though His ways pleased the Lord above any of us could ever do! Though we should not be reading Proverbs the same way we read the Ten Commandments, God may still use an individual proverb to speak to us about a particular situation with which we are wrestling. The more we spend time with Him and His Word, the more clearly we will recognize His Voice when He chooses to speak to us in this way. ***If time, can do proverbs exercise, GOD'S PROMISES?***

Proverbs show great variety in form and content:

PARALLELISM IN PROVERBS

This can take the form of a synonymous, synthetic or antithetic parallelism. Most striking is **antithetic** proverb, painting a **stark contrast of righteous vs. wicked** (*know for the test*), the fool and the wise, commending wise conduct and making foolishness unappealing. "*A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.*" 15:18 In essence, these are usually descriptive in nature.

LITERARY FORMS

Descriptive sayings: proverbs which state a simple observation about life without reckoning with exceptions or applications. They are in the indicative mood. "*The person who labors, labors for himself, for his hungry mouth drives him on.*" (16:26) "*He who conceals hatred has lying lips, and he who spreads slander is a fool.*" (10:18) These sayings can be synonymous, synthetic, or antithetic. Most of our famous antithetic proverbs are descriptive sayings.

Two main subcategories of descriptive sayings seen fairly often in Proverbs include:

Comparative proverbs make their point by using comparisons. *"Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred" 15:17* Also, using words such as *like* or *as* (simile words) is another type of comparative proverb: *"Like one who binds a stone in a sling, is he who gives honor to a fool."* 26:8

Numerical proverbs cleverly drive their truths home by using the formula $x/x+1$. *"There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand...(30:18-19)* The final item in the sequence is often the point of the proverb. In the above, it is the wonders of human affection, not animals or ships.

Prescriptive proverb or **admonition** does more than just observe something. It clearly states its truth with a specific aim to influence human behavior. These prescriptive proverbs can include either **positive commands or negative prohibitions** or warnings, which are stated in the imperative mood. Often they are followed by a reason or reasons, introduced with the word "for". *"My son, do not walk in the way with them...for their feet run to evil and they make haste to shed blood." (1:15-16)* *"My son, hear the instruction of your father and do not forsake the law of your mother." (1:8)*

Some **other forms** include (but not limited to) rhetorical questions:

*Can a man take fire to his bosom,
And his clothes not be burned? 6:27*

Reflections on experiences or accounts of personal observations – this is used even more extensively in Ecclesiastes

Beatitudes:

*Happy is the man who finds wisdom
And the man who gains understanding 3:13*

Worksheet on EXERCISE ON PROVERBS

When interpreting proverbs, follow the following simple steps:

- 1.state subject matter and type of proverb
- 2.classify parallelism if present
- 3.identify any short figures of speech like similes, metaphors, etc.

4. check the immediate context of the proverb to see if there is any further understanding of meaning found there. (don't look too hard for this, often there is not – and do not compare to other proverbs far afield of the one you are studying)

5. briefly state the meaning of the proverb in your own words.

Try some examples of Proverbs using this outline: *(to instructor - note that different translations may have metaphors in place of similes and other changes)*

Proverbs, Chapter 19

subject matter and type	parallelism	figures of speech	surrounding context?	meaning
12 <i>king /descriptive anger</i>	<i>antithetic</i>	<i>similes X 2</i>	<i>no association</i>	<i>beware of ruler's but enjoy his favor</i>
13 <i>family members descriptive,negative</i>	<i>synthetic</i>	<i>almost hyperbole metaphor-dripping</i>	<i>no association contrast/v.14</i>	<i>bad family relations affect everyone & can destroy home</i>
14 <i>family members we comparative/desc. God's positive spousal</i>	<i>contrast--not quite antithetic</i>	<i>wife=gift</i>	<i>antithetic(13b/14b) (son vs. wife)</i>	<i>certain material things can obtain without help but a good relationship is a blessing from God</i>

PARABLES

Simple Definition: an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. An illustration or comparison, usually in story form, using common experiences from everyday life to reveal a moral or spiritual truth.

Basic principles for interpretation

1. Meaning will usually focus on one central thrust or unifying principle. But this is not always clear cut because some parables are more like allegory.
2. interpret in light of the original meaning of the earthly details and of the author's specific purpose. Look for the purpose in the situation giving rise to the parable, the parable itself or the conclusion.
3. Don't over-apply the minor details. These are only "local color", not meant to add meaning to the spiritual application.

4. Don't carry spiritual meaning from one parable to another. In Mt 13:18,19 (parable of the sower), seed=word of God but in 13:38 (parable of the tares), seed= sons of the kingdom.
5. Watch for surprise elements as this focuses attention on the main emphasis of the story. This can be very important to a parable's interpretation.
6. Interpret Jesus' parables in light of the major theme of his teaching, the kingdom of God.

Simplified procedure for interpreting parables

Determine the purpose/intended meaning of parable:

- may be stated explicitly in the introduction to the parable, either by Jesus or the biblical author.
- May be conveyed through the application that is made of the parable (*Lk 12:15, 21; 15:7,10 for example*)
- May be clarified by its immediate context (such as gold coin, lost sheep, and prodigal son)

Determine the central truth illustrated by the facts (and surprises) of the parable for the original audience.

Remember:

- Most synoptic parables by Jesus deal in some form with Kingdom of God/Heaven.
- Parables need to be interpreted with one main meaning/purpose/central focus in mind, not detailed analysis of its constituents except how they relate to the focal idea.

Do exercise on PARABLES.

ALLEGORY

The word allegory etymologically can mean any verbal form of figurative expression. Definition for "allegory" in the Bible is the expression, by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions, of truths or generalizations about human existence. Important difference between parable and allegory: true allegory is a story where each element in the story means something quite foreign to the story itself. Much more detailed in parallel points of comparison than parables or typology.

In actual theological usage, allegory includes 3 expressions: rhetorical, hermeneutical, and homiletical.

1) rhetorical is an extended or continued metaphor, extending from 2 or more statements to a whole volume, such as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Found in Scripture in both OT and NT. Ps 80:7-19; **Ecd 12:1-7**; Jn 10:1-16 (the Good Shepherd); **Eph 6:11-17** (armor of God). Rhetorical allegory is specified in the Bible. *review the 2 in bold.*

2) hermeneutical – in the history of biblical exegesis, this is a distinct type of interpretation wherein the exegete finds a hidden, often spiritual meaning behind the simple statement of a passage. Borrowed from the Greek world by Jewish interpreters for interpreting passages in the OT (Philo being a prime example), it became a customary form of interpretation of the early Christian church. It is still used fairly extensively in the Roman Catholic Church but was rejected by the Reformers who sought the plain understanding of Scripture instead. *Give example from Origen on Good Samaritan.* Hermeneutical allegory is not specified in the Bible but is imposed upon Scripture by an outside exegete.

3) homiletical – (preaching), this form of allegory draws spiritual truths from common historical statements and events where spiritual truths are not being specified in the text. As an example, the healing of a leper by Christ is made the basis of an exposition of the healing of the soul by the Savior. This use of allegory can be found in subtle forms throughout the church. As long as it is specified as a human invention and not a divinely given allegory presenting absolute spiritual truths, then it is probably an acceptable practice. There is a big difference between our allegorizing Scripture and true allegory that is present in the text itself – we need to know that difference! Homiletical allegory is not specified in the Bible.

Do exercise on Allegory: EXEGESIS OR EISEGESIS?

TYOLOGY

The use of typology rests on the belief that God's ways of acting are consistent throughout history. NT writers thus explained some phenomena in the new Messianic era in terms of their OT precursors. Many of God's former actions with Israel were types of what he was now doing through Christ and the early church. This does not have to imply that OT writers actually intended, in a prophetic kind of way, the type that the NT writer later discovered. It is more a technique of a later writer who "mines" prior Scripture for similarities to God's present activities. These meanings were not originally present in the text but the divine pattern of activity seen in the OT (how God worked with His people) was picked up by the later writers and linked to Christ, who was the ultimate fulfillment of God's divine actions. In the divine plan, the early event did anticipate the later reality, though the OT authors and participants did not recognize any typological force in the original.

Definition: a type is a representative relationship which certain persons, events, and institutions bear to corresponding persons, events, and institutions occurring at a later time in salvation history. The prefigurement is called the type, the later fulfillment is called the antitype. **Both are located in historical time and in chronological order.**

Three characteristics:

1. there must be a notable point of resemblance or analogy between type and antitype. Do not carry this too far by looking for multiple resemblances in the details (in this way a type/antitype is like a parable, since there is usually only one or two main points being made)
2. there must be an explicit or clearly implicit comparison being stated in Scripture
3. the type must prefigure something in the future and thus present an actual historical prefigurement

Where found:

Types can be found strictly within the OT. *The use of the Exodus in Is 52:7-12 (from Egypt to the promised land = type vs. Babylon to the promised land = antitype) or the wilderness in Ps 95:7-12 (hard-hearted people at Sinai = type and hard-hearted people in the psalm's present time = antitype).*

Many OT types and NT antitypes are found in the Bible and explicated by the NT writers. Types can also be found that link NT imagery with its fulfillment in the eschatological promises of the end times. The imagery of the Lord's Supper points forward to the messianic banquet, as an example. (word "type" used only twice in NT: Adam & Jesus in Rom 5:14/Isaac & Jesus in Heb 11:19)

Typical institutions such as atonement by shedding of blood by lambs and later by Christ (Lev 17:11; cf. 1 Pet 1:19)

Typical offices such as Moses as prophet being a type of Christ; Melchizedek as type of Christ's priesthood (in Heb), David as king being a type of Christ's kingship.

Typical persons such as Adam as a type of Christ (Rom 5:14) since Adam was the representative head of fallen humanity while Christ is the representative head of redeemed humanity. Note that Scripture points out dissimilarities between the two as well!

We want to be careful not to attribute every link we see between the OT and the NT as a type. It is best to center upon explicit or clearly implicit biblical typology so as to avoid excess and poor exegesis. Several rules can help in this:

- Make certain that the relationship between type and antitype centers upon historical correspondence rather than general spiritual concepts.
- Study areas of both correspondence and difference between the two so as to determine the exact areas of parallel.
- Avoid establishing doctrine on the basis of typology, which is normally used in Scripture to illustrate rather than to establish dogma.

- Do not seek types where the context does not allow them. Does Scripture indicate there is a type/antitype being presented? Subjective use leads to allegorizing and is dangerous!
- Allow the richness of the type to speak anew both of the essential unity of Scripture and of the faithfulness of God to His people in every generation.

Exercise on SPECIAL LITERARY FORMS

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Lecture: PART THREE: LEXICAL-SYNTACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Now let's discuss the more detailed study of words, phrases and sentences, also a part of any literary analysis.

The correct interpretation of Scripture is the meaning required by the normal meaning of the words in the context in which they occur.

A word comes to represent a given idea (or ideas) only by its repeated use within a common language group. Thus, if two people wish to communicate, they both must use words in a similar way. This is what we are trying to accomplish across space, time, and culture. Hence, we must pursue what the original words meant at the time they were written in the context in which they occur.

Words have a range of meanings (ROM)

Give examples, including **hand=**

Physical body part, clock arm for measuring time, card playing, unit of measurement for horses, a worker as in "all hands on deck", the act of helping, or applause

Word meanings overlap

Each meaning of a word forms part of a distinct semantic field or domain.

Hand = domains of "parts of the body" also "ways to show appreciation in a public setting". This latter goes along with words such as applause, cheers, clapping, ovation. Synonymous words are words where, out of their total range of meaning, at least one of their meanings overlaps with each other. Usually they have other domains that do not overlap.

We look for clues within the context of a passage to determine which domain or field fits the particular use of a word. "We were watching the good actors in a play so we gave them a hand" (i.e., applause) is quite different than "we were watching them build a house when we gave them a hand" (picking up a hammer).

Word meanings change over time

We must determine the range of meanings that was in common use at the time the particular book of the Bible was written and not require that it be tied to the original etymology of the word. The meaning of a word in its context may not have anything to do with its original meaning when the word was first developed *Example: "hypocrite" first meant an actor using a mask in a play but then developed the meaning of being two-faced, saying one thing while doing something opposite, often associated with putting on a false appearance of virtue or religion. In Mt 6:2-6, "hypocrite" does not*

mean a Greek actor in the amphitheatre but a Jewish person who is putting on a false appearance of virtue.

Words have connotative and denotative meanings

The definition of denotation is a direct, specific meaning of a word. Connotation means the suggestion or implication of a meaning of a word apart from the thing it explicitly names or describes, often with emotional or cultural overtones.

We must study a word carefully to discern if there is a connotative meaning that the original recipients would have sensed and that the original writer was trying to convey. "Dogs" can denote the animals with four legs and a tail we see everyday in the streets of our cities. But when used by Paul in Phil 3:2, its connotative meaning is very derogatory; 1st century Jews considered dogs despicable animals, not pets. Hence Gentiles and other despicable people were called dogs. But in Jesus' encounter with the Syrophenician woman in Mt 15:21-28 and Mk 7:24-30 "dog" is used first by Jesus as a general designation of someone other than the chosen people of God, and then the woman plays on the word and uses it in its more common and neutral meaning, as an animal that would eat crumbs under a table if given a chance.

Do DENOTATIONS AND CONNOTATIONS worksheet for today's associations.
Do WHAT'S IN A NAME? Worksheet for biblical associations.

So how do we go about properly conducting a word study of an important word in our passage? The following steps will help you do so.

Steps for performing word studies

Select words that require detailed analysis

We may want to study further those words which have a wide range of meanings, those which are hard to understand and don't make immediate sense to us, rare words that are uncommon in Scripture, figurative words, or those which are central/critical to the theology and interpretation of your passage. If it is just that you don't understand the English word, look it up in the English dictionary. It needs to be an important Hebrew or Greek word for the passage (not just your lack of English knowledge) if you are going to do all the work of a full word study!

Determine the range of meaning for the word

Lexicons, word study books present a broad understanding of biblical words.

Can use concordances to see the specific translated meaning of your word in the Bible and a simplified, single-word range of meaning in the back.

Specialized multi-volume sets of word books & dictionaries will give more detail on each important Hebrew or Greek word.

Select the meaning that best fits the context

1) Look at definitions or explanatory phrases that the author himself gives. *Example: 2 Tim 3:16-17 What does Paul mean when he says the man of God might be adequate? He answers it himself with "equipped for every good work."*

2) The subject and the predicate of a sentence may mutually explain each other. The immediate context of the sentence may give the answer.

3) Look at parallelism if it occurs within the passage. Large amount of OT is poetic and this helps in establishing probable meanings.

Occasionally there is a significant theological meaning that is clarified via a parallelism.

Example of clarification through parallelism: ROM of the word "firstborn"

(prototokos in Greek) can include the firstborn by natural birth but also had the developed meaning of superiority, prestige and higher status that went along with being the firstborn son without the necessity of one being the firstborn in a family. Which meaning is meant in Col 1:15? Jehovah's Witnesses say it is natural birth. But if we look at Ps 89:27, we see the word is being used in precise superiority language in the Hebrew language:

*I will appoint him my firstborn,
The most exalted of the kings of the earth.*

This psalm is clearly talking about David, who was not the firstborn of his family, but the last born, so this superiority meaning is further enhanced by the knowledge of the subject of the psalm. In the LXX the same word prototokos is used in Psalm 89 as in Colossians, so Paul's choice of this messianic title to show Christ's primacy above both creation and those who will experience resurrection from the dead (1:18) is verified by both the Hebrew and Greek usage of the term.

4) Determine if the word is being used as part of a figure of speech. *(You have already studied how to do this)*

5) Study parallel passages (real, not verbal parallels – Example: if you know you are talking about wood "boards" a real parallel might be a passage referring to "planks" but would not be a passage referring to a committee running an organization).

We have studied under the subject of "Context" how to proceed here, first with passages in the same book, then those by the same author, then those in the same testament and finally the whole Bible.

How do you find parallel passages? This can be done with a concordance (if that is all that is available to you) by finding the number of your Greek or Hebrew word; looking up its many English-translated words; going to each entry for each of those translated words and looking for the ones that have the same number as your original Greek/Hebrew word; gathering all those references together and looking up each passage to understand how the word is being used in each location. If you have an advanced library, you can much more easily look up the Hebrew or Greek word in a Hebrew or Greek Concordance, such as the *Greek English Concordance to the New Testament* for NT and *The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance* for OT.

Finally, use common sense in the following ways:

- Simplest meaning probably the right one (Law of Parsimony)
- Remember that normally there is one fixed meaning for each context (Law of unity)
- A rare word may be used to intend more than one meaning, to create ambiguity on purpose. *example: Jn 13:8 clean body - physically washed clean from dirt vs. spiritually washed clean from sin* (Law of Multiplicity)
- Normally a word repeated in a similar way in the same context will have the same meaning throughout that passage (Law of Repetition). However, there are cases when an author will use the same word to mean two different things in order to portray a contrast on purpose – *Example: "boasting" in 2 Cor 10:17, 11:12-13, 11:18, 12:9 - particularly a contrast between 2 lines of thought, 2 ideologies, 2 groups of people, etc.*
- The natural meaning in its context is the most likely (Law of Context) ***this last one is the most important of these laws

Worksheet on RANGE OF MEANING: "world"

Grammatical relationships

Though we often study individual words, we need to keep in mind that we do not communicate with single words, but by combining words together. Their meaning is only determined by the context of these larger units of thought.

2 aspects of grammar of which we need to be aware:

Morphology: forms of individual words (analytical lexicons help here)

Apple vs. apples // pick vs. picked vs. picking

Syntax: the system each language has for combining its various constituents in order to communicate. Word order, case markings, word endings, etc.

Each word's impact on the thought being expressed by the sentence stems from its relationship with the rest of the words in the sentence. There is a quite different meaning when we say "John hit the ball" than when we say "The ball hit John" even though we have exactly the same words. This is an example of syntax and different languages will have different systems of syntax to convey meaning.

Biblical languages convey nuances that are sometimes hard to capture in English. This is one reason why we have so many translations, as translators try to capture these nuances in different ways. But for our Bibles written in English, how do we go about studying and determining proper meaning of the words of our passage?

Steps for discovering structural relationships

1. Look at the flow of thought within your passage-

a. Paragraphs typically develop a unit of thought

Form an outline of these thoughts/themes to see how they fit together

b. each sentence then fits within this paragraph.

Identify the main statement in each sentence, subordinate clauses, and how they modify or qualify the main statement. Diagramming sentences to determine main and subordinate clauses and ideas can be very helpful, especially for Paul's letters which are thick with ideas and can be very lengthy. *Example: Col 1:3-8*. Diagramming is not as useful for OT Hebrew with its simpler sentences and with NT narratives. Identify main ideas for all sentences within a paragraph to gain the essential unit of thought being presented.

worksheet on MAIN vs. SUBORDINATE CLAUSES.

The main clause is that part of the sentence that contains the main verb action and subject of the sentence – test it by asking if it can be used by itself and still make sense as a complete thought. *Be sure to have the students who are studying NT passages (especially Paul's letters) determine the main clauses within their passage. It will help them understand what Paul is saying.*

2. Look at the verbs being used.

Mood indicates whether the writer is making a statement, giving a command, expressing a possibility or making a wish. It is the relationship between the verb and reality. In indicative mood it is describing something that is, whereas other moods may indicate something that may or might be (such as subjunctive).

Aspect indicates kind or type of action, is it a completed state, still in process, or unspecified? She read the book, is reading the book, reads a book.

Time indicates past, present, future. In **Hebrew**, time is always indicated by the context and never by the tense/stem of the verb. Tense in **Greek** has two connotations – that of aspect and time. English is much more clear on the time of an action through our use of a verb's morphology and syntax.

Voice refers to the relationship between the subject and the verb. It reveals whether the subject performs the action (active), is acted upon by another (passive), or acts in reference to itself (reflexive). *Mary cut the pie, the pie was cut by Mary, Mary cut herself a piece of pie. This final one is called the Middle or reflexive voice.*

3. connectives

indicate relationship between the words, phrases and clauses through which ideas are being communicated. (*example: and, but, however*)

4. adjectives and adverbs

adjust the sense of a noun or verb in some significant way.

5.pronouns

often clearer in Hebrew and Greek than in English – indicates number, person, and gender.

Example: "you" in English cannot be differentiated by number (1 or many) but it can be differentiated in Hebrew and Greek. Mt 1:16 "and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus..." Greek "whom" is feminine singular. This restricts "whom" to Mary alone, so does NOT allow inclusion of Joseph in the birth of Jesus.

Lecture: THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL ANALYSIS

Now you need to tentatively draw together what you have discovered from the previous focused studies of your passage to the more general message of the passage. What beliefs are present and how does the passage fit into the broader body of truth?

THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All humans operate on the basis of a belief system or worldview. For theists (those who believe in a god or gods = *theos* in Greek) their belief system is termed theology. A biblical theologian regards the Bible as the necessary basis for theology. Yet theology is a human endeavor – it articulates our understanding of reality with God at its center.

Theology is an anchor for the church and for all believers. It offers the church a secure understanding of herself and how she fits into God's overall purposes in history and eternity. It protects her from relativism and the vicissitudes of the culture all around her. For those parts of the greater church that claims the Bible is foundational to its theology, we need to discuss further the differences between biblical, systematic and historical theology.

Biblical theology relates more closely to the development of theology within the historical development of the Bible itself. It is the message of the books of the Bible in their historical setting. Bib theology is primarily a descriptive discipline, focusing on how individual biblical writers framed their messages to meet the needs of their specific readers in their historical contexts. Sometimes this is done explicitly with direct teaching and exhortation. Other times this is implicitly taught and exemplified by narrative and poetry. Much of the canon consists of occasional writings – writings for specific occasions. Hence, the theology expressed in those writings were also expressed for specific purposes. This can be clearly seen in James vs. Paul's discussion of grace and works. These two authors had different purposes but not a contradictory message, though Luther certainly thought so. Biblical theology emerges from historical conditions and depends upon the movements and circumstances of people and events. We discover the theology of the individual biblical writers by exegeting key texts within their writings, letting those texts speak for themselves, then studying their main themes, overall concepts and even the backgrounds of the writers themselves, to be sure we are correctly understanding what we are attributing to them.

We recognize that there is both **diversity** of individual contributions within individual books of the Bible and **unity** in the message of the Bible. We see how God is working in history to redeem humanity from Genesis to Revelation. God has inspired the authors in both aspects. It is much like a music concert. Each musician plays his/her own part and not that of the others, but together they make a complete and beautiful piece of music. Each biblical author presents an individual part of the whole, and by doing so, we are given a much richer theological picture than if every author said the exact same thing.

Systematic theology is the discipline that strives to give a coherent statement of the doctrines of the Christian faith, based primarily upon Scripture, placed in the context of culture in general, worded in a contemporary idiom and related to the issues of life. Its categories are not always the same as biblical writers, but those of the theologian.

Example: Trinity. The term is not even found in the Bible! Systematic theology reflects the philosophical and interpretive agendas of the systematizers. One explanation why people come to different positions on the Bible's teaching on many matters (such as election vs. free will) is that they bring different pre-understandings to their analysis of the relevant texts, and they also give different weight to the relevant texts.

Historical theology studies how the church and its theologians have systematized the study of God through the centuries – the influences, reactions, and development of beliefs which have transpired.

Each period in history and each group of churches will look to address their own concerns and issues through theology, and will counter opposing viewpoints prevalent at the time. *In the USA, the movement towards individual evangelization of the world rather than social issues among Christian conservatives during 1940s-60s was in reaction to liberal Christians who were taking the social issues to the extreme and leaving out evangelization. We need both!* This is true of the writers of the Bible as well – we can be thankful for the Judaizers among the Galatians so that Paul felt he had to write about salvation through grace and not through the law. We can be thankful for Gnostics at the time of John writing 1 John or he might not have given us such an eloquent statement about the physical reality of Christ and of God's love.

The Bible's diversity reflects the variety of its numerous authors and the circumstances of their times, places and situations. Its unity derives from its single divine Source and Author. Biblical theology exposes and highlights the inherent diversity of the Bible. But we cannot be content with a mere collection of theology truths, we need organization and structure of the whole that systematic theology gives us. It brings together all the bits and pieces to systematize them into a uniform, logical teaching on an issue. And we need the wisdom of the whole church through the centuries (historical theology) to make theology relevant, applicable to each generation while avoiding previous errors.

It is important that the Bible inform, shape and transform my theology, rather than my preconceived theology informs my reading of Scripture. How does this take place correctly?

Guidelines for determining legitimate theology based on the Biblical text

1. Valid theologizing must follow the sound exegesis of the appropriate biblical texts. We must investigate all the passages that speak to that issue. Theology ought to originate inductively, not deductively (define).

2. Implicit in this idea, theology must be based on the Bible's total teaching, not on selected or isolated texts.

Also to be considered when weighing the Bible's teachings on an issue of theology, we should pick:

- clear texts over more obscure ones (place more weight on them)
- frequency of a point vs. infrequency
- direct teaching passages vs. indirect more poetic or narrative presentations.

Example: 1 Cor 15:29 for all of these points

- progressive revelation, especially in the NT, sheds light on earlier portions of the Bible (Jesus as the perfect sacrifice vs. OT sacrificial system).

We must give more weight to the former of each of the above, rather than the latter.

3. Legitimate theology considers and expresses the Bible's own emphases. What does the Bible portray as most important? What are God's principal concerns? *Have class name a few about God and about humans.*

4. Theologians must go beyond just an intellectual knowledge of theology. They must then state theological points in ways that explain and illuminate their significance for the life and ministry of the church today. Good theology must be practical. What are the concrete implications of God's Word to us today?

5. Theology must be centered in what God has revealed, not in what people have devised by their own thinking. Again, many cults take human ideas and elevate them to the equivalence of the Bible – Mormons, Christian Scientists, etc.

6. Modern theologians cannot do their work as if in a vacuum, as if no Christians have ever considered these issues prior to their own time. Traditions, creeds, and church doctrines can restrict our thinking by predetermining what we are to "see" in the text, but they may also protect us from our own blind spots so that we do not lead others into heresy. Insights of our spiritual predecessors can open our thinking to ideas, implications and conclusions that would never have occurred to us. We may decide to reject their teaching as wrong or prejudiced, we may modify or rearrange it, but we lose much by simply ignoring their input. We run the great risk of missing important insights or wasting time rethinking what they have already accomplished for us. *Example: Treatise on Christ by Athanasius in 300s written against the Arians gives excellent arguments against the false view of the Jehovah Witnesses today regarding the divinity of Christ.*

If we do not learn lessons from our history, we are condemned to repeat the errors.

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Before beginning your theological analysis,

1. Determine your own viewpoint of God's relationship to man only in so far as this will help you be aware of your pre-understandings as you approach the scriptural passage.
2. Now analyze the passage to determine its theological content:
 - a. Determine the main doctrinal or theological theme of this passage.
 - b. What are the background circumstances that gave rise to this doctrinal teaching? Why is it important to the original audience?
 - c. Trace the substance and sequence of ideas within the passage about this doctrine.
 - i. List the facts about the doctrine in the order they appear.
 - ii. Label each fact by giving it its doctrinal name.
 - iii. Discuss the significance of the facts and/or events of the passage for this area of theology. Also discuss whether the doctrine is implicit or explicit in the passage.
 - iv. Discuss why this material is included at this point. What is the author's purpose in using this doctrine here in his writing?
 - v. Develop an outline that shows how the doctrine is presented in the passage.

3. Determine the theological meaning the passage possessed for its original recipients in light of their knowledge at the time.

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS on Phil 2

Beyond that of the passage itself, we should be identifying the additional knowledge about this topic which is available to us now because of later revelation. This additional study is called the **analogy of Scripture**. How does the passage contribute to the solution of doctrinal questions raised by other Scriptures? Does the passage raise difficulties for other doctrines?

These questions lead us to:

BIBLICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Familiarity with all of Scripture is important to this step in interpretation. In addition, a good cross-reference will help in this process. Some Bibles have cross-references built in and commentaries are helpful in this as well. Be aware that any cross-reference you are using was not inspired by God and may include poor, incomplete, and even incorrect information.

1. Analyze the passage's relation to rest of Scripture.
 - a. How does this passage function in conveying its message within the larger context of book, division, Testament, and Bible, in that order?

- b. How does it compare to other Scriptures that are addressing the same sorts of issues? What is it similar to or dissimilar to? These questions are particularly helpful when comparing parables in the Gospels.
 - c. How does this passage (and its theology) advance previous biblical presentations on its issues? Does it specifically use other Scriptures (NT often employs OT references)
 - d. Where in later Scripture is this passage used and how is it used there?
2. Analyze the passage's importance for understanding Scripture.
- a. Does the passage affect the meaning or value of other Scriptures in ways that may cross literary or historical lines? How important is it in general?
 - b. What would be lost or incomplete in the general biblical message if this passage did not exist?

Exercise on BIBLICAL ANALYSIS: NT ISSUES

Allow the passage to speak to your pre-understandings and question your thinking:

- a. If the passage does not agree with those pre-understandings, what other passages should you study to gain a full view of Scripture's teaching on that issue?
- b. Be willing to be transformed in your thinking by these questions!

SECONDARY LITERATURE

Now that you have determined your own understanding of the passage, it is important to check with other authorities as to their interpretation. Does your understanding of the passage agree with that of other scholars, theologians, and your church's tradition (including foundational Christian creeds) who have addressed this passage as well? This final question leads us to our next area of study: secondary literature, which usually requires the use of commentaries and journals.

- What other insights do you gain from their work?
- How do these insights affect the conclusions to which you have already come?
- Should these insights be incorporated into your work to give a more complete picture of your passage?

We should be open to the wisdom of other scholars while critically assessing their contributions. A commentary is that person's subjective opinion on how to interpret a book or section of Scripture. No specialist's work can be accepted uncritically, since they can display poor judgment and unlikely conclusions just as often as the rest of us. If possible, review more than one commentary on your passage. You may well discover multiple possibilities of interpretation. When this happens, the following process may be of help.

INTERPRETIVE PROBLEM SOLUTION

Determine the problem(s).

What are the interpretive problems of the passage? Produce an actual list of what you believe to be the major problems that the passage presents for interpreters.

1. Most should be apparent from your study. Much of your research up to this point has been geared to gathering data concerning key issues and important concepts that may need further elucidation.
2. In case you have failed to detect other major problems, read the commentaries and note their discussions.

Determine the alternative answers.

For each major problem, determine the principle alternatives or interpretive options.

Marshal the evidence for and against each option.

1. Draw upon your prior studies – literary context, historical or cultural background, words, grammar – for data to consider.
2. Consult other sources that defend the various alternatives. Assess how they argue their positions, especially in light of your own study (commentaries are important sources here).
3. If you discover that you do not have all the information you require to arrive at a reasonable solution to a problem, you may have to engage in further research.

Determine your best solution.

What evidence seems most reasonable to you? What solution seems to you to involve the fewest problems? You don't want to just agree with what the experts say (since they often won't agree with each other anyway!) but discover the case for the best alternative yourself.

THE FINAL STEP IN INTERPRETATION

Now that you have completed all the above steps, the final step is to integrate all the collected material into your best assessment of what message the original author intended to convey to his/her original audience through his communications – its historical meaning.

We must be aware that often we do not know precisely who was the original author nor perhaps even who was the audience who seems to be intended for the message. We can only use the clues and information available to us to discuss who appears to be the author, the narrator, and who appears to be his audience within the text itself and outside of the text. But if we ignore this step altogether, we can make Scripture say whatever we desire it to say. THAT IS DANGEROUS!

BASIC STEPS FOR STUDYING THE BIBLE

Let's review:

- Observation – looking at the facts contained in the passage and what is happening.
- Interpretation – studying the text to determine the author's meaning and purpose. Includes analysis in these areas:

Historical-cultural

Contextual

Literary: genre/forms, syntax, word studies

Theological

Biblical

Summary of historical meaning

- Application – discovering the relevance of this passage for contemporary faith and life.

Lecture: APPLICATION

HOW TO DETERMINE LEGITIMATE CORPORATE APPLICATION

Exegesis and interpretation is an empty intellectual exercise if it is divorced from application. Its goal for the Christian should always be right belief and right action.

A note of warning: There is a tremendous difference between personal application and general application to the body of Christ. God may speak to an individual about an issue that he is not raising for the general church. The Holy Spirit may use a particular passage for an individual (to convict, encourage, etc.) that would not have the same meaning for the entire church. As a pastor, church leader, or active Christian working with other Christians, you will want to be able to recognize that difference, so that you can point it out when there is confusion about a biblical application as to it being personal vs. corporate. You may not need to directly teach to other Christians the guidelines you are learning in this course, but you will be able to model these guidelines as you interact with other Christians. Have you ever had someone find a passage through which God was speaking to them individually and then they want to apply that passage to everyone? *Give the class a personal example of this if possible.* Final warning when counseling someone on personal application: the message they think they hear from the Holy Spirit should never contradict general biblical truths.

Here are some general guidelines that will help us determine legitimate application for today's church from any text of Scripture.

1. Does the text present a broad theological or moral principle or does it give a specific manifestation of such a principle, which Scripture elsewhere embodies in one or more different forms? Not all Scripture will do so.

Example: Decalogue presents broad moral principles, which Jesus refines even further into 2 statements (love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself). Then major parts of the rest of the Pentateuch concerned with specific commands and rules that fulfill these principles, how the Israelites were to obey or disobey them.

2. Does the larger context of the book in which the passage appears limit the application in any way or does it promote a more universal application?

Example: Jesus' warning to Peter that he would die for his faith (Jn 21:18-19) - is this something applicable to everyone? Just a bit further in Jn (vv. 20-23), Jesus predicts quite a different destiny for John. So the answer is no.

3. Does subsequent revelation limit the application of a particular passage even if the book in which it appears does not?

We must ask this question of any OT text. Has it been fulfilled in Christ and therefore does not need further application today?

Example: Command of Jesus to take nothing with the disciples while they went preaching but rely solely on the generosity of others. (Mt 10:9-10) What appears to come later chronologically because Jesus refers to these earlier commands we see in Lk 22:35, "but now if you have a purse, take it and also a bag..." If we only took one of the statements as command, we would not gain the whole picture. The principle seems to deal with what most likely advances the cause of the gospel, rather than always do or do not accept remuneration.

4. Is the specific teaching "contradicted" elsewhere in ways that show it was limited to exceptional situations?

Example: Abraham's sacrifice of his son was meant only to test Abraham, and should not be attempted by others. Children sacrifices are discussed negatively in later parts of the OT, as a Canaanite religious practice to be shunned. The fact that no other devout believer attempted child sacrifice after Abraham is important to note.

5. Are cultural conditions mentioned in Scripture or assumed by its authors that make it inappropriate to apply a given text in the same way? *We will study this further shortly.*

6. Is the particular cultural form expressed in the biblical text present today, and if so, does it have the same significance as it did then?

Example: Some practices common in other countries but not common in the USA. Greeting others with a holy kiss. In Middle East men commonly greet other men with a kiss on each cheek. In parts of Europe, people of same sex often greet each other in this way. But we do not do so in America to any great extent. Our interpretation would probably be "greet each other with a warm handshake."

Example: eating food sacrificed to idols. Fellowship meals with various deities were common in the Greco-Roman world - Paul's point (1 Cor 8-10 & Rom 14-15) was that strong Christians should not flaunt their freedom to eat or do whatever they please in areas such as this, which could cause weaker believers to be led into actual sin.

He also admonished weaker ones not to pass judgment on the stronger. In Africa, this issue may deal with food offered to ancestors.

7. Is the rationale for the application rooted in a creation ordinance, in the character of God, or in part of His redemptive plan for humanity?

Example: monogamous marriage seems to be part of a creation ordinance that is referred to by both Jesus and Paul.

Character of God - "be holy because I am holy" is used by Peter (1 Pet 1:13-15) to admonish proper living practices for Christians that is still applicable today.

Redemption principle seen in Gal 3:27-28 in which baptism seen as a liberating outward rite for women that put them on equal public footing with men in a way that OT circumcision could not.

8. Is the command or application at variance with standard cultural norms of the day? If so, it likely indicates something we should consider for our culture as well.

Example: Paul (Rom 1:18-32) is clearly countercultural for his day when he condemns homosexuality, as it was practiced widely and very acceptable in the Greco-Roman culture. Hence, it is likely that Paul's views should NOT be limited to first century Roman society.

Example: going the extra mile in Mt 5:41 referred to forced Roman conscription that was required of all subjects of the Roman Empire. The fact that Jesus told Jews to go the extra mile with their enemies means we are to do the same, to love our enemies in unexpected ways.

9. Does the passage contain an explicit or implicit condition that limits its application? Conditional promises are valid only if the conditions are met.

Example: "Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you" (Mt 7:7) What is the implicit condition that is spelled out explicitly elsewhere (such as in 1 Jn 5:14)? That it must be in accordance with God's will (seen in Mt 6:10)!

Promise to Abraham in Gen 12:1-3 was conditional on his obeying God by leaving his home in Ur in order to travel to the promised land.

As we have discussed before, many prophecies are also conditional.

Faithful application of the Bible to new contexts requires that we become as earnest in our study of the contemporary world as we are to Scripture itself. We must determine as clearly as possible the principle behind the Scripture, then take that principle and

RIGHTLY apply it to today's culture. This is particularly difficult when it is not our own culture, as with cross-cultural mission work. We think we know how something we teach or preach will be understood by and should be applied to our audience, only sometimes to find out we are very wrong. *Example: Presbyterian missionaries came to a group of Sioux Indians in Canada who were led by a chief called Big Hunter. Many of the Sioux embraced the Christian teachings, including Big Hunter who wanted to become a Christian. He had multiple wives as was common among the Sioux leaders, so the missionaries told him he had to put away all of his wives except one in order to become a Christian. After a long struggle because he loved his wives, he at last determined to obey. Not knowing how to arrange for this, he hanged all of them except one. Then he came to the missionaries and told them that he had done as they demanded. When they heard how he had "put them away", they drove him out as a murderer. Big Hunter despaired of ever becoming a Christian and hence lived as a heathen until his death, even though his children became Christians. Though the missionaries were teaching their converts God's laws and desires, they didn't understand how their teachings would be applied by those converts because they didn't understand their culture. They also did not allow the Holy Spirit to do the work of conviction after regeneration regarding which changes needed to take place in that culture. Instead, they demanded obedience to specific laws that they deemed most important based on their own culture. (From *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, by Roland Allen, pp. 65-66).*

FURTHER STUDY OF BIBLICAL DIRECTIVES

As we read the epistles of the New Testament, we cannot help but notice the great number of commands and requests made by the authors of those reading their letters. Are these commands meant to be obeyed by all Christians everywhere? Most evangelicals don't ask women to wear head coverings when they are praying in church nor expect Christians to return to slave-holding just so that slaves can obey their masters. How do we tell the difference between a culture-bound directive and a timeless, trans-cultural one?

First, we need to understand what issues the biblical writers were addressing when they originally wrote those directives. Certainly the context surrounding the particular command will give us indications. Our understanding of the history and culture of the audience will also give us much important information to help in this process.

Let us take for example the head coverings for women. By researching in Bible encyclopedias or commentaries, we will discover that women in the Eastern Mediterranean area during the first century covered their hair when they got married. Since the hair represented the chief element of female beauty at that time and in that

general culture, conservative ethnic groups such as the Jews believed that only a husband should view his wife's hair. Uncovered hair by a married woman was thus understood to represent seduction. Conversely, virgins and prostitutes were expected not to cover their heads since they were looking for men. In addition, wealthy women among the Greek elite would have their hair elaborately fashioned and wear their coiffures uncovered even in public worship, possibly exacerbating tension between wealthier and poorer women. Women who covered their heads would thus view uncovered women as a threat while uncovered women would view the covering custom as restrictive. Women did not have short hair in this time period; any woman with a shaved head was seen as totally disgraced.

We know that Paul on principle would have opposed behavior that could appear seductive to certain groups and possibly bring dishonor to one's family and spouse, as well as opposing anything overtly ostentatious or causing class division/disunity in the church.

How would this have application to us today? Certainly viewing a woman's uncovered head no longer represents seduction in our general American culture nor is it a sign of a prostitute. As far as ostentation is concerned, there was a period in American history when hats covering women's heads (not uncovered hair) became ostentatious objects used to attract attention and reinforce class distinctions. Covering or uncovering one's head no longer holds the same meaning as it did back in the time of Jesus and Paul.

It certainly can become more difficult to discern accurate contemporary analogies for transcultural principles as our present-day cultures move further and further from biblical cultures. Yet there were differences even among the cultures present in the Greco-Roman world at the time of Christ as indicated above in regard to Jewish vs. Greek understandings of hair adornment. This is true for us today as well. As an example, in our **American culture** the low-cut dress might be an issue in regard to seductive activity, representing a woman who is attracting attention to herself in unhealthy ways. However, in **Papua New Guinea** a bare-breasted woman raises no eyebrows whatsoever while a bare knee is considered scandalous. We need to be aware that interpreters and communities will differ on specific cases of what is analogous and what is not, but most will agree on the principles of interpretation outlined below. That we sometimes arrive at different conclusions using the same methods reinforces the need for charity on these secondary issues and reliance on the Holy Spirit to guide us into truth for our particular faith community and away from inappropriate judgment of other Christians. (Some of the above from the article "Veils, Kisses, and Biblical Commands" by Craig S. Keener in *Christianity Today*, Oct. 26, 1998, p. 90.)

The following process is one approach to help us decipher correct application of Biblical directives to our time and culture. I hope it will be a helpful tool for you!

1. Specify the original directive (the specific command or request). Was this original directive meant as a one-time personal directive and not meant to present a principle for many Christians to follow? If only a one-time directive, you do not need to proceed any further in this process.
2. If the directive is based upon a principle meant for many Christians to follow, what is the principle behind the directive? Be aware that sometimes a directive is a principle so the wording may be quite similar for both. Also, there may be more than one principle in a particular passage.
3. Is that principle only meant for that time and culture (time-bound) or is it a timeless principle meant for all Christians transculturally? If only a time-bound principle, you do not need to proceed any further in this process.
4. If the principle is meant for all Christians throughout time, study the cultural equivalent today that would properly express the timeless principle. Warning: do not use one's general culture to answer this issue, as God may be calling Christians to an expression that would be counter-cultural to our contemporary culture. Then proceed with parts (a) and (b) below:
 - a. Would today's behavioral application be the same as the original directive? If so, please restate that directive and how it might be carried out today by Christians; you do not need to proceed with answer (b). If not, explain why not and proceed to (b).
 - b. Would the original directive be inappropriate or anachronistic today? If the behavioral expression of the principle should be changed, what would be an equivalent **within your particular culture** that would still express the godly principle behind the directive?

AN EXAMPLE:

1 Cor 11:2-16

1. *The directive is that Christian women should wear head coverings over their hair when praying in public worship. This was not a personal directive but was given for all Christian women in Corinth. It is assumed to be valid for all Christian women in the Greco-Roman empire though it is not stated in other letters.*
2. *The principle is that propriety in dress when in public is important for Christians.*
3. *This principle is important for all Christians and is timeless.*
4.
 - a. *Today's behavioral application would not be the same as when Paul wrote his letter. Having women's hair uncovered in public does not indicate anything negative about those women and does not cause disunity among Christians in church services in America.*
 - b. *In American churches, a low-cut dress being worn by a woman or very tight clothing being worn by either men or women might be considered provocative.*

If we are dealing with the wealthy drawing attention to their wealth, then the wearing of a great deal of gold jewelry by either men or women could be considered inappropriate in church.

exercise on PRINCIPLE ANALYSIS

THREE SIMPLE AND PRACTICAL STEPS FOR DETERMINING LEGITIMATE CORPORATE APPLICATION OF ANY SCRIPTURE

1. list the life issues of the passage

What aspects of life is the passage really concerned about?

First identify all potential life issues, then ask:

- Which issues are central and which are peripheral?
- Which issues are clearly specified and which are questionable?
- How are these issues still active in the lives of your audience today?

2. clarify the nature of the application in the passage itself

A. usually two kinds: descriptive/in order to inform the audience AND/OR prescriptive/in order to direct-command the audience.

Passage may have both aspects – it helps to determine which ones are present

B. usually two general areas: faith/belief AND/OR action/practice

Which is being emphasized in the passage and how do you know that?

3. clarify the audience to whom the author was speaking

personal OR corporate

- Can that differentiation be made from the passage itself?
- What kinds of individuals (believers or unbelievers/parents or children, etc.)?
- What kinds of groups (church; nation; particular profession; social group)?

--With these three steps complete, try to decide what one **application is most central** to and follows most naturally from the passage, then how that application from ancient times would be most soundly understood in your culture today.

--In presenting your sermon/teaching, decide what your audience/congregation needs to know in order to understand this valuable application. Do not overload them with the details and peripheral information you obtained through your thorough study but **keep it simple and truthful to the text**. Differentiate for your congregation which of your insights are only possibly or probably accurate vs. which are definite.

--a preacher's task is often to comfort the afflicted or afflict the comfortable. Deciding on **the focus and aim** of your sermon will help you decide how to proceed with its content.

--the more time you spend **in prayer** about your audience, the more likely you will be able to prepare an application that will communicate a valuable message to your audience.

ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is vital to our hermeneutical task. The following summarizes what many believe to be important aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit in interpretation:

1. The Holy Spirit does not give new revelation on a par with Scripture. *Cults today may disagree with this, such as the Mormons, for example.*
2. He does not guarantee that our interpretations are infallible.
3. He does not usually give one person new insights that no one else has ever had.
4. Many non-Christians can apply sound hermeneutics to understand the meaning of Scripture; without the Spirit, however, they refuse to apply it adequately to their lives.
5. Spiritual devotion on the part of the interpreter is crucial; lack of spiritual preparation can hinder correct interpretation.
6. There is no substitute for diligent study, as the Spirit uses that as well.
7. The Spirit does not usually override common sense and logic; we are to use them for God's glory. *(This is especially true about information and context.)*
8. He does provide a dynamic comprehension of the significance of and truths in Scripture through illumination, when we are obedient to the Word.
9. He does not insure comprehensive biblical understanding nor does He make all parts of the Bible equally clear.

THE CRUCIAL ELEMENTS

In short, the five crucial elements for proper interpretation and application are:

- 1) salvation / faith
- 2) spiritual maturity (including obedience)
- 3) diligent study
- 4) common sense and logic
- 5) humble dependence on the Spirit for discernment

***Lecture:* THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANON**

The word originally meant "reed," but developed a metaphorical meaning of "standard" like a ruler, measuring rod against which we measure our faith and practice. The canon are those books accepted by believers as divinely inspired, authoritative, the standard that governs belief and conduct, "Holy" Scripture. We need to understand that there existed a process over time by which the books of the canon were brought together and recognized as canon by the believing community. The Bible did not suddenly come down from heaven complete and in its final form, directly from God!

OT

Have students look at the OT Canon chart in their Student Handbook.

Canon of the Old Testament

<u>Hebrew Bible (24)</u>	<u>English Bible (Protestant) (39)</u>	<u>English Bible (Catholic) (46)</u>
TORAH (5) Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	LAW (5) Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	LAW(5) Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy
PROPHETS (8) Former Prophets (4) Joshua Judges 1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings Latter Prophets Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel The Twelve Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	HISTORY(12) Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther POETRY(5) Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon MAJOR PROPHETS(5) Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel MINOR PROPHETS (12) Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	HISTORY (14) Josue (Joshua)* Judges Ruth 1 Kings (1 Samuel) 2 Kings (2 Samuel) 3 Kings (1 Kings) 4 Kings (2 Kings) 1 Paralipomenon (1 Chr) 2 Paralipomenon (2 Chr.) Esdras-Nehemias (Ezra, Neh.) Tobias (Tobit) Judith Esther POETICAL AND WISDOM (7) Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Canticle of Canticles Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) PROPHETICAL LITERATURE(20) Isaias (Isaiah) Jeremias (Jeremiah) Lamentations Baruch Ezechiel (Ezekiel) Daniel Osee (Hosea) Joel Amos Abdias (Obadiah) Jonas (Jonah) Micheas (Micah) Nahum Habacuc (Habakkuk) Sophonias (Zephaniah) Aggeus (Haggai) Zecharias (Zechariah) Malachias (Malachi) 1 Machabees (1 Maccabees) 2 Machabees (2 Maccabees)
WRITINGS (11) 'Emeth (Truth) (3) Psalms Proverbs Job Megilloth (Scrolls) (5) Song of Solomon Ruth Lamentations Ecclesiastes Esther Daniel Ezra-Nehemiah 1-2 Chronicles		

*Recent editions of the Catholic Bible and some recent Roman Catholic writers have conformed to the names as used in the RSV.

LaSor, William, David Hubbard, & Frederic Bush. Old Testament Survey. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996. page 605

Three official parts to the Hebrew Bible (*note first column on page*):

1) Torah or **Law** (5 first and oldest books – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy),

2) **Prophets** (Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi), and

3) **Writings** (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, 1-2 Chronicles).

These books are not called OT by Jews but usually referred to by the above names (Law, Prophets, Writings) or as the Jewish/Hebrew Scriptures or Bible.

1. We first must remember that oral transmission for the older books took place. Genesis, even if largely written down by Moses, was transmitted orally until his time. Quite likely most of the Torah not fixed in written form until later in Israel's history. Probably oral traditions and written texts existed side by side in earliest Israel.

2. The Law appears to have been fully written and already considered canonical by many at the time of Ezra's reading around 450 BC.

The Prophets were considered canonical by no later than 200 BC.

--Found in DSS Qumran and LXX

The Writings were more controversial as to canonicity.

--for example, controversy surrounded Esther and Song of Songs

--Yet all were canon by about AD 90 when a Jewish council at Jamnia met

--Many believe they were considered canonical before then

--were included in LXX (but so were other writings so this does not necessarily mean canonical) LXX=Septuagint.

Many Jewish scholars believe the 22 books were canon by mid 2nd cent BC; if so, Jews were agreed on canon by Jesus' day.

3. BUT this canonicity dealt with which books, not with precise wordings of each book – more than one set of wordings were circulating. LXX vs. the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT) is a good example of this. At the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls (around the time of Jesus) there were at least 3 and possibly 5 different recensions or forms of the OT. It is important for us to realize Jesus did not make an effort to specify that only one of those forms was the "true, inerrant" form so we should not be concerned by this.

4. The Jewish texts were written in Hebrew consonants only (*give example: RLGTDGT from R to L = "To God be the glory"*), no spaces or punctuation or vowels.

The consonants were very precisely transmitted for each particular recension but varied in words, verses, even sections from one recension to the next (book of Jeremiah is 1/8

shorter in the LXX than the MT). Even with this precision in transmission, errors did get introduced over time in texts. Modern scholars' work helps us to determine the most likely reading of the earlier texts.

Later history just after the time of Christ indicates that the Jewish leaders chose one particular set of manuscripts as the authoritative text for Judaism; this is what we today call the Masoretic text.

5. Note that we have **no original manuscripts**. The earliest complete collections of OT that we have today are dated from around AD 400 and are in Greek, not Hebrew. A complete OT in Hebrew is available to us from a much later time, around AD 900. The Dead Sea Scrolls give us almost complete individual books from around 100 BC to AD 50, some of which were based on a different text than the MT, closer to the LXX text.

LXX

1. *Look at the pdf file on the OT Canon.* First note that the order is different – the precise sequence of the books is not considered canonical. Now note differing numbers (because of differing combinations of books) but also note books that are apocryphal (Greek meaning = “hidden”) and deuterocanonical (2nd canon) of the Catholic Church. These were written after the time of Malachi, during the intertestamental period. These books include Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch, 1 and 2 Maccabees.

2. At the time of Christ, Jews did not accept the apocrypha as canon, since they were not believed to be inspired like the rest of the books, but they were found in the Septuagint. **The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.** This translation first took place around 200 BC with the Law, then later the Prophets were translated, and finally the Writings. The LXX was known to have existed as a unit by late 100s BC. Its name comes from a legend that 72 scholars wrote it in 72 days in Egypt (then the number was rounded off to 70). It became OT for early Christianity as their official Bible, since most Gentile Christians knew no Hebrew. Paul used the LXX for many of his OT quotes. During the first few centuries of the Christian church, Christian translations of OT into other languages were usually made from the Greek LXX, not Hebrew.

3. Many discrepancies are found between the LXX and MT of certain books (such as with Samuel and Jeremiah). This seems to be the result of a different Hebrew recension (called the Vorlage) from the MT. Sometimes this Vorlage seems to be superior to the MT. *Example: in 1 Sam 14:41 the LXX preserves the authentic passage missing in the MT most likely through scribal error.*

LXX can be helpful in translating and understanding the Hebrew text because it gives more information than the Hebrew. Sometimes LXX seems to preserve a more original form than our present day MT. *Example: Gen 4:8 MT reads "Cain said to Abel". LXX*

completes the construction by adding Cain's words, "Let us go out to the fields."
Most original language studies of the Bible are still conducted using the MT, however.

4.No original manuscripts of the LXX

Oldest copies of the full Greek OT text are available from approx. AD 400, Hebrew OT text from 900, segments and individual books from the time of Christ (DSS).

NT

1. Reminder: Jesus only had OT and it was not called OT then or now by Jews.
By early church we added a new testament – not meaning a “will” but based upon Latin testamentum, translated from the Greek “diatheke” which means “covenant” – name first used by Tertullian around AD 200.

2. Last of NT writings begin to refer to earlier Christian works as Scripture:

1 Tim 5:18 re: Lk 10:7, 2 Pet 3:16 re: Paul’s letters

3. As with OT, Order of the books in the NT is not canonical but practical. Gospels begin, then Acts. Letters arranged first by author, then Paul’s are by decreasing length except when written to the same church, with his personal letters last.

Oral Transmission to Written Text

Though the NT epistles (the letters from Paul, Peter, etc.) were written immediately upon dictation or directly by the author himself and contain some of our earliest records about Jesus, the NT gospels experienced a period of oral transmission before the words were compiled and written by the evangelists. What were their reasons for writing down what had previously been transmitted orally?

- The speed and extent of the spread of the gospel message. It became impossible for the church to spread the word by oral means alone. There were not enough apostles and accredited teachers to go where Christianity had gone, but written words could be sent and read, studied, and copied.
- End of the apostolic age. As time went on the apostles and other eye-witnesses were aging and soon to pass from the scene. By AD 70 many had perished for their faith. There was a sense of urgency to record the material by those who knew it best.
- The delayed return of Christ. Though at first many had expected Christ’s immediate return, soon believers began looking to the future. Who knew when Christ would finally come? It only made sense to record the truth while it could still be verified.
- Instruction of new converts. There was a tremendous need for factual material to use for training new converts. In the first few generations of Christianity, few had any Christian background or heritage from which to draw. Most were new to both

the God of the Hebrews as well as to this man Jesus. Having the NT written gave a solid basis for their knowledge and their faith. (Elwell & Yarbrough, 74-75)

All NT books were believed to be written between AD 49-95, the Pauline letters first, the Gospels and Acts in the 60s-80s, and Revelation probably during the last decade of the century. All NT texts were written in Greek, as far as we are aware.

The Canon of the New Testament

Criteria for Acceptance. For many years after Christ's death and resurrection, Christians did not have all of the New Testament books we now have; they depended upon oral traditions about Jesus and the written OT. They received letters from leaders of the church, which they then shared with other churches in their area. But soon many writings were being circulated about Jesus and the church. The process of canonization was to determine which of these writings were genuine Scripture, and which were not. This process was to take a couple of hundred years before it was completed. There were certain criteria for acceptance which the early church councils followed. The canonical books were to have been written by an apostle or someone close to the apostles during the apostolic age (**apostolicity**). The books were preserved that have proven useful to a large number of churches from the earliest generations forward (**catholicity**). The theology and ethics promoted by each of the NT books fit together as a whole and did not contradict each other (**orthodoxy**). If we were to discover a new but seemingly genuine apostolic book today, such as a long lost epistle of Paul never before seen, how would these criteria be useful in assessing it?

Implication of Canonization. The implication of canonization is that God superintended and guided the early church in the evaluation and selection of various books so that the ones that did make it into the canon are truly inspired. Other writings, classified as sub apostolic such as the Apocrypha, do not meet the standards of canonicity, hence they are treated as non-inspired books. The canonized books of the NT portray the authoritative words of Jesus as revelation from God as well as the words of the apostles and their associates, which are also authoritative for our faith and practice. Why did the early church need to establish which writings were canon and which were not?

Importance of Establishing the Canon. At about AD 140 in Rome, a heretic by the name of Marcion adopted his own New Testament canon. It contained 10 Epistles of Paul (excluding the Pastorals) and only one Gospel, a mutilated version of Luke. He rejected the entire Old Testament and any writings dealing with the harsh God of the Jews. To counteract his growing but heretical influence, it was necessary for the Church to consider which writings were truly authoritative. At the other extreme from Marcion who cut out so much, many churches in the east (for example, the church in Alexandria, Egypt) were adding to Scripture, reading certain writings of the New Testament Apocrypha in their public services, giving them an air of authority. It was time for the

church to begin the process of deciding what would be canon and what would not, in order to stem heretical beliefs and practices. But which books should be included?

The Historical Process of Canonization – 2nd Century. Though the earliest church had only limited access to certain NT writings, the church fathers of the second century, such as Ignatius and Polycarp, show a wide acquaintance with Paul's Epistles, some of the Gospels, and I Peter and I John. For instance, Justin Martyr (A.D. 150) shows knowledge of the four Gospels, Acts, several of Paul's Epistles, Hebrews, I Peter, and Revelation. Lists of accepted books began to appear, the earliest available to us today being the Muratorian fragment from the second half of the second century. This was the first step in establishing canonicity.

Further controversies: During the third century there was considerable dispute about the canonicity of seven of our New Testament books. These were Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude and Revelation. The first list of our 27 books is found in the Easter letter of Athanasius, in AD 367. His views were subsequently ratified by the Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397), at which time it was decreed that only the 27 "canonical" books should be read in the churches. Only minor debates persisted after that time. From that day to this the canon of the New Testament has remained the same for the Roman Catholic Church and has been the Protestant canon since the Reformation.

Later Church history also affected the Bible in interesting ways:

Though earlier Latin translations were available, Rome sponsored Greek and Hebrew officially to be translated into Latin around 400 by the brilliant biblical scholar, Jerome – this became known as the Vulgate translation. From that time and throughout the Middle Ages, the study of the Bible in the original languages ceased in the Western church for all practical purposes. Not until Erasmus (after a Greek NT was published in 1516) was the idea again introduced in the Western church to study the original Greek copies rather than the Latin.

Constantinople and Eastern Orthodox Christianity kept the Greek and LXX texts all through this period.

The Text

1. We have **no original manuscripts**. Small fragments of the NT have been found from around AD 100. The earliest are on papyrus but later copies were written on leather parchment. Also at first they were written on scrolls like the OT, but became transcribed into book form, called a codex, because of the ease of reading a codex. Codex Sinaiticus from the 4th century contains all 27 NT books and Codex Vaticanus from sometime shortly after AD 367, includes the whole Bible in Greek. Codex Alexandrinus contains most of the Bible in Greek from first half of 5th cent AD.

2. Greek lettering at first all capitals, with no spaces or punctuation,

give example:

*INTHEBEGINNINGWASTHEWORDANDTHEWORDWASWITHGODANDTHEWORD
DASGODHEWASINTHEBEGINNINGWITHGODALLTHINGSAME...*

3. Transmission The NT was not as carefully transmitted at first as the Hebrew OT since many of its "books" were only letters with wide appeal. These letters needed copies made quickly so they could be sent to other churches as soon as possible since they were also interested in reading what had been written by Paul, Peter, John, etc.

5366 Greek manuscripts. 200,000 variants in 10,000 places:

Most variants are only spelling or style changes, hence the significance of errors are miniscule and none affects major issues of doctrine.

4. Later additions

There appears to be sections in our present NT that were not found in the earliest writings. For example, what about the section in Jn 7:53-8:11, the story of the woman caught in adultery? Or the ending of Mark after 16:8 – we now know that this is an addition by a later scribe, as it is definitely not in the earlier manuscripts.

What is important for the church is that no doctrine of orthodox Christianity rests solely on textually-disputed passages such as these. *(though sometimes a section of these may become foundational to a practice, such as snake handling by certain Christians is based on Mk 16:18)*

We can understand how important it is to determine as close to possible the original texts and study them in detail rather than studying later additions or errors. Those scholars who are seeking to determine the earliest texts are participating in Textual Criticism.

A final reminder:

OUR GOAL AND PURPOSE

Our goal in hermeneutics is to determine the historical meaning of a text, the meaning the original writer meant to communicate to his original audience. Ultimately we want to discern God's message accurately, avoid or dispel misconceptions or erroneous perspectives and conclusions about the Bible, and be able to accurately apply the Bible's message to our lives.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Prepared by Dr. Mary Spaulding

BASIC STEPS FOR INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

- Observation – looking at the facts contained in the passage and what is happening.
- Interpretation – determining the text's meaning and purpose.
- Application – discovering the relevance of this passage for contemporary faith and life.

PRAYER

Always begin and end your time of study in prayer.

OBSERVATION

1. Confirm the pericope (literary unit).
2. Read and compare.
 - a. Read the entire book.
 - b. Read the section (larger than the pericope) several times.
 - c. Compare different translations of the section.
3. Ask questions of the text itself.
Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

INTERPRETATION

HISTORICAL-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

1. Determine the general historical and cultural milieu of the writer and his audience.
 - a. Determine the general historical circumstances of the book. What was taking place at this time in history in this part of the world?
 - b. Be aware of cultural circumstances and norms that add meaning to or clarify given actions or situations. Where was it written and how does its general cultural setting affect its writing?
 - c. Were there any social aspects of the culture of the time that are important to know?
2. Determine the specific historical-cultural milieu of the writer and his audience.
 - b. Who was the author? What was his spiritual background and experience?
 - c. To whom was he writing? What do we know about the audience?
 - d. What can be determined about the dating of the writing? How does this impact our understanding of its meaning?
3. Describe and explain any specific historical-cultural issues regarding events, customs, or people presented in the passage itself.

4. Conclusion: How does the historical-cultural analysis of the passage shed light on its meaning?

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

1. What was the writer's purpose (intention) in writing this particular book?
 - a. Note explicit statements or repeated phrases.
 - b. Observe exhortative or hortatory sections.
 - c. Observe issues that are omitted or focused upon.
2. Understand how the specific passage fits into its context.
 - a. Identify the major blocks of material in the book (the outline) and show how they fit into a coherent whole.
 - b. Show how the passage fits into the flow of the author's argument or narrative.
 - i. What is the theme of the preceding verses, the theme of the text itself, and the theme of the following verses?
 - ii. What is the overall theme of the immediate context?
 - iii. How does the structure and theme of this passage relate to the flow of the author's plan and purpose for the book?
3. Conclusion: How does the context of the passage shed light on its meaning?

LITERARY ANALYSIS

1. Identify the general literary genre of the book and literary form(s) of the specific passage (dialogue, monologue, narrative, etc.).
2. Identify the natural divisions of the passage. This usually involves developing an outline for the passage.
3. Identify important connecting words between paragraphs and sentences; show how they aid in understanding the author's progression of thought.
4. Analyze the syntax (sentence structure) to show how it contributes to the understanding of the passage.
 - b. Study the structure of each sentence in the text – the main statement (subject, verb, direct object) and subordinate clauses.
 - c. Analyze important verbs in the text as to their contextual meaning.
 - d. Look at connectives, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns for any additional light they might shed on the meaning of each sentence.
 - e. Identify the following specific literary forms, if present: similes, metaphors, personifications, symbols, proverbs, etc.
5. Determine what the individual words mean.
 - b. Select key words for study.
 - c. Identify the multiple meanings a word possessed in its time and culture.
 - d. Study which meanings this particular author used in his writings.
 - e. Determine the single meaning intended by the author in this particular context.
6. Conclusion: How does the literary analysis shed light on the meaning of your passage?

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

1. Analyze the passage to determine its theological content.
 - a. Determine the main doctrinal or theological theme of this passage if present.
 - b. What are the background circumstances that gave rise to this doctrinal teaching? Why is it important to the original audience?
 - c. Trace the substance and sequence of ideas within the passage about this doctrine.
 - i. List the facts about the doctrine in the order they appear.
 - ii. Label each fact by giving it its doctrinal name.
 - iii. Discuss the significance of the facts and/or events of the passage for this area of theology. Also discuss whether the doctrine is implicit or explicit in the passage.
 - iv. Discuss why this material is included at this point. What is the author's purpose in using this doctrine here in his writing?
 - v. Develop an outline that shows how the doctrine is presented in the passage.
2. Determine the theological meaning the passage possessed for its original recipients in light of their knowledge at the time.
3. Identify the additional knowledge about this topic which is available to us now because of later revelation:
 - a. Where and how is the doctrine discussed later in Scripture?
 - b. How does this passage contribute to the solution of doctrinal questions raised by other Scriptures? Does the passage raise difficulties for other doctrines? These questions lead us to:

BIBLICAL ANALYSIS

1. Analyze the passage's relation to the rest of Scripture.
 - a. How is this passage (and its issues/message) similar or dissimilar to other passages in Scripture?
 - b. Does this passage use other passages of Scripture and how does it do so?
 - c. Where else in Scripture is this passage used and how is it used there?
2. Analyze the passage's importance for understanding Scripture.
 - a. Does the passage affect the meaning or value of other passages in ways that may cross literary or historical lines?
 - b. What would be lost or incomplete in the general biblical message if this passage did not exist?

SECONDARY LITERATURE

Now that you have determined your own understanding of the passage, it is important to check with other authorities as to their interpretation.

1. What other insights do you gain from their work?
2. How do these insights affect the conclusions to which you have already come?

3. Should these insights be incorporated into your work to give a more complete picture of your passage?

SUMMARIZE THE ORIGINAL MESSAGE

Integrate all the collected material into your best assessment of the message communicated in the text of your passage that the original author intended to convey to his/her original audience.

APPLICATION

Your final step is to find relevant application for your own time, location, and people.

1. List the life issues of the passage and determine which are central and clearly presented.
2. Clarify the nature of the main issue(s) within the passage:
 - a. Descriptive or prescriptive?
 - b. Dealing with belief or practice?
 - c. Implicit or explicit in the text?
3. Clarify the audience to whom the author was speaking:
 - a. Personal or corporate?
 - b. What is known about the individuals or the groups?
4. Locate an application of the life issue that is of relevance to your audience, taking into account the nature of the issue and the kind of audience to which it was originally addressed.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION EXERCISE ANSWERS

Dr. Mary Spaulding

THE GREATEST STORY NEVER READ Biblical literacy in the church

Please place these Bible events/people in chronological order:

This exercise is just for fun. After students complete exercise, have them compare their scores for each section (percentage to the left) with Wheaton College freshmen (indicated by a "W") and with the scores of a youth group at a large church (indicated by a "Y").

W=66% correct:

The death of Christ	_____	<i>Abraham</i>
Abraham	_____	<i>prophets</i>
Pentecost	_____	<i>Christ</i>
Old Testament prophets	_____	<i>Pentecost</i>

W=50% correct:

Exile of Judah to Babylon	_____	<i>Isaac</i>
Isaac's birth	_____	<i>Moses</i>
Saul's death	_____	<i>Saul</i>
Moses in Egypt	_____	<i>Exile</i>

Y = 20% correct:

Solomon	_____	<i>Adam</i>
Moses	_____	<i>Moses</i>
Adam	_____	<i>David</i>
David	_____	<i>Solomon</i>

Y = 15% correct:

Paul's life:

First missionary journey	_____	<i>Stoning</i>
Prisoner in Rome	_____	<i>Road</i>
The road to Damascus	_____	<i>first missionary journey</i>
The stoning of Stephen	_____	<i>prisoner</i>

Please locate the following events in their respective books of the Bible:

W=66%/Y=20%

Paul's travels and missionary trips are found in _____ *Acts*

W=50%

The Christmas story is found in (name either book) _____ *Mt and Lk*

W=50%

The OT Passover event is found in _____ *Exodus*

The story of Jacob and his sons is found in _____ *Genesis*

Y=33%

The Sermon on the Mount is found in _____ *Matthew*

Washing the disciples' feet by Jesus is found in _____ *John*

HOW OUR PERSPECTIVES AFFECT OUR INTERPRETATIONS

(from the Nazarene Clergy Development module)

This exercise is meant to help students be more aware of how personal perspectives / pre-understandings affect one's interpretation of Scripture. You can split your students up into 4 groups, two to discuss exercise 1 and two to discuss exercise 2.

Exercise 1

Group 1: You should imagine you are a group of poor plantation laborers on a large coffee plantation in Central America. You are poorly paid, have no health benefits, and work long hours at back-breaking work. However, this is the only employment available within two days journey, walking from your home.

Group 2: You should imagine you are upper-level managers in a large coffee production and distribution company based in the United States. Profits have been dropping due to increased shipping costs, and you've heard the workers on the coffee plantations in Central America are agitating for higher pay.

Each group should now read Isaiah 3:13-15.

1. Identify your feelings as you read this passage from the perspective of your group.
2. What perspective of God arises from this passage for you?
3. How do you want to interpret this passage?
4. In what ways can you identify the impact of your group's (imagined) social context on your reading of the passage?
5. Discuss with the class as a whole the impact of the reader's perspective on interpretation.

Exercise 2

Group 1: Imagine you are a group of traditional, older men who have thought all your lives that a woman's place is in the home, a wife should not work outside the home, and the husband is the head of the house.

Group 2: Imagine you are a group of young women who have been called by God to pastoral ministry. You know there are people—both men and women—who oppose your calling.

Each group should now read 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

1. Identify your feelings as you read this passage from the perspective of your group.
2. What perspective of God arises from this passage for you?
3. How do you want to interpret this passage?
4. In what ways can you identify the impact of your group's (imagined) social context on your reading of the passage?
5. Discuss with the class as a whole the impact of the reader's perspective on interpretation.

FORMS OF JEWISH INTERPRETATION

Choose from the following:

Peshat: takes the words of Scripture exactly as they were written in a simple, straightforward way

Pesher: describes the meaning and finds fulfillment of an Old Testament text in light of the eschatological perspective of the contemporary audience

Midrash: uses other passages to explain the meaning of the passage under study

Allegory: looks for the spiritual meaning behind any and every literal meaning of the text

1. Compare Ex 21: 2 with Dt 15: 12-18.
 - How are they different and how are they similar? *Both on same subject, but Dt much longer than Ex*
 - How is Dt expanding upon the information in Exodus? *Dt gives much more detailed information on what to do when setting a kinsman free*
 - Which kind of exegesis are we witnessing here? *Peshat*
2. Read Rom 3: 9-18. The following OT references are found in this text: v. 10 = Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3 /v. 13 = Ps 5:9; 140:3 /v. 14 = Ps 10:7 / v. 15 = Isa. 59:7f / v. 18 = Ps 36:1
 - What is Paul doing with these OT references? *Using OT to support his position that both Jews and Greeks are under sin*
 - Which kind of exegesis are we witnessing here? *Midrash*

3. Read Jn 12: 37-41.
 - How does the author use the two quotes from Isaiah to shed light on Jesus and those responding to him? *They are fulfilling the passage in Isaiah. Jesus is the person of whom Isaiah spoke.*
 - Which kind of exegesis are we witnessing here? *Pesher*
4. Read Gal 4: 22-31.
 - How is Paul using the Genesis story of Sarah and Hagar? *To explain the difference between believers in Jesus and Jews.*
 - What does Hagar represent? *Jerusalem which are the Jews in bondage*
What does Sarah represent? *The free sons of the promise who believe in Jesus*
 - Which kind of exegesis are we witnessing here? *Allegory*

CONCORDANCE AND WORD DICTIONARY WORKSHEET

(Use Concordances and Dictionaries or distribute copies of resources from Strong's Concordance/Vine's Dictionary found in the Appendix for class use.)

(G-K) = Goodrick and Kohlenberger (used for NIV) (S) = Strong's (used for KJV)

I. The Old Testament

1. Look up Ecclesiastes 1:2. Note the word "meaningless."(NIV) or "vanity" (KJV)
2. Look up that word in your concordance and note its number here: **2039 (G-K) 1892 (S)**
3. Look up the word by its number at the back of the Hebrew section of the concordance. What other English words are listed there? This is your range of meaning for that Hebrew word. List some of the words here:

NIV: fleeting/futile/in vain/dishonest/worthless/vapor/breath (G-K)

KJV or NASB: vanity/delusion/emptiness/fraud/nothing/useless (S)

4. Copy the transliterated word here: **hebell (G-K) hebel (S)**
5. Is the number Strong's or G-K? Depending upon the word dictionary you will be using, look up the proper reference number for it and note it here:

6. Look up that number or the transliterated word in the back of your word dictionary and note the page numbers associated with the word here: **p. 1005 in NIDOTTE which is based on Goodrick and Kohlenberger numbering system (G-K)**
7. Now look at those pages. What additional information do you find in the dictionary on that word, especially with regards to Ecclesiastes? (summarize below) **Metaphor for temporary and fleeting (G-K)**

8. Now look back at Ecclesiastes. Why did the **translator** choose the particular English word that he did for that passage? Could any of the other English terms have also fit the context? If so, which ones?

Yes: vapor, fleeting (G-K)

emptiness (S)

Which terms would clearly not fit the context?

dishonest (G-K)

fraud (S)

8. The same Hebrew word is used in Proverbs 13:11, for "dishonest." (NIV) Could any other English words from the concordance list fit the context of Proverbs as well?

Not really (G-K)

Could the word "meaningless" be used in Prov 13:11?

No! (G-K)

II. New Testament

1. Look up Romans 14:15. Note the word "destroy." (NIV or KJV)
2. Look up that word in your concordance and note its number here: **660 (G-K)**

622 (S)

3. Look up the word by its number at the back of the concordance. What other English words are listed there? This is your range of meaning for that Greek word. List some of the words here:

NIV: lose/destroy/drown/lost/perish/kill/die (G-K)

KJV or NASB: destroy/bring to an end/dying/lose/put to death/pass away/ruin/perish (S)

4. Copy the transliterated word here: **apollymi (G-K) apollumi (S)**
5. Is the number Strong's or G-K? If Strong's, look up the G-K number in the back of the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (NIDNTT) and note it here: **660 (G-K)**
6. Look up the word by its G-K number in NIDNTT and look at those pages. What additional information do you find in the dictionary on that word? (summarize it below)

Must follow reference to a different page number.

NIDNTT does not mention Rom 14:15 but discusses Paul's use of its meaning: "destruction for all eternity" (G-K)

7. Now look back at the passage in the New Testament. Why did the translator choose the particular English word that he did for that passage? ***Felt Paul was emphasizing how one Christian can cause extreme damage to another (G-K)*** Could any of the other terms have also fit the context? If so, which ones? ***Lose (G-K)***

Which terms would clearly not fit the context?

Kill, drown, perish (G-K)

8. The same Greek word is translated in Mt 8:25 (NIV) as "drown." Which other English words from the concordance list could fit the context of Mt as well?

Perish, die (G-K)

Could the word "destroy" be used in Mt 8:25? Why is "drown" better?

Possibly "be destroyed" Drown is better because the event takes place on a boat. (G-K)

OUR BIBLE AIDS

Here are three interesting quotes from a book by Ched Myers, et al, *Say To This Mountain*. How would you research the issues highlighted in **BOLD** further, in order to verify or refute the statements being made?

1. (In Mark 10:21), the verb implies that it is the rich man who is in debt – to the poor he has defrauded. **"Get up," pleads Jesus, using the verb associated in Mark with healing episodes.** "Sell what you have and give to the poor." The man must dismantle the system from which he derives his privilege. (p. 126)

We would want to do a word study. "Get up" is Strong's number 5217. When checking a word dictionary/lexicon, one finds that the Greek word hupago means to go away (leaving someone's presence), to go (in a certain direction), and it is used especially of Christ and his going to the Father through his death. It is not associated with healing episodes in Mark in the following locations: Mk 6:38; 11:2; 14:13; 14:21; 16:7

2. Historically, therefore, the fact that Pilate signed off on Jesus' crucifixion, which was **the Roman penalty reserved for those convicted of insurrection** can **only** mean that he judged Jesus to be a substantial threat to imperial security. (p. 193)

Look "crucifixion" or "cross" up in a Bible dictionary. One can learn that it was a punishment of slaves usually for rebellion but often at caprice. Used for robbers,

especially in the provinces. Also excessively used for seditious provincials during times of revolt. It therefore can mean more than just the penalty of insurrection.

3. (Mk 5:1-13) This unlikely story offers a symbolic portrait of how Roman imperialism was destroying the hearts and minds of a colonized people. If the synagogue demoniac spoke “under the influence” of the scribal establishment, then the Gerasene demoniac represents Rome’s military occupation of the land and its people. That this episode is a kind of political cartoon critical of Roman imperialism is confirmed by the recurring military terminology that follows. Legion begs to be sent into **a “band” of pigs (5:11), a Greek term usually referring to a group of military recruits.** (p. 59)

Greek word study in two major Greek lexicons (including BAGD) reveals ‘band’ means a collective for a group of animals, or a herd. It is not a Greek term usually referring to a group of military recruits.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

Here are a few examples we will study in order to explore the importance of the surrounding context to a particular passage (#1-3 from Virkler, *Hermeneutics*, pp. 90-91).

1. A Christian author was discussing the way to discover God’s will for one’s life and made the point that inner peace was an important indicator. The sole verse he used to anchor his argument was Colossians 3:15 (“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts”). Would you agree with his use of this verse to make this point? *No* Why or why not?
This passage is dealing with relationships among Christians. We should be at peace and love each other. It is not speaking of determining God’s will for one’s life.

2. A popular Christian counselor, talking about the problem some people have of saying yes when they mean no and then finally exploding in anger because of all the pent-up frustration, said:

“Always being Mr. Nice-Guy, and then turning your real feelings into stomach acid is self-defeating. You may get what you want – for a moment - by erupting in anger at others, but you don’t like yourself for it.

Consider putting out what you’re feeling in simple honesty. As Jesus put it, “Let your yes be a clear yes, and your no, no.” Anything else spells trouble.” Do you agree with this author’s use of Scripture (paraphrase of Mt 5:33-37) to make this point? *No* Why or why not?

This passage is not talking about hiding your true feelings. It is talking about a common practice of the time, making vows. When a vow was made, it was associated with different levels of commitment for it being carried out. If one vowed to do something with a lower level of commitment, it wasn't much of a sin to break that vow. If one vowed to do something with a higher level of commitment, then it was expected to be completed. Jesus was saying we should not make different kinds of vows but always keep our word without having to bother with different levels of vows.

3. A Christian man lost his job during the economic recession of 1974-5. He and his wife interpreted Romans 8:28 ("All things work together for good...") to mean that he lost his job in order that God might give him a better-paying one. Consequently, he turned down several lower- or equal-paying job opportunities and remained on unemployment for over two years before returning to work. Do you agree with his way of interpreting this verse? *No* Why or why not?

Romans 8:29 completes the idea that all things work together for good to those who love Christ.. in order to conform us to the image of His Son. So it is not necessarily a good by our definition (in this case, a higher paying job) but may even be divine discipline to help us become more like Christ.

4. A well-known Christian author disagrees with other Christians who believe that the last verse in Judges (21:25: "everyone did what was right in his own eyes") indicates that something terrible or wrong had taken place. The author goes on to state: "to do as one pleases is the ideal condition of humanity, what is often called 'freedom,' and does not imply wrongdoing at all. In the book of Judges, doing what was right in one's own eyes was not opposed to doing what is right in God's eyes, but opposed to doing what some governmental official saw as right." How might the context of the preceding events in chapters 19-21 indicate that this author is not properly understanding Judges 21:25?

A review of the events of chapters 19-21 will reveal the horrendous depravity of the people at that time. Those events could not possibly be what God would want for His people.

CAN YOU GUESS THE GENRE?

In the blank next to each quote, write in one of the following genre names:

Old Testament

Prophecy

Wisdom

Narrative

Law

Poetry

New Testament

Letter (epistle)

Gospel

Revelation

Theological History (Acts)

1. Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. *letter*
2. Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, so that the Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. *narrative*
3. An arrogant man stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the Lord will prosper. *wisdom*
4. And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. *Theological history*
5. Concerning all the animals which divide the hoof, but do not make a split hoof, or which do not chew cud, they are unclean to you: whoever touches them becomes unclean. *law*
6. And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war... *Revelation*
7. I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. *poetry*
8. After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. *Gospel*
9. For thus says the Lord, "The whole land shall be a desolation, yet I will not execute a complete destruction." *prophecy*

PSALM FORMS

Psalms follow patterns that can be classified as follows:

laments or complaints, which almost always contain an element of hope or trust in God

songs of thanksgiving for something God has done

hymns of praise, praising God for who He is

royal psalms about the king

liturgies used in worship

wisdom psalms

Please classify the following psalms according to the above forms. If the psalm is a lament or thanksgiving, then specify whether it is being spoken by an individual or by a community:

Ps 107:1-9 *thanksgiving - community*

Ps 13 *lament - individual*

Ps 1 *wisdom*

Ps 2 *royal*

Ps 30 *thanksgiving - individual*
 Ps 137 *lament - community*
 Ps 136 *liturgy (also communal thanksgiving)*
 Ps 104 *hymn of praise*

PROPHETIC FORMS

Please classify the following verses according to their prophetic form.

Forms:

- Prophecy of disaster
- Prophecy of salvation
- Woe speech
- Dirge or funeral lament
- Prophetic hymn
- Prophetic lawsuit
- Oracle against foreign nations
- Prophetic vision report
- Narratives, either vocation report/biography or divine instruction about symbolic actions and descriptions

1. The word of the Lord came to me saying, "Now the end is upon you, and I shall send My anger against you; I shall judge you according to your ways, and I shall bring all your abominations upon you." ***Prophecy of disaster***
2. Now you son of man, get yourself a brick, place it before you, and inscribe a city on it, Jerusalem. Then lay siege against it, build a siege wall, raise up a ramp, pitch camps, and place battering rams against it all around. ***Narrative - divine instruction***
3. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel. Again you shall take up your tambourines, and go forth to the dances of the merrymakers!
Prophecy of salvation
4. "For behold, I am going to arouse and bring up against Babylon a horde of great nations from the land of the north, and they will draw up their battle lines against her; from there she will be taken captive. ***Oracle against foreign nations***
5. Thus says the Lord, "Go and buy a potter's earthenware jar, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the senior priests. Then go out to the valley of Ben-hinnom, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell you...then you are to break the jar in the sight of the men who accompany you." ***Narrative - divine instruction***
6. Hear the word of the Lord and declare in the coastlands afar off, and say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock." For the Lord has ransomed Jacob and redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than he. ***Prophecy of salvation***

7. Hear this word which I take up for you as a dirge, O house of Israel, she has fallen, she will not rise again – the virgin Israel. She lies neglected on her land; there is none to raise her up. *Dirge/funeral lament*
8. Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure in the mountain of Samaria. *Woe speech*
9. And He said, "What do you see, Amos?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the Lord said to me, "The end has come to my people Israel." *Vision report*
10. His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise. His radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays flashing from His hand... *prophetic hymn*
11. Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, for the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land. *Prophetic lawsuit*
12. On the fifth of the month in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile, the word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the Lord came upon him. *Narrative – vocation report*

FIGURES OF SPEECH #1

Pick from the following list the figure of speech that is being used in each passage.

Simile

Metaphor

The LORD is my shepherd. I shall not be in want. Ps 23:1

_____ *metaphor*

Not so the wicked!

They are like chaff

That the wind blows away. Ps. 1:4

_____ *simile*

The LORD will march out **like a mighty man,**

Like a warrior he will stir up his zeal... Ps 42:13

_____ *simile*

Then Jesus declared, "**I am the bread of life.** He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." Jn 6:35

_____ *metaphor*

Keep me **as the apple of your eye**;
Hide me in the shadow of your wings. Ps 17:8

_____ *simile*

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, **like sheep without a shepherd**. Mt 9:36

_____ *simile*

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. Mt. 5:13

_____ *metaphor*

For **the LORD God is a sun and shield**; the LORD bestows favor and honor...
Ps 84:11

_____ *metaphor*

The following exercise is much more difficult than #1. This would only be used for an advanced class of students.

FIGURES OF SPEECH #2

Pick from the following list the figure of speech that is being used in each passage.

Hyperbole

Metonymy - substitution of words closely related mentally, usually based on a known relationship existing between them

Synecdoche - A more inclusive term is used for one less inclusive or vice versa. An individual for a class or a class for an individual. A singular for a plural or vice versa. A part stands for the whole.

Personification

Irony

Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, **but a sword**... Mt. 10:34

_____ *metonymy - sword has a strong association with war*

Then **Jerusalem** was going out to him, and all **Judea**, and all **the district** around the Jordan. Mt. 3:5

_____ *synecdoche*

_____ The "all" expressions *hyperbole*

You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! 1 Cor 11:19

_____ *irony*

Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed, each of whom **could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.** Judges 20:16

_____ *hyperbole*

Through patience a ruler can be persuaded,
And **a gentle tongue** can break a bone. Prov 25:15

_____ *metonymy - this is associated with voice*

So he (Potiphar) left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him there he did not concern himself with anything except **the bread** which he ate. Ex 39:6

_____ *synecdoche - bread stands for more generic term, food- a less inclusive term is used for a more inclusive one*

The **mountains** and the **hills** will break forth **into shouts of joy** before you, and all the **trees of the field will clap their hands.** Is 55:12

_____ *personification*

For **their feet** rush into sin,
They are swift to shed blood. Prov 1:16

_____ *synecdoche - feet actually means the whole man (part for the whole)*

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. John 19:14

_____ *irony*

So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how **the whole world** has gone after him!" John 12:19

_____ *hyperbole*

I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and **no sword** will pass through your land. Lev 26:6

_____ *metonymy*

The sea looked and fled; the Jordan turned back. Ps 114:3

_____ *personification*

I have poured out **my soul** before the LORD. 1 Sam 1:15

_____ *metonymy - doesn't mean actual soul, but desires and longings - close association of relationship and meaning*

And it came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; **either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.**" 1 Kings 18:27

_____ *irony*

They (the Jews) **have Moses and the Prophets...** Lk 16:29

_____ *metonymy - not the people but the books - close association between the names and what they stand for*

...Our brothers have made our hearts melt, saying, "The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and **fortified to heaven...**" Dt. 1:28

_____ *hyperbole*

The **land mourns**...the oil languishes. Joel 1:10

_____ *personification*

Cursed is the one who trusts in **man**,
Who depends on **flesh** for his strength

And whose heart turns away from the LORD. Jer 17:5

Man: _____ *synecdoche - man represents all humans*

Flesh: _____ *metonymy - means physical might*

PARALLELISM PRACTICE

Choose the kind of parallelism seen in each verse from the following list:

Synonymous
Antithetic
Synthetic
Chiasm

The memory of the righteous is blessed,
But the name of the wicked will rot. Prov 10:7 *antithetic*

O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD,
Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Ps 95:1 *synonymous*

We will not conceal them from their children,
But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.
78:4 **synthetic**

But my people did not listen to My voice;
And Israel did not obey Me. Ps 81:11 **synonymous**

When God heard, He was filled with wrath,
And greatly abhorred Israel;
So that He abandoned the dwelling place at Shiloh. 78:59-60 **synthetic**

For they provoked Him with their high places,
And aroused His jealousy with their graven images. 78:58 **synonymous**

For He has satisfied the thirsty soul,
And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good.
107:9 **synonymous** and **chiasm**

The wages of the righteous is life,
The income of the wicked, punishment. Prov 10:16 **antithetic**

Poor is he who works with a negligent hand,
But the hand of the diligent makes rich. Prov 10:4 **antithetic** and **chiasm**

O sing to the Lord a new song,
For He has done wonderful things. Ps 98:1 **synthetic**

GOD'S PROMISES?

Read the following passage from *The Power of a Praying Wife* by Stormie Omartian,
Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1997, p. 89:

When you have the fear of the Lord, God promises to:
deliver you from your enemies (2 Kings 17:39),
protect you from evil (Proverbs 16:6),
keep His eye on you (Psalm 33:18),
show you His mercy (Luke 1:50),
give you riches and honor (Proverbs 22:4),
supply everything you need (Psalm 34:9),
reveal all you need to know (Psalm 25:14),

bless your children and grandchildren (Psalm 103:17),
give you confidence (Proverbs 14:26),
a satisfying life (Proverbs 19:23),
longevity (Proverbs 10:27),
and the desires of your heart (Psalm 145:19).
What more could you ask?

What are the issues and problems associated with Omartian's statements? *She is sometimes conveying general wisdom statements or promises made to a specific group of people (2 Kings) as promises being made by God to all believers, which is not true. Do all Christians live a long life, are delivered from all their enemies, and are given riches and honor in this life? The answer is no.*

A man had a son, 25 years old, who was obviously far away from God in his walk. The man was convinced that it was only a matter of time before his son would return to the Lord, because he said, "God promises all Christians that if we raise our children according to His admonitions, they will return to Him. It says right in Proverbs: 'Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.'" So this father was sitting back, waiting until God fulfilled His promise and returned the son to a Christian walk. Is this man correct in his understanding of the proverb? *It is possible that God may have made a promise using that proverb for this man personally but it is not a promise made by God to all believers.*

EXERCISE ON PROVERBS

After each of the following proverbs, designate which kind of proverb it is:

Descriptive: then specify further if antithetic, comparative, numerical

Prescriptive: then specify further whether positive command or negative prohibition

A false witness will perish,
But the man who listens to the truth will speak forever. ***Descriptive Antithetic***

Like a dog that returns to its vomit
Is a fool who repeats his folly. ***Desc. Comparative***

Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. ***Desc. antithetic***

The rich and poor have a common bond,
The Lord is the maker of them all. *Desc.*

Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. *Presc. negative and positive*

Better is the poor who walks in integrity,
Than he who is crooked though he be rich. *Desc. comparative*

There are three things which are stately in their march,
Even four which are stately when they walk; *desc. numerical*

Like the legs which hang down from the lame,
So is a proverb in the mouth of a fool. *Desc. comparative*

A wise son makes a father glad,
But a foolish son is a grief to his mother. *Desc. antithetic*

Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise,
And apply your mind to my knowledge; *presc. positive*

Do not lust in your heart after her beauty
Or let her captivate you with her eyes... *presc. negative*

There are six things the Lord hates,
Seven that are detestable to him.... *Desc. numerical*

PARABLES *Mt 13:24-30*

1. Determine the purpose of the parable:
 - a. Check the immediate surrounding context of the passage for information on the reason for the parable. Describe below.

Descriptions of the kingdom of heaven gives us surprising ideas about how it grows and spreads on the earth.

- b. State any explicit references to the purpose of the parable. Is the explanation given by Jesus or by the author?

See vv. 36-43

- c. What do you determine is the general purpose of the parable?

To describe the kingdom of heaven

2. Are there any historical or cultural details that would help in our understanding?

List them here and research them if possible.

Fields were normally weeded in the spring but if weeds (tares=poisonous weed which was a kind of ryegrass known as darnel) discovered too late as in this story, one risked uprooting the wheat with them. Once fully grown, harvesters could cut wheat just below the head, leaving the shorter tares to be cut separately. Once dried, the darnel was useful as a fuel for burning.

3. Facts: use the following table to determine the main focus and which details are important to that focus vs. which details are only "local color."

<u>Physical story</u>	<u>Spiritual counterpart</u>
<u>Physical facts:</u> List characters and the facts indicated about each one.	<u>Spiritual facts:</u> List the corresponding spiritual facts if they are identifiable.
<i>1. sower of good seed</i>	<i>1. Son of Man</i>
<i>2. field</i>	<i>2. the world</i>
<i>3. the good seed</i>	<i>3. Sons of the Kingdom</i>
<i>4. tares</i>	<i>4. Sons of the evil one</i>
<i>5. enemy</i>	<i>5. Devil</i>
<i>6. reapers</i>	<i>6. angels</i>
<i>7. harvest</i>	<i>7. the end of the age</i>
<i>Men sleeping, enemy went away, the servants' offer to pull out weeds, etc. are all local color</i>	
<u>Physical principle:</u> State basic principle of facts above.	<u>Spiritual principle:</u> State corresponding spiritual principle.
<i>Weeds are permitted to grow along With wheat until harvest</i>	<i>kingdom will have both good and evil people living together until judgment at end of world</i>

4. Is there a surprise element in this parable? How does it help convey the main point?
That the weeds are allowed to remain. This conveys the main point that evil people are allowed to remain among the good until final judgment.

5. Study the points of view of each main character. What lesson is illustrated by each one that fits with the central thrust or focus of the parable?
An evil person may think he is getting away with evil but he will be cast into hell at the end.

The righteous may feel as if God does not care whether they do good but he does and they will be rewarded.

6. Based on the spiritual principle/meaning of the parable, what lesson should we learn from the parable for today?

Don't be surprised that both good and evil exist together on this earth. Don't give up heart that God is aware and will ultimately reward the faithful.

EXEGESIS OR EISEGESIS?

In John 15:1-11, Jesus speaks about the true vine. From this passage we can see that the following word pictures represent who?

True vine *Jesus*

Vinedresser *the Father*

Branch bearing fruit *followers who abide in Jesus*

Branch not bearing fruit *people who do not abide in Jesus*

What is the prerequisite for abiding in Jesus' love?

Keeping Jesus' commandments

What is the result of abiding in Jesus? (see v. 5 and v. 11)

Much fruit and joy, life in the vine

According to the following OT passages, what does the vine represent there?

Is 5:1-7, see especially v. 7

Jer 2:21

Ez 19:10-14

ALL OF THESE = ISRAEL

Hos 10:1

Ps 80:8-16

If this analogy is a clear understanding in the OT, this could indicate that in John, *Jesus* is replacing *Israel* as the vine of God.

To verify this statement one might look in John for other instances of Jesus replacing or fulfilling Jewish institutions, practices, and/or Jewish people. What do you find in the following passages? What or who is replacing/fulfilling what or who?

2:18-22 *Jesus is replacing the Jerusalem temple*

6:31-35, 49-51 *Jesus as the true bread out of heaven is fulfilling/replacing the temporary wilderness manna*

7:14, 37-39 *Holy Spirit is fulfilling the water of the Feast, which is only given once Jesus is glorified*

8:12 (see below) *Jesus fulfills the light ceremonies of the Feast by proclaiming himself light of the world*

Further information about the Feast of Tabernacles is helpful here, in that a major ceremony took place during the yearly Feast, involving the high priest pouring a large amount of water on the altar in the temple. There was also a strong emphasis on light through torch ceremonies at night during this Feast.

With this background information, do you feel that the True Vine analogy of Jesus replacing/fulfilling Israel fits well or does not fit with the rest of John? *It fits well with the rest of the Gospel*

A recent author has linked John's true vine with the church, that the vine is the church. What information from the passage itself supports this view and what information does not support this view? *Jesus is the true vine. The church is not the same as Jesus. If anything, the church might be the branches connected to the vine, but is not the vine itself.*

How would you find other NT passages that talk about the word "vine"?
Use a concordance and look up "vine"

Is there any other reference(s) in John to vines that might support this view?
no

Is there any passage in the epistles of John that support this view?
no

Is there any passage in the NT that supports this view?
no

The True Vine passage in John is based upon an "I am" statement made by Jesus. Do any of the other "I am" statements made in John support a switch of the identity of the vine from that of Jesus to that of the church? *no*

Bread of life 6:35 *Jesus*

Light of the world 8:12 *Jesus*

Gate or door 10:7 *Jesus*

Good shepherd 10:11 *Jesus*

Resurrection and life 11:25 *Jesus*

The way, the truth, and the life 14:6 *Jesus*

With this background information, do you feel that the association of the True Vine with the church is warranted? *no*

Stating that Jesus is the True Vine is accurate *exegesis* (exegesis or eisegesis).

Stating that the church is the True Vine is only *eisegesis* (exegesis or eisegesis).

SPECIAL LITERARY FORMS

(from Virkler, *Hermeneutics*, 208)

1. A hermeneutics textbook made the following points from its study of typology of the OT tabernacle: Linen means the Righteous One, Jesus. Brass/bronze is always a symbol of judgment. Silver is always the symbol of redemption. In the tabernacle the pure linen (hence, Jesus) was hung on the pillars of brass/bronze and was set in sockets of brass/bronze (judgment), but was held together with rods of silver hooks (redemption). Jesus could have come down from the cross, but He wouldn't. Our redemption held Him there (the silver hooks of redemption that held the linen to the brass/bronze). Is this valid typology? *No* Why or why not?

Silver much more commonly represented money, wealth, and value, not redemption.

Bronze was a common metal of the time - used for many items, not as valuable as gold.

Linen was common material for clothing, especially with the wealthy or important people.

Hence, these materials do not have the specific meaning the textbook claimed they had.

2. A minister preached a message from Isaiah 18:1-7. He said that although the original intent was for Ethiopia, according to the "double fulfillment" theory of prophecy, it could also legitimately be applied to the United States of America. Some of his points were: (1) v. 1 applies to the United States since it is one of the few countries with a bird as its national symbol; (2) v. 2 describes the United States as a strong and mighty nation; (3) v. 3 refers to the raising of the American flag on the moon; and (4) v. 5 warns us that judgment is coming for the United States. Is this a legitimate use of the text? Why or why not?

1) many countries have had birds for their national symbols

2) there have been many countries who have been considered strong and mighty through the centuries

3) mountains would have been the logical place to raise a standard or flag for any country. There is no indication in the text that this was the moon.

4) *there is judgment here, but there is nothing to indicate that it is for the USA. It is clearly being leveled at Ethiopia by several references within these verses (land of whirring wings, lying beyond the rivers of Cush, papyrus vessels, people who are tall and smooth, etc.)*

DENOTATIONS AND CONNOTATIONS

Place "+" next to those words with a positive connotation and "-" next to those words with a negative connotation in today's culture.

Note that there may be different connotations among different cultures for these words. For example, someone who is called "slim" in certain African countries would be implicated as having AIDS and thus the term bears a negative connotation while in USA, "slim" is a positive term of someone who looks healthy.

<u>Hard</u>	<u>showing no fear</u>	<u>underweight</u>	<u>cautious</u>
Durable +	foolhardy -	slim <i>in USA</i> , +	careful +
Unforgiving -	heroic +	scrawny -	indecisive -

<u>Leisure</u>	<u>surplus</u>
Idleness -	excessive -
Relaxation +	plenty +

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Please take the following biblical words and list them under the appropriate category. Refuge, trappers, flourishing cedar, bulls, stronghold, dogs, arrows in the quiver, shield, chaff, rock, dust, fruitful vine, lions, shelter, shepherd, king, fortress, sheep, hiding place, a deer yearning for water, serpent.

<i>GOD</i>	<i>ENEMIES</i>	<i>THE RIGHTEOUS</i>
Refuge/stronghold/	trappers/bulls/dogs	flourishing/cedar/arrow in quiver
Shield/rock/shelter/	lions/serpent	chaff&dust (all humanity)/
<i>Shepherd/king/fortress</i>		<i>fruitful vine</i>
		<i>sheep/deer yearning for water</i>
<i>Hiding place</i>		

RANGE OF MEANING: Greek Word *Kosmos*

If we were to look this word up in a Greek dictionary of the New Testament, we would learn that the Greek word *kosmos* can be used in the following ways:

- 1. the created universe**
- 2. the physical world, the planet Earth**
- 3. the earth as opposed to the heavens – 2 different “locations”**
- 4. the world of people, mankind**
- 5. human existence, “life in the world”**
- 6. adornment, like jewelry, nice clothing, or makeup**
- 7. the place of earthly joys, material possessions, cares, sufferings**
- 8. all that is hostile to God, depraved, and lost in sin**
- 9. totality, sum total**

Here are examples of how the word *kosmos* is used in the New Testament.

Be aware that there may be more than one “correct” answer to the following examples, since the above definitions have some overlap in meaning and application.

1. God so loved the *kosmos* that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish. John 3:16 **4**
2. Do not love the *kosmos* or anything in the *kosmos*. If anyone loves the *kosmos*, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15 **8**
3. I came forth from the Father and have come into the *kosmos*; I am leaving the *kosmos* again, and going to the Father. John 16:28 **3**
4. Your beauty should not come from outward *kosmos*, such as braided hair... 1 Peter 3:3 **6**
5. ...those who use the things of the *kosmos*, as if not engrossed in them. 1 Cor 7:31 **7**
6. For we brought nothing into the *kosmos*, and we can take nothing out of it. 1 Tim 6:7 **5**
7. ...tongue also is a fire, a *kosmos* of evil among the parts of the body. James 3:6 **9**

Which of the eight definitions best explains how the word is used in each of the above verses?

*How does your Bible translate *kosmos* in each of these verses?*

Though usually a word’s meaning will be used consistently throughout a passage, occasionally the immediate context of a word indicates more than one definition for that word in a passage. See, for instance, John chapter 17:

Again, there might be a bit of a difference in student choices on definitions, so you need only correct definitions offered by students that clearly do not fit

the sentence context. Make sure the students realize how the context of the sentence does indicate differing definitions of the word kosmos all within one chapter of John.

1. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the *kosmos* began. (v. 5) **1**
2. I will remain in the *kosmos* no longer, but they are still in the *kosmos*. (v. 11) **3**
3. I have given them your word and the *kosmos* has hated them, for they are not of the *kosmos* any more than I am of the *kosmos*. (v. 14, see also 16) **8**
4. ...that they also may be in us so that the *kosmos* may believe that you have sent me. (v. 21) **4**

Which of the eight definitions best explains how the word is used in each of these verses?

MAIN vs. SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

Identify the main verbs of the passages and their subjects. Identify the participles.

These are often indicted in English by their "ing" endings, such as "speaking" in the first example below.

What is the relationship between the participles and the main verbs? What is the most significant grammatical information in each passage and why? *Students need to be aware that the main verbs and their subjects contain the most important information for each sentence.*

(v)= main verbs (s)=main subjects

Eph 5:18-21 (NASB), "And **do not get drunk** (v) with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled** (v) with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and **be subject** (v) to one another in the fear of Christ." *Implied subject of the main verbs = "you" (s)*

Matt 28:19-20: "**Go** (v) therefore and **make** (v) disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I **am** (v) with you always, even to the end of the age." *Implied subject of the main verbs = "you" (s)*

Though we need to recognize main clauses, all parts of a sentence are important to its meaning.

Note Eph 4:11-13: "And *He (s) gave (v)* some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ..."

If we remove the phrase "for the equipping of the saints," who is left to do the work of service? *The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers*

Do you know churches that function as if that phrase is absent? *Those churches that expect only the official leaders of their church to do all the works of service*

Who does God intend to do the works of service? *The saints*

What is the role of the church leaders? *To equip the saints to do the work of service*

Is that happening in your church today?

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

<u>General Categories of Theology</u>	<u>Terms used in Christology</u>
Scriptures	Condescension
God (Trinity, the Father) – theology	Incarnation
Jesus – Christology	Humiliation
Holy Spirit – pneumatology	Resurrection
Angels – angelology	Ascension
Satan and demons	Exaltation
Sin – hamartiology	Consummation at end time
Universe and all creation – cosmology	
Humanity – anthropology	
Salvation – soteriology	
Sanctification	
Church – ecclesiology	
End times – eschatology	

Explain any of the above terms that might be unfamiliar to the students. Note in particular "condescension", which is voluntary descent from one's rank or dignity in relation with an inferior.

Philippians 2:1-11

Procedure: Use the following steps for studying a doctrinal section within a book.

1. Determine the main *doctrinal* theme of this passage (think in theological terms).

Christology. *Jesus is our perfect example of humble servitude that Christians should follow and emulate.*

Perhaps the Philippians were holding themselves above others instead of regarding others as more important than themselves. It is also possible, since this is a warm, personal letter to a group Paul considers his friends, that the warnings are only cautionary and preventive.

<i>Jesus: existed in form & equality with God</i>	<i>pre-existence as God</i>
<i>Emptied himself</i>	<i>condescencion</i>
<i>Made in likeness & found in appearance of man</i>	<i>incarnation</i>
<i>Humbled himself even to death on cross</i>	<i>humiliation</i>
<i>God exalted him after death</i>	<i>exaltation</i>
<i>All will acknowledge & confess Jesus as Lord</i>	<i>consummation at end times</i>

3) his humility and obedience, even to the point of death, is to be emulated by all of us. 4) the importance of his death on the cross as part of God's plan for humanity, not an error or accident. 5) his being alive after death and exalted as worthy of all praise and honor.

Note the previous verses (2:1-4) indicating how Christians are to act towards each other and warning against selfishness. Jesus is the perfect example of how we need to be serving each other in humility and selflessness, just as he served the whole world. This attitude of humility will result in unity for the body of Christ.

1. form of God & pre-existence

2. *emptied self*

3. *likeness & appearance of man - incarnation*

B. *Humiliation to point of death on cross*

C. *Exaltation*

1. *God exalted him*

2. *All will bow at his name*

3. *All shall confess him as Lord*

7. Does your study of the passage shed any new light on your understanding of the doctrine? If so, describe. *This would be subjective as to what new light each individual student gained by studying this passage and the doctrines it contains.*

How our **THEOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS** can blind us to the text's message!

Hebrews 10:26-27. "A person comes to you extremely depressed. A week ago she willfully and deliberately stole some merchandise from a local store and now on the basis of the above verses believes that there is no possibility of repentance and forgiveness. How should you respond?" This problem was answered by one commentary that the lady should have no fear because she is a Christian. Therefore she is already forgiven of her sins and will go to heaven despite new sins she might commit after her conversion to Christianity. The commentary stated that because of such passages, the book of Hebrews must have been written to Jews who had refused Jesus altogether, not to Jewish Christians. Is this true? *This commentary was written by a Christian who believed that Christ covers all our sins and therefore it does not matter if Christians continue to sin. God only sees the Christian as holy and sinless because God sees the blood of Christ covering the Christian, even if the Christian is actively sinning.*

First, who is the audience?

2:1, 3

3:1, 12

4:14

5:12-6:2 already have milk of gospel, you need to press on to the solid food of mature faith

6:9-12

10:19-25

10:32-36

12:22-24

ch. 13 usual Christian admonitions

Conclusion: *Hebrews was clearly written to people who believe in Jesus and who have a Jewish background, hence it was written to Jewish Christians, not to Jews who were not also Christian*

References to falling away from the faith:

2:1

3:12-14

6:4-6

10:26-27, 39

How? By continuing in sin. Are we to continue in sin as Christians?

Heb 6:4-6

10:26-27

12:1

Paul: Rom 6:1-2

Gal 5:13, 16 and especially 24

Col 3:3-10, especially 9 and 10

Other NT writers:

Jn 8:11 (go and sin no more)

1 Jn 2:1

3:4-6

1 Peter 1:15

We are not to continue in sin or we may lose our relationship with God through Jesus Christ and thus our salvation.

Our systematic theology needs to be based on and not contradicting Biblical theology or we lose the foundation of our beliefs. *The woman should be comforted that she is not beyond redemption. If she has repented of her sin and asked for forgiveness (or will do so now), God will grant that to her because of Christ (1 John _____). But if she is unrepentant and continues to sin, she should be warned that then she is in danger of losing her salvation in Christ.*

BIBLICAL ANALYSIS: NEW TESTAMENT ISSUES

(#1-3 from Virkler, *Hermeneutics*, pp. 156, 180, 230-31)

1. In Deut 19:21 (see also Exod 21:24) God's command is "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Jesus, claiming that he was fulfilling the law, said: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mt 5:38-9). How do you reconcile these two statements? What issues about progressive revelation does this raise? Also, how might the intended audience of each passage affect our understanding?

Jesus is giving us a new perspective on a very old command. Its original intent was to make punishment more equitable since surrounding cultures would allow the powerful and wealthy leaders of society to extract much more severe punishment for an offense than the poor, who had little recourse to any justice. God gives His people a command that is to be obeyed by all, whether rich or poor, powerful or powerless. Jesus takes it a step further and says that we are not to demand equal satisfaction for a wrong done to us, a further revelation from God than what had been previously given. This will surely set Christians apart from the rest of society which naturally demands equal retribution for offenses. The difference in audience also plays into these two statements, since the Dt passage was dealing with justice in government and was meant to be used in judging cases, whereas Jesus' admonition was not meant for the court system of the time, but for individual Christians. Hence his admonition was given for personal application in order to help spread the gospel message of love.

2. Romans 13:1-5 commands Christians to be obedient to their governmental authorities. This command has caused conflicts for Christians who have lived under governments such as in Nazi Germany and in some contemporary totalitarian regimes. What is the meaning of this text for Christians who encounter a government which commands them to act contrary to their consciences or to God's commands? What other passage(s) would be relevant to this issue? See, for example, Acts 5: 27-32.

This Romans passage indicates that God has established human governments on the earth in order to keep order so that there is not anarchy and to do good for their citizens. So it is speaking in general of the benefits of having a government vs. not having a government. It is assumed that Paul would agree with Luke's writing in Acts 5 that we are not to obey laws that require us to disobey God or that force us to do something that is contrary to our Christian beliefs. However, when we decide we must disagree with a government, we are still to submit ourselves to the consequences of that disagreement (usually imprisonment), as the apostles did in Acts (see 5:40-41).

3. The theology of grace and works. Some writers have suggested that there is an inconsistency between the doctrine of Paul (as found in Gal. 2:15-16; Rom. 3:20,28; Eph 2:8-9) and the doctrine of James (as found in James 1:22-25; 2:8, 14-17, 21-24). Do you believe these can be reconciled? If so, how would you reconcile them? *Yes. We come to faith by God's grace and not through any works of our own, but even Paul states in Eph 2:10 that we are then to do works as an outcome of that faith and of our new creation through Jesus Christ. James is dealing with Christians who have already come to faith but may be neglecting the work they should be doing for God*

as an outcome of their salvation and love of God. Note also Mt 25:31-46 on the sheep and the goats as well as 1 John 3:14-18 that speaks of our actions to our brothers and sisters indicating whether we truly love God as we say we do.

4. Compare the Parable of the Lost Sheep in its greater context in two of the gospels. Read Mt 18:1-14 and Lk 15:1-32. Then read the other parables/material around each of these passages. How is the Parable of the Lost Sheep used differently by each evangelist? How does the context of the other parables/material around this particular parable give you clues? How would the contexts affect how you would preach or teach each passage? **Important Hint:** note the different wording of the two parables, particularly Mt's description of the sheep as having "gone astray" vs. Lk's description of the sheep as "lost".

Note in Mt, the "little ones" are being led astray and woe to the ones doing that (vv. 6-10). These little ones are children but can also include weak and young Christians (vv. 1-5). Hence Mt is speaking of the importance of not leading anyone astray and how joyful it is to God when one of those little ones are led back to the fold so that it will not perish (vv. 13-14). This parable is then followed by a passage describing how to correct a brother who is doing evil, which may include leading others astray. Luke's emphasis deals with the lost who do not know God or his presence. God rejoices when one sinner repents (v. 7). That explains why Jesus talks to/receives the sinners (v. 1) and why the Pharisees/scribes should not grumble (v. 2) as the brother does in the Prodigal Son (28-30).

PRINCIPLE ANALYSIS

The Process:

1. specify the original directive (the specific command or request). Was this meant as a one-time personal directive to individuals and not meant to present a principle for many Christians to follow? If only a one-time directive, **do not** proceed any further.
2. If the directive is based upon a principle for many Christians to follow, what is that principle? Be aware that sometimes a directive is a principle so the wording may be quite similar for both. Also, there may be more than one principle in a passage.
3. Is this principle only meant for that time and culture (time-bound) or is it a timeless principle meant for all Christians in all cultures? If only a time-bound principle, **do not** proceed any further.
4. If the principle is meant for all Christians throughout time, study the cultural equivalent today that would properly express the timeless principle. Warning: do not use your general culture to answer this issue, as God may be calling

Christians to an expression that would be counter-cultural to your present culture. Then proceed with parts (a) and (b) below:

- a. Would today's behavioral application be the same as the original directive? If so please restate that directive and how it might be carried out today by Christians; you do not need to proceed with part (b). If not, explain why not and proceed with part (b).
- b. Would the original directive be inappropriate or anachronistic today? If the behavioral expression of the principle should be changed, what would be an equivalent **within your particular culture** that would still express the godly principle behind the directive?

Now use the above process with one of the following four passages as assigned in class:

Titus 3:12 *only #1 above - it is only a one-time personal directive to Titus.*

2 Cor 13:12 *The principle is showing love/care to each other in greetings. In many cultures today, it could be applied as #4a above, showing love to our fellow Christians through a holy kiss. But other cultures (such as in the USA) would object to a holy kiss and the behavioral expression would be better exemplified as a warm handshake or a hug between two people of the same gender.*

Phil 4:6 *The directive is a principle that is universal for all Christians in all time periods. Nothing would change in different cultural settings so its application would be the same today as it was then (#4a).*

Gal 5:2 *The way circumcision was being presented by the Judaizers at the time of Paul meant that it was tightly associated with becoming a Jew and following all the laws of God as found in the OT and the Jewish oral traditions. The principle behind this directive is that we are not to place ourselves under the law and rely on obeying the law in order to maintain our salvation. It is not obedience to the law (or anything else) that saves us, but belief in Christ that does so. Today's application of this principle may look very different than it did at the time of Paul. Is there any law that is being preached by a Christian pastor or group as being necessary to one's salvation? That is what should be avoided. Circumcision itself is not the issue as long as Christians are not being circumcised in order to obey the OT law and think they are being saved by their obedience to the law.*

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION FINAL EXAM STUDY GUIDE

- Be able to define and list in proper order: observation, interpretation, and application, and why that order is important to us.
- Be able to articulate why it is important that we analyze a passage as to its original meaning before applying it to ourselves today.
- Be able to recognize legitimate keys to interpreting Scripture.
- Be able to describe the circles of context for a particular passage.
- Know what to look for in order to determine a writer's purpose in writing a book.
- Know the single most important element in determining the proper interpretation of a passage.
- Be able to recognize the various gaps or blocks that prevent us from spontaneously understanding the original meaning of a text.
- Understand that we can never read a passage of Scripture from a totally unbiased and objective viewpoint.
- Understand why studying the history of biblical interpretation is helpful to us today.
- Know the basic historical movements in scriptural interpretation.
- Be able to articulate how Protestants view Scripture today with regard to its plain sense and meaning.
- Know the meaning of each type of analysis we have studied in class (historical-cultural, contextual, literary, lexical-syntactical, theological, biblical)
- Know the main genres of the Bible, their definitions, and important issues in interpreting those genres.
- Be able to classify specific passages of the Bible as to genre, form, parallelism (synonymous, antithetic, synthetic, chiasm), and proverbial (descriptive, prescriptive, etc.) categories. This includes prophecy, psalm, proverb, and law forms.
- Be able to recognize simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole.
- Understand the definition and purpose of a proverb and the dangers associated with proverbs if they are understood as God's direct promises to us.
- Be able to recognize a parable and understand how to determine the specific symbols being used and its overall intended meaning.
- Understand the basic differences between prophecy and apocalyptic literature.
- Understand the steps in determining the application of a biblical command (such as from Paul) to our culture today.
- Know the general use and value of concordances, Bible dictionaries, word dictionaries, atlases, and commentaries.
- Know that we have no original manuscripts of the Bible in our possession today.
- Know the original languages in which the Old and New Testaments were written, including the Septuagint.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION FINAL EXAM

Name: _____ Points: _____

Please answer all of the following questions, reading carefully as you do so. Total points possible: 150

5 points for each answer. OT = Old Testament NT= New Testament

1. Of the following, which is most important in determining the proper interpretation of a passage?

- a. who wrote it
- b. how often a key word is used in it
- c. its context in the surrounding verses and passages in which it is found
- d. how the subject is presented in other books of the Bible

2. Before we can determine the application of a passage for ourselves today, we must first determine:

- a. the text's meaning for its original audience
- b. whether or not we will abide by that application
- c. every range of meaning of every key word in the passage
- d. the chronology of all events in the book

3. What are gaps in or blocks to our spontaneous understanding of the original meaning of Scripture?

- a. historical gap only
- b. cultural gap only
- c. linguistic gap only
- d. philosophical gap only
- e. a and c only
- f. a, b, c, and d

4. How many original manuscripts of the Old and New Testament are available to us today?

- a. 50
- b. 30
- c. 12
- d. none – we only have copies of the original manuscripts.

5-7. Match the following:

____ original language of the OT
____ Greek translation of the OT
____ original language of the NT

A. Greek
B. Septuagint
C. Hebrew

8. Explain one item of information you will be able to find in an exhaustive concordance:
9. The term "hermeneutics" could be defined as:
- a. the science and art of studying contemporary society
 - b. the science and art of interpreting Catholic Church tradition
 - c. the science and art of general historical interpretation
 - d. the science and art of biblical interpretation
10. When we explore the time, the significant events, and the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of the people of a book of the Bible, this is called:
- a. contextual analysis
 - b. historical-cultural analysis
 - c. theological analysis
 - d. literary analysis
11. When we identify the form of a passage as an historical narrative, a letter, a poem, a prophecy, or other similar designation, we are performing:
- a. contextual analysis
 - b. historical-cultural analysis
 - c. theological analysis
 - d. literary analysis
12. If we look at how God is revealed through Jesus Christ in the NT, we are doing:
- a. lexical-syntactical analysis
 - b. contextual analysis
 - c. historical-cultural analysis
 - d. theological analysis
13. When we look at the range of meaning of a word and explore how it is related to the other words in a particular sentence, we are studying:
- a. lexical-syntactical analysis
 - b. contextual analysis
 - c. historical-cultural analysis
 - d. theological analysis

14. If we use a Bible verse in a sermon without ever looking at the other verses in the passage from which it comes, we are disobeying a basic principle of:
- lexical-syntactical analysis
 - contextual analysis
 - historical-cultural analysis
 - theological analysis
15. Draw the circles of context for Galatians chapter 2:
16. To determine a writer's purpose in writing his book, we should:
- conduct a word study of one word in our passage
 - observe the issues the author is focusing on throughout the book
 - note exhortations and arguments used in the book
 - both b and c can help determine purpose
17. In the OT genre of "Narrative", the ultimate intent of the author is to:
- give commands and laws to the people
 - prophecy about the future
 - reveal God's redemptive actions in human history
 - present short, concise principles for wise living
18. It is very important when interpreting a psalm to be sure to:
- know who the author is
 - study it as a complete unit
 - know precisely when it was written
 - study the commands it contains regarding temple sacrifices
19. Generally the Gospels could be described as:
- apocalyptic writing
 - letters written for specific occasions
 - poetry
 - theological biographies

20. To understand the NT letters, we especially need to know:
- a. the historical background of the recipients that caused the letter to be written to them in the first place
 - b. that our present time fulfills all the prophecies found in them
 - c. the various kinds of poetic parallelism present in the text
 - d. the numerous quotes in the letters that are taken directly from the Gospels

"In the place where they slay the burnt offering they are to slay the guilt offering, and he (the priest) shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar." Lev 7:2

21. From our literary analysis, the above quote is an example of which literary genre?
- a. poetry
 - b. law
 - c. prophecy
 - d. wisdom

22. Which of the following categories does it fit, under that genre?
- a. Civil (government)
 - b. Moral (ethical)
 - c. Ceremonial (temple ritual)
 - d. Prohibitive

23. Which of the following is not a legitimate key to interpreting Scripture?
- a. interpret Scripture according to your personal experience alone
 - b. consider historical customs and culture of the time
 - c. look for the full counsel of Scripture
 - d. check with other authority figures in your life

24. We as evangelical Protestants today believe that:
- a. the Bible's message is obscure, hidden, and mysterious to most people
 - b. we are to give the Bible whatever meaning we wish it to have
 - c. there is a plain sense to much of Scripture, based upon the author's intended meaning
 - d. the Bible has a special interpretive key that has only been revealed to our present generation and only to our own church leaders

25. An historical overview of different ways people have interpreted the Bible in the past helps us:

- a. to broaden our interpretation so we will use all of their techniques
- b. to see previous mistakes so we won't repeat them
- c. understand our way of interpreting Scripture is not the only way ever used
- d. to be proud of our perfection in biblical exegesis
- e. b and c

26. During the time of the writing of the NT, Jesus and several of the NT authors often used exegetical methods already developed by:

- a. the Chinese monarchy
- b. the Roman emperor
- c. Jewish scholars

27. In reaction to church tradition and the allegorical method used often during the Medieval Period, the Protestant scholars of the Reformation preferred interpreting Scripture according to:

- a. sociological analysis
- b. apocalyptic reasoning
- c. its simple, straightforward meaning
- d. historical-critical analysis that rejected all miracles

Choose from the following list the figure of speech being portrayed in the next four verses:

Personification

Simile

Metaphor

Hyperbole/exaggeration

28. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, **like sheep without a shepherd.** Mt 9:36

29. The **mountains** and the **hills** will break forth **into shouts of joy** before you, and all the **trees of the field will clap their hands.** Isa 55:12

30. ...Our brothers have made our hearts melt, saying, "The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and **fortified to heaven...**" Dt. 1:28

31. For **the LORD God is a sun and shield**; the LORD bestows favor and honor... Ps 84:11

The word of the Lord came to me saying, "Now the end is upon you, and I shall send My anger against you; I shall judge you according to your ways, and I shall bring all your abominations upon you."

32. The above prophecy would be called a:

- a. vision report
- b. woe prophecy
- c. prophecy of disaster
- d. prophecy of salvation

33. This prophecy was a warning to the Israelites of the Old Testament. Can we use those same words with God's full authority and power in order to curse anyone whom we hate?

"The LORD is far from the wicked,
But He hears the prayer of the righteous." Prov 15:29

34. The above is an example of:

- a. a synonymous parallelism
- b. an antithetic parallelism
- c. a synthetic parallelism
- d. a chiasm

"Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise,
And apply your mind to my knowledge."

35. The above is an example of:

- a. a prescriptive proverb with a positive command
- b. a prescriptive proverb with a negative command
- c. a descriptive comparative proverb
- d. a descriptive antithetic proverb

"O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD,
Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation." Ps 95:1

36. The above is an example of:
- a. a synonymous parallelism
 - b. an antithetic parallelism
 - c. a parable
 - d. an allegory

"The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree,
He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Ps 95:12

37. From our literary analysis, these lines are an example of which genre?
- a. Historical narrative
 - b. A letter or epistle
 - c. Wisdom poetry
 - d. Law

38. We would understand these lines to:
- a. indicate that being righteous generally leads to a better life
 - b. that God is promising that a righteous man will always grow tall
 - c. that God is promising that a righteous man will always prosper
 - d. a wicked life will always produce much illness and poverty
 - e. c and d

39. List one kind of reference we could check if we were looking for an historical-cultural explanation for a particular custom we read about in a passage.

40. One can determine the intended meaning of a parable by looking at:
- a. any explicit statements made by the author or speaker
 - b. the conclusion or application of the parable
 - c. the context in which the parable is found
 - d. all of the above are helpful

He (Jesus) said: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' And for a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming she wears me out.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily..." Lk 18:2-8

41. This is an example of a(n):

- a. simile
- b. proverb
- c. parable
- d. epistle

42. The widow is meant to represent the following:

- a. God
- b. One of God's elect people
- c. An unrighteous and wicked person
- d. Corruption in the legal system

43. The spiritual principle of this passage is:

44. Can we ever read a passage of Scripture from a totally unbiased and objective viewpoint?

- a. No, we are always going to be influenced by our background and our beliefs but we can still allow God to speak to us through Scripture
- b. Yes, we can divorce ourselves from who we are whenever we want and be totally objective in our thinking
- c. Yes, because the Holy Spirit will give the exact same information to every Christian so that every Christian interprets every passage exactly the same way
- d. Yes, because how we were raised as children to interpret Scripture is the only right way to do so; therefore everyone else is wrongly biased

45. Most proverbs are based upon:

- a. commands of God
- b. wisdom concerning daily living
- c. promises of God
- d. scientific truths

46-48. Specify whether the following statements are describing prophecy (P) or apocalyptic (A) literature:

_____ this form comforts and encourages the Righteous, rather than points out sins among the people

_____ this form focuses on the sins of the people and calls for its audience to make changes in their attitudes and actions in order to conform with godly living

_____ this form often deals with God bringing the present world to a cataclysmic end and establishing a perfect heaven and earth

49. When we study biblical commands such as those given by Paul, we should determine the principle behind the command and then:

- a. apply the command directly to our own church without changing any aspect of it
- b. ignore the command since it was given only for Paul's church
- c. determine if the same application today will express the biblical principle or if the behavioral expression needs to be changed
- d. ignore the advice of other church leaders and decide for ourselves whether we want to obey the command or ignore it

50. Why is it important that we analyze/study a passage as to its original meaning before we determine an application for today?

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION FINAL EXAM (ANSWERS)

Name: _____ Points: _____

Please answer all of the following questions, reading carefully as you do so. Total points possible: 150

5 points for each answer. OT = Old Testament NT= New Testament

1. Of the following, which is most important in determining the proper interpretation of a passage?

- e. who wrote it
- f. how often a key word is used in it
- g. its context in the surrounding verses and passages in which it is found**
- h. how the subject is presented in other books of the Bible

2. Before we can determine the application of a passage for ourselves today, we must first determine:

- e. the text's meaning for its original audience**
- f. whether or not we will abide by that application
- g. every range of meaning of every key word in the passage
- h. the chronology of all events in the book

3. What are gaps in or blocks to our spontaneous understanding of the original meaning of Scripture?

- g. historical gap only
- h. cultural gap only
- i. linguistic gap only
- j. philosophical gap only
- k. a and c only
- l. a, b, c, and d**

4. How many original manuscripts of the Old and New Testament are available to us today?

- a. 50
- b. 30
- c. 12
- d. none - we only have copies of the original manuscripts.**

5-7. Match the following:

- ___**C**___ original language of the OT
- ___**B**___ Greek translation of the OT
- ___**A**___ original language of the NT

- A. Greek
- B. Septuagint
- C. Hebrew

8. Explain one item of information you will be able to find in an exhaustive concordance:

This has several possible correct answers. For example, a student could answer: "the original Greek or Hebrew word from which an English word is translated" or "where to find the location in the Bible of a particular English word."

9. The term "hermeneutics" could be defined as:

- e. the science and art of studying contemporary society
- f. the science and art of interpreting Catholic Church tradition
- g. the science and art of general historical interpretation
- h. the science and art of biblical interpretation***

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15. Draw the circles of context for Galatians chapter 2:
- At center should be "ch. 2," next circle out should be "Galatians chs. 1 and 3," next circle should be all of the "book of Galatians," next circle should be "other books by Paul," next circle should be "NT," final outer-most circle should be "OT" (or whole Bible).***
16. To determine a writer's purpose in writing his book, we should:
- e. conduct a word study of one word in our passage
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"In the place where they slay the burnt offering they are to slay the guilt offering, and he (the priest) shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar." Lev 7:2

21. From our literary analysis, the above quote is an example of which literary genre?

- e. poetry
- f. *law***
- g. prophecy
- h. wisdom

22. Which of the following categories does it fit, under that genre?

- e. Civil (government)
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- g. *Ceremonial (temple ritual)***
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 - h. the Bible has a special interpretive key that has only been revealed to our present generation and only to our own church leaders
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- f. to broaden our interpretation so we will use all of their techniques
 - g. to see previous mistakes so we won't repeat them
 - h. understand our way of interpreting Scripture is not the only way ever used
 - i. to be proud of our perfection in biblical exegesis
 - j. *b and c***
26. During the time of the writing of the NT, Jesus and several of the NT authors often used exegetical methods already developed by:
- d. the Chinese monarchy
 - e. the Roman emperor
 - f. *Jewish scholars***
27. In reaction to church tradition and the allegorical method used often during the Medieval Period, the Protestant scholars of the Reformation preferred interpreting Scripture according to:
- e. sociological analysis
 - f. apocalyptic reasoning
 - g. *its simple, straightforward meaning***
 - h. historical-critical analysis that rejected all miracles

Choose from the following list the figure of speech being portrayed in the next four verses:

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Metaphor

Hyperbole/exaggeration

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simile

29. The **mountains** and the **hills** will break forth **into shouts of joy** before you, and all the **trees of the field will clap their hands.** Isa 55:12

personification

30. ...Our brothers have made our hearts melt, saying, "The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and **fortified to heaven...**" Dt. 1:28

hyperbole

31. For **the LORD God is a sun and shield**; the LORD bestows favor and honor... Ps 84:11 *metaphor*

The word of the Lord came to me saying, "Now the end is upon you, and I shall send My anger against you; I shall judge you according to your ways, and I shall bring all your abominations upon you."

32. The above prophecy would be called a:

- e. vision report
- f. woe prophecy
- g. prophecy of disaster**
- h. prophecy of salvation

33. This prophecy was a warning to the Israelites of the Old Testament. Can we use those same words with God's full authority and power in order to curse anyone whom we hate?

No we cannot.

"The LORD is far from the wicked,
But He hears the prayer of the righteous." Prov 15:29

34. The above is an example of:

- e. a synonymous parallelism
- f. an antithetic parallelism**
- g. a synthetic parallelism
- h. a chiasm

"Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise,
And apply your mind to my knowledge."

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- a. a prescriptive proverb with a positive command**
- b. a prescriptive proverb with a negative command
- c. a descriptive comparative proverb
- d. a descriptive antithetic proverb

"O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD,
Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation." Ps 95:1

36. The above is an example of:

- a. a synonymous parallelism**
- b. an antithetic parallelism
- c. a parable
- d. an allegory

"The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree,
He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Ps 95:12

37. From our literary analysis, these lines are an example of which genre?

- e. Historical narrative
- f. A letter or epistle
- g. Wisdom poetry**
- h. Law

38. We would understand these lines to:

- f. indicate that being righteous generally leads to a better life**
- g. that God is promising that a righteous man will always grow tall
- h. that God is promising that a righteous man will always prosper
- i. a wicked life will always produce much illness and poverty
- j. c and d

39. List one kind of reference we could check if we were looking for an historical-cultural explanation for a particular custom we read about in a passage.

Possible correct answers include a Bible dictionary, Bible encyclopedia, a survey or a commentary.

40. One can determine the intended meaning of a parable by looking at:

- e. any explicit statements made by the author or speaker
- f. the conclusion or application of the parable
- g. the context in which the parable is found
- h. all of the above are helpful**

He (Jesus) said: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' And for a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming she wears me out.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily..." Lk 18:2-8

41. This is an example of a(n):

- e. simile
- f. proverb
- g. parable**
- h. epistle

42. The widow is meant to represent the following:

- e. God
- f. One of God's elect people**
- g. An unrighteous and wicked person
- h. Corruption in the legal system

43. The spiritual principle of this passage is:

Answer should be something like: "If humans will respond to repeated calls for help, how much more does God listen to and respond to the prayers/cries of His people" or: "We should be praying to God for our needs because He will listen to us."

44. Can we ever read a passage of Scripture from a totally unbiased and objective viewpoint?

- e. No, we are always going to be influenced by our background and our beliefs but we can still allow God to speak to us through Scripture**
- f. Yes, we can divorce ourselves from who we are whenever we want and be totally objective in our thinking
- g. Yes, because the Holy Spirit will give the exact same information to every Christian so that every Christian interprets every passage exactly the same way
- h. Yes, because how we were raised as children to interpret Scripture is the only right way to do so; therefore everyone else is wrongly biased

45. Most proverbs are based upon:

- e. commands of God
- f. wisdom concerning daily living**
- g. promises of God
- h. scientific truths

46-48. Specify whether the following statements are describing prophecy (P) or apocalyptic (A) literature:

___**A**___ this form comforts and encourages the Righteous, rather than points out sins among the people

___**P**___ this form focuses on the sins of the people and calls for its audience to make changes in their attitudes and actions in order to conform with godly living

___**A**___ this form often deals with God bringing the present world to a cataclysmic end and establishing a perfect heaven and earth

49. When we study biblical commands such as those given by Paul, we should determine the principle behind the command and then:

- a. apply the command directly to our own church without changing any aspect of it
- b. ignore the command since it was given only for Paul's church
- c. determine if the same application today will express the biblical principle or if the behavioral expression needs to be changed**
- d. ignore the advice of other church leaders and decide for ourselves whether we want to obey the command or ignore it

50. Why is it important that we analyze/study a passage as to its original meaning before we determine an application for today?

An answer that somehow indicates that without first studying its original meaning, we will not be able to determine an accurate application for today.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION SAMPLE GRADE SHEET

Dr. Mary Spaulding

Student name:

Class Participation (120)

Handbook Exercises (150)

IBS Memorization (150)

Exegesis Reports

#1 (70)

#2 (70)

#3 (70)

#4 (70)

Application Presentation (150)

Final Exam (150)

Total for course:

Total possible points for the course: 1000

Appendix

Inductive Bible Study Resources

Table of Contents

I. "Digging Deeper"—Optional Student Enrichment Activities/ extra credit assignments

II. Resources for "Concordance and Dictionary Worksheet" (In "Biblical Interpretation Class Exercises," pg. 47 Student Handbook)

III. Inductive Bible Study Resources

(For small group exegesis reports. Each group will choose one of the Bible passages below, analyze one aspect of it each day, Monday-Thursday, and write a daily report. Students will use their Bibles, the information from the "Inductive Bible Study" pages 37-41 in the student book and a variety of commentaries, or the following resources in the appendix. See also "Course Requirements", pg. 5-6, #5.)

A. Jeremiah 7: 1-15

1. Historical/cultural (Monday)
2. Contextual (Tuesday)
3. Literary (Wednesday)
4. Biblical/Theological (Thursday)

B. Colossians 2: 6-15

1. Historical/cultural (Monday)
2. Contextual (Tuesday) – Use Bible as resource
3. Literary (Wednesday) – Use Bible as resource
4. Biblical/Theological (Thursday)

C. John 4: 4-30

1. Historical/cultural (Monday)
2. Contextual (Tuesday)
3. Literary (Wednesday)
4. Biblical/Theological (Thursday)

D. Genesis 11: 1-9

1. Historical/cultural (Monday)
2. Contextual (Tuesday)
3. Literary (Wednesday)

Digging Deeper

Optional Student Enrichment Activities

Prepared by Dr. Mary Spaulding

These activities are designed for advanced learners who desire further study or who are seeking articulation into a bachelor's level program. These activities are especially recommended for Diploma of Theology students and Course Leaders.

These activities could also be used for students seeking extra credit.

Activity #1

Read the textbook by Fee and Stuart *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. (available at Challenge bookstores). The student should be given ample time to complete the assignment. (One idea is to assign the report as "extra credit" and have students turn the report in before the start of the next course. The instructor would still submit the student's grade at the end of the course but adjust the grade and resubmit it when the extra credit is completed. The student could also get the book the month prior to the course and complete the assignment before the course begins.)

Once you have read the textbook, complete a book report according to these directions:

Book Report :

The book report should be a minimum of one full page in length and is due by the start of the next NTI course, or as arranged by your instructor.

On the first line, please state how much of the book you were able to complete (25%-50%-75%-100%). Then answer the following questions in your book report:

1. What new insights did you gain from reading this book?
2. How was this book valuable to your understanding of the Bible?
3. With what concepts/ideas in the book did you not agree, and why?
4. How did this book help you to grow as a Christian?

The amount of reading you complete has a possible value of 80% of the book report grade. The full and accurate completion of the above book report has a value of 20%, totaling 100% for completing the reading and the book report.

Activity #2

Bible Passage Observation :

This assignment involves conducting a general observation of a passage of Scripture. The passage to observe is **Acts 2: 1-13**. It is due by the last day of the course, or as arranged by your instructor.

1. If you are unfamiliar with Acts, read the whole book (if possible at one sitting). Everyone should read the specific passage and its surrounding context (at least chapters 1 and 2) several times. Pick a Bible translation for reading the passage that is not a paraphrase.
2. After the first general reading of your passage and its surrounding context, begin to ask questions of the text itself. Does it give you information such as Who? What? When? Where? Why? How is it written? What ideas and themes can you find from the words being used and from the surrounding context of the passage? See the list below for questions to ask, though you may not be able to find answers to all of them in your text. Keep a written list of your observations that you discover; **turn this list into your instructor**. Do not use any outside resources for this part of the assignment.

Bible Passage Observation

Questions to Ask of your Passage. Do not do extra research to answer these questions, just read your passage and its surrounding context several times to see which questions are answered there. Then write down the answers according to the sections listed below. Do not expect that you will be able to answer all of the following questions.

a. Who?

- Who is the author? Who are the recipients of the book?
- Who are the people in the passage?
- Who is speaking? to whom?

b. What?

- What does the author tell you about himself? about his circumstances?
- What do the people in the passage say? What is said about them?
- What is happening in your passage?
- What are the ideas? events? in what order?
- What happens to the characters?
- What is the argument? the point?
- What does the author talk about the most?
- What are the people to do or not do?
- What are the consequences/results of what happens?

c. Where?

- Where is the narrative taking place? What is the setting?
- Where have events taken place? Where will they take place, if in the future?

- Where are the people in the story?
 - Where are they coming from? Where are they going?
 - Where is the writer?
 - Where were the original readers?
- d. When?
- When did the events in the passage take place? or when will they?
 - When did they occur in relation to other events in the book? in the Bible as a whole?
 - When was the writer writing? (in history? at what point in his life?)
 - When did the character do or say what is recorded?
 - Was the time of the action day or night? what day?
 - What was the duration of the action?
- e. Why?
- Why is the passage included? Why is this placed here?
 - Why does it precede one thing and follow another?
 - Why does this person say that?
 - Why does someone say nothing?
 - Why is the author where he is?
 - Why is something mentioned? or not?
 - Why is this amount of space given this person? idea? event?
- f. How?
- How is something done? said?
 - How is truth illustrated, if present?
- g. So What?
- What is the purpose of this passage?

Activity #3

Journaling for Spiritual Formation :

Read the Journaling instructions below. If you will not have sufficient time to conduct this journaling exercise each evening of the week-long course, you may conduct the exercise over a four-day period before the course begins. Your journal entries should be submitted by the beginning of the day on Friday, our last day of the class, in order to receive extra credit.

Thank you for completing the above assignments as specified. I am confident that God will richly reward our efforts to understand and appreciate His written word better.

Journaling For Spiritual Formation

Each evening of the course (Monday through Thursday) you may participate in a journal assignment. This devotional material will help integrate the intellectual study of Scripture with your own growth in grace as you intentionally cultivate your relationship with God. Because of the limited time necessitated by the intensive format of our course, you will

only be asked to accomplish four exercises. Our hope is that you will continue devotions on a regular basis throughout your life.

Please set aside a sufficient amount of time to slowly and carefully consider the biblical passage and how God might speak to you through it; it is important that you spread these four journal assignments out over four days and not attempt to complete them all at once.

Students choosing to journal, will submit their entries at the beginning of the last full day of the course (Friday) in order to obtain credit for this assignment (50 points total). Please be as honest as possible regarding your journal comments. You will not be critiqued on what you have written but will only be assessed as to whether you have completed the four journal entries.

The four assignments are as follows:

(Monday) Read and reflect on 2 Tim 3:16-17 and Hebrews 13:7, 17-21. Think about how these passages are similar in what they are saying about Scripture, God, and church leadership. The dictionary defines “authority” as the power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior. These two passages are dealing with authority. Try to identify three or four different authority figures who have influence in your life. List the ways they influence you and identify in which ways the Bible functions authoritatively for you.

(Tuesday) Read and reflect on Psalm 73. What is the problem facing the psalmist? Where and how does he find an answer to that issue? How does this psalm speak to you? Do you recognize your own circumstances in this psalm? How does the psalmist’s answer help you in your troubles? Wait, reflect and pray about this with God, then write down what you can capture of how this psalm speaks to you.

(Wednesday) Read and reflect on Mt 5: 43-48. How does this passage speak to you? What aspects concerning our attitude towards the wicked are different/new here than in Psalm 73? Ask God to speak to you from this Scripture. As He does, absorb what He says to you. Wait, reflect, pray. Write down what you can capture of what God says to you through this Scripture.

(Thursday) Read and reflect upon Gal 5:19-25. How would you describe your life in the light of the qualities described here as the fruit of the Spirit? How are these qualities at work in your life? Which qualities are lacking or weak in your life? Describe the areas where you need to seek God’s help to be more like Jesus in your world. Ask God to give you insight about and opportunity to grow in those areas.