

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Interpreting the Bible as Instructed in the Bible

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Course Description:

Have you ever wondered how to read the Bible? Have you ever struggled with studying it yourself? Should we read Matthew the same way we read Malachi? How should our approach to 1 Samuel be different from 1 Peter? This class will cover a study of proper theories and methods of biblical interpretation and provide actual practice in interpreting a text of Scripture. The goal of this class is to inspire a greater love for God by teaching you how to read, interpret, and apply his word as a faithful follower of Jesus.

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How to Study the Bible

Lesson 1

The Bible

Revelation and Response:

*What Is the Bible and How Should I Approach It?*¹

“There is no book like the Bible. It is a miracle of literature, a perennial spring of wisdom, a wonderful book of surprises, a revelation of mystery, an infallible guide of conduct, an unspeakable source of comfort” (Samuel Chadwick).

WHAT KIND OF CLASS IS THIS?

1. Class Goals

- a. Immediate Goal: To learn how to study God’s word better.
- b. Ultimate Goal: To know and love God more deeply and live more faithfully as disciples for his glory.

2. Class Structure

- a. Blend of *hermeneutics* (study of correct theories and methods of interpretation) and *exegesis* (actual practice of interpreting a text of Scripture).
- b. Blend of lecture + lab.
 - i. 9:30–9:45—Review homework from previous lesson
 - ii. 9:45–10:15—Work through new lesson for that week
 - iii. 10:15–10:20—Assign homework for following week

3. Course Outline

¹ In addition to the resources cited, this course was developed in part from the “How to Study the Bible” core seminar at Capitol Hill Baptist Church (Washington, D.C.), John Kimbell’s “How to Study the Bible” class at Clifton Baptist Church (Louisville, KY), and various Bible classes at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, KY).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 1

WHAT KIND OF BOOK IS THIS?

1. General Overview

- a. 66 books (or literary works)
- b. Written by various authors over a period of about 1,500 years
- c. Variety of genres
- d. Divided into Old Testament and New Testament

2. Human & Divine (Dual authorship)

- a. Human
 - i. **Amos 1:1**—"The words of Amos, who was one of the sheep breeders from Tekoa..."
 - ii. **Daniel 8:27**—"I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for days. Then I got up and went about the king's business..."
 - iii. **Ephesians 1:1**—"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will: To the faithful saints in Christ Jesus at Ephesus."
 - iv. **2 Timothy 4:13**—"When you come, bring the cloak I left in Troas with Carpus, as well as the scrolls, especially the parchments."
- b. Divine
 - i. **2 Timothy 3:16**—"All Scripture is breathed out by God..."
 - ii. **2 Peter 1:21**—"No prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."
 - iii. **1 Corinthians 2:12–13**—"Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. 13 We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people."
 - iv. **Acts 4:25**—"You said through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David your servant..."

c. Verbal Plenary Inspiration

"While the authors of the Bible wrote as thinking, feeling human beings, God so mysteriously superintended the process that every word written was also the exact word he wanted to be written—free from all error" (Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible*, 32).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 1

3. Ancient & Relevant

a. Ancient

b. Relevant

- i. **2 Timothy 3:15–17**—“And you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are *able to give you wisdom for salvation* through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and is *profitable* for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, *equipped for every good work*.”
- ii. **Hebrews 4:12**—“For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”
- iii. **1 Peter 1:23**—“You have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God.”
- iv. **Romans 10:17**—“So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.”
- v. **1 Peter 2:2**—“Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation.”
- vi. **John 17:17**—“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”
- vii. **Psalms 119:105**—“Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.”
- viii. **John 8:31–32**—“‘If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples. 32 You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’”
- ix. **Psalms 19:9b–10**—“The ordinances of the LORD are reliable and altogether righteous. 10 They are more desirable than gold—than an abundance of pure gold; and sweeter than honey dripping from a honeycomb.”

“If I were the devil (please, no comment), one of my first aims would be to stop folk from digging into the Bible. Knowing that it is the Word of God, teaching people to know and love and serve the God of the Word, I should do all I could to surround it with the spiritual equivalent of pits, thorn hedges and man traps, to frighten people off. With smug conceit, no doubt, as if receiving a compliment, I should acknowledge that wise old Jonathan Edwards had me absolutely taped when he wrote: “The devil never would attempt to beget in persons a regard to that divine word which God has given to be the great and standing rule. . . . Would the spirit of error, in order to deceive men, beget in them a high opinion of the infallible rule, and incline them to think much of it, and be very conversant with it? . . . The devil has ever shown a mortal spite and hatred towards that holy book the Bible: he has done all in his power to extinguish that light. . . . He is engaged against the Bible, and hates every word in it.” I should labor every day to prove Edwards’s words true.

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How? Well, I should try to distract all clergy from preaching and teaching the Bible, and spread the feeling that to study this ancient book directly is a burdensome extra that modern Christians can forgo without loss. I should broadcast doubts about the truth and relevance and good sense and straightforwardness of the Bible, and if any still insisted on reading it I should lure them into assuming that the benefit of the practice lies in the noble and tranquil feelings evoked by it rather than in noting what Scripture actually says. At all costs I should want to keep them from using their minds in a disciplined way to get the measure of its message” (J. I. Packer, Foreword to *Knowing Scripture* by R. C. Sproul, 9–10).

4. Difficult & Clear

a. Difficult

- i. **2 Peter 3:15–18**—“Also, regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him. 16 He speaks about these things in all his letters. There are some things hard to understand in them. The untaught and unstable will twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures. 17 Therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own stable position. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”
- ii. **2 Timothy 2:7**—“Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.”
- iii. **2 Timothy 2:15**—“Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn’t need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.”

b. Clear

- i. **Psalms 119:130**—“The revelation of your words brings light and gives understanding to the inexperienced.”
- ii. **Luke 24:25–27**—He said to them, “*How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Wasn’t it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?*” 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.
- iii. **Romans 1:7**—“To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as saints.”

“The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God’s help and being willing to follow it” (Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 52).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 1

5. Points to Jesus

- a. **John 5:39–40**—“You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me. 40 But you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life.”
- b. **John 20:30–31**—“Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”
- c. **Luke 24:27**—“Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.”
- d. **Romans 10:17**—“So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.”
- e. **2 Corinthians 1:20**—“For every one of God’s promises is “Yes” in him.”

Charles Spurgeon tells of a Welsh minister who spoke to a younger minister about his sermon after hearing it. “It was a very poor sermon,” he told the young man. “Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon?” came the response. “Because,” said the Welsh minister, “there was no Christ in it.” “Well,” said the young man, “Christ was not in the text; we are not to be preaching Christ always, we must preach what is in the text.” The exchange continued:

“Don’t you know young man that from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London?” “Yes,” said the young man. “Ah!” said the old divine, “and so from every text in Scripture, there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is Christ. And my dear brother, your business is when you get to a text, to say, ‘Now what is the road to Christ?’ and then preach a sermon, running along the road towards the great metropolis—Christ. And,” said he, “I have never yet found a text that had not got a road to Christ in it, and if I ever do find one that has not a road to Christ in it, I will make one; I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savor of Christ in it” (cited in Timothy Keller, *Preaching*, 67–68).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 1

HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH IT?

1. **Prayerfully**
 - a. My heart is wicked and deceitful (Jer 17:9).
 - b. Natural human response to God's revelation is to suppress it (Rom 1:18–20).
 - c. I need God's grace/Spirit to work in my mind and will (1 Cor 2:10–14).
2. **With faith**—If this is God's word, I need to believe it is true.
3. **With humble obedience/submission**—Not just seeking to understand an irrelevant work of literature, but to stand under the absolute authority for how I live and what I believe.
4. **With eager anticipation**—God works through his word.
5. **With a willingness to work**
 - a. Studying the Bible well does take a lot of work!
 - b. Human words use grammar, vocabulary, etc.
6. **With an awareness of historical/cultural issues**
7. **With an awareness of place in time/history/history of redemption**
8. **With an awareness of genre**
9. **Letting Scripture interpret Scripture**—Not all parts are equally clear.
10. **Seeking God's intended meaning for us today**—These writings were not simply intended for an audience several centuries ago.
 - a. **Romans 4:23–25**—“Now **it was credited to him** was not written for Abraham alone, 24 but also for us. It will be credited to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.”
 - b. **Romans 15:4**—“For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures.”
 - c. **1 Corinthians 10:11**—“These things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the ages have come.”
11. **Seeking to grow in our knowledge of Jesus**—It's all about him! (2 Pet 3:18).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 1

Lesson 1 Homework

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Psalm 19:1–14. As you read this passage, ask yourself these questions:

- **How has God revealed himself to us? (See vv. 1–11.)**
- **What qualities does God's Word possess? What effect does it have on us? (See vv. 7–11.)**
- **How should we respond to God's gracious revelation of himself? (See vv. 12–14.)**

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on these truths at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 1

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 2

The Holy Spirit

Illumination:

How Does the Holy Spirit Influence My Understanding?

1 Corinthians 2:1–14—“For who knows a person’s thoughts except his spirit within him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. 13 We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. 14 But the person without the Spirit does not receive what comes from God’s Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated spiritually.”

SCRIPTURE AND THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Inspiration

“The Holy Spirit’s work in the lives of the human authors of Scripture with the result that they wrote what God wanted to communicate (i.e., the Word of God)” (Duvall & Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 196).

- a. **2 Timothy 3:16**—“All Scripture is breathed out by God . . .”
- b. **2 Peter 1:21**—“No prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

2. Illumination

The Holy Spirit’s “work of bringing believers to understand and receive the truth of Scripture” (Duvall & Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 196).

- a. Believers (“spiritual things to spiritual people”)
- b. Understand (“not able to understand”)
- c. Receive (“does not receive”)

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 2

HOW DOES THE SPIRIT BRING ILLUMINATION?

1. The Spirit does not . . .

- a. Make right understanding automatic.
- b. Create new meaning or provide new information.

“One good, solid, contextual, grammatical argument for what a text means outweighs every assertion that the Holy Spirit told me the meaning” (John Piper).

2. The Spirit does . . .

- a. Use our careful thinking, proper interpretive methods, good study helps, and the faithful instruction of others.

2 Timothy 2:7—“Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.”

2 Timothy 2:15—“Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn’t need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.”

Ephesians 4:11–12—“And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ.”

Proverbs 2:1–6—“My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, 2 listening closely to wisdom and directing your heart to understanding; 3 furthermore, if you call out to insight and lift your voice to understanding, 4 if you seek it like silver and search for it like hidden treasure, 5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God. 6 For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

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Lesson 2

- b. Enable us to understand and receive the meaning that he already inspired in the Scriptures.

Psalms 119:18—“Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.”

Luke 24:44–45—He told them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

John 16:13–15—“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. 15 Everything the Father has is mine. This is why I told you that he takes from what is mine and will declare it to you.”

- c. Transform our hearts so that we receive and obey the truth we perceive.

Ezekiel 36:27—“I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances.

I.O.U.S: A PRAYER FOR BIBLE STUDY

I — “*Incline* my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain!” (Ps. 119:36, ESV).

O — “*Open* my eyes so that I may contemplate wondrous things from your instruction” (Ps. 119:18).

U — “*Unite* my heart to fear your name” (Ps. 86:11, ESV).

S — “*Satisfy* us in the morning with your faithful love so that we may shout with joy and be glad all our days” (Ps. 90:14).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 2

CAN UNBELIEVERS UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

1. Some scholars argue that unbelievers can mentally grasp the meaning of the Bible just as well as a believer; they simply reject the significance of it. They don't believe it is true.
2. However . . .
 - a. Sin affects the whole person, including the mind, and has dulled our ability to perceive Scriptural truth.
 - b. The sinful human heart manufactures evidence to justify its distorted perspective.
 - i. **Proverbs 22:13**—The slacker says, “There’s a lion outside! I’ll be killed in the public square!”
 - ii. **Romans 8:7–8**—“The mindset of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit to God’s law. Indeed, it is unable to do so. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”
 - c. Furthermore, unbelievers not only have a blinding disease within; they also have a blinding enemy without.
 - i. **2 Corinthians 4:3–4**—“But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”
 - d. So, because of the massive, blinding influences of sin and Satan, the unbeliever has no hope of reading the Bible and seeing what is really there and all of God’s glory in Jesus Christ apart from the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.
 - e. Therefore, all other things being equal, the believer is at a great advantage for weighing the evidence more accurately because he is not as given over to his sin and is no longer blinded by Satan.
 - i. **2 Corinthians 4:3–4**—When the festival was already half over, Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. 15 Then the Jews were amazed and said, “How is this man so learned, since he hasn’t been trained?” 16 Jesus answered them, “My teaching isn’t mine but is from the one who sent me. 17 If anyone wants to do his will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own.”
3. Is there an application here for Christians?

Because sin remains in our lives, we need to be on guard against the deceitfulness of our hearts that will want to twist the meaning of Scripture in order to justify or provide opportunity for our sinful desires. In other words, we still have indwelling sin and thus need the Spirit’s help.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 2

CONCLUSION

1. **We must not assume that the Spirit is just going to whisper in our ears the proper understanding of Scripture without any effort to read, study, and think.**

B. B. Warfield: “Sometimes we hear it said that ten minutes on your knees will give you a truer, deeper, more operative knowledge of God than ten hours over your books. ‘What!’ is the appropriate response, ‘than ten hours over your books, on your knees?’ Why should you turn from God when you turn to your books, or feel that you must turn from your books in order to turn to God? If learning and devotion are as antagonistic as that, then the intellectual life is in itself accursed and there can be no question of a religious life for a student, even of theology.”

2. **While giving ourselves to reading, studying, and thinking, we need to bow before the Lord and confess our sinfulness, and our desire to twist his word for our own sinful and selfish gain, and depend by faith on his supernatural work in our hearts to faithfully understand and believe the truth of his word.**

John Owen: “For a man solemnly to undertake the interpretation of any portion of Scripture without invocation of God, to be taught and instructed by his Spirit, is a high provocation of him; nor shall I expect the discovery of truth from any one who thus proudly engages in a work so much above his ability.”

3. **Our ultimate goal in reading the Bible is that God’s infinite worth and beauty would be exalted in the everlasting, white-hot worship of the blood-bought bride of Christ from every people, language, tribe, and nation. This implies:**

1. that the infinite worth and beauty of God are *the ultimate value and excellence* of the universe;
2. that the supremely *authentic and intense worship* of God’s worth and beauty is the ultimate aim of all his work and word;
3. that we should always read his word in order to see this supreme worth and beauty;
4. that we should aim in all our seeing to savor his excellence above all things;
5. that we should aim to be *transformed* by this seeing and savoring into the likeness of his beauty;
6. so that more and more people would be drawn into the worshiping family of God until the bride of Christ—across all centuries and cultures—is complete in number and beauty” (John Piper, *Reading the Bible Supernaturally*, 41).

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Lesson 2 Homework

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on John 15:18–16:15. As you read this passage, ask yourself these questions:

- **What is the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation? What is his relation to the Father and the Son? (See 15:26.)**
- **Why does Jesus say it is to the disciples' advantage that he go away? (See 16:7.)**
- **What will the Holy Spirit do when he comes? (See 16:8–15.)**

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on these truths at the beginning of next class.

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Lesson 3

The Inductive Method

The Interpretive Journey:

How Do I Get from The Text to Today?

THE INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY METHOD

1. Inductive vs. Deductive Reasoning

Inductive reasoning uses a series of specific observations to formulate general conclusions.

Deductive reasoning begins with assumed premises and then logically argues a conclusion from there.

All though imperfect—because there are an infinite number of “instances”—inductive thought is a superior form of study because it is less susceptible to our personal biases.

2. The Inductive Bible Study Method

Inductive Bible Study is about the faithful exercise of coming to the Bible without an agenda, and reading the passage in order to discern God’s agenda.

3. Steps

- a. Always begin with prayer.
- b. Context
- c. Observation
- d. Meaning/Interpretation
- e. Application

Or to phrase it another way:

- Where/when is it written?
- What does it say?
- What does it mean?
- What does it mean for me?

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Lesson 3

THE INTERPRETIVE JOURNEY²

1. Basics

- a. Goal: Grasp the meaning of the text God has intended.
- b. Bridge that spans the river: Theological principle

2. Steps of the Interpretive Journey

- a. Grasp the Text in Their Town

QUESTION: What did the text mean to the biblical audience?

- b. Measure the Width of the River

QUESTION: What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?

- c. Cross the Principizing Bridge

QUESTION: What is the theological principle in this text?

- i. Reflected in the text
- ii. Timeless
- iii. Not culturally bound
- iv. Corresponds to rest of Scripture
- v. Relevant to both biblical and contemporary audience

- d. Consult the Biblical Map

QUESTION: How does our theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?

- e. Grasping the Text in Our Town

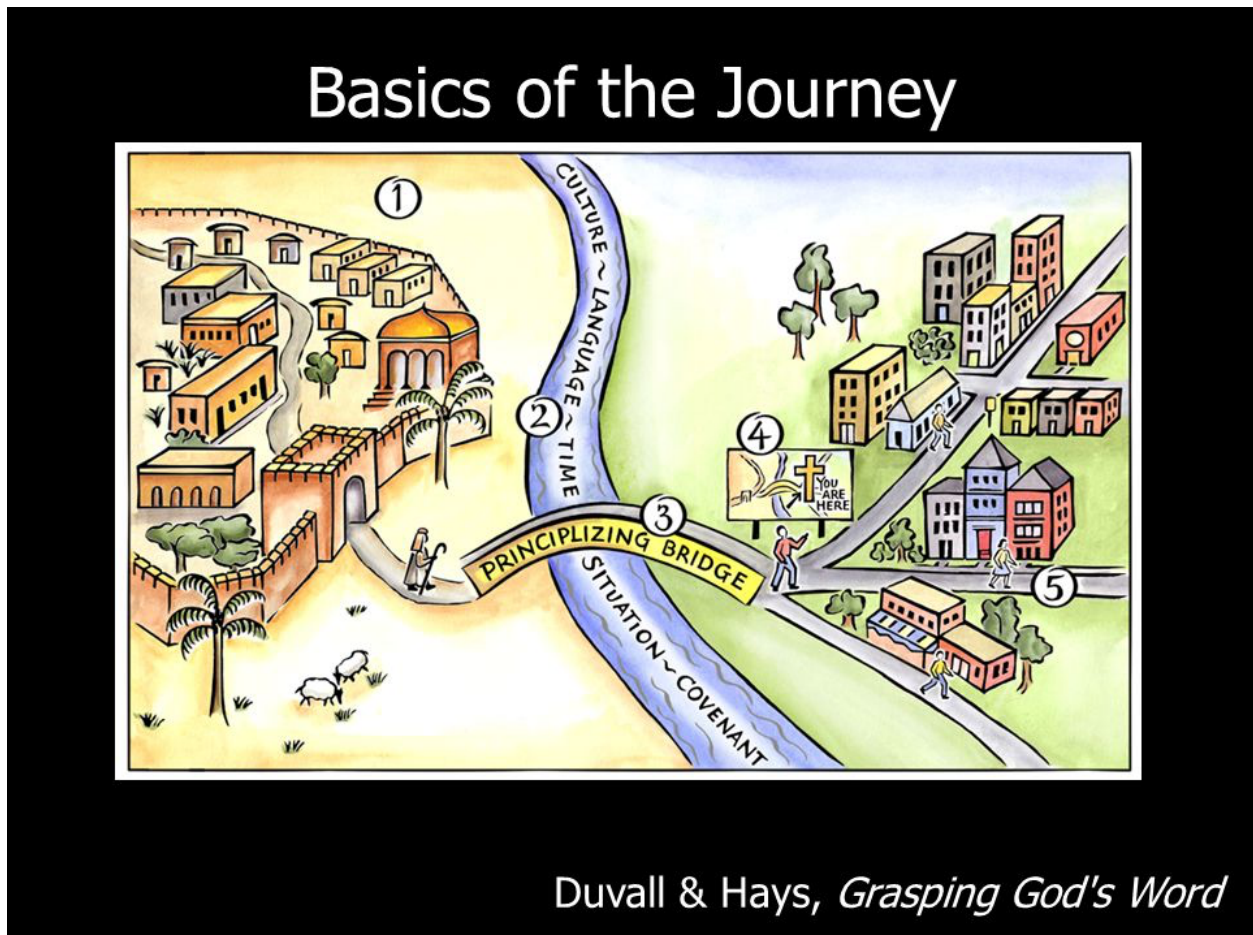
QUESTION: How should individual Christians & churches today apply the theological principle in their lives?

²Taken from J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting and Applying the Bible*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 41–47.

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Lesson 3

Figure 1: The Interpretive Journey



How to Study the Bible

Lesson 3

Example: Genesis 17:1–27

Step 1: What did the text mean to the biblical audience?

Step 2: What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?

Step 3: What is the theological principle(s) in this text?

Step 4: How do our theological principles fit with the rest of the Bible?

Step 5: How should individual Christians & churches today live out the theological principles?

For Further Study: Read “How to Interpret the Bible: The COMA Bible Study Method by Micah Colbert at rootedthinking.com/2023/10/27/how-to-interpret-the-bible-the-coma-bible-study-method/

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Lesson 3

Lesson 3 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Joshua 1:1–9. As you read this passage, ask yourself these questions:

Step 1: What did the text mean to the biblical audience?

Step 2: What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?

Step 3: What is the theological principle(s) in this text?

Step 4: How do our theological principles fit with the rest of the Bible?

Step 5: How should individual Christians & churches today live out the theological principles?

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 3

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 4

Context (Part 1)

Presuppositions:

How Do We Read the Bible on Its Own Terms?

INTRODUCTION

“A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text.”

OUR CONTEXT(S)

1. **Broader (Orthodox) Christian tradition**
2. **Reformation/Evangelical tradition**
3. **Denominational tradition**

Hebrews 13:7—“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.”

4. **Personal and family experience**

2 Timothy 3:14–15—“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

5. **Local church**

1 Timothy 4:13—“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 4

THE ROLE OF TRADITION

1. **Tradition 1:** The Reformation – Doctrine is rooted in Scripture, and “tradition” refers to a traditional way of interpreting Scripture (e.g., early church confessions). *Ministerial* role of tradition.
2. **Tradition 2:** Roman Catholicism (Council of Trent) – Doctrine is rooted in two distinct sources, Scripture and unwritten tradition (i.e. papal authority when he speaks *ex cathedra*). *Magisterial* role of tradition.
3. **Tradition 0:** The Radical Reformation – Every individual has the right to interpret Scripture as s/he pleased, subject to the guidance of the Holy Spirit (e.g., Thomas Müntzer). *No* role of tradition.

“Tradition is the fruit of the Spirit’s teaching activity from the ages as God’s people have sought understanding of Scripture. It is not infallible, but neither is it negligible, and we impoverish ourselves if we disregard it” (J. I. Packer).

WHAT IS SCRIPTURE? (=ITS CLAIM)

Scripture is God’s Word through human authors progressively revealed and culminating in Christ.

1. Who wrote the Bible?

- a. *What is the Bible’s own claim of itself?* From beginning to end, the Bible claims to be the triune God’s own speech written through the agency of human authors.

Psalms 19:7–11—“The instruction of the Lord is perfect, renewing one’s life; the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. 8 The precepts of the Lord are right, making the heart glad; the command of the Lord is radiant, making the eyes light up. 9 The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are reliable and altogether righteous. 10 They are more desirable than gold—than an abundance of pure gold; and sweeter than honey dripping from a honeycomb. 11 In addition, your servant is warned by them, and in keeping them there is an abundant reward.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 4

- b. *What is the relationship between the divine author's intent and the human author's intent?* God speaks so that his intent comes through the human's intent (see lesson 13).

2 Peter 1:21—"No prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

2 Timothy 3:16—"All Scripture is inspired [breathed out] by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

- i. **Historic/Received view:** "What the Bible says, God says." Scripture speaks with full authority and without error.
 - ii. **Moderate view:** The human character of the Bible entails human error. Scripture is from God when it speaks on issues of faith and practice.
 - iii. **Neo-orthodox view:** The Bible is merely a record of God's revelation, so that Scripture is inspired in the sense that the men who wrote it had inspirational experiences with God that they put into writing.
 - iv. **Liberal view:** The Bible gives us no doctrine of inspiration that demands that we identify its human writings with God's own word. Such a view of Scripture's full authority is only "a modern invention."
- c. *What is the result?* There is a unity between the testaments that together declares God's unfailing purposes in this fallen world (metanarrative).

2. How does the Bible come to us?

- a. The Bible is a progressively revealed book: it comes to us over time.

Hebrews 1:1–2—"Long ago God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. 2 In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son."

- b. Scripture is best viewed as a "word-act" revelation. God's word is his interpretation of his acts in history to redeem.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 4

3. What is the Bible centrally about?

- a. Ultimately, the Bible has a single message uniting its diverse parts.

Hebrews 1:1–2—“Long ago God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. 2 In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son.”

- b. The Bible is centrally about what our triune Creator-covenant God has done to redeem us and to make everything new in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Matthew 5:17—“Don’t think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”

1 Peter 1:10–12—“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that would come to you, searched and carefully investigated. 11 They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—angels long to catch a glimpse of these things.”

4. How then should we read the Bible?

- a. Extratextual Reading vs. Intratextual Reading

- i. To read the Bible *extratextually*, we read the Bible in terms of an outside point of reference, an external grid. (e.g. Darwinian evolution, existentialism, feminism, liberation theology, psychology, personal experience).
- ii. To read the Bible *intratextually*, we read the Bible in its own categories and on its own terms.

- b. Extratextual Reading vs. Extrabiblical Information

- c. Extratextual Reading vs. Mistaken Intratextual Readings

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 4

THE TEXT'S CONTEXT(S) (=ITS STRUCTURE)

Our reading of Scripture must reflect what Scripture is. It is God's *revelation* that comes to us *progressively* and has a *Christological* focus. As a result, we must read it along its three interlocking contexts (Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology*, 293–310; Hunter and Wellum, *Christ From Beginning to End*, 42–72).

1. Looking Down: The Close Context (=Immediate Context)

The Bible is a divine-human revelation. So when we *look down* at the page, we seek to understand the words in their immediate context. The close context takes into account the divine inspiration and human character of the words written.

2. Looking Back: The Continuing Context (=Epochal Context)

The Bible is a progressive revelation. Thus, we *look back* in the story to read a given passage according to the Bible's unfolding drama. The continuing context takes into account where the words are in relation to what has come before them in the unfolding story.

3. Looking Ahead: The Complete Context (=Canonical Context)

Because the Bible is a book centered on Jesus, we *look ahead* in the story, even when we read the earlier parts before the coming of Jesus, so that we read them in light of the whole of Scripture. The complete context takes into account the whole Bible's message centered in Christ and brought to bear on our lives.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 4

Lesson 4 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Acts 17:16–32. This story is instructive for us, as Paul teaches us how to present the truth of the gospel in a pluralistic cultural context. As you read this passage, ask yourself these questions:

- **How does Paul's reasoning in the Areopagus with the people of Athens differ from his reasoning in the synagogues with the Jews? (vv. 16–21; see Acts 13:13–52 for comparison)**

- **What biblical truths does Paul lay down that are foundational to the biblical worldview and essential to the correct exposition and defense of Jesus's identity as the Christ? (vv. :22–34)**

About God/Creation (Acts 17:22–29)

About Man/Fall (Acts 17:22–29)

About Repentance/Final Judgment (Acts 17:30–31)

About Christ/Resurrection (Acts 17:30–31)

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 5

Context (Part 2)

Looking Down:

What Is the Close Context of the Text?

READ THE BIBLE AS A DIVINE BOOK

1. If God wrote every word, sentence, paragraph, chapter, and book, then:

- a. The Bible is *unified*.
- b. The Bible is *coherent*.
- c. The Bible is *complete*.
- d. The Bible is *sufficient*.
- e. The Bible is *urgent*.

2. All these truths about Scripture have major implications for how we interpret the Bible:

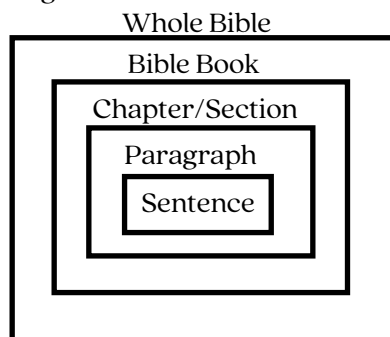
- a. We should read it with creaturely *humility*.
- b. We should read it with *expectation*.
- c. We should read it with *caution*.
- d. We should read it *patiently*.
- e. We should read it *submissively*.

READ THE BIBLE AS A HUMAN BOOK

1. Consider the Literary Context

- a. Flow

Figure 2: Levels of Context³



³Figure taken from Nigel Beynon and Andrew Sach, *Digging Deeper: Tools to Unearth the Bible's Treasure* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005), 37.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 5

b. Form

- i. *Discourse*: Words spoken or written from one person to another.
- ii. *Narrative*: Words that tell a story.
- iii. *Poetry*: Words conveying images and structured through lines.

2. Consider the Historical Context

a. Author

- i. What is his background?
- ii. Where does he come from?
- iii. When does he write?
- iv. What kind of ministry does he have?
- v. What is his relationship with the people he addresses?

b. Audience

- i. Who are the recipients?
- ii. What are their general circumstances?

c. Geography and Topography

d. Cultural Features (religious, political, social, economic, etc.)

e. Three Dangers:

- i. Watch out for inaccurate background information.
- ii. Don't elevate the background of the text above the meaning of the text.
- iii. Don't assume you do not need to know any background information.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 5

CORRECTING FREQUENTLY MISUSED PASSAGES

1. Philippians 4:13

- a. The Abused Interpretation

- b. The Correct Interpretation

2. Revelation 3:20

- a. The Abused Interpretation

- b. The Correct Interpretation

3. 2 Chronicles 7:14

- a. The Abused Interpretation

- b. The Correct Interpretation

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 5

Lesson 5 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on the story of the widow's gift in Mark 12:38–13:2 and Luke 20:45–21:6. As you read these passages, focus on the context of the passages immediately before & after—the warning against the scribes & the prediction of the temple's destruction—and ask yourself these questions:

- Why is the story of the widow's gift placed between these passages?
- Why does Jesus warn about the scribes who "devour widows' houses"?
- What is the significance of the widow giving out of her poverty "all she had to live on"? (See 1 Corinthians 16:1–2; 2 Corinthians 8:1–4)
- Why does Jesus predict that the temple, adorned with gifts dedicated to God, will be thrown down?

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on these passages at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 6

Context (Part 3)

Looking Back:

What Is the Continuing Context of the Text?

DISCERNING THE SHAPE & FLOW OF THE BIBLE'S UNFOLDING STORY

1. We must *look back* in the story to discover how a given passage relates to what *preceded* it.
2. One simple way to start is by considering the Bible's chronology: when the various parts were written.
3. But the chronology of the Bible's books is not always determinative. We need something more to discern the true shape of the story they tell.
4. The epochal/temporal divisions are tied to *before* and *after* categories in Scripture and are significant for interpretation. The most obvious epochal division is between the Old and New Testaments.

Galatians 4:4—"When the time came to completion, God sent his Son."

Romans 5:6—"At the right time, Christ died for the ungodly."

Other examples:

- a. Before the fall of Adam, and after the fall (Gen. 1–2 vs. Gen. 3; see Rom. 8:20)
 - b. The Patriarchs, the Old Covenant, the exile, and the Coming of Christ (Acts 7:1–53)
 - c. Abraham to David, David to the exile, the exile to Christ (Matt. 1:1–17)
 - d. Before the cross, after the resurrection (John 2:20–22)
5. To honor the most significant divisions of the Bible's story, we will focus on two sets of divisions. The first will be akin to a wide-angle photographic lens, helping us to gain the "big picture" (=the Bible's plot movements). The second will be more like a narrow lens, giving us an up-close perspective (=the biblical covenants).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 6

TRACE THE BIBLE'S PLOT MOVEMENTS

1. The Bible's long and layered story can be outlined in four major plot movements: *creation, fall, redemption, and new creation*.
2. Thinking through the Bible's plot movements helps us answer the questions that every person asks and must ultimately answer:
 - Where did we come from?
 - What went wrong?
 - What is the solution to our problem?
 - Where is history ultimately going?

Creation—Genesis 1–2 gives the account of God's creation of all things, including human beings like you and me, his creatures and image-bearers. It's foundational to everything that Scripture teaches, setting the stage for the rest of the Bible's unfolding drama.

Fall—In Genesis 3, Adam, the first man, forever changed the direction of space-time history with his choice to rebel against God. The fall establishes the terrible problem that the rest of Scripture is written to address. The question that creates tension in the story is: How can sinful and rebellious human beings ever be acceptable before the triune, holy God, given his sin's impurity and pollution? How can you and I stand before God without being condemned?

Redemption—In Genesis 3:15 God promises that a son—the “seed” of the woman, a human offspring—will one day come to crush the enemy who tempted our first father and mother. The rest of the Bible slowly unfolds this initial “good news” promise, which is fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

New Creation—The direction of history is toward a new creation, the goal and end of God's redeeming promise. The Old Testament prophets describe this new creation as arriving in the coming of God's King and Messiah. Through his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus brings the new creation. In his return, he will bring the new creation in its fulness (Rev. 21–22).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 6

TRACE THE BIBLE'S COVENANTS

“Every book has a skeleton hidden between its covers. Your job as an analytical reader is to find it. A book comes to you with flesh on its bare bones and clothes over its flesh. It is all dressed up. You do not have to undress it or tear the flesh off its limbs to get at the firm structure that underlies the soft surface. But you must read the book with X-ray eyes, for it is an essential part of your apprehension of any book to grasp its structure” (Mortimer Adler, *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading*, 75).

1. **If we want to see with finer details and understand what shapes the Bible's deeper structure, we need to grasp something called a covenant.**
2. **Covenants are simply God's way of relating with his people. They are the backbone of Scripture's grand story, holding its four-part skeleton together.**
3. **Covenants vs. Contracts**
 - a. Similarities—Both types of agreements involve parties and require obligations.
 - b. Differences—While a contract involves a relationship for the sake of obligations, a covenant involves obligations for the sake of a relationship. “A covenant is a chosen relationship between two parties ordered according to specific promises” (Hunter and Wellum, *Christ From Beginning to End*, 55).

4. The Biblical Covenants

God's Covenant with Creation through Adam and Noah—Adam, the first man, is not merely the first biological man; he is also the representative head of humanity and of creation itself. For this reason, when Adam disobeys God's command, his sinful choice affects *all* people and the entire creation (Hos. 6:7; Rom. 5:12–19; 8:20). God's covenant with Noah is a *reaffirmation* of the foundational covenant with Adam and creation. Yet unlike the original covenant with Adam and creation, the Noahic covenant is established in the context of a fallen world subject to God's judgment.

God's Covenant with Abraham and His Children—The Abrahamic covenant is how God will fulfill his promise to redeem and restore the world. Through *one family*, Abraham and his seed, God will make good on his promise to reverse the effects of sin and death. Abraham's children, identified as those who trust and obey God, will be God's people, restored to his presence and remade to fulfill God's intent for human beings—to be his image-bearers and servant kings.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 6

God's Covenant with Israel through Moses—In God's covenant with Israel, mediated through a man named Moses, God's promise is now focused on an entire *nation*—a holy nation and a kingdom of priests who are to act as God's son (Ex. 4:22; 19:6). Moses serves as the mediator of this covenant, and God outlines his plans for the nation. These plans include the key roles of prophets, priests, and kings, each role touching on an aspect of Adam's original role in Eden. The structure included blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. This covenant, often called the "old covenant," although given by God, also points beyond itself to something greater. In itself it was insufficient because it foreshadowed what was necessary to save us, but it did not provide that salvation in full. As part of God's plan, the old covenant served several purposes: it revealed the hideous nature of human sin (Rom. 7:13), it unveiled the greatness of God's grace, and it prophetically anticipated the righteousness of God in the gospel (Rom. 3:21) by serving as a guardian to lead us to the promised seed of Adam and the true son of Abraham, Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:19–4:7).

God's Covenant with David and His Sons—Through the Davidic covenant, God's promise is now focused on an *individual*: the king. In his covenant with David, God promises a "son/king," a throne, and a kingdom that will never end (2 Sam. 7:14). This seed/son will be descended from David's line, and he will fulfill all of God's promises.

God's New Covenant in Christ—With the arrival of Jesus of Nazareth—who is revealed to be God's eternal Son, born into history as a descendant of Adam, Abraham, and David—all of God's promises are now a yes and the covenants reach their fulfillment (2 Cor. 1:20). As God planned from eternity, through the new covenant established by our Lord Jesus Christ, our triune God inaugurates his kingdom and saving reign in the world. In his incarnation, the divine Son becomes the promised son of Eve, Abraham's seed, the true Israel, and David's greater Son, and he achieves our redemption from the effects of sin and the curse by his work. By Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension, and pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost, he pays for our sin, remakes us as his new creation, and removes the curse of sin upon creation. In Christ alone, all of God's promises are fulfilled, and the original purpose of our creation as God's covenant people living in relationship with him is now accomplished forever.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 6

CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLICAL COVENANTS

1. God's covenants are part of God's one plan of salvation.

"Sometimes theologians and biblical scholars will speak of a covenant of works and a covenant of grace, but it's better to think in terms of *one plan* that each of the *covenants* unveil as they progressively unfold God's plan, which culminates in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Hunter and Wellum, *Christ From Beginning to End*, 60).

2. God's covenants progress from one to another.

3. God's covenants are unconditional and conditional.

"On the one hand, each covenant is unconditional and unilateral because of God's gracious initiative to redeem and to keep his own promises. On the other hand, each covenant is conditional because it involves a human partner who is called to obey God. God, as our Creator and Lord, demands perfect love, loyalty, and obedience, which highlights the conditional aspect of each covenant.

Why is this important? Because as the Bible's storyline unfolds, it becomes clear that God always keeps his promises, but human beings do not. In each covenant that God makes, we eventually find that *no human partner loves and obeys God perfectly*. What hope can there be for us? The only hope is that God keeps his own promise to redeem us through the provision of his Son, who does perfectly keep his promises. Jesus Christ simultaneously meets God's own righteous demand *and* acts as our obedient covenant representative and substitute. Through his obedience, sinners can be saved" (Hunter and Wellum, *Christ From Beginning to End*, 61).

4. God's covenants are revelatory; they reveal who God is and his plan.

"The covenants include many different elements, including laws and commands, but they are far more than a collection of rules. In all of their elements, the covenants reveal the nature of God and his plan to save. In studying each covenant, we learn more about the God who makes these promises, who he is and why he does what he does. We learn that our God is a gracious God, faithful to his Word, and he saves through his Promised One. In numerous ways, the covenants reveal who this Promised One is, the need he comes to address, and what he does to save. As we read the Bible's story, we are always asking ourselves, How does *this* covenant reveal the God who saves and the Savior he sends?" (Hunter and Wellum, *Christ From Beginning to End*, 61–62).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 6

Lesson 6 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on three biblical texts that make arguments based on the continuing context of Scripture. As you read these passages, ask yourself these questions:

- **Matthew 19:1–12—How does Jesus' understanding of the Bible's major plot movements inform his answer to the Pharisees' question about divorce?**
- **Romans 4—How does Paul's understanding of the chronological order of events in Abraham's life inform his teaching of the role of circumcision in relation to salvation?**
- **Galatians 3—How does Paul's understanding of the order of the biblical covenants inform his teaching of the role of the Law of Moses in the life of the new covenant Christian?**

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on these passages at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 7

Context (Part 4)

Looking Ahead:

What Is the Complete Context of the Text?

THE COMPLETE/CANONICAL CONTEXT

1. We must *look ahead* to discover the fullness of God's intent in light of the fullness of Scripture's message.
2. The ultimate context for every text is the entire canon of Scripture.
 - a. **Luke 24:27**—"Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures."
 - b. **John 5:39**—"You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me."

FOLLOW PROMISE TO FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST

1. The Bible *moves from promise to fulfillment in Christ through the biblical covenants*.
2. The Old Testament is the story of God's promise, and the New Testament is God's fulfillment of all he has promised.
 - a. **Luke 24:44**—"These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled."
 - b. **2 Corinthians 3:19–20**—"For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you—Silvanus, Timothy, and I—did not become "Yes and no." On the contrary, in him it is always "Yes." 20 For every one of God's promises is "Yes" in him. Therefore, through him we also say "Amen" to the glory of God."

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 7

FOLLOW THE TYPOLOGICAL PATTERNS FULFILLED IN CHRIST

1. When we say that something is *typical*, we mean it follows a certain pattern. Biblical typology explores how the Bible's thematic patterns—or types—are traced through the covenants. The writers of Scripture use the Greek term *typos* in a variety of ways.
 - a. **Romans 5:14**—"Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression. He is a type of the Coming One."
 - b. **1 Corinthians 10:6**—"Now these things took place as examples for us, so that we will not desire evil things as they did."
 - c. **1 Corinthians 10:11**—"These things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the ages have come."
 - d. **1 Peter 3:21**—"Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
 - e. **Hebrews 8:5**—"These serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was warned when he was about to complete the tabernacle. For God said, **Be careful that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain.**"
 - f. **Hebrews 9:24**—"For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with hands (only a model of the true one) but into heaven itself, so that he might now appear in the presence of God for us."
2. Types are categorized in several ways. One popular and useful way to think of types is in terms of *people, events, and institutions*.
 - a. People
 - i. Adam (Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15:21–28; Heb. 2:5–18)
 - ii. Moses (Deut. 18:15–18; Acts 3:17–26)
 - iii. David (2 Sam. 7:14; Matt. 1:1–18)
 - b. Events
 - i. Exodus (Exod. 12; Isa. 11:1–16; 53:1–12; Hos. 11:1; Luke 9:31; Eph. 1:17)
 - ii. Passover (Exod. 12; 1 Cor. 5:7)
 - c. Institutions
 - i. Prophet (John 1:1, 14; Heb. 1:1–2)
 - ii. Priest (Heb. 5:1–10; 7:1–8:13; 9:1–10:18)
 - iii. King (2 Sam. 7:14; Isa. 9:6–7; 11:1–16; 53:1–12; Ezek. 34)

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 7

CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLICAL TYPES

1. Types are patterns rooted in history. [*Historical Correspondence, Repetition*]

- a. Typology is grounded in *history* and presupposes corresponding events; allegory is grounded in a linguistic system of signs and presupposes parallels between *ideas* or *sign* meanings.
- b. Typology involves an *organic* relation, in history, between events, persons, and institutions in one epoch and their counterparts in later epochs. The early event, person, or institution is called the 'type' and the later one is called the 'antitype.'

2. Types are designed by God. [*Textual Warrant*]

- a. Typology is *prophetic* and *predictive* and thus it is divinely given. It is not a 'direct' prediction; rather it is 'indirect.'

Romans 16:25–27—"Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation about Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept silent for long ages 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of the eternal God to advance the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles— 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ—to him be the glory forever! Amen."

1 Peter 1:10–12—"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that would come to you, searched and carefully investigated. 11 They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—angels long to catch a glimpse of these things."

- b. Typology is grounded in God's omniscience and sovereignty. If there is to be an intention of God to relate Adam to Christ, he must know the end from the beginning. He must know how the parts fit with the whole. And he needs sovereignty to pull it off.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 7

3. Types involve progression toward fulfillment in Christ. [*Escalation/Intensification*]

- a. Typology allows for the promises of God to often have *two or more fulfillment horizons* (=little installments), one relatively immediate and the other at some distance in the future. The repetition must have 2 texts in the OT before culminating in Christ (e.g. Gen. 14; Ps. 110; then Heb. 7).
- b. Typology involves a *significant progression* between these fulfillment phases (=intensification). The height of intensification occurs with Christ (=antitype).

PUTTING THE THREE CONTEXTS TO WORK

Example: Genesis 12:1–3

1. What is the Close Context?

2. What is the Continuing Context?

Genesis 3:14–19

- 1. Enmity between the seeds (v. 15).
- 2. Gender conflict (vv. 16, 17a).
- 3. Land cursed (vv. 17b-19).

Genesis 12:1–3, 7

- > Bless Abraham/Curse enemies
- > Nation
- > Promised Land

3. What is the Complete Context?

- a. **Numbers 24:9**—“He crouches, he lies down like a lion or a lioness—who dares to rouse him? Those who bless you will be blessed, and those who curse you will be cursed.”
- b. **Psalms 72:17**—“May his name endure forever; as long as the sun shines, may his fame increase. May all nations be blessed by him and call him blessed.”
- c. **Galatians 3:7–9**—“You know, then, that those who have faith, these are Abraham’s sons. 8 Now the Scripture saw in advance that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and proclaimed the gospel ahead of time to Abraham, saying, **All the nations will be blessed through you.** 9 Consequently, those who have faith are blessed with Abraham, who had faith.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 7

Lesson 7 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Exodus 19:1–6. As you read this passage, focus on how the three contexts (close, continuing, complete) inform our understanding of this passage and how it applies to us today. Ask yourself these questions:

- **CLOSE:** What did Moses (inspired by the Spirit) intend for Israel to understand in this passage? What has happened so far in the book? What comes next?
- **CONTINUING:** Where are we in the unfolding story of God's plan? How should we understand this passage in light of what came *before*? (Hint: See Genesis 12:1–3)
- **COMPLETE:** What is the meaning of this text in light of the whole Bible and the person and work of Jesus? (Hint: See Deuteronomy 7:6–12; Isaiah 62:1–3, 11–12; Jeremiah 23:5–8; 1 Peter 2:4–12; Revelation 1:5–6; 5:9–10.)

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 7

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 8

Observation (Part 1)

Semantics:

What Do These Words in the Text Mean?

INTRODUCTION:

1. Last Four Lessons: Big Picture
2. Next Four Lessons: Detail Level

AGASSIZ AND THE FISH

Agassiz was the founder of the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology and a Harvard professor. The following account was written by one of his students, Samuel H. Scudder, under the title “Agassiz and the Fish, by a Student” (*American Poems*, 3rd ed. [Boston: Houghton, Osgood & Co., 1879], pp. 450–54).

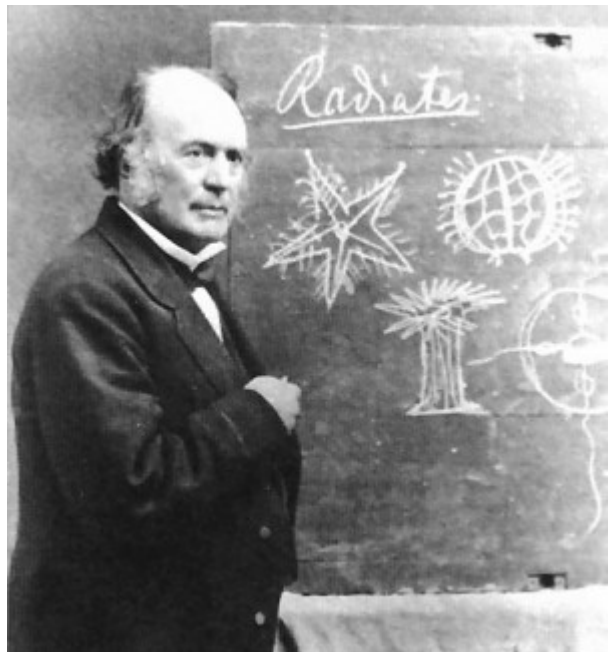
Agassiz and the Fish

by a Student

It was more than fifteen years ago that I entered the laboratory of Professor Agassiz, and told him I had enrolled my name in the scientific school as a student of natural history. He asked me a few questions about my object in coming, my antecedents generally, the mode in which I afterwards proposed to use the knowledge I might acquire, and finally, whether I wished to study any special branch. To the latter I replied that while I wished to be well grounded in all departments of zoology, I purposed to devote myself specially to insects.

“When do you wish to begin?” he asked.

“Now,” I replied.



Louis Agassiz (1807–1873)

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 8

This seemed to please him, and with an energetic “Very well,” he reached from a shelf a huge jar of specimens in yellow alcohol.

“Take this fish,” he said, “and look at it; we call it a Haemulon; by and by I will ask what you have seen.” With that he left me. . . . I was conscious of a passing feeling of disappointment, for gazing at a fish did not commend itself to an ardent entomologist. . . .

In ten minutes I had seen all that could be seen in that fish, and started in search of the professor, who had, however, left the museum; and when I returned, after lingering over some of the odd animals stored in the upper apartment, my specimen was dry all over. I dashed the fluid over the fish as if to resuscitate it from a fainting-fit, and looked with anxiety for a return of a normal, sloppy appearance. This little excitement over, nothing was to be done but return

to a steadfast gaze at my mute companion. Half an hour passed, an hour, another hour; the fish began to look loathsome. I turned it over and around; looked it in the face—ghastly; from behind, beneath, above, sideways, at a three-quarters view—just as ghastly. I was in despair; at an early hour, I concluded that lunch was necessary; so with infinite relief, the fish was carefully replaced in the jar, and for an hour I was free.

On my return, I learned that Professor Agassiz had been at the museum, but had gone and would not return for several hours. My fellow students were too busy to be disturbed by continued conversation. Slowly I drew forth that hideous fish, and with a feeling of desperation again looked at it. I might not use a magnifying glass; instruments of all kinds were interdicted. My two hands, my two eyes, and the fish; it seemed a most limited field. I pushed my fingers down its throat to see how sharp its teeth were. I began to count the scales in the different rows until I was convinced that that was nonsense. At last a happy thought struck me—I would draw the fish; and now with surprise I began to discover new features in the creature. Just then the professor returned.



The Tomtate, *Haemulon aurolineatum*. Illustration by Diana Rome Peebles 1998. Courtesy of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Division of Marine Fisheries.

“That is right,” said he, “a pencil is one of the best eyes. I am glad to notice, too, that you keep your specimen wet and your bottle corked.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 8

With these encouraging words he added—

“Well, what is it like?”

He listened attentively to my brief rehearsal of the structure of parts whose names were still unknown to me; the fringed gill-arches and movable operculum; the pores of the head, fleshy lips, and lidless eyes; the lateral line, the spinous fin, and forked tail; the compressed and arched body. When I had finished, he waited as if expecting more, and then, with an air of disappointment:

“You have not looked very carefully; why,” he continued, more earnestly, “you haven’t seen one of the most conspicuous features of the animal, which is as plainly before your eyes as the fish itself. Look again; look again!” And he left me to my misery.

I was piqued; I was mortified. Still more of that wretched fish? But now I set myself to the task with a will, and discovered one new thing after another, until I saw how just the professor’s criticism had been. The afternoon passed quickly, and when, towards its close, the professor inquired,

“Do you see it yet?”

“No,” I replied. “I am certain I do not, but I see how little I saw before.”

“That is next best,” said he earnestly, “but I won’t hear you now; put away your fish and go home; perhaps you will be ready with a better answer in the morning. I will examine you before you look at the fish.”

This was disconcerting; not only must I think of my fish all night, studying, without the object before me, what this unknown but most visible feature might be, but also, without reviewing my new discoveries, I must give an exact account of them the next day. I had a bad memory; so I walked home by Charles River in a distracted state, with my two perplexities.

The cordial greeting from the professor the next morning was reassuring; here was a man who seemed to be quite as anxious as I that I should see for myself what he saw.

“Do you perhaps mean,” I asked, “that the fish has symmetrical sides with paired organs?”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 8

His thoroughly pleased, "Of course, of course!" repaid the wakeful hours of the previous night. After he had discoursed most happily and enthusiastically—as he always did—upon the importance of this point, I ventured to ask what I should do next.

"Oh, look at your fish!" he said, and left me again to my own devices. In a little more than an hour he returned and heard my new catalogue.

"That is good, that is good!" he repeated, "but that is not all; go on." And so for three long days, he placed that fish before my eyes, forbidding me to look at anything else, or to use any artificial aid. "Look, look, look," was his repeated injunction.

This was the best entomological lesson I ever had—a lesson whose influence was extended to the details of every subsequent study; a legacy the professor has left to me, as he left it to many others, of inestimable value, which we could not buy, with which we cannot part. . . .

The fourth day a second fish of the same group was placed beside the first, and I was bidden to point out the resemblances and differences between the two; another and another followed, until the entire family lay before me, and a whole legion of jars covered the table and surrounding shelves; the odor had become a pleasant perfume; and even now, the sight of an old six-inch worm-eaten cork brings fragrant memories!

The whole group of Haemulons was thus brought into review; and whether engaged upon the dissection of the internal organs, preparation and examination of the bony framework, or the description of the various parts, Agassiz's training in the method of observing facts in their orderly arrangement, was ever accompanied by the urgent exhortation not to be content with them.

"Facts are stupid things," he would say, "until brought into connection with some general law."

At the end of eight months, it was almost with reluctance that I left these friends and turned to insects; but what I gained by this outside experience has been of greater value than years of later investigation in my favorite groups.

1. Good observation is work, and it is a skill that needs to be developed.

"Raking is easy, but all you get is leaves; digging is hard, but you might find diamonds" (John Piper).

2. We are not mainly looking for things that are hidden or difficult to see or understand.

"No verse of Scripture yields it meaning to lazy people" (A. W. Pink).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 8

BASIC INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

I keep six honest serving-men

■ (They taught me all I knew);

Their names are What and Why and When

■ And How and Where and Who. (Rudyard Kipling, "The Elephant's Child")

1. Who?

- a. Who is mentioned? Who is the subject?
- b. Who is speaking or writing?
- c. Who is being addressed?
- d. To whom does the promise apply?
- e. Who is doing the action? Who is being acted upon?

2. What?

- a. What is the passage about? What are the main ideas/events?
- b. What kind of literature (genre) is this?
- c. What promises are made? What commands are given?

3. When?

- a. When was this written?
- b. When did it take place? Historical setting?
- c. When does this occur in the storyline of redemptive history? What era is it in? (E.g., within the Mosaic covenant? After the exile? Before the cross or after?)
- d. Expressions of time and their significance (then, immediately, after this, until, etc.)?

4. Where?

- a. Where does the action take place? Any significance to this?
- b. Geographical setting?

5. Why?

- a. What is the *reason* or *support* given for what is said?
- b. Why did this action happen?
- c. Why did the people do what they did?
- d. Why was this promise, command, or truth given?

6. How?

- a. How was the action done?
- b. How should this command be obeyed?
- c. How did these people respond? How should they have responded?
- d. How was this truth illustrated?

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 8

THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN A TEXT: WORDS & PHRASES

1. Repetition

- Often indicates key words
- Early indication of what a passage is primarily about
- Check connections with surrounding text as well

2 Corinthians 1:3–7—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. 6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings that we suffer. 7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that as you share in the sufferings, so you will also share in the comfort.”

2. Figures of Speech

- Words used in a sense other than the normal, literal sense
- Intending a particular emotional response?
- What aspect of the image is relevant?
- Examples:
 - **Simile**—a declaration that one thing resembles another.
 - **Psalms 17:8**—“Protect me as the pupil of your eye.”
 - **Ephesians 5:22, 25**—“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord . . . Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her.”
 - **Metaphor**—a declaration that one thing is (or represents) another.
 - **Psalms 23:1**—“The LORD is my shepherd; I have what I need.”
 - **Matthew 26:26**—“Take and eat it; this is my body.”
 - **Merism**—two elements together stand for the totality of something.
 - **Genesis 1:1**—“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
 - **Jonah 1:9**—“I’m a Hebrew. I worship the LORD, the God of the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land.”

How to Study the Bible

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- **Hendiadys**—two words used, but one thing meant.
 - **1 Timothy 1:17**—“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be **honor** and **glory** forever and ever. Amen.”
 - **Luke 1:17**—“And he will go before him in the **spirit** and **power** of Elijah.”
- **Synecdoche**—the part represents the whole or the whole stands for the part.
 - **Psalms 44:6**—“For I do not trust in my **bow**, and my **sword** does not bring me victory.”
 - **Genesis 3:19**—“You will eat **bread** by the sweat of your brow.”
- **Metonymy**—one word or phrase stands in for another with which it is closely associated.
 - “The difference between Metonymy and Synecdoche lies in this: in Metonymy, the exchange is made between two related nouns; in Synecdoche, the exchange is made between two related ideas” (E. Y. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*).
 - **Proverbs 10:20**—“The tongue of the righteous is pure silver.”
 - **Matthew 6:21**—“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
- **Personification**—the presentation of a thing (an inanimate object) or idea as having the qualities or actions of a person.
 - **Isaiah 55:12**—“You will indeed go out with joy and be peacefully guided; the mountains and the hills will break into singing before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.”
 - **Leviticus 18:25**—“The land has become defiled, so I am punishing it for its iniquity, and the land will vomit out its inhabitants.”
 - **1 Corinthians 12:15–16**—“If the foot should say, “Because I’m not a hand, I don’t belong to the body,” it is not for that reason any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I’m not an eye, I don’t belong to the body,” it is not for that reason any less a part of the body.”
- **Anthropomorphism**—the presentation of God as having human characteristics or actions.
 - **Genesis 3:8**—“Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze.”

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- **Isaiah 59:1–2**—“Indeed, the LORD’s arm is not too weak to save, and his ear is not too deaf to hear. 2 But your iniquities are separating you from your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not listen.”
- **Psalms 8:3–4**—“When I observe your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you set in place, 4 what is a human being that you remember him, a son of man that you look after him?”
- **Litotes**—occurs when an assertion is made by negating the opposite.
 - **Jeremiah 30:19**—“I will multiply them, and they will not decrease; I will honor them, and they will not be insignificant.”
 - **Revelation 2:11**—“The one who conquers will never be harmed by the second death.”
 - **Acts 15:2**—“And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them . . .” (ESV); “After Paul and Barnabas had engaged them in serious argument and debate . . .” (CSB).
- **Hyperbole**—an exaggerated statement or claim not meant to be taken literally.
 - **Matthew 5:29–30**—“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”
- **Euphemism**—the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant.
 - **Genesis 15:15**—“But you will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age.”
 - **John 11:11**—“Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I’m on my way to wake him up.”
- **Idioms**—the peculiar usage of words and phrases according to the common manner of speaking.
 - **Acts 20:7**—“On the first day of the week, we assembled to break bread.”

Psalms 119:105—“Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.”

Isaiah 40:31—“But those who trust in the LORD will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not become weary, they will walk and not faint.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 8

3. Verbs

- Communicate the action
- Past, perfect, present, or future indicative tense (I went, I have gone, I go, I will go)?
- Imperative/command (Go!)?
- Infinitive (To go)?
- Active (John *hit* the ball) or passive (John *was hit* by the ball) or reflexive (John *hit himself* with the ball) voice?

Colossians 3:1—"If then you **have been raised** with Christ, **seek** the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

Hebrews 9:14—"How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit **offered himself** without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works so that we can serve the living God?"

Jude 24—"Now to him who is able **to protect** you from stumbling and **to make** you stand in the presence of his glory, without blemish and with great joy ..."

4. Participles

- A participle is a verbal adjective
- Function at times like adjectives, and other times like (ad)verbs (context!)
- Examples:
 - **Adjectival** uses
 - **John 4:10**—Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would ask him, and he would give you **living** water."
 - **1 John 5:1**—"Everyone **who believes** that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone **who loves** the Father also loves the one born of him."
 - **Adverbial** uses
 - **Acts 5:41**—"Then they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, **rejoicing** that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name."
 - **Jude 24–25**—"But you, beloved, **building** yourselves up in your most holy faith and **praying** in the Holy Spirit, 21 **keep** yourselves in the love of God, **waiting** for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life" (ESV).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 8

5. Conjunctions

- Connecting words (and, for, but, since, because, as, etc.)
- Communicate the relationship between words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, discourses
- Essential for understanding an author's flow of thought

Philippians 2:12–13—“Work out your own salvation with fear **and** trembling. **13 For** it is God who is working in you both to will **and** to work according to his good purpose.”

Ephesians 2:4—“**But** God, who is rich in mercy . . .”

Romans 5:19—“For just **as** through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, **so** also through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.”

6. Pronouns

- Be sure to clearly identify the *antecedent* (the person or thing to which the pronoun refers)

Luke 12:41—“Lord,” Peter asked, “are you telling this parable to us or to everyone?”

Ephesians 2:8—“For you are saved by grace through faith, and **this** is not from yourselves; **it** is God's gift.”

CONCLUSION

“He that has a Bible, and [doesn't] observe what is contained [in] it, is like a man that has a box full of silver and gold, and [doesn't] know it, [doesn't] observe that it is anything more than a vessel filled with common stones. As long as it is thus with him, he'll be never the better for his treasure” (Jonathan Edwards).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 8

Lesson 8 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Hebrews 12:1–3. As you read this passage, observe any repeated words, figures of speech, verbs, conjunctions, and pronouns. Ask yourself these questions:

- **CONTEXT:** Who is the author referring to by the great cloud of witnesses? (See v. 1.)

- **OBSERVE:** How should we run the race set before us? (See vv. 1–3).

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 8

Observation (Part 2)

Syntax:

How Do Clauses in the Text Relate Together?

Bibleαrc.com

The 18 Logical Relationships

Coordinate Relationships

Series (S): Each proposition makes its own independent contribution to a whole.
Conjunctions: *and*, moreover, likewise, neither, nor, καί, ὁέ.
Example: warning everyone *and* teaching everyone with all wisdom (Colossians 1:28)

Progression (P): Like series, but each proposition is a further step toward a climax.
Conjunctions: then, and, moreover, *furthermore*, καί, ὁέ.
Example: The earth produces by itself, first the blade, *then* the ear, *then* the full grain in the ear (Mark 4:28)

Alternative (A): Each proposition expresses a different possibility arising from a situation.
Conjunctions: or, but, while, *on the other hand*, ὁέ, ἤ, μέν.
Example: Are you the one who is to come, *or* shall we look for another? (Matthew 11:3)

Support by Distinct Statement

Ground (G): A statement and the argument or reason for that statement (supporting proposition follows)
Conjunctions: for, *because*, since, γάρ, ὅτι, ἐπεὶ, διότι.
Example: Blessed are the poor in spirit, *for* theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3)

Inference (I): A statement and the argument or reason for that statement (supporting proposition precedes)
Conjunctions: *therefore*, accordingly, οὖν, διό, ὅπως.
Example: The end of all things is at hand; *therefore* be self-controlled and sober-minded (1 Peter 4:7)

Bilateral (BL): A proposition that supports two other propositions, one preceding and one following.
Conjunctions: for, because, therefore, so, γάρ, ὅτι, οὖν, διό.
Example: For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, *for* it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:7-8)

Action-Result (Ac/Res): An action and a consequence or result which accompanies that action.
Conjunctions: so that, that, *with the result that*, ὥστε.
Example: there arose a great storm on the sea, *so that* the boat was being swamped by the waves (Matthew 8:24)

Action-Purpose (Ac/Pur): An action and its intended result.
Conjunctions: *in order that*, so that, that, lest, ἵνα, εἰς τὸ.
Example: I say this *in order that* no one may delude you with plausible arguments (Colossians 2:4)

Conditional (If/Th): Like Action-Result except that the existence of the action is only potential and the result is contingent upon that action.
Conjunctions: *if...then*, provided that, except, unless, εἰ, ἐάν, εἴτε, ἄρα.
Example: *If* there is harm, *then* you shall pay life for life (Exodus 21:23)

Temporal (T): A statement and the occasion when it is true or can occur.
Conjunctions: *when*, whenever, after, before, ὅταν, ὅτε, πρίν.
Example: And *when* you fast, do not look gloomy (Matthew 6:16)

Locative (L): A statement and the place where it is true or can occur.
Conjunctions: *where*, wherever, ὅπου.
Example: For *where* you go I will go (Ruth 1:16)

Subordinate Relationships

Support by Restatement

Action-Manner (Ac/Mn): An action and a statement indicating the way or manner that action is carried out. This relationship can also be used to indicate means.
Conjunctions: in that, by, participles.
Example: he did good *by giving* you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons (Acts 14:17)

Comparison (Cf): An action and a statement that clarifies that action by showing what it is like.
Conjunctions: even as, as...so, *like*, just as, ὡς, καθὼς.
Example: Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1)

Negative-Positive (+/-): Two statements, one of which is denied so that the other is enforced. This is also the relationship implicit in contrasting statements.
Conjunctions: *not...but*, ἀλλά.
Example: do *not* be foolish, *but* understand what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:17)

Idea-Explanation (Id/Exp): The relationship between an original statement and one clarifying its meaning. The clarifying proposition may expound on only one word of the associated arc or its entirety.
Conjunctions: *that is*, in other words, ὅτι, γάρ, ἵνα.
Example: Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin (Romans 4:7-8)

Question-Answer (Q/A): The statement of a question and the answer to that question.
Conjunctions: question mark.
Example: what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness (Romans 4:3)

Support by Contrary Statement

Concessive (Csv): A main clause that stands despite a contrary statement.
Conjunctions: although, though, yet, *nevertheless*, but, however, ὁέ, πλὴν.
Example: I intend always to remind you of these qualities, *though* you know them (2 Peter 1:12)

Situation-Response (Sit/R): A situation and its surprising or counter-intuitive response.
Conjunctions: and.
Example: How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, *and* you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37)

Helping to spread a passion for the glory of God through the careful study of His Word.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN A TEXT: SENTENCES & PARAGRAPHS

1. Coordinate Relationships

1. List

- More than two itemized things.
- Is there any order?
- Are there any groupings?

Colossians 3:12–14—“Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive. 14 Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”

2. Series

- Each statement makes its own contribution to the whole.
- Key words: and, moreover, likewise, neither, nor

1 Corinthians 1:26—“Brothers and sisters, consider your calling: Not many were wise from a human perspective, not many powerful, not many of noble birth.”

Romans 12:12—“Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer.”

3. Progression

- Like series, but each statement is a further step toward a climax.
- Key words: the, and, moreover, furthermore

Romans 5:3–4—“And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, 4 endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope.”

Romans 8:30—“ And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.”

4. Alternative

- Each statement expresses a different possibility arising from a situation.
- Key words: or, but, while, on the other hand

Romans 8:13—“If you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

Romans 6:23—“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

2. Subordinate Relationships

1. Support by Restatement

i. Action-Manner

- The statement of an action, and a statement that tells more explicitly how the action is carried out.
- Similar to Idea-Explanation (General-Specific), but an action is specifically in view rather than a concept.
- Key words: by, in that

Deuteronomy 6:2—“Do this so that you may fear the LORD your God all the days of your life **by keeping all his statutes and commands** I am giving you, your son, and your grandson, and so that you may have a long life.”

1 Peter 5:6–7—“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”

ii. Comparison

- A statement, and another statement making it more clear by showing what it is like.
- Key words: as, just as, even as, as . . . so, so also, like

Proverbs 25:26—“A righteous person who yields to the wicked is like a muddied spring or a polluted well.”

1 Thessalonians 2:7—“Although we could have been a burden as Christ’s apostles, instead we were gentle among you, as a nurse nurtures her own children.”

iii. Contrast (Negative-Positive)

- Two statements, one of which is denied so that the other is enforced.
- The order of these can be reversed so that the positive precedes the negative.
- The two statements may be essentially synonymous, or may stand in contrast.
- Key words: but, not . . . but

Proverbs 15:1—“A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath.”

1 Timothy 2:14—“And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and transgressed.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

iv. Idea-Explanation (General-Specific)

- The general statement of an idea, and more specifics or further explanation of that idea.
- Usually moves from general → specific but can move from specific → general.
- Similar to Action-Manner, but a concept is specifically in view rather than an action.
- Key words: that is, for (often no key word)

John 10:9—“I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture.”

1 Timothy 2:11–12—“A woman is to learn quietly with full submission. 12 I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; instead, she is to remain quiet.”

v. Question-Answer

- A question and the answer to the question.
- The answer may be implied rather than explicitly stated.
- Key words: what, when, how, why

Mark 2:16–17—“When the scribes who were Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” 17 When Jesus heard this, he told them, “It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

1 Corinthians 1:13—“Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul’s name?”

2. Support by Distinct Statement

i. Ground (Cause/Reason)

- A statement, and the basis or reason for which that statement stands.
- Key words: because, for, since

Exodus 32:35—“And the LORD inflicted a plague on the people for what they did with the calf Aaron had made.”

1 Corinthians 2:14—“But the person without the Spirit does not receive what comes from God’s Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated spiritually.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

ii. Inference

- A statement that draws a conclusion from a previous statement (which has given the basis or reason for that conclusion).
- Key words: therefore, thus, consequently
Psalm 46:1–2—“God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble. 2 Therefore we will not be afraid . . .”
Romans 5:1—“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

iii. Action-Result

- The statement of an action, and a statement that tells the result of that action.
- Similar to Action-Purpose, but the result is *not* intended.
- Key words: that, so that, with the result that
Mark 4:37—“A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped.”
Genesis 26:14—“He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him” (ESV).

iv. Action-Purpose

- The statement of an action, and a statement that tells the purpose for that action.
- Similar to Action-Result, but the result is intended.
- Key words: that, so that, in order that
Colossians 4:6—“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.”
1 Peter 4:13—“Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed.”

v. Conditional (If-Then)

- A statement giving the condition by which some consequence or result will happen.
- The condition is usually only possible or potential.
- Key words: if, if . . . then
1 John 1:6—“If we say, “We have fellowship with him,” and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth.”
2 Corinthians 5:17—“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

vi. Temporal

- A statement and the occasion when it is true or can occur.
- Key words: when, whenever, before, after, now

James 1:12—"Blessed is the one who endures trials, because when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."

Hebrews 7:12—"For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must be a change of law as well."

Psalms 119:67—"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word."

vii. Locative

- A statement and the place where it is true or can occur.
- Key words: where, wherever

Matthew 18:20—"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them."

2 Corinthians 3:17—"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

viii. Bilateral

- A statement that supports two other statements: one preceding and one following.
- It is simply an example of a statement that is the ground of the preceding statement, and an inference is drawn from it in the next statement.
- The main point is stated twice on the outside (like two pieces of bread in a sandwich), and the reason for the main point is in the middle (like the meat of the sandwich).
- Key words: for, because, therefore, so

Romans 8:7–8—"The mindset of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it is unable to do so. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

ix. Double Ground

- A statement that gives two reasons or grounds for the main point.
- The main point is like the meat in the middle of the sandwich, and the two reasons that support the main point are like the two pieces of bread.
- Key words: for, because, therefore, so

1 Peter 1:22–23—“Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, 23 because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God.”

3. Support by Contrary Statement

i. Concession

- A statement that contrasts the main statement with the concessive one.
- The main clause stands, even though there are conditions that would cause one to expect the opposite.
- Key words: although . . . yet, although, yet, nevertheless, but

Hebrews 5:8—“Although he was the Son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.”

1 Corinthians 4:15—“For you may have countless instructors in Christ, but you don’t have many fathers.”

ii. Situation-Response

- A situation in one statement and a response in another.
- Most common in narrative texts or in the recounting of events.
- In Action-Result, the effect is usually an inevitable result of the described action, whereas situation-response focuses on a person’s surprising or counter-intuitive response.
- Key words: and, but

1 Peter 2:23—“When he was insulted, he did not insult in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.”

Matthew 9:33–34—“When the demon had been driven out, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed, saying, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!” 34 But the Pharisees said, “He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

4. Other Kinds of Statements

i. Dialogue

- Frequently employed in narrative material.
- Ask questions of the dialogue:
 - Who are the participants?
 - Who is speaking to whom?
 - What is the setting?
 - Are other people around? Are they listening?
 - Is it an argument? A discussion? A lecture?
 - What is the point of the dialogue?

John 4 (Jesus and Samaritan woman)

Habakkuk (God and Habakkuk)

ii. Tone

- Is there a distinct emotional tone or manner of expression that characterizes the passage?
- Joy? Anger? Sorrow? Rebuke? Compassion? Encouragement?

Colossians 3:1–4—“So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

Galatians 3:1–14—“You foolish Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? 2 I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning by the Spirit, are you now finishing by the flesh? 4 Did you experience so much for nothing—if in fact it was for nothing?”

For Further Study: Read “How to Read a Book by God: Eight Questions for Better Understanding by Marshall Segal at desiringgod.org/articles/how-to-read-a-book-by-god

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

Ephesians 2:4–7

But God, who is rich in mercy,

because of his great love that he had for us,

5 made us alive with Christ

even though we were dead in trespasses.

You are saved by grace!

6 He also raised us up with him

and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus,

7 so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace

through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 28:16–20

The eleven disciples traveled to Galilee,

to the mountain where Jesus had directed them.

17 When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted.

18 Jesus came near and said to them,

“All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

Lesson 9 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Philippians 2:5–11. As you read this passage, observe the different statements Paul makes and ask yourself how they relate to each other. Use the lesson categories to help you. Record your observations below.

Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus,

6 who, existing in the form of God,
did not consider equality with God
as something to be exploited.

7 Instead he emptied himself
by assuming the form of a servant,
taking on the likeness of humanity.

And when he had come as a man,
8 he humbled himself by becoming obedient
to the point of death—
even to death on a cross.

9 For this reason God highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

10 so that at the name of Jesus
every knee will bow—
in heaven and on earth
and under the earth—

11 and every tongue will confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

Observation (Part 3)

Structure:

How Is This Text Put Together?

LITERARY STRUCTURE

Two questions to ask about structure:

1. Has the author divided his material into sections?
2. How do those sections fit together?

Examples of structure:

- At the book level: Ecclesiastes
- At the chapter level: Isaiah 40
- The importance of structure: 1 Corinthians 13

How to find structure:

- Look for recurring words or themes (e.g. “the next day” in John 1:29, 35, 43)
- Look for major breaks or pivot points (e.g. Ephesians 1–3, 4–6; 2 Samuel 11–12)
- In narratives, look for scene changes
- In dialogue, look at who is talking
- In discourse, identify progression of thought or argument

How to use structure:

- Give each section a title
- Identify how the pieces fit together
- Outline your passage
- Memorize your passage

Other structural clues:

- Chapter/verse divisions
- Paragraph breaks
- Headings
- ... but these are not inspired and can be unhelpful at times

Example: John 18:12–27

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

COMMON TYPES OF STRUCTURE

1. Sandwiching (intercalation)

- a. A literary technique where the narrator encloses or “sandwiches” one story in the middle of a different story (forming an **A1, B, A2** pattern), so that each story affects the interpretation of the other.
- b. Examples:
 - i. **A1) Mark 11:12–14**—Jesus curses a fig tree outside of Bethany
B) Mark 11:15–19—Jesus expels sellers and buyers from the Temple
A2) Mark 11:20–25—The fig tree is withered; the importance of faith
 - ii. **A1) Mark 5:21–24**—Jairus asks Jesus to heal his dying daughter
B) Mark 5:25–34—A hemorrhaging woman touches Jesus’ clothes
A2) Mark 5:35–43—Jesus raises the daughter of Jairus to life

2. Bookends (inclusio)

- a. A literary technique in which a passage has the same or a similar word, statement, event, or theme at the beginning and at the end. This is also called “bracketing” or “framing.”
- b. Book-level
 - i. **Romans 1:1–5**—“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations.”
 - ii. **Romans 16:25–27**—“Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages 26 but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—27 to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.”
- c. Passage-level
 - i. **Matthew 5:3–10**—The Beatitudes
 - ii. **Matthew 5:17–7:12**—Exposition of the Law and the Prophets
 - iii. **Matthew 4:23–9:35**—Matthew’s account of the first part of Jesus’ ministry

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

3. Chiasms

- a. A literary technique in which a list of items, ideas, or events is structured in such a manner that the first item parallels the last item, the second item parallels the next to the last item, and so forth.
- b. If the middle event does not have a parallel, it functions as the main point or the focal point of the chiasm.

- c. Book-level

- Daniel 1–12**

- 1—Daniel exiled

- 2—Nebuchadnezzar's vision (statue representing four kingdoms)

- 3—Deliverance from the fiery furnace

- 4—Nebuchadnezzar humbled (7 years of insanity)

- 5—Belshazzar humbled (weighed & found wanting)

- 6—Deliverance from the lion's den

- 7–9—Daniel's visions (four kingdoms represented in various ways)

- 10–12—Daniel's vision of the end of the exile

- d. Passage level

- i. **John 1:1–2**

- ii. **Jonah 1:4–16**

- iii. **Genesis 11:1–9**

The whole earth

had the same language and vocabulary ...

they found a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there.

They said to each other, "Come, let's make oven-fired bricks ..."

And they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower ...

Then the LORD came down

to look over the city and the tower that the humans were building ...

The LORD said, "Come, let's go down there and confuse their language ..."

It is called Babylon--for there

the Lord confused the language

of the whole earth

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10

Lesson 10 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on the book of Jonah. Do the following:

- 1. Read the entire book of Jonah and identify how the book is divided into paragraphs or sections.**
- 2. Summarize the main idea of each section in about a dozen words or less.**
- 3. Explain how Jonah's prayer (chapter 2) relates to the surrounding context.**

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this book at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 11

Observation (Part 4)

Significance:

How Is This Text Put Together?

TRACING THE ARGUMENT: DISCOURSES

Discourses have introductory material, which marks it off from any previous material, a development, usually involving argument and/or explanation, and a conclusion, which wraps up the purpose of the discourse and marks a break from any succeeding material.

Big question: *How does the writer's (or speaker's) argument develop in the passage? What is the flow of thought?*

1. Isolate the different propositions (statements) in the passage.
2. Identify the relationships between the different propositions.
3. Explain the main and supporting points in the text.

Romans 1:15-17

Paul is eager to preach the gospel because the gospel is God's power to save everyone who believes.

		ESV	
<pre>graph LR Root((*)) --- Node1 Node1 --- 15 Node1 --- Node2 Node2 --- 16a Node2 --- Node3 Node3 --- 16b Node3 --- Node4 Node4 --- 16c Node4 --- Node5 Node5 --- 16d Node5 --- Node6 Node6 --- 17a Node6 --- 17b</pre>	15	So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.	
	16a	For I am not ashamed of the gospel,	
	16b	for it is the power of God	
	16c	for salvation to everyone who believes,	
	16d	to the Jew first and also to the Greek.	
	17a	For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith,	
	17b	as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."	

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 11

Bracket of Philippians 2:5-11

by Matthew DelValle

Bible^{arc}.com

		NASB	
Exp	Id	Cf	5a Have this attitude in yourselves
			5b which was also in Christ Jesus,
	-	Csv	6a who, although He existed in the form of God,
			6b did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
	+	Ac	7a but emptied Himself,
		Mn S	7b taking the form of a bond- servant,
	S	Mn	7c and being made in the likeness of men.
		Ac Mn	8a Being found in appearance as a man,
	Mn	Ac	8b He humbled Himself
		Id	8c by becoming obedient to the point of death,
	Exp		8d even death on a cross.
			9a For this reason also, God highly exalted Him,
	Ac	S	9b and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
			10a so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow,
	Pur	L	10b of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
		Ac	11a and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
		Res	11b to the glory of God the Father.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 11

Isaiah 30:1-5

ESV

1a	“Ah, stubborn children,” declares the Lord,
1b	“who carry out a plan,
1c	but not mine,
1d	and who make an alliance,
1e	but not of my Spirit,
1f	that they may add sin to sin;
2a	who set out to go down to Egypt,
2b	without asking for my direction,
2c	to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh
2d	and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!
3a	Therefore shall the protection of Pharaoh turn to your shame,
3b	and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt to your humiliation.
4a	For though his officials are at Zoan
4b	and his envoys reach Hanes,
5a	everyone comes to shame
5b	through a people that cannot profit them,
5c	that brings neither help nor profit,
5d	but shame and disgrace.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 11

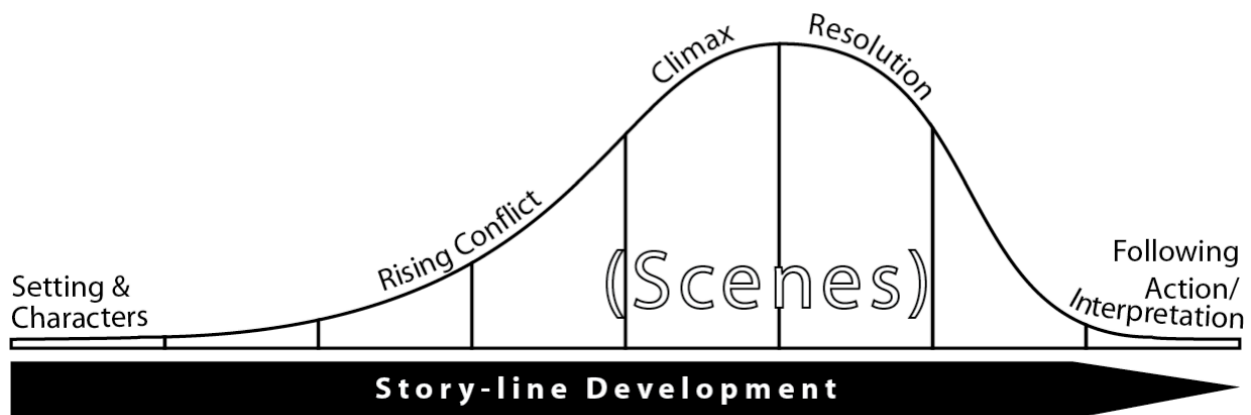
TRACING THE PLOT: STORIES

Stories have plots, with beginning, development (usually involving conflict and/or rising tension), climax, and conclusion.

Big question: How does the narrator tell his story? What is the plot structure?

1. Identify the setting and main characters
2. Isolate the different scenes
 - a. New setting?
 - b. New characters?
3. Analyze the plot
 - a. Setting & Characters
 - b. Rising Conflict
 - c. Climax
 - d. Resolution
 - e. Following Action/Interpretation

Figure 3: Narrative Plot Structure⁴



⁴Taken from Jonathan T. Pennington, "How to Read the Gospels," Unpublished New Testament I Lecture Notes, 2016.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 11

Example: Matt 4:1–11

1. Setting:

- a. Wilderness (1–4)
- b. Temple (5–7)
- c. Mountain (8–11)

2. Characters:

- a. Jesus
- b. The devil
- c. The Spirit
- d. Angels

3. Observe the Story

- a. Jesus is led into the wilderness by God the Spirit, for the purpose of being tempted.
- b. Jesus fasts forty days, paralleling Israel's forty years in the wilderness. Like Israel, he experiences physical weakness and temptation related to bread.
- c. The devil's first two temptations revolve around Jesus' claim to be the Son of God. The third temptation invites Jesus to worship him. His second temptation includes two quotations of Scripture.
- d. The location of each temptation moves from wilderness, to temple, to the mountain, a significant location in Matthew.
- e. Jesus responds to each temptation by quoting Scripture, specifically Deuteronomy (8:3; 6:16, 13).
- f. After the final temptation, Jesus commands Satan to "Be gone!" and Satan leaves. Angels then come to minister to Jesus.

4. Isolate the Different Scenes

- a. Scene 1: Jesus Tempted in the Wilderness (1–4)
- b. Scene 2: Jesus Tempted on the Temple (5–7)
- c. Scene 3: Jesus Tempted on a Mountain (8–11)

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 11

5. Analyze the Narrative:

- a. *Rising Tension*: 3–7 – The devil tempts Jesus twice in relation to his claim to Sonship, and twice Jesus resists.
- b. *Climax*: 8–9 – The devil takes Jesus up a mountain and offers him all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for worship.
- c. *Resolution*: 10 – Jesus tells the devil to be gone and serves only the Lord. Jesus command to Satan “Be gone, Satan!” parallels his command to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan!” (4:10; 16:23). The nature of the temptation is to exercise his divine prerogative outside of the will of God. In other words, both Satan and Peter were trying to thwart Jesus’ mission of suffering, dying, and rising on the third day. But Jesus is resolved not to do his own will but the Father’s (cf. 26:36–48).
- d. *Following Action/Interpretation*: 11 – The devil leaves and angels come and minister to Jesus.

6. Think about the Context

- a. *Close context*: In light of the preceding passage, the claim to sonship becomes the basis of the temptations.
- b. *Continuing context*: Jesus is about to preach the kingdom of heaven, whereas Satan offers him the kingdoms of this world.
- c. *Complete context*: Jesus is the true Son of God, the better Adam and Israel, who obeys God and defeats the devil. Unlike the first Adam, whose temptation by the devil and disobedience in a garden led to exile in the wilderness with angels forbidding the entrance to Eden, the second Adam’s triumph over the devil and obedience in the wilderness leads to angels ministering to him, and he will eventually pave the way to re-open Paradise. Therefore, Jesus is a sympathetic high priest who was tempted in every way that we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). Because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted (Heb. 2:18).

7. Write a Brief Summary Paragraph

- a. Jesus is the obedient Son. He defeats the devil and obeys God perfectly as the representative of his people. He is the greater Israel who passes the test in the wilderness. He is the second Adam who obeys as the representative of his people. He is an example for us to follow as one who fights temptations to sin with the power of God’s word.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 11

Lesson 11 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Mark 2, particularly 2:1–12. As you read this passage, observe the literary and plot structure of the text. Ask yourself these questions:

- **LITERARY STRUCTURE:** Read all of Mark 2. How has Mark organized this material? Do you notice any similarities in the accounts? What is the literary structure of this chapter?

- **PLOT STRUCTURE:** Read Mark 2:1–12. Using the plot structure diagram, identify the following plot elements:

Rising Conflict:

Climax:

Resolution:

Following Action/Interpretation:

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 11

Meaning (Part 1)

Authorial Intent:

Who Determines the Meaning of the Text?

WHO DETERMINES THE MEANING OF A TEXT?

1. The Reader (“Reader-Response”)

- a. Every reader “responds” personally to the text, and that personal response is what actually creates the meaning.
- b. Dominant approach in the secular academy.
- c. Generally connected with rejection of absolute truth.
- d. Often driven by various philosophical concerns.

2. The Text (

- a. Meaning of a text is not necessarily tied to what the author meant when he wrote it.
- b. After author finishes writing, the text takes on a life of its own. It can contain meanings beyond the intent, or even contrary to, the desire of the author.
- c. Knowing the historical setting and original addressees is of no importance.
- d. Problem: a text is an inanimate object. It can't *create* meaning. It can only convey meaning.

3. The Author (“Authorial Intent”)

- a. “Meaning”—what the author intended to communicate to readers through the text.
- b. Goal of the reader is to discover the author's consciously intended meaning.
- c. Must pay attention to:
 - i. Words, grammar, syntax
 - ii. Historical-cultural setting
 - iii. Original addressees
- d. This is the *commonsense* approach to all communication.
- e. Whose intended meaning are we trying to discover?

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 12

OBJECTIONS TO THE AUTHOR AS DETERMINER OF MEANING

1. We can never access the author's thoughts, so the authorial meaning of the text is inaccessible to us.
2. An author's worldview might be so distant from our own that we can never claim to understand his meaning.
3. To seek the author's intended meaning makes the document irrelevant to modern readers.
4. To delimit meaning to the conscious intent of the human author is to deny the divine authorship of Scripture.

GOOD INTERPRETATION VS. BAD INTERPRETATION

1 Timothy 1:3–11—“As I urged you when I went to Macedonia, remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach false doctrine 4 or to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies. These promote empty speculations rather than God's plan, which operates by faith. 5 Now the goal of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. 6 Some have departed from these and turned aside to fruitless discussion. 7 They want to be teachers of the law, although they don't understand what they are saying or what they are insisting on. 8 But we know that the law is good, provided one uses it legitimately. 9 We know that the law is not meant for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinful, for the unholy and irreverent, for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, 10 for the sexually immoral and males who have sex with males, for slave traders, liars, perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching 11 that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which was entrusted to me.

1. Paul is talking about the reading of scripture.
2. Paul is contrasting a valid reading strategy with an invalid reading strategy.
3. Paul says that the proper way to read the text is implied by the nature of the text itself.
4. The inspiration of scripture puts a hermeneutical focus on authorial intent.
5. Paul seems to draw a line between reader speculation and textual meaning.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 12

SEVEN GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETATION

1. Context rules.
2. Let scripture interpret scripture.
3. Never base your convictions on an obscure passage of scripture.
4. Interpret scripture as the author intends you to.
5. Look for the main message of the passage.
6. Study the Old Testament in view of Jesus and the New Testament.
 - a. Where does this passage fit in the timeline of redemptive history?
 - b. How does this passage point to Jesus?
 - c. How does this truth about OT Israel relate to the NT idea of the church?
 - d. How is this passage foundational for an understanding of NT Christianity?
 - e. Which NT passages help me to answer these questions?
7. Adopt the New Testament's attitude toward the Old Testament.
 - a. How is this passage a fulfillment of something promised in the OT?
 - b. How is this NT Testament idea different from or similar to an OT teaching?
 - c. In what way does this NT passage clarify, unveil, fulfill, or amplify something from the OT?

MEANING VS. APPLICATION

1. All interpretation is application, and vice versa.
2. Arriving at the "meaning" does not mean we have purely objective truth that is separate from all human activity or concern.
3. On the other hand, even our most concrete, practical "applications" are inherently theological and part of our interpretation of the meaning of the text.
4. Nevertheless, it is helpful practically, as part of the interpretive process, to distinguish between what we commonly understand as "meaning" and "application."
 - a. "Meaning"—what the author intended to communicate to readers through the text.
 - b. "Application"—the response expected of individual readers to the meaning of the text.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 12

Lesson 12 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to compare three interpretations of Matthew 18:18–20. As you read this passage, ask yourself which interpretation is faithful to the intended meaning & why.

1. Engaging in Spiritual Warfare

"When we bind something, we declare it unlawful (or evil) based on God's word. Because we stand as co-heirs in Jesus Christ, we have his authority to execute this judgment on the forces of evil...Our faith in God's word releases the power from heaven that binds (or ties up) the evil we are facing. Similarly, when we loose something on earth, we "permit and declare [it] proper and lawful on earth" based on the scriptures. Everything that we loose or bind must be in accordance with God's word"
(<https://truthinreality.com/2012/08/15/prayer-of-warfare/>).

2. Empowering Prayer Meetings

"Every Christian needs to be involved in a small group within their church, whether it is a home fellowship group, a Sunday school class, or a Bible study. This is where real community takes place, not in big gatherings. If you think of your church as a ship, the small groups are the lifeboats attached to it. God has made an incredible promise about small groups of believers: "*For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst*" (Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, 139).

3. Exercising the Keys of the Kingdom

"What does it mean to say that churches possess the authority of the keys to bind or loose? . . . It means that churches can exercise the same authority that Jesus exercised with Peter in chapter 16, or that the local church exercises in chapter 18: the authority to stand in front of a gospel confessor, to consider his or her gospel confession and life, and to announce an official judgment on heaven's behalf: "That is/isn't a right confession" and "That is/isn't a true gospel confessor." Exercising the keys is rendering judgment on a *gospel what* and a *gospel who*, a confession and a confessor" (Jonathan Leeman, *Understanding the Congregation's Authority*, 32).

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 13

Meaning (Part 2)

Dual Authorship:

Is There More Than One Meaning in This Text?

HISTORICAL ANSWERS

1. Patristic Era (AD 100–500) – Alexandrian vs. Antiochian Schools

- a. Alexandrian: Famous for its 'allegorical' interpretation of Scripture.
- b. Antiochian: Famous for its 'literal' interpretation of Scripture.
- c. Origen (AD 185–254): Literal and Spiritual Senses (2 Corinthians 3:6)
 - i. **2 Corinthians 3:6**—"He has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."
 - ii. Key interpretive question: Is the spiritual meaning *distinct from* or *tied to* the literal meaning intended by the author?

2. Medieval Period (AD 500–1500) The Four-Fold Sense of Scripture

- a. Literal – tells what happened (=literal meaning)
- b. Allegorical – one thing is understood through another (=spiritual meaning)
- c. Moral (Tropological) – moral declaration (=deals with the ordering of behavior)
- d. Eschatological (Anagogical) – through which we are led to higher things that we might be drawn to the highest and heavenly (=end-times nuances)

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 for daily life;

The *anagogy* shows us where we end our strife.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 13

“The usual example cited to illustrate the quadriga or fourfold sense was the city of Jerusalem. On the literal level, Jerusalem was a city in Palestine with homes, bazaars, mosques, churches and remnants of the Second Temple. On the allegorical level, it was the church, radiant in holiness, adorned with saints and martyrs, proclaiming its ancient faith and dispensing its life-giving sacraments. On the tropological level, it was the faithful soul, marked by its trust in divine mercy and devoted to patient works of love. Finally, on the anagogical level it was Jerusalem the Golden, the heavenly city of the Apocalypse, a city not made with hands which would appear at the end of time” (David C. Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* [New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010], 266).

3. Reformation Response (A.D. 1500s) – *Ad fontes!* (“To the sources”)

a. Criticism of the Fourfold Sense

i. Martin Luther (A.D. 1483–1546)

1. He referred to earlier allegorical interpretations as “silly,” “amazing twaddle,” “absurd,” and “useless.”
2. “When I was a young man, my own attempts at allegory met with fair success . . . But, I ask you is this not a desecration of the sacred writings?”

ii. John Calvin (A.D. 1509–1564)

1. “We ought to have a deeper reverence for Scripture than to reckon ourselves at liberty to disguise its natural meaning.”
2. “It is . . . an audacity, closely allied with sacrilege, rashly to turn Scripture in any way we please, and to indulge our fancies as in sport; which has been done by many in former times.”
3. “It is the first business of the interpreter to let his author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say” (Preface to *Romans*).

b. An Alternative: Typological Readings

- i. The natural (=literal) interpretation of a passage was one that did justice to the *intention* of the author.
- ii. *At the same time*, they acknowledged that the ‘literal’ could include the spiritual sense *if the author intended it*.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 13

THE EASY ANSWER

1. No, if you mean that the text is cut off from the author and that readers/communities create new meanings.
2. Yes, if the human author intends for there to be multiple meanings.
 - a. Meaning and Implications⁵
 - i. Meaning—"The paradigm or principle that the author consciously willed to convey by the shareable symbols [i. e., writing] he or she used."
 - ii. Implication—"Those submeanings that legitimately fall within the paradigm or principle intended by the author, whether he or she was aware of them or not."
 - iii. Significance—"How the reader responds to the willed meaning of the author."
 - iv. Subject Matter—"The content or 'stuff' talked about in the text."
 - v. **Proverbs 11:1**—"Dishonest scales are detestable to the LORD, but an accurate weight is his delight."
 - b. Surface and Depth Understandings
 - i. **Matthew 2:16–18**—"Then Herod, when he realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, flew into a rage. He gave orders to massacre all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, in keeping with the time he had learned from the wise men. 17 Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: 18 **A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.**"
 - ii. **Jeremiah 31:15–17**—This is what the LORD says: "A voice was heard in Ramah, a lament with bitter weeping—Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children because they are no more. 16 This is what the LORD says: Keep your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for the reward for your work will come—this is the LORD's declaration—and your children will return from the enemy's land. 17 There is hope for your future—this is the LORD's declaration—and your children will return to their own territory."

⁵ Robert H. Stein, "The Benefits of an Author-Oriented Approach to Hermeneutics," *JETS* 44, no. 3 (2001): 457–61.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 13

Lesson 13 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to read 1 Kings 17:1–6 and use your imagination to develop a far-fetched allegorical interpretation. Ignore the context completely and try to come up with a "superspiritual" meaning for as many of the details as possible. Keep in mind that the point of this exercise is to misinterpret the passage intentionally. Don't be concerned with the real meaning of the passage. Be as creative (and wrong) as you can.

Come prepared to share your misinterpretation of the passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 14

Meaning (Part 3)

Typology:

Is There a Divine Intention Beyond the Human Author's?

A BIT MORE COMPLICATED ANSWER

1. The Dual Authorship of Scripture

Is the divine author's intention ever different than the human author's intention? If so, how would we know? That is, how do we discern this divine intention?

- a. Human author's intent
 - i. Grammatical-historical exegesis (=background, time setting, culture, etc).
 - ii. Literary form.
 - iii. Priority of the original languages/translation.
- b. Divine author's intent
 - i. Through the human author's intent.
 - ii. By reading the entire Bible as a whole.

2. Do the words of Scripture take on a “fuller sense” that was unknown to the human authors?

Sensus literalis: The literal, plain, reading.

Sensus plenior: The “fuller sense.”

1 Corinthians 10:3–4—“They all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.”

- a. Some things were unclear to the Old Testament authors.

Daniel 12:8–9—“I heard but did not understand. So I asked, “My lord, what will be the outcome of these things?” 9 He said, “Go on your way, Daniel, for the words are secret and sealed until the time of the end.”

1 Peter 1:10–12—“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that would come to you, searched and carefully investigated. 11 They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—angels long to catch a glimpse of these things.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 14

- b. The Old Testament is like a room richly furnished but dimly lit.

“The Old Testament may be likened to a chamber richly furnished but dimly lighted; the introduction of light brings into it nothing which was not in it before; but it brings out into clearer view much of what is in it but was only dimly or even not at all perceived before. The mystery of the Trinity is not revealed in the Old Testament; but the mystery of the Trinity underlies the Old Testament revelation, and here and there almost comes into view. Thus the Old Testament revelation of God is not corrected by the fuller revelation that follows it, but only perfected, extended and enlarged” [Benjamin B. Warfield, “The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity,” in *Biblical Doctrines*, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 141–42].

- c. However, we should avoid thinking that there is some hidden meaning in the OT that is not organically related to the original meaning of the text.

Genesis 3:15—“I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Genesis 22:18—“And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command.”

Genesis 49:1—“The scepter will not depart from Judah or the staff from between his feet until he whose right it is comes and the obedience of the peoples belongs to him.”

2 Samuel 7:12–13—“When your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”

Galatians 3:16—“Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say “and to seeds,” as though referring to many, but referring to one, **and to your seed**, who is Christ.”

Colossians 2:15—“He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; he triumphed over them in him.”

Romans 16:20—“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 14

3. Typology

a. Overview (review lesson 7)

- i. Historical/literary correspondence
- ii. Escalation/intensification
- iii. Criteria?
- iv. Typology and Allegory

b. Examples

i. Adam typology

Romans 5:14—“Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam’s transgression. He is a type of the Coming One.”

ii. Sacrificial typology

Hebrews 10:1—“Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the reality itself of those things, it can never perfect the worshipers by the same sacrifices they continually offer year after year.”

iii. Israel/Exodus typology (Matthew 1–4)

Out of Egypt, Red Sea, Wilderness Testing

iv. David typology

Hebrews 1:5—“For to which of the angels did he ever say, **You are my Son; today I have become your Father**, or again, **I will be his Father, and he will be my Son?**” (cf. Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 14

v. Virgin Birth

Isaiah 7:14—“Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.”

Matthew 1:22–23—“Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 **See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel**, which is translated “God is with us.”

Class: “Pardon me, Isaiah. I’m from the distant future, and I’ve come back to chat with you. I was peeking over your shoulder, and I just noticed that you wrote that prophecy down about the promised child. Is that about Jesus?”

Isaiah: “Who is Jesus?”

Class: “Jesus is the coming Messiah who conquers sin and death forever.”

Isaiah: “Hallelujah! I didn’t know his name, but I knew he was coming. What do you mean by asking, ‘Is this text about Jesus?’”

Class: “Well, in the future, before the Messiah is born, God promises through his angel that a virgin will give birth, similar to the events in your day. Matthew, one of God’s messengers in Jesus’ day, says that this text of yours was pointing to the Messiah.”

Isaiah: “Yes, I see. Just as God signified his coming intervention with the supernatural birth of a child in my day, so in the final deliverance, again he promises the supernatural birth of a child. The historical parallels show God’s consistent intentions! Of course, not knowing exactly how God would repeat his deliverance, I was not fully conscious of the final typological correspondence until you told me. But, I knew later deliverances were coming. I wrote this text, consciously knowing it might be reiterated in a later, parallel, heightened saving event. Yes, yes, of course that is a valid use. That’s what is called biblical typology, with a correspondence between earlier events (the type) and later events (the antitype).”

Class: “Thanks for talking with us, Isaiah.”⁶

Isaiah: “Shalom.”

⁶ Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2010), 138–139.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 14

CAN A TEXT HAVE MORE THAN ONE MEANING?

1. No, if you mean that texts are cut off from the author's intent.
2. Yes, if the divine Author of Scripture intends multiple meanings that culminate in the person and work of Jesus.

For Further Study: Read "The Hanging Chad of Hermeneutics: Human Authorial Intent" by Ben Carlson at cbtseminary.org/the-hanging-chad-of-hermeneutics-human-authorial-intent-ben-carlson/

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 14

Lesson 14 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Jonah 1:1–16. As you read this passage, ask yourself how Jonah prefigures or points to the person & work of Jesus Christ. What are the similarities? What are the differences?

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 15

Meaning (Part 4)

Translations:

How Does My Translation Affect My Interpretation?

INTRODUCTION

If it is true that God has revealed himself as the ultimate Author of Scripture, and if he revealed himself through human authors in a different era and language than our own, and if he has commanded his people to make that revelation known to others in every age and every language, then **the work of translation is unavoidable.**

HOW DID WE GET OUR ENGLISH BIBLES?

In between the **inspiration** of the text and the **translation** of the text is the whole history of the **transmission** of the text.

1. Under divine inspiration, the human authors of Scripture wrote the original text of Scripture. These are called the *autographs*.
2. Copies of the original text were made and preserved under God's providence. These are called *manuscripts* (or copies).
3. With an abundance of manuscripts comes the need to determine which copy is more likely to reflect the original text. This is the discipline known as *textual criticism*.
4. All the copies and early translations are analyzed by scholars to produce an *eclectic* or *critical text*. These critical texts form the basis of almost all modern translations.
 - a. Hebrew Bible: *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS)
 - b. Greek NT: United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* (UBS5) and the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (NA28).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 15

WHAT IS A TRANSLATION?

A translation is an attempt by a reader (or readers) to convey faithfully the words and sense of a text from the source language (e.g. Hebrew, Aramaic, Koine Greek) to the target language (e.g. English) according to the author's intended meaning.

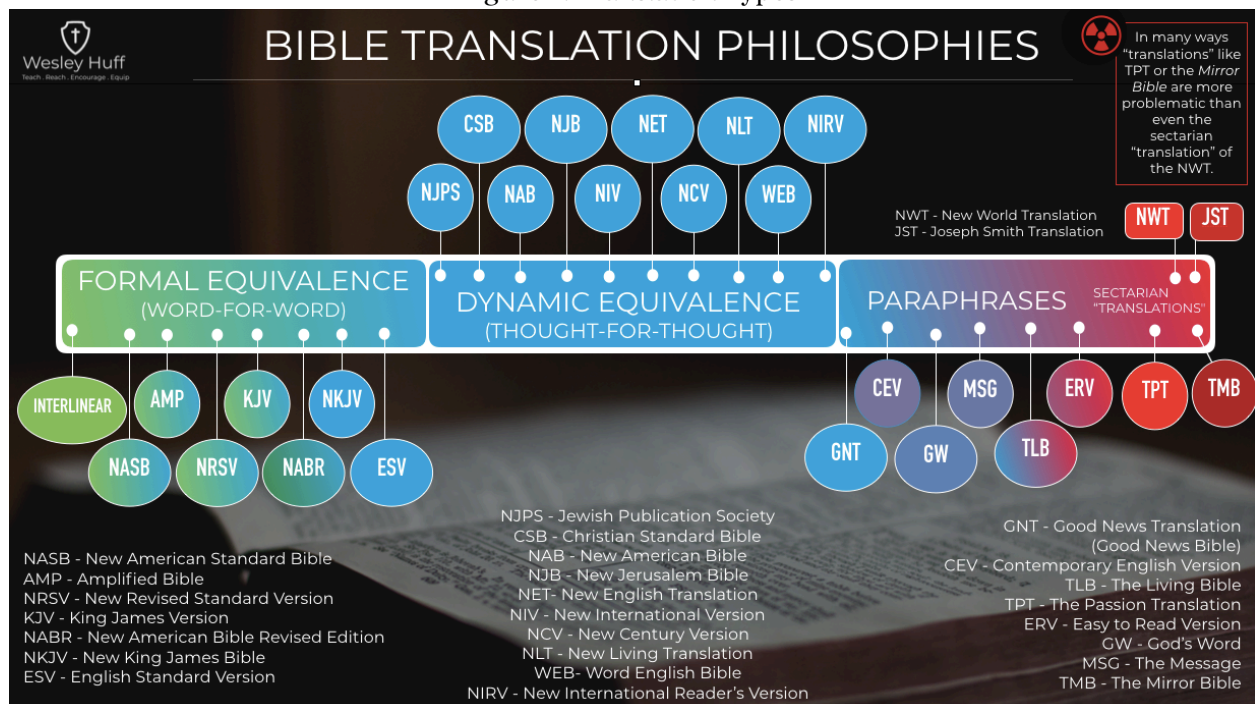
WHAT ARE SOME APPROACHES TO BIBLE TRANSLATION?

1. Philosophy

- a. Formal Equivalence (word-for-word)
- b. Dynamic equivalence (thought-for-thought)
- c. Paraphrase

2. Spectrum

Figure 4: Translation Types⁷



⁷Taken from Wesley Huff, <https://www.wesleyhuff.com/blog/2020/10/13/one-bible-many-versions>

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 15

WHAT ARE SOME GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING A TRANSLATION?

1. Choose a translation that uses modern English.
2. Choose a translation that is based on the standard Hebrew and Greek text.
3. Choose a translation done by a committee rather than an individual.
4. Choose a translation that is appropriate for your own particular purpose at the time.

WHAT ARE SOME DITCHES TO AVOID IN CHOOSING A TRANSLATION?

1. The “Knowing the original languages is worthless!” error

“We will not long preserve the gospel without the languages . . . The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and, as the gospel itself points out, they are the baskets in which are kept these loaves and fishes and fragments. If through our neglect we let the languages go (which God forbid!), we shall . . . lose the gospel . . . As dear as the gospel is to us all, let us as hard contend with its language” (Martin Luther).

- a. If you have the energy, time, money, and skill, why not try to learn Hebrew or Greek?
- b. As responsible church members, in calling future pastors to serve the church, seek out godly men who are competent in the languages and can feed the flock from the original.

2. The “I have to know the original languages to understand the Bible!” error

“So the Church should always be ready with translations in order to avoid the same kind of emergencies [i.e., the inability to understand because of a language barrier]. Translation is what opens the window, to let the light in. It breaks the shell, so that we may eat the kernel. It pulls the curtain aside, so that we may look into the most holy place. It removes the cover from the well, so that we may get to the water . . . In fact, without a translation in the common language, most people are like the children at Jacob’s well (which was deep) without a bucket or something to draw the water with; or like the person mentioned by Isaiah who was given a sealed book and told, “Please read this,” and had to answer, “I cannot, because it is sealed” (Isaiah 29.11)” (Preface to the 1611 King James Bible).

3. The KJV-only error

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 15

Lesson 15 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Romans 8:28–39. As you read this passage, read the NASB (1995), ESV, CSB, and NIV translations. Note significant translation differences and ask yourself how they affect interpretation. (Hint: The "Add Parallel" feature on biblegateway.com will help you access and compare these translations.)

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 16

Meaning (Part 5)

Tools:

What Are Some Helpful Books or Tools for Interpreting the Bible?

INTRODUCTION

“Make careful choice of the books which you read. *Let the holy Scriptures ever have the pre-eminence*; and, next [to] them, the solid, lively, heavenly treatises, which best expound and apply the Scriptures; and next [to] those, the credible histories, especially of the church . . . but take heed of the poison of the writings of false teachers, which would corrupt your understandings.”⁸

“*It is not the reading of many books which is necessary to make a man wise or good; but the well reading of a few*, could he be sure to have the best. And it is not possible to read over very many on the same subjects, without a great deal of loss of precious time.”⁹

STUDY BIBLES

1. What a Study Bible helps you with:

- a. History
- b. Exegesis
- c. Theology

2. How to use a Study Bible well:

- a. Don't use poor Study Bibles.
- b. Use quality Study Bibles.
- c. Don't use the notes as a crutch or shortcut instead of wrestling with the text itself.
- d. Don't combine the authority of the God-breathed text with the notes.

⁸ Richard Baxter, “A Christian Directory,” part I (“Christian Ethics”), chapter II, Direct XVI, in *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter* (London: George Virtue, 1846; reprint, Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2000), 1:56 (my emphasis).

⁹ (Richard Baxter, “A Christian Directory,” part III (“Christian Ecclesiastics”), “Ecclesiastical Cases of Conscience,” Question 174., Direct XVI, in *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter* (London: George Virtue, 1846; reprint, Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2000), 1:73 (my emphasis).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 16

CONCORDANCES

1. A concordance is an index for the Bible.
2. If you purchase a concordance, you should get one for the translation you regularly use.
3. In using a concordance, those with a limited knowledge of linguistics can make wrong assumptions about how to apply their recognition of repeated words.

WORD STUDY TOOLS

1. Two common dangers:
 - a. *Illegitimate Totality Transfer* – Wrongly taking the totality of what a word can mean and reading that potentiality as a reality in every word occurrence.
 - b. *Etymological Fallacy* – Wrongly believing that knowing the history of a word gives us deeper insight into its current meaning.
2. Despite these warnings against the misuse of word studies, they can be helpful in clarifying the nuances of important words.

COMMENTARIES

1. If you are going to use a Bible commentary, it is best to use it towards the end of your study, rather than at the beginning.
2. Uses of Commentaries:
 - a. Written by acknowledged authorities
 - b. Give details
 - c. Check our own work

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 16

3. Types of Commentaries

- a. Exegetical
- b. Homiletical
- c. Devotional

4. Caveats About Commentaries

- a. It is better to purchase individual volumes based on the quality of scholarship than complete commentary series.
- b. Be strategic about building a commentary library digitally vs. printed.
- c. Build your libraries slowly and thoughtfully, using trusted recommendations.

BIBLE DICTIONARIES/ENCYCLOPEDIAS

When Choosing a Bible Dictionary/Encyclopedia consider:

- 1. Reputation**
- 2. Recency**
- 3. References**
- 4. Relevancy**

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 16

Lesson 16 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to use a Study Bible, Bible dictionary, or encyclopedia to answer the following questions about the book of Nehemiah. (Hint: The "Tools" feature on blueletterbible.com will help you answer these questions.)

- 1. How much time passes between the month of Chislev (or Kislev) in Nehemiah 1:1 and the month of Nisan in Nehemiah 2:1?**
- 2. Where is Susa (Neh. 1:1)?**
- 3. For which empire did Susa serve as one of three royal cities?**
- 4. What other biblical character lived in Susa?**
- 5. Did this character live before Nehemiah or after?**
- 6. Which empire did King Artaxerxes rule over and when (Neh. 2:1)?**
- 7. What was a cupbearer's (Neh. 1:11) status in the royal court?**

Come prepared to share your discoveries at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 17

Application (Part 1)

Transformation:

How Does This Text Change People's Lives?

James 1:22–25—“But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like someone looking at his own face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of person he was. 25 But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does.”

THE INTERPRETIVE JOURNEY

1. Grasp the Text in Their Town

QUESTION: What did the text mean to the biblical audience?

2. Measure the Width of the River

QUESTION: What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?

3. Cross the Principlizing Bridge

QUESTION: What is the theological principle in this text?

4. Consult the Biblical Map

QUESTION: How does our theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?

5. Grasp the Text in Our Town

QUESTION: How should individual Christians and churches today apply the theological principle in their lives?

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 17

FINDING THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

1. These principles are *part of the meaning*. The reader does not create it. Rather, the reader seeks to discover it through discerning the intention of the author.
2. Criteria for formulating theological principles:
 - a. Reflected in the text
 - b. Timeless
 - c. Not culturally bound
 - d. Corresponds to rest of Scripture
 - e. Relevant to both biblical and contemporary audience

FINDING PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. How was the original audience expected to respond? How does the theological principle address their situation?
2. What parallel situations in my contemporary context are addressed by the theological principle?
3. What does that response look like in the particular, real-world situations, events, and/or relationships God has given me? Be specific and concrete!

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

1. S – Is there a *sin* to confess and repent of?
2. P – Is there a *promise* to trust?
3. E – Is there an *example* to follow (or avoid)?
4. C – Is there a *command* to obey?
5. K – Is there *knowledge* of a truth to believe (or a falsehood to abandon)?

GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW

1. Pray
2. Think
3. Write
4. Talk
5. Listen

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 17

SOME KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. **Are the events/circumstances/actions in the text intended to be descriptive or prescriptive?**
 - a. Definitions
 - i. “Descriptive”—an event, circumstance, or action is described to provide understanding, but is *not intended* to express normative behavior to be applied by the reader.
 - ii. “Prescriptive”—an event, circumstance, or action is described in order to express normative behavior to be applied by the reader.
 - b. Guidelines
 - i. What is the author’s intention? Does he signal it in some way?
 - ii. Is this a positive example or a negative example?
 - iii. Is there explicit teaching elsewhere to support or contradict?
 - c. Example: Gideon (Judges 6:14–16, 36–40)
 - d. Example: Speaking in tongues (Acts 10:45–46)
2. **Is the original application a specific cultural manifestation of a broader theological principle, or is it timeless and unchanging?**
 - a. Some applications will transfer from culture to culture with little or no alteration.

Romans 10:9—“If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
 - b. Some applications will embody timeless principles that find varying expressions in different cultures.
 - i. **Romans 16:16**—“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”
 - ii. **Ephesians 5:18**—“Don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living.”
 - c. Difficult example: Head coverings in 1 Corinthians 11
3. **Does your application fit or contradict the full counsel of Scripture?**
 - a. Luke 10:3–4; cf. Luke 22:35–36
 - b. Acts 2:44–45; cf. Acts 5:4; 1 Tim 6:17–19

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 17

APPLICATION MATRIX: TWO DIRECTIONS, THREE SPHERES

1. Inward and Outward

- a. Inward – By God’s grace, you can change your own life to be more like Christ.
- b. Outward – By God’s grace, you can help others change to be more like Christ.

2. Head, Heart, Hands

- a. Head (Conviction) – Represents what we *think* and *believe*.
- b. Heart (Character) – Represents what we *love* and *desire*.
- c. Hands (Competency) – Represents what we *choose* and *do*.

3. The Application Matrix

	Inward	Outward
Head		
Heart		
Hands		

- a. Don’t
 - i. *Don’t fall into the trap of hypocritical living.*
 - ii. *Don’t fall into the trap of self-centered living.*
 - iii. *Don’t fall into the trap of overly theological application (too much focus on your head).*
 - iv. *Don’t fall into the trap of overly pietistic application (too much focus on your heart).*
 - v. *Don’t fall into the trap of overly ethical application (too much focus on your hands).*
- b. Do
 - i. *Remember Jesus.*
 - ii. *Get specific.*
 - 1. Point your finger at yourself first.
 - 2. Focus on your heart in addition to your behavior.
 - 3. Know your next steps.
 - 4. Make progress measurable.
 - 5. Put off and put on.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 17

GENERAL ENCOURAGEMENTS

1. Seek to broaden your knowledge and understanding of Scripture as a whole.
2. Approach the Bible with faith and a humble willingness to obey God.
3. Be involved in and accountable to a local church.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 17

Lesson 17 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Romans 12:1–2. As you study this passage, apply it in the two directions (inward and outward) and to the three spheres (head, heart, hands).

	Inward	Outward
Head		
Heart		
Hands		

Come prepared to share your applications at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 18

Application (Part 2)

Teaching:

How Do I Teach and/or Preach This Text?

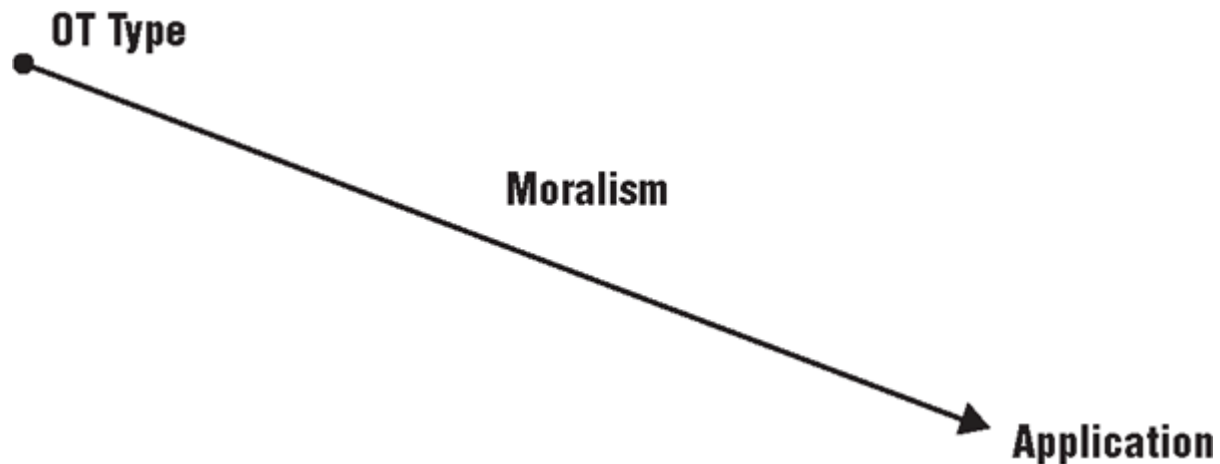
DEFINING APPLICATION

“Application is the . . . process by which preachers make scriptural truths so pertinent to members of their congregations that they not only understand how these truths should effect changes in their lives but also feel obligated and perhaps even eager to implement those changes” (Jay Adams, *Truth Applied*, 17).

“Application is the process by which the unchanging principles of God’s Word are brought into life-changing contact with people who live in an ever-changing world” (David Murray, *How Sermons Work*, 108).

MOVING FROM TEXT TO APPLICATION¹⁰

1. Moralism

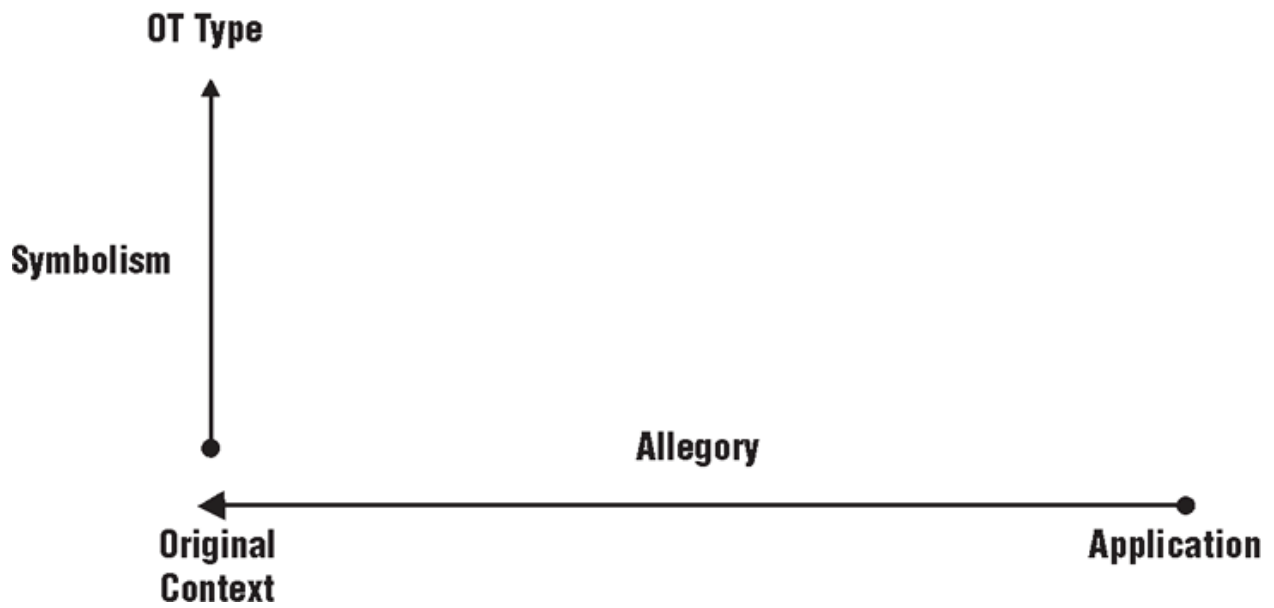


¹⁰Taken from Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 78–80.

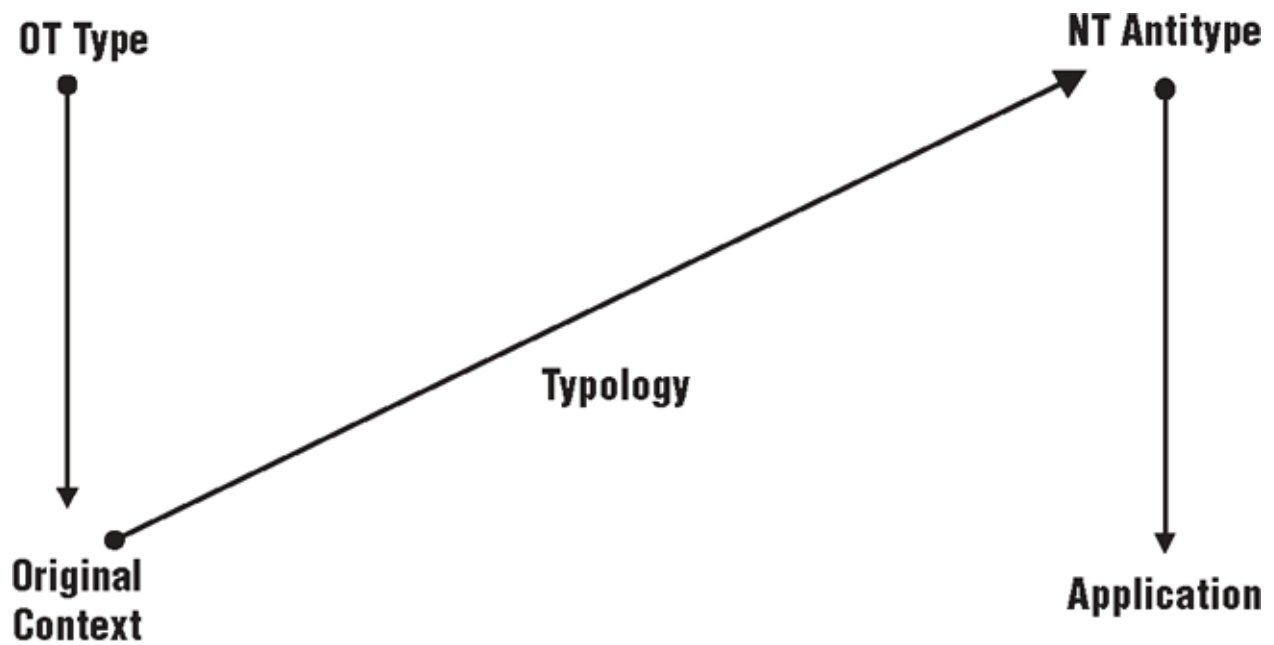
How to Study the Bible

Lesson 18

2. Allegory



3. Typology



How to Study the Bible

Lesson 18

SERMON APPLICATION GRID

Categories Outline	Epoch / Redemptive History	Non-Christian	Society	Christ	Christian	Church
Point 1						
Point 2						
Point 3						

Key

- **Epoch/Redemptive History:** What about the passage is important for the way God unfolds his plan of salvation in history? What's unrepeatable by us but worthy of worshipping God for?
- **Non-Christian:** How does this passage speak to the unbeliever? How does it call him/her to repentance and belief? How does it warn, rebuke, correct, or prod the unbeliever? What does it say about the danger of the unbeliever's situation, the exclusivity of Christ, the sinner's need for a Savior, or the sufficiency of that Savior as a substitute for the sinner?
- **Society:** What does the passage say about our lives and roles as citizens in the public sphere, both as Christians and non-Christians (e.g. government, neighborhood)? What does this passage say to the employee and employer?
- **Christ:** How is Jesus foreshadowed or typed? What particular perfection of Christ does that type depict? How is Jesus remembered or described in character, authority, glory, or essence?
- **Christian:** What does the passage mean for the life of the individual Christian? How does it call him/her to deeper repentance and belief? How does it warn, rebuke, correct, motivate, comfort, or encourage the Christian? How does it address the head, heart, and hands (mind, emotions, will)?
- **First Baptist Church:** What does the passage mean for the corporate life of our local church? How does it call the local corporate body to tend to its corporate life together and corporate witness to the unbelieving community around it?

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 18

A SHEPHERD'S TAXONOMY

1. **First, everyone listening to you falls into the following three pairs:**
 - a. Christian or non-Christian
 - b. Complacent or Anxious
 - c. Legalistic or Licentious
2. **Second, assume, the following is true of everyone listening:**
 - a. Idolatry
 - b. Self-justification
 - c. Love of the world
3. **Third, there are different kinds of errant sheep that need the Word (1 Thess. 5:12–14):**
 - a. The Idle
 - b. The Timid
 - c. The Weak
4. **Finally, pay attention to the physical, as well as the spiritual, circumstances of your hearers. How does this text speak specifically, and perhaps differently, to these categories?**
 - a. Men and women
 - b. Single, married, and widowed
 - c. The elderly, middle-aged, and children
 - d. Employed, unemployed, and retired
 - e. Wealthy and poor
 - f. Educated and un(der)educated
 - g. Employers and employees

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 18

CASE STUDY: LEVITICAL FOOD AND CLEANLINESS LAWS

1. The Point

Leviticus 11:44–45—“For I am the LORD your God, so you must consecrate yourselves and be holy because I am holy. Do not defile yourselves by any swarming creature that crawls on the ground. 45 For I am the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God, so you must be holy because I am holy.”

2. The Bible’s Storyline

Exodus 19:5–6—“Now if you will carefully listen to me and keep my covenant, you will be my own possession out of all the peoples, although the whole earth is mine, 6 and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation.”

Mark 7:15, 19—“Nothing that goes into a person from outside can defile him but the things that come out of a person are what defile him . . . 19 For it doesn’t go into his heart but into the stomach and is eliminated” (thus he declared all foods clean).

3. Non-Christian/Worldview

4. Society

5. Christ

Matthew 5:17—“Don’t think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”

6. The Individual Christian

7. The Church

8. The Shepherd’s Taxonomy

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 18

Lesson 18 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Genesis 12:10–20. As you read this passage, apply the passage to the following categories (see key on page 106).

- 1. Epoch/Redemptive History**

- 2. Non-Christian**

- 3. Society**

- 4. Christ**

- 5. Christian**

- 6. Church**

Come prepared to share your applications from this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 19

Correlation

Studying Both Testaments:

How Does This Text Relate to the Entire Scripture?

2 Peter 1:19—“We also have the prophetic word strongly confirmed, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”

THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE: CORRELATION

1. After studying a passage of Scripture, we should connect what we learned to the rest of Scripture. This is the process of *correlation*—constructing a systematic theology or worldview from the Scripture.
2. How do you correlate effectively while avoiding the dangers of unhelpful cross-referencing?
 - a. Don’t correlate too soon; understand each passage first.
 - b. Don’t just harmonize; rather, illuminate.
 - c. Don’t just connect words; connect ideas.

INTERPRETING THE OLD TESTAMENT: FIVE INTERPRETIVE LENSES

1. Context
2. Covenant

Progressive Revelation

A covenant is a formal agreement between two or more persons, usually involving requirements, promises, and stipulations that had to be kept if the covenant were to remain firm.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 19

- a. The Adamic/creation covenant (Gen. 1–2; Hosea 6:7)
- b. The Noahic covenant (Gen. 9:8–17)
- c. The Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:1–21; 17:1–14)
- d. The Mosaic covenant (Ex. 19–24),
- e. The Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7),
- f. The New covenant (Jer. 31:27–34; Ezek. 36:24–28; Matt. 26:27–30).

Plot:

Creation → Fall → Redemption → New Creation

Kingdom of God

God's people, in God's place, under God's rule (Graeme Goldsworthy)

3. Canon

Psalms 95:6–7—“Today, if you hear his voice: 8 Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the wilderness” (cf. 1 Cor. 10: Heb. 4:7).

Daniel 9:2—“In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the books according to the word of the LORD to the prophet Jeremiah that the number of years for the desolation of Jerusalem would be seventy” (cf. Jer. 25:1–12).

- a. Use your Bible's cross-references!
- b. Use the chart of New Testament references to Old Testament Scriptures.

4. Character of God

5. Christ

- a. How does this text *foreshadow* or *point forward* to Christ?
- b. How is this text *fulfilled* by Christ?

Luke 24:25–27, 44—“He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?” 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures . . . 44 He told them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 19

INTERPRETING THE NEW TESTAMENT: FOUR THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. In the New Testament, remember the basic genres.

- a. Gospels
- b. Epistles
- c. Apocalyptic

2. In the Gospels, remember to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus.

When you read any passage in the Gospels, notice:

- a. What Jesus did
- b. What Jesus taught
- c. Who Jesus is
- d. What it means to be his disciple

3. In the epistles, remember the indicative / imperative pattern.

- a. Indicative: “God has done this.”
- b. Imperative: “You need to do that.”

1 Peter 1:14–16—“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. 15 But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, **Be holy, because I am holy.**”

Look at the flow of Romans and Ephesians

4. In application, remember what Scripture is for.

2 Timothy 3:16–17—“All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

- a. What is this text teaching me?
- b. How is this text rebuking or correcting me?
- c. What is this text training me to do?

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 19

NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES TO OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

Matthew Mt 1:23 Isa 7:14 Mt 2:6 Mic 5:2 Mt 2:15 Ho 11:1 Mt 2:18 Jer 31:15 Mt 3:3 Isa 40:3 Mt 4:4 De 8:3 Mt 4:6 Ps 91:11,12 Mt 4:7 De 6:16 Mt 4:10 De 6:13 Mt 4:10 De 10:20 Mt 4:15,16 Isa 9:1,2 Mt 4:15,16 Isa 42:7 Mt 5:5 Ps 37:11 Mt 5:21 Ex 20:13 Mt 5:21 De 5:17 Mt 5:27 Ex 20:14 Mt 5:27 De 5:18 Mt 5:31 De 24:1 Mt 5:33 Ex 20:7 Mt 5:33 Le 19:12 Mt 5:38 Ex 21:24 Mt 5:38 Le 24:20 Mt 5:38 De 19:21 Mt 5:43 Le 19:18 Mt 5:48 Ge 17:1 Mt 7:23 Ps 6:8 Mt 8:4 Le 14:2,3 Mt 8:17 Isa 53:4 Mt 9:13 Ho 6:6 Mt 10:35,26 Mic 7:6 Mt 11:5 Isa 35:5 Mt 11:5 Isa 29:18 Mt 11:10 Mal 3:1 Mt 11:14 Mal 4:5 Mt 12:3 1Sa 21:6 Mt 12:5 Nu 28:9,10 Mt 12:7 Ho 6:6 Mt 12:18 Isa 42:1 Mt 12:18-21 Isa 42:1-4 Mt 12:40 Jon 1:17 Mt 12:42 1Ki 10:1 Mt 13:14 Isa 6:9,10 Mt 13:35 Ps 78:2 Mt 15:4 Ex 20:12 Mt 15:4 De 5:16 Mt 15:4 Ex 21:17 Mt 15:4 Le 20:9 Mt 15:4 Pr 20:20 Mt 15:8,9 Isa 29:13 Mt 16:4 Jon 1:17 Mt 17:10 Mal 4:5 Mt 18:15 Le 19:17 Mt 18:16 Le 19:15 Mt 18:16 Le 19:15 Mt 19:4 Ge 1:27 Mt 19:5 Ge 2:24 Mt 19:7 De 24:1 Mt 19:18 Ex 20:12 Mt 19:19 Le 19:18 Mt 19:26 Jer 32:17 Mt 21:5 Zec 9:9 Mt 21:9 Ps 118:26 Mt 21:13 Isa 56:7 Mt 21:13 Jer 7:11 Mt 21:16 Ps 8:2 Mt 21:33 Isa 5:1 Mt 21:42 Ps 118:22,23 Mt 21:44 Isa 8:14 Mt 21:44 Zec 12:3 Mt 21:44 Da 2:34,35,44 Mt 22:24 De 25:5 Mt 22:32 Ex 3:6 Mt 22:37 De 6:5 Mt 22:39 Le 19:18 Mt 22:44 Ps 110:1 Mt 23:35 Ge 4:8 Mt 23:35 2Ch 24:21,22 Mt 23:38 Ps 69:25 Mt 23:38 Jer 12:7 Mt 23:38 Jer 22:5 Mt 23:39 Ps 118:26 Mt 24:15 Da 9:27 Mt 24:15 Da 8:13 Mt 24:15 Da 11:31 Mt 24:15 Da 12:11 Mt 24:21 Jer 30:7	Mt 24:29 Isa 13:9,10 Mt 24:29 Joe 2:10 Mt 24:29 Joe 3:15 Mt 24:29 Eze 32:7 Mt 24:35 Isa 51:16 Mt 24:37 Ge 7:4 Mt 25:41 Ps 6:8 Mt 26:24 Ps 22:1-31 Mt 26:31 Zec 13:7 Mt 26:60 Ps 35:11 Mt 26:67 Isa 50:6 Mt 27:9,10 Zec 11:13 Mt 27:35 Ps 22:18 Mt 27:43 Ps 22:7,8,9 Mt 27:46 Ps 22:1 Mt 28:18 Da 7:14 Mark Mr 1:2,3 Mal 3:1 Mr 1:2,3 Isa 40:3 Mr 1:44 Le 14:2 Mr 2:25,26 1Sa 21:6 Mr 4:12 Isa 6:9 Mr 7:6,7 Isa 29:13 Mr 7:10 Ex 20:12 Mr 7:10 De 5:16 Mr 7:10 Ex 21:17 Mr 7:10 Pr 20:20 Mr 9:11 Mal 4:5 Mr 9:44 Isa 66:24 Mr 10:4 De 24:1 Mr 10:6 Ge 1:27 Mr 10:7 Ge 2:24 Mr 10:19 Ex 20:12,13,14 Mr 11:9 Ps 118:26 Mr 11:17 Isa 56:7 Mr 11:17 Jer 7:11 Mr 12:1 Isa 5:1 Mr 12:10,11 Ps 118:22,23 Mr 12:19 De 25:5 Mr 12:26 Ex 3:6 Mr 12:29,30 De 6:4,5 Mr 12:31 Le 19:18 Mr 12:33 1Sa 15:22 Mr 12:36 Ps 110:1 Mr 13:5 Jer 29:8 Mr 13:12 Mic 7:6 Mr 13:14 Da 9:27 Mr 13:14 Da 8:13 Mr 13:14 Da 11:31 Mr 13:14 Da 12:11 Mr 13:24 Isa 13:9,10 Mr 13:24 Joe 3:15 Mr 13:31 Isa 40:8 Mr 14:27 Zec 13:7 Mr 15:28 Isa 53:12 Mr 15:34 Ps 22:1 Luke Lu 1:10 Le 16:17 Lu 1:17 Mal 4:5,6 Lu 1:32 Ps 132:11 Lu 1:33 Mic 4:7 Lu 1:33 Da 4:3 Lu 1:55 Ge 22:18 Lu 1:55 Ge 17:19 Lu 1:73 Ge 22:16 Lu 1:73 Ge 12:3 Lu 1:78 Nu 24:17 Lu 1:78 Mal 4:2 Lu 1:79 Isa 9:2 Lu 2:21,22 Le 12:3,4 Lu 2:23 Ex 13:2 Lu 2:24 Le 12:8 Lu 2:34 Isa 8:14,15 Lu 3:4,5,6 Isa 40:3,4,5 Lu 4:4 De 8:3 Lu 4:8 De 6:13 Lu 4:8 De 10:20 Lu 4:10,11 Ps 91:11,12 Lu 4:12 De 6:16 Lu 4:18,19 Isa 61:1,2 Lu 4:25,26 1Ki 17:1,9 Lu 4:25,26 1Ki 18:1,2 Lu 4:27 2Ki 5:14 Lu 5:14 Le 14:2 Lu 6:3,4 1Sa 21:6	Lu 6:24 Am 6:1 Lu 7:27 Mal 3:1 Lu 8:10 Isa 6:9 Lu 10:4 2Ki 4:29 Lu 10:27 De 6:5 Lu 10:27 Le 19:18 Lu 10:28 Le 18:5 Lu 11:30 Jon 1:17 Lu 11:30 Jon 3:1-10 Lu 11:30 Jon 4:1-11 Lu 11:31 2Ki 10:1 Lu 11:51 Ge 4:8 Lu 11:51 2Ch 24:21,22 Lu 13:27 Ps 6:8 Lu 13:35 Ps 118:26 Lu 13:35 Jer 12:7 Lu 13:35 Jer 22:5 Lu 14:8 Pr 25:6 Lu 14:26 Mic 7:6 Lu 17:3 Le 19:17 Lu 17:27 Ge 7:7 Lu 17:29 Ge 19:16 Lu 17:32 Ge 19:26 Lu 18:20 Ex 20:12 Lu 18:20 De 5:17,18 Lu 19:46 Isa 56:7 Lu 19:46 Jer 7:11 Lu 20:9 Isa 5:1 Lu 20:17 Ps 118:22,23 Lu 20:18 Isa 8:14 Lu 20:18 Zec 12:3 Lu 20:18 Da 2:44 Lu 20:28 De 25:5 Lu 20:37 Ex 3:6 Lu 20:42,43 Ps 110:1 Lu 22:37 Isa 53:12 Lu 23:29 Isa 54:1 Lu 23:30 Ho 10:8 Lu 23:46 Ps 31:5 Lu 24:46 Isa 53:5 John Joh 1:23 Isa 40:3 Joh 1:51 Ge 28:12 Joh 2:17 Ps 69:9 Joh 3:14 Nu 21:8,9 Joh 4:37 Mic 6:15 Joh 6:31 Ps 78:24 Joh 6:31 Ex 16:15 Joh 6:45 Isa 54:13 Joh 6:49 Ex 16:15 Joh 7:22 Le 12:3 Joh 7:38 Isa 55:1 Joh 7:38 Isa 58:11 Joh 7:38 Isa 44:3 Joh 7:38 Zec 13:1 Joh 7:38 Zec 14:8 Joh 7:38 Pr 18:4 Joh 7:38 Isa 12:3 Joh 7:39 Isa 44:3 Joh 7:42 Ps 89:4 Joh 7:42 Ps 132:11 Joh 7:42 Mic 5:1,2 Joh 8:5 Le 20:10 Joh 8:5 De 22:21 Joh 8:17 De 19:15 Joh 9:31 Ps 82:6 Joh 10:34 Ps 82:6 Joh 12:13 Ps 118:26 Joh 12:14,15 Zec 9:9 Joh 12:34 2Sa 7:13 Joh 12:34 Ps 89:30,37 Joh 12:34 Ps 110:4 Joh 12:34 Isa 9:7 Joh 12:38 Isa 53:1 Joh 12:40 Isa 6:9 Joh 12:49 De 18:18 Joh 13:18 Ps 41:9 Joh 15:25 Ps 69:4 Joh 15:25 Ps 109:3 Joh 15:25 Ps 35:19 Joh 17:12 Ps 41:10 Joh 17:12 Ps 109:8,17 Joh 19:24 Ps 22:19 Joh 19:28 Ps 69:21 Joh 19:36 Ex 12:46 Joh 19:36 Ps 34:20	Joh 19:36 Nu 9:12 Joh 19:37 Zec 12:10 Joh 20:9 Ps 16:10 Joh 20:17 Ps 22:22 Acts Ac 1:20 Ps 69:25 Ac 1:20 Ps 109:8 Ac 2:17-21 Joe 2:28-32 Ac 2:25-28 Ps 16:8-10 Ac 2:30 2Sa 7:12 Ac 2:30 Ps 89:4 Ac 2:31 Ps 16:10 Ac 2:34 Ps 110:1 Ac 3:22,23 De 18:15,18,19 Ac 3:25 Ge 22:18 Ac 3:25 Ge 12:3 Ac 4:11 Ps 118:22,23 Ac 4:11 Isa 28:16 Ac 4:25,26 Ps 2:1,2 Ac 7:2 Ge 15:7 Ac 7:2 Ne 9:7 Ac 7:3 Ge 12:1 Ac 7:4 Ge 11:31 Ac 7:4 Ge 12:4,5 Ac 7:5 Ge 12:7 Ac 7:5 Ge 13:15 Ac 7:6,7 Ge 15:13,14 Ac 7:8 Ge 17:10 Ac 7:8 Ge 21:3,4 Ac 7:8 Ge 25:26 Ac 7:8 Ge 42:13 Ac 7:9 Ge 37:4,11,28 Ac 7:9 Ge 39:1,2,21 Ac 7:10 Ge 41:37,40 Ac 7:11 Ge 41:54 Ac 7:12 Ge 42:2 Ac 7:13 Ge 45:1,9 Ac 7:14,15 Ge 45:1-28 Ac 7:16 Jos 24:32 Ac 7:17 Ex 1:7 Ac 7:18 Ex 1:8 Ac 7:19 Ex 1:10,22 Ac 7:20 Ex 2:2 Ac 7:21 Ex 2:3-10 Ac 7:24 Ex 2:11 Ac 7:26 Ex 2:13,14 Ac 7:29 Ex 18:3 Ac 7:30 Ex 3:2 Ac 7:32 Ex 3:6 Ac 7:33,34 Ex 3:5,7,8,10 Ac 7:35 Ex 2:14 Ac 7:35 Ex 3:15-18 Ac 7:36 Ex 7:1-12,51 Ac 7:36 Ex 14:21 Ac 7:36 Ex 12:41 Ac 7:36 Ex 15:23 Ac 7:36 Ex 16:1-36 Ac 7:37 De 18:15 Ac 7:38 Ex 19:3 Ac 7:38 Ex 20:1-24:18 Ac 7:40 Ex 32:1 Ac 7:41 Ex 32:19 Ac 7:42,43 Am 5:25,26 Ac 7:44 Ex 25:40 Ac 7:44 Ex 26:30 Ac 7:45 Jos 3:14 Ac 7:45 Jos 18:1 Ac 7:46 2Sa 7:2 Ac 7:46 Ps 132:5 Ac 7:47 1Ki 8:1-66 Ac 7:49,50 Isa 66:1,2 Ac 8:32,33 Isa 53:7,8 Ac 10:34 De 10:17 Ac 10:34 Job 34:19 Ac 13:17 Isa 1:2 Ac 13:17 Ex 12:37 Ac 13:18 De 1:31 Ac 13:18 Nu 14:33 Ac 13:18 Ps 95:10 Ac 13:19 De 7:1 Ac 13:19 Jos 14:2 Ac 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How to Study the Bible

Lesson 19

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How to Study the Bible

Lesson 19

Lesson 19 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Matthew 21:12–13. As you read this passage, ask yourself how Jesus's quotations of Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11 function in his rebuke of the money changers in the temple. You will need to read the larger context of the Old Testament passages to gain a full understanding.

Come prepared to share your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

OT Genres (Part 1)

OT Historical Narrative Literature Genre:

Is the Text and OT Bible Story?

INTRODUCTION

1. Playing by the Rules

Genre: “A category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content” (Merriam-Webster).

“Literary genre refers to the literary form being used by an author and the rules governing that form” (Robert Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*, 52).

- a. The biblical **authors** sought to share their meaning with their readers by working within the literary conventions of their day that controlled the particular literary forms they used.
- b. Furthermore, certain genres create certain expectations for the **reader**.
- c. Thus, genre **controls the author** in writing and **guides the reader** in interpreting.

2. Multiform Witness to the Truth

“It is possible to view canonical diversity not as a problem to be solved but as a blessing to be received with thanks. It is precisely its diversity—call it plenitude, an embarrassment of riches, a Pentecostal plurality—that enables Scripture to speak on so many levels to so many different kinds of situations. Indeed, it is a *pastoral* advantage to be able to draw on diverse theological voices” (Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Doctrine* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005], 275).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 20

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

1. Redemptive History

- a. About 60% of the Bible is historical narrative.
- b. Theological Narrative: Word-Act Revelation
 - i. God's redemptive acts are revelatory: God reveals himself in his mighty acts in history.
 - ii. But God's redemptive acts are never left to speak for themselves: God's revelatory word interprets God's redemptive acts.
 - iii. God's revelatory word is itself a redemptive act.
- c. Other genres are imbedded within the big story of Scripture.

2. General Features of Narrative

- a. Structure: The Dramatic Shape of (Some) Narratives
 - i. Setting & Characters
 - ii. Rising Conflict/Tension
 - iii. Climax
 - iv. Resolution
 - v. Following Action/Interpretation
- b. Themes/Motifs
 - i. *Themes* are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.
 - ii. *Motifs* are recurring structures, contrasts, and literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.
- c. Characters
 - i. The meaning of a story derives primarily from the actions of its characters.
 - ii. Biblical characters are complex.
 - iii. God is the central character in biblical narratives. Let God be God!

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 20

d. Editorial Comments

- i. Sometimes the narrator expresses his view to us clearly by using summary statements or judgment statements.

2 Kings 17:7—“This disaster happened because the people of Israel sinned against the LORD their God who had brought them out of the land of Egypt from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt and because they worshiped other gods.”

- ii. Sometimes the narrator appears neutral; the meaning he conveys is subtle and not explicit (e.g. Judges 19).

3. Some Specifics regarding Historical Narrative in the Old Testament

a. Typology/Allusions

- i. Assumes God's providence

- ii. Examples

- 1) Eden-Tabernacle-Temple (Genesis 2; Exodus 25–40; Ezekiel 40–48; cf. Rev. 21–22)

- 2) Ark-Basket (Genesis 6; Exodus 2; cf. Psalm 18:16; 1 Peter 3:20–21)

- 3) Egypt-Exodus-Exile (Genesis 12; Exodus; Isaiah 11:16; cf. Luke 9:31)

b. Subgenres

- i. Genealogy (Genesis 5; 1 Chronicles 1–9)

- ii. Covenant (Genesis 15; Deuteronomy)

- iii. Recorded Speech (Job)

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 20

Lesson 20 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on 1 Kings 10–11. As background, read Deuteronomy 17:14–17 (rules for the king) and 1 Samuel 8:10–18 (warnings about the king). Now read the story of Solomon in 1 Kings 10–11. Discuss the ways in which Solomon violates the rules for the king and how he fulfills the warnings. Contrast his good deeds with his bad deeds. In the narrator's mind, is Solomon a good character or a bad character? Is he a hero or a bum?

Come prepared to share your applications from this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 21

OT Genres (Part 2)

Poetic Literature Genre:

Is the Text Poetry or a Psalm?

POETRY

1. Purpose

- a. Affective
- b. Memorable
- c. Worshipful

2. Figurative vs. Literal Language

- a. Not “Mythical vs. Real”
- b. Not even “Abstract vs. Concrete”

3. Examples: Psalms, Songs, Proverbs, Some Prophecies

4. Common Conventions

- a. Parallelism
 - i. Synonymous—The second line repeats the first with little or no added meaning. An obscure initial line can be elucidated by a second, clearer one.

Isaiah 53:5—“But he was pierced because of our rebellion,
crushed because of our iniquities;
punishment for our peace was on him,
and we are healed by his wounds”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 21

- ii. Synthetic (“step parallelism”)—The second line adds to the ideas of the first line.

Psalms 1:3—“He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams
that bears its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.”

- iii. Antithetical— Instead of building upon an idea, the second line is contrasted with the first.

Proverbs 1:7—“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and discipline.”

- b. X, X+1 Form (Psalms 62:11; Proverbs 30:15–16, 21–23, 29–31; Micah 5:5)

Proverbs 30:18–19—“Three things are too wondrous for me;
four I can’t understand:
19 the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a snake on a rock,
the way of a ship at sea,
and the way of a man with a young woman.”

- c. Acrostic (Psalms 119; Lamentations 1–4; Proverbs 31:10–31)

- d. Chiasm

Psalms 118:22–23—“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
23 This came from the LORD;
it is wondrous in our sight.”

- e. Others: Alliteration, Assonance, Puns, Idioms, Figures of Speech

- i. Alliteration—Lines begin with the same letter of the alphabet (Psalms 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 119; Lamentations 3)
- ii. Assonance—Similar sounding words (Jeremiah 1:11–12)

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 21

PSALMS

1. Reading the Psalms

2. Types of Psalms

- a. Lament (3; 9; 12; 13; 17; 42; 60; 74; 94; 139)
- b. Praise (106; 111–113; 146; 150)
- c. Thanksgiving (18; 32; 40; 65; 75; 92; 107; 136)
- d. Royal (2; 24; 72; 93; 101; 110)
- e. Wisdom (1; 19; 37; 73; 119)
- f. Historical (78; 104–107)
- g. Penitential (6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143)
- h. Imprecatory (35; 60; 70; 109; 137; 140)

3. Structure of the Psalms

- a. Five Books
 - i. Book 1 (1–41)
 - ii. Book 2 (42–72)
 - iii. Book 3 (73–89)
 - iv. Book 4 (90–106)
 - v. Book 5 (107–150)
- b. Movement from lament to thanksgiving to praise
- c. One interesting proposal: a Davidic Structure

“The Book of Psalms falls into five books, each ending with a doxology. By attending to the superscriptions, we can see that these five books tell a story. Book 1 focuses on David’s rise to power through affliction. Book 2 sings of David’s reign down to the time of Solomon. Book 3 then reflects the time of Solomon to the exile from the land. Book 4 consists of exilic reflections on Yahweh’s past deliverance of Israel. Then book 5 looks beyond exile and hopes for Yahweh’s future deliverance of his people through the agency of the Davidic king, who is seated at Yahweh’s right hand until he puts all his enemies under his feet The Psalms, then, recount the history of Israel from David to the exile, and then they look beyond the exile to the new David who will arise and lead the people back to the land” (James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation Through Judgment*, 277–79).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 21

Lesson 21 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Psalm 11. As you read this passage, focus particularly on how the imagery sheds light on the meaning. Ask yourself these questions:

Context

Are there any clues about the circumstances in which the passage was written? Where does this passage fit in the flow of the book?

Observation

Are there repetitions or multiple instances of similar ideas? Do these repetitions make a particular point, or point to a particular structure?

What images or metaphors does the author use? What do they indicate about God or the people in the text? What might they indicate about modern readers?

What is the tone of the passage? What emotions is the author arousing?

Meaning

Are there specific instructions/commands given to the reader? Does this passage mention any consequences for not following God's commands?

How does the author motivate the reader/audience, or make his appeal?

What does the passage teach us about God, and his people, and life in his world?

Does the passage point forward to Jesus? Is the gospel anticipated or foreshadowed in some way?

Application

How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding? (Head)

Is there some attitude you need to change? (Heart)

How does this passage call on you to change the way you live? (Hands)

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 22

OT Genres (Part 3)

Wisdom Literature Genre:

Is the Text a Proverb or Reflection on Life?

WISDOM LITERATURE

1. Proverbs (Proverbs)

2. “Philosophical” Reflection:

a. Theodicy (Job)

- i. Things are not always what they seem.
- ii. We need a mediator and a redeemer.
- iii. God is majestic!

b. Self-Reflection (Ecclesiastes)

- i. 1:1–11: An introductory poem talking about the circularity of life. The same things happen over and over again.
- ii. 12:1–8: The closing poem says: You’re going to get old. So, you need to remember my instruction and your Creator.
- iii. The book is bookended with vanity in 1:2 and 12:8.
- iv. 12:9–14: The conclusion of the matter is to fear God and keep his commandments. If you lose sight of this central truth, the vanities of life are attractive and seemingly reasonable to pursue.
- v. But what does it look like to fear God and keep his commandments? 2:3b poses the main question of the book: What is good for people to do under heaven during the few days of their lives? How does one live the good life?
- vi. The answer is stated several times: Eat, drink, enjoy your work, enjoy your wife; it is the gift of God (Ecclesiastes 2:24, 3:12–13, 3:22, 5:18, 8:15, 9:9).

3. Song of Songs

a. Human Marriage

b. Picture of Christ and the church

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 22

PROVERBS

1. **Definition**—A pithy, short, vivid statement that is essentially a portrayal of reality.

2. **Purposes**

- a. To quicken in the reader or hearer a sense of what is real instead of the illusory.
- b. To compel the hearer to make a judgment on his or her conduct, on his or her character, and on the moral world.

3. **Themes**

- a. The Fear of the Lord
- b. Instruction/Law/Humility
- c. Two Ways
- d. Marriage and sexual purity
- e. Money
- f. Work
- g. Justice
- h. Relationships

4. **Principles for Interpreting Proverbs**

- a. Many proverbs are meant to be taken as general principles, not universal laws (cf. Job).

Proverbs 22:6—“Start a youth out on his way;
even when he grows old he will not depart from it.”

Proverbs 10:4—“Idle hands make one poor,
but diligent hands bring riches.”

Proverbs 26:4–5—“Don’t answer a fool according to his foolishness
or you’ll be like him yourself.

5 Answer a fool according to his foolishness
or he’ll become wise in his own eyes.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 22

- b. Some proverbs are meant to be taken as universally true.

Proverbs 11:1—“Dishonest scales are detestable to the LORD, but an accurate weight is his delight.”

- c. The introductory homilies (ch. 1–9) are meant to invite us, like Solomon’s son, to make a choice between Wisdom and Folly. There are four parts to an introduction:
 - i. There is an address (“my son”).
 - ii. There is a command to hear.
 - iii. There is an assertion of authority.
 - iv. There is a motivation clause.
- d. The occasional nature and random ordering of Proverbs 10–31 is meant to communicate the everyday, practical nature of biblical wisdom.
- e. The Proverbs are, in a sense, “creation wisdom,” but they are still set within the context of redemption (e.g. the fear of the Lord).
- f. Wisdom, like all of Scripture, is meant ultimately to point to Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:20–24—“Where is the one who is wise? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the debater of this age? Hasn’t God made the world’s wisdom foolish? 21 For since, in God’s wisdom, the world did not know God through wisdom, God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of what is preached. 22 For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. 24 Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

1 Corinthians 1:30—“It is from him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom from God for us—our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

Colossians 2:3—“In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 22

Lesson 22 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Proverbs 5. As you read this passage, focus particularly on how the imagery sheds light on the meaning. Ask yourself these questions:

Context

Are there any clues about the circumstances in which the passage was written? Where does this passage fit in the flow of the book?

Observation

Are there repetitions or multiple instances of similar ideas? Do these repetitions make a particular point, or point to a particular structure?

What images or metaphors does the author use? What do they indicate about God or the people in the text? What might they indicate about modern readers?

What is the tone of the passage? What emotions is the author arousing?

Meaning

Are there specific instructions/commands given to the reader? Does this passage mention any consequences for not following God's commands?

How does the author motivate the reader/audience, or make his appeal?

What does the passage teach us about God, and his people, and life in his world?

Does the passage point forward to Jesus? Is the gospel anticipated or foreshadowed in some way?

Application

How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding? (Head)

Is there some attitude you need to change? (Heart)

How does this passage call on you to change the way you live? (Hands)

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

OT Genres (Part 4)

Legal Literature Genre:

Is the Text an OT Law?

HOW SHOULD WE INTERPRET AND APPLY THE LAW?

1. **Some laws seem strange to us—even weird.**
 - a. **Exodus 34:26**—“You must not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.”
 - b. **Leviticus 19:19**— “Do not crossbreed two different kinds of your livestock, sow your fields with two kinds of seed, or put on a garment made of two kinds of material.”
 - c. **Leviticus 12:2**—“When a woman becomes pregnant and gives birth to a male child, she will be unclean seven days, as she is during the days of her menstrual impurity.”
 - d. **Leviticus 13:40**—“If a man loses the hair of his head, he is bald, but he is clean.”
 - e. **Deuteronomy 22:12**—“Make tassels on the four corners of the outer garment you wear.”

2. **There are numerous Old Testament laws that we as modern Christians violate with some regularity.**
 - a. **Leviticus 19:32**—“You are to rise in the presence of the elderly and honor the old.”
 - b. **Leviticus 19:28**— “You are not to . . . put tattoo marks on yourselves.”
 - c. **Deuteronomy 14:8**— “And pigs, though they have hooves, they do not chew the cud—they are unclean for you. Do not eat their meat or touch their carcasses.”

3. **There are other Old Testament commands that we latch onto as the moral underpinnings of Christian behavior.**
 - a. **Leviticus 19:18**— “Do not take revenge or bear a grudge against members of your community, but love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.”
 - b. **Exodus 20:13**—“Do not murder.”
 - c. **Deuteronomy 5:18**—“Do not commit adultery.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 23

THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH

1. Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) / London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)

- a. *Moral laws* are those fundamental ethical principles that are eternally applicable, regardless of the time or covenant.

“God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it. The same law that was first written in the heart of man continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall, and was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables, the four first containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man” (LBCF 19.1–2).

- b. *Civil laws* are related to Israel's political and social structures in the land and are time-bound.

“Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties, all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are, by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end abrogated and taken away” (LBCF 19.3).

- c. *Ceremonial laws* are those symbolic requirements related to Israel's religious ceremonies and cult worship that find their typological end in Christ.

“To them also he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any now by virtue of that institution; their general equity only being of moral use” (LBCF 19.4).

2. Problems with the traditional approach

- a. The Bible never differentiates laws in this way but treats the law as a singular entity.
- b. All the laws express moral principles, and most of the so-called moral laws contain temporally or culturally bound elements.
- c. We are to gain benefit from *all* the Old Testament, not just the moral portions.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 23

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

1. Biblical authors *repudiate the Mosaic law-covenant*.¹¹

- a. **2 Corinthians 3:7–11**—“Now if the ministry that brought death, chiseled in letters on stones, came with glory, so that the Israelites were not able to gaze steadily at Moses’s face because of its glory, which was set aside, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry that brought condemnation had glory, the ministry that brings righteousness overflows with even more glory. 10 In fact, what had been glorious is not glorious now by comparison because of the glory that surpasses it. 11 For if what was set aside was glorious, what endures will be even more glorious.”
- b. **Hebrews 8:13**—“By saying a new covenant, he has declared that the first is obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old is about to pass away.”
- c. **Hebrews 7:18–19**—“So the previous command is annulled because it was weak and unprofitable 19 (for the law perfected nothing), but a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.”

2. Biblical authors *replace Moses’s law with the new covenant law of Christ*.

- a. **John 1:17**—“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”
- b. **Romans 7:6**—“But now we have been released from the law, since we have died to what held us, so that we may serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the old letter of the law.”
- c. **Ephesians 2:14–15**—“For he is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. In his flesh, 15 he made of no effect the law consisting of commands and expressed in regulations, so that he might create in himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace.”
- d. **Hebrews 7:12**—“For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must be a change of law as well.”
- e. **1 Corinthians 9:20–21**—“To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews; to those under the law, like one under the law—though I myself am not under the law—to win those under the law. 21 To those who are without the law, like one without the law—though I am not without God’s law but under the law of Christ—to win those without the law.”
- f. **James 2:8**—“Indeed, if you fulfill the royal law prescribed in the Scripture, **Love your neighbor as yourself**, you are doing well.”

¹¹ Taken from Brian Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God*, NSBT 31 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 208–209, 217–22.

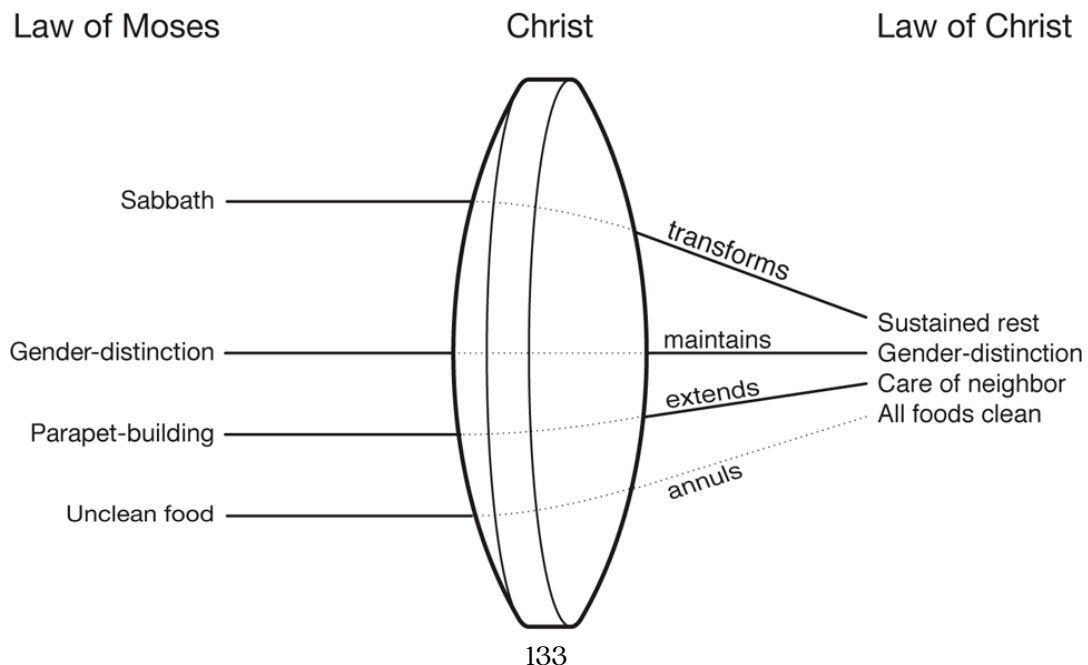
How to Study the Bible

Lesson 23

3. Biblical authors reappropriate Moses's law through Christ.

- a. *Maintains (no extension)*: When fulfilling Moses's prohibitions against murder, adultery, theft, coveting, and the like (e.g., Exod. 20:13–17), Christ maintains the law's essence without any extension from the old to new covenants (Matt. 15:18; 19:17–21; cf. Rom. 13:9). Obeying such laws would have looked the same in both eras.
- b. *Maintains (with extension)*: When fulfilling Moses's charge not to muzzle an ox while it is threshing (Deut. 25:4), Christ's work extends the principle's application to include paying wages to ministers (1 Cor. 9:8–12; 1 Tim. 5:17–18; cf. Matt. 10:10). Such extensions often occur in laws where their instruction includes cultural details that are different from our own; in such instances, we heed Jesus's words at the end of the parable of the good Samaritan and "do likewise" (Luke 10:37), though working out the principle in a new way.
- c. *Transforms*: When fulfilling laws like Yahweh's charge to observe the Sabbath (e.g., Deut. 5:12–15) or Moses's directions on capital punishment (e.g., Deut. 22:22), Christ transforms. On the one hand, he secures sustained rest for his followers and calls them to receive it (Matt. 11:28–12:8), and on the other hand, his work leads to applying the charge to "purge the evil from your midst" to excommunication within the church (1 Cor. 5:13).
- d. *Annuls*: When fulfilling Moses's laws about unclean food (e.g., Lev. 20:25–26), Christ annuls them, declaring all foods clean (Mark 7:19; cf. Acts 10:14–15; Rom. 14:20). But though he rescinded the diet restrictions, we still benefit from the commands by considering what they tell us about God and how they magnify Jesus's work.

Figure 5: The Law's Fulfillment through the "Lens" of Christ (Jason S. DeRouchie)



How to Study the Bible

Lesson 23

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING OLD TESTAMENT LAW

1. Establish the original revealed meaning and application of the law.

- a. What kind of situation was this law trying to promote or prevent?
- b. Whose interests was this law aiming to protect?
- c. Who would have benefited from this law, and why?
- d. Whose power was this law trying to restrict, and how did it do so?
- e. What rights and responsibilities were embodied in this law?
- f. What kind of behavior did this law encourage or discourage?
- g. What vision of society motivated this law?
- h. What moral principles, values, or priorities did this law embody or initiate?
- i. What motivation did this law appeal to?
- j. What sanction or penalty (if any) was attached to this law, and what does that show regarding its relative seriousness or moral priority?

2. Determine the theological significance of the law.

- a. Clarify what the law tells us about God and his ways.
- b. Assess how Christ's law-fulfillment impacts the law.
- c. State in a single sentence the love principle behind the law.

3. Summarize the lasting significance of the law for today.

"Here we preserve both the portrait of God and the love principle behind the law but change the context, all in light of Christ's new covenant work. We consider the practical implications of the theological insights gained from this law for our own new covenant context. God's nature is unchanging, but his purposes progress over time. Furthermore, we must consider not only living in light of the *pattern* that Christ set for us but also living by his gospel *power*. As similar as the old and new covenants are in many respects, the internalization of grace in all members marks the new covenant as a massive progression within salvation history" (Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 442).

Example: Deuteronomy 22:8

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 23

Lesson 23 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to understand and apply the Old Testament law in Deuteronomy 22:5. As you study this passage, ask yourself these questions:

1. Establish the original revealed meaning and application of the law.

- a. What kind of situation was this law trying to promote or prevent?
- b. Whose interests was this law aiming to protect?
- c. Who would have benefited from this law, and why?
- d. Whose power was this law trying to restrict, and how did it do so?
- e. What rights and responsibilities were embodied in this law?
- f. What kind of behavior did this law encourage or discourage?
- g. What vision of society motivated this law?
- h. What moral principles, values, or priorities did this law embody or initiate?
- i. What motivation did this law appeal to?
- j. What sanction or penalty (if any) was attached to this law, and what does that show regarding its relative seriousness or moral priority?

2. Determine the theological significance of the law.

- a. Clarify what the law tells us about God and his ways.
- b. Assess how Christ's law-fulfillment impacts the law.
- c. State in a single sentence the love principle behind the law.

3. Summarize the lasting significance of the law for today.

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

OT Genres (Part 5)

Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature Genre:

Is the Text a Prophecy?

PROPHECY

1. The Pattern of Prophecy: Two Key Texts

Exodus 7:1–2—“The LORD answered Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother will be your prophet. 2 You must say whatever I command you; then Aaron your brother must declare it to Pharaoh so that he will let the Israelites go from his land.”

Deuteronomy 18:15–22—“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. 16 This is what you requested from the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, ‘Let us not continue to hear the voice of the LORD our God or see this great fire any longer, so that we will not die!’ 17 Then the LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken well. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. 19 I will hold accountable whoever does not listen to my words that he speaks in my name. 20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a message in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods—that prophet must die.’ 21 You may say to yourself, ‘How can we recognize a message the LORD has not spoken?’ 22 When a prophet speaks in the LORD’s name, and the message does not come true or is not fulfilled, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 25

2. Principles for Interpreting Prophecy

- a. Understand Deuteronomy as a foundation for understanding the prophets.
- b. Study the book's context, especially its relation to Judah's exile into Babylon.
 - i. Pre-exilic Prophets (e.g. Micah, Nahum, Israel)
 - ii. Exilic Prophets (e.g. Jeremiah, Obadiah)
 - iii. Post-exilic Prophets (e.g. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)
 - iv. Some overlap the period of exile, either in their own ministries (Jeremiah) or in their prophecies (Isaiah).
 - v. Some ministered in Israel, the Northern Kingdom (Amos, Jonah, Hosea).
- c. Expect figurative language.
 - i. Poetic form
 - ii. Symbolic language and actions
- d. Distinguish between conditional and unconditional prophecies.

Jonah 3:4—Jonah set out on the first day of his walk in the city and proclaimed, "In forty days Nineveh will be demolished!"

2 Kings 20:1—"In those days Hezekiah became terminally ill. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Set your house in order, for you are about to die; you will not recover.'"

Jeremiah 18:7–10—"At one moment I might announce concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will uproot, tear down, and destroy it. 8 However, if that nation about which I have made the announcement turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the disaster I had planned to do to it. 9 At another time I might announce concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it. 10 However, if it does what is evil in my sight by not listening to me, I will relent concerning the good I had said I would do to it."

- e. Note that some prophecies can have multiple fulfillments (Isaiah 7).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 25

APOCALYPTIC (“REVELATORY”) LITERATURE

1. Examples of Apocalyptic Literature in Scripture

- a. Daniel
- b. Revelation
- c. Isaiah 24–27
- d. Ezekiel 38–39
- e. Zechariah 1–6
- f. Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21

2. Characteristics of Apocalyptic Literature

- a. *God’s Eye View of History*—The expectation of the inbreaking of God into the present age to usher in a qualitatively different existence in the age to come.
- b. *Given by a Heavenly Messenger*—The use of an angelic mediator or mediators to communicate God’s message to a chosen recipient/spokesman.
- c. *Narrative Framework*—The journey of the chosen human recipient into the heavenly realms, with ongoing interaction and communication with the angelic mediator(s).
- d. *Colorful Metaphors and Symbols*—Highly symbolic visions or dreams that describe both current hidden spiritual realities and future divine interventions.
- e. *Using the Language of God’s Deliverance in the Past to Describe Future Salvation*—Visions of a new exodus, new entry into the promised land, new temple, new David, new covenant, etc.
- f. *Future Hope in Present Trouble*—Visions of final, divine judgment, warnings of coming distresses and trials to be faced by the faithful, and encouragements to the faithful to persevere in light of the true spiritual realities and coming divine interventions.

“The point and purpose of apocalyptic literature is to give God’s people hope in the midst of present sufferings based on God’s certain victory over their enemies, both now and in the future. To do that, apocalyptic draws heavily on the images of the past, as well as other stylized imagery. The point is to review the sweep of history and show its culmination in the victory of God’s kingdom” (Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 50).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 25

Lesson 24 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Zechariah 8:1–23. As you read this passage, ask yourself the following questions:

Context

Are there any clues about the circumstances in which the prophecy was given or written?

Are any people or places mentioned that you aren't familiar with? (Chase them up in earlier parts of the book or refer to a Bible dictionary or commentary.)

Are other bits of the Old Testament mentioned or alluded to in the passage? What part do these 'memories' play in the text?

Observation

Are there repetitions or multiple instances of similar ideas? Do these repetitions make a particular point, or point to the structure of the passage?

Paying attention to when the prophet is speaking and when God is speaking, what does the passage tell us about God's plans? What does it tell us about God's character?

What kind of human behavior, if any, is condemned or rewarded? What response is called for (if any)?

What is the main point or points?

Meaning

Are there specific instructions/commands given to the reader? Does this passage mention any consequences for not following God's commands?

Does the text have a sense of expectation about something happening in the future? What is to be expected and when? How should this motivate action in the present?

Does the passage point forward to Jesus? Is the gospel anticipated or foreshadowed in some way?

Application

How is your own situation similar to or different from those being addressed?

How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?

How does this passage lead you to trust God and his promises in Jesus?

How does this passage call on you to change the way you live?

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

NT Genres (Part 1)

Gospel Literature Genre:

Is the Text a Gospel?

INTRODUCTORY REMINDERS

1. **Read these NT texts as a divine Word to us.**
2. **Remember our course goals: love God more and live more faithfully as his disciples.**

“So anyone who thinks that he has understood the divine scriptures or any part of them, but cannot by his understanding build up this double love of God and neighbor, has not yet succeeded in understanding them” (Augustine).

WHY FOUR GOSPELS? THE ANGST AND THE JOY

1. Definitions

“Our canonical Gospels are the *theological, historical, and aretological (virtue-forming) biographical narratives that retell the story and proclaim the significance of Jesus Christ, who through the power of the Spirit is the Restorer of God’s reign*” (Jonathan Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 35).

“We can classify the Gospels as *historical narrative motivated by theological concerns*” (Mark Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007], 29).

“The Gospels (and Acts) are like the rest of biblical narratives in that they intermingle three ingredients: 1) the historical impulse to record facts; 2) the theological and didactic impulse to teach religious truth; 3) the literary impulse to recreate experiences in our imaginations” (Leland Ryken, *Words of Life*, 29).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 25

2. The Angst—Dealing with Discrepancies

- a. Maximalist harmonization
- b. Recognition of different perspectives entailed in reporting of events (=reasonable harmonization)
- c. Recognition of the itinerant nature of Jesus' ministry
- d. Recognition of the *ipsissima vox* versus the *ipsissima verba Jesu*

"Inerrancy does not demand that the *Logia Jesu* (the sayings of Jesus) contain the *ipsissima verba* (the exact words of Jesus), only the *ipsissima vox* (the exact voice) When a New Testament writer cites the sayings of Jesus, it need not be the case that Jesus said those exact words. Undoubtedly, the exact words of Jesus are to be found in the New Testament, but they need not be in every instance. For one thing, many of the sayings were spoken by our Lord in Aramaic, and thus had to be translated into Greek Thus, it is impossible for us to know which are direct quotes, which are indirect discourse, and which are free renderings" (Paul Feinberg, "The Meaning of Inerrancy" in *Inerrancy* ed. by Norman L. Geisler, 270).

- e. Recognition of the differences between ancient and modern historiography

"I am not a writer of histories but of biographies. My readers therefore must excuse me if I do not record all events or describe in detail, but only briefly touch upon, the noblest and most famous. . . . As painters produce a likeness by the representation of the countenance and the expression of the face, in which the character is revealed, without troubling themselves about the other parts of the body, so I must be allowed to look rather into the signs of a man's character, and by means of these to portray the life of each, leaving to others the description of great events and battles" (Plutarch, *Alexander*, 1.1).

- i. Plagiarism
- ii. Chronological and Narrative Time/Sequence

3. The Joy—Delighting in Different Emphases

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 25

HOW TO READ THE GOSPELS WELL

1. Reading “Vertically”: Following the Storyline

- a. Understand each *pericope*, how it fits in the whole Gospel story
- b. Be aware of historical/literary context
- c. Understand the difference between descriptive vs. prescriptive texts

2. Reading “Horizontally”: Comparing the Accounts

- a. Intertextuality and Intratextuality: Some Definitions
 - i. *Intertextuality*—Deliberate literary borrowing of one text from another. For the NT authors this would be the question of what OT passages might be in the background for the writer.
 - ii. *Intratextuality*—This slightly more clumsy term is similar to the former one but refers instead to ways in which an author is alluding to other passages *within his own work*.
- b. Now within the broad category of intertextuality, we can identify different levels of how texts borrow from and use each other:
 - i. *Quotation*—A quotation is when one text reproduces verbatim several consecutive words from another text. A quotation can be marked (e.g., ‘as it is written:’) or unmarked. For example, Matthew 2:4–6.
 - ii. *Explicit reference*—An explicit reference directs readers to a familiar text not by quoting but by referring to it or some episode in it. For example, Matthew 12:42 – “the queen of the South will rise up at the judgment” = explicit reference to 1 Kings 10:1–13; 2 Chronicles 9:1–12.
 - iii. *Allusion*—An allusion to another text exists when one text shares enough with another text, even without reproducing several consecutive words from it, to establish the latter as a subtext to which an audience is being implicitly directed.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 25

c. Why This All Matters

- i. Understanding intertextuality helps us greatly with the apparent problem of the use of the OT in the NT.
- ii. Understanding intertextuality is a crucial element in interpreting the Gospels and Acts well because they so frequently cite, allude to, and echo OT texts.
- iii. Understanding how intertextuality works:
 - Provides clues to right interpretation.
 - Provides a depth of nuance to our interpretation.
 - Provides a sense of the rhetorical punch and aesthetic pleasure of how the texts are functioning.
- iv. Understanding intertextuality gives us insight into the huge theological issue of the relationship of the Testaments/Covenants to each other.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 25

Lesson 25 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Matthew 21:1–11. As you read this passage, ask yourself the following questions:

Context

What has happened so far in the narrative? Have there been any major events, characters, or themes?

What has happened just prior to the section you are reading?

Observation

What do you learn about the main characters in this section? How does the author describe them? How do they describe themselves?

Is time or place significant in the events that happen in the passage?

Is there a conflict or high point in the passage?

Do you think there is a main point or theme in this section of the story?

What surprises are there?

Meaning

Are there any 'editorial' comments from the author about the events in the narrative? How do these comments illuminate what is happening?

Does someone in the narrative learn something or grow in some way? How? What does this person learn?

What does the passage reveal about who Jesus is, and what he came into the world to do?

How could you sum up the meaning of this passage in your own words?

Application

How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?

Is there some attitude you need to change?

What does this passage teach you about being a disciple of Jesus?

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 25

NT Genres (Part 2)

NT Historical Narrative Literature Genre:

Is the Text the Book of Acts?

WHAT KIND OF BOOK IS ACTS?

1. Acts is a story.
2. Acts is theological history.
 - a. Luke is a historian.
 - b. Luke is also a theologian.

GRASPING THE MESSAGE OF ACTS

Should we take Acts as *normative*, so that the church of all times should imitate the experiences and practices of the early church? Or should we read Acts as merely *descriptive* of what was valuable and inspiring in the early church, but not necessarily binding on us today?

1. **Look for what Luke intended to communicate to his readers.**

Commenting on Acts 8: “We cannot always know Luke’s intent for certain, but we can look for common themes and patterns that connect the stories. Here we will discover Luke’s message to his readers (and to us). We might ask, “What do Samaritans and eunuchs have in common?” Samaritans were “half-breeds” and eunuchs were physical rejects; both groups were considered religious and social outcasts to one degree or another. The normative message from Luke is that the gospel of Jesus Christ destroys human barriers that are used to keep people from God. God accepts us not because we have developed a perfect body or have been born in a certain part of the world, but because of what he has done for us through his Son Jesus. The intent of the author should take precedence over our own curiosity when looking for what is normative in Acts” (Duvall & Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 301).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 26

2. Look for positive and negative examples in the characters of the story.

- a. **Acts 1:21–22**—“Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us—from among these, it is necessary that one become a witness with us of his resurrection.”
- b. **Acts 6:8**—“Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.”
- c. **Acts 8:6**—“The crowds were all paying attention to what Philip said, as they listened and saw the signs he was performing.”
- d. **Acts 15:12**—“The whole assembly became silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul describe all the signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.”

3. Read individual passages in light of the overall story of Acts and the rest of the New Testament.

Acts 19:1–7—“While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples 2 and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” “No,” they told him, “we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 “Into what then were you baptized?” he asked them. “Into John’s baptism,” they replied. 4 Paul said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus.” 5 When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy. 7 Now there were about twelve men in all.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 26

4. Look to other parts of Acts to clarify what is normative.

- a. **Acts 2:42–47**—“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. 44 Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. 45 They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”
- b. **Acts 4:32–35**—“Now the entire group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common. 33 With great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on all of them. 34 For there was not a needy person among them because all those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds of what was sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles’ feet. This was then distributed to each person as any had need.”
- c. **Acts 5:1–5**—“But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property. 2 However, he kept back part of the proceeds with his wife’s knowledge, and brought a portion of it and laid it at the apostles’ feet. 3 “Ananias,” Peter asked, “why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds of the land? 4 Wasn’t it yours while you possessed it? And after it was sold, wasn’t it at your disposal? Why is it that you planned this thing in your heart? You have not lied to people but to God.” 5 When he heard these words, Ananias dropped dead, and a great fear came on all who heard.”

5. Look for repeated patterns and themes.

- a. General themes in Acts:
 - i. The Holy Spirit (Acts 1–2; 4:8, 31; 8:29, 39; 10:19, 44–46; 13:2; 16:6–7; 20:22)
 - ii. God’s Sovereignty (Acts 1:16; 2:16–21, 25–28, 34–35; 4:24–25; 13:32–37, 47)
 - iii. The Church (Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35; 20:17–38)
 - iv. Prayer (Acts 1:14, 24; 4:24; 7:59–60; 13:3; 20:36; 28:8)
 - v. Suffering (5:41; 9:15–16; 12:4; 14:22; 16:22–23; 20:23–24; 21:30–33; 27:13–44)
 - vi. The Gospel for Jews and Gentiles (Acts 1:9; 2:17, 21; 8:14–17; 10:1–48)
 - vii. The Power for Witness (Acts 1:8, 22; 2:32–36; 4:2, 20, 33; 5:20, 32, 42, 10:39–41)

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 26

b. Specific examples:

i. *Choosing a replacement for Judas.*

Acts 1:23–26—“So they proposed two: Joseph, called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed, “You, Lord, know everyone’s hearts; show which of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this apostolic ministry that Judas left to go where he belongs.” 26 Then they cast lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias and he was added to the eleven apostles.”

ii. *Receiving the Holy Spirit.*

1:8	witnessed of Jesus
2:4	spoke in other tongues (languages)
2:17–18	prophesied
4:31	spoke the word of God boldly
8:15–17	(no description)
9:17–20	preached that Jesus is the Son of God
10:44–46	spoke in tongues and praised God
19:6	spoke in tongues and prophesied

iii. *Preaching the gospel evangelistically.*

1. The message is constantly spreading (Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20).

2. The gospel of Jesus Christ remains constant (Acts 10:39–43).

3. The message is shaped to specific audiences.

a. When preaching to Jews, the preachers usually use Scripture and the history of Israel as the basis of the appeal (Acts 2; 3; 13)

b. When preaching to Gentiles, the preachers build a bridge by appealing to God as Creator (Acts 14; 17).

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 26

Lesson 26 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Acts 13:1–3. As you read this passage, take the text through all five steps of the Interpretive Journey. Do this by answering the following five questions:

Step 1: *Grasp the text in their town.* What did the text mean to the biblical audience?

Step 2: *Measure the width of the river to cross.* What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?

Step 3: *Cross the principlizing bridge.* What are the theological principles in this text?

Step 4: *Consult the biblical map.* How does our theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?

Step 5: *Grasp the text in our town.* How should individual Christians and churches today apply the theological principles in their lives and ministries?

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 26

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 27

NT Genres (Part 3)

Parabolic Literature Genre:

Is the Text a Parable?

WHAT IS A PARABLE?

A story about earthly matters that depicts heavenly truths.

HISTORY OF INTERPRETING PARABLES

1. Early Church
2. Reformation
3. Modern Age

HOW TO INTERPRET A PARABLE

1. Context

- a. Literary

Luke 18:1—“Now he told them a parable on the need for them to pray always and not give up.”

Matthew 13:10–11—Then the disciples came up and asked him, “Why are you speaking to them in parables?” 11 He answered, “Because the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given for you to know, but it has not been given to them.”

- b. Historical/Cultural

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 27

2. Content

- a. Determine the main point(s) of the parable.
 - i. *Who are the main characters?*
 - ii. *What occurs at the end?*
 - iii. *Who/What gets the most space?*
- b. Recognize stock imagery in the parables.
 - i. Father
 - ii. Master
 - iii. Judge
 - iv. Shepherd
 - v. King
 - vi. Son
 - vii. Vineyard
 - viii. Fig Tree
 - ix. Sheep
 - x. Servant
 - xi. Enemy
 - xii. Harvest
 - xiii. Wedding Feast

John 15:5—"I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me."

- c. Note striking or unexpected details.

3. Caution

- a. Do not press all the details for meaning.
- b. Since each central figure generally conveys only one main point of comparison, it should not surprise us that some characters act in untoward ways.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 27

Lesson 27 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Luke 18:9–14. As you read this passage, ask yourself the following questions:

Context

What has happened so far in the narrative? Have there been any major events, characters or themes?

What has happened just prior to the section you are reading? What happens after?

Observation

What do you learn about the main characters in this section? How does the author describe them? How do they describe themselves?

Is time or place significant in the events that happen in the passage?

What surprises are there? Are there any striking or unexpected details?

Meaning

Are there any 'editorial' comments from the author about the events in the narrative?

Does someone in the parable learn something or grow in some way? How? What does this person learn?

What does the passage reveal about who Jesus is, and what he came into the world to do?

How could you sum up the meaning of this passage in your own words?

Application

How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?

How does this passage lead you to trust God and his promises in Jesus?

What does this passage teach you about being a disciple of Jesus?

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 27

NT Genres (Part 4)

Epistolary Literature Genre:

Is the Text a Letter?

THE STRUCTURE OF EPISTLES

Most of the NT letters follow the format of most Greco-Roman letters of their day, containing the *opening*, the *body*, and the *closing*.

1. Opening

- a. Sender (e.g. “Paul,” “Peter”; sometimes a co-sender)
- b. Recipients (e.g. “to the Thessalonians”)
- c. Greeting (e.g. “grace and peace”)
- d. Prayer (“I thank God”)

2. Body

- a. Mostly “linear”
- b. Occasionally “circular”

3. Closing

- a. Travel plans or personal situation
- b. Prayer
- c. Commendation of fellow workers
- d. Prayer requests
- e. Greetings
- f. Final instructions and exhortations
- g. Holy kiss
- h. Autographed greeting
- i. A grace benediction/doxology

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 28

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EPISTLES

1. The diatribe

“The characteristic feature of the diatribe is its conversational nature. The teacher (or writer) anticipates a possible objection or response to his argument, puts the question or objection in the student’s words, and responds to it” (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, 25).

Romans 3:1–2—“So what advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? 2 Considerable in every way . . .”

Romans 6:1–2—“What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? 2 Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?”

Romans 9:19–20—You will say to me, therefore, “Why then does he still find fault? For who resists his will?” 20 On the contrary, who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? Will what is formed say to the one who formed it, “Why did you make me like this?”

2. Paraenesis (exhortations)

1 Thessalonians 4:3–8—“For this is God’s will, your sanctification: that you keep away from sexual immorality, 4 that each of you knows how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not with lustful passions, like the Gentiles, who don’t know God. 6 This means one must not transgress against and take advantage of a brother or sister in this manner, because the Lord is an avenger of all these offenses, as we also previously told and warned you. 7 For God has not called us to impurity but to live in holiness. 8 Consequently, anyone who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.”

3. Hymns and confessional statements (Phil. 2:6–11; Col. 1:15–20; 1 Cor. 11:23–26)

1 Timothy 3:16—“And most certainly, the mystery of godliness is great:

He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the Spirit,
seen by angels,
preached among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 28

HOW TO READ THE EPISTLES WELL

1. The NT letters are often written in carefully structured grammatical arguments.

- a. Begin by reading the whole letter in one sitting.
- b. Reconstruct the historical-cultural situation.
- c. Trace the author's flow of thought (think paragraphs!).

2. The NT letters are occasional in nature.

- a. To churches
- b. To individuals (e.g. 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 2–3 John)
- c. Implications:
 - i. These are not systematic treatises, but pastoral works in which the apostles apply their theology to specific situations in the churches.
 - ii. These are not comprehensive treatises, so we cannot fully unpack Paul, Peter, or John's total theology from one letter.
 - iii. The more one knows about the culture, history, and literature of the NT times, the greater will be the ability to put oneself into the shoes of the original readers.
 - iv. Use mirror reading with caution.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 28

Lesson 28 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Colossians 3:1–17. As you read this passage, ask yourself the following questions:

Context

What can you learn about the person or situation to which the letter is written?

What clues are there about the author and his circumstances?

What was the main point of the passage immediately before this one? Are there logical or thematic connections to the passage you are reading?

Observation

Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text? Are there key connecting words (for, therefore, but, because) that indicate the logical flow of the passage?

What is the main point or points? What supporting points does the author make?

What surprises are there in the flow of the argument?

Meaning

How does this text relate to other parts of the book?

How does the passage relate to Jesus?

What does this teach you about God?

How could you sum up the meaning of this passage in your own words?

Application

How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?

Is there some attitude you need to change?

How does this passage call on you to change the way you live?

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

NT Genres (Part 5)

Eclectic Literature Genre:

Is the Text the Book of Revelation?

GENRES OF REVELATION

1. Letter

- a. **Revelation 1:4–5**—“John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth.”
- b. **Revelation 22:21**—“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone. Amen.”

2. Prophecy

- a. **Revelation 1:3**—“Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it, because the time is near.”
- b. **Revelation 22:6–7**— Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.” 7 “Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

3. Apocalyptic

- a. **Revelation 1:1–2**— “The revelation [apocalypsis] of Jesus Christ that God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatever he saw.”
- b. “[A] supernatural unveiling of what is about to take place. A divine disclosure usually via angels to some prominent person in which God promises to intervene in human history, to destroy evil and bring in his kingdom” (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Unpublished Introduction to New Testament, Part II Notebook: Acts, Epistolary Literature, and the Revelation*, 89).

How to Study the Bible

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APPROACHES TO REVELATION

1. **Preterist** – According to preterists, while portions of Revelation may have been forward-looking when initially written, almost all events described in Revelation already have taken place, most in the first century or soon thereafter. Preterists tie much of the cataclysmic symbols in Revelation to the destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
2. **Historicist** – Historicists approach Revelation as a blueprint of the entire span of church history. Thus, portions of the book describe the past, while others look the future.
3. **Idealist** – Idealists see Revelation as describing the spiritual realities that reoccur throughout history until the final consummation. It is erroneous, then, to seek particular rulers or events that uniquely correspond with the beasts or images and events in Revelation. Many events throughout history correspond to these same symbols.
4. **Futurist** – The futurist view sees the majority of Revelation as applying to future end-time events that occur directly prior to Christ's return.
5. **Eclectic** – This approach seeks to combine the strengths of several of the above approaches.

HOW TO READ REVELATION WELL

1. Old Testament apocalyptic passages provide the most helpful background to understanding Revelation.
2. The book of Revelation should be read from the perspective of the original audience.
3. In accord with the standards of apocalyptic literature, the symbolic images in Revelation must not be taken literally.
4. Revelation is not intended to be read chronologically.
5. We should not adopt any interpretation that is out of harmony with the rest of the Bible.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 29

Lesson 29 Homework:

In this class, we will encourage growth in this discipline by committing ourselves to reading thoughtfully and prayerfully some assigned Scripture passage. At the beginning of each class, we will share our personal reflections on the passage for that week, particularly focusing on how our lives and ministries have been (or need to be) challenged by the truths we have thought so much about.

As the class progresses, each week's homework assignment will seek to apply the previous lesson content to the passage at hand. This will allow us to reinforce what we learn as we go, so that we may have our "powers of discernment trained by constant practice" (Heb 5:14, ESV).

Our assignment this week is to meditate on Revelation 7:9–17. As you read this passage, ask yourself the following questions:

Context

Are there any clues about the historical circumstances the literature is addressing?

Are other bits of the Bible mentioned or hinted at in the passage? What part do these 'memories' play in the text?

Observation

What images are used in the passage? What effect do they have?

What emotions does the passage arouse (e.g. fear, expectation, awe)?

How does the passage seek to reveal what God is like? Where in this passage might we find hope for men and women?

Is there a crisis in the passage? What is the tension/conflict about, and how does it relate to readers?

Meaning

Are there specific instructions/commands given to the reader? Does this passage mention any consequences for not following God's commands?

Does the text have a sense of expectation about something happening in the future? What is to be expected and when? How should this motivate action in the present?

Does the passage point to Jesus? Is the gospel foreshadowed or looked back upon in some way?

Application

How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?

How does this passage lead you to trust God and his promises in Jesus?

How does this passage call on you to change the way you live?

Come prepared to discuss your reflections on this passage at the beginning of next class.

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 29

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 28

Putting It Together

Particular Challenges:

How Do I Study Difficult or Familiar Passages?

STUDYING DIFFICULT PASSAGES

1. Why are passages often difficult?

- a. Culture Gap
- b. Apparent Contradiction
- c. Mystery

2. Four Principles:

- a. Pray— “Many times I have learned more from one prayer than I might have learned from much reading and speculation” (Martin Luther, *A Simple Way to Pray*).
- b. Examine the Context
- c. Let Scripture Interpret Scripture
 - i. Diagnose the difficulty
 - ii. Find relevant passages
 - iii. Synthesize
- d. Ask for Help

Matthew 12:22–32—“Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and unable to speak was brought to him. He healed him, so that the man could both speak and see. 23 All the crowds were astounded and said, “Could this be the Son of David?” 24 When the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man drives out demons only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.” 25 Knowing their thoughts, he told them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is headed for destruction, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons drive them out? For this reason they will be your judges. 28 If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 How can someone enter a strong man’s house and steal his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. 30 Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather with me scatters. 31 **Therefore, I tell you, people will be forgiven every sin and blasphemy, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the one to come.”**

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 28

STUDYING FAMILIAR PASSAGES

1. Five Principles

- a. Pray
- b. Don't Assume; Ask
- c. Search for Surprises
- d. Meditate
 - i. "The reason we come away so cold from reading the word is, because we do not warm ourselves at the fire of meditation" (Thomas Watson).
 - ii. Meditation is "deep thinking on truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture for the purpose of understanding, application, and prayer" (Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 49).
- e. Express

2. Example

Psalm 23—"A psalm of David.

1 The LORD is my shepherd;

I have what I need.

2 He lets me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside quiet waters.

3 He renews my life;

he leads me along the right paths

for his name's sake.

4 Even when I go through the darkest valley,

I fear no danger,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

6 Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me

all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD

as long as I live."

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 28

CONCLUSION: YOU ARE APPROVED!

2 Timothy 2:15—“Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn’t need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.”

1. Four Mistakes to Avoid:

- a. Present yourself to God to get approved.
- b. Fail to present yourself, fearing God’s disapproval.
- c. Present yourself to men as one approved.
- d. Present others to God as one approved.

2. The Challenge: Present yourself to God as one approved. You don’t need to get approved. You are already approved.

Colossians 1:21–23—“Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds as expressed in your evil actions, 22 But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him— 23 if indeed you remain grounded and steadfast in the faith and are not shifted away from the hope of the gospel that you heard.”

How to Study the Bible

Lesson 28

RECOMMENDED BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

Interpretive Method—General Tools and Categories for How to Study the Bible

Beginner:

- R. C. Sproul, *Knowing Scripture*

Intermediate:

- J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word*
- John Piper, *Reading the Bible Supernaturally*
- Robert Plummer, *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible*

Advanced:

- Jason DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*
- Andy Naselli, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament*

Biblical Reference—General Tools for Understanding History, Literature, and Theology

- Thomas C. Brisco, *Holman Bible Atlas*
- B&H, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*
- IVP, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*
- IVP, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*

Biblical Theology—Grasping the Overall Storyline of Scripture

- Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan* (Biblical Theology)
- James M. Hamilton Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology?* (Biblical Theology)
- Trent Hunter and Stephen Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End* (Biblical Theology)
- Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture* (Biblical Theology)
- Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty* (Biblical Theology)

Commentary—Guidance on the Interpretation of Particular Books and Texts

- ESV Study Bible
- NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible
- IVP, *New Bible Commentary*
- Baker, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*
- Get author recommendations from those you trust for specific commentaries
- Tremper Longman, *Old Testament Commentary Survey*
- D. A. Carson, *New Testament Commentary Survey*

Study Guides—Guided Study through Questions for Observation and Application

- Crossway, *Knowing the Bible Series* (knowingthebibleseries.org)
- The Good Book Company, *Good Book Guides* (thegoodbook.com)
- Matthias Media, *Pathway Bible Guides* (matthiasmedia.com)
- Navigators, *LifeChange Bible Study Series* (navigators.org)



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