

LB 103 Biblical Interpretation (Interpreting Scripture)



**Student Handbook
Nazarene Theological Institute
Church of the Nazarene
Africa Region**

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**LB 103 Biblical Interpretation
(Interpreting Scripture)**
Diploma Level
Syllabus

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Description

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

Course Rationale

Narration

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

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

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

Program Outcomes

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

- CON 3 Knowledge of the principles of Biblical interpretation
- CON 4 Knowledge of the theological foundations for the Christian faith from the Biblical point of view when read from a Wesleyan perspective.
- CON 8 Knowledge of the position and teaching of the Church of the Nazarene concerning religious phenomenon
- CON 10 Knowledge of the basic theory and art of communication, especially that which concerns preaching and teaching

- COM 2 Ability to preach a Biblical sermon that can then be applied to life
- COM 4 Ability to teach the Word of God and make disciples that can make other disciples
- COM 10 Ability to interpret and apply the Bible according to the best principles of Biblical interpretation

- CAR 4 Ability to allow Christ's character to form the attitudes and actions of one's daily life
- CAR 9 Ability to engage in continuing formation and education

- CXT 3 Ability to understand the principles of cross-cultural ministry
- CXT 4 Ability to understand the differences between the worldviews of the Western world, that of Africa, and that of the Bible

Course Outcomes for this module

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

1. An attitude ready to receive the Bible as the Word of God. (CAR 4).
2. A knowledge of the development of the canon including the sixty-six books of the Bible. (CON 3).
3. An understanding of biblical texts according to their genre and form. (CON 3, CON 10; COM 10).

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

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

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

Course Resources

Required:

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

Recommended:

1. Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth. (En francais: Un Nouveau Regard ≠ la Bible)* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
2. *Interpreting Scripture*. RIIIE course module. Clergy Services. 2002
3. Truesdale, Lyons, and Eby, *Dictionary of the Bible and Christian Doctrine in Everyday English*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1986.

Course Requirements

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

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

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

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

5. In small groups, the students will move through these steps for a selected passage of Scripture together, after which each student will compose a short written report. (course outcomes 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12,

13, 16, 17)—6.25% of final grade for each report X 4 reports = 25% of final grade.

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

7. The student will take a final exam that covers the course materials (course outcomes 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17) —20% of final grade.

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

Course Evaluation

	Percentage	Points
Class Participation	10%	100
Handbook Exercises	15%	150
Inductive Method Memorization	15%	150
4 Small-Group Written Exegesis Reports	25%	250
Presentation on Application		
For preaching/teaching	15%	150
Final Exam	20%	200
Total for course:	100%	1000 points

Course Schedule

This course meets as an intensive for a duration of five days with the final exam taking place the morning of day six.

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

Session 1: Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction

Session 2: Introduction, continued: Basic Principles for the Interpretation of Scripture

Session 3: The History of Biblical Interpretation

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

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION LECTURE OUTLINE

Prepared by Dr. Mary Spaulding

LIST OF DEFINITIONS

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

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

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

OUR GOAL AND PURPOSE

Our goal in hermeneutics is to determine the historical meaning of a text, the meaning that the original writer meant to communicate to his original audience.

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

BASIC STEPS FOR STUDYING THE BIBLE

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

INTRODUCTION

Why should Christians study the Bible?

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

2. God wants to change our lives through His Word.

What is necessary for this to take place?

1. Observation and Interpretation
2. Application and obedience
"All true knowledge of God is born out of obedience."

Why should Christians *study* the Bible?

- To help us hear God's message more clearly above our own preconceptions
- Because the Holy Spirit does not necessarily teach knowledge, but uses our knowledge to illumine understanding and application
- To help us better understand the message given *then* so we can apply that message correctly *now*
- Because God admonishes us to do so through His Word

Basic Keys to the Interpretation of Scripture

- Look for the author's intended meaning as conveyed by the text.
- Consider historical customs and culture of the time.
- Read a passage in context. (Note circles of context.)
- Identify the type of passage you are reading.
- Interpret experience in the light of Scripture, not Scripture in the light of experience.
- Always seek the full counsel of Scripture.

- Check our interpretation/application with other Christians and authority figures whom God has placed in our lives.

Three Aspects to Studying a Text

1. Behind the Text
Geography, history, culture
2. The Text Itself
Historical, ideological, aesthetic
3. In Front of the Text
Church tradition and our own backgrounds/pre-understandings

The Hermeneutical Spiral

HISTORY OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Why do we study how others before us interpreted the Bible?

- To discover that ours is not the only view
- To understand that our approach is based upon centuries of study
- To avoid previous mistakes
- To learn to be consistent in our practices
- To understand how historical context affects interpretation

Ancient Jewish Exegesis

Clearly from time of Ezra on
Various methods of interpretation:

- Literal or peshat
- Midrashic
- Peshet
- Allegorical

New Testament Interpretation of OT by Jesus and the apostles

Why are OT quotes in NT modified?

- Several versions at time of Christ
- Did not always quote word for word
- Mastery of Scripture

- Often quoted only first line but rest assumed
- Combined quotes from different sources

Jesus used Jewish methods but claimed personal authority

Methods of early Christians depended upon Jesus fulfilling OT.

They included:

- Typological
- Literal-contextual
- Peshet
- Other Jewish methods including allegory, principle/application, etc.

Early Church Exegesis (100-600)

Three great schools emerged:

1. Alexandrian school: allegorical method
 2. Antiochan school: grammatical-historical
- Allegorical approach became dominant
3. Western school: combined elements of above two

Medieval Exegesis (600-1500)

Fourfold sense of Allegorical interpretation:

The letter shows us what God and our fathers did;
 The allegory shows us where our faith is hid;
 The moral meaning gives us rules of daily life;
 The anagogy shows us where we end our strife.

Church tradition/interpretation held equal authority with Bible

Developed discipline of *lectio divina*

Reformation Exegesis (1500s)

Renaissance led to Reformation

Luther and Calvin – the plain sense of Scripture instead of allegory

Sola scriptura – Scripture is its own best interpreter

Post-Reformation Exegesis (1650-1800)

Confessionalism – creedal Christianity

Spiritual offspring of Reformation: Pietism
Intellectual offspring of Renaissance: Rationalism

Modern Hermeneutics (1800-present)

Rationalism in philosophy led to Liberalism in theology
Historical-critical method developed as a scientific approach to
Scripture
Shift in centers of meaning, from author-centered to text-centered
to reader-centered; text remains primary focus among
Christians

Today's Criticisms

We all participate in biblical criticism
False assumptions rejected by Christians

Definition of biblical criticism: the scientific investigation and art
of analyzing documents of the Bible

Various forms of criticism we study today include:

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

Subsets of literary:

Rhetorical – art of composing discourse aimed at persuasion

Form – examination of texts with respect to recognizable forms or
patterns

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

Traditio-historical – identifying and describing the history of transmission
of a text

Redaction – contribution of final writer/editor who composed a literary
work based on its sources

Textual – seeks to establish the most accurate text possible, closest to
its original form

Grammatical – study of vocabulary, morphology, and syntax

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

New hermeneutic – language communicates unique truths in light of

hearer's own experience – this leads to Reader Response Criticism, in which reader decides the meaning of the passage

Subsets of human sciences:

Sociological – social (group), economic, and institutional studies

Anthropological – such as language, art, dress, dance, myth, legend

Psychological – study of individuals in Scripture

What have we learned from our history?

- Best to determine text's original intent and message before applying message to ourselves
- Look for the plain sense of Scripture
- Intellectual study must be weighed against God's revelation

Why do Christians still end up with different interpretations?

- Our own backgrounds
- Different views of the original historical and cultural contexts
- Different views on divine inspiration of Scripture:

Christ merely human	Christ both human & divine	Christ solely divine
/-----\		
Scripture merely human endeavor (Humanistic theory)	Scripture both human & divine (Dynamic theory)	Scripture solely divine inspiration (Dictation theory)

Our Article of Faith #4 on Scripture fits the Dynamic Theory.

When Christians disagree – ways to check solid Biblical **interpretation** on a broad basis:

- Study what others have said through the centuries
- Ask the believing community
- Is the interpretation workable and practical?
- What are its results?
- Be willing to allow unbelievers to critique it
- We may decide to "agree to disagree" if not a foundational issue

BIBLE STUDY AIDS

Bible Translations

Interlinear
Formally equivalent
Dynamically equivalent
Paraphrase
When to use each?

Bible Dictionaries/Encyclopedias

Provides information on historical-cultural questions
Usually covers only topics dealing with Bible
Uses

Cross References

Word Studies: Concordances

Importance of "Exhaustive" and matching particular Bible translation

Uses:

1. Helps in locating a passage if a key word or phrase can be remembered
2. systematizes words and key phrases so can do a word, theme, or topical search of all the biblical uses of the term
3. allows word study to determine meaning of key words in a particular passage
4. can help determine the various ranges of meaning for a particular term

Word Studies: Lexicons/word dictionaries

Steps to conduct a word study if a lexicon is available:

1. Identify the significant words in your passage
 - a. Determine the number code in the concordance for each key word from your passage you are studying
 - b. look up the original Greek or Hebrew word that corresponds with the English word
 - c. Look up that Greek/Hebrew word and number in a lexicon or expository dictionary, then determine the following:
2. Using both concordance and lexicon, determine the range of meanings

- a. Determine the distribution of the word
- b. Establish key usages, ones that are clear and easy to understand
3. Determine the word's meaning in the passage itself Which meaning fits best here? Be sure to check broader context of author's use, etc., to verify choice or to clarify meaning if it is still not clear
4. Finally, check your conclusions with commentaries
5. Summarize your findings for yourself and others

Commentaries

Secondary sources of information – will be subjective

Bible Atlases

Especially helpful with narratives and Biblical history

BASIC STEPS FOR STUDYING THE BIBLE

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

PRAYER

Always begin and end your time of study with prayer!

COMMENCEMENT AND OBSERVATION

- Confirm your pericope (literary unit)
- Read and compare
- Ask questions of the text

INTERPRETATION

HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Why is this important to a correct interpretation of Scripture?

1. Perspective of the original communicators:

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

a. If more than one interpretation possible, ask which fits the historical-cultural context best.

b. Our life settings differ from the Bible:

Sitz im Leben – life situation

Sitz im Glauben – faith situation

2. Mindset of the original communicators and audience:

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

3. Contextualization

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

Hence, we need to know both the biblical and the modern world in order to accomplish this.

WARNING: Don't allow the historical/cultural background to distort a clear message.

A basic historical-cultural study includes:

1. Determine the general historical-cultural context of the time

a. historical situation

b. culture

This includes: worldview, societal structures, physical features, economic structures, political climate, behavior patterns/customs, religious structures

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

a. writer

b. audience

c. date of writing

3. Determine historical-cultural issues of the passage itself

use the above to help determine the purpose of the book (below)

CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

The most important context of a passage is the material that comes immediately before and after the passage.

Context is important because:

1. otherwise we violate writer's/speaker's flow of thought
2. context provides most accurate and likely meaning
3. most biblical books written as complete documents meant to be read as a unit

Three principles

1. Each statement must be understood according to its natural meaning
Context is the single most important aspect in all exegesis!
2. A text without a context may be a pretext
3. The smaller the passage being studied, the greater the chance of error

The Process:

1. Determine purpose of the book first
 - may be determined from its historical-cultural background
 - general contents, dominant themes can help
 - explicit statements, repetition of phrases, exhortations indicate what is important to the author
2. Determine the context of the passage:
The Circles of Contextual Study
 - a. immediate passages
theme and plan
 - b. entire book
 - c. parallel passages (real parallels)
 - i. by same author
 - ii. by different author but same testament
 - iii. entire Bible
3. Final conclusion – how does its context shed light on the meaning of the passage?

LITERARY ANALYSIS: MAIN GENRES OF THE BIBLE

Old Testament:

Historical Narratives

Background

Intent is to reveal God's redemptive actions in human history

Principles of Interpretation

Place the narrative in its general historical setting

Look for facts about people and events / themes / values

Look at storyline: characters / general plot

Determine the crisis or major issue, then how God and humans respond

Seek analogies but be careful about establishing doctrine, moral teachings, or principles for living

Law

Background

Two general categories:

1. Casuistic – "if this, then that"

2. Apodictic – absolute command

Three kinds of OT laws:

Moral – interpersonal relationships

Judicial or civil – Israel's civil government

Ceremonial – ritual observances (often in Temple)

Principles of Interpretation

Discern its relationship with the New Testament:

Equal – more strict – no longer valid – timeless principle

Covenant relationship

Poetry

Background

Different literary forms, including lament, thanksgiving, praise, royal, liturgical, wisdom

Principles of Interpretation

Look at poem as complete unit, sometimes with an historical context

Understand Hebrew poetic structure:

Rhythm

Word pairs

Parallelism - Synonymous, Antithetic, Synthetic

Application best when conforms to original purpose,
occasion, and speaker(s)

Psalms represent people speaking to God

--Understanding imprecatory psalms

Wisdom

Background

Roots in creation theology

Found throughout Scripture but specifically in

Proverbs, Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes,

Gospels, James

Two general categories:

1. Higher/speculative – universal, difficult issues
2. practical/proverbial – daily common sense on living rightly

Principles of Interpretation

Based upon type of wisdom literature, be it proverbs,
instruction, story, speech, etc.

Must take into account the entire counsel of Scripture

Prophecy

Background

Two categories:

Foretelling about the future

Forthtelling = message for own day (more
common)

Conditional vs. unconditional prophecy

Principles of Interpretation

Historical setting of book helps guide exegesis

Clarity of the prophecy is important

Various forms of prophecy used in OT

Allow other Bible passages to interpret prophecy

Allow for multiple fulfillments if specified

Seek major points and themes rather than symbolic
details

New Testament:

Theological Biographies - Gospels

Background

Theological biographies

Principles of Interpretation

Understand variations among the four; also similarities among the three Synoptics

Look for major themes, presentation of Jesus and kingdom

Be aware of other forms of literature in the accounts

Historical-cultural issues behind each gospel

We need to think both vertically (within a gospel) as well as horizontally (comparison with the other gospels)

Historical Narratives - Acts

Background

Theological history

Principles of Interpretation

Discern which aspects are normative for all Christianity and which were merely descriptive of the early church:

incidental

descriptive

prescriptive

Epistles - Letters

Background

Written for specific occasions and reasons, to specific people

Principles of Interpretation

Historical background, audience, purpose extremely important to study

Seek to understand the issues within their cultural context

Discern which teachings/principles carry forward to us

Look for patterns within letters

Be aware we may not always understand their intent

Combination - Revelation

Background

Epistle, prophecy, and apocalyptic

Characteristics of apocalyptic:

- hero of the past on a journey
- visions very strange and pessimistic about human intervention
- cataclysmic end to present world
- writer uses pseudonym
- re-writes history as prophecy
- supports remnant of believers

Differences between prophecy and apocalyptic:

- spoken vs. written
- given in name of prophet vs. written under pseudonym
- brief oracles vs. long, often cyclical writing
- less vs. more symbolism and dualism
- castigation vs. encouragement
- optimistic vs. pessimistic about human change
- little vs. much about end-times

Principles of Interpretation

Be cautious regarding future events

Allow Revelation to explain its own symbolism

For unexplained symbols, look for themes and concepts

Be aware may not present specific chronological sequence

Be ready for Jesus today, even if He should tarry another millennium

SPECIAL LITERARY FORMS

1. Literary forms in a passage

- Kinds: dialogue, monologue, narrative, instruction, exhortation, song are examples
- What is the form's intent?

2. Short Figures of Speech

a. Common figures of speech

simile: comparison that uses words "like, as, such as."

Metaphor: direct comparison of two items

Personification: ascribing human characteristics to nonhuman

Hyperbole: deliberate exaggeration

metonymy

merismus

rhetorical question

irony

synecdoche

symbols

b. How do we go about interpreting figures of speech?

i. We identify words used figuratively

ii. We identify the kind of figure of speech

iii. We interpret the meaning of the figure by looking first at its literal meaning, then determining its figurative meaning

iv. We then see how our understanding of the figurative word affects the meaning of the entire passage. Why did the author use this particular figure of speech here?

3. Hebrew poetic forms:

a. Rhythm

b. Word pairs

c. Parallelism:

Synonymous – similar ideas in parallel lines

When Israel went forth from Egypt,

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

He has not dealt with us according to our sins,

Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 103:10

Antithetic – opposite ideas in parallel lines

The wicked borrows, and cannot pay back,

But the righteous is generous and gives;

For those blessed by the Lord shall possess the land,

But those cursed by Him shall be cut off. Ps 37:21-22

Many are the pangs of the wicked;
But steadfast love surrounds him who trusts in the Lord. Ps 32:10
Synthetic – continuation/expansion of thought in parallel
lines

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

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

Also: chiasm – elements in parallel lines are reversed in order
His mischief returns upon his own head,
And on his own pate his violence descends. Ps 7:16

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

Ellipsis – element missing in parallel line
What ails you, O sea, that you flee?
O Jordan, that you turn back? Ps 114:5

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

Other longer forms:

4. Proverbs – a concise, memorable statement of truth learned over
extended human experience.

- a. based upon creation wisdom/general revelation
- b. parallelism
all three, but antithetic parallelism is frequently employed
- c. literary types (forms) of proverbs
 - descriptive: simple observation
 - comparative
 - numerical
 - prescriptive: admonishing particular behavior
 - positive command
 - negative prohibition
 - others

d. how to interpret them:

- determine subject matter and type of proverb
- classify parallelism if present
- identify any short figures of speech
- check the immediate context
- briefly state the meaning of the proverb

Let's try these examples:

Proverb
Chapter 19

subject matter and type	parallelism	figures of speech	context?	meaning
12				
13				
14				

5. Parables

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

b. basic principles for interpreting them:

- i. the meaning will focus on one central thrust or unifying principle.
- ii. interpret in light of what the earthly details would have originally meant and the purpose for the parable
- iii. don't over apply the minor details as they may only be "local color"
- iv. don't insist on carrying the same spiritual meaning from one parable to the next
- v. watch for the surprise element to help clarify the main meaning
- vi. interpret parables in light of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God

- c. Simplified procedure for interpreting parables:
- i. What is the purpose/intended meaning for this parable?
 - Is it stated explicitly in the introduction?
 - Is there an application in the conclusion of the parable or in an editorial comment?
 - Is it clarified by its surrounding context?
 - ii. What central truth was illustrated by the facts (and surprises) of the parable for the original audience?

6. Allegories

- a. definition: the expression by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence.
- b. comparison with parables: true allegory is a story where each element in the story means something quite foreign to the story itself. Much more detailed in parallel points of comparison than parables or typology.
- c. three types of theological allegory:
 - i. rhetorical – found in Bible
 - ii. hermeneutical – one type of interpretation of Bible material (not found in Bible)
 - iii. homiletical – used in preaching to portray spiritual insights not directly stated in Bible

7. Typologies

- a. a technique of a later writer who “mines” prior Scripture for earlier similarities to God’s present activities
- b. Definition: a type is a representative relationship which certain persons, events, and institutions bear to corresponding persons, events, and institutions occurring at a later time in salvation history. The prefigurement is called the type while the fulfillment is called the antitype.
- c. types and antitypes within OT, between OT and NT, between Bible and future events. These can consist of institutions, offices, or persons.

- d. rules of interpretation:
 - i. find historical correspondence of type and antitype
 - ii. study areas of both correspondence and difference
 - iii. avoid establishing doctrine on this literary form
 - iv. seek types only where the context (Scripture itself) specifically allows them
 - v. allow this form to speak of the essential unity of Scripture and of the faithfulness of God to every generation

LEXICAL-SYNTACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

1. Important lexical concepts:

- a. Words have a range of meanings.
- b. Word meanings overlap.
- c. Word meanings change over time.
- d. Words have connotative and denotative meanings.

2. Steps for performing word studies:

- a. Select words that require detailed analysis.

These may include: words with a broad range of meaning, that are difficult to understand, rare, figurative, or central/critical to the theology or interpretation of the passage

- b. Determine the range of meaning for the word.
- c. Select the meaning that best fits the context:
 - i. Look for definitions or explanatory phrases
 - ii. Immediate context of sentence itself is vital
 - iii. Look at any parallelism or word pairs

- iv. Determine if the word is being used as a figure of speech
- v. Study parallel passages via Circles of Context

d. Use common sense.

- i. Simplest meaning
- ii. One fixed meaning
- iii. Rare word usage
- iv. Repeated word in same passage
- v. The natural meaning is the most likely meaning

3. Grammatical relationships

The specific meaning of a word can only be determined within a larger unit of thought.

a. Two aspects of grammar:

- 1. morphology
- 2. syntax

b. Translations always have to deal with the nuances of the original language.

4. Steps for discovering structural relationships:

a. Look at the flow of thought within your passage

- i. paragraphs develop a unit of thought
- ii. look for the main statement within each sentence

b. Look at the verbs being used

- i. Mood
- ii. Aspect
- iii. Time
- iv. Voice

c. Connectives

d. Adjectives and adverbs

e. Pronouns

Now that you have this background, you can approach the text literarily from larger to smaller units, determining genre/forms, syntax, and word meaning.

THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I. Worldviews and Theologies

II. Kinds of Theology

1. Biblical Theology

- a. Each book emerges from the historical context of its time
- b. Written with specific reasons/purposes in mind
- c. Diversity of individual contributions while unity of total message

2. Systematic Theology

- a. Organizes and systematizes statements on doctrines
- b. our pre-understandings affect us
- c. we give different weight to different texts

3. Historical Theology

- a. development of beliefs and doctrines through church history
- b. influenced by events and people of the time; expresses their concerns

III. Guidelines for Legitimate Theology

- 1. Valid theologizing must follow the sound exegesis of the appropriate biblical texts.
- 2. Our theology must be based on the Bible's total teaching, not on selected or isolated texts.
- 3. Legitimate theology considers and expresses the Bible's own emphases.
- 4. Theologians should go beyond just an intellectual knowledge of their theology.

5. Theology must be centered in what God has revealed, not in what people have devised by their own thinking.

6. Modern theologians cannot do their work in an historical vacuum. We need the wisdom of past theologians!

IV. Theological Analysis

1. Before beginning your own theological analysis, think about your pre-understandings of the doctrine/issue presented in your passage. This will help you be aware of your biases.

2. Analyze the passage to determine its theological content and meaning (see IBS for details).

3. Consider how it fits within the greater message of the Bible. This leads us to →

BIBLICAL CONSIDERATIONS

What is needed?

- Familiarity with all of Scripture
- A good cross-reference

1. Analyze the passage's relation to the rest of Scripture

- How does this passage fit into the larger context of the Bible?
- How does it compare to other Scriptures addressing the same issues?
- How does this passage advance previous biblical presentations on its issues? Does it specifically use other Scriptures?
- Where else is this passage used in later Scripture?

2. Analyze the passage's importance for understanding Scripture.

- Does the passage affect the meaning or value of other Scriptures?
- What would be lost or incomplete in the Biblical message if it were absent?

Allow the passage to speak to your pre-understandings and question your thinking. Now compare your interpretation of the passage to that of other authorities→

SECONDARY LITERATURE

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

2. When there is controversy on how to interpret the passage:
 - a. Make a list of the major problem(s)
 - b. Determine the alternative answers given in the secondary sources
 - i. list evidence for and against each possible answer
 - ii. draw upon your own prior studies for data
 - iii. consult other sources for additional arguments and data

 - c. Determine your best solution, asking:
 - i. What evidence seems most reasonable to you?
 - ii. What solution seems to involve the fewest problems?

FINAL STEP IN INTERPRETATION

State in your own words your best assessment of what message the original author intended to convey to his/her original audience through this biblical communication.

BASIC STEPS FOR STUDYING THE BIBLE

- Observation – looking at the facts contained in the passage and what is happening.
- Interpretation – studying the text to determine the author's meaning and purpose. Includes analysis in these areas:
 - Historical-cultural
 - Contextual
 - Literary: genre/forms, syntax, word studies

Theological
Biblical
(Secondary Source studies, if available)
Summary of historical meaning

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

APPLICATION

HOW TO DETERMINE LEGITIMATE CORPORATE APPLICATION

Remember the difference between personal and corporate application!

1. Does the text present a broad theological or moral principle or does it give a specific manifestation of such a principle, which Scripture elsewhere embodies in one or more different forms?
2. Does the larger context of the book in which the passage appears limit the application in any way or does it promote a more universal application?
3. Does subsequent revelation limit the application of a particular passage even if the book in which it appears does not?
4. Is the specific teaching “contradicted” elsewhere in ways that show it was limited to exceptional situations?
5. Are cultural conditions mentioned in Scripture or assumed by its authors that make it inappropriate to apply a given text in the same way?
6. Is the particular cultural form expressed in the biblical text present today, and if so, does it have the same significance as it did then?
7. Is the rationale for the application rooted in a creation ordinance, in the character of God, or in part of his redemptive plan for humanity?
8. Is the command or application at variance with standard cultural norms of the day? If so, it likely indicates something we should consider for our culture as well.

9. Does the passage contain an explicit or implicit condition that limits its application?

FURTHER STUDY OF BIBLICAL DIRECTIVES

Steps for application today:

1. Specify the directive and determine if this was meant to be only a one-time directive.
2. If not a one-time directive, specify and study the principle behind the directive. Then determine if the principle was meant only for that time and culture or if it is a timeless principle. (Be aware: there may be more than one principle in a passage)
3. If the principle is meant for all Christians through the ages, then study the cultural equivalent today that would express the timeless principle.
4. Be aware that this is a subjective undertaking. It is important to discuss your conclusions with other authority figures before presenting any new application to your congregation!

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR DETERMINING LEGITIMATE CORPORATE APPLICATION OF ANY SCRIPTURE

1. List the life issues of the passage
 - a. Which issues are central?
 - b. Which issues are clearly specified?
 - c. Which issues are still important for your audience today?
2. Clarify the nature of the application in the passage itself
 - a. Is the passage descriptive or prescriptive?
 - b. Does the passage deal with belief or with practice?
3. Clarify the audience to whom the author was speaking
 - a. Is the audience a single person or a group?
 - b. What kinds of individuals or groups are being addressed?
4. Decide on your application based upon:
 - its clear, central presence in the passage and a sound application for today's culture

- keep your application simple (not highly detailed) and truthful to the text (differentiating for your audience between possible and definite insights)
- be clear in your own mind as to your aim: is it to comfort the afflicted or afflict the comfortable?
- be sure to pray about your audience in order to communicate a message valuable to your audience

ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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

THE CRUCIAL ELEMENTS

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

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

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANON

I. Original meaning of the word

II. Old Testament Canon

1. Old Testament – Hebrew

- Oral transmission
- Written forms developed first of Law, then Prophets, then Writings
- Acceptance over time of canonicity
 - Law canonized by Ezra's time
 - Prophets canonized before Septuagint
 - Writings canonized last
 - All considered canon by Jews of Jesus' time
- Hebrew lettering
- No original manuscripts
- Order of books in OT not canonical

2. Old Testament – Greek translation

- Septuagint (LXX)
- History and impact on Christianity
 - Completed by 100 BC
 - Main translation for early church
- Discrepancies between Greek and Hebrew versions
- No original manuscripts

Oldest copies of full Greek OT text from approx. A.D. 400, Hebrew from 900, segments and individual books from time of Christ (DSS)

III. New Testament Canon

1. Background information:

- Jesus' Bible was the Jewish Scriptures
- New "Testament" meaning
- ordering of books for practical reasons

2. Though NT letters written, oral transmission of Gospel material at first

3. Reasons for writing down the Gospels

4. Written NT developed over time; all texts were in Greek

5. Criteria for canonicity:

- apostolicity
- catholicity
- orthodoxy

6. God's part in the process

7. Reasons for establishing a canon

- Heresies
- Which books authoritative?

8. Historical process of canonization

- Lists appeared during 2nd century
- Disputed books
- List finalized by end of 4th century
- Later church history – transmission in West from A.D. 400 via Latin Vulgate

9. The text:

- As with OT, no original manuscripts
Fragments from about A.D. 125, full Greek Bibles from
4th century
- Greek lettering
- Transmission issues
- Later additions

Canon of the Old Testament

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

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

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

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Prepared by Dr. Mary Spaulding

BASIC STEPS FOR INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

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

PRAYER

Always begin and end your time of study in prayer.

OBSERVATION

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

INTERPRETATION

HISTORICAL-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

1. Determine the general historical and cultural milieu of the writer and his audience.
 - a. Determine the general historical circumstances of the book.
What was taking place at this time in history in this part of the world?

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

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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

3. Conclusion: How does the context of the passage shed light on its meaning?

LITERARY ANALYSIS

1. Identify the general literary genre of the book and literary form(s) of the specific passage (dialogue, monologue, narrative, etc.).

2. Identify the natural divisions of the passage. This usually involves developing an outline for the passage.

3. Identify important connecting words between paragraphs and sentences; show how they aid in understanding the author's progression of thought.

4. Analyze the syntax (sentence structure) to show how it contributes to the understanding of the passage.

- a. Study the structure of each sentence in the text – the main statement (subject, verb, direct object) and subordinate clauses.
- b. Analyze important verbs in the text as to their contextual meaning.
- c. Look at connectives, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns for any additional light they might shed on the meaning of each sentence.
- d. Identify the following specific literary forms, if present: similes, metaphors, personifications, symbols, proverbs, etc.

5. Determine what the individual words mean.

- a. Select key words for study.
- b. Identify the multiple meanings a word possessed in its time and culture.
- c. Study which meanings this particular author used in his writings.
- d. Determine the single meaning intended by the author in this particular context.

6. Conclusion: How does the literary analysis shed light on the meaning of your passage?

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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

BIBLICAL ANALYSIS

1. Analyze the passage's relation to the rest of Scripture.
 - a. How is this passage (and its issues/message) similar or dissimilar to other passages in Scripture?
 - b. Does this passage use other passages of Scripture and how does it do so?
 - c. Where else in Scripture is this passage used and how is it used there?

2. Analyze the passage's importance for understanding Scripture.
 - a. Does the passage affect the meaning or value of other passages in ways that may cross literary or historical lines?
 - b. What would be lost or incomplete in the general biblical message if this passage did not exist?

SECONDARY LITERATURE

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

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

SUMMARIZE THE ORIGINAL MESSAGE

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

APPLICATION

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

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

Biblical Interpretation

Class Exercises

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION EXERCISES

Prepared by Dr. Mary Spaulding

THE GREATEST STORY NEVER READ Biblical literacy in the church

Please place these Bible events/people in chronological order:

The death of Christ _____
Abraham _____
Pentecost _____
Old Testament prophets _____

Exile of Judah to Babylon _____
Isaac's birth _____
Saul's death _____
Moses in Egypt _____

Solomon _____
Moses _____
Adam _____
David _____

Paul's life:
First missionary journey _____
Prisoner in Rome _____
The road to Damascus _____
The stoning of Stephen _____

Please locate the following events in their respective books of the Bible:
Paul's travels and missionary trips are found in _____
The Christmas story is found in (name either book) _____
The OT Passover event is found in _____
The story of Jacob and his sons is found in _____
The Sermon on the Mount is found in _____
Washing the disciples' feet by Jesus is found in _____

HOW OUR PERSPECTIVES AFFECT OUR INTERPRETATIONS

(from the Nazarene Clergy Development module)

Exercise 1

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

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

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

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

Exercise 2

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

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

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

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

FORMS OF JEWISH INTERPRETATION

Choose from the following:

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

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

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

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

1. Compare Ex 21: 2 with Dt 15: 12-18.
 - How are they different and how are they similar?
 - How is Dt expanding upon the information in Exodus?
 - Which kind of exegesis are we witnessing here? _____ -

2. Read Rom 3: 9-18. The following OT references are found in this text: v. 10 = Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3 /v. 13 = Ps 5:9; 140:3 /v. 14 = Ps 10:7 / v. 15 = Isa. 59:7f / v. 18 = Ps 36:1
 - What is Paul doing with these OT references?
Which kind of exegesis are we witnessing here?

3. Read Jn 12: 37-41.
 - How does the author use the two quotes from Isaiah to shed light on Jesus and those responding to him?
 - Which kind of exegesis are we witnessing here?

4. Read Gal 4: 22-31.
 - How is Paul using the Genesis story of Sarah and Hagar?
 - What does Hagar represent? What does Sarah represent?
 - Which kind of exegesis are we witnessing here?

CONCORDANCE AND WORD DICTIONARY WORKSHEET

(If books are not available, use copies of resources provided by your instructor)

I. The Old Testament

1. Look up Ecclesiastes 1:2. Note the word "meaningless." (NIV)
2. Look up that word in your concordance and note its number here: _____
3. Look up the word by its number at the back of the concordance. What other English words are listed there? This is your range of meaning for that Hebrew word. List some of the words here:
4. Copy the transliterated word here: _____
5. Is the number Strong's or G-K? Depending upon the word dictionary you will be using, look up the proper reference number for it and note it here: _____
6. Look up that number or the transliterated word in the back of your word dictionary and note the page numbers associated with the word here: _____
7. Now look at those pages. What additional information do you find in the dictionary on that word, especially with regards to Ecclesiastes? (summarize below)

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

Which terms would clearly not fit the context?

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

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

II. New Testament

1. Look up Romans 14:15. Note the word "destroy." (NIV)
2. Look up that word in your concordance and note its number here: _____
3. Look up the word by its number at the back of the concordance. What other English words are listed there? This is your range of meaning for that Greek word. List some of the words here:

4. Copy the transliterated word here: _____
5. Is the number Strong's or G-K? If Strong's, look up the G-K number in the back of the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (NIDNTT) and note it here: _____
6. Look up the word by its G-K number in NIDNTT and look at those pages. What additional information do you find in the dictionary on that word? (summarize it below)
7. Now look back at the passage in the New Testament. Why did the translator choose the particular English word that he did for that passage? Could any of the other terms have also fit the context? If so, which ones?

Which terms would clearly not fit the context?

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

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

OUR BIBLE AIDS

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

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

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

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

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

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

1. A Christian author was discussing the way to discover God's will for one's life and made the point that inner peace was an important indicator. The sole verse he used to anchor his argument was Colossians 3:15 ("Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts"). Would you agree with his use of this verse to make this point? Why or why not?

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

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

Consider putting out what you're feeling in simple honesty. As Jesus put it, "Let your yes be a clear yes, and your no, no." Anything else spells trouble."

Do you agree with this author's use of Scripture (paraphrase of Mt 5:33-37) to make this point? Why or why not?

3. A Christian man lost his job during the economic recession of 1974-5. He and his wife interpreted Romans 8:28 ("All things work together for good...") to mean that he lost his job in order that God might give him a better-paying one. Consequently, he turned down several lower- or equal-paying job opportunities and remained on unemployment for over two years before returning to work. Do you agree with his way of interpreting this verse? Why or why not?

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

CAN YOU GUESS THE GENRE?

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

Old Testament

Prophecy

Wisdom

Narrative

Law

Poetry

New Testament

Letter (epistle)

Gospel

Revelation

Theological History (Acts)

1. Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. _____
2. Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, so that the Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. _____

3. An arrogant man stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the Lord will prosper. _____
4. And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. _____
5. Concerning all the animals which divide the hoof, but do not make a split hoof, or which do not chew cud, they are unclean to you: whoever touches them becomes unclean. _____
6. And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war... _____
7. I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. _____
8. After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. _____
9. For thus says the Lord, "The whole land shall be a desolation, yet I will not execute a complete destruction." _____

PSALM FORMS

Psalms follow patterns that can be classified as follows:

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

songs of thanksgiving for something God has done

hymns of praise, praising God for who He is

royal psalms about the king

liturgies used in worship

wisdom psalms

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

Ps 107:1-9

Ps 13

Ps 1

Ps 2

Ps 30

Ps 137

Ps 136

Ps 104

PROPHETIC FORMS

Please classify the following verses according to their prophetic form.

Forms:

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

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

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

FIGURES OF SPEECH #1

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

Simile

Metaphor

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

Not so the wicked!

They are like chaff

That the wind blows away. Ps. 1:4 _____

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FIGURES OF SPEECH #2

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

Hyperbole

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

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

Personification

Irony

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

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

You gladly put up with fools since **you are so wise!** 1 Cor 11:19

Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed, each of whom **could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.** Judges 20:16

Through patience a ruler can be persuaded,
And **a gentle tongue** can break a bone. Prov 25:15

So he (Potiphar) left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him there he did not concern himself with anything except **the bread** which he ate. Ex 39:6

The **mountains** and the **hills** will break forth **into shouts of joy** before you, and all the **trees of the field will clap their hands.** Is 55:12

For **their feet** rush into sin,
They are swift to shed blood. Prov 1:16

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. John 19:14

So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how **the whole world** has gone after him!" John 12:19

I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and **no sword** will pass through your land. Lev 26:6

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

I have poured out **my soul** before the LORD. 1 Sam 1:15

And it came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; **either he is occupied or gone**

aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened." 1 Kings 18:27 _____

They (the Jews) **have Moses and the Prophets...** Lk 16:29

...Our brothers have made our hearts melt, saying, "The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and **fortified to heaven...**" Dt. 1:28 _____

The **land mourns**...the oil languishes. Joel 1:10 _____

Cursed is the one who trusts in **man**,
Who depends on **flesh** for his strength
And whose heart turns away from the LORD. Jer 17:5
Man: _____ Flesh: _____

PARALLELISM PRACTICE

Choose the kind of parallelism seen in each verse from the following list:

Synonymous

Antithetic

Synthetic

Chiasm

The memory of the righteous is blessed,
But the name of the wicked will rot. Prov 10:7

O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD,
Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.
Ps 95:1 _____

We will not conceal them from their children,
But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. 78:4

But my people did not listen to My voice;
And Israel did not obey Me. Ps 81:11 _____

When God heard, He was filled with wrath,
And greatly abhorred Israel;
So that He abandoned the dwelling place at Shiloh. 78:59-60

For they provoked Him with their high places,
And aroused His jealousy with their graven images. 78:58

For He has satisfied the thirsty soul,
And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good. 107:9
_____ and _____

The wages of the righteous is life,
The income of the wicked, punishment.
Prov 10:16 _____

Poor is he who works with a negligent hand,
But the hand of the diligent makes rich. Prov 10:4
_____ and _____

O sing to the Lord a new song,
For He has done wonderful things. Ps 98:1 _____

GOD'S PROMISES?

Read the following passage from *The Power of a Praying Wife* by Stormie Omartian, Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1997, p. 89:

When you have the fear of the Lord, God promises to:
deliver you from your enemies (2 Kings 17:39),
protect you from evil (Proverbs 16:6),
keep His eye on you (Psalm 33:18),
show you His mercy (Luke 1:50),
give you riches and honor (Proverbs 22:4),
supply everything you need (Psalm 34:9),
reveal all you need to know (Psalm 25:14),
bless your children and grandchildren (Psalm 103:17),
give you confidence (Proverbs 14:26),

a satisfying life (Proverbs 19:23),
longevity (Proverbs 10:27),
and the desires of your heart (Psalm 145:19).
What more could you ask?

What are the issues and problems associated with Omartian's
statements?

A man had a son, 25 years old, who was obviously far away from God in his walk. The man was convinced that it was only a matter of time before his son would return to the Lord, because he said, "God promises all Christians that if we raise our children according to His admonitions, they will return to Him. It says right in Proverbs: 'Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.'" So this father was sitting back, waiting until God fulfilled His promise and returned the son to a Christian walk. Is this man correct in his understanding of the proverb?

EXERCISE ON PROVERBS

After each of the following proverbs, designate which kind of proverb it is:

Descriptive: then specify further if antithetic, comparative, numerical

Prescriptive: then specify further whether positive command or negative prohibition

A false witness will perish,
But the man who listens to the truth will speak forever.

Like a dog that returns to its vomit
Is a fool who repeats his folly. _____

Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

The rich and poor have a common bond,
The Lord is the maker of them all. _____

Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. _____

Better is the poor who walks in integrity,
Than he who is crooked though he be rich.

There are three things which are stately in their march,
Even four which are stately when they walk;

Like the legs which hang down from the lame,
So is a proverb in the mouth of a fool. _____

A wise son makes a father glad,
But a foolish son is a grief to his mother. _____

Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise,
And apply your mind to my knowledge; _____

Do not lust in your heart after her beauty
Or let her captivate you with her eyes... _____

There are six things the Lord hates,
Seven that are detestable to him.... _____

PARABLES

1. Determine the purpose of the parable:
 - a. Check the immediate surrounding context of the passage for information on the reason for the parable. Describe below.
 - b. State any explicit references to the purpose of the parable. Is the explanation given by Jesus or by the author?
 - c. What do you determine is the general purpose of the parable?

2. Are there any historical or cultural details that would help in our understanding? List them here and research them if possible.

3. Facts: use the following table to determine the main focus and which details are important to that focus vs. which details are only "local color."

<u>Physical story</u>	<u>Spiritual counterpart</u>
<p><u>Physical facts:</u> List characters and the facts indicated if they are about each one.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Etc. 	<p><u>Spiritual facts:</u> List the corresponding spiritual facts if they are identifiable.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Etc.
<p><u>Physical principle:</u> State basic principle of facts above.</p>	<p><u>Spiritual principle:</u> State corresponding spiritual principle.</p>

4. Is there a surprise element in this parable? How does it help convey the main point?

5. Study the points of view of each main character. What lesson is illustrated by each one that fits with the central thrust or focus of the parable?

6. Based on the spiritual principle/meaning of the parable, what lesson should we learn from the parable for today?

EXEGESIS OR EISEGESIS?

In John 15:1-11, Jesus speaks about the true vine. From this passage we can see that the following word pictures represent who?

True vine _____

Vinedresser _____

Branch bearing fruit _____

Branch not bearing fruit _____

What is the prerequisite for abiding in Jesus' love?

What is the result of abiding in Jesus? (see v. 5 and v. 11)

According to the following OT passages, what does the vine represent there?

Is 5:1-7, see especially v. 7

Jer 2:21

Ez 19:10-14

Hos 10:1

Ps 80:8-16

If this analogy is a clear understanding in the OT, this could indicate that in John, _____ is replacing _____ as the vine of God.

To verify this statement one might look in John for other instances of Jesus replacing or fulfilling Jewish institutions, practices, and/or Jewish people. What do you find in the following passages? What or who is replacing/fulfilling what or who?

2:18-22

6:31-35, 49-51

7:14, 37-39

8:12 (see below)

Further information about the Feast of Tabernacles is helpful here, in that a major ceremony took place during the yearly Feast, involving the high priest pouring a large amount of water on the altar in the temple.

There was also a strong emphasis on light through torch ceremonies at night during this Feast.

With this background information, do you feel that the True Vine analogy of Jesus replacing/fulfilling Israel fits well or does not fit with the rest of John?

A recent author has linked John's true vine with the church, that the vine is the church. What information from the passage itself supports this view and what information does not support this view?

How would you find other NT passages that talk about the word "vine"?

Is there any other reference(s) in John to vines that might support this view?

Is there any passage in the epistles of John that support this view?

Is there any passage in the NT that supports this view?

The True Vine passage in John is based upon an "I am" statement made by Jesus. Do any of the other "I am" statements made in John support a switch of the identity of the vine from that of Jesus to that of the church?

Bread of life 6:35

Light of the world 8:12

Gate or door 10:7

Good shepherd 10:11

Resurrection and life 11:25

The way, the truth, and the life 14:6

With this background information, do you feel that the association of the True Vine with the church is warranted?

Stating that Jesus is the True Vine is accurate _____ (exegesis or eisegesis).

Stating that the church is the True Vine is only _____ (exegesis or eisegesis).

SPECIAL LITERARY FORMS

(from Virkler, *Hermeneutics*, 208)

1. A hermeneutics textbook made the following points from its study of typology of the OT tabernacle: Linen means the Righteous One, Jesus. Brass/bronze is always a symbol of judgment. Silver is always the symbol of redemption. In the tabernacle the pure linen (hence, Jesus) was hung on the pillars of brass/bronze and was set in sockets of brass/bronze (judgment), but was held together with rods of silver hooks (redemption). Jesus could have come down from the cross, but He wouldn't. Our redemption held Him there (the silver hooks of redemption that held the linen to the brass/bronze). Is this valid typology? Why or why not?

2. A minister preached a message from Isaiah 18:1-7. He said that although the original intent was for Ethiopia, according to the "double fulfillment" theory of prophecy, it could also legitimately be applied to the United States of America. Some of his points were: (1) v. 1 applies to the United States since it is one of the few countries with a bird as its national symbol; (2) v. 2 describes the United States as a strong and mighty nation; (3) v. 3 refers to the raising of the American flag on the moon; and (4) v. 5 warns us that judgment is coming for the United States. Is this a legitimate use of the text? Why or why not?

DENOTATIONS AND CONNOTATIONS

Place "+" next to those words with a positive connotation and "-" next to those words with a negative connotation in today's culture.

<u>Hard</u>	<u>showing no fear</u>	<u>underweight</u>	<u>cautious</u>
Durable	foolhardy	slim	careful
Unforgiving	heroic	scrawny	indecisive
<u>Leisure</u>	<u>surplus</u>		
Idleness	excessive		
Relaxation	plenty		

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Please take the following biblical words and list them under the appropriate category.

Refuge, trappers, flourishing cedar, bulls, stronghold, dogs, arrows in the quiver, shield, chaff, rock, dust, fruitful vine, lions, shelter, shepherd, king, fortress, sheep, hiding place, a deer yearning for water, serpent.

GOD

ENEMIES

THE RIGHTEOUS

RANGE OF MEANING: Greek Word *Kosmos*

If we were to look this word up in a Greek dictionary of the New Testament, we would learn that the Greek word *kosmos* can be used in the following ways:

- 1. the created universe**
- 2. the physical world, the planet Earth**
- 3. the earth as opposed to the heavens – 2 different “locations”**
- 4. the world of people, mankind**
- 5. human existence, “life in the world”**
- 6. adornment, like jewelry, nice clothing, or makeup**
- 7. the place of earthly joys, material possessions, cares, sufferings**
- 8. all that is hostile to God, depraved, and lost in sin**
- 9. totality, sum total**

Here are examples of how the world *kosmos* is used in the New Testament.

1. God so loved the *kosmos* that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish. John 3:16
2. Do not love the *kosmos* or anything in the *kosmos*. If anyone loves the *kosmos*, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15
3. I came forth from the Father and have come into the *kosmos*; I am leaving the *kosmos* again, and going to the Father. John 16:28
4. Your beauty should not come from outward *kosmos*, such as braided hair... 1 Peter 3:3
5. ...those who use the things of the *kosmos*, as if not engrossed in them. 1 Cor 7:31

6. For we brought nothing into the *kosmos*, and we can take nothing out of it. 1 Tim 6:7
7. ...tongue also is a fire, a *kosmos* of evil among the parts of the body. James 3:6

Which of the eight definitions best explains how the word is used in each of the above verses?

How does your Bible translate kosmos in each of these verses?

Though usually a word's meaning will be used consistently throughout a passage, occasionally the immediate context of a word indicates more than one definition for that word in a passage. See, for instance, John chapter 17:

1. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the *kosmos* began. (v. 5)
2. I will remain in the *kosmos* no longer, but they are still in the *kosmos*. (v. 11)
3. I have given them your word and the *kosmos* has hated them, for they are not of the *kosmos* any more than I am of the *kosmos*. (v. 14, see also 16)
4. ...that they also may be in us so that the *kosmos* may believe that you have sent me. (v. 21)

Which of the eight definitions best explains how the word is used in each of these verses?

MAIN vs. SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

Identify the main verbs of the passages and their subjects. Identify the participles.

What is the relationship between the participles and the main verbs?

What is the most significant grammatical information in each passage and why?

Eph 5:18-21 (NASB), "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."

Matt 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Though we need to recognize main clauses, all parts of a sentence are important to its meaning.

Note Eph 4:11-13: "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ..."

If we remove the phrase "for the equipping of the saints," who is left to do the work of service?

Do you know churches that function as if that phrase is absent?

Who does God intend to do the works of service?

What is the role of the church leaders?

Is that happening in your church today?

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

General Categories of Theology

Scriptures
God (Trinity, the Father) – theology
Jesus – Christology
Holy Spirit – pneumatology
Angels – angelology
Satan and demons
Sin – hamartiology
time
Universe and all creation – cosmology
Humanity – anthropology
Salvation – soteriology
Sanctification
Church – ecclesiology
End times – eschatology

Terms used in Christology

Condescension
Incarnation
Humiliation
Resurrection
Ascension
Exaltation
Consummation at end

Procedure: Use the following steps for studying a doctrinal section within a book.

1. Determine the main *doctrinal* theme of this passage (think in theological terms).

2. Determine the general situation that gave rise to this doctrinal teaching or the setting in which it occurs. In other words, what historical-cultural circumstances are “driving” the theology?

3. Trace the substance and sequence of ideas within the passage about this doctrine.

List the facts about the main theme
in the order in which they occur

Label each fact with its
Doctrinal name

4. Discuss the significance of the facts and of the sequence of events or facts for this area of theology.

5. Discuss why this doctrinal material is included in the book at this particular point. What is the author’s purpose in presenting this doctrine here?

6. Develop an outline that shows how this doctrine is presented in this passage.

7. Does your study of the passage shed any new light on your understanding of the doctrine? If so, describe.

How our **THEOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS** can blind us to the text’s message!

Hebrews 10:26-27. “A person comes to you extremely depressed. A week ago she willfully and deliberately stole some merchandise from a local store and now on the basis of the above verses believes that there is no possibility of repentance and forgiveness. How should you respond?” This problem was answered by one commentary that the lady should have no fear because she is a Christian. Therefore she is already forgiven of her sins and will go to heaven despite new sins she might commit after her conversion to Christianity. The commentary stated that

because of such passages, the book of Hebrews must have been written to Jews who had refused Jesus altogether, not to Jewish Christians. Is this true?

First, who is the audience?

2:1, 3

3:1, 12

4:14

5:12-6:2 already have milk of gospel, you need to press on to the solid food of mature faith

6:9-12

10:19-25

10:32-36

12:22-24

ch. 13 usual Christian admonitions

Conclusion:

References to falling away from the faith:

2:1

3:12-14

6:4-6

10:26-27, 39

How? By continuing in sin. Are we to continue in sin as Christians?

Heb 6:4-6

10:26-27

12:1

Paul: Rom 6:1-2

Gal 5:13, 16 and especially 24

Col 3:3-10, especially 9 and 10

Other NT writers:

Jn 8:11 (go and sin no more)

1 Jn 2:1

3:4-6

1 Peter 1:15

Our systematic theology needs to be based on and not contradicting Biblical theology or we lose the foundation of our beliefs.

BIBLICAL ANALYSIS: NEW TESTAMENT ISSUES

(#1-3 from Virkler, *Hermeneutics*, pp. 156, 180, 230-31)

1. In Deut 19:21 (see also Exod 21:24) God's command is "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Jesus, claiming that he was fulfilling the law, said: "You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mt 5:38-9). How do you reconcile these two statements? What issues about progressive revelation does this raise? Also, how might the intended audience of each passage affect our understanding?

2. Romans 13:1-5 commands Christians to be obedient to their governmental authorities. This command has caused conflicts for Christians who have lived under governments such as in Nazi Germany and in some contemporary totalitarian regimes. What is the meaning of this text for Christians who encounter a government which commands them to act contrary to their consciences or to God's commands? What other passage(s) would be relevant to this issue? See, for example, Acts 5: 27-32.

3. The theology of grace and works. Some writers have suggested that there is an inconsistency between the doctrine of Paul (as found in Gal. 2:15-16; Rom. 3:20,28; Eph 2:8-9) and the doctrine of James (as found in James 1:22-25; 2:8, 14-17, 21-24). Do you believe these can be reconciled? If so, how would you reconcile them?

4. Compare the Parable of the Lost Sheep in its greater context in two of the gospels. Read Mt 18:1-14 and Lk 15:1-32. Then read the other parables/material around each of these passages. How is the Parable of the Lost Sheep used differently by each evangelist? How does the context of the other parables/material around this particular parable give you clues? How would the contexts affect how you would preach or teach each passage? **Important Hint:** note the different wording of the two parables, particularly Mt's description of the sheep as having "gone astray" vs. Lk's description of the sheep as "lost".

PRINCIPLE ANALYSIS

The Process:

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

Now use the above process with one of the following four passages as assigned in class:

Titus 3:12

2 Cor 13:12

Phil 4:6

Gal 5:2

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION FINAL EXAM STUDY GUIDE

- Be able to define and list in proper order: observation, interpretation, and application, and why that order is important to us.
- Be able to articulate why it is important that we analyze a passage as to its original meaning before applying it to ourselves today.
- Be able to recognize legitimate keys to interpreting Scripture.
- Be able to describe the circles of context for a particular passage.
- Know what to look for in order to determine a writer's purpose in writing a book.
- Know the single most important element in determining the proper interpretation of a passage.
- Be able to recognize the various gaps or blocks that prevent us from spontaneously understanding the original meaning of a text.
- Understand that we can never read a passage of Scripture from a totally unbiased and objective viewpoint.
- Understand why studying the history of biblical interpretation is helpful to us today.
- Know the basic historical movements in scriptural interpretation.
- Be able to articulate how Protestants view Scripture today with regard to its plain sense and meaning.
- Know the meaning of each type of analysis we have studied in class (historical-cultural, contextual, literary, lexical-syntactical, theological, biblical)
- Know the main genres of the Bible, their definitions, and important issues in interpreting those genres.
- Be able to classify specific passages of the Bible as to genre, form, parallelism (synonymous, antithetic, synthetic, chiasm), and proverbial (descriptive, prescriptive, etc.) categories. This includes prophecy, psalm, proverb, and law forms.
- Be able to recognize simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole.
- Understand the definition and purpose of a proverb and the dangers associated with proverbs if they are understood as God's direct promises to us.
- Be able to recognize a parable and understand how to determine the specific symbols being used and its overall intended meaning.
- Understand the basic differences between prophecy and apocalyptic literature.
- Understand the steps in determining the application of a biblical command (such as from Paul) to our culture today.
- Know the general use and value of concordances, Bible dictionaries, word dictionaries, atlases, and commentaries.
- Know that we have no original manuscripts of the Bible in our possession today.
- Know the original languages in which the Old and New Testaments were written, including the Septuagint.