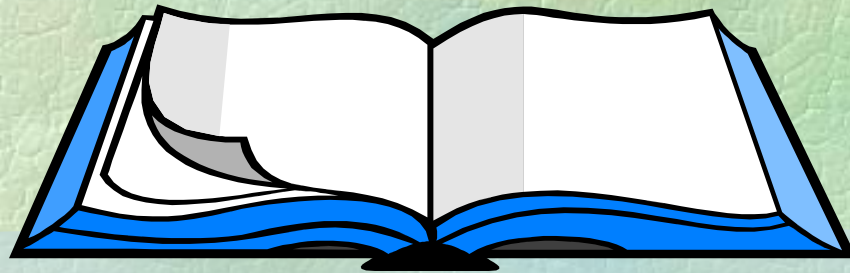


How To Read The Bible



For All Its Worth!

Goals For This Class

- To give a basic approach to understanding the biblical text
- To examine historical methods of interpretation
- To consider other methods of interpretation
- To promote unity of shared understanding
- To relate elders' views on interpretation

Not Goals For This Class

- To ensure everybody believes what I do
- To ensure everybody believes the same thing
- To debate controversial passages of scripture
- To negate or endorse any particular interpretative approach
- To confuse, frustrate, or agitate truthseekers

Biblical Interpretation:

Why and How?

Biblical Interpretation:

The process of understanding the Bible so as to be able to apply it in our lives in a manner pleasing to God.

Simplistic Approach To Biblical Interpretation

- It says what it means
- It means what it says

Arguments Against Interpretation

- No need - meaning of text is plain
- Requires professional scholars
- Takes something clear and clouds it up
- Produces unique or “far out” explanations
- Why not just read the text and follow it?
- Bible says not to interpret God’s word

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

II Peter 1:20-21 (NIV)

Arguments For Interpretation

- Reveals the “plain meaning of the text”
- Allows for the use of good common sense
- We really have no choice but to interpret

The Need For Interpretation

- The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”
- Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.
- “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?”

Acts 8:28-40 (NIV)

Two Reasons We Can't Just Read The Bible

- The nature of the reader
- The nature of Scripture

Exercise

The Nature Of The Reader

- Every reader is an interpreter
- We bring to the text our past experiences
- We assume our understanding is correct
- We seem to find different “plain meanings”

Presuppositions: The Root of our Differences

- God has revealed himself to man
- God's revelation is through Jesus Christ
- Christians are bound by the authority of Jesus
- The Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit
- The Bible is the sole expression of authority
- The biblical text is true and understandable

Presuppositions: The Root of our Differences

- Everyone has a right to interpret the Bible himself.
- With study, we can determine biblical truth.
- All truth is on the same level of importance.
- Primitive Christianity is normative for all times
- Biblical authority is determined by following direct commands, apostolic examples and necessary inferences

The Nature of Scripture

- Word of God given through people in time
- Eternal relevance
- Historical particularity

Ways God Chose To Communicate With Us

- Narrative history
- Genealogies
- Chronicles
- Laws
- Poetry
- Proverbs
- Prophecy
- Riddles
- Drama
- Biographical sketches
- Parables
- Letters
- Sermons
- Apocalypses

The Need For Serious Bible Study

▪ **Meditation**

- Relishes a word or phrase
- Application is to me
- Feelings of spiritual uplift
- Awareness of God's presence

▪ **Serious Study**

- Explains meaning logically
- Intellectual/practice application
- Feelings can interfere with
- Seeks wisdom & understanding

The Foundation of Biblical Interpretation: God's Relentless Love

- Jesus = Seed of the woman
- Jesus = Seed of Abraham
- Jesus = Prophet like Moses
- Jesus = Royal house of David
- Jesus = Virgin-born Messiah
- Jesus = Great High Priest
- Jesus = Lamb of God
- Jesus = Eternal Logos
- Jesus = Alpha and Omega
- Jesus = Son of God

Basic Components of Biblical Interpretation

■ Exegesis

- 1. Determining what the passage says
- 2. Determining what the passage *meant*

■ Hermeneutics

- 1. Determining what the passage *means*
- 2. Making application in our daily lives

Questions or Comments?



Next Week:

The Task of Exegesis