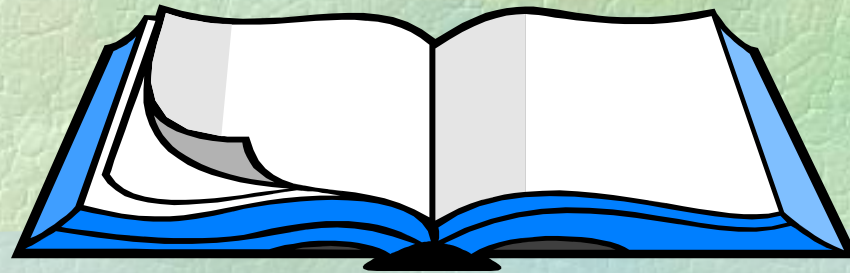


How To Read The Bible



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

The Epistles:



Understanding Context

General Format of Epistles

- Name of writer (Paul)
- Name of recipient (church of God in Corinth)
- Greeting (Grace and peace to you...)
- Prayer wish or thanksgiving (I always thank God for you...)
- Body
- Final greeting and farewell (The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you...)

Key Characteristics of Epistles

- Occasional documents
- First century documents
- Non-theological documents

Exegesis of the Epistles

- Consult Bible dictionary or Introduction to New Testament to learn about setting
- Read the whole letter through in one setting
- Look for statements about the recipients
- Identify Paul's attitudes about them
- Identify occasion for writing of letter
- Divide the letter into natural, logical divisions

Background of Ephesus

- Capital of proconsular Asia
- First and greatest metropolis of Asia
- Home of temple of Artemis and 50,000 seat theatre
- Many Jews lived there after Pentecost
- Paul first visited about AD 51 on 2nd Missionary Journey
- Visited again for 3 years on 3rd Journey
- Home to Aquila, Priscilla, Timothy, Trophimus, and Tychicus
- Apostle John died and buried there by tradition

What does Paul say about the recipients?

- God's holy people/faithful followers (1:1)
- Loving people (1:15)
- In need of wisdom to grow spiritually (1:17)
- Used to live sinful lives (2:1)
- Some are Gentiles (2:11)
- Possibly deceived by false teachers (4:14)
- Probably reverting to old lifestyles (4:21)

What are Paul's attitudes toward them?

- Thankful and prayerful (1:16-17)
- Hope for their spiritual futures (1:18)
- Unprejudiced as to their race (2:19)
- Blameless (3:1)
- Concern (3:13)
- Authoritative (4:17)
- Collegial (6:19)

What was Paul's occasion for writing?

- Encouragement (1:16)
- Promote maturity (4:11-13)
- Possibly correct false teaching (4:14)
- Correct ungodly living (4:17)

Outline of Ephesians

- I. Introduction (1:1-2)
- II. God's blessings (1:3-14)
- III. Need for spiritual understanding (1:15-23)
- IV. What God has done through Jesus (2-3)
- V. How to live a worthy response
 - A. By getting alone (4:1-16)
 - B. By avoiding ungodly living (4:17-32)
 - C. By staying sexually pure (5:1-14)
 - D. By living by the Spirit (5:15-20)
 - E. In various relationships (5:21-6:9)
- VI. Using God's armor to fight Satan
- VII. Farewell

Ephesians 5:15-20

15: See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16: Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17: Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

18: And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

19: Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

20: Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; (KJV)

Ephesians 5:15-20

¹⁵So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise. ¹⁶Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days. ¹⁷Don't act thoughtlessly, but try to understand what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, let the Holy Spirit fill and control you. ¹⁹Then you will sing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs among yourselves, making music to the Lord in your hearts. ²⁰And you will always give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(NLT)

Meaning of the Greek word Psallo

- From:
- “psa” - “to pluck”
- To play an instrument
- Music from instrument
- Sing accompanied
- Sing accompanied or unaccompanied
- It came to mean:
- To play an instrument
- Music from instrument
- Sing accompanied
- Sing accompanied or unaccompanied
- Sing unaccompanied

Hermeneutical Approaches

- Authorization approach - Sing is a direct command; instruments not authorized
- Love Letter approach - Paul's concern is for maturity; Singing reflects Spirit's presence
- Revelatory approach - Christians in Ephesus likely sang unaccompanied; not necessarily a precedent for all times

To Play Or Not To Play?

- Pleasing or Displeasing to God?
- Historical Precedent?
- Necessary for worship?
- Edifying in nature?
- Ramifications of use

Use of Music in The Old Testament

- Jubal - Father of lyre and harp (Gen 4:21)
- Miriam used tambourines (Ex 14:29-15:21)
- Barak's victory (Judges 5:11)
- Jehosaphat's victory (II Chr 20:28)
- Return of the Ark (II Sam 6:12-15)
- Temple dedication (II Chr 7:6)

Use of Music in The New Testament

- No references to instruments in text
- Most early writers disapprove or do not endorse the use of instruments in worship
- Some early writers affirm vocal singing only
- Protestant reformers opposed instruments
- Restorationists opposed instruments

Use of Music in Synagogue Worship

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down and wept,
When we remembered Zion.

Upon the willows in the midst of it
We hung our harps.

For there our captors demanded of us songs,
and our tormentors mirth, saying
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”

How can we sing the Lord’s song
In a foreign land?

Psalm 137:1-4 (ASV)

To Play Or Not To Play?

- Pleasing or Displeasing to God?
- Historical Precedent?
- Necessary for worship?
- Edifying in nature?
- Ramifications of use

Questions or Comments?



Next Week:

The Epistles: Applying Hermeneutics