



DISCIPLE DEVELOPMENT MONTH

Biblical studies 1: Bibliology
“Why you can trust the Bible as God’s Word”
Teacher: Professor Russ Glessner

A Survey of Basic Teaching Concerning The Holy Scripture

Week 4 || January 28th, 2024

Interpretation

Scripture

Nehemiah 8:8; Matthew 24:15; Acts 8:30-35; 2 Timothy 2:15

Concept

Interpretation is the task of comprehending the meaning of the text of Scripture intended by the writer and so coming to understand the message God intends for the reader.

This task is guided by applying normal guidelines for interpretation such as understanding the biblical text literally, grammatically, historically, literarily, and theologically. The Bible comprises a beautiful array of literary qualities and these must be recognized for optimal reading of Scripture. History, poetry, hymns, prophecy, Gospels, letters, apocalypse, riddles, envelope structure, parables, figures of speech give Scripture rich flavor! Read and reflect upon the Bible in paragraphs, not primarily in verses. Context is one of the most important factors in interpretation and so the reader must always consider that first in the process of understanding God’s Message. Here are several suggestions of worthwhile helps for your consideration:

*****Dr. Constable’s Expository (Bible Study) Notes**

Website: planobiblechapel.org

“Dr. Constable’s Notes, authored by [Dr. Thomas L. Constable](http://www.planobiblechapel.org), provide commentary on all 66 books of the Bible and contain over 12,000 pages of material in PDF format. Dr. Constable taught at [Dallas Theological Seminary](http://www.dallas-theological-seminary.com) for 45 years, and served as the Chairman of its Bible Exposition department

for 13 years. He now spends most of his time upgrading these notes. These notes are intended to help you to understand the Bible better. Click on a Bible book below and the notes will open in a new page." [From the website]

Leland Ryken. How to Read the Bible as Literature. Zondervan, 1984.

Gordon Fee, Douglas Stuart, & Mark L. Strauss. How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth. 4th ed. Zondervan, 2014.

Mark L. Strauss. How to Read the Bible in Changing Times. Baker, 2011.

John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck. The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 2 vols. David C. Cook, 2002.

The Tyndale OT & NT Commentary Series and The Bible Speaks Today Series from InterVarsity Press. Study Bibles for the NASB, NIV, ESV, and CSB can be very useful.

Norman L. Geisler & William E. Nix. A General Introduction to the Bible. Revised. Moody, 1986.

Illumination

Scripture

Psalm 119:34; Luke 24:25-32; 1 Corinthians 2:14-15; Heb 4:12-13

Concept

Illumination is that work of the Holy Spirit by which He energizes and assists the reader of the Bible in understanding the message of Scripture **in order to obey it and to please God.**

Illumination refers to an understanding of Scripture **which results in the reader desiring to obey, please, and glorify God.** It refers to the Holy Spirit's work of providing awareness and insight **which produces an obedient response to God's Word.** It does not refer to the Holy Spirit [directly] giving the reader the meaning of Scripture. Rather it is His giving the reader the **desire and capacity to read and apply Scripture to the life God gives.** Regenerate, faithful readers of Scripture do not always understand the meaning of Scripture accurately. So also: unregenerate readers have the capacity to understand Scripture (otherwise how could they come to saving faith? and display understanding of biblical texts?), but not necessarily rightly and genuinely to obey it. Picture a child, an adult ignorant of the Bible, and a person from a people group who has never heard of Jesus. How do they come to faith as they engage God's revelation in the Bible? Additionally, ponder the implications of Saul of Tarsus before and after his conversion: before, he is brilliantly and thoroughly knowledgeable of the Hebrew Bible; after, he understands and obeys God's Word, recognizes Jesus as Messiah, and is led to develop deep theological truths of Christian faith in his 13 Letters. [Paul's illumination occurred on the road to Damascus when he experienced the glorious shining of "the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:6). Seyoon Kim, The Origin of Paul's Gospel, 1981] Think also of Jesus' brothers.

[Authority]

Scripture

"Thus saith the LORD," Deut 30:8-10, Matt 24:35; Mark 1:22; John 10:35; Rev 1:3

Rightly interpreted teaching of Scripture is the ultimate and final standard of truth for the faith and practice of God's people. "**Scripture Alone**" reminds us that as valuable as creeds, confessions, statements of faith, and volumes of scriptural/theological teaching may be, the Bible is our final authority. Scripture is canonical.

Application

Scripture

Psalm 19; 119; John 5:39; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:22

Concept

God intends that His message in Scripture should be applied by the reader to all aspects of daily living. Merely reading, memorizing, or knowing the facts of Scripture is insufficient to please God. Correctly applying Scripture pleases the Lord Jesus Christ, glorifies God Almighty, and is enabled by the Holy Spirit. This is the believer's purpose for living. Our Lord desires obedience to His Word in areas that relate to our lives personally, in our family, our church, our denomination, our nation, and our relationships with the world communities. **Read and heed!**

"Holy Bible, Book Divine"

Holy Bible, book divine, Precious treasure, thou art mine;
Mine to tell me whence I came; Mine to teach me what I am;

Mine to chide me when I rove; Mine to show a Savior's love;
Mine thou art to guide and guard; Mine to punish or reward;

Mine to comfort in distress, Suff'ring in this wilderness;
Mine to show, by living faith, Man can triumph over death;

Mine to tell of joys to come, And the rebel sinner's doom;
O thou holy book divine, Precious treasure, thou art mine.

"Ancient Words"

Holy words – long preserved — for our walk – in this world,
They resound with God's own heart
Oh, let the Ancient Words impart.

Words of life – Words of hope — give us strength – help us cope
In this world, where e'er we roam
Ancient Words will guide us home.

Chorus: Ancient Words – ever true; Changing me, and changing you.
We have come – with open hearts; Oh let the Ancient Words impart.

Holy words – of our faith — Handed down – to this age.
Came to us through sacrifice;
Oh heed the faithful Words of Christ.

Holy words – long preserved — For our walk – in this world.
They resound with God's own heart;
Oh, let the Ancient Words impart.

Words and Music by Lynn DeShazo
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Closing remarks: Jason Nightingale (now with the Lord) had a powerfully effective ministry of “speaking Scripture” for many years. He spoke often in the chapel of NBS and in numerous churches throughout our western States, and in other US and international venues. He taught a seminary class, “Speaking Scripture,” which our son Timothy took with great profit. His resonant voice, gifting, and training made his declamation very effective and much appreciated. He had memorized 15 NT and 3 OT books and spoke with Spirit-induced power. You may access some of his spoken Scripture at “Jason Nightingale—The Wordsower” on Spotify. I recommend that you listen to Scripture, as well as read it.

I am grateful for the opportunity to teach this class at Christ's Church. You have been a wonderful group of fellow disciples, whose interest and thoughtfulness I have appreciated. I am grateful for Caleb Kim's invitation and assistance and Gwen Foyle's efforts in making these notes available. During these sessions I have missed my wife, Linda, who was my supporting partner in ministry for five and a half decades. She is now present with the Lord! May you join with me in **glorifying our great God by thinking and acting biblically**. As passionate followers of Jesus Christ may your delight be in His Holy Word! **Soli Deo Gloria!**

Important Scripture Passages about the Bible

Genesis 1:1
Psalm 19:7-14
Psalm 119:34, 160
Luke 24:25-27
John 17:17
1 Corinthians 2:13-14
1 Thessalonians 2:13
2 Timothy 3:14-17
Hebrews 1:1
2 Peter 1:20-21
Revelation 22:18-19

Representative Scriptures

Genesis 12.1-3
Exodus 20.12-17
Deuteronomy 30.11-16
2 Samuel 7.18-24
Nehemiah 13.6-9
Psalm 137.7-9; 139.19-24
Proverbs 30.24-28
Ecclesiastes 7.14-18
Song of Songs 4.10-11
Isaiah 53.1-6
Jeremiah 31.31-34
Matthew 5.3-10
Mark 15.37-41
Luke 10.38-42
John 3.16-18
Romans 8.31-39
Galatians 5.7-12
Philemon 8-16
Hebrews 12.18-24
Revelation 17.1-5; 21.9-14

Our Bible—Questions

1. What are special qualities about the Bible? Why do you believe it is unique?
2. What kind of impact or effect does the Bible have on my life? What about its impact on others?
3. What basic information about the Bible's teaching about itself should I know?
4. Who wrote the Bible? How was God involved?
5. When was the Bible written?
6. What did the earliest Bibles look like and what were the writing materials used? How did the Bible writers write?
7. What were the languages of the earliest Bibles? Were there early translations of the Bible? What were they?
8. How were the books selected which we find in our Bibles? Who did this? When did they do it?
9. Why do different Christian groups have different books in their Bibles? Why is there a difference between our Bible and my Roman Catholic (or Greek Orthodox) friend's Bible? Which is right?
10. How do we know that the Bible we have today is just like the original Bibles? How has it been preserved?
11. What is the big discussion about the original kind of Greek texts used for the New Testament? Why is there such debate about this?
12. What versions of the English Bible are most helpful?
13. What are the advantages or disadvantages of different versions? What is the best version for me? What is the difference between a translation and a version?
14. How is our Bible put together? What is the logic of the order of the books? Why did the earlier versions have different orders?
15. What about the Book of Mormon?
16. Who gathered the books of the Bible and when and why and how was the grouping of Bible books completed?

17. How should I read my Bible? What kind of a plan? How many chapters?
18. How can I understand the Bible when it is so deep, difficult, and complicated? What is the use of many parts that seem to have no relationship to real life? Yet, how can it be understood even by those of limited understanding—young children and those with mental disabilities?
19. I've heard that some good Christians believe there are unimportant errors in the Bible? Are there? What about seeming contradictions?
20. How do I know whose interpretation of the Bible is correct? Many fine scholars disagree. Who is right?
21. How can reading the Bible give me wisdom? How do we move from facts to teaching and a way to live?
22. How do we discern what commands of the Bible are to be followed today and which were intended for another time?

Our Bible—Discussion Questions

1. How often do I think of God or Scripture during the day? How does it affect my activity or behavior? Any samples?
2. What might be a couple of examples of naturally referring to the Bible in conversation with a neighbor or relative?
3. How would you describe the Bible when you were conversing with your Muslim [Hindu, Mormon, Sikh, Buddhist, atheist] neighbor—someone who knows very little about it?
4. Explain how you, from CCFW, would compare or contrast your beliefs with other kinds of “Christians.”
5. How well do you know the books of the Bible and their categories? OK, say them—and how are they arranged?
6. What kind of Bible would you recommend to a friend or neighbor? What versions? What particular kind of Bible APP?
7. What plan do you use for reading the Bible? How faithful are you?
8. How fresh and new is your reading of Scripture? What do you do when that reading seems strange, irrelevant, curious, horrific, or contradictory? Or when it produces wonder,

amazement, awe, excitement? Do you ever weep or shout at the wonder of what you are reading?

9. What would your response be to someone who demeans the Bible, raises significant questions about it, or offers examples of errors or problems in the Bible?

10. Many fellow-believers are suffering for Jesus Christ around the world. My nephew-by-marriage was taken prisoner by the Taliban in Afghanistan and has been mostly isolated and without a Bible for 16 months. How would you survive in that situation?

11. What examples could you give of occasions where you have changed your lifestyle, behavior, speech, or attitude towards certain people groups, because of the Bible's influence?

12. What are your three favorite books in the Old Testament? The New Testament? Why?

13. How did the earliest followers of Jesus (in the early churches) engage with Scripture, since they did not have actual Bibles?

14. How do you experience Scripture as profitable in your life regarding teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness? Examples?

15. Who are the one or two persons you can call and discuss things about Scripture—meaning, interpretation, questions, bewilderment, joy, or thrill?

16. What is the roll of the Holy Spirit in your life, with reference to Scripture? How closely do you reflect on the way Scripture is used in CCFW sermons?