



Part 2: The Bible and You

Class 5: Interpreting the Bible, part 1

Objective: To understand the importance of basic processes, principles, and postures for the personal study of the Bible.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Question 1: What guidelines should govern our study of the Bible?

- The study of how to interpret the Bible is called _____.

“As a Protestant I cherish the NT teaching on the priesthood of believers—that each Christian has the right to his own interpretation, but also that each Christian has the responsibility to get it right.” — Daniel Wallace

Basic processes for interpreting the Bible:

- 1. _____ - before we begin
- We always approach the Bible with influences - no blank slate.
 - We need the Holy Spirit, prayer, community, and good resources.

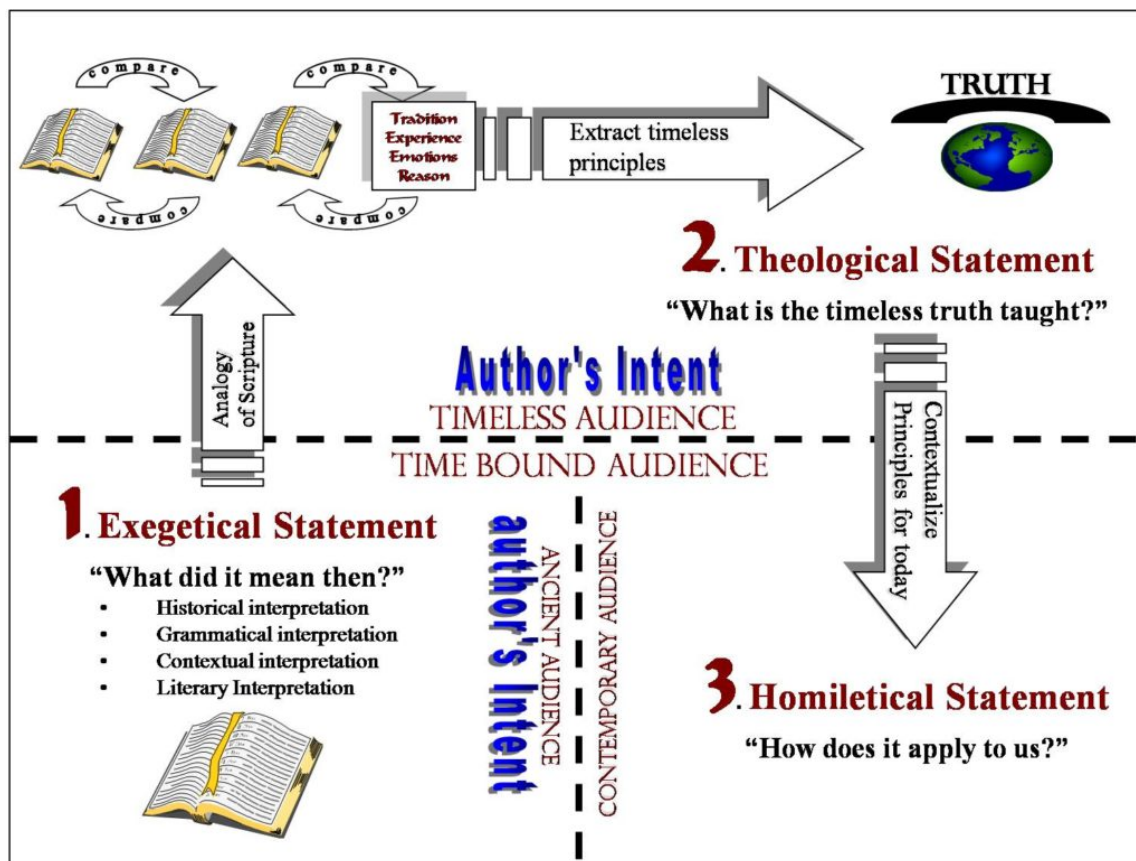


- 2. _____ - focusing on the original meaning
- Take the audience, author, language, and context into consideration.
 - Distinguish between *exegesis* (pull out from) and *eisegesis* (read into).

- 3. _____ -connecting original meaning to contemporary audiences
 - Seek to understand, so that you can *believe and obey*.
 - Read the Bible with your whole being (emotions, intellect, will).

Basic principles for interpreting the Bible:

- 1. Since the Bible was written by humans, the reader must determine authorial _____.
 - Study the setting (history, culture, geography).
 - Research words (unclear, important, repeated).
 - Analyze the structure of the sentences.
 - Examine the context (passage → book → Bible).
 - Identify the genre (narrative, poetry, parable, apocalyptic).
- 2. Since the Bible is God-breathed and infallible, the reader must seek to understand its _____ and _____ elements.
 - Compare scripture with scripture (the clear helps the obscure).
 - Seek an explanation for difficulties (consider the *metanarrative*).
 - Handle prophecy with care.
- 3. Since the Bible is God-breathed, the reader must hold it as _____ for doctrine and life.
 - Distinguish between universal and limited applications.
 - Avoid the hypocrisy of being a hearer but not a doer.
 - Draw near to the Author!



- 4. Since the Bible was originally written to real people in their own time, yet relevant for all believers for all times, be careful to distinguish between interpretation and _____.

◆ **Key takeaway:** *The study of the Bible should be done carefully and intentionally, to give the most honor to its Author!*

Question 2: What role does the Holy Spirit play in helping us interpret the Bible?

“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (John 14:25-26)



- The Holy Spirit is the great _____ . (John 16:13)
- _____ is essential to understand the Bible as it was meant to be understood. (1 Cor. 2:6-16).
- Biblical interpretation should not be treated as an _____ activity.
- Since the Holy Spirit _____ the Bible (2 Peter 1:20-21), the reader must be _____ on him.
- The Holy Spirit’s work of conveying a proper understanding of the Bible to a human being is called _____ .
 - He stands with us, indwells us, and opens our minds.
 - He grants knowledge of his word to our conscience, will, and emotion.

“The Holy Spirit will never say something through the biblical writer, then contradict or change it for the reader.” - Robertson McQuilkin

◆ **Key takeaway:** *Rely upon the presence of the Holy Spirit in order to get the most out of your study of the Bible!*

Question 3: What role does human effort play in interpreting the Bible?

- Paul’s admonition to Timothy to “rightly handle the word of truth” compares him to a diligent, hard-working _____ . (2 Timothy 2:15)



- We should approach Bible study humbly aware of our own _____.
 - Tradition
 - Preferences
 - Culture
 - Emotions
 - Experiences
- Bible study that makes an impact should always be accompanied by _____ (Psalm 119:125).
- Using the tools of _____ properly, we handle the Bible honorably.
 - Understanding context
 - Knowing literary forms
 - Reading for understanding
 - Consulting aids
 - Keeping in mind the Bible's theological unity (*analogy of faith*)
- We have a wealth of _____, from history and today, to assist us in discovering meaning. *Use them wisely!*
- Our own _____ do not *determine* meaning, but they do *help* us to better *understand* what the text says and how it applies. (Romans 12:1-2)
- The Bible deserves our full _____ and effort.
- ◆ **Key takeaway:** *God will not reward laziness in the study of the Bible!*



Bibliography

Understanding and Applying the Bible by Robertson McQuilkin
“He Gave Us Scripture: Foundations of Interpretation” by Third Mill Ministries
“Interpreting the Bible” in *The ESV Study Bible*
“Ten Simple Rules for Getting the Most out of Your Bible Study” by Khaldoun A. Sweis
“Principles of Biblical Interpretation” by James Davis