

# **Inductive Bible Study**

**Psalm 119:130**

<sup>130</sup> The unfolding of Your words gives light;  
It gives understanding to the simple.

## 2 APPROACHES TO BIBLE STUDY

### Deductive

- One is dictating to the Scriptures, rather than letting the Scriptures speak.
- One comes to the text with a thesis and then seeks out passages to support that thesis.
- One has already, to a certain extent, drawn conclusions before reading the whole text of Scripture in context.



*Eisegesis* “to lead into”

### Inductive

- One lets the Scriptures speak for themselves.
- One draws conclusions based on thorough examination of the content.
- One lays aside preconceived ideas and first lays down a groundwork of observations.



*Exegesis* “to lead out of”

The **inductive approach** goes from general observations to specific conclusions. It is better for digging deeper into the heart and mind of God with accuracy. Conclusions come from what you have *observed*.

Before anything...

# PRAY.

The Holy Spirit is your Teacher. Without Him you will not understand or be able to live out what you study.

## **1 Corinthians 2:12-14**

<sup>12</sup>Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, <sup>13</sup>which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. <sup>14</sup>But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

You can pray something like this...

## **Psalm 119**

<sup>17</sup>Deal bountifully with Your servant, that I may live and keep Your word.  
<sup>18</sup>Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law.

<sup>33</sup>Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, and I shall observe it to the end. <sup>34</sup>Give me understanding, that I may observe Your law and keep it with all *my* heart. <sup>35</sup>Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it.

God wants to speak to *you*. Don't rely on other people. Think for yourself, and let the text and Spirit speak for themselves.



## **Qualifications for interpreting the Bible**

- **Regeneration**
- **Reverence**
- **Humility**
- **Willingness**
- **Dependence**
- **Objectivity**



## **The Bible is...**

- **divinely inspired**
- **indestructible**
- **infallible**
- **finally authoritative**
- **historical**
- **factually inerrant**
- **spiritually clear**

# 3 STEPS OF INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

## **Observation:**

What does this text say?

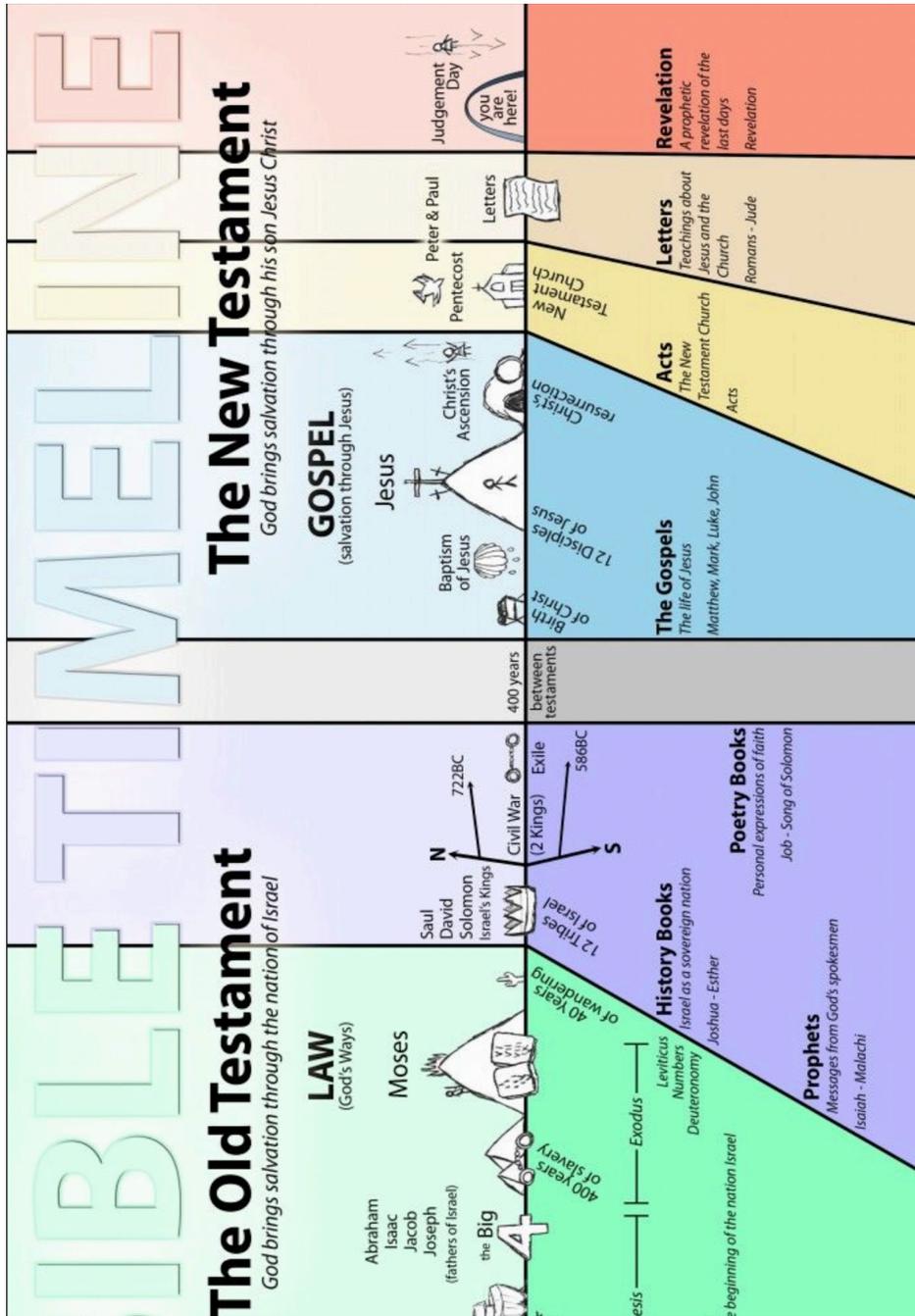
## **Interpretation:**

What does this text mean?

## **Application:**

What does this text mean for me?

# Look, Learn, Live



## THE SEVEN C'S IN GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN



CREATION



CORRUPTION



CATASTROPHE



CONFUSION



CHRIST



CROSS



CONSUMMATION



# CREATION - FALL - REDEMPTION - NEW CREATION

**The Jesus Storybook Bible** by Sally Lloyd-Jones

*“Some people think the Bible is a book of rules, telling you what you should and shouldn’t do. The Bible certainly does have some rules in it. They show you how life works best. But the Bible isn’t mainly about you and what you should be doing. It’s about God and what He has done.*

*Other people think the Bible is a book of heroes, showing you people you should copy. The Bible does have some heroes in it, but most of the people in the Bible aren’t heroes at all. They make some big mistakes (sometimes on purpose). They get afraid and run away. At times they are downright mean.*

*No, the Bible isn’t a book of rules, or a book of heroes. The Bible is most of all a Story. It’s an adventure story about a young Hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure. It’s a love story about a brave Prince who leaves his palace, his throne - everything to rescue the one he loves. It’s like the most wonderful of fairy tales that has come true in real life! You see, the best thing about this Story is - it’s true.*

*There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all the stories are telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves His children and comes to rescue them. It takes the whole Bible to tell this Story. And at the center of the Story, there is a baby. Every Story in the Bible whispers His name. He is like the missing piece in a puzzle - the piece that makes all the other pieces fit together, and suddenly you can see a beautiful picture.*

*And this is no ordinary baby. This is the Child upon whom everything would depend. This is the Child who would one day...but wait. Our Story starts where all good stories start. Right at the very beginning...”*

## **CREATION** - (Genesis 1:1, 26-27)

*“God saw all that He had made and He loved them. And they were lovely because He loved them. But God saved the best for last. From the beginning, God had a shining dream in His heart. He would make people to share His Forever Happiness. They would be His children, and the world would be their perfect home. So God breathed life into Adam and Eve... Whatever happened, whatever it cost Him, He would always love them. And so it was that the wonderful love story began...”*

## **FALL** - (Genesis 3:6, 15)

*“God had a horrible enemy. His name was Satan. Satan had once been the most beautiful angel, but he didn’t want to be just an angel - he wanted to be God. He grew proud and evil and full of hate, and God had to send him out of heaven. Satan was seething with anger and looking for a way to hurt God. He wanted to stop God’s plan, stop this love story, right there...And a terrible lie came into the world. It would never leave. It would live on in every human heart, whispering to every one of God’s children; ‘God doesn’t love me.’...And terrible pain came into God’s heart...They had broken their wonderful relationship with Him. And now He knew everything else would break. God’s creation would start to unravel, and come undone, and go wrong. From now on everything would die - even though it was all supposed to last forever.”*

*“But before they left the garden, God made clothes for His children, to cover them...God loved His children too much to let the story end there. Even though He knew He would suffer, God had a plan - a magnificent dream. One day, He would get His children back. One day, He would make the world their perfect home again. And one day, He would wipe away every tear from their eye. You see no matter what, in spite of everything, God would love His children - with a Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love....One day, God Himself would come.”*

## **NOAH** - (Genesis 6:5-8)

*“It was a new beginning in God’s world. It wasn’t long before everything went wrong again but God wasn’t surprised, He knew this would happen. That’s why, before the beginning of time, He had another plan - a better plan. A plan not to destroy the world, but to rescue it - a plan to one day send His own Son, the Rescuer.”*

## **BABEL** - (Genesis 11:6-8)

*“You see, God knew, however high they reached, however hard they tried, people could never get back to heaven by themselves. People didn’t need a staircase; they needed a Rescuer. Because the way back to heaven wasn’t a staircase; it was a Person. People could never reach up to Heaven, so Heaven would have to come down to them.”*

## **FATHER ABRAHAM** - (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:5-6, 21:1-3)

*“And one day, God would send another baby, a baby promised to a girl who didn’t even have a husband. But this baby would bring laughter to the whole world. This baby would be everyone’s dream come true.”*

## **ISAAC’S BINDING** - (Genesis 22:1-2)

*“Many years later, another Son would climb another hill, carrying wood on his back. Like Isaac, He would trust His Father and do what His Father asked. He wouldn’t struggle or run away. Who was He? God’s Son, His only Son - the Son He loved. The Lamb of God.”*

## **LEAH** - (Genesis 29:31, 35)

*“One day, God was going to rescue the whole world - through Leah’s family...One of Leah’s children’s children’s children would be a prince - the Prince of Heaven - God’s Son. This Prince would love God’s people. They wouldn’t need to be beautiful for Him to love them. He would love them with all of His heart. And they would be beautiful because He loved them. Like Leah.”*

**JOSEPH** - (Genesis 50:20)

*“One day, God would send another Prince, a young Prince whose heart would break. Like Joseph, He would leave His home and His Father. His brothers would hate Him and want Him dead. He would be sold for pieces of silver. He would be punished even though He had done thing wrong. But God would use everything that happened to this young Prince - even the bad things - to do something good: to forgive the sins of the whole world.”*

**PASSOVER** - (Exodus 12:5-7, 13)

*“God’s people would always remember this great rescue and call it “Passover.” But an even Greater Rescue was coming. Many years later, God was going to do it again. He was going to come down once more to rescue His people. But this time God was going to set them free forever and ever.”*

**RED SEA** - (Exodus 14:28-29)

*“Many years later, once again, God was going to make a way where there was no way.”*

**TEN COMMANDMENTS** - (Exodus 20:1-17)

*“No matter how hard they tried, they could never keep God’s rules all the time. God knew they couldn’t. And he wanted them to know it, too. Only one Person could keep all the rules. And many years later God would send Him - to stand in their place and be perfect for them. Because the rules couldn’t save them. Only God could save them.”*

**JOSHUA** - (Joshua 24:14-18)

*“One day He would give His people another Leader. And another home. But this home, no one could ever take from them.”*

**DAVID** - (2 Samuel 7:16)

*“Many years later, God would send His people another young Hero to fight for them. And to save them. But this Hero would fight the greatest battle the world has ever known.” God chose David to be king because God was getting His people ready for an even greater King who was coming. Once again, God would say, ‘Go to Bethlehem. You’ll find the new King there.’ And there, one starry night in Bethlehem, in the town of David...Wise Men would find Him.”*

**PSALM 23** - (John 10:11)

*“Another Shepherd was coming - a greater Shepherd. He would be called the Good Shepherd. And this Shepherd was going to lead all of God’s lambs back to the place where they had always belonged - close to God’s heart.”*

**ISAIAH** - (Isaiah 9:2, 6; 40:9-11, 53)

*“I can’t stop loving you. I will come to find you. So I am sending you a Shepherd to look after you and love you. To carry you home to me...into the darkness, a bright Light will shine!...Emmanuel...The Prince of Peace...Servant...Lamb....Everything sad will come untrue. Even death is going to die! And He will wipe away every tear from every eye. Yes the Rescuer will come.”*

**DANIEL** - (Daniel 6:19-22)

*“God would keep on rescuing his people. And the time was coming when God would send another brave Hero, like Daniel, who would love God and do what God said - whatever it cost him, even if it meant he would die. And together they would pull off the Greatest Rescue the world has ever known.”*

## **JONAH** - (Jonah 1:17)

*“Many years later, God was going to send another Messenger with the same wonderful message. Like Jonah, He would spend three days in utter darkness. But this Messenger would be God’s own Son. He would be called “The Word” because He Himself would be God’s Message. God’s Message translated into our own language. Everything God wanted to say to the whole world - in a Person.”*

## **MALACHI** - (Malachi 4:1-2)

*“I am like the sun that gently shines on you, chasing away darkness and fear and death. You’ll be so happy - you’ll be like little calves running free in an open field. I am going to send my Messenger - The Promised One. The One you have been waiting for. The Rescuer. He is coming. So, get ready! It had taken centuries for God’s people to be ready, but now the time had almost come for the best part of God’s Plan. God Himself was going to come. Not to punish His people - but to rescue them. God was getting ready to wipe away every tear from every eye. And the true party was just about to begin...”*

## **CHRISTMAS** - (Matthew 1:18-23)

*“And they gazed in wonder at God’s Great Gift, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. Mary and Joseph named him Jesus, ‘Emmanuel’ - which means ‘God has come to live with us.’ Because, of course, He had.”*

## **STAR OF BETHLEHEM** - (Numbers 24:17)

*“This baby would be like that bright star shining in the sky that night. A Light to light up the whole world. Chasing away darkness. Helping people to see. And the darker the night got, the brighter the star would shine.”*

## **MAGI** - (2 Corinthians 8:9)

*“The three men knelt before the little King...to the King God had promised David all those years before. But this child was a new kind of king. Though He was the Prince of Heaven, He had become poor. Though He was the Mighty God, He had become a helpless baby. This King hadn't come to be the boss. He had come to be a servant.”*

## **JESUS' BAPTISM** - (Mark 1:9-11)

*“And a voice came down from heaven. It was clear and strong and loud so everyone could hear. ‘This is my own Son. And I love Him. I am very pleased with Him.’ God said. ‘Listen to Him.’ Heaven had broken through. The Great Rescue had begun...”*

## **JESUS' TEMPTATION** - (Matthew 4:1-11)

*“Jesus wasn't like Adam. Jesus was a new kind of man. He would not believe the terrible lie that the enemy spoke. Jesus knew God loved him. And He would trust God. No matter what. It was just as God had promised to Adam and Eve all those years before. Jesus had come to do battle against the snake's work. He would get rid of the sin and the darkness and the tears. And He would suffer - but He would win.”*

## **JAIRUS' DAUGHTER** - (Luke 8:41-42, 54-55)

*“Jesus helped and healed many people, like this. He made blind people see. He made deaf people hear. He made lame people walk. Jesus was making the sad things come untrue. He was mending God's broken world.”*

## **LORD'S PRAYER** - (Matthew 6:9-13)

*“You see, Jesus was showing people that God would always love them - with a Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love. So they didn't need to hide anymore, or be afraid, or ashamed. They could stop running away from God. And they could run to Him instead. As a little child runs into her daddy's arms.”*

### **FEEDING 5000** - (Mark 6:41-44)

*“Well, Jesus did many miracles like this. Things people thought couldn’t happen, that weren’t natural. But it was the most natural thing in all the world. It’s what God had been doing from the beginning, of course. Taking the nothing and making it everything. Taking the emptiness and filling it up. Taking the darkness and making it light.”*

### **PRODIGAL SON** - (Luke 15:11-24)

*“Jesus told people this story to show them what God is like. And to show people what they are like. So they could now, however far they ran, however well they hid, however lost they were - it wouldn’t matter. Because God’s children could never run too far, or be too lost, for God to find them.”*

### **LAST SUPPER** - (Luke 22:14-20)

*“‘So whenever you eat and drink, remember,’ Jesus said, ‘I’ve rescued you!’ Jesus knew it was nearly time for him to leave the world and to go back to God. ‘I won’t be with you long,’ He said. ‘You are going to be very sad. But God’s Helper will come. And then you’ll be filled up with a Forever Happiness that won’t ever leave. So don’t be afraid. You are my friends and I love you.’*

### **JESUS’ ARREST/TRIAL** - (Matthew 26:62-64)

*“The Leaders put Jesus on trial. ‘Are you the Son of God?’ they asked. ‘I Am,’ Jesus said. ‘Who do you think you are? To call yourself God? You must die for calling yourself the Son of God!’ Only the Romans were allowed to kill prisoners, so the Leaders made a plan. ‘We’ll tell the Romans, ‘This man wants to be our king!’ And then they will crucify him.’ But it would be all right. It was God’s Plan. ‘It was for this reason that I was born into the world,’ Jesus said.”*

## **JESUS' CRUCIFIXION** - (John 19:30)

*"It wasn't the nails that kept Jesus there. It was love...Tears rolled down Jesus' face. The face of the One who would wipe away every tear from every eye...The full force of the storm of God's fierce anger at sin was coming down. On His own Son. Instead of His people. It was the only way God could destroy sin, and not destroy His children whose hearts were filled with sin. Then Jesus shouted out in a loud voice, 'It is finished!' And it was. He had done it. Jesus had rescued the whole world."*

## **JESUS' RESURRECTION** - (Matthew 28:5-7)

*'Jesus isn't dead anymore!' he said. 'He's alive again!' And their hearts leapt. And then the angel laughed with such gladness that they felt, for a moment, as if they had woken from a nightmare... 'But now, go and tell the others that I'm alive!...Was God really making everything sad come untrue? Was he making even death come untrue?... 'Now everyone can come home to God,' Jesus said. 'Death is not the end of you. You can live forever with your Father in heaven because I have rescued the whole world!'"*

## **JESUS' ASCENSION** - (Luke 24:51-52)

*"Even though you won't be able to see me anymore, I will never leave you. No! Not ever! I will be with you. Yes! Always and forever!' 'How can Jesus be with us and leave us at the same time?' they wondered. They didn't understand. No, but soon they would."*

## **PENTECOST** - (Acts 2:1-4, 41-42, 46-47)

*"How it happened they didn't know, but they knew God's power had struck their hearts ablaze - and Jesus Himself was coming to live inside them. They had seen Jesus go away, but now he was closer than he had ever been - inside their hearts. And this time nothing could ever separate them. Jesus would always be there...Could it be? Heaven was coming into their hearts...Many people believed. And became Jesus' new friends and helpers. And the wonderful news of Jesus spread."*

**SAUL/PAUL** - (1 Corinthians 15:8-11)

*“Saul had never met Jesus. So one day, Jesus met Saul...And do you know what Ananias’ name means? ‘The Lord is full of Grace.’ (Grace is just another word for gift - which is funny, because that’s just what Paul’s message was all about from then on.)...’It’s not about keeping rules!’ Paul told people. ‘You don’t have to be good at being good of God to love you. You just have to believe what Jesus has done and follow Him. Because it’s not about trying, it’s about trusting. It’s not about rules, it’s about Grace: God’s free gift - that cost Him everything.”*

**HEAVEN (NEW CREATION)** - (Revelation 21:1-4)

*“‘I am the Beginning,’ Jesus said, ‘and the Ending!’ One day, John knew, Heaven would come down and mend God’s broken world and make it our turn, perfect home once again...the most wonderful thing about this Story is - it’s your story, too!”*

# OBSERVATION

## What does the text say?

“Look, look, look, until looking becomes seeing.”

What is **observation**?

- the first and foundational step of Inductive Bible Study
- not determining what the text means, but simply looking to see what it says
- becoming familiar with the text before moving on to interpretation

## **MISCONCEPTIONS**

1. The Bible will magically make an impression on me without any effort on my part.
2. I can't *really* actually understand the Bible.
3. I need a pastor or teacher to explain the Bible to me so I know what to believe.

## **BARRIERS TO BIBLE STUDY**

1. **Busyness** – Bible study requires time and patience, as well as regularity and consistency. Go slow. Make it a priority. Make it count.
2. **Sloppiness/Laziness** – Bible study requires precision, thoroughness, and effort.
3. **Distractions** – Bible study requires paying attention and using your mind for God's glory. Put aside your phone, texts, emails, social media, news, etc.

**Hebrews 2:1** For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*.

## **CONTEXT**

Before you start taking a detailed look at the text, it is important to first get the big picture.

- Look at the surrounding passages.
- Read through many chapters or the whole book in one sitting if possible.

## **OBSERVING THE TEXT**



You are a detective. Gather clues.

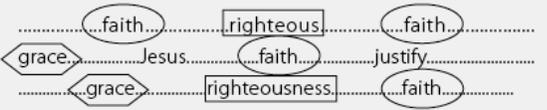
- Look at multiple translations.
- Look up words/phrases/expressions you don't know.
- Mark your Bible up! (Yes, it's really OK.) Color code.
- Ask good questions. Observation questions are like keys that open up the text and help us really see what is going on.



# OBSERVATION QUESTIONS



1. Repeated Words / Phrases / Ideas / Themes
2. Key Words
3. Who
  - people: main characters, people groups, etc.
  - pronouns
4. When
  - time elements
  - verb tenses
5. Where
  - geographical locations
  - general "locations"
6. Contrasts
7. Comparisons
8. Commands (Includes Advice, Promises, Warnings, Predictions)
9. Conditional Statements
10. Connectives
11. Atmosphere, Mood, Emotion
12. Figures of Speech
13. Lists
14. Illustrations
15. Emphatic Statements
16. Progression
  - progression of events
  - progression of thought, author's logic

Observation	Example
<p><b>1. Repeated Words / Phrases / Ideas / Themes</b></p> <p>Look for words, phrases, ideas, and themes that are repeated throughout the book. These will show you the big picture and main emphasis of the book and also things that the author is concerned about.</p>	
<p><b>2. Key Words</b></p> <p>Key words are those words with meaning that are essential to understanding a passage. Key words are often repeated.</p>	<p>Galatians, Romans: <i>Justification</i></p> <p>Hebrews: <i>Perfect</i></p>
<p><b>3. Who</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People: main characters, people groups, etc.</li> <li>• Pronouns: I, he, they, you ...</li> </ul>	<p>1 Peter 1:1 <i>Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the exiles of the dispersion...</i></p> <p>1 Thessalonians 4:13 <i>But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep...</i></p> <p>Mark 13 <i>Interchange between you &amp; they.</i></p>
<p><b>4. When</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time elements: Look for time elements or specific dates given in the book.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="570 919 719 1150" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p><b>then after when until before in that day</b></p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verb tenses: Observe past, present, and future tenses.</li> </ul>	<p>Galatians 1:18 <i>Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days.</i></p> <p>Ephesians 2:1-2 <i>And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked...</i></p> <p>Acts 20:29-31 <i>I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.</i></p>
<p><b>5. Where</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical locations Look for cities, regions, &amp; countries. Find them on a map.</li> <li>• General "locations" Observe locations such as heaven, earth, etc. Observe direction: north, east, south, &amp; west.</li> </ul>	<p>Acts 16:6 <i>And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.</i></p> <p>Ephesians 2:6 <i>...and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...</i></p>

Observation	Example
<p><b>6. Contrasts</b></p> <p>Contrasts are things that are opposites. Contrasts are often identified by the conjunction "but". Also look for broader contrasts such as contrasting ideas, character, actions, people, etc.</p> <div data-bbox="565 281 716 457" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">  <p><b>but</b> <b>rather</b> <b>instead</b></p> </div>	<p>Titus 1:16  <i>"They profess to know God, <b>BUT</b> they deny him by their deeds..."</i></p>
<p><b>7. Comparisons</b></p> <p>Comparisons lay things or people alongside of each other and show how they are alike or not alike. These things can be shown to be similar to each other, or one can be shown to be better than the other. Another type of comparison is when something is compared to how it should be.</p> <div data-bbox="565 535 716 858" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">  <p><b>as</b> <b>like</b> <b>likewise</b> <b>so also</b> <b>more</b> <b>less</b> <b>better</b></p> </div>	<p>Psalm 42:1  <i>"<b>As</b> the deer pants for the water, <b>so</b> my soul longs after thee O Lord."</i></p> <p>Hosea 13:3  <i>"Therefore they shall be <b>(like)</b> the morning mist or <b>(like)</b> the dew that goes early away, <b>(like)</b> chaff that swirls from the threshing floor or <b>(like)</b> smoke from a window."</i></p>
<p><b>8. Commands</b></p> <p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice</li> <li>• Promises</li> <li>• Warnings</li> <li>• Predictions</li> </ul>	<p>2 John: 10-11  <i>"If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, <b>do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work.</b>"</i></p>
<p><b>9. Conditional Statements</b></p> <p>Statements where the promise is dependant on an action.</p> <div data-bbox="565 1165 716 1308" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>if</b> <b>then</b> <b>unless</b></p> </div>	<p>Deuteronomy 28:1  <i>"And <b>if</b> you obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments which I command you this day, <b>the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.</b>"</i></p>
<p><b>10. Connectives</b></p> <p>A connective is a word that connects two statements or ideas together.</p> <p>Connectives show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reason</li> <li>• Result</li> <li>• Conclusion</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="565 1371 716 1669" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">  <p><b>for</b> <b>therefore</b> <b>because</b> <b>so, so that</b> <b>in order that</b> <b>nevertheless</b> <b>thus</b></p> </div>	<p>2 Timothy 3:1-2  <i>"<b>So</b> put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander."</i></p> <p>Philippians 3:2-3  <i>"Look out for the dogs, look out for the evil-workers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. <b>For</b> we are the true circumcision..."</i></p> <p>Nehemiah 9:26-27  <i>"<b>Nevertheless</b> they were disobedient and rebelled against thee and cast thy law behind their back and killed thy prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to thee, and they committed great blasphemies. <b>Therefore</b> thou didst give them into the hand of their enemies..."</i></p>

Observation	Example
<p><b>11. Atmosphere, Mood, Emotion</b></p> <p>Observe the author's emotion or general feeling of a book or passage. Atmosphere/mood/emotion can be: joyful, sorrowful, angry, loving, rebuking, beseeching etc.</p>	<p>Philippians 4:1  <i>"Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved."</i></p> <p>Lamentations 1:2  <i>"She weeps bitterly in the night, tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies."</i></p>
<p><b>12. Figures of Speech</b></p>	<p>See page 26.</p>
<p><b>13. Lists</b></p> <p>A list is 3 or more items that fall under a certain category.</p>	<p>Galatians 5:22  <i>"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law."</i></p>
<p><b>14. Illustrations</b></p> <p>Observe illustrations the author uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quotes</li> <li>• Metaphors, analogies</li> <li>• Personal experience</li> <li>• Everyday life situations</li> <li>• Past history</li> </ul>	<p>Titus 1:12  <i>"One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'"</i></p> <p>2 Timothy 4:7  <i>"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."</i></p>
<p><b>15. Emphatic Statements</b></p> <p>Observe words that add extra emphasis to what the author is saying.</p>	<p>Amos 9:13  <i>"Behold the days are coming, says the Lord..."</i></p> <p>Matthew 19:23, 28  <i>"Truly say to you..."</i></p>
<p><b>16. Progression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progression of events</li> <li>• Progression of thought, author's logic</li> </ul> <p>Observe the following progressions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the author move to a climax?</li> <li>• General → Specific</li> <li>• Question → Answer</li> <li>• Statement → Illustration</li> <li>• Teaching → Application</li> <li>• Need → Remedy</li> </ul>	<p>Ephesians:  <i>Ch. 1-3 = Theology / Teaching</i>  <i>Ch. 1-4 = Application</i></p>



# INTERPRETATION

## What does the text mean?

What is **interpretation**?

- understanding the author's viewpoint, as well as the viewpoint of his audience
- not asking what it means to us today, but what it meant to the original hearers or readers



Understanding the historical context is ESSENTIAL to good interpretation. Imagine yourself thousands of years back in time. Put yourself in the sandals of the original audience. Try and see the book or passage through their eyes.

## LITERAL, HISTORICAL, GRAMMATICAL APPROACH

Historical Context:

- Who is the Original Audience?
- What is the cultural, political, social, and geographical situation of the Original Audience?
- What did the Original Audience think or believe? What is their religious background?
- What is happening in history or in their church at this time?
- Is the audience facing any problems? Are they struggling with something? What are their strong points?
- Why was the book written?

The bridge between Observation and Interpretation is:

# WHY?

(For example: Why are these words repeated? Why are these people mentioned? Why was this command given?)

**INTERPRETATION**

**OBSERVATION**

Interpretation **BUILDS** on the foundation of Observation.  
Thorough Observation results in better Interpretation.

**REMEMBER:** *A text cannot mean what it has never meant!*

## **INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS**



1. What are the author's concerns?
2. What are the original audience's concerns, questions, struggles, strengths and/or weaknesses?
3. What does this mean?
4. What does this imply?
5. What is the significance of this?
6. What is the larger argument being made?
7. What is the theme?
8. What does this passage reveal about man?
- 9. What does this passage reveal about God? His purpose? His nature? His work?**

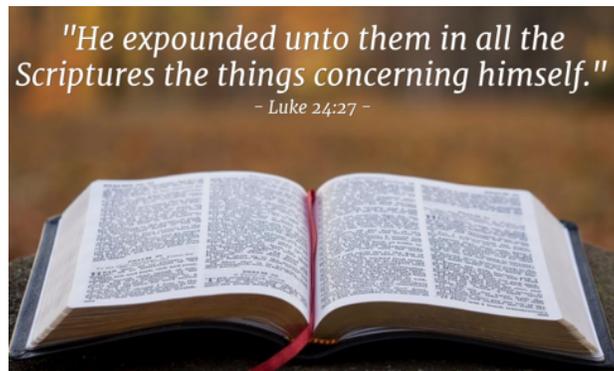
**Cross-Reference** – Let Scripture interpret Scripture.

(For example: Is there an OT quote in the NT? What is it referring to? What other Bible passages deal with this same theme?)

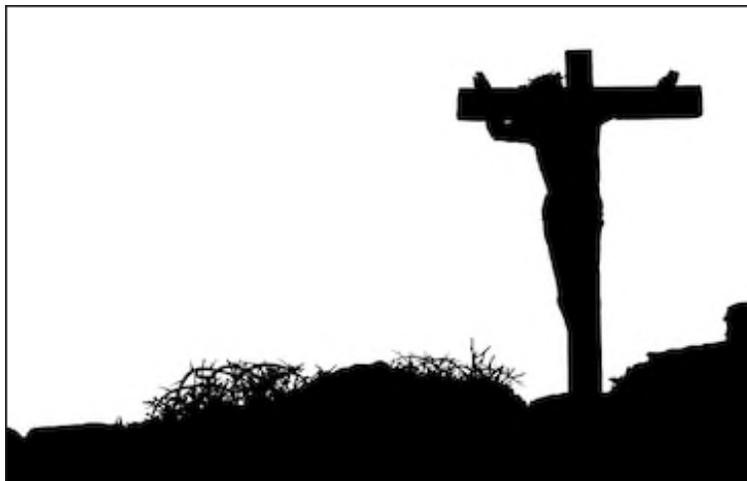
Start with reading the Bible itself first. There is no substitute for the text itself. Then you can tap into solid resources...

**Bible dictionaries**

**Commentaries**



**KEEP IT GOSPEL-CENTERED:** Always come back to the larger story of the Bible: God's glorious provision of salvation for sinners through His Son Jesus Christ who lived, died, and rose for us. (For example: How does this *prepare* for Jesus? How does this *present* Jesus? How does this call me to *live as a follower* of Jesus?)



## **CLEARING THE GAPS**

God's word is spoken in time, yet is *timeless*!

God spoke to specific situations, problems, and questions in the past, because He was personally involved in people's lives, speaking directly to their needs in concrete ways that were appropriate to their situations. *And God still speaks!* Passages that seem outdated and irrelevant to us contain timeless and universal truths for us to discover. But we have to clear the gaps...

**TIME GAP** - 2000 years + away from 2019AD

**CULTURE GAP** – Cultures, customs and ways of living differ from period to period in history; politics, religion, economy, law, agriculture, architecture, diet, clothing, military

**GEOGRAPHY GAP** – Ancient Near East

(Egypt to Iran, Turkey to Ethiopia),

**LANGUAGE GAP** – Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic; 40 different authors with different styles writing in different genres (poetry, history, etc.)

**SPIRITUAL GAP** – God thinks and acts in ways that differ from the mere human perspective

# APPLICATION

What does this text mean for me?



What is **application**?

- The GOAL of Bible study
- As God teaches us His Word, we want Him to work in our hearts. The study of Scripture should result in changed, transformed lives and a deep, abiding relationship with Jesus Christ.

## 2 Timothy 3:16-17

<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

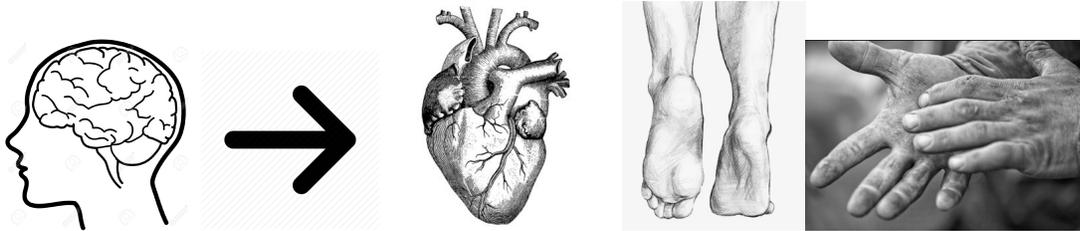
## James 1:22-25

<sup>22</sup>But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. <sup>23</sup>For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. <sup>25</sup>But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

**So**What?

Where do I go from here?

What am I going to do as a result of what I have learned?



**KNOWLEDGE >>> WISDOM**

**KNOWING >>> DOING**

**Obey the Word!**

# APPLICATION QUESTIONS



**1. What are the basic timeless truths in this passage?**

**2. How do these truths apply to my life? Be specific.**

- What am I to believe? Do I need to change anything I have previously believed?
- Are there attitudes/actions I need to change/repent of?
- How does this truth comfort me? challenge me?
- What have I learned about myself or others? Is there any way I need to change in how I relate to others?
- What do I see about the character of God? How does this aspect of God's character speak or minister to me?
- Is there a command to obey? a warning to heed? a promise to believe? an encouragement to receive?

**3. What specific steps or actions can I take to carry this application out?**

Commit your application to the Lord in prayer.

## **PRAY THE SCRIPTURE BACK TO GOD!**

**Remember** that *God alone* has the power to provoke change in our hearts and give us the endurance to obey.

### **Ezekiel 36:26-27**

<sup>26</sup> Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

## **OTHER WAYS TO HELP APPLICATION**

### **Memorization**

### **Meditation**

- *A filling of your mind*, not an emptying!

### **Journaling**

### **Studying in a group**

- Keeps you on course
- Gives different perspectives
- Provides accountability
- Guards from heresy

God gave us His word to  
*communicate* with us and  
*change* our lives!

## DETERMINING THE TIMELESS TRUTHS



A “**cultural statement**” is an expression that can be understood only within a certain cultural context and/or period of time.

A “**timeless truth**” is one of God’s principles that stands true regardless of differing times and cultures.

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Following is a list of commands and practices that appear in the Bible. Your task is to determine which ones apply at all times and in all places, and which are temporary, needed at one particular time in one particular place but not necessarily applicable at all other times and in other places. Think about each one, then mark a “P” beside those that are permanent, and a “T” beside those that are temporary. (WARNING: Some may not be so easy.)

## **Old Testament**

1. Remember the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8) \_\_\_\_\_
2. No person shall eat blood (Leviticus 17:12) \_\_\_\_\_
3. You shall not wear a garment made of two kinds of fabric (Leviticus 19:19) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot (Deuteronomy 19:21) \_\_\_\_\_
5. You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18) \_\_\_\_\_

## **New Testament**

1. Greet one another with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Eat what is set before you asking no questions (1 Corinthians 10:27) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Observe the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:24) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Anoint the sick with oil (James 5:14-15) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Remember the poor (Galatians 2:10) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Sell lands and houses when one becomes a Christian (Acts 4:32-37) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Permit no woman to teach men (1 Timothy 2:12) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Wash each other's feet (John 13:14) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Beware of dogs (Philippians 3:2) \_\_\_\_\_

What principles did you use to determine whether these are temporary or permanent?



### **Old Testament Commands**

Right or wrong, many often assume that some OT commandments no longer apply to us, while on the other hand, we feel certain that others are valid for today.

To properly determine which are valid we need to understand some basic facts about the OT.

1. The OT contains over 600 different commands (mostly in Exodus-Deuteronomy).
2. The OT is the record of God's covenant with Israel.

### **Guidelines for Applying OT commands:**

1. Is the command restated in the NT?
2. Is the command revoked in the NT?
3. What is the *principle behind* the OT command?



**Question: "What is the key to applying the Bible to my life?"**

**Answer:** Applying the Bible is the duty of all Christians. If we don't apply it, the Bible becomes nothing more to us than a normal book, an impractical collection of old manuscripts. That's why Paul says, "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9). When we apply the Bible, God Himself will be with us.

The first step toward applying God's Word in our lives is reading it. Our goal in reading is to get to know God, to learn His ways, and to understand His purpose for this world and for us individually. In reading the Bible, we learn about God's interactions with humanity throughout history, His plan of redemption, His promises, and His character. We see what the Christian life looks like. The knowledge of God we glean from Scripture serves as an invaluable foundation for applying the Bible's principles for life.

Our next goal is what the psalmist refers to as "hiding" God's Word in our hearts: "I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). The way we "hide" God's Word in our hearts is by studying, memorizing, and meditating on what we have first read. These four steps—read, study, memorize, and meditate—make it possible to successfully apply the Scriptures to our lives.

*Study:* While studying certainly involves reading, reading is not the same as studying. To study God's Word means that we prayerfully devote time and attention to acquiring advanced knowledge on a particular person, subject, theme, passage, or book of the Bible. A multitude of study resources is available, including biblical commentaries and published Bible studies that enable us to feast on the "meat" of God's Word (Hebrews 5:12-14). We can familiarize ourselves with these resources, then choose a topic, a passage, or a book that piques our interests and delve in.

*Memorize:* It is impossible to apply what we cannot remember. If we are going to "hide" the Word in our hearts, we have to first get it in there by means of memorization. Memorizing Scripture produces within us a well from which we may continually drink, especially at times when we are not able to read our Bibles. In the same way that we store up money and other earthly possessions for future use, we should "lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul" (Deuteronomy 11:18, KJV). Create a plan for the Scripture verses you would like to memorize each week.

*Meditate:* Writer and philosopher Edmund Burke once said, "To read without reflecting is like eating without digesting." We cannot afford to "eat" God's Word without "digesting"

it. In the parable of the four soils (Matthew 13:3-9; cf. 18-23), Jesus tells of a sower who goes out to sow seed in his field, only to find that some seeds – the Word of God (Matthew 13:19) – had fallen on “rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away” (13:5-6). This, Jesus says, is the person in whom the Word is sown but does not take root (13:20-21).

Psalms 1:2 says that the man who meditates on God’s Word is blessed. Donald S. Whitney, in his book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, writes, “The tree of your spiritual life thrives best with meditation because it helps you absorb the water of God’s Word (Ephesians 5:26). Merely hearing or reading the Bible, for example, can be like a short rainfall on hard ground. Regardless of the amount or intensity of the rain, most runs off and little sinks in. Meditation opens the soil of the soul and lets the water of God’s Word percolate in deeply. The result is an extraordinary fruitfulness and spiritual prosperity” (pp. 49-50).

If we desire for the Word to “take root” in our lives so that we produce a harvest that pleases God (Matthew 13:23), we must ponder, reflect, and meditate on what we read and study in the Bible. As we meditate, we can ask ourselves some questions:

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about the church?
3. What does this passage teach me about the world?
4. What does this passage teach me about myself? About my own desires and motives?
5. Does this passage require that I take action? If so, what action should I take?
6. What do I need to confess and/or repent of?
7. What have I learned from this passage that will help me to focus on God and strive for His glory?

*Apply:* The degree to which we study, memorize, and meditate on God’s Word is the degree to which we understand how it applies to our lives. But understanding how the Word applies is not enough; we must actually apply it (James 1:22). “Application” implies action, and obedient action is the final step in causing God’s Word to come to life in our lives. The application of Scripture enforces and further enlightens our study, and it also serves to sharpen our discernment, helping us to better distinguish between good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).

As a final word, it is important to note that we are not alone in trying to understand and apply God’s Word to our lives. God has filled us with His Spirit (John 14:16-17) who speaks to us, leading and guiding us into all truth (John 16:13). For this reason, Paul instructs believers to “walk by the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16), for He is a very present Help in our time of need (Psalm 46:1)! The Spirit will faithfully guide us into the will of God, always causing us to do what is right (Ezekiel 36:26-28; Philippians 2:13). Who better to teach how to live according to all that is written in the Bible than the One who inspired the Bible to begin with—the Holy Spirit Himself? Therefore, let us do our part by hiding the Word in our hearts and obeying the Holy Spirit as He draws that Word out of us.

**Question: "How can we know what parts of the Bible apply to us today?"**

**Answer:** Much misunderstanding about the Christian life occurs because we either assign commands and exhortations we should be following as "era-specific" commands that only applied to the original audience, or we take commands and exhortations that are specific to a particular audience and make them timeless truths. How do we go about discerning the difference? The first thing to note is that the canon of Scripture was closed by the end of the 1st century A.D. This means that, while all of the Bible is truth we can apply to our lives, most, if not all, of the Bible was not originally written to us. The authors had in mind the hearers of that day. That should cause us to be very careful when interpreting the Bible for today's Christians. It seems that much of contemporary evangelical preaching is so concerned with the practical application of Scripture that we treat the Bible as a lake from which to fish application for today's Christians. All of this is done at the expense of proper exegesis and interpretation.

The top three rules of hermeneutics (the art and science of biblical interpretation) are 1) context; 2) context; 3) context. Before we can tell 21st-century Christians how the Bible applies to them, we must first come to the best possible understanding of what the Bible meant to its original audience. If we come up with an application that would have been foreign to the original audience, there is a very strong possibility that we did not interpret the passage correctly. Once we are confident that we understand what the text meant to its original hearers, we then need to determine the width of the chasm between us and them. In other words, what are the differences in language, time, culture, geography, setting and situation? All of these must be taken into account before application can be made. Once the width of the chasm has been measured, we can then attempt to build the bridge over the chasm by finding the commonalities between the original audience and ourselves. Finally, we can then find application for ourselves in our time and situation.

Another important thing to note is that each passage has only one correct interpretation. It can have a range of application, but only one interpretation. What this means is that some applications of biblical passages are better than others. If one application is closer to the correct interpretation than another, then it is a better application of that text. For example, many sermons have been preached on 1 Samuel 17 (the David and Goliath story) that center on "defeating the giants in your life." They lightly skim over the details of the narrative and go straight to application, and that application usually involves allegorizing Goliath into tough, difficult and intimidating situations in one's life that must be overcome by faith. There is also an attempt to allegorize the five smooth stones David picked up to defeat his giant. These sermons usually conclude by exhorting us to be faithful like David.

While these interpretations make engaging sermons, it is doubtful the original audience would have gotten that message from this story. Before we can apply the truth in 1 Samuel 17, we must know how the original audience understood it, and that means determining the overall purpose of 1 Samuel as a book. Without going into a detailed exegesis of 1 Samuel 17, let's just say it's not about defeating the giants in your life with faith. That may be a distant application, but as an interpretation of the passage, it's alien to the text. God is the hero of the story, and David was His chosen vehicle to bring salvation to His people. The story contrasts the people's king (Saul) with God's king (David), and it also foreshadows what Christ (the Son of David) would do for us in providing our salvation.

Another common example of interpreting with disregard of the context is John 14:13-14. Reading this verse out of context would seem to indicate that if we ask God anything (unqualified), we will receive it as long as we use the formula "in Jesus' name." Applying the rules of proper hermeneutics to this passage, we see Jesus speaking to His disciples in the upper room on the night of His eventual betrayal. The immediate audience is the disciples. This is essentially a promise to His disciples that God will provide the necessary resources for them to complete their task. It is a passage of comfort because Jesus would soon be leaving them. Is there an application for 21st-century Christians? Of course! If we pray in Jesus' name, we pray according to God's will and God will give us what we need to accomplish His will in and through us. Furthermore, the response we get will always glorify God. Far from a "carte blanche" way of getting what we want, this passage teaches us that we must always submit to God's will in prayer, and that God will always provide what we need to accomplish His will.

Proper biblical interpretation is built on the following principles:

1. Context. To understand fully, start small and extend outward: verse, passage, chapter, book, author and testament/covenant.
2. Try to come to grips with how the original audience would have understood the text.
3. Consider the width of the chasm between us and the original audience.
4. It's a safe bet that any moral command from the Old Testament that is repeated in the New Testament is an example of a "timeless truth."
5. Remember that each passage has one and only one correct interpretation, but can have many applications (some better than others).
6. Always be humble and don't forget the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation. He has promised to lead us into all truth (John 16:13).

Biblical interpretation is as much an art as it is science. There are rules and principles, but some of the more difficult or controversial passages require more effort than others. We should always be open to changing an interpretation if the Spirit convicts and the evidence supports.

## Question: "Do Christians have to obey the Old Testament law?"

**Answer:** The key to understanding the relationship between the Christian and the Law is knowing that the Old Testament law was given to the nation of Israel, not to Christians. Some of the laws were to reveal to the Israelites how to obey and please God (the Ten Commandments, for example). Some of the laws were to show the Israelites how to worship God and atone for sin (the sacrificial system). Some of the laws were intended to make the Israelites distinct from other nations (the food and clothing rules). None of the Old Testament law is binding on Christians today. When Jesus died on the cross, He put an end to the Old Testament law (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:23–25; Ephesians 2:15).

In place of the Old Testament law, Christians are under the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2), which is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...and to love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39). If we obey those two commands, we will be fulfilling all that Christ requires of us: “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:40). Now, this does not mean the Old Testament law is irrelevant today. Many of the commands in the Old Testament law fall into the categories of “loving God” and “loving your neighbor.” The Old Testament law can be a good guidepost for knowing how to love God and knowing what goes into loving your neighbor. At the same time, to say that the Old Testament law applies to Christians today is incorrect. The Old Testament law is a unit (James 2:10). Either all of it applies, or none of it applies. If Christ fulfilled some of it, such as the sacrificial system, He fulfilled all of it.

“This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). The Ten Commandments were essentially a summary of the entire Old Testament law. Nine of the Ten Commandments are clearly repeated in the New Testament (all except the command to observe the Sabbath day). Obviously, if we are loving God, we will not be worshipping false gods or bowing down before idols. If we are loving our neighbors, we will not be murdering them, lying to them, committing adultery against them, or coveting what belongs to them. The purpose of the Old Testament law is to convict people of our inability to keep the law and point us to our need for Jesus Christ as Savior (Romans 7:7-9; Galatians 3:24). The Old Testament law was never intended by God to be the universal law for all people for all of time. We are to love God and love our neighbors. If we obey those two commands faithfully, we will be upholding all that God requires of us.



### **New Testament Commands**

Much of the teaching of the NT can be applied directly to us today, but sometimes a biblical teaching is directed so specifically to the culture of the ancient world, that another culture cannot understand it. As previously stated, we need to evaluate whether specific statements are cultural and temporary, or timeless; spanning across all ages. We should understand that *every cultural expression in the Bible is the result of some timeless principle*. And even though a cultural expression cannot be carried over directly to another culture, the timeless truth behind it can. Just because it is cultural does not mean it can be ignored.



# EXAMPLES

## Applying Biblical Examples

There are many excellent examples in the Bible. The difficulty however, is knowing which examples we are to follow and which we should avoid. Information the author gives us about the example will determine our application.

- **Explicit Examples:** The author tells explicitly whether a person or group is good or bad.
- **Implicit Examples:** There are no explicit statements about whether the actions of the example are right or wrong, but the author gives implicit approval or disapproval of what is done.

# PROMISES

## Applying Biblical Promises

Because we are no longer under the Old Covenant, we cannot assume that promises of that covenant directly apply to us. In fact, most of them do not. Such promises are usually associated with the blessings God promised the people of Israel if they obeyed His Law. Before applying a Biblical promise, we must *identify the person or group to whom the promise was originally given*. We cannot ignore the Original Audience and historical context of these books without serious danger of misapplying what we read.

### Categories of Promises Directly Intended for Us:

1. Promises that are universal in scope
2. Promises given to the church
3. Promises given to other groups to which we belong

## **Conditional vs. Unconditional**

Once we conclude that a promise applies to us, we must also ask whether its fulfillment is dependent in any way on our actions or attitudes.

## **Promises vs. Principles**

A *principle* is not the same as a *promise*. A principle is usually based on who God is - and God never changes. But a promise is based on what God has said He would or would not do. Both the conditions and the recipients of His promise have sometimes changed greatly from the Old to the New Covenant.

## **Promises vs. Proverbs**

In spite of appearance, most proverbs are not promises. They are wise sayings or principles that are generally true of life. Those who follow the advice given in Proverbs will have wisdom for dealing with the practical areas of life.



# BACKGROUND INFORMATION



## **Author & Audience**

Who wrote the book?

To whom was the book written? (Original Readers)

When was the book written?

Where was the book written from?

## **Historical Context**

### **Old Testament**

What is God doing in Israel's history at this time?

What is the religious, social, and political situation at this time?

### **New Testament:**

What is the historical setting of the original audience?

Culture?

Religious situation/background?

Political/geographical situation?

What is happening in the church at this time?

- Strengths & Weaknesses?
- Problems, struggles, questions they may have been asking?

## **Type of Literature**

What type(s) of literature is the book composed of?

## **Survey of Book**

What is the main idea of the book?

What is the major reason that the book was written? (Author's goal/purpose in writing)

# STRUCTURE & COMPOSITION



## Levels of Structure

Words in phrases → Sentences → Paragraphs → Segments →  
Sections → Divisions → Books → OT & NT

## Kinds of Structure

1. **Geographical:** places (Acts, Joshua)
2. **Chronological:** time and events (Genesis, Luke)
3. **Biographical:** persons (Judges, Ruth)
4. **Topical:** ideas (Jeremiah, Matthew)
5. **Logical:** progression of thoughts or ideas (Romans, Galatians)
6. **Epistolary:** letter (Ephesians, Philemon)
7. **Anthology:** collections (Proverbs)

## Laws of Composition

The composition of a book reflects the author's style – how the author expresses himself or arranges his material. These following compositional considerations are to be discovered from the text, not imposed upon it.

1. **Comparison:** alike (Romans 7:1-6)
2. **Contrast:** unlike (Acts 4:36-5:1)
3. **Repetition:** recurrence (“holy” in Leviticus)
4. **Principality:** emphasis and de-emphasis [attention to what's and isn't stated] (Gospels = note the amount of space devoted to the last week of Jesus' life)
5. **Continuity:** progression (the 3 “lost” parables in Luke 15)
6. **Climax:** everything builds to a high point (Job, Revelation, Ecclesiastes)
7. **Radiation:** central point or theme and everything ties into it (Philemon 10 / Philippians 2:1-11)

8. **Interchange:** subject A > subject B > subject A (Luke 1-3 = [A] John's birth announced [B] Jesus' birth announced [A] John born [B] Jesus born)
9. **Cruciality:** pivotal or turning point (Mark 8:27-30 / 2 Samuel 11-12)
10. **Harmony:** unity, everything fits together (Hebrews = centers around the superiority of Christ)
11. **Interrogation:** asking of questions (Romans 6-7 / Habakkuk / Malachi)
12. **General to Specific:** (1 Corinthians = book begins by talking about wisdom in general terms and then moves into the specific lack of wisdom in the Corinthian church)
13. **Problems to Solution:** (1 Corinthians)
14. **Theological to Application:** (Galatians)

# FIGURES OF SPEECH



A figure of speech is “a literary mode of expression in which words are used out of their literal sense to suggest a picture or image. A form of expression in which words are intentionally used in other than a plain or literal way so as to produce fresh, vivid, or poetic effects.”

(Websters)

**Simile:** A direct comparison of two things that are essentially different. Characterized by use of: *like, as, so*.

- Revelation 1:14 “His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like burning fire.”

**Metaphor:** An implied comparison between two objects without the use of like, as or so. Asserts that one thing is another.

- John 10:9 “I am the door.”

**Allegory:** An extended metaphor that has the form of a story.

- Galatians 4:21-31 Hagar & Sarah :: Law & Faith

**Analogy:** A rather full comparison showing several points of similarity between unlike things.

- Ephesians 5:21-33 The body & the church

**Irony & Sarcasm:** Irony is stating one thing, but implying something different or meaning the exact opposite. When used to taunt and ridicule, irony is called sarcasm.

- Judges 10:14 “Go and cry to the gods whom you have chosen. Let them deliver you in the time of your distress.”

**Personification:** The attribution of life or human qualities to inanimate objects. The representation of an object as if it were a person.

- Leviticus 18:25 “The land vomited out its inhabitants...”

**Apostrophe:** Addressing or speaking to things, abstract ideas or imaginary objects.

- 1Co 15:55 “O death, where is your sting?”

**Hyperbole:** Exaggeration, not with the intent to deceive, but to emphasize and intensify an impression, make or reinforce a point.

- Matthew 5:29 “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away...”

**Rhetorical Questions:** Questions posed for which the author doesn't expect or wait for an answer.

- Matthew 7:16 “Are grapes gathered from thorns?”

**Litotes:** The use of understatement. A phrase that understates or lessens one thing in order to magnify another. The opposite of hyperbole, often used as irony.

- Acts 14:28 “they remained no little time with the disciples”

**Metonymy:** The substitution of one term for another - usually a closely associated term.

- Romans 3:30 “Circumcision” for “Jews”

**Synecdoche:** Part of something is mentioned, but the whole is meant.

- James 4:8b “Cleanse your hands”

**Eponymy:** A sub-division of synecdoche in which an individual stands for the whole nation.

- Hebrews 11:2 “Ephraim has encompassed me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit...”

**Merismus:** a combination of parts of the whole to express totality.

- Psalms 72:8 “May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth!”

**Euphemism:** The substitution of a mild, indirect or vague expression for a harsh, blunt one. A cultured or less offensive way to state something. Euphemisms are used to indirectly discuss such topics as bodily functions, anatomy, reproduction, death, etc.

- John 11:11 “Lazarus has fallen asleep”

**Anthropomorphism:** The practice of describing God in human terms as if he has hands, feet, a face, etc.

- John 10:29 “No one is able to snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”

**Idiom:** An expression belonging to a particular language that cannot be understood by the individual meaning of the terms.

- Acts 26:14 “It hurts you to kick against the goads.”

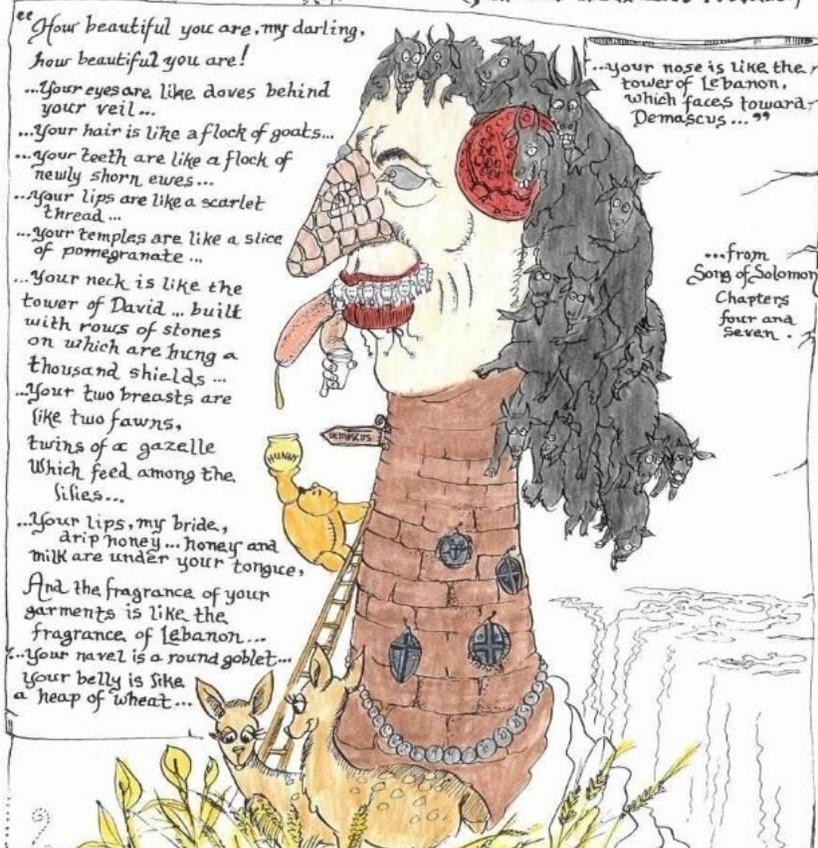
**Type:** A prefiguring symbol such as an OT event (or person) prefiguring an event (or person) in the NT. It is best to have the type explicitly mentioned in the NT.

- 1 Corinthians 5:7 OT Passover lamb typified Christ, the ultimate sacrificial lamb.

**Symbol:** Something that stands for another meaning in addition to its ordinary meaning. It is usually a visual image that represents an invisible concept. In interpreting symbols one is not free to impose his own interpretation but he must discover the author’s intention by taking into consideration: the culture, principles of interpretation, the overall message of the book, and in many cases the author’s own specific definition.

- Revelation 1:12-20 7 lampstands > 7 churches; 7 stars > angels of 7 churches

# The Song of Solomon Illustrated (For our literalist friends.)





## How Solomon saw Abishag

Your eyes are like doves  
Your hair is like a flock of goats  
Your teeth are like a flock of ewes  
Your lips are like a scarlet thread  
Your temples are a slice of a pomegranate  
Your neck is like the tower of David  
Your breasts are like two fawn gazelle  
(Song of Solomon 4:1-5)

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# GENRES

The Bible is a work of literature. Literature comes in different genres, or categories based on style, and each is read and appreciated differently from another. For example, to confuse a work of science fiction with a medical textbook would cause many problems—they must be understood differently. And both science fiction and a medical text must be understood differently from poetry. Therefore, accurate exegesis and interpretation takes into consideration the purpose and style of a given book or passage of Scripture. In addition, some verses are meant figuratively, and proper discernment of these is enhanced by an understanding of genre. An inability to identify genre can lead to serious misunderstanding of Scripture.

The main genres found in the Bible are these: law, history, wisdom, poetry, narrative, epistles, prophecy and apocalyptic literature. The summary below shows the differences between each genre and how each should be interpreted:

**LAW:** This includes the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The purpose of law is to express God's sovereign will concerning government, priestly duties, social responsibilities, etc. Knowledge of Hebrew manners and customs of the time, as well as a knowledge of the covenants, will complement a reading of this material.

**HISTORY:** Stories and epics from the Bible are included in this genre. Almost every book in the Bible contains some history, but Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Acts are predominately history. Knowledge of secular history is crucial, as it dovetails perfectly with biblical history and makes interpretation much more robust.

**WISDOM:** This is the genre of aphorisms that teach the meaning of life and how to live. Some of the language used in wisdom literature is metaphorical and poetic, and this should be taken into account during analysis. Included are the books of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes.

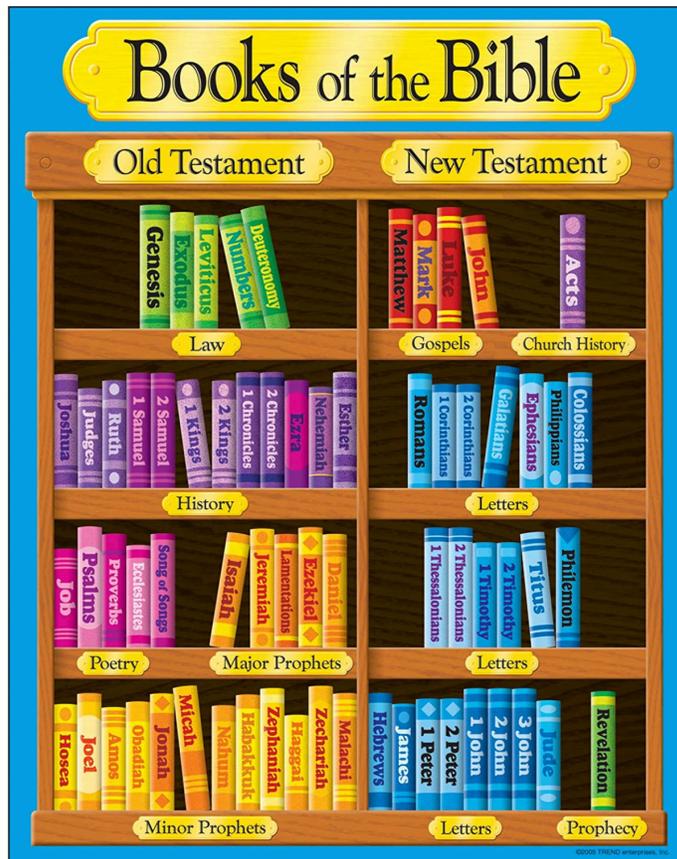
**POETRY:** These include books of rhythmic prose, parallelism, and metaphor, such as Song of Solomon, Lamentations and Psalms. We know that many of the psalms were written by David, himself a musician, or David's worship leader, Asaph. Because poetry does not translate easily, we lose some of the musical "flow" in English. Nevertheless, we find a similar use of idiom, comparison and refrain in this genre as we find in modern music.

**NARRATIVE:** This genre includes the Gospels, which are biographical narratives about Jesus, and the books of Ruth, Esther, and Jonah. A reader may find bits of other genres within the Gospels, such as parable (Luke 8:1-15) and discourse (Matthew 24). The book of Ruth is a perfect example of a well-crafted short story, amazing in its succinctness and structure.

**EPISTLES:** An epistle is a letter, usually in a formal style. There are 21 letters in the New Testament from the apostles to various churches or individuals. These letters have a style very similar to modern letters, with an opening, a greeting, a body, and a closing. The content of the Epistles involves clarification of prior teaching, rebuke, explanation, correction of false teaching and a deeper dive into the teachings of Jesus. The reader would do well to understand the cultural, historical and social situation of the original recipients in order to get the most out of an analysis of these books.

**PROPHECY:** The Prophetic writings are the Old Testament books of Isaiah through Malachi, and the New Testament book of Revelation. They include predictions of future events, warnings of coming judgment, and an overview of God's plan for Israel. Apocalyptic literature is a specific form of prophecy, largely involving symbols and imagery and predicting disaster and destruction. We find this type of language in Daniel (the beasts of chapter 7), Ezekiel (the scroll of chapter 3), Zechariah (the golden lampstand of chapter 4), and Revelation (the four horsemen of chapter 6). The Prophetic and Apocalyptic books are the ones most often subjected to faulty eisegesis and personal interpretation based on emotion or preconceived bias. However, Amos 3:7 tells us, "Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets." Therefore, we know that the truth has been told, and it can be known via careful exegesis, a familiarity with the rest of the Bible, and prayerful consideration. Some things will not be made clear to us except in the fullness of time, so it is best not to assume to know everything when it comes to prophetic literature.

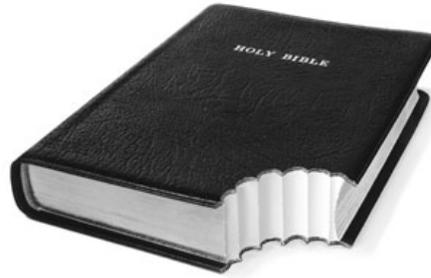
An understanding of the genres of Scripture is vital to the Bible student. If the wrong genre is assumed for a passage, it can easily be misunderstood or misconstrued, leading to an incomplete and fallacious understanding of what God desires to communicate. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33), and He wants us to "correctly [handle] the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Also, God wants us to know His plan for the world and for us as individuals. How fulfilling it is to come to "grasp how wide and long and high and deep" (Ephesians 3:18) is the love of God for us!



## GENRES OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

LAW	HISTORY	WISDOM & POETRY	PROPHECY	GOSPEL	LETTERS
<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b> Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b> Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther <b>NEW TESTAMENT</b> Acts	<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b> Job Psalm Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs	<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b> Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel Hosea Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi <b>NEW TESTAMENT</b> Revelation	<b>NEW TESTAMENT</b> Matthew Mark Luke John	<b>PAULINE</b> Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon <b>GENERAL</b> Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude

# Don't forget to eat!



## Matthew 4:4

<sup>4</sup>But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”