“Getting the Most Out of Your Bible”

An Introduction to Bible Interpretation

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* Everyone is an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture; the question is: “Will you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ one?”
* Danger in studying Scripture: reading our own ideas, beliefs, or opinions \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_text, which can make a passage say/mean something that God did not intend it to.
* INTERPRETIVE KEYS FOR SCRIPTURE:

FIRST: Authorial Intent – what did the author mean this text \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

 NOT: “Well, what does this text mean to you?”

SECOND: How does the author’s intended meaning \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ today?

THIRD: What’s the context for this book/section of Scripture?

* It’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - the historical situation in Israel or the church that led to the need for these words to be written.

FOURTH: What’s the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_context: words only have meaning in sentences, paragraphs, chapters, books, and testaments.

* So, how does this passage relate to its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ verses?
* Never pluck a verse out of its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!

THE PROPER STARTING POINT: We want to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the text what God originally intended it to mean when it was first spoken or written and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ apply it to our lives!

* Invest in a good \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Bible (Concordia or ESV):
* Solid – ESV, NASB, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, NIV, HCSB
* Weaker – The Message, LB, NLT
* Avoid – Scofield Study Bible, The Message Remix

Study One: Interpreting Biblical Narrative (Stories)

* \_\_\_\_\_% of the First Testament is narrative.

AVOID

1. The hunt for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ meaning or allegories (i.e, - this stands for this)
2. Using the narratives to teach \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lessons of right or wrong.
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - ization: turning Bible characters into examples “be a better \_\_\_\_\_”

NOTE

1. The Scene: narratives are comprised of different \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; identify each scene.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: location, time, place, etc.
3. The Characters and their development, including any noted traits or details.
	1. Usually 1 – 3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: compare/contrast with others & their response to God.
	2. Especially \_\_\_\_\_\_\_: give special attention to His words and actions as He directs salvation-history to redeem a people for Himself from every tribe, nation, and tongue. What does the text reveal/communicate about God – His presence in the story, His character, nature, purpose, ways, commands, or covenant faithfulness?
4. The Plot: every narrative has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
	* What \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/problem (physical, spiritual, military, familial, covenantal) is introduced that needs resolving?
	* The story/problem will build towards a crisis or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: “What will happen now?”
	* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and any following \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Dialogue: often carries the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the passage.
	* Where is it first introduced and by whom? Why not simply more narration?
	* What does it reveal about the speaker?

\*\*The author’s intended meaning or purpose can be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*\*How does the narrative point the hearer/reader to Christ?

\*\*Just because the Bible \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it, doesn’t mean the Bible \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it!

Study Two: Interpreting Biblical Prophecy

The Importance of Prophetic Interpretation:

* Over \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the 31,124 verses in Scripture are prophetic in nature ( \_\_\_\_%).
* Most prophetic books in the OT: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (65%); \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (60%); and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (59%) of their respective verses.
* Most prophetic books in the NT: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (63%); \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (26%); and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (23%)

Two Kinds of Biblical Prophecy

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-telling: future events/acts of God
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-telling: speaking God’s Word to the immediate, historical situation (i.e., God’s Word to the “then and there” community); otherwise, prophecies would have had zero meaning for its hearers until NT interpreters finally understood it for the first time.
	+ Jeremiah 19:3-5, 14-15; 20:1-2
	+ Isaiah 65:17-25

Functions of Biblical Prophecy

1. The prophets’ sermons were not original/from scratch, but they based their preaching on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Torah) .
2. The prophets were more CEMs (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Enforcement Mediators):
	1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ covenants: based upon Leviticus 26:14-39 and Deuteronomy 4:25-28; 28:15-68; 30:1-20.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for obedience: life, health, rain, crops, prosperity, safety, etc.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for disobedience: drought, disease, famine, danger, distress, defeat, destruction, death, disgrace, and deportation.
	1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ covenants: pure promise (Genesis 15:9-21; 2 Samuel 7:4-16)
1. Their message was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ word and backed by/carried divine \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., Jeremiah 1:1-10).

Some Interpretive Keys for Prophecy

1. Don’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it.
2. Don’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it: futurology becomes your hobbyhorse!
3. Remember not to search for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ meanings or to allegorize prophecy.
4. Prophetic \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - many prophecies blend together both near and distant aspects of the prediction in one and the same vision … a *now* AND a *not-yet even greater fulfillment* (partially at Jesus’ first coming & fully at Jesus’ second coming). Hence, prophecy can have multiple referents/fulfillments, yet to the prophet: it’s one and the same vision.
5. Sometimes Scripture gives the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/s of the prophecy:
	1. Daniel 7:1-8 & 7:15-28 (NOTE also Daniel’s interlude – 7:9-14!!!)
	2. Revelation 12:1-6 & 12:7-12.

*“Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”* ~Paul, 1 Corinthians 13:12

1. Never separate a prophecy from its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ context!
2. Use \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ passages of Scripture to help interpret \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ verses/sections.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| THE LAST DAY EVENTS | 1 Thessalonians |  |
| Christ Returns | 4:16 | 24:30; 25:31 |
| from heaven | 4:16 | 24:30 |
| accompanied by angels | 4:16 | 24:31; 25:31 |
| with a trumpet of God | 4:16 | 24:31 |
| believers gathered to Christ | 4:17 | 24:31, 40-41; 25:32-34 |
| in clouds | 4:17 | 24:30 |
| time unknown | 5:1-2 | 24:36, 50; 25:13 |
| coming like a thief | 5:2-4 | 24:37-39, 43, 50; 25:10, 19 |
| unbelievers unaware of its coming | 5:3 | 24:37-39 |
| judgment likened to labor pains | 5:3 | 24:8 |
| eternal blessings for believers | 4:17; 5:9-10 | 24:46-47; 25:34, 46 |
| unbelievers will not escape | 5:3, 9 | 24:51; 25:41, 46 |
| believers to be watchful and sober | 5:6-8 | 24:44; 25:13 |

[Table inspired by: G.K. Beale. *1-2 Thessalonians*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2003, pg. 137]

Study Three: Interpreting the Psalms & Biblical Wisdom

About the Psalms

Psalms is actually a book comprised of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150)

The Psalter is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the people of God in worship.

The Psalter is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: they \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and actually \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the emotions of believers.

The Psalms’ Literary Characteristics as Poetry:

1. All Psalms are written in the verse form of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: a line of Hebrew poetry usually has two parts. The second line relates to the first line is one of three ways:
	1. Synonymous: it essentially restates the 1st line
	2. Antithetical: the 2nd line provides the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the 1st line.
	3. Synthetic: the 2nd line emphasizes the 1st line by completing or by expanding it.
2. Image: authors employ images rather than abstractions and prefer figurative to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Metaphor: comparisons that do not use \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Simile: a writer compares \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ using *like* or *as*.
5. Personification: human attributes are given to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ things: animals, objects, or abstract qualities
6. Hyperbole: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for the sake of effect – emotional expression vs literal reality.
7. Apostrophe: the writer addresses someone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as though present and capable of responding or something nonhuman as though it were human and capable or responding.

Different Types of Psalms

1. Laments: laying a personal or communal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ before God, pleading for His help while recalling God’s faithfulness in the past ( \_\_\_\_\_%).
2. Hymns of Praise: admiring God for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: His greatness, attributes, and deeds.
3. Hymns of Thanksgiving: thank God for His faithfulness, protection, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Wisdom Psalms: divine instruction on the two ways in life: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vs \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. Royal Psalms/Kingship: focus on the reign of David’s heir, yet in a fuller way that only \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ can completely fulfill.
6. Psalms of Trust: express a deep \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in God and His goodness – a declaration of trust as well as an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ trust.
7. Torah Psalms: the blessing of God’s Word/instruction and for a life \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it.

Some Keys to Help Interpret the Psalms

1. Try to discover the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ occasion and purpose for writing the psalm.
2. Note the parallel structures in the text.
3. What words or phrases are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? Are there “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” terms in it?
4. How does the psalm teach about God/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Him and our relationship to Him?
5. What figures of speech (metaphors, images) does the psalm use?
6. Describe the “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” of the poem.

About Biblical Wisdom

* Four Primary Books: Proverbs - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wisdom

 Job/Ecclesiastes - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wisdom

 Song of Songs - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wisdom

* Definition of Biblical Wisdom: a humble life-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God’s ordering of creation and will that encompass the entirety one’s life (spiritual, mental, marital, parental, financial, societal, moral, and ethical choices/decision making)

Wisdom Themes

1. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ LORD
2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ human wisdom
3. The righteous and the wicked in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God – behavior & respective outcomes.
4. The problem of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in life/this world.
5. The need to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ call: seek it, pursue it, chase after it, and live by it.

*The LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding*. ~ Proverbs 2:6

Proverbs

* Proverbs are simple, concrete, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, memorable, practical, poetically crafted *general truths* about life; they are NOT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that we must “name and claim.”
* Their godly counsel guides \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ living and hold promise for the life to come.
* Two Major Forms: (1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – 3rd person observations; (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – father to son
* Three Kinds of People: (1) the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (2) the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (3) the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* How does the intended \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ still \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

Ecclesiastes

* Though life can feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, even its monotony is God’s gift, and the one who fears the LORD can still \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ itself. (3:9-13; 5:18-20)

Song of Solomon

* A lengthy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ celebrating the physical and emotional beauty of sexual intimacy between husband and wife as God fully intended them to enjoy.

Job

* Is God’s sovereignty good and just even when life is (unfairly) marred with suffering? Can God and His providential \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
* The climax of the book is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ dialogue (Job 38-41).
* God brings Job to humble \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and a humble \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God’s unfathomable wisdom and unsearchable ways. (i.e., His hidden knowledge, purposes, and plan)
* We don’t have to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our suffering in to order \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Study Four: Interpreting the Gospels

Jesus’ first sermon = Mark 1:14-15 *Now after John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying:*

 “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand;repent and believe in the gospel*.”

The Greek NT uses two different words for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

1. *Chronos* – sequential or chronological time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, etc.)
2. *Kairos* - signifies *the appointed/the right/the critical time or moment in history in which "something" special happens as part of God’s larger redemptive plan.* Hence, *kairos moments* are specific, God-ordained moments which supersede and invade *chronos time* as part of His sovereign plan to redeem fallen humanity and this fallen creation.
* “*The kairos is fulfilled*” – because the Greek verb *fulfilled* is in the perfect tense (a past action with ongoing, enduring results), the literal translation from the Greek would be “is fulfilled and remains in a fulfilled state,” or *“The appointed moment (the kairos) is fulfilled and remains in a fulfilled state/condition [until the end of time…]”*

The BIG question: What *kairos moment* is fulfilled and remains in a fulfilled state for us today?

* “*the kingdom of God is at hand*” – again the Greek verb for *is at hand* is perfect tense (a past action with ongoing, enduring results) so the literal translation and understanding would be = *“and the kingdom of God has drawn nigh and remains at hand [for us today].”*

THE KEY TO INTERPRETING THE GOSPELS is understanding: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_\_, because Jesus’ sermon proclaims that it’s already here/it has arrived/began with His first coming.

* As a result of the “inbreaking of the kingdom of God” NOW in the person and work of Jesus Christ, His sermon summons THE ONLY proper response from every man, woman, and child: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| This Fallen Age (The Now) | The Kingdom of God/Perfect Age to Come (The Not Yet) |
| Temporary/Passing Away | Eternal/Never Ending/Consummated/Complete |
| Satan’s season/Demon-possession | God’s full, un-assaulted reign over all creation (Dan 7:14) |
| Sin | Perfect Righteousness (Ge 15:6; Ro 3:21-22; 2Pet 3:13) |
| Sickness | Perfect Health (Isa 53:4; 65:20; Matt 8:14-17; Rev 22:2) |
| Hard hearts & Disobedience | The Holy Spirit & Perfect Wills (Ez 36:26-27; Jn 20:23) |
| Violence/Hatred | Perfect Peace (Isa 11:6-9; 65:25; Rev 21:4) |
| Death | Bodily Resurrection/Eternal Life (Dan 12:2; Jn 5:28-29) |
| Broken/Groaning Creation | The New & Perfect Creation (Isa 66:22; Rev 21:1) |

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 \*\*\*In Jesus’ first coming (His life, teaching, death, resurrection, ascension, giving of the

 Holy Spirit), The Perfect Age to Come has already begun \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\*\*\*

* Luke 4:16-21
* Mark 1:21-28
* Mark 1:29-33
* Mark 4:35-41
* Mark 5:35-43
* Matthew 27:52-53

But when will The Perfect Age to Come/The Kingdom of God come in full/be realized fully?

* Matthew 24:3-14
* Matthew 24:29-31
* Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46

In the meantime [The Gospel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: as we live between the Now and the Not Yet], we:

* Matthew 28:18-20

 …because (Matt 25:10-13) THE only door into the Kingdom of God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!

Study Five: Interpreting the Parables

About Parables and Jesus’ Use of Them

* Parables are short, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ stories that teach a biblical truth or lesson.
* Parables are found \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Ezek 17; 19; Jdg 9:8-15; 2 Sam 12).
* Jesus’ use of parables \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OT prophecy (Psalm 78).
* Parables account for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus’ teaching.
* In parables, Jesus masterfully \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ divine truth with day-to-day, yet non-literal stories from 1st century culture.
* Jesus’ parables carry \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Mark 4:10-13, 33-34).

Two Kinds of Parables

* (1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ parables: teach us the ways and workings of God’s Kingdom
* (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ parables: Christian character and discipleship as kingdom recipients

Six Keys to Help Interpret Parables

1. Discern the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ point – the authorial intent or what the author meant it to mean, though a parable may have 2 or 3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Try to understand its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ context (Matthew 13:44).
3. Note the parable’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ context. Why did the author place the parable in that particular paragraph/chapter/section of Scripture? How does the parable function in the narrative? How does the parable relate to the verses before it and after it? (Matthew 24:32-34).
4. Remember the “Rule of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Stress” – the shock or punch often come at the end of the parable (Luke 15:8-10).
5. Jesus desires to challenge and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our kingdom thinking, attitudes and behaviors through His use of parables (Luke 18:1-7a).
6. Because Jesus’ parables speak of one thing in terms of another thing, they must be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In other words, Jesus’ parables are entire stories in code; however, NOT every detail in the parable \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/represents something real (Luke 8:4-15)

Stock “Metaphors” for Decoding Kingdom Parables

* Man - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Sowing Seed – spread \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Pairs/2s – religious & \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Delay/Absence – time until \_\_\_\_\_
* Reapers - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Servants - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God
* King - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Vineyard - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Harvest - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Marriage - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Age
* Field - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Birds – Gentiles/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Study Six: Interpreting the Epistles

About Epistles

* Definition of Epistle: A Letter to a Specific \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-Community/Church
* The New Testament contains \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Epistles and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Epistles.

 (General: James 1st – 2nd Peter 1st – 3rd John Jude)

* Epistles contain a variety \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ themselves:
	+ Diatribe – addresses anticipated objections to his argument (Romans 6:1)
	+ Paraenesis - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/to urge earnestly (Ephesians 4:1ff or 1 Thessalonians)
	+ Hymns & Confessional Statements – (Philippians 2:6-11; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
	+ Traditional or Gospel Materials – (Romans 1:3-4; 3:24-26; 4:25; 10:9; Gal 1:4)
* Their form mirrors numerous 1st century letters:
	+ The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
	+ The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
	+ General \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
	+ Prayer wish or thanksgiving
	+ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
	+ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Greeting or farewell
* Epistles are NOT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ treatises, but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ applied to a particular situation or need.
* One crucial feature all epistles have: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ documents – they arose out of and are intended to address a specific concern, problem, or circumstance. For example …
	+ A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that needed correcting
	+ A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ error that needed fixing
	+ A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that needed further light
* Epistles exemplify a deep level \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ care.
* Epistles are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1 Cor 14:37; Gal 1:11-12; 1 Thess 2:13); hence, they are expected to be read and obeyed by the Christian community.

10 Keys to Interpret the Epistles

1. In your Bible’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, note the author, recipients, date, purpose, themes, and general outline.
2. Reading through an entire book in one sitting \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and gives the feel for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Try to identify the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the provoked the author to write to the person or the congregation.
4. To follow or trace Paul’s argument, think \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Trace the author’s argument \_\_\_\_\_\_ paragraph and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ paragraphs.
5. Note/List \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ words/phrases, especially \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ words/phrases.
6. To help understand Paul’s letters in historical context: read Paul’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (Philippi – Acts 16:11-40)
7. Is the text \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ something to us or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ something for us?
	1. To take a descriptive passage and make it prescriptive is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
	2. To take a prescriptive passage and make it descriptive is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
8. When a passage is culture-specific, distinguish between making specific application and underlying, holy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (i.e., 1 Timothy 2:8-15)
9. Use \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ passages of Scripture to help interpret \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ texts.
10. Interpret each \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in light of the other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: let Scripture interpret Scripture.

Study Seven: Interpreting Apocalyptic Literature in the Bible

About Apocalyptic Texts (Especially Revelation)

* Found in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Dan 7-12; Zech 1-6 & 9-14; Isa 24-27; Ezek 38-39; Joel 2-3; Matt 24-25; Mk 13; Lk 21; 2 Thess; Revelation)
* Convey both “\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” end-time events via visions, dreams, angels, etc.
* Prophecy regarding the church’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ spiritual warfare:
	+ Forth-telling: exhortation for people in the present/the church in every age
	+ Foretelling: exhortation for the future
* Revelation 1:1 – the book’s title is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (*apokalypsis*: to reveal, disclose, or unveil) and its divine author is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Despite never directly quoting from the First Testament, Revelation’s \_\_\_\_\_ verses contain \_\_\_\_\_\_ allusions to the Old Testament:
	+ Isaiah 128 (theme – judgment and hope of return from exile)
	+ Psalm 99 (theme – worship of the true God)
	+ Ezekiel 92 (theme – judgment and hope of return from exile)
	+ Daniel 82 (theme – living faithfully under the power of hostile empires)
	+ Exodus 53 (theme – through the wilderness to the future Promised Land)
* Obsession with future end-time events leads many to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Revelation.
* Sketches redemptive history using vivid, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, graphic, metaphoric, hyperbolic, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ words and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
	+ Lions, lambs, beasts, bowls, women, heads, horns, lampstands, etc. are not to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but each refers \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to another reality/set of realities.
	+ Completeness/totality/fullness (worldwide or universal) - \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_
* Outline of Revelation (G.K. Beale, *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary*, Eerdmans: 2015)
	+ 1:1-20 Prologue
	+ 2:1 – 3:22 The seven letters: the church imperfect in the world
	+ 4:1 – 5:14 God and Christ glorified through Christ’s resurrection
	+ 6:1 – 8:5 The seven seals
	+ 8:6 – 11:19 The seven trumpets
	+ 12:1 – 15:4 Seven visions or “signs”/deeper conflict
	+ 15:5 – 16:21 The seven bowls
	+ 17:1 – 19:21 Final judgment of Babylon and the beast
	+ 20:1-15 The millennium
	+ 21:1 – 22:5 The new creation: the church perfect in glory
	+ 22:6-21 Epilogue
		- The structure of Revelation is not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		- The series of judgments are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ descriptions of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ events but from differing perspectives.
		- Revelation 6:12-17; 11:15-19; and 16:17-21 each close with the end of this world/the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Address a serious, intensifying \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on earth, yet a reigning, triumphant, enthroned, victorious, sovereign, ever-present, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God-King/Jesus!
* The beginning, end, and interludes (Ch 7, 10-11) in Revelation keep \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God and the Lamb!
* So Revelation is both \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

7 Keys to Help Interpret Revelation and Apocalyptic Literature in the Bible

1. Use \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ passages of Scripture to help interpret \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ parts.
2. Interpret Revelation (and all apocalyptic passages) in light of the other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: let Scripture interpret Scripture.
3. Lean on a good \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Don’t lose sight of its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. Don’t over \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. Decipher the big picture or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
7. The authorial intent/goal of apocalyptic literature was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but a call to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ believers of all ages that God is on THE THRONE and Christ’s return \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

“*Do not fear what you’re about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for 10 days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life…the one who conquers won’t be hurt by the 2nd death*.” 2:10

Some of Revelation’s Symbolism

7 lampstands = 7 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1:12-13, 20; Zech 4:2ff) representative of all Christians on earth

7 spirits of God = the power of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1:4; 3:1)

7 stars = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ support (1:20; 3:1; 12:4)

24 thrones & 24 elders = the \_\_\_\_\_\_ of God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, OT Israel & the NT church (4:4)

Two witnesses = the church and her prophetic witness to the Gospel (11:7; 13:7; Dt 19:15)

42 months = ½ of a sabbatical cycle = a period of the church’s suffering/persecution (11:2)

Heads/Horns = great wisdom, power and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/dominion (Rev 12:3; 13:3)

7 seals, bowls, trumpets = stresses the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God’s worldwide \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_;

the period of time from Christ’s ascension to His return. The goal is repentance & faith.

144,000 = represents the church (7:4; 14:1; cf. Rev 21:16 for the dimensions of new Jerusalem)

Beast from the sea = worldwide systems (political, gov’t, social, economic, philosophical, educational) Satan can corrupt/control to war against the church (Rev 13:1-10)

Beast from the earth = religious tyranny…infiltrates the church from within via the deception of Satan “the false prophet/harlot” – false Christianity & apostate church (Rev 13:11-18)

Babylon/the great harlot = the great enemy of God’s saints on earth; this is the 2nd

 beast in Rev 13 – the religious beast Satan uses against the church (Rev 17 & 19:2)

1,000 yrs = completeness of time when Satan is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1st – 2nd advents) so church complete her mission (cf. Matt 12:28-29 “the binding of Satan” started w/Jesus’ 1st coming; in Ps 90:4; 2 Pet 3:8 “1000” is never a literal time period but general reference to lengthy time) until 20:7-10

1st resurrection = Christian conversion (20:6); 2nd death = the lake of fire (Rev 20:14; Mk 9:47ff)