

How to Study the Bible

Grace Bible Fellowship Church – Winter 2020

TEACHING NOTES

Week 6: Interpretation: Avoiding the Dangers

February 23, 2020 – Dangers of Misinterpretation

Graphic: “Church of Convenient Bible Interpretation”

Discussion: Satan’s Strategy



Review: OIA (see OIA Bookmark)

Observe - "What Does it Say?" {previous weeks}
Interpret - "What Does it Mean?" {Last week and Today}
Apply - "What Does it mean for Me?" {final 3 weeks}



Discussion: Why Interpret?

Why Interpret?

- Language Barriers
- Cultural Barriers
- Communication Barriers
- We interpret what others say all the time,
we just don't realize it

Importance of Proper Interpretation

Private interpretation never meant that individuals have the right to distort the Scriptures. With the right of private interpretation comes the sober responsibility of accurate interpretation. Private interpretation gives us license to interpret, not to distort. -R. C. Sproul

Take all that you can of this book upon reason and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier man. -Abraham Lincoln

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. -2 Timothy 2:15

For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.-Hebrews 2:1

Keys to Proper Interpretation

Big Picture:

- 1) Ask Interpretive Questions
- 2) Answer Interpretive Questions
- 3) Fit all the pieces together

Main Point:

Finish the sentence **“The Authors main point is ...”**

Goal: To understand what the AUTHOR really meant

Dangers of Mishandling the Text

➤ Misreading the Text

- *Sloppy reading, leading to critical error*

➤ Distorting the Text

- *Changing the text to fit our theology*

➤ Contradicting the Text

- *Pitting one thing against another to invalidate*
- *or call into question what God says*

Dangers of Mishandling the Heart

➤ Subjectivism

- *Make the text say what YOU it want to*

➤ Relativism

- *Encourage everyone to find own meaning*

➤ Overconfidence

- *Assuming you have it right*

Avoiding the Pitfalls

- **** Only Answer Questions Passage Does ! ****
- *- Interpret the Bible by the Bible*
- *- Start with for straight-forward explanation*
- *- Don't let problems cloud clear meaning*
- *- Look for interpretation the author gives*
- *- Look up OT references and Parallel passages*
- *- Look for assumptions/ questions that underlie the passage; principles that come from it*
- *- avoid preconceptions / theological prejudice*
- *- Be careful to find meaning of words in text*
- *- Shoot for depth of knowledge, not quantity*
- *- Never assume exegesis is complete!*

Key to Avoiding Error

- Don't Go it Alone!
- Be Careful who's help you solicit

Consultation

{More on this next week}

Notes on Interpreting Figurative Language

Figuring out the Figurative

We *do not* take the Scriptures literally!

We *do* take the Scriptures in their most natural sense unless the context or some other clear teaching of Scripture forbids it.

"Most natural" includes the literal sense

It also includes the figurative: Simile, Hyperbole; Euphemism; Idiom, etc.

Use the literal unless there is some good reason not to

Use the figurative when

The passage tells you to

The literal meaning is impossible or absurd

The text contains an obvious figure of speech

The literal interpretation is contrary to the context of the passage, the book or the rest of Scripture

A literal interpretation would involve a contradiction in doctrine. Use extreme caution here: be sure the doctrine is Scriptural and not "the precepts of men" (Matt 15:1-11)

{See figurative language chart on next page}

Summary

Observe "What Does it Say?"

- Content
- Context

Interpret "What Does it Mean?"

- Big picture
- Main Point

Today's Study: Ephesians 3:1-22 { Page 4, Line 60 – Page 6, Line 85}

Home Study: Ephesians 4:1-16 { Page 6, Line 86 – Page 7, Line 103}

Read: Article 6 "The Lords Prayer ... With Answer"

Is it literal or figurative?

Genesis 1:5	And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.	Literal Figurative
Exodus 32:24	I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' So they gave <i>it</i> to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.	Literal Figurative
Numbers 22:30	The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?" And he said, "No."	Literal Figurative
1 Samuel 10:23	So they ran and took him from there, and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward.	Literal Figurative
Psalms 19:4	Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world.	Literal Figurative
Proverbs 1:20-21	Wisdom shouts in the street, She lifts her voice in the square; At the head of the noisy <i>streets</i> she cries out; At the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings:	Literal Figurative
Isaiah 7:14	Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.	Literal Figurative
Isaiah 9:20	They slice off <i>what is</i> on the right hand but <i>still</i> are hungry, And they eat <i>what is</i> on the left hand but they are not satisfied; Each of them eats the flesh of his own arm.	Literal Figurative
Malachi 3:8	Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me!	Literal Figurative
Luke 15:4	What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?	Literal Figurative
Luke 18:13	But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'	Literal Figurative
1 Cor 3:10	According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.	Literal Figurative
Rev 21:10-11	And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.	Literal Figurative

Week 6: Ephesians 3:1-22

June 17, 2012 – Mystery and Prayer – taught by Mike Plourde

Ephesians 3:1-22 { *Page 4, Line 60 – Page 6, Line 85* }

OBSERVATION

For This Reason ... because Christ made us One

Paul about to pray prayer of end of chapter, does aside here - but a very important one!

Key Phrase - outlines section - "Stewardship of God's Grace"

A) Mystery Made Know: Divine Revelation to Paul

Mystery: Gospel to Gentiles (but this was seen in Old Testament)

Gospel to gentiles **AS ONE** with jews -

no national or ceremonial separation

Fellow heirs, partakers of same gospel...

Method: Through Spirit's revelation

Through suffering

Through going and preaching

B) Ministry Entrusted: Divine Commission to Paul

1) Christ's Riches to the Gentiles

2) The Mystery to all Men

3) God's Wisdom to Cosmic Powers

What we can learn from Paul's Prayer

- Posture:** Kneel before God - attitude of worship, respect, humility - in action !
- Basis:** God is Father ; God has Glory, God Power lives in us (thus can strengthen)
- Goal:** we be Strengthened - in Inner Man (see ch. 1 - eyes of heart) - by Spirit
we have Christ dwell in us - in Heart - by Faith
- Prayer:** Rooted and Grounded - in love
Comprehend - extent of Christ's love
Know - Love of Christ - that is unknowable!
Be Filled - with all fullness of God
- Power:** Christ - Who's power is at work in us (what power? - ch 1 and 2!!!)
- Able to do more than ask or imagine - what did Paul just ask
- do you get it? God can do even more than fill with all fullness!
- End:** Glory of God - in Church and in Christ - forever!

INTERPRETATION

Main Point of 1st half of passage:

Main Point of Prayer:

APPLICATION

- 1) Remember: O.T. is now OUR history
 - 2) Kingdom about Christ and People
 - 3) There are no Distinctions
 - 4) Church is Central
 - 5) Call to Take the Gospel
 - 6) Call to Live the Gospel
- ** CORPORATE **** (not individual salvation, sanctification, glorification)

- 7) Are you praying like this for each other?
- 8) Do you believe God can do immeasurably more ... of this ... of knowing Christ!
- 9) What would happen if God answered this prayer? {revival}