* Beginning in Bible Study
* **Bible Study Methods for Expository Preaching and Teaching**
* **Introduction**

Presuppositions, Principles, and Dangers to Avoid for Interpretation

* Two Presuppositions
* God, the ultimate Author of Scripture, is a good communicator.
* God generally intends to communicate.
* Four Principles
* Context
* Plain Sense
* Minimalism
* Sharability
* Four Principles
* Context
* All meaning comes from context.
* Four Principles
* Plain Sense
* If the plain sense makes good sense, don’t look for any other sense
* **or you get nonsense!**
* Four Principles
* Minimalism
* A text means all that it must, not all that it can.
* Four Prinicples
* Shareability
* The best interpretation is the one the author and original readers could share with one another.
* Dangers to Avoid
* Artificial Assumptions
* Obscure passages, uncertain interpretations, or minor biblical emphases
* are made to prevail over clearer passages or more pervasive teaching
* Dangers to Avoid
* The other chief danger is the violation of the authority of Scripture through logical deduction from Bible teaching
* Dangers to Avoid
* Logical deduction: **danger**
* when (1) it is treated as infallible truth,
* **or worse,** (2) it is turned against other clear teaching of Scripture.
* It then becomes an extrabiblical philosophical position that has been used to subvert the plain intent of the biblical author.
* Sources of Artificial Approaches
* Becoming enamored with some minor emphasis of the Bible focusing of the minute details, losing sight of the whole.
* Tradition
* False presuppositions about reality, truth, God, or the Bible
* Sin — Rom. 12:2
* Some Artificial Assumptions
* what is foreign by its very nature to the material to be interpreted.
* what is unnecessary to bring out the meaning
* any arbitrary application of legitimate principles
* Interpretation is both an art and a science.
* imposing principles from unrelated disciplines
* what makes the passage say what the interpreter wants it to say
* what is contrary to any basic emphasis of the NT
* Beginning in Bible Study
* Tools and Processes for Bible Study
* Tools for Bible Study
* Don’t skimp on these resources! Quality buys will pay dividends over the years.
* Tools for Bible Study
* A good English dictionary
* *New Oxford American English Dictionary* (2000+ pages, $40 new)
* *Collins English Dictionary Complete and Unabridged*Thirteenth Edition,13th edition, 2300+, $63
* *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary,* 1600+ pages, $10!
* Tools for Bible Study
* A good Bible atlas
* *ESV Bible Atlas,* $42
* *New Moody Atlas of the Bible,* $25
* *Collins Atlas of the Bible,* $79
* Tools for Bible Study
* Bible dictionary
* *New Bible Dictionary,* (one vol., Marshall and Wood; $37)
* *IVP Bible Dictionary Series* (8 vols., from $20 to $48)
* *New Dictionary of Theology* (IVP, Wright and Ferguson, $39)
* Tools for Bible Study
* Bible dictionary
* Uses
* Gaining historical background
* On Bible books
* On customs
* Quickly identifying people[s], places, things
* Tools for Bible Study
* English Grammar
* Phil Williams, *The English Tenses Practical Grammar Guide* ($9; Kindle—free download; paperback, $19)
* Tools for Bible Study
* Concordance
* This is where software will be most helpful
* Most modern translations have concordances available
* Tools for Bible Study
* Theological wordbooks
* *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* *(NIDOTTE)* $229-$327 (nydotty)
* *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis (NIDNTTE)* $190 (nidnitty)
* Tools for Bible Study
* For Presentations (and Fun)
* Dr. Todd Bolen, *Pictorial Library of Bible Lands*, https://www.bibleplaces.com/
* Tools for Bible Study
* Theological wordbooks
* *Vines Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
* Severely out of date because of advances in understanding how language and, especially, lexicography works
* Tools for Bible Study
* Theological wordbooks
* *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* ($27)
* Tools for Bible Study
* Much of this can be solved by using computer Bible study software.
* Tools for Bible Study
* Software (low cost)
* Olive Tree (https://www.olivetree.com/)
* E-Sword
* WORDsearch (Faithlife)
* (Blue Letter Bible)
* https://www.patheos.com/blogs/jimerwin/2014/05/22/top-10-bible-study-software-programs/
* Tools for Bible Study
* Software:
* Accordance: more of a niche software for students of Hebrew and Greek
* Logos “the Cadillac of Bible software” — vast and growing library of resources (72,724 resources!)
* Four Processes
* Observation
* Interpretation
* Correlation
* Application
* Observation
* looking to see what’s there!

Louis Agassiz

Observe, observe, observe

* Observation
* What to Observe
* Anything and Everything!
* Observation

2. Six basic questions

a. Who?

b. What?

c. When?

d. Where?

* Observation

e. How?

* What tools or instruments?
* What agents?
* What resources?
* Why?
* What goal?
* What outcome?
* What motivation?
* What cause?
* Observation
* Parts of speech

Oh, great! English grammar!

**The decision to engage in Bible study is a decision to study language.**

* Observation: Parts of Speech
* nouns — A noun names a person, place, thing, state, or condition
* subject — doer of the action
* object — receiver of the action
* adjectival
* object of preposition
* Observation: Parts of Speech
* pronouns–refers to a noun, replacing it.
* Identify the antecedent
* relation of pronoun clause to main clause?
* Students who do their work may go outside.
* All of them are students who do their work.
* Observation: Parts of Speech
* **verbs — express action or states of being**
* tenses — Carefully observe tenses to see how the text is presenting the action
* voices
* active
* passive
* Observation: Parts of Speech
* moods — methods of portraying how the listener or reader should conceive of the action
* indicative
* definition — statement *is presented* as a reality, as a representation of truth
* function — But we lie in the indicative!
* Observation: Parts of Speech
* moods — methods of portraying how the listener or reader should conceive of the action
* Subjunctive — In English, almost completely limited to a presentation of a statement as unreal: If I were you. . . .
* Observation: Parts of Speech
* Imperative
* definition — expressing one person’s attempt to impose his will on another
* functions
* command
* request
* permission
* even, a condition (John 2:19)
* Observation: Parts of Speech
* adjectives — descriptive (a brick house) or limiting (answer the questions Who? or Which?)
* adverbs
* definition — modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs
* function — answer the questions how? when? or where?
* Observations: Parts of Speech
* **prepositions —** **Work in your dictionary with these words**, considering their meanings carefully.
* definition — connecting words that indicate the relationship of a noun to the rest of the sentence
* function
* Adjectival
* adverbial
* Observations: Parts of Speech

**g. conjunctions** — **Work in your dictionary** with these words, considering their meanings carefully.

i. definition — connecting words that link elements of a sentence with one another

ii. function

a) coordinating conjunctions — link elements of a sentence that have the same function (and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet, while)

b) link elements of a sentence that do not have the same function

Examples: purpose (in order that), result (so that), cause (for, because), concession (though, although), inferential (therefore), comparative (as, in the same way), conditional (if), temporal (when, since), spatial (where)

* Observation

h. key words (terms for word study)

i. big words

ii. significant words: words repeated in the passage or significant to the passage

* theological words
* figurative language
* characteristics: concrete language, that is used in abnormal ways
* the use of figurative language
* Observation
* Paragraphs
* definition — A unit of communication that is made up of more than one sentence and develops a single thought.
* function: see handout on Laws of Composition (p. 9 in the handout)

These work both between paragraphs and within them.

* Atmosphere
* definition — the tone of the passage
* function — determines the significance of statements that are made in the text.
* Observation: Literary Genre

a. prose

* narrative
* telling a story with a plot, not simply recording an event. Study the plot and the characters.
* The point of the story is in the interaction between character and plot.
* Two forms of narrative are common in the New Testament:
* history (Matthew and Luke-Acts)
* and biography (Mark and John).
* Nearly all biblical narrative aims at communicating theology, teaching who God is and how to live before Him.
* Observation: Literary Genre
* epistle — a letter. The simplest form of biblical literature to study. Normally has one or more main points to develop. Tends to develop them logically.
* sermon — a discourse delivered to listeners. Similar to an epistle. Some even argue that an epistle is what one would have said if one were present to give a sermon.
* apocalyptic — a form of literature that uses heavy symbolism and visions to communicate its message.
* Observation: Literary Genre
* Poetry
* prophetic literature
* communication that originated with God and is given to a prophet to proclaim to God’s people (cp. Jer 23.13-18)
* Prophecy ***must***
* cohere with prior revelation (Deut. 13)
* and demonstrate accuracy of fulfillment (Deut. 18).
* Observation: Literary Genre
* psalms — poems that typically either make petition of God or communicate the praise of God. Other functions are possible: wisdom psalms, for example. Heavily characterized by figurative language and by poetic parallelism.
* Observation: Literary Genre
* Wisdom literature
* poetry that strives to inculcate ***skill in living***.
* Comes in two widespread forms
* the two-line maxim
* “instruction” (as in Prov. 1–9 or Ecclesiastes).
* characterized widely by figures of speech and parallelism.
* Observation: Literary Genre
* poetry embedded in narrative — functions typically to summarize the point of the narrative in which it appears.
* Observation
* Other things to look for (from *Living by the Book*)
* what is repeated
* what is emphasized
* things that are related
* things that are alike or unlike
* things that are true to life
* Observation
* The purpose of the work you are studying
* specific statement (cp. John 20:30-31)
* Inference from structure
* Processes of Bible Study
* Observation
* Interpretation
* Correlation
* Application
* Interpretation
* Identifying and solving problems
* Identify problems to be solved.
* Check a variety of translations.
* Check a good **commentary.**

bestcommentaries.com

* Gather information about the problems (from your observations of the passage and other reading)
* Interpretation
* Find possible ways to solve the problems.
* from your own thinking
* from the way various translations handle the passage
* from reading in **commentaries.**
* Interpretation
* ***Test*** the various proposals for solving the problems ***by the details of the passage***.
* Evaluate and draw conclusions
* Interpretation
* Specific issues determining meaning
* the contribution of the meanings of words
* the contribution of the verbs
* relation to the context, including literary form, audience, overall purpose of the book
* the contribution of atmosphere
* Interpretation
* Identify the structure of your passage
* In non-narrative literature

Follow the guide of the conjunctions

* In narrative literature

Use the plot conflict to structure the passage

Use of the passage’s structure for structuring your message.

* Interpretation
* Using quotations or allusions to or from other parts of Scripture
* Assume that the biblical writer understood the passage that he is quoting accurately, and better than we do.
* Interpretation
* Assume, normally, that the biblical writer is using the quoted material to point to the whole context from which the quotation came.

• Study that source context to see how that passage and the passage quoting share common themes.

• Explain the passage in which the quotation occurs in light of the passage from which it came.

* Interpretation
* Goal of Interpretation: Summarize, in one sentence the message of the passage; ask two functional questions:
* What is the passage talking about?
* What is the passage saying about what it is talking about?
* Interpretation
* The problem of ***inductive*** Bible study
* Four Processes
* Observation
* Interpretation
* **Correlation**
* Application
* Correlation
* Definition: coordinating (*and correcting!*) your findings with other passages of Scripture.
* Ultimate Aim: to synthesize all that Scripture says on any given subject.
* Correlation
* Method of Correlation — identifying [all] other passages that bear on the same subject as the one you have been studying.
* The earlier your passage appears in the Bible, the more needful this step is, since early commandments in the Bible are sometimes changed or abrogated in the rest of Scripture: sacrifice or dietary laws.
* Correlation
* Method of Correlation — identifying [all] other passages that bear on the same subject as the one you have been studying.
* Yet, even the appearance of such ideas in the New Testament will require correlation with earlier Scripture, for example, the use of the idea of Passover in 1 Cor. 5..
* Correlation
* This step is a needed guard against misinterpretation AND misapplication.
* Four Processes
* Observation
* Interpretation
* Correlation
* Application
* Application
* Analyze the message of the passage in light of the book’s historical background, structure, and purpose.

What application should the original readers of the book have made?

* Application

2 Tim. 3.16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

* Application
* 2 Tim. 3.16-17

Implications

* Every passage of Scripture aims at application in one of three ways, by:
* Application
* Giving application
* Imperatives, exhortation
* Preparing for application
* Look ahead for a “therefore” or “so” or “because.”
* Explaining application
* Watch for, “because,” “for,” “since,” etc.
* Application
* So, look for application either in the passage itself or in its wider context (2 Tim 3.16-17).
* This is the inspired application and must take precedence over all others.
* You will need to clarify how that application addresses a modern audience, but you will still need to identify the biblical Author’s inspired application first.
* You may use other applications, *but not in preference to or substituting for the inspired application*.
* Application
* What does later revelation do with the application?

You ***must*** indicate to your audience what changes later revelation makes. This is only honest and fair to yourself and your listeners.

* Application
* Application does not aim simply at “behavior modification.”
* Pavlov got that with his dogs!
* Application
* Application aims at transformation:
* involves more than the hands
* aims to see people change their value system
* But this can only be done through the power of the Holy Spirit, so we are apt to settle for behavior modification.
* Bible Study for Preaching Christ
* Preaching Christ
* Why do we look for Christ?

Luke 24.25-27 — And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

* Preaching Christ
* How do we look for Christ?
* Through “models” (i.e., types)
* Persons
* Institutions
* Events
* That model God’s future saving work
* so that when it comes to pass, we can recognize it and understand it
* Preaching Christ
* How do we look for Christ?
* Through OT quotations in the NT
* many of which are based on the principle of typology
* Preaching Christ
* How do we look for Christ?
* By observing how any passage prepares for the coming of the Grace of God provided by Christ
* By observing how any passage calls for faith
* Summing Up
* Beginning Bible Study
* Summing Up
* We study because
* the Bible is God’s Word.
* we need our minds renewed
* we need a word from outside the human situation to solve personal and societal ills
* we need to know where we stand in God’s plan
* No one particularly cares what I think
* Summing Up
* So, we study for transformation
* Of ourselves
* and of others,
* a transformation produced by the Holy Spirit working through His Word.