

How To Understand and Explain the Bible (Part 1)

Introduction

I. Why _____ the Bible?

A. The Bible is God's _____ to man.

1. It is verbally _____ in every word, and absolutely _____ in the original documents.
2. In the Scriptures are contained the very _____ of God, as well as the _____ of God for your life.
3. As you continue to grow as a true worshipper of God, you will need to become familiar with what He has left as the divinely inspired guide for your life, and as the source of _____.

B. The Word of God itself testifies to its own _____.

1. We are reminded in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that "All Scripture is _____ and _____ for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in

righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for _____
good work.”

2. As a result, you can be _____ that the Word of God is the
_____ source of wisdom and practical instruction.

C. The Word of God will _____ and _____ you in your Christian life,
and provide you with truth.

1. We will never truly know _____ if we are not getting our knowledge
from what God has revealed in His Word. It is the independent _____ of
truth (John 17:17).
2. The Word of God will never cease to give up riches to the one who _____
_____ the knowledge of it, coupled with _____ to it.
3. Should you be able to live a hundred lifetimes, you could not _____
plumb its depths.
4. Nobody ever _____ Scripture: the book widens and deepens with
_____. -Charles Spurgeon

II. What is the _____ of the Bible?

“There is one _____. The Bible has one Creator. It is one book. It has one
_____, recorded from initiation, through execution, to consummation.

From predestination to glorification, the Bible is the story of God redeeming His chosen people
for the praise of _____.”

-John MacArthur, in the preface to *The MacArthur Study Bible*

A. As God's redemptive purposes and plan unfold in Scripture, _____
are constantly emphasized:

1. The _____ of God
2. The _____ for sin and disobedience
3. The _____ for faith and obedience
4. The Lord Savior and _____ for sin
5. The coming _____ and glory

B. As you pursue a _____ of the Scriptures, keep these
basic motifs in mind.

C. In all your reading, ask yourself what the passage is teaching you about the
_____ of God Himself.

D. Watch for consistent themes of _____ for disobedience and
_____ for obedience.

E. Apply the truths found in the Word to _____ and learn how to obey
more consistently.

F. Always _____ who effected your salvation, and _____
in the fact that someday He will return for you.

III. What is the _____ of the Bible?

A. _____ Testament Introduction:

1. The _____ of the Old Testament can be seen in the following way:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____ (Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Seth)

- c. _____ (Noah and family)
- d. _____ (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph)
- e. _____ (Egypt) – 430 years
- f. _____ (Wilderness) – 40 years g. Conquest (Canaan) – 7 years
- g. _____ – 350 years i. United Kingdom (Saul, David, Solomon) – 110 years
- h. _____ (Judah/Israel) – 350 years
- i. _____ (Babylon) – 70 years
- j. _____ (Rebuilding) – 140 years

2. The books of the Old Testament are divided into the following _____:

- a. _____ (Genesis – Deuteronomy)
- b. _____ (Joshua – Esther)
- c. _____ (Job – Song of Solomon)
- d. _____ Prophets (Isaiah – Daniel)
- e. _____ Prophets (Hosea – Malachi)

B. _____ Testament Introduction

1. The _____ accounts of Christ present the manifestation of the incarnate Son of God.

- a. The gospel proclaimed in _____ to the Jews.
- b. The gospel proclaimed in _____ and _____.
- c. The gospel proclaimed to the _____.

- d. The gospel proclaimed to the _____ of the then-known world (Rome).
2. The Acts of the Apostles presents the expansion of the gospel message, and was written to _____ the doctrine in the churches.
3. The Epistles form the heart of the _____ teaching for the Church. They explain in detail what the Gospels narrate and what the Book of Acts demonstrates in history. These letters apply the truth of the Gospel to real-life church situations.
- a. _____ Epistles (13 letters written by the Apostle Paul)
- a. _____ Epistles (written to specific local churches to instruct them in doctrine and practice): Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- b. _____ Epistles (written to individual pastors for guidance in church leadership): 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus
- c. _____ Epistle: Philemon
- b. _____ Epistles: Hebrews (author unknown – possibly Paul or Apollos), James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude
4. Revelation presents the _____ of God's redemptive plan for both Israel and the church in the eternal state.
- a. Christ is _____ over Satan.
- b. Christ is _____ as King.

IV. _____ Do I _____ the Bible?

A. _____ to Study

1. The _____ for Preparation

a. We are _____ the mind and heart of an infinite and all-wise God.

1) ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² 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, ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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. (1 Co 2:11–14)

2) ⁸ “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. ⁹ “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Is 55:8–9)

b. We are called to be good stewards of _____, not those who speak and say whatever we choose for our own benefit.

- 1) ¹ Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. (1 Co 4:1–2)
- 2) The teacher is always to speak as to an _____.
- 3) Speak so as to _____ and all who hear you will hear what they need to hear.
- 4) If you _____ Christ it does not matter who you else you _____. If you _____ Christ, it does not matter who else you _____.
- 5) ¹ Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. (James 3:1)

2. The _____ for Preparation

¹⁰ For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel. (Ezr 7:10)

¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. ¹⁶ But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, ¹⁷ and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸ men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some. (2 Ti 2:15–18)

a. _____

1) In light of who we are and what we are trying to do, we should not pray just because we think it would be _____ to pray, but rather because it is _____ to pray.

2) Look at the prayers of the psalmist in Psalm 119

_____.

- a) Oh that my ways may be established to keep Your statutes!... I shall keep Your statutes; Do not forsake me utterly! (vv. 5, 8)
- b) With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. (v. 10)
- c) Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law. (v. 18; cf. also Eph 1:18-19)
- d) Teach me Your statutes. Make me understand the way of Your precepts.... Remove the false way from me, and graciously grant me Your law. (vv. 26b-27, 29)
- e) Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall observe it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may observe Your law And keep it with all my heart. Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to dishonest gain. Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, and revive me in Your ways. Establish Your word to Your servant, as that which produces reverence for You. Turn away my reproach which I dread, for Your ordinances are

good. Behold, I long for Your precepts; Revive me through Your righteousness. (vv. 33-40)

- 3) Therefore, the psalmist's major theme is that God's Word is the only adequate guide for _____. It is the only source of absolute _____. It is the only reliable source of _____. It is the only sure foundation for _____. It is the only basis for true _____. -George Zemek

b. _____

- 1) You cannot ever hope to understand the Word of God unless you _____ and _____ the sin in your life beforehand.
- 2) Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:22)

c. _____

Studying is not an _____. There is a purpose for the study: to know God and His expectations.

- 1) _____ apply the things you learn
1. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers. (James 1:22)
- 2) Seek to be _____ to others with what you learn.

B. _____ the Passage

1. _____ the text. As much as possible, try and understand the author's intent in what he is writing.

a. Familiarize yourself with as much of the _____ as possible.

1) With an epistle, this would include the _____.

2) With a psalm, this would include the _____.

3) With an Old Testament or New Testament narrative, this would include the _____ in which your passage is found.

b. Familiarize yourself as much as possible with the _____ you want to study (i.e. once a day for 30 days).

1) Noting _____

2) Noting _____

3) Noting _____

4) Noting _____

2. Make _____

a. Observe the passage _____

Observing the passage literally is to take what is said in the verse or passage at face value. This is important because it establishes two very important aspects of Bible study.

1) Foundations for _____

This will provide us with the necessary raw data to interpret correctly.

2) Formula for _____

This will force us to limit our interpretations to what is actually said in the text, avoiding subjective interpretation based on “what this verse says to me.”

b. Observing the passage _____

1) Nothing in Scripture is going to operate _____. No truth or message at one point in the Scriptures will contradict a truth at another point.

2) Example: Whenever a later writer refers to Noah, we know what that entails, and no writer will say that the events _____.

C. Research the _____ Context

1. Know the _____ involved in your passage.

a. For Historical _____

1) Who is/are the _____ character(s)?

2) Try to _____ each character as fully as possible with the information that is given.

3) Example from Luke 10:38-42: There are _____ main characters in this passage

a) _____

i. He was travelling with the disciples (v. 38)

ii. He entered a certain village (v. 38), and He was welcomed by Martha (v. 38).

iii. He was speaking or teaching (v. 39), and He was sitting (v. 39).

iv. He responded to Martha's question (vv. 41-42).

b) _____

i. She welcomed Jesus Christ (v. 38), and the house is said to be hers (v. 38).

ii. She had a sister named Mary (v. 39).

iii. She was distracted with all her preparations (v. 40), asked Jesus a question (v. 40), and understood His authority (v. 40).

iv. She is described as being worried about many things (v. 41).

c) _____

i. She was Martha's sister.

ii. She was listening to the Lord's words, seated at His feet (v. 39).

iii. She chose the "good part" (v. 42).

b. For _____

1) Who is the _____?

2) Who is/are the _____ of the epistle?

3) Example: Ephesians

a) Author: _____

i. He was an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God (1:1).

ii. He saw himself as a prisoner of Christ Jesus (3:1).

iii. He was a minister of the gospel to the Gentiles (3:7-8).

iv. He was the very least of all saints (3:8).

b) Recipients: _____

- i. Called “saints” (1:1).
- ii. Called “faithful” (1:1).
- iii. Described to be “in Ephesus” (1:1).

2. Know the _____ or the Geographical Setting

a. Examples

- 1) Paul wrote Ephesians during his 1st _____.
- 2) Paul wrote 2 Timothy from Rome during his 2nd imprisonment right before his _____.
- 3) David wrote Psalm 63 from the _____ of Judah.

3. Know the _____

a. Examples

- 1) First Peter was written around the time of the reign of _____.
- 2) The events of Mark 3:13-5:43 all occurred during _____.

4. Know the _____ Context

a. Examples

- 1) Paul’s prison in 2 Timothy was a _____.

When the prison cell was full, the guards would open the sewage inlet and have the cell filled with sewage.

- 2) Women and children during the time of 1 Peter had no _____ of their own. Women were treated as property.
- 3) _____ for background:

- i. Print: NT Introductions by Guthrie or Hiebert, most study Bibles, or Bible Handbooks (Halley, MacArthur)
- ii. Online: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/resources/intros.cfm>

D. _____ the Text: Words and Phrases

1. The passage you are studying will contain _____ that aid in your overall understanding of its meaning. These clues are found in the specific _____ and _____ of the passage, which must be examined in order to gain a solid grasp on the passage as a whole.
2. There are four key _____ elements to be aware of when making observations:
 - a. _____: a key word is a word which, if removed, leaves the passage devoid of meaning (ex. Eph. 2:1 "And you were dead in your *trespasses* and *sins*"
 - b. _____
 - 1) Synonyms are different words that have the _____ basic meaning (like *big* and *large*; *sin* and *transgression*).
 - 2) Example: Gal. 2:15-18, the words *sinners* and *transgressors* are used within the same thought.
 - 3) Antonyms are words whose meanings are _____ of one another, like *narrow* and *wide*; *life* and *death*.
 - 4) Example: Enter through the *narrow* gate. For *wide* is the gate and *broad* is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it." (Matt. 7:13)

c. _____

1) Repetition is a signal of _____

2) “you were *dead*” (Eph. 2:1); “we were *dead*” (Eph. 2:5)

3) “you formerly *walked*” (Eph. 2:2); “we would *walk*” (Eph. 2:10)

d. _____

1) Key phrases are phrases that appear repeatedly or which are significant.

2) Example: “in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6-7, 10). This phrase is an example of a phrase which is both significant and repeated.

E. Determine the _____ of the Passage

1. Identify the _____

A proposition is an assertion or statement about something which has both a _____ and a _____.

A proposition can be either independent (can stand alone) or dependent (cannot stand alone).

a. Exercise: Identify the propositions

1) ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Ti 3:16–17)

b. Exercise:

1) [All Scripture] (subject) [is] (linking verb) [inspired by God] (predicate adjective phrase. (Independent)

2) [All Scripture is] profitable for teaching. (Independent)

- 3) [All Scripture is] profitable for reproof. (Independent)
- 4) [All Scripture is] profitable for correction. (Independent)
- 5) [All Scripture is] profitable for training in righteousness. (Independent)
- 6) [The purpose/result is] so that the man of God may be adequate.
(Dependent)
- 7) [The man of God may be] equipped for every good work. (Dependent)

2. Identify the _____ the propositions

a. Identify the _____ within the passage

- 1) Conjunctions are the key to determining the relationships between the propositions; they are the _____ that tell you which way the movement of the passage is going.
- 2) Some key conjunctions and what they _____
 - a) "But" – _____ (ex.: You were dead in your sins, but now you are alive in Christ)
 - b) "For" – proof of _____ for an assertion (ex.: You will be saved from your sins, for God has promised salvation to all who believe)
 - c) "In order that" – _____ (ex.: God has saved you in order that He may display His grace)
 - d) "Therefore" – _____ or inference (ex.: God has saved you unto holiness; therefore be holy as He Himself is holy.)

b. Identify _____ of relationship exists between the propositions.

_____ kinds of relationships exist between propositions:

1) _____ – Two independent propositions which are linked by a conjunction and are not in a subordinate relationship.

a) Ex1.: All Scripture is inspired by God. Ex2. All Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

(These both stand as foundational assertions.)

2) _____ – subordinate propositions do not stand alone, are dependent, and support the main proposition.

a) Ex.: “so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

b) This subordinate proposition _____ the main propositions. It does not make sense _____. It answers the question of purpose or result: Why is Scripture inspired and profitable? So that God’s people would be thoroughly equipped for every good work. The main idea drives toward this dependent outcome.

c) Recognizing subordinate propositions _____ us from flattening the text into a list of equal points. It shows how the Holy Spirit builds the argument.

3. _____

a. Looking for the propositions is a great way to grasp the _____ of a passage.

- b. Working hard to find the propositions is another way to get into the text, to _____ with it, and to get a good grip on it.
- c. Look for the _____. They will give you the key to the argument or flow of the passage. Look for contrasts, proofs, conclusions, inferences, etc.

F. Consider Biblical _____

- 1. A cross-reference is _____ passage of Scripture that sheds additional light on the text you are studying.
 - a. Why use cross-references?
 - 1) Because the greatest tool for interpreting Scripture is _____ (the analogy of Scripture)
 - 2) Because it gives a _____ understanding of Scripture.
 - 3) No biblical truth is _____ the rest of Scripture
 - a) "People love to see the big picture. They want to know how everything fits together. It is sometimes difficult for them to grasp a truth presented in isolation...Cross-references help sink truths deeply into people's consciousness." -John MacArthur
 - b) The parts take on meaning in the light of the whole. You very rarely have to go outside of the Bible to explain anything in the Bible. – Donald Grey Barnhouse
 - 4) Because it _____ in interpretation

- a) No part of Scripture can be interpreted in such a way as to render it in conflict with what is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture. -R. C. Sproul
- b. What are some _____ for using cross-references?
 - 1) Focus on meaningful cross-references that _____ the understanding of the issue in the passage being studied.
 - 2) Make sure the cross-references that are used _____ they are taken from.
 - a) Avoid proof-texting – i.e., importing the _____ of one passage into another
 - b) Handle each passage as a _____.
2. There are various _____ for of cross-referencing.
 - a. Trace how a _____ is used in the Bible.
 - b. Trace a _____ through the Bible.
 - c. Some _____ for cross-referencing exist.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____ (Strong's, Young's, most study Bibles will have a mini-concordance)
 - 3) _____ (phrase-by-phrase)
 - 4) _____ (Nave's, MacArthur. It is not a Bible. It is an alphabetical arrangement of _____ and where passages are located)

G. _____ Commentaries

1. Commentaries can be extremely _____ in your study of the Bible.

a. Understand the _____ of commentaries

1) Allows us to profit from the in-depth study and _____
_____.

2) Helps us to come at the text from a _____.

3) Helps us to check the _____.

4) Shows us areas we have _____ in our study.

b. Recognize the _____ of commentaries.

1) They can become _____ the
Scriptures ourselves. Therefore, they should be used as the last step.

2) They are not infallible and thus can have interpretations that _____
_____.

3) They _____ what appear to be crucial
issues and questions.

c. Important _____ for using commentaries.

1) If just _____ with this process, use a
_____ general commentary.

a) *The Believer's Bible Commentary* by William MacDonald

b) *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* edited by John Walvoord and Roy Zuck

- 2) For those more experienced, use in-depth, _____ commentaries which deal with grammar, etc. These are multi-volume commentaries, with most volumes focused on a single book of the Bible.

a) *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*

b) *New American Commentary*

H. _____ the Text

1. Application is the process whereby the truth that has been discovered is _____ in life situations.

a. Because Scripture is for _____ not just _____.

- 1) The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity; it was written to _____.
_____. The ultimate goal of Bible study, then, is not to do something to the Bible, but to allow the Bible to do something to you, so truth becomes tangent to life. -Howard Hendricks

b. Because simply "understanding" the text is not the _____ for Bible study...the focus must culminate in application.

- 1) Bible study...can degenerate into a process that's intellectually fascinating but spiritually frustrating. You can get mentally _____ by the truth, yet fail to be morally _____ by it.... Our task, then, is two-sided. First, we must get into the Word of God for ourselves. But then we must allow that Word to get into us, to make a permanent difference in our character and conduct. -Howard Hendricks

- 2) The student of Scripture must always seek to _____.

- 3) The teacher of Scripture must always seek to _____ in such a way that it can be applied.
 - 4) Some have said, "If you haven't made application in your teaching, you haven't fully taught the Word." Question: Did _____ always make application in His teaching? (Example: Matthew 13:3-9)
2. There are some important _____ to follow when applying a text.
- a) _____ the biblical truth. Identify the main message the author is seeking to convey to his readers.
 - 1) Example: In Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul shows that those who were once dead in sin (1-3) have been made alive by God (4-6) to display His glory and live holy lives (7-10).
 - b) Identify specific _____ to follow. Ask what overall principles of action and thought can be derived from the passage and applied to any cultural situation.
 - 1) 7 Key _____:
 - i. Are there _____?
 - ii. Are there _____?
 - iii. Are there _____?
 - iv. Are there _____?
 - v. Are there _____?
 - vi. Are there _____?
 - vii. Are there _____?

2) Example: Ephesians 2:1-10

i. New thoughts about God –

ii. Principles to live by –

3) _____ on the truths learned.

i. Take time to think about what _____ and what

ii. Meditation also involves _____

what changes should be made.

iii. True meditation is _____ the truth with a view to
letting it help and _____ our lives. -Howard Hendricks

4) _____ the truth.

i. Write down _____ based on the passage studied.

ii. Ask, “What _____ to apply this truth?”

5) Remember the _____ of good application.

i. _____: Avoid application that is _____ to put into
practice.

ii. _____: Avoid application that is not _____
_____.

iii. _____: Develop applications so that there will be a
_____ when they are achieved or not.