

A Brief Overview of Bible Study

WHAT DO I SEE?

- Ask who, what, where, when, why... Don't read into it yet; just observe...
- Break down sentence structure and word choice: what do pronouns mean, what verb tenses are used, what does the use of conjunctions, prepositions, cause and effect, shifts imply...
- Look for emphasis by length, purpose, ordering, exaggeration...
- Look for comparisons through similes, metaphors, allegories...
- Look for communication in emotion, tone, mood; identify the original audience...

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- This is NOT "what does it mean to me?" nor is it application.
- There is only one way to interpret the Bible but many applications.
- The text can never mean what it never meant.
- Minimize personal baggage and subjectivity.
- CONTEXT is crucial: historical, cultural, grammatical. Use a reference Bible.
- Interpret plainly, meaning literally, unless there is a good reason not to.

HOW DOES IT RELATE?

- Identify at least one timeless truth from the passage.

WHAT DO I DO?

- Perhaps the most important section, for we are called to be doers, not just hearers. This is the difference between true follower of Jesus and those living under deception.
- Who should I be? How should I think?
- Is there a sin to avoid, a promise to claim, a prayer to pray, a command to obey, a condition to meet, or a challenge to face? (Think SPACEPETS.)
- All Scripture is intended to be understood in the context of mission (disciple-making).
- Learn it in order to give it away!

Old Testament

- 39 books of law, history, prophecy, and poetry.
- Narratives, laws, oracles, genealogies, songs, wisdom, laments, visions, etc...
- Written in Hebrew from around 1500 BC to 400 BC
- The essential character is Israel, told through the narrative in three divisions:

The Story of God's People

- Perfect creation: Genesis 1-2
- The fall of man: Genesis 3-11
- God's promised blessing and judgment to the patriarchs: Genesis 12-50
- God's promised blessing and judgement to a nation: Exodus - 1 Samuel 8
- Israel's monarchy: 1 Samuel 9 - 1 Kings 11, 1 Chronicles - 2 Chronicles 9
- Israel's division and exile: 1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles 10 - Esther

The Writings of God's People

- Job - Song of Solomon
- Work in throughout the Story of God's People

The Prophets from Among God's People

- Isaiah - Malachi
- Work in throughout Kings and Chronicles

New Testament

- 27 books written by (possibly) nine human authors, divinely inspired.
- The Church did not create the New Testament; the New Testament created the Church.
- Historical narrative, letters, prophecy...
- Written mostly in Greek over a span of less than 100 years (beginning ~63 BC).
- All of history was sovereignly orchestrated by God to arrive to the essential character: Jesus Christ.

The Story

- Matthew - written to Jewish people considering Christ.
- Mark - written to Gentiles who were suffering persecution in Rome.
- Luke - written by a doctor/historian for Gentile Christians.
- John - written to show Jesus is the Son of God.
- Acts - "part 2" of Luke, written to show the life and ministry of the Church.

The Letters

- Romans - Jude
- Paul's first missionary journey (48-49 AD) - Galatians
- Paul's second missionary journey (49-52 AD) - 1, 2 Thessalonians
- Paul's third missionary journey (53-57 AD) - Romans; 1, 2 Corinthians
- Paul's imprisonment (61-63 AD) - Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon
- Prior to Paul's death - 1, 2 Timothy; Titus
- Other letters named for the writer - James, Peter, John, Jude, and the unknown author of Hebrews

The Conclusion

- Revelation
- Written by John, while imprisoned, to the Christians facing persecution.