

Hermeneutics 101: The Art of Interpreting Scripture (Part 1)

I. Why study *the interpretation of scripture*?

- A. So that Scripture can ***illuminate our paths*** rather than merely support our position.
- B. Because we don't have a proper fear/love of God.
 - i. The Bible's worldview is radically God-centered.
 - ii. The best way to understand your bible is to read it...read it...read it.

II. Foundational Convictions to Understanding the Bible

- A. The Bible (both OT&NT) is God's Word

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 competent, equipped for every good work."*

- B. The Bible Is A Unity

- C. The Bible Is the Best Commentary on the Bible

- D. Our motives matter: we must intend to understand and obey.

Titus 3:9-10 *“But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.
¹⁰Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.”*

III. Using the Right Tools (You wouldn't set out to build cabinets without the right tools.)

A. The Basic Tools

- i. A good everyday Bible for devotional purposes.
 - a) Marginal cross references
 - b) Have several Bible translations
 - NASB, ESV, NIV, HCSB are four important translations.
 - Young's Literal Translation is helpful.
 - c) This is the most important tool. Always do most of your work here.
- ii. A Notebook/Journal or Word Doc.

B. Other Tools

- i. Concordance [Englishman's Concordance]
- ii. Bible Dictionary
- iii. Commentary
- iv. OT or NT Survey
- v. Lexicon—gives Greek or Hebrew definitions.

C. Have a Plan

D. How to Proceed.... **LIGHT**

i. **Look**

ii. **Inquire** (of God)

iii. **Genre & Geography**

iv. **Hallelujah:** How does this effect my worship?

v. **Transformation:** What is the transforming effect in my life?

Look

A. Read

a) **What does God mean?** Must come after **What did He say?**

B. Observe—we can decide to be careless readers or careful readers.

i. Take Notes

ii. Think and Analyze

a) What is the structure of the text?

b) Are there quotes, or repetitious phrases?

C. Investigate

i. Investigate words you don't understand.

ii. Investigate what various authors say about it.

iii. Investigate Important Questions:

- a) Who was the original author? Why was he writing this?
- b) Who was the original audience? To what need was this written? What was the goal of this particular passage?

Robert Stein assignment for hermeneutics: *“Find the meaning of a pas-sage in one of the Gospels, such as Mark 5:1-20—the story of the healing of the Gerasene demoniac. **The first sentence of their paper must begin, ‘I, Mark, have told you the story of the healing of the Gerasene demoniac in Mark 5:1-20, because _____.’ After filling in the rest of this sentence, they must then seek to defend their view. It becomes clear by this first sentence that the student cannot simply repeat the subject matter...in other words, they cannot simply talk about **what happened**. Rather they must seek to understand what Mark is **seeking to teach by this story**.”***

- c) It is vital that we understand the original intent to the original audience **before** we start trying to apply it to ourselves.

D. PRACTICE TEXT: Mark 1:1-20

- i. Make note: repeated words, special or unusual things, people, places; References—to other passages; Questions—that you have, that come to your mind; Thoughts and interpretation. Quotes (things the characters say)
- ii. Repeated Words and Phrases
- iii. Connective or Linking Words—“and”, “but”, “or”, “since”, “therefore.”
- iv. Time Words
- v. Location or Place Words
- vi. Contrasts and Comparisons
- vii. Unknown Words
- viii. The Core of Each Sentence—look for subject, main verb, and object of verb
Mark 1:14, 15.
 - a) “Jesus came...preaching...and saying...” is the core of the sentence.
 - b) The rest of the sentence fills it out:
 - When did he come?
 - What did he preach?
 - What did he say?
- ix. Figurative Expressions
- x. Logical Sequences
- xi. Anything Strange, Unusual, or Unexpected

Books which may be helpful:

How to Read the Bible Book by Book, Gordon Fee, Douglas Stuart

According to Plan, Graham Goldsworthy

God's Big Picture, Vaughan Roberts

How to Understand Your Bible, T. Norton Sterrett

One-to-One Bible Reading, David Helm