

He Gave Us Scripture: Foundations of Interpretation

Journal Questions

LESSON
ONE

INTRODUCTION TO
BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS



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Journal Questions

1. How does applying biblical hermeneutics change the way you understand the Bible?
2. How do you prepare yourself for the study of Scripture personally or in a group setting?
3. How does interpreting the Scriptures more like a scientific exercise influence your interpretation of it?
4. What comfort and encouragement do you draw from the fact that biblical authors often interpreted the Scriptures with an orientation toward factual and logical analysis?
5. How should *Sola Scriptura* aid and guide your reading and interpretation of the Bible?
6. What confidence do you gain from the historical examples of scientific hermeneutics?
7. How are you drawing near to God as you read and interpret the Scriptures in your current circumstances?
8. How important is it for you to approach Scripture by prayerfully being dependent upon the Holy Spirit?
9. What benefits have you gained from a devotional approach to Scripture?
10. How has a faithful practice of confessing your sins affected your ability to understand the Bible?
11. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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Journal Questions

LESSON
TWO

PREPARATION FOR
INTERPRETATION



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Journal Questions

1. How do you practice dependence on the Holy Spirit as you interpret Scripture?
2. How does the doctrine of inspiration affect the way you read and interpret the Bible?
3. How are you staying in touch with the Holy Spirit in the midst of your current circumstances?
4. What comfort and encouragement do you draw from the fact that God had the Scriptures composed by human authors?
5. What blessings have you received from the Holy Spirit's standing with you and opening your mind to understand the Bible?
6. What type of work do you do in preparation to interpret Scripture?
7. How are you exhibiting the importance of depending on the Holy Spirit in your current spheres of influence?
8. What benefits have you gained from being an exegete of Scripture?
9. How has interacting with other people influenced your understanding of the Bible?
10. How have past experiences affected your ability to interpret the Scriptures?
11. How are your present circumstances influencing your efforts to interpret Scripture?
12. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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LESSON
THREE

INVESTIGATING
SCRIPTURE



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1. How can discovering the original meaning of a biblical passage help us in our teaching and preaching?
2. How can giving attention to the biblical writers affect the way you read the Bible?
3. What are some methods you use for grasping the original meaning of biblical passages?
4. What measure of confidence do you find in knowing scholars today have access to many manuscripts that contain the original words of Scripture?
5. What are some specific ways you can demonstrate your confidence in organic inspiration in your present circumstances?
6. How has divine accommodation influenced the way you interpret the Bible within your cultural circumstances?
7. What encouragement do you gain from the early church's focus on original meaning in their investigation of Scripture?
8. How have you seen modern literary critics have an impact on the way we interpret the Bible today?
9. How are you pursuing the Bible's original meaning within the current ministries you are engaged in?
10. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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LESSON
FOUR

APPROACHES TO
MEANING



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1. What methods have you developed, or do you currently follow, to study the Bible? How do these methods help you? How could they be improved?
2. Is it possible to arrive at a strictly objective understanding of the Bible? Explain your answer.
3. How do you guard against a narrow emotional or intuitive reading of the Bible?
4. What are some ways you have encountered subjectivism in regard to biblical interpretation?
5. How has subjectivism influenced your understanding and interpretation of Scripture?
6. What is the danger in letting your personal experiences and preconceptions influence your understanding of Scripture?
7. What benefits have you received from prayerfully interacting with the Bible?
8. How should you adjust your dialog with Scripture to improve your understanding of the Bible?
9. How do you deal with your questions and opinions when studying the Bible?
10. How has your personal, subjective input been valuable to your interpretation of Scripture?
11. What are some specific ways you can influence others to engage the Scriptures in accord with the authority-dialog model?
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LESSON
FIVE

THE COMPLEXITY OF
MEANING



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1. How does knowing the literal sense of Scripture personally help you as you interpret the Bible?
2. How can viewing the Scriptures as having multiple meanings affect the way you read and interpret the Bible?
3. Do you think there is any value to the allegorical style of biblical interpretation? Why?
4. Are you more likely to interpret the Bible literally or allegorically? Explain your answer.
5. How do you interpret the Scriptures and make them relevant for those in your sphere of influence without misapplying them?
6. How would you respond to critics that argue that the Bible's multiple meanings result from the inherent ambiguities of the language itself?
7. How has using a literal sense approach affected the way you have applied the Scriptures in your present circumstances?
8. What affect has reading the Scriptures with a multifaceted perspective to original meaning had on your biblical interpretation?
9. How can you emphasize the importance of seeking the full value of Scripture in your current ministry?
10. What parameters help you to remain faithful in your interpretation and applications of the Bible?
11. How do biblical elaborations aid your understanding and interpretation of the Bible?
12. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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LESSON
SIX

DISCOVERING MEANING



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1. Do our presuppositions always influence our biblical interpretation? If so, how do we guard against faulty interpretation in light of our individual backgrounds, assumptions and concerns?
2. How has your knowledge of biblical writers influenced your interpretation of Scripture? Give at least two examples.
3. Which features of a biblical text have been most helpful in your own interpretive efforts (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, etc.)? What effect has studying all the features of a biblical text had on your reading and interpretation?
4. Why should you make investigating the historical setting of a biblical book a regular part of your bible study?
5. How much do you know about the Bible's original audiences, and how has this information influenced your interpretation?
6. Of the intentional fallacy, the graphic fallacy, and the affective fallacy, which has been your greatest weakness when interpreting Scripture? Why?
7. Give an example of two legitimate summaries for the same biblical passage. In what circumstances would each summary be most effective?
8. Give some specific examples of times when another person's summary of Scripture has been useful to you in your previous and/or present ministry context.
9. What background and gifts do you bring to ministry? How do your gifts and background help you in summarizing biblical passages? How do they hinder you?
10. What benefits have you gained from studying the Scriptures in a group setting? Has studying the Scriptures with others been easier or more difficult than studying on your own?
11. In your current work or ministry, how do you discover the needs of your audience? What has helped you in adapting the Scriptures to their circumstances?
12. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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LESSON
SEVEN

APPLYING SCRIPTURE



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1. How has your knowledge of the original meaning of a biblical passage impacted your modern application? Give a specific example.
2. What encouragement do you gain from the fact God is immutable?
3. In many ways, our world is significantly different from the world that existed when the Bible was first written. How should these differences affect the way we apply Scripture and minister to people today?
4. As a sinful image of God, should you put confidence in your interpretation and application of Scripture? Explain your answer.
5. What are some specific ways you have reached out to false believers and unbelievers in your sphere of influence? What approaches have been most effective? What approaches have fallen short?
6. What are some practical methods you use that aid you in connecting with the original audiences of the Bible?
7. How would you answer someone who claims that the epochal developments in redemptive history mean that certain parts of the Bible are no longer applicable to us today?
8. Do you find it difficult to interpret and apply the Bible knowing that our cultures are different from the cultures of the original audiences? Explain your answer.
9. How do the basic principles found in the Bible help us bridge the gap between the original audiences and modern audiences?
10. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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Journal Questions

LESSON
EIGHT

MODERN APPLICATION &
OLD TESTAMENT EPOCHS



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1. How does knowledge of the epochal divisions of the Old Testament affect your understanding of Old Testament theology?
2. Abraham believed God's covenant promise and remained faithful to God. What are some specific ways you can demonstrate faithfulness to God in your present circumstances?
3. How can you apply the teachings of the Old Testament to your life without living as if you were in the past?
4. Scripture is essentially the story of the spiritual conflict between God and Satan. How should this reality influence the way we approach the Bible?
5. What are some of the challenges you have encountered when interpreting the teachings of the Old Testament? How did you deal with these challenges?
6. Should we *always* take into account the Bible's single, unified storyline when we interpret the Bible? Why or why not? Cite some examples to support your position.
7. How are the principles of the Old Testament guiding you in your present ministry and circumstances?
8. Does knowing the circumstances and struggles of people in the Old Testament help you when you face difficulties in your own life? Explain your answer.
9. How can concentrating on what God did in the past help you apply the Scriptures to your present circumstances?
10. What ministries are you currently engaged in, and how are you helping others connect the Old Testament writings to our modern world?
11. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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LESSON
NINE

MODERN APPLICATION &
THE NEW COVENANT



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1. Should the Old Testament outlooks on the new covenant impact your current ministry? Why or why not?
2. What impact has God's grand hope for the future, found in Jeremiah 31, had on your personal calling and purpose?
3. What lesson can we learn from Israel when we read of God's decision to postpone the full extent of the new covenant in places like Daniel 9:24?
4. How are you living in anticipation of Christ's return and the time of future glory? Give specific examples.
5. Is knowledge of the inauguration, continuation, and consummation of the new covenant a useful resource in evangelism? Explain your answer.
6. How will the general guidelines for applying Scripture aid you in your current ministry or area of influence?
7. When applying Scripture today, what do you consider to be the most challenging aspect of appropriately connecting original meaning to your audience?
8. The New Testament was written initially for Christians in the early church. With this in mind, how can you relate your own experiences to the experiences of those in the early church?
9. Find a prominent theme in the Bible and illustrate it through the stages of the new covenant using the general guidelines for application.
10. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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Journal Questions

LESSON
TEN

BIBLICAL CULTURE &
MODERN APPLICATION



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1. What impact does the cultural mandate have on your current ministry and/or vocation?
2. How does the importance of biblical culture affect your study and application of Scripture?
3. What effect do the cultural divisions revealed in Genesis 3 have on your worldview and ministry outlook?
4. Give some specific examples of cultural variety you have personally experienced or observed. How did you deal with this variety?
5. How does the development of culture in biblical history influence your study of the Old Testament?
6. Since the opposing cultural ideals still exist in our modern context, how do you approach evangelism?
7. What are some specific things that have changed in your culture over time? What impact have these changes had on the church in your culture?
8. How are you influencing your culture through your present ministry or vocation?
9. What does it look like for you to be salt of the earth and light of the world in your culture? Would this look different in another culture? Explain your answer.
10. Choose a passage of Scripture and think of two different cultures in the world today. How would you apply this passage to each culture?
11. How can you faithfully apply cultural patterns found in the Scriptures to your current circumstance?
12. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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LESSON
ELEVEN

MODERN APPLICATION
FOR INDIVIDUALS



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1. God's Word is intended to influence every area of our lives. What are some specific areas in your life where you have been successful in applying the Scriptures? What are some areas of your life where you struggle to apply God's Word?
2. The Bible provides universal principles, general guidelines, specific instructions, and examples of success and failure to guide our lives. How should understanding this instructional variety affect our application of Scripture?
3. Provide some specific examples of how you are following Christ's command to love your neighbor in your present circumstances.
4. When you are faced with choices in life, do you usually maintain the priorities that Jesus taught his disciples, or do you sometimes become lost in the details of Scripture and forget the higher instructions? Explain your answer.
5. How do you currently apply the higher and lower instructions of Scripture to your own ministry context and personal circumstances?
6. How have Christian leaders and/or other Christians helped you deal with unfamiliar and complex teachings in Scripture? Give specific examples.
7. What encouragement and comfort do you find in knowing that God has designed the process of biblical application to take place both under the care of appointed leaders and in community with faithful Christians?
8. Should we *always* study the Bible in community with others? Why or why not? Cite some examples to support your position.
9. How do we find a balance between the extremes of being overly dependent on church leaders and remaining in isolation and individualism when we study the Scriptures?
10. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?