

The Interpretation of Scripture
The Revelation of God - Week 11 - Summer 2019

- Review - The Four Principles of Biblical Interpretation
 - 1) The human element of every passage matters.
 - ▶ Yes, every single word (letter!) of Scripture is breathed out by God, is His very Word!
 - ▶ But with rare exception, God used the intents and styles of the human authors He inspired to communicate His Word.
 - ▶ Thus, things like authorial intent, style, and genre are all important for understanding a passage because God was using all of those things.
 - 2) The original meaning of every passage matters.
 - ▶ Each portion of scripture was first written for a particular audience at a particular time addressing a particular situation.
 - ▶ The path to proper contemporary understanding and application flows through the path of its original meaning.
 - 3) The timeline location of every passage matters.
 - ▶ God's plan of redemption did not all happen at once.
 - ❖ Since the Fall, God has been restoring His Heavenly Kingdom to Planet Earth.
 - ❖ This involves bringing all things under a new King who is His perfect image bearer in every way (i.e. the Divine/Human Messiah).
 - ❖ This also involves a holy people being given to this King - a people cleansed of sin, a people made holy, a people who share in the rule of the King.
 - ❖ This plan unfolded over time, from Adam to Christ.
 - ▶ Also God did not *reveal* His plan of redemption all at once.
 - ❖ God's written Word was expanded as His plan of redemption unfolded historically.

- ❖ Newer Revelation about God's Kingdom advancements guide our understanding and application of earlier revelation.
- 4) The ultimate Subject of every passage matters.
 - ▶ Every single passage of Scripture, in one way or another, points to Jesus.
 - ▶ We know this is true because Jesus told us (John 5:39-47; Luke 24:27).

STEPS TO INTERPRETATION

Step One – Open in Prayer, asking the Lord for Understanding

Step Two – Discern the Original Meaning in Context

- 1) What is the passage?
 - a) Look for chapter/paragraph markers (bold print).
 - b) Look for where the episode begins and ends (change in characters/settings/etc.)
- 2) What is the literary genre of the passage?
 - a) What genre features should be kept in mind?
- 3) Who was the original author of the passage?
- 4) Who was the original audience of this passage?
- 5) What was original intended meaning of the passage?

Step Two – Interpret the Original Meaning in Light of the Rest of Scripture to Arrive at Contemporary Meaning

- 1) “When” was this passage in the overall history of the Kingdom of God?
 - a) How far had God’s Kingdom advanced?
 - b) What was/is still to come?
 - c) How might this affect the passage’s contemporary meaning?
- 2) “When” was this passage in the history of God’s covenant administrations?
 - a) What covenant(s) were currently in place?
 - b) What covenant was yet to come?
 - c) How might this affect the passage’s contemporary meaning?
- 3) What does this passage say about Jesus? (Hint: Answers to this question often overlap with answers regarding the Kingdom and Covenant.)

Step Three – State the Overall Message of the Passage for God’s People Today

STEPS TO PERSONAL APPLICATION

1) When am I in the history of Christ and His Kingdom?

- a) What has changed about the Kingdom since this passage was written?
- b) What is still the same?
- c) What aspects of the Kingdom are still in the future?

2) What does the passage's contemporary message tell me about Jesus?*

a) Does it highlight a specific way Jesus has redeemed me and reconciled me to God the Father?

- i) Does it show/tell me how He fully obeyed in a way I have not?
- ii) Does it show/tell me how He suffered for my failures to obey?
- iii) Does it show/tell me how He is changing me into His image?
- iv) Does it show/tell me how He continues to act as my heavenly High Priest?

b) Does it highlight specific promises of God that are now mine in Jesus?

c) Does it highlight the blessings of the Holy Spirit given to me by Jesus?

d) Does it highlight Jesus' present love for me?

e) Does it highlight Jesus' present expectations of me?

- i) Am I called to repent of sin and love God more faithfully?
- ii) Am I called to repent of sins against others and to love them more faithfully?

f) Does this passage inform me about Christ's Church, of which I am a part?

*The questions and sub-questions under step 2 are not all answerable by every individual passage. Depending on the passage, the answer to some will be "Non-Applicable (N/A)".

3) Given all of the above, answer these 3 questions:

a) How does this passage call me to think about God, (or) myself, (or) the world, and (or) other believers?

b) How does this passage call me to feel about God, (or) myself, (or) the world, and (or) other believers?

c) How does this passage call me to behave toward God, (or) myself, (or) the world, and (or) other believers?