

Teaching Guide

Based on

Robert H. Stein's hermeneutics book *Playing by the Rules*

WEEK ONE

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Discuss the term *hermeneutics* and its value in Bible reading
- Handout or refer to hermeneutical circle and 1-2-3s of theology/Bible reading, asking each participant to come up with one question they want to ask of the Bible
- Process chapter 1 together

Outcome:

Learn the difference between “meaning” and “significance”

Homework: Read for next week history of the bible from the following link:

<https://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/index.html>

CHAPTER ONE

“Who Makes Up the Rules?”

Hermeneutics: The term *hermeneutics* describes the practice or discipline of interpretation.

Primary goal of reading: Discover the meaning of the text

Three components of communication: In all communication there are three necessary components: **The Author, the Text, and the Reader.**

To Whom Does the Meaning Belong?

- Implications of the text belonging to **the Reader**
 - If the meaning of a text belongs to the reader, each reader can decide what the text means. In this approach, the author does not get to decide what he meant by his words. His meaning is irrelevant. This reader-response approach leads to a lack of certainty about the text.
 - Proponents of “reader response” begin their textual comments with the premise “this is what the text means to me.” Others who at times skip the hard work of observation and hermeneutics also state, “This is what this passage means to me.” They unwittingly take the same reader-response approach, because of laziness or a lack of tools, resulting in the same uncertainty as that of those who intentionally remove the meaning from the author.

- Implications of the **text belonging to No One** (it's just a text)
 - If the text belongs to no one, it is treated like a work of art, with each person subjectively viewing the text. The text is reduced to abstract and meaningless words and phrases. Again, in this approach the author has no say-so in the meaning of the words he wrote. Some textual critics who assume the meaning of a text belongs to no one treat the text like a science experiment, assuming we know nothing about the true authors or their cultures.
- Implications of the **text belonging to the Author**
 - If the text belongs to the writer, the goal of Bible reading is to discover what the author meant by the words he wrote. This is the orthodox position held by the church since its inception, until recent liberal interpreters proposed alternatives.

Intentional Fallacy

Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that it is impossible to climb into the heads of the biblical authors and experience all that was going on in their minds (mental acts). Thus, it is impossible to understand a text's meaning.

Stein counters with the truth that we do not need to know the mental state of, for example, Paul to understand his writing. We simply need to understand what Paul meant by his words. Since the language in which Paul wrote is accessible, so is the meaning.

Meaning and Significance

- **Meaning:** The meaning of a text is bound in history. Paul wrote instructions and conveyed truth to an audience in a specific time and place. Thus, the text is "time bound." The meaning of Paul's words never changes into something different to a variety of people in differing eras or cultures.
- **Significance:** The significance of a text is the ways in which we apply the teaching of Paul (and other Bible writings) to our current circumstances. For example:

Ephesians 5:18-21 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

- **Meaning** "Do not take into your body substances such as wine in a quantity that causes you to lose control of your senses and natural inhibitions."
- **Significance** (application for today): [To the oxy, meth addict, beer drinker or pot smoker] "Do not lose control of your senses or natural inhibitions by getting high, stoned or drunk." Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, which naturally inclines one to please God.

Luke 14:26²⁶ If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

- **Meaning:** (What genre? discourse/hyperbole) (What context? consider the cost of following Jesus) Considering this is hyperbole (or an exaggeration to make a point by drawing clear distinctions), the meaning of Jesus' statement is this:

"To be a disciple of Jesus, we must place everything behind Him."

- **Significance:**
 - Fred and Wilma are living together. They will lose benefits if they are married. But to be a follower of Jesus means all other considerations, including possible financial loss, are secondary to obeying Jesus Christ. Or
 - Barney and Betty are afraid to share their faith with their atheist family because of a real threat of losing their inheritance and relationships. They must count the cost of following Jesus, which does include pleasing Jesus Christ above pleasing one's family.

WEEK TWO

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions

Handouts: refer to History of the Bible and discuss English Bible translations

Cover word-for-word vs. thought-for-thought translations (See illustration in handouts)

- Do more work with refining questions to ask of the text
- Refer to 1-2-3s of theology and Bible reading. Demonstrate step two (search for passages with concordance or search engine)
- Discuss Vocabulary for Interpretation (from chapter 2)

Outcomes:

1. Learn the process of asking questions of the text and looking up relevant passages
2. Learn the significance of using the correct vocabulary terms for interpretation
3. Assignment: Read the Student, the Professor and the Agassiz before next meeting

CHAPTER TWO

“Defining the Rules: A Vocabulary for Interpretation”

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Meaning

The meaning of a text is that pattern of meaning the author willed to convey by the words (shareable symbols) he used.

Implications

Implications are that those meanings the author was unaware of in a text nevertheless legitimately fall within the pattern of meaning he willed.

Significance

The significance refers to how a reader responds to the meaning of a text.

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Meaning belongs to the author; significance belongs to the reader.

Significance is multifaceted. The significance of a text for one person may be quite different from its significance for another.

Example: One country may have a growing problem with intoxication resulting from sniffing aerosol fumes, whereas another country or region may have a significant problem with alcohol abuse. Each will apply the “don’t get drunk with wine...” text differently, depending on their context and experience.

Subject Matter

Subject matter is the “stuff” talked about (or general topic addressed) in a text.

- Genesis 1-3 – Topic addressed is the creation of the world conveyed by oral and written means
- Psalms – Hebrew poetry and ancient liturgical worship using specific patterns
- Proverbs – ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature using the form of proverbs (pithy wisdom statements)
- Gospels – The life and teachings of Jesus (consideration of dates, authorship and traditions)

Example of subject matter: John Piper has written several books, each dealing with a variety of subject matter. In one book he discusses the purpose of creation related to the expanding glory of God, and in another his subject matter focuses on the basis of reformed theology.

Note: Subject matter differs from meaning, in that meaning focuses on what is meant, whereas subject matter describes the overall topic in view.

Understanding

Understanding is the correct mental grasp of the author’s meaning.

Mental Acts

Mental acts refer to the experiences the author went through when writing the text. This could range from his emotion and physical well-being to social circumstances that may have affected his writing.

Norms of Language

Words possess a range of meanings allowed by the words of a text. What are all the possible meanings of a word or sentence? Which is the most likely meaning given the context?

Norms of Utterance

Norms of utterance is the specific meaning the author has given to a word, phrase, or sentence. The reader’s task is to narrow down all the possible meanings of a word, phrase, or sentence to the one meant by the author.

Example: *Murder* could be a metaphor for doing a great job, similar to the phrase “she knocked it out of the park!” Understanding is possible when one considers the genre, context and normal language patterns used in the culture of the author.

Literary Genre

Literary genre refers to the literary form used by the author and to the rules that govern that form. For example, poetry is a different form from narrative. Each of these forms possesses differing rules of writing and reading.

Errors in understanding often occur when one does not account for the literary genre in which a text is written.

Context

Context refers to the material immediately surrounding a specific text.

Errors in understanding often occur when one reads a passage out of its context.

Example: People make an argument for retaliation by quoting Jesus: “You have heard that is was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’” (Matt. 5:38). However, this passage, taken in context, is making the opposite argument. In verse 39 Jesus says, “But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matt. 5:39).

WEEK THREE

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Discuss the article “The Student, The Fish, and Agassiz”
- Introduce the “hermeneutical circle” and the significance of observation
- Discuss the ways in which the hermeneutical circle is similar to processes used in our hard and social sciences
- Discuss the temptation to rush from step one (in herm. circle) to step four and develop unfounded conclusions and norms
- Discuss chapter 3, the role of the Holy Spirit in writing Scripture and reading the text

Outcomes:

1. Learn the importance of observation and of working the whole interpretive process
2. Learn the role of the Holy Spirit in writing and reading the Bible

CHAPTER THREE

“Can Anyone Play This Game? The Spirit and Biblical Interpretation”

How is the Holy Spirit involved in the Bible?

1. The Holy Spirit, from the beginning, is the Divine Deliverer of biblical material.
2. The Holy Spirit “carried along” (2 Peter 1:21) the biblical authors as they wrote.
3. The Holy Spirit was involved in recognizing which books were canonized.
4. The Holy Spirit is also involved as believers seek to apply the biblical teachings to their lives.

Read: **2 Timothy 3:16-17 & 2 Peter 1:20-21**

Define: Define *divine inspiration* on the basis of these two passages.

Define: **Infallible**

Answer: Infallibility focuses on the reliability of the Bible. The Bible never fails to accurately communicate the truth and will of God.

Stein: Infallibility means that what the authors willed to convey with regard to matters of faith (doctrine) and practice (ethics) is true and will never lead us astray.

Define: *Inerrant*

Answer: Inerrancy addresses the reliability of the Bible. The Bible does not err in its communication.

Stein note: Inerrant means that what the authors willed to convey with regard to matters of fact (history, geography, science, etc.) are also true and will never lead us astray.

Define: **Plenary**

Answer: *Plenary* means all or every. Example: A plenary conference session includes everyone, in contrast to break-out sessions where conference attendees break out into specialized workshops.

Canon Defined & Canonization Process

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Canon comes from a Greek word that refers to a staff or straight rod used as a means of measurement. The term came to mean a rule or standard.

This would be like saying all the books of the Bible are the measuring tape of our faith and practice. It is the ops manual or standard for the Christian life (but it is much more than an ops manual).

Canonization Process: The church did not “make” these books into the Word of God, but merely “recognized” which books were in fact the Word of God. The canon of the New Testament was closed when the last of the book of the New Testament was written.

Inclusion in the canon: to be included in the canon, a New Testament book must:

1. be written by an apostle or close associate
2. have a unity and agreement with the rest of Scripture
3. must strengthen the faith of the reader
4. have been used in, and accepted by, churches since it was written

Luther, Calvin, and the Reformers on **“Illumination”** p. 13

The Reformers spoke of the inward work of “illumination” and conviction of the Holy Spirit. Apart from the Spirit we cannot “fully” or “truly” understand the Bible. The Spirit helps the reader understand the pattern of meaning the author willed, and **convinces** the reader about the truth of that teaching.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Question: What does it mean that a person without the Spirit will not be able to come to a correct mental grasp of what the biblical text means?

Question: Do you have an example in which you observed (in yourself or others) the inability to understand the Bible apart from the Spirit’s illumination?

Note: "Foolishness" relates not to understanding a text's meaning but to its significance.

Example: The fruit of the Spirit is unavailable to those who are not baptized with the Spirit.

Note: One of the best books written on the Psalter was written by an unbeliever. He is able to grasp the meaning but is unable to apprehend the text's significance and personal transforming power.

WEEK FOUR

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Work through the next step of the 1-2-3s of theology and Bible reading; whittle down the search texts to about five or six relevant texts that speak to your question; then write a summary of each verse (in everyday language)
- Discuss chapter 4 and focus on the difference between implicit (inferred) and explicit (referential) texts
- View video in class:

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/knowning-scripture/the-explicit-and-the-implicit/>

Outcomes:

1. Learn to handle a number of texts well in searching for answers to theological questions
2. Learn to identify in any text whether it is implicit or explicit

CHAPTER FOUR

“Different Games in the Same Book: Different Forms of Scripture”

View video in class

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/daily-video/2020/01/21/the-explicit-the-implicit/>

Discuss Implicit (commissive or inferential) vs. explicit (referential).

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Referential language has the purpose of passing along information.

Commissive language has the goal of evoking decisions, conveying emotions and feelings.

Referential language appeals to the mind.

Commissive language appeals to the heart.

Example: We read an automobile manual (referential) differently than we read love poems (commissive).

Note: The author (under the Spirit’s guidance) chooses a writing form that best conveys what he has to say. If the author wants to entice the reader into worship, he may choose to write a song or psalm that can be sung. This is not where we will find user-manual facts of doctrine, but instead will be led to song, worship, and full hearts.

When Paul wanted to convey explicit truth, he wrote epistles, which are doctrinal letters with many explicit facts and references to standards, all of which are geared toward the mind. He wanted us to believe the right things. (However, he included doxology at times.)

WEEK FIVE

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Work through the next step of the 1-2-3s of theology and Bible reading; combine all your summary statements of each relevant passage and work on synchronizing all of these statements into a single, brief statement that describes what the Bible says about your topic; try to fit your application statement into a single paragraph (or sentence if possible)
- Discuss chapter 5 and discuss how wisdom literature is often applied as if it were a part of the law or a theological statement in the epistles

Outcomes:

1. Learn how to interpret and apply wisdom literature
2. Work through the final step in the 1-2-3s of theology and Bible reading

Homework: Read Sam Storm's article on cosmic imagery used in prophecy (located in chapter 6 of this teaching guide, also located in the handouts)

CHAPTER FIVE

"The Game of Wisdom: Proverbs"

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Question: How would you define a proverb?

Answer: Short, pithy sayings

Discuss: Proverbs are not absolute but are generally true.

Example:

Read together: **Proverbs 3:1-12**

Group assignment: Identify whether the statements and promises have exceptions. Also identify general rules of thumb that add quality and blessing to one's life.

Question: Are the Proverbs promises?

Answer: No, they "are general observations learned from a wise and careful look at life" (p. 16).

Question: Do the "exceptions" render the Proverbs meaningless?

Question: According to Stein, what do the Proverbs provide?

Answer: "Wise and memorable observations, usually found in poetic form, provide inspired principles upon which believers can and should build their lives."

Group assignment: What are examples of wise and memorable observations (proverbs) on which a person can build their life?

WEEK SIX

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Introduce the method of charting a Bible book using an “Anxiety Chart”
- Homework: Identify the rise and reduction in anxiety in a biblical narrative using a whole book or at least five chapters (hint: Nehemiah chapters 1-6 is fairly straightforward)
- Process chapter 6 in class, discussing factors in reading Bible prophecy
- Process Sam Storm’s article on Bible imagery in prophetic literature

Outcomes:

1. Learn how to understand and read prophetic literature accurately
2. Assign homework: Anxiety charting a biblical narrative (such as Act 1-8)

CHAPTER SIX

“The Game of Prediction: Prophecy”

Broad Description of Biblical Prophecy

Biblical prophecy, simply stated, is the canonized prediction of future events. The “future events” are events that take place after the prediction is given. Some prophecies predict events that will take place in the *immediate future*, and others in the *distant future*.

“Then” (Past) and “Now” (Present or Immanent) (p. 19)

Numerous prophetic predictions have already found their fulfillment such as the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Isa. 4, 7, 9, 11, 40, 53; Jer. 23, 33; Mic. 5; Zech. 3) and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost (Jer. 31; Joel 2).

Others still await fulfillment such as the coming of a great tribulation (Matt.24; Mark 13; 2 Thess. 2); the glorious appearing of the Son of Man (Matt.24; Mark 13; 1 Thess. 4; 2 Thess. 2); and the final judgment (Matt. 25, Rev. 20)

Application: We cannot take a “then” prediction (already fulfilled) and push it into the future unless that is the intention of the author.

Examples: (books containing both “then” and “now” application)

The seven churches in Revelation are given prophecies that took place in the readers’ immediate future. It is a mistake to assume that the prophecies given to a specific church have yet to be fulfilled unless there is clear evidence of both a “then” and a “now” application.

Revelation 20-22 contain prophecies for the distant future, relative to the original readers. However, the book of Revelation begins with an epistle written to specific churches. The “then” and “now” aspects of Revelation should be rightly identified. Without this differentiation the epistle sections will be treated as though they are eschatological texts and thus assigned meaning that is contrary to the clear meaning assigned by the author.

Example: Many have allegorized the letters to the seven churches (Rev. 1-3) to represent various eras of church history. However, if the original readers were unaware of this hidden meaning it cannot be true, especially when no hint of future prophetic fulfillment is mentioned. Letters written to a specific church address their present issues. Letters cannot be turned from one genre (letters or epistles) into another genre such as eschatological prophecy.

(Our theological assumptions influence text reading...preterist, futurist, historicist, idealist)

p. 17 Judgment Prophecies

Read: **Jeremiah 18:7-8 & Ezekiel 33:13-16**

Question: Does this prophecy seem “conditional”? How does this contrast with other “unconditional prophecies”? (Consider a contrast with Genesis 15.)

Conditional judgment prophecies are important to identify. We may read a passage in which God promises certain blessings to His people but neglect the context, in which His promises are conditioned upon obedience.

Considerations in Prophecy: Cosmic Imagery

Because of the cosmic imagery found in prophecy, many interpreters assume prophecies refer to the end of history. However, the prophets often used cosmic imagery to describe God’s intervention in history and to describe His sovereign rule over heaven and the kingdoms of the earth. Such imagery was not meant to be interpreted literally.

Revelation 1:14 ¹²Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

This imagery refers to the wisdom of God who also has unlimited vitality and strength. This passage does not refer to the eschaton (the end of history) but to events that will immediately visit the seven churches of Revelation. (Eschatological writing appears at the end of Revelation.) The presence of cosmic imagery is assumed by some to indicate a reference to the return of Jesus Christ.

That assumption, however, does not account for the normal use of biblical imagery by several biblical authors. In this case the point the author makes, through the use of dramatic biblical imagery, is that God is more powerful than any foe the church will soon face.

Unrecognized Forms

Telescoping Prophecy

In the following passage put either “then” or “now” to indicate whether this passage has been fulfilled or awaits future fulfillment.

Isaiah 61

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,	When? _____
because the LORD has anointed me	
to bring good news to the poor;	When? _____
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,	When? _____
to proclaim liberty to the captives,	When? _____
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;	When? _____
² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,	When? _____
and the day of vengeance of our God;	When? _____
to comfort all who mourn;	When? _____
³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion—	
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,	When? _____
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,	When? _____
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;	When? _____
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,	When? _____
the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.	When? _____

Illustration: Instructor draws illustration of telescoping prophecy, using a telescope and both a near and a distant mountaintop. This illustration shows that, although both mountain peaks appear in the picture, one is near and the other is distant. This is illustrative of telescoping prophecy as found in the Isaiah 61 passage.

Common Prophecy Interpretation Errors

Headlines Prophecy

Question: What are examples of interpreting prophecies by identifying them with current events?

Examples: the Great Awakening, epidemics, rare cosmic occurrences, rise of powerful nations, unions of nations, symbols on national flags, dates in history (such as Y2K)

Grabbing Promises and Blessing Given to Others

Example: prayer of Jabez – Reading a Chronicle (genealogical within historical narrative) as a prophecy applying to individuals who thereby have a “claim ticket.”

Read together: **1 Chronicles 4:1-10**

- Notice the word *was* (indicating past observations of facts and actions)
- Notice Jabez’s prayer: whom is Jabez asking God to bless? (answer: himself)

- Notice historical factors: the sign of God's blessing in the OT covenant is land and children. Land and children are not the specific NT sign of God's blessing. The NT sign of blessing is the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Note: The only way this description of God's activity could apply to individual contemporary readers is if the text were written as a general promise to all people, or a prophecy applying to our covenantal dispensation.

Note: The prayer of Jabez is NOT a prophecy or a promise given generally to all people!

Example 2: *Four Blood Moons* by John Hagee

Apocalyptic signs (such as the moon turning to blood) are NOT a hidden means of predicting future events. The sun not giving its light and moon turning to blood are symbolic ways to describe the complete shaking of nations and earthly governments. This use of symbolism would be similar to one of us stating, "I feel the weight of the world crashing down," or "I am in the middle of a dark, demonic storm."

Several references to this application of the apocalyptic are found in the research of Sam Storms. One may not agree with his amillennial position; however, the scholarship located on the following link is excellent in the area of apocalyptic application.

<https://www.samstorms.org/all-articles/post/matthew-24-and-the-olivet-discourse---part-iii>

Research Regarding Apocalyptic Prophetic Signs, written by Sam Storms

Luke refers to "signs" in sun, moon, and stars. Matthew says "the sun will be darkened, the moon loses its light, and the stars will fall from the sky." Are these literal, physical, astronomical events that one might see with the naked eye? I don't think so.

In the OT, **such language was used to portray not what is going on in the heavens but what is happening on the earth**. Natural disasters, political upheaval, turmoil among the nations, etc., are often described figuratively through the terminology of cosmic disturbances. The ongoing and unsettled, turbulent state of affairs among earthly world powers is portrayed symbolically by reference to incredible events in the heavens. In other words, astronomical phenomena are used to describe the upheaval of earthly dynasties as well as great moral and spiritual changes. As one author has put it: "In prophetic language, great commotions upon earth are often represented under the notion of commotions and changes in the heavens" (Clarke). As we shall see, when the sun and moon are darkened or the stars fall from heaven, the reference is to the disasters and distresses befalling nations on the earth.

Some examples of how *cosmic events* are used as symbolic portrayals of earthly realities (whether blessing or cursing) include [Isa. 60:20](#); [Amos 8:2-9](#); [Zeph. 1:4,15](#); [Isa. 5:30](#); [Jer. 4:23,28](#); [13:16](#); [Joel 2:10](#).

In [Isaiah 13:9-10](#) we read of the impending judgment of God on Babylon, which he describes in this way:

"The stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will not shed its light."

Former Dallas Seminary professor John Martin acknowledges that the language is figurative:

"The statements in 13:10 about the heavenly bodies (stars . . . sun . . . moon) no longer functioning may figuratively describe the total turnaround of the political structure of the Near East. The same would be true of *the heavens* trembling *and the earth* shaking (v. 13), figures of speech suggesting all-encompassing destruction" ("Isaiah," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1059).

Concerning the destruction of Egypt, Ezekiel wrote,

"I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon the land . . . I shall make the land of Egypt desolate" (Ezek. 32:7-15).

The destruction of Idumea (Edom) is described in this way:

"And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, or as one withers from the fig tree. For My sword is satiated in heaven, behold it shall descend for judgment upon Edom, and upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction" (Isa. 34:4-5).

William Kimball summarizes:

"When Israel was judged, or when Babylon was subdued by the Medes, or when Idumea and Egypt were destroyed, it was not the literal sun, moon, and stars that were darkened. The literal stars of heaven did not fall from the skies, and the literal constellations were not dissolved or rolled up as a scroll. These figurative expressions were clearly presented in a purely symbolic manner to characterize the destruction befalling nations and earthly powers" (166).

In summary, "it is crass literalism," notes Wright, "in view of the many prophetic passages in which this language denotes socio-political and military catastrophe, to insist that this time the words must refer to the physical collapse of the space-time world. This is simply the way regular Jewish imagery is able to refer to major socio-political events and bring out their full significance" (Victory, 361).

Victory Reference = N.T. Wright – *Jesus and the Victory of God*

—End of quoted matter by Sam Storms

Special Focus

What is the true measure of a biblical prophet? How does this prepare us for those claiming to have a special revelation from God?

A Prophet: Biblical Traits and Qualifications

1. Called by God and announced by reliable sources such as another true prophet (Jer. 1:5-10) (They do not declare themselves prophets as many in our day have done)
2. They live a godly life (Matt. 7:15-20)
3. They do not contradict the Word of God (Isa. 8:19-20)
4. They predict future events with perfect accuracy (Deut. 18:20-22)
5. They hear the Lord's message in dreams or visions (Num. 12:6)

WEEK SEVEN

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Discuss the various forms of poetry
- Question: In poetry we are familiar with, what response is the writer seeking?
- Teach the use of “rejoinder” in seeking understanding and defeating bias
- Work through chapter 7: biblical poetry

Outcomes:

1. Learn how to understand and read poetic literature accurately
2. Assign homework: Use rejoinder by trying to prove the opposite side of one of your theological beliefs (Note: Use a nonessential issue for this exercise)

CHAPTER SEVEN “The Game of Rhythm: Poetry”

p. 9

Important Feature of Poetry

1. Parallelism
2. Rhythmic balance between different lines
3. Terseness (lines are shorter than prose)
4. Equal length of lines
5. General lack of conjunctions and participles
6. The regular use of figurative language

Hermeneutical issue: The poetry writer is often less concerned with precise descriptions or with scientific accuracy than with evoking emotions and creating impressions.

Poetry is “commissive” rather than “referential.”

Class activity: Turn to **Judges 4** and identify prose and poetry that are both used to describe a battle with the Canaanite people. Chapter 4 is prose (narrative free writing), whereas **Judges 5** is written in poetic form.

p. 114 Stein Book

Explore the difference genre makes in reading and understanding **Colossians 1:15-20**. Stein on Read through Stein’s comments and the biblical passage as a class.

(SEE PAGE 114 & 115 STEIN’S BOOK)

Explore: differing forms of parallelism

p. 20 Examples of parallelism:
Synonymous Parallelism
Examples:

Psalm 2:4

He who sits in the heavens *laughs*,
The Lord *scoffs at them*.

Psalm 2:9

You shall break them *with a rod of iron*,
You shall shatter them *like earthenware*.

Antithetical Parallelism

Antithetical means the second line of the poem is stated in the negative if the first is stated in the positive, or vice versa.

Psalm 1:6

For the Lord knows *the way of the righteous*.
But the *way of the wicked* will perish.

Psalm 40:4

How blessed is the man who has made the Lord his trust.
And [how blessed is the man who] has not turned to the proud nor to those who lapse into falsehood.

Step or Climatic Parallelism

The first thought is embellished by the second and third lines, but the thought is not complete until the “climax” builds and is finished in the last line.

Isaiah 1:8

The daughter of Zion is left
Like a booth in a vineyard
Like a hut in a cucumber field
Like a city diminished

Chiastic Parallelism

(A - B - C), then next line(s) = (C - B - A)

Matthew 6:24

A: No one can serve two masters;
B: for either he will hate the one
C: and love the other,
C: he will be devoted to one
B: and despise the other.
A: You cannot serve God and wealth

WEEK EIGHT

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Define the word *idiom*
- Work through some biblical idioms identified in the “got questions” article excerpt pasted in chapter 8
- Revisit hermeneutical circle. If time permits work through an example of a theological question, searching for biblical passages and eliminating irrelevant search results

Outcome:

Learn how to identify idioms and the way idioms affect reading and meaning

CHAPTER EIGHT **“The Game of Jargon: Idioms”**

The most difficult form of literature to interpret is idioms. The reason is that in idioms the literal meaning of the words does not convey what the author meant by the use of these words. Further, idioms change over time; thus many biblical idioms are unfamiliar.

We can know if a combination of words is an idiom by finding this same combination in different places and noting from the context that its meaning is different from the normal meaning conveyed by these words.

There are hints that an idiom is used when the literal meaning seems to contradict truths taught elsewhere in Scripture. The context in which an idiom is placed becomes critical to understanding.

Examples of idioms:

In our day we use many idioms without realizing the form.

“It’s raining cats and dogs”

This does not mean cats and dogs are falling from the sky. Rather, this idiom is a common expression referring to heavy rain.

“A piece of cake”

This is not a request for high-calorie dessert. Rather, it is a common expression meaning something is relatively easy or simple.

The key to all good hermeneutics (interpretation) is to determine what the author willed by the words used. The literal interpretation of idioms pulls the intended meaning away from the author and gives it to the reader. For example, if Paul wrote, “praying is a piece of cake,” we would not interpret these words literally. Otherwise we would need cake each time we prayed.

Examples of idioms in Scripture:

Malachi 1:2-3 “Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated.”

Read and discuss together: Stein’s comments (p. 153) (love-hate contrast)

Other examples of idioms:

The following is from the [website GotQuestions.org](http://www.GotQuestions.org):

Some of the Bible’s idioms have been adopted as idioms in English. Idioms that come straight from the Bible include the following:

Let me catch my breath. Meaning: “give me some time.” As Job is questioning the purposes of his suffering, he says of God, “He would not let me catch my breath but would overwhelm me with misery” ([Job 9:18](#)).

A drop in the bucket. Meaning: “a very small, insignificant amount.” In lifting up God as sovereign, Isaiah writes, “Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust” ([Isaiah 40:15](#)).

The apple of one’s eye. Meaning: “something very dear.” The psalmist asks for God’s protection against his enemies, saying, “Keep me as the apple of the eye” ([Psalm 17:8](#)).

Other English idioms that are sourced from the Bible include *Adam’s apple* ([Genesis 3:6](#)), *cast the first stone* ([John 8:7](#)), *by the skin of one’s teeth* ([Job 19:20](#)), *taking someone under the wing* ([Psalm 17:8](#); [61:4](#); [91:4](#)), *the handwriting on the wall* ([Daniel 5:5-6](#)), *set in stone* ([Exodus 31:18](#)), *Good Samaritan* ([Luke 10:30-35](#)), *extending an olive branch* ([Genesis 8:11](#)), and *to miss the mark* (from the meaning of the Greek word *hamartia* in [Luke 1:77](#); [John 1:29](#); [1 John 3:4](#)).

The Bible also contains [Hebrew and Greek](#) idioms that are translated into English. Idioms are notoriously difficult to translate, because they are specific to the language of origin and may cause confusion when translated literally. Here are some examples of idiomatic phrases in the Bible:

Know. A literal translation of *yada* (Hebrew) and *ginóskó* (Greek) gives us the sense of “knowing.” Both words are used as an idiom for “sexual intercourse.” Adam “knew” his wife ([Genesis 4:1, ESV](#)). Joseph did not “know” Mary until after Jesus was born ([Matthew 1:25, ESV](#)).

Seed. Someone's "seed" in the Bible can be an idiomatic reference to his "children" or "descendants" ([Genesis 22:17, KJV](#)).

The manner of women. The Hebrew idiom for a woman's period can be translated literally as "the manner of women" ([Genesis 31:35, NKJV](#)).

Flowing with milk and honey. God used this idiom to communicate to the Israelites that the Promised Land was "fertile" ([Exodus 3:8](#)).

Melting heart. If a person's heart "melts," then he "loses courage," and that's how the idiom is used in [Deuteronomy 20:8](#) (BSB).

One who urinates on a wall. In [1 Samuel 25:22](#) (WEB), this idiom makes reference to a male.

Cover one's feet. It is thought that the Hebrew expression translated as "covered his feet" in [Judges 3:24](#) and [1 Samuel 24:3 \(NASB\)](#) was a euphemistic idiom for "relieving himself."

From Dan to Beersheba. Dan was in the extreme northern part of Israel, and Beersheba was in the extreme south, so the idiom *from Dan to Beersheba* meant "all of Israel" (see [2 Samuel 3:10](#); [1 Kings 4:25](#)).

Great before God. A literal translation of [Jonah 3:3](#) says that Nineveh was "a great city before God" (YLT). Most translations simply say something akin to "Nineveh was an extremely large city" (HCSB), which is what the idiom *great before God* means in this context.

Gird up your loins. If someone tells you to "gird up your loins," you are to "get yourself ready" ([Jeremiah 1:17](#); [Job 40:7, NASB](#)).

Having in the belly. [Matthew 1:18](#) contains an idiom describing Mary as *en gastri exousa*, literally, "having in the belly" or "possessing in the womb." This was Matthew's way of saying that Mary was pregnant.

Answered and said. A common idiom in Greek, *answered and said* or *opened his mouth and said* was simply a way of saying that someone began speaking. In a language written without punctuation marks (including quotation marks), such an idiom was useful for alerting readers of the start of a direct quote (see [Matthew 4:4](#) and [Acts 10:34, NKJV](#)).

What you hear in the ear. This idiom is used by Jesus to refer to a "whisper" ([Matthew 10:27](#), BLB).

Eat their own bread. Paul rebukes idle people in the church, telling them to "eat their own bread," that is, to work for a living and earn their own money ([2 Thessalonians 3:12, NKJV](#))

—Quoted from gotquestions.org

WEEK NINE

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Define the word *hyperbole*
- Work through examples of hyperbole used in Scripture
- Revisit hermeneutical circle. If time permits work through an example of a theological question by searching for biblical passages and eliminating irrelevant search results
- Visit Bible study tools that need more explanation or practice

Outcome:

Learn how to identify biblical hyperbole and how hyperbole affects meaning

CHAPTER NINE

“The Game of Exaggeration: Hyperbole”

Proverbs, poetry, and prophecy by their nature use intentionally exaggerated language for the purpose of dramatic effect. Exaggeration is not falsehood. It is the use of normal patterns of speech present in every language and culture.

Hyperbole is a powerful form that enables the writer to convey not just factual information but also feelings and emotions. It is difficult to communicate certain things apart from exaggeration (hyperbole).

To communicate the love between a man and women or between the psalmist and his God, hyperbole is necessary.

Two Types of Exaggeration

1. Overstatement that exaggerates and says what is possible but unlikely
2. Hyperbole, which expresses what is literally impossible

Question: What are the implications of readers not understanding they are reading hyperbolic form?

Hints for Recognizing Exaggeration

1. The statement is literally impossible
2. The statement conflicts with what the speaker says elsewhere
3. The statement conflicts with the actions of the speaker elsewhere
4. The statement conflicts with the teachings of the Old or New Testament

5. The statement is interpreted by another biblical writer in a nonliteral way
6. The statement would never achieve its desired goal (example: removing one's eye would never solve the problem of lust)
7. The statement uses a literary form prone to exaggeration such as proverbs, prophecy, and poetry, which all intentionally add exaggeration that appeals to one's emotions
8. The statement uses universal language such as "all," "everyone," "no one"

How to Handle Hyperbole

Understand the central meaning of the hyperbolic statement. Then ask why this meaning was framed in this particular literary form. We tend to use hyperbole to emphasize what is important. We do not exaggerate trivial truths. So, what is the significant central truth to which the writer draws our focus?

Examples of hyperbole used in Scripture:

Exercise: Read the following passages and identify hyperbole:

Matthew 23:24 Strain out a gnat but swallow a camel

Question: What is the primary point made by Jesus when He uses that hyperbole?

Matthew 18:9 "If your right eye [thought to be dominant eye] causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away."

Question: What is the central point of this hyperbolic statement?

Matthew 13:31 Parable of the mustard seed

Comments: Jesus does not mean that there are no seeds smaller than the mustard seed; He is simply pointing to the smallest seed commonly found in ancient Palestine to make a point about the kingdom. The kingdom starts out so tiny that it appears all but invisible, but from its small beginnings, it grows into a large realm.

WEEK TEN

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Define the word *parable*
- Explain the rules and norms of parables
- Work through examples of parables used in Scripture
- Revisit any issues that need further development

Outcomes:

1. Participants will learn how to identify and interpret the primary lesson taught in biblical parables
2. Participants are reminded of terms *commissive* and *referential*

CHAPTER TEN

“The Game of Comparison: Parables”

p. 25

Core Ideas

1. The essence of a parable is to compare two things. Something is likened to something else.
2. Parables have two parts:
 - a. A picture or story line
 - b. The reality that is highlighted by the picture or story line

Example: In the story of the lost son, unforgiving Pharisees and Sadducees are the reality. The older son who refuses to forgive and welcome the returning younger brother is the story's character to whom the religious leaders are compared.

Note: A parable differs from a narrative in that a narrative is a “story” of actual, historical events.

3. Parables are fictional in nature. The rich man who cries out from the flames of hell is not a real character, but a fictional one. This character, created by Jesus, conveys the truth that once people are dead, they cannot cross back over and that it is a terrible thing to live one's life focused on wealth, only to lose it all in the flames of hell.
4. Seek the main point of the parable and do not press its details. The greatest danger in reading parables is to make generalizations out of the parable's story line or picture. They are made-up illustrations to make a central point.
5. A parable consists of commissive language. The statement of its basic meanings consists of referential language.

Definitions

Commissive language – appeals to the emotions with the purpose of eliciting a response
Biblical commissive language is often expressed in the form of hyperbole, poetry, or parables.

Referential language – appeals to the intellect by conveying facts and truths

Reminder: The goal of ALL Bible interpretation is to seek the meaning assigned by its original author. To do so, one must understand the context and audience addressed by the author.

p. 27

Guidelines to Discern the Main Point

Questions to ask:

1. Who are the main characters? (to whom is Jesus and the Evangelist drawing attention)
2. What occurs at the end? (good storytelling builds up stress to focus on the conclusion)
3. What occurs in the direct discourse (conversations between people in the story)?
4. Who gets the most space? (important characters of a story are well-developed)
5. What is the one, single point made by the parable? Examples: (Pharisees are like _____), (those obsessed with wealth are like _____), those who fail to use their spiritual gifts are like _____)

Final word: Seek timeless truths, or significance. Are there people today who act like those highlighted in the story? If so, how should they and we respond?

Read together: **Luke 15:11-32**

Instruction: As you read through this parable, identify both the made-up story line, and the actual people who are compared with the story's lesson or character(s).

A - Story line:

B - Real person(s) compared with story character/object/event:

WEEK ELEVEN

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Define the word *narrative* (hint: remember the word *narration*)
- Explain the rules and norms of biblical narrative
- Point to examples of biblical narrative (explain narrative story line by pointing out similarities between stage scenes and narrative story lines)
- Review factors of reading a narrative (text, context, setting and historical background, timeless truths)
- Revisit or reinforce Bible study tools that need further development or explanation

Outcomes:

1. Participants will learn how to identify and interpret biblical narrative
2. Participants learn how a story line contains scene transitions comparable with a play's changing stage scenes
3. Increase the use of Bible study tools and methods by participants

CHAPTER ELEVEN

“The Game of Stories: Biblical Narrative”

p. 28

- Discuss the definition and use of *biblical narrative*.
- Discuss the way narrative was interpreted for the first 3,000 years of its existence.
- Discuss the effect of the 17th- and 18th-century Enlightenment and the ways the Enlightenment influenced narrative interpretation.

Discuss the effect of the Enlightenment on Bible interpretation (especially narrative).

- Before the Enlightenment, the meaning of a text was sought by investigating the willed meaning of the author.
- Post-Enlightenment, the **historicity of all biblical miracles was questioned** by Enlightenment-minded unbelievers and compromising liberal theologians.
- Liberal theologians preserved the “meaningfulness” of narrative by redefining the meaning and by seeking meaning outside the willed intention of the author.

p. 29

Discuss three alternatives to preserving “meaningfulness” while still casting doubt on the willed meaning of the author. (Note: These are not good ways to interpret the text.)

1. According to rationalism, the literal description, which was miraculous, was not what actually took place. A real, nonsupernatural event lay behind the account. Discovery of the “real event” was the goal of rationalism, resulting in reconstructing the event in rational, nonsupernatural terms to discover what really took place.

Note: It becomes difficult to preach a text that has been rationalized.

Imagine trying to preach with conviction on a passage in which Jesus just appeared to walk on water or preach a sermon in which Lazarus just seemed to rise from the dead.

2. According to the theory of accommodation, the biblical writers of Bible narrative knew that the events they described did not take place. But they needed to accommodate their stories to reach an audience who believed in the miraculous. Thus, the authors shaped principles into fictional miraculous events. Accommodationists portrayed the biblical authors as intelligent, saving the authors’ reputation from the rationalists, who assumed the Bible authors were unintelligent. But accommodationists portrayed the them as dishonest by asserting that the authors invented supernatural narrative.

3. According to the mythical approach, the goal of interpretation was to discover the myths’ meaning, which was seen as the truth that was working in the subconsciousness of the authors.

Note: The problem with this approach is that “mythology” does not exist in narrative form. The rules of narrative do not allow for mythology.

Bottom line: The meaning of a biblical narrative is to be found in what the author willed to teach his readers by recalling the events described.

p. 30

Principles for Interpreting Biblical Narrative

The purpose of a biblical narrative is to relate previous events to biblical faith. The meaning of a narrative is taught “implicitly” (commissive) rather than “explicitly” (referential).

Note: Implicitly means a story implies something, whereas explicitly refers to something expressed explicitly or definitively.

Note: Narrative is the account of what did happen and not an account of what always must happen. (It is generally descriptive rather than prescriptive.)

1 Context

A biblical narrative is always part of a larger narrative. One can discover the meaning of a narrative in light of the overall meaning of the Bible book (using the hermeneutical circle).

Illustration: Class leader introduces the hermeneutical-circle illustration(s) and discusses with the class.

Immediate context often provides insight for correct Bible reading and application.

2 Introductions and conclusions

Introductions and conclusions often give information about how the author wants his readers to interpret and apply the narrative.

Read **Joshua 1:1-9**. This introduction to Joshua is an example of what the author wants the reader to understand while reading the narrative that follows.

Read **Joshua 24** (the narrative's conclusion) to understand more about the context of the book.

Read **Judges introduction**. There is a period of leadership crisis in Israel.

Read **Judges 21:25** in the conclusion. This statement gives insight into the failure of Israel (and the source of all failure of faith).

3 Authorial Comments

On numerous occasions the authors of the biblical narrative intrude into the story to give interpretive clues. These may include summary statements inserted within the text.

4 Repetition

Luke continually emphasizes the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus, because Luke wants his readers to understand the importance of the Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus. This emphasis prepares us for the importance of the Spirit for the life and ministry of the church (addressed by Luke in the book of Acts).

5 Authoritative Speakers

Example: **Acts 5:25-39** (make note of an authoritative speaker in verse 34)

6 Dialogue, or Direct Discourse

Look for conversations that include quotations marks. Pay attention to what is quoted and how it applies to the immediate context. The use of quotations adds strength to the central lessons conveyed by the story.

Example: In **Exodus 3** God speaks directly to Moses. The author, by using direct discourse, provides clues for understanding this narrative and the entire book.

Primary lesson: God will use His chosen means (Moses) to lead the people of Israel out of bondage and into the land of Canaan.

Note: Do not confuse meaning with subject matter.

Reminder: Subject matter refers to the stuff discussed. Meaning refers to the central points the author intended to communicate using the subject matter.

7 Proportion

How much space is devoted to certain aspects of the story (example Mark 5:2-5,9 devote lots of space to the possessed man)

WEEK TWELVE

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Define the word *epistle*
- Explain the rules and norms of biblical epistles
- Revisit or reinforce Bible study tools that need further development or explanation

Outcome:

Participants will learn how to identify and interpret epistles

CHAPTER TWELVE

“The Game of Correspondence: Epistles”

The dominant literary New Testament form is an epistle or a letter.

- A letter tends to address a specific situation or problem and builds on an established relationship (example: the established relationship seen in 1 Corinthians 2, 3)
- An epistle is a self-explanatory treatise to a wider public.

Examples: Philemon is a letter, and Romans an epistle. Paul’s writing is a combination of the two (as seen in 1 Corinthians as a whole).

Features of Ancient Letters

Within ancient letters we usually find the following:

Salutation – a reference to the sender and recipient along with a greeting; Paul often uses his salutation to explain why he has written the letter

Thanksgiving, Prayer, or both – found in all Paul’s letters except Galatians

Body – frequently the largest part of a Pauline letter

Exhortation and Instruction

Conclusion – can include such things as a wish for peace, a greeting, a kiss, a concluding autograph, and a benediction

Note: When a word of thanksgiving or prayer is not included in a letter, it may reveal something about the author’s state of mind. In Galatians Paul omits a word of thanksgiving, revealing his

anger over what was happening in the church. (The Galatians were obfuscating the gospel by requiring unnecessary OT temple regulations.)

Etymology

When we speak or write, we are normally concerned with only the present meaning of the words we are using. We are not interested in what the words meant when they came into existence.

Example: Today the commonly used term *gay* refers to one engaged in homosexual activity. We therefore do not use the term's original meaning (happy and joyous). When we communicate, we use words with the current meaning in mind. This is why English Bible versions update their language. So do preachers.

Understanding the etymology of a word is *occasionally* useful (when the full meaning of the word is not fully conveyed by an updated Bible translation).

Two Examples of Worthwhile Etymology Study

1. When we have little idea of what a biblical word means because it is seldomly used
2. When we want to fully understand the meaning of the name of a person in the Bible

Example: *Jesus* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Joshua*, which has a root meaning "Yahweh is salvation."

Example: *Immanuel* has a root meaning of "God is with us."

Note: Old Testament people commonly believed that people would become what they are named.

Dictionaries, Concordances, and Lexicons

A Bible dictionary or lexicon is a key resource for understanding possible meanings of a word. A concordance can help find other instances in which the same name is used, assisting with finding patterns and insights.

p. 34 Refer to Stein's list of ways in which parts of a sentence can related to each other.

Means and Cause

Read **Ephesians 2:8-9** to view how "means" and "cause" can be confused. Faith is not the cause but the means of salvation.

Yet people often refer to "faith" as though it is the cause. Faith is the means, not the cause, of salvation.

WEEK THIRTEEN

Class Meeting - Teaching Guide

- Open in prayer and open the floor for questions
- Define the biblical terms *treaty and law*
- Watch Tom Schreiner's video on the law https://youtu.be/jm_-BPFVlqc
- Watch other week 13 videos from the Facebook group

Outcome:

Participants will learn the unique features of treaties and law

CHAPTER THIRTEEN "The Games of Treaties, Laws"

Covenants and Treaties

Discuss the patterns found in biblical covenants as outlined by Stein's book P.99 .

SEE HANDOUT PACKET P. 22 & 23

Discuss what must take place to redact or replace a covenant (and how this applies to NT believers)

Discuss the major covenants highlighting Abrahamic, Mosaic and Messianic Covenants (highlight how these new covenants affected the previous covenants)

Note: It takes both a prophet and a priest to redact, replace, renew or establish a completely new covenant.

The Law

Watch video together: https://youtu.be/jm_-BPFVlqc

Where: The law is found in the Pentateuch.

Etymology: The Pentateuch—*Penta* means "five"; *teuch* means "books."

(The Pentagon is a five-sided building serving five branches of the military).

The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Bible, all written by Moses.

Genesis (written by Moses) can be considered a prelude to the law.

In the following four books, God gives over 600 regulations to His people. The regulations DO NOT and DID NOT save a person. Grace by Faith has always been the means of salvation (Genesis 15). Apart from God we are unable to follow the law's regulations and save ourselves. (Sacrifices and cleanings rituals were introduced in the law to cover the expected failing of God's people to follow the law).

Genre issues: Large portions of the books of the law were written in narrative form.

Two Types of Law

1. Apodictic law: Apodictic is declarative and categorical. Apodictic includes prohibitions, commands, and instructions.
2. Casuistic law: Casuistic law usually involves secular or civil matters. (Note: There was no separation of church and state in Israel.)

Patterns of Meaning

The laws of the Bible are not exhaustive in nature. Often, they present commands that are meant to be applied more widely. Example: “Do not commit adultery” has numerous implications concerning lust and pornography.

Example of Conflation or Misapplication of Law

Contemporary law-related reading mistakes: Adultery is sleeping with someone to whom one is not legally married. Would, then, sex in a same-sex “marriage” be acceptable to God? After all, God permits married sex.

“Marriage” does not change or undo God’s prohibition of homosexual sex communicated in other passages. Thus, the proposition “married homosexual sex is approved God” is a non sequitur. (It contains more than one false premise)

Asking the Right Questions

1. Do all homosexual unions violate biblical commands? (yes)
2. Does homosexual “marriage” fit within the parameters and definition of biblical marriage? (no)
3. Does the Bible or a secular government determine what is biblically moral? (biblical law comes from God) (secular law is a tool of God but may not rewrite biblical law)
4. Does following one law (marriage) permit one to break another (homosexual sex)?

Non sequitur = It does not follow that because God blessed marriage that God will also bless homosexual “marriage.”

Law Content and Law Typology

There are three specific types of law. Jesus said the law will never pass away. However, Jesus and the apostles gave permission to ignore certain aspects of the law. How do we square these two seemingly opposing propositions? These statements are understood by observing which “types” of law have passed away and which (referenced to by Jesus) “will never pass away.”

Three Classifications of OT Law

1. **Moral laws** (Ethical Laws): Example: the Ten Commandments (Note: Orthodox scholarships includes disagreement about the fourth commandment’s interpretation and application in the new covenant.)

2. Ceremonial laws (also known as “cultic” or “ritual” laws): These laws all related to temple worship ceremony, in that worshippers sought to remain pure (by the ritual standards) so that they could enter the temple regularly for worship, and remain in fellowship with God and other believers, by remaining “pure” or “ceremonially clean.”
3. Civil laws: These were laws used by Israel to run their government.

Jesus introduced the redaction of the ceremonial law (distinguishing it from the moral law) by saying, “Nothing outside a man can make him unclean by going into him.”

What kinds of foods previously banned by the ceremonial law must be avoided? (none)

Except brussels sprouts and canned mushrooms 😊

CLASS DISCUSSION: Schreiner claims all OT covenantal rules were abolished when the New Covenant was ratified with the blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection. The only moral laws still enforce are those specifically affirmed in the New Testament.

Others claim that all moral laws remain (however, the Saturday sabbath was specifically removed because it relates to ritual rather than personal moral conduct). This removal of sabbath requirement is alluded to (commissive language) in Romans 14:5, Acts 20:7, Rev.1:10, Col.2:16-17. (Note: The Lord’s day is not a replacement for the sabbath, but rather an intentional decision of behalf of worshippers to honor the Lord, by gathering weekly for public worship on the day of His resurrection)

New Testament View of the Old Testament Laws (change in covenant)

NT Effect on Ceremonial/Ritual/Temple Laws

The Old Testament regulations (all three types of law) were put in place with a covenant. When Old Testament Israel followed those laws, they experienced God’s blessing, based on His covenant promises. When they broke those laws, Israel experienced correction and rebuke.

The only means of changing the ceremonial laws is to make a new covenant that comes with a new set of conduct laws. God established a new covenant (Hebrews 9) through the priestly work of Jesus Christ. Jesus and the apostles consistently communicated the abolition of all ceremonial laws in the new covenant.

Note: Before the Old Testament Mosaic Covenant was given, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses were free to eat pork, shellfish, blood soup, or any other food palatable to their appetites. Only when the Mosaic covenant was established were Moses and Israel forbidden from eating such things. Before the Old Testament Mosaic Covenant there were no required tithes or sacrifices.

Reminder: When a new covenant is established, the old rules and norms are updated. So also, the new covenant of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ has updated the rules and norms for God's people.

Features of the New Covenant

1. There is no human priest to enforce temple rituals or ceremonial law or to keep track of sacrifices.
2. Animal sacrifices for law breaking have been removed by the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
3. Jesus Christ, in making a new covenant with His blood, set forth the stipulations of our new covenant. He specifically stated that all foods are now clean to eat, and there is no specific "required day" to worship (Mark 7:19; Romans 14). Tithes (adding up to more than 20 percent in the old covenant) are no longer required, since they all relate to Israel's temple and civic system. (Generous giving is required of believers)
4. Jesus Christ, the author of the new covenant, stipulated the moral law is still enforced (Some details of the Sabbath commandment are disputed among scholars).
5. Jesus Christ is the high priest, and each believer is considered a priest, who may enter through Jesus into the holy presence of God at will. Examples of being "unclean" include not forgiving others, or failing to repent of volitional sin.

The civil laws of the Old Testament are no longer binding since biblical Israel no longer exists. The principles of such laws still reflect divine guidelines for society to follow.

Example: False witness, perjury, and unfair high interest rates on lending are banned in OT civil law. These civil laws, however, provide an excellent example for all earthly governments.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN “Songs / Psalms”

1. Review Hebrew Poetry (Parallelism and repetition)

LESSON 7 – P 23 Of this teaching guide.

2. Interpretation terms reviewed

Explicit vs implicit

Referential language has the purpose of passing along information.

Commissive language has the goal of evoking decisions, conveying emotions and feelings.

The Psalter is written in “commissive language”

3. Watch videos and facilitate discussion

The Bible Project

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9phNEaPrv8>

Faith Life today (Reformed Seminary)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYZ0gOvM1TA>

Bono & Eugene Peterson conversation

(5:30 to 7:15 / 9:00 to 11:50 metaphor / 16:10 imprecatory and expressions of anger)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-l40S5e90KY>

Jesuit Video (optional)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRyba3iCTy0>

SUBJECTS TO COVER IN DISCUSSIONS OF VIDEOS OR SEPARATE DISCUSSION

Psalter Overview: Psalms is the largest book in the Bible. There are 150 psalms arranged in five “Books.”

Book one: 1-41

Book two: 42-72

Book three: 73-89

Book four: 90-106

Book five: 107-150

- Psalms are collections of poetry, many of which were sung in worship. Five books were collected and combined into what we know as the book of Psalms.
- We can refer to the whole collection of Psalms (all five books) as the Psalter.
- Each book ends with a doxology.
- Authors include David (73 psalms), Asaph (12), Sons of Korah (11), Solomon (2), and Moses (1).

Various Types of Psalms

Psalms of Lament

These make up the largest number of psalms. Lament psalms address both individual lament and national lament. In songs of lament we frequently find:

(pp. 40-41)

- Address to God – “O LORD”
- Lament of description of need – “Will you forget me forever?” (sometimes included in psalms of lament are a protest over a lack of justice or a claim of innocence by the psalmist)
- Petitions or prayer for help – “Look on me and answer, O LORD my God” (usually a cry for rescue in this present life)
- Confession of confidence – “But I trust in your unfailing love”
- Vow or confession of praise – “I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me”

Examples:

Psalm 12 is an example of a “community lament.”

Psalm 86 is an example of an “individual lament.”

Note: There are 42 individual psalms of lament and 16 community psalms of lament.

Psalms of Praise and Thanksgiving

Follow p. 41 of Stein summary for description of psalms of praise and thanksgiving.

Note: **Psalm 95** is an example of a thanksgiving and praise psalm.

Other Forms of Psalms

P. 128 Stein (Kindle version)

Psalms of Zion / Entrance Psalms / Royal Psalms / Hymns to God / Wisdom Psalms /
Psalms of Trust / Penitent Psalms / Lament Psalms / Imprecatory Psalms