

LESSON 7

**Principles of Understanding Scripture (6)
Background Information for the Teacher**

Objectives:

1. The student can explain the principle of "theology" in understanding Scripture.
2. The student can demonstrate the use of "other passages" in interpreting Scripture.

Preparation:

1. Have ready to distribute Written Review No. 6.
2. Have ready to distribute Worksheet No. 7. (Fill out one for yourself.)
3. Have sufficient Bibles and pens.
4. Have access to a chalkboard or overhead projector.

Theme: When studying a passage, we must look at how that passage fits into the big picture of what the Bible says on the content of that passage and we must look at other verses that may be related. We call these two principles using "theology" and "other passages."

Lesson Plan for the Teacher

Introduction: (10 minutes)

1. Call the role and plan contact with those who are absent.
2. Make necessary announcements.
3. Songs and prayer as desired.
4. Give answers to Written Review No. 5. No. 1—impossibility. No. 2—direct, unlike; indirect, unlike; extended; substitution, association; human, living. No. 3—metaphor, metonymy, parable, simile.
5. Discuss 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. The metaphor is that the church is a body. Verse 27 says "You (the church) are the body of Christ." Some of the points of comparison are: body and church should be one, united; just as the body enjoys the same nourishment so we all, having been baptized into the church, enjoy the Holy Spirit; all parts of the body and church are needed and important; when one member of the body or the church rejoice or suffer, all the others are affected.

Learning Experiences: (about 30 minutes)

1. The eighth of our ten principles of understanding the Bible is "theology." We are using this word here to mean that the interpretation of any passage must be in harmony with the "big picture" of Scripture. Making one verse mean something that is not in harmony with the broader teaching of Scripture is to give it a meaning that is incorrect. **Q:** Over how long a period of time were the Scriptures being



revealed? **A:** About 1500 years, from about 1400 BC to about 100 AD. **Q:** How many different people were involved in writing the 66 books of the Bible? **A:** About 40. Yet, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, these different writers have produced a book of amazing harmony. So, we should check any possible interpretation of a passage with the overall theme of Scripture and with the teaching of Scripture on the point of the passage we are studying.

2. Here are some guidelines that will help us to look at the "theology" or "big picture" as we are studying a passage.
 - a. Determine the covenant under which the statement applies.
 1. **Q:** What are the two major covenants under which God's people have lived? **A:** Mosaic and Christian. **Q:** Did God intend for people to live under both of those at the same time? **A:** No. Read Romans 7:1-4. **Q:** To what does Paul compare a person's relationship to God's covenants? **A:** To a woman being married to two husbands? **Q:** What is the first husband in Paul's comparison? **A:** The Law of Moses. **Q:** What is the second husband? **A:** The law of Christ. **Q:** What had to happen to the first husband before the woman is free to marry another husband? **A:** He had to die. **Q:** What had to happen to the first covenant before those in it (Jews) could be joined to the covenant of Christ? **A:** It had to die. Read verse 7. **Q:** How do we know from this verse what law it was that Paul said had to die? **A:** The one that said, "Do not covet." And that would be the Law of Moses.
 2. In Hebrews 10:9, the writer says "He sets aside the first to establish the second." **Q:** What act marked the end of the covenant through Moses and established the covenant through Christ? **A:** The death of Christ. Read Hebrews 9:15-17.
 3. So, Jews, who were under the Law of Moses have been released from it to be under the Law of Christ and Gentiles, who were not required to be under the provisions of Moses, are also subject to the Law of Christ.
 4. Two important truths need to be drawn from this information: (a) Since those living after the death of Christ are not under the provisions of the Law of Moses, we should not look to the provisions of that law as those we should follow today.
(b) There are still great benefits that come from studying passages in the Old Testament.



Q: What are some of the values we get today from studying the Old Testament? **A:** Learn about God, creation, the nature of man, the early development of God's plan, principles by which God deals with His people, examples of moral character—both good and bad, much background information by which we understand what the New Testament says.

Q: What should we not use the Old Testament for? **A:** To learn about such matters as what to eat or wear, what to do to worship God, how to be forgiven of sins, etc.

6. **Q:** Do the four gospels belong with the Old Testament or the New? **A:** (Let the class discuss this some.) They describe a time when people were living under the Old Covenant—as Jesus did. But while Jesus was living under the Old Covenant, He was delivering the teaching that would later be taught as part of the New Covenant. So many of the things Jesus did, and a few of the things He taught, fit under the Old Covenant. In His commission to the apostles, however, He told them to go teach what He had taught them while He was alive. (Matthew 28:18-20). So what He taught is part of the New Covenant even though He lived under the Old.
- b. Connect the content of the passage to the larger teaching on the Bible doctrine considered in the passage. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. **Q:** What is the fundamental teaching of this passage about salvation? **A:** That it is by the principle of grace we are saved as opposed to our being able to earn salvation by the principle of works. **Q:** How does this passage say we can connect with grace? **A:** By faith. But this passage does not tell us all we need to know about that faith. Certainly we would need to look at the broad picture throughout Scripture on salvation and what God has asked us to do to connect with His grace. Read Matthew 25:34-36? **Q:** Should we conclude from this passage that the only basis of judgment will be how we treated the needy? **A:** No. We must take into account all that other passages about the basis of judgment say. We need to see all of what God has said on a particular topic before drawing our final conclusion about it. This is what we mean by "theology." Get the full picture.
- c. Relate the teaching of the passage you are studying to other Bible themes. Often we will get important



insights into a theme we are studying by seeing how it connects with other great “currents” that run through Scripture. Ephesians 1:4 speaks of election but we must connect our understanding of this verse with what the Bible says about the theme of free will. When we discuss the question of why there is pain and suffering in the world, we must connect that question with the nature of God and the fact that He gave man the power of making choices.

3. The ninth principle to consider in studying how to understand Scripture is “other passages.” This is a rather obvious one and is related to some of the principles we have already studied. It is such an important one, however, that it needs our special attention here.
 - a. First, check to see if there are other passages with parallel content that tell of the same event or treat the subject in a very similar fashion. Some turn to 2 Kings 18-19, some to Isaiah 36-37, and some to 2 Chronicles 32. Q: What event is described in the passage to which you have turned? A: The invasion of Sennacherib against Judah when Hezekiah was king. Think how useful it will be when we study any one of these passages to look at the others. Q: Is the story of Jesus’ birth in more than one gospel? A: Yes—Matthew and Luke. Q: Is the story of Jesus’ resurrection in more than one gospel? A: Yes—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Q: How many different times is Paul’s conversion recorded? A: Three—Acts 9, 22, 26. Sometimes in Paul’s epistles, particularly those written at a similar time, there are parallel passages that need to be studied together. One very helpful instance of parallel passages occurs in the reports of Christ’s discourse on the Mount of Olives about the coming fall of Jerusalem and of the end of the world. Some turn to Matthew 24:15 and some to Luke 21:20. Jesus is here giving a sign by which the disciples will know that the fall of Jerusalem is immediately upon them and that they should, therefore, leave the city quickly. Someone read Matthew 24:15. Q: Would that tell you very much about when to leave the city? A: No. It is a good connection to the prophecy of Daniel about the fall of Jerusalem. But it does not tell anyone specifically about when to leave. Now read Luke 21:20. This verse falls at exactly the same point in the discourse as reported by Matthew and Luke. Q: When does Luke’s account say one should leave the city? A: When you see an army coming. This is more specific. Since this army was the “abomination of desolation spoken by Daniel the prophet,” looking at



the two passages together helps greatly in understanding the Matthew passage.

- b. Look for passages with similar content. Matthew 5:33-37, for example, says not to take an oath, yet in Hebrews 6:17, God took an oath. Looking at these together will give us a fuller picture of this issue. Q: If one is studying the question of conversion to Christ and what one does to be forgiven of sins, what are some stories of conversion that could be studied together? A: Pentecost, Samaritans, Simon, Ethiopian, Saul, Cornelius, Lydia, Philippian Jailor, the Corinthians. And there are other passages not in conversion stories that would help illuminate this topic.
4. Q: How can you find these other passages? A: References in your Bible. Concordance. Nave's Topical Bible. Commentaries. Bible dictionary or encyclopedia. Bible software.

Application: (3 minutes)

1. Let's list on the board the nine principles we have studied so far: Conditions, Genre, Context, Speaker/Audience, Word Meaning, Syntax, Figures, Theology, Other Passages. We will have one more. We have studied how each of these can be used with particular passages. It is important to use all of these and not just the principles we happen to be most familiar with. When we have studied all ten, then we will have some class meetings in which we practice applying these ten principles to some passages of Scripture.

Assignment: (2 minutes)

1. Be seeking to memorize the nine principles we have learned so far.
2. Prepare for the written review over this week's lesson.
3. Ephesians 5:19 is a useful verse to study. Think about the nine principles we have studied so far and see if you can come up with something that the use of each of these principles would contribute to our study of that verse.



**WRITTEN REVIEW NO. 6
(For use with Lesson No. 7)**

1. We understand a word or expression to be used figuratively if taking it literally appears like an _____.

2. Definitions of different figures of speech:
 - a. Metaphor--_____ comparison of two _____ objects.
 - b. Simile--_____ comparison of two _____ objects.
 - c. Parable--_____ simile.
 - d. Metonymy--_____ of one word for another with which it has some _____.
 - e. Hyperbole--_____ to _____ not to deceive.
 - f. Personification—Giving _____ characteristics to something not _____.

3. Look at the figures of speech given below and identify in the blank provided the type of figure being used.
 - a. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

 - b. "Drink this cup." _____
 - c. The kingdom of heaven is like a net put into the sea. It catches fish of all kinds. _____
 - d. "He shall be like a tree planted by streams of water."



**UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE
WORKSHEET NO. 7**

Principle No. 8 for understanding the Bible is

_____.

1. To use the principle of "theology," determine the _____ to which the statement applies.
 - a. There are two major covenants in Scripture: the Law of _____ and the Law of _____.
 - b. Romans 7:1-4 teaches that the Law of Moses had to _____ so those under it could "marry" the Law of _____. The law passing away was the one that said, "Do not covet."
 - c. Although we no longer live under the provisions of the Law of Moses, we can benefit much from studying the Old Testament. Some of these benefits are:
 - d. While Christ lived under the Law of _____, He was delivering His message which would become in effect when He _____.
2. To use the principle of "theology," connect the content of the passage to the larger teaching of the Bible.
 - a. Example: Ephesians 2:8-9. We are saved by _____. But this passage must be connected with other passages about salvation.
 - b. Example: Matthew 24:34-36. We will be judged on how we have helped others but other passages on _____ will also be consulted.
3. A list of the nine principles covered so far:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.
 - 8.
 - 9.

STUDY EPHESIANS 5:19 AND SEE IF YOU CAN CONNECT IT WITH EACH OF THE NINE PRINCIPLES STUDIED SO FAR.

