

Are We Reading Someone Else's Mail?

When reading the Bible, are we actually reading someone else's mail? What do the Scriptures say, what do they mean when they say it, and to whom are they written?

These are very important questions that need to be answered when trying to understand the message of the Bible. Audience relevance is the **MOST** important key in understanding the Scriptures. **Why, Who, What, When, and Where** the Word of God was written are the basic questions that need to be considered to gain the proper understanding of the Bible.

When placed in its proper context, the Scriptures can be SO much easier to understand. If taken in their proper context, the Bible will actually explain itself.

To whom were the letters of the New Testament written? What were the conditions and situations that existed in the first century that caused the need for these letters to be written?

These letters or Epistles were **NOT** written to us today, but they were written to living breathing born-again Christians who were alive back in the first century concerning the events that were getting ready to take place in their lifetime. Their lifetime was a first century lifetime and a first century generation.

It was the Last Days of God's Covenant relationship with the Nation of Israel that was coming to an end in the first century. If you are sincere about seeking a true Biblical understanding about the Word of God, these Scriptures must be honored:

Hebrews 1:2, Acts 2:17, James 5:3, Hebrews 9:26, I Peter 4:17, Philippians 4:5

These Scriptures are clear, consistent, and inseparably connected to a first century audience.

Consider to whom these Epistles are addressed: to Timothy, to Titus, to the Romans, to the Church at Galatia, to the Church at Corinth, to Ephesus, and to the seven Churches of Asia and so on.

These can be easily found in the salutation of each Epistle. These Epistles or letters were written to first century Churches and people about first century situations and events. God has preserved them for us today for our learning, instruction, and comfort, but they are **NOT** written **TO** us.

We are in effect reading someone else's mail. We must understand them as they were written. When the writers told the readers that these events would happen soon, they were indeed talking about the events that were about to happen at that time in the first century.

The common practice today is to tear these passages of Scripture out of their first century setting and try to apply them to the year 2022 or to the present.

In most Churches today, preachers expand on how the terms used in the Epistles, such as **“soon”**, **“shortly”**, and **“at hand”** apply to us today saying that these very events are getting ready to happen to us one day very soon, maybe even today.

They fail to explain that the Apostles in the first century were telling the first century people that these events were to happen soon at that time back in the first century not in our time, some 2,000 years later and counting.

The writers of the Epistles were not talking about events that were going to happen way off in the distant-2,000-year future at all. In order to understand what the Scriptures mean, we must first understand what they meant to the original audience.

Conclusion

The answers to many questions about the Bible are in the past **NOT** in the future. Today we are blessed because Jesus kept His word and brought about the events that He said would happen in their lifetime, in their generation. **(Matthew 24:3,6,7,11,14,21,29,34, Mark 13:13,14,24,29,30, Luke 21:20,22,32)**

These Scriptures speak about God's judgment upon His Covenant people, the Nation of Israel. **It was their End Times, not our End Times.**

We now live in the Spiritual Kingdom of God and share with all people the Blessing of Abraham, **(Genesis 12:3, Galatians 3:28-29)** We have God's completed plan of salvation through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Promised Seed of Abraham. **WE ARE** the seed of Abraham by faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to the Gospel message.

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