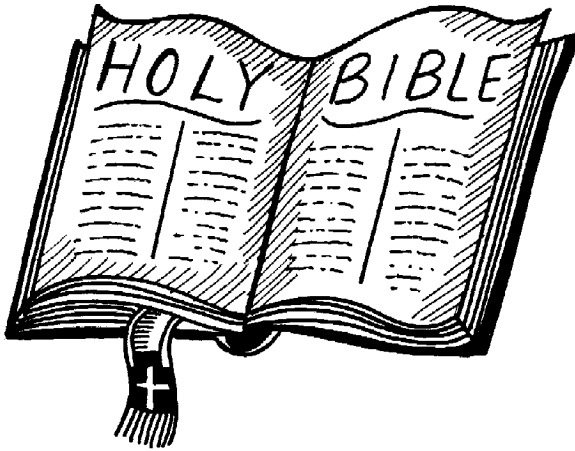


Introduction to New Testament Study Practices



Definitions, Points of Interests, and Miscellaneous
Notes,

Concerning New Testament Writings

The Bible is the Infallible Word of God to the Point of Faith and Practice.

Aetiology:

1. The study of origins or beginnings (*aitios* means cause, reason, or origin). In cultures which have an aetiological world view, the beginnings or origins of things are seen as providing the meaning for all that follows.

2. The Study of Cause; or Why

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Kerygma:

1. Kerygma is a Greek word which means "proclamation, announcement, preaching". In Erasmian Greek pronunciation, which is used in most universities for ancient Greek, both biblical and classical, *kerygma* is pronounced "kay-roog-ma" where the first "a" is long and the last "a" is short. Related words are *kerux* ("herald, preacher" and *kerusso* ("announce, make known, proclaim aloud, preach").
2. As referenced to the New Testament, kerygma refers to the teachings as a whole. The intended message of the writings.

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Gospel:

1. From the Greek meaning “Good News”;
εὐαγγέλιον, *euangelion* (*eu-* "good", *angelion* “message”)
Same root as the word evangelism.

Synoptic:

1. [adj] presenting or taking the same point of view; used especially of the first three gospels of the New Testament; "the synoptic Gospels"
2. [adj] presenting a summary or general view of a whole; "a synoptic presentation of a physical theory"

Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke):

1. The three gospels that share a common tradition in presenting a portrait of Jesus.
2. The three gospels “see together” the life and ministry of Jesus.
Syn = same, optic = see.

Interpretation Disciplines:

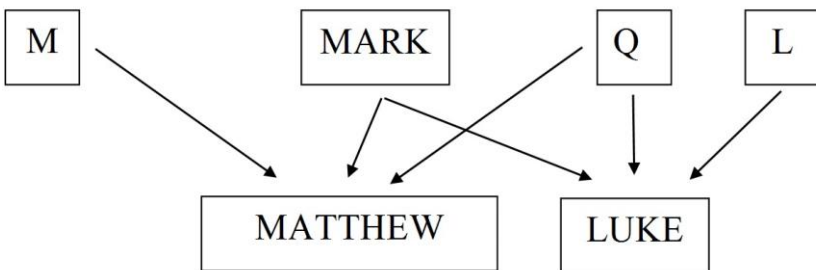
1. Assist in the understanding of writings and to assist in the task of attempting to unravel the mysteries involved in the transmission of the material.

A. Three basic disciplines:

1.) Form Criticism – attempts to study the tradition before it was written down, i.e. while it still existed in oral form. Assumes that the traditions about Jesus at first circulated orally; that these traditions circulated basically in single self-contained units; that these units have no real chronological value; that these units were preserved by the churches in the light of their own needs; that these units can be classified according to form.

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2.) Source Criticism – attempts to find sources used by the gospel writers in the composition of their works to ascertain how they were used, what kind of sources they were, and what kinds of emphasis the sources made.



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3.) Redaction Criticism – views the individual gospel as a unit and seeks to determine the author’s ideas, purposes, and theological motifs in writing the work as he did. Assumes that the author of the gospel is a person who writes and tells the story with specific purposes in mind.

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Various Bible Study Methods

There are a variety of Bible study methods.

If you were to Google search “Bible Study Methods” you will get many different names and approaches for studying God’s Word.

One is not necessarily better than the other, they have different purposes. You may want to combine one or more methods as you study.

Having an idea of how they benefit you in your study allows you to choose the best method for your study needs.

Here are a few examples:

The Expositional Bible Study Method

An expositional Bible study is where you study each verse of a chapter and each chapter of a particular book of the Bible. You study verse by verse from the first verse to the last of one book of the Bible at a time. Here's an example of an expositional Bible study.

The Topical Bible Study Method

Unlike an expositional Bible study, a topical Bible study often involves more than one book of the Bible. This method is where you take a topic and explore what the

Bible says about it. For example, you could study what the Bible says about pride. Here's an example of that type of Bible study.

The Biographical Bible Study Method

This Bible study method is where you choose an individual/s or a family from the Bible and follow their story. Using this method you examine the person's life in light of biblical principles and how s/he does (*or doesn't*) follow or obey God and the consequences of their decisions.

The “Word Study” Bible Study Method

This method is pretty self-explanatory; however, its benefits might not be so obvious. Because the Bible was not written in English, a study of its words in their original language can be very helpful in understanding the meaning of the text.

For example, did you know there are three different Greek words that are all translated to the English word love? Although they are all translated "love," the three Greek words describe a different type of love - either spiritual, intimate, or brotherly love.

The Survey Bible Study Method

In this method the process is basically to survey or read the Bible for basic information and to see how it all fits together. Unlike the expositional method, a survey method doesn't go verse by verse; instead, it's a process that focuses on general subjects. For example, a survey might explore the Bible to discover themes, information about the author or his writing style, and the circumstantial issues regarding the books being studied.

The Devotional Bible Study Method

This is the most common Bible study method. It usually involves daily Bible reading, often using many of the common devotional study resources available in books, online or by email. The primary benefit of this is regular, ongoing engagement of scripture.

Bible Study Tools

There are many free and low cost tools available to you in your effort to study the Bible. On the other hand, you could spend a great amount of money on certain resources.

Another important question to ask yourself when choosing a resource to aid in bible study is, “What is the theological presupposition of this resource?”

In other words, did the author or publisher have a particular theological perspective that will be advanced in this resource?

For example, if you are using a Wesley Study Bible the commentary will be in line with the theological approach handed down by John Wesley through our United Methodist Church.

If you are using a Schofield Study Bible you will have a dispensational theological perspective, which is more in line with the biblical understanding found in most Baptist churches.

Always ask your pastor if you are uncertain in this area.

Here's a list of Bible study tools or references:

1. Study Bibles
2. Bible Atlases
3. Concordances
4. Commentaries
5. Interlinear Bibles
6. Bible Handbooks
7. Bible Dictionaries
8. Bible Encyclopedias
9. Bible Study Software
10. Bible Study Websites
11. Theological Dictionary
12. Wordbooks or Lexicons
13. Electronic Bible Study Libraries
14. Studies of Historical or Cultural Background
15. New or Old Testament Surveys or Introductions

What Does the Context Include?

It is important to understand what is meant by "context" when using it to interpret a passage of Scripture. The context of a passage includes all of the following things:

1. The verses immediately before and after the passage.
2. The paragraph and book in which the passage appears.
3. Other books by this author, as well as the overall message of the entire Bible.
4. The cultural environment of the time when the passage was written.
5. The historical period during which the passage was written.

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The Immediate Context of a Passage

Context is important because it forces the interpreter to examine the biblical writer's overall flow of thought. The meaning of any passage is nearly always determined, controlled, or limited by what appears immediately beforehand and afterward in the text.

"By observing what precedes and what follows a passage, the interpreter has greater opportunity to see what the writer was seeking to convey to his original readers. These readers did not plunge into the middle of the letter and seize out a few consecutive sentences. They read carefully the whole document. To treat material fairly the modern interpreter must enter into the total train of thought. No axiom is better known and more frequently disobeyed than the oft quoted: 'A text without a context is just a pretext.' Faithful adherence to context will create in the interpreter a genuine appreciation for the authority of Scripture."

A respect for the authority of Scripture means that we will seek its meaning rather than putting ourselves in authority above Scripture as the determiner of its meaning.

We all have a tendency to take verses out of context and use them to support points that we think are important.

This is called "proof-texting" -- and it is our own attempt to make the Bible say what we want it to say, rather than

letting the text of Scripture say what God intended to communicate. "The most common failure in interpretation is to violate this most simple and basic principle: the context must control."

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