Hermeneutics — Student Handout

Chapter 4: How to Read the Book — Paragraphs

What You Should Learn From Today's Lecture

- Understand how paragraph-level observation builds on sentence-level observation.
- Learn why "learning to see" is a skill developed through practice.
- Identify key paragraph features that reveal structure and meaning.
- Recognize how authors develop arguments across multiple verses.
- Strengthen observation habits before moving into interpretation.

1. The Shift: From Sentences to Paragraphs

2. The Art of Observation — "Learning to See"

(Agassiz, the student, and the fish)

3. Things to Look for in Paragraphs

Use this section to write definitions, examples, and notes during lecture.

General and Specific (General → Specific / Specific → General)

Questions and Answers

Dialogue (Who speaks? To whom? Purpose?)

Purpose / Result Statements (Why? So that...)

Means (How is something accomplished?)

Conditional Clauses (If… then…)

Actions/Roles of People and Actions/Roles of God

Emotional Terms

Tone (Encouraging, rebuking, sorrowful, etc.)

4. Examples Used in Lecture (Write Notes)

Examples / passages referenced today:

Closing Summary

- Paragraphs show flow and argument across multiple verses.
- Observation must be practiced, not assumed.
- Structure reveals meaning and emphasis.
- We are still observing before interpreting.
- Next chapter will move to larger discourse units.

THINGS TO KNOW

1. Paragraph observation expands sentence-level observation.
2. General-to-specific structure reveals argument flow.
3. Rhetorical questions often introduce major arguments.
4. Dialogue must be analyzed carefully for speakers, setting, and purpose.
5. Purpose/result statements reveal why something is said or done.
6. Means answers the question “How is this accomplished?”
7. Conditional clauses identify requirements and consequences.
8. Biblical paragraphs often show actions of God and actions of people together.
9. Emotional terms help reveal relational meaning in the text.
10. Tone is part of the author’s message and should be observed.
11. A question will be asked if you completed the assigned reading.

ASSIGNMENT

Read Chapter 4 — HOW TO READ THE BOOK—PARAGRAPHS