

## How to Study the Bible (Hermeneutics)

### Part 4 - Reading & Studying the New Testament

#### **Gospel Accounts**

- The four gospels are purposeful retellings of Jesus' life. They are written by different authors and for different audiences.
- To read a passage in context, we should first consider the context within that gospel and then consider similar accounts in the other gospels.
- When looking at Jesus' teachings, pay attention to his audience and if his teaching comes in response to a question or particular issue.
- Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God more than any other topic. It is important to understand the present and future realities of the kingdom.
- Just because Jesus is in the story, there still might be a process to connect to the Gospel.

#### *Parables within the Gospel Accounts*

- A good rule of thumb: there is usually one main point for each main character in a story.
- To understand the parables, we must identify the key points of reference for Jesus and his hearers. Identifying the points of reference will help us see the unexpected turn.
- As with other parts of Jesus' teaching, it is important to pay attention to the audience and if the parable comes in response to a question or particular issue.

#### **Acts**

- Many of the events in Acts should not be seen as normative. However, there are many patterns, models, and principles that we should seek to follow.
- Acts 1:8 is the theme verse of the book and it outlines the rest of the book. Acts 1-7: The Gospel in Jerusalem. Acts 8-9 into 10: The Gospel in Judea and Samaria. Acts 10-28: The Gospel to the ends of the earth.
- Overall, the book of Acts is a model of how God intends the church to take the Gospel to the whole world under the power of the Holy Spirit. The main character of Acts is the Holy Spirit.

## Epistles

- These letters were written to specific groups of people, but we believe that the Holy Spirit gave the author words that are applicable to all people at all times.
- These letters were written to address specific situations. They speak to behaviors that need to be corrected and doctrines that need to be clarified.
- One thing we must remember; we have the answers but we don't always have the questions.
- The authors usually make arguments using logic and reasoning. By focusing on propositions and seeing how they relate to one another, we can follow these arguments more closely. Remember to reach each verse in its context.
- When it comes to application: If the cultural impact is high, we must be careful to consider how a text should be applied. If the cultural impact is low, the application should come straight from the text.

## Revelation

- Approach this book with humility. Within certain parameters, it is okay for us to disagree over the details of this book.
- "Seven critical conclusions from Revelation: God is Sovereign, Satan is Subordinate, Our God Wins, We must see the world in all its deception, We must see Christ in all His glory, We must see the church in all her beauty, We must see our lives in proper perspective" – David Platt
- Remember that the primary audience was first century Christians. While they could not understand much of the prophecy, we should consider what this book meant to them.
- Revelation is filled with Old Testament references.
- Some important questions to consider:
  - When will these prophecies be fulfilled?
  - Is Revelation arranged chronologically or cyclically?
  - What is the millennium and when will it happen?
  - What is the tribulation and who will experience it?