



Bible Study Methods

Overview

Intro: A Three Step Process

Observation: “What Do I See?”

There are basically three things to look for:

1. Structure
2. Key Terms
3. Atmosphere

Interpretation: “What Does it Mean?”

Three things will help us discover the meaning of a passage:

1. Bombard the text with questions
2. Look for the answers to your questions.
3. Seek to integrate the parts with the whole.

Application: “How Does it Work?”

There are two things to look for in this process:

1. How does it work for me?
2. How does it work for others?

Note: *Two out of three ain't good!*

I. Observation

Ten Second Drill: *What do you see?*

Write down as many observations as you can.....



Reading with X-ray Vision

Every book has a skeleton hidden between its covers. Your job as an analytical reader is to find it. A book comes to you with flesh on its bare bones and clothes over its flesh. It is all dressed up. You do not have to undress it or tear the flesh off its limbs to get at the firm structure that lies under its soft surface. But you must read the book with X-ray eyes, for it is an essential part of your apprehension of any book to grasp its structure.

(Mortimer Adler, How to Read a Book, 75)



A. Structural Elements

Cause and Effect — $C \Rightarrow E / E \Rightarrow C$

One event, concept or action that causes another.

Comparison— =

Two or more elements that are alike or similar.

Contrast— \neq

Two or more elements that are unlike or dissimilar.

Explanation— EXP

The presentation of an idea followed by its explanation.

Introduction or Summary— INTRO: / SUM:

Opening or concluding remarks on a subject or situation.

Proportion— \textcircled{P}

Emphasis indicated by the amount of space the writer devotes to a subject.

Purpose— *

A declaration of the author's intentions.

Repetition— “

Terms or phrases used two or more times.

Specific \leftrightarrow **General** — $S \Rightarrow G / G \Rightarrow S$

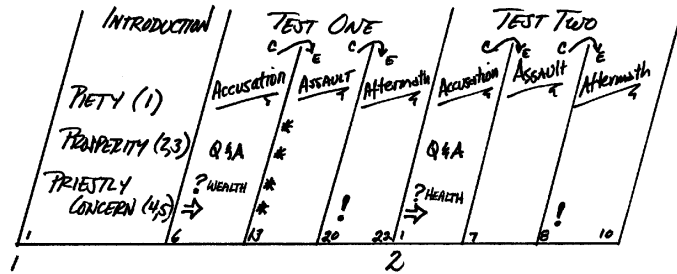
Progression: a single example to a general principle, or vice versa.

B. Structural Display

Text Layout:

The Art of the Chart:

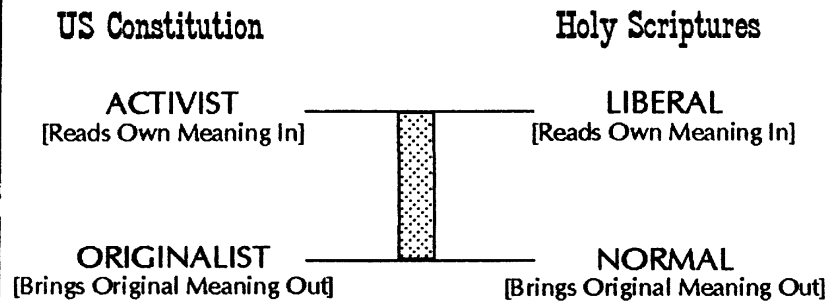
TITLE: "The Worshipper of Uz"



II. Interpretation: The Original Intent

"What was once the dominant view of constitutional law--that a judge is to apply the Constitution according to the principles intended by those who ratified the document--is now very much out of favor among the theorists of the field...

... a judge, no matter on what court he sits, may never create new constitutional rights or destroy old ones. Any time he does so, he violates not only the limits to his own authority but, and for that reason, also violates the rights of the legislature and the people." – Robert Bork



A. Content

There is a cause effect relationship between content and its meaning.
Observation provides the raw material, the content, for interpretation.

B. Context

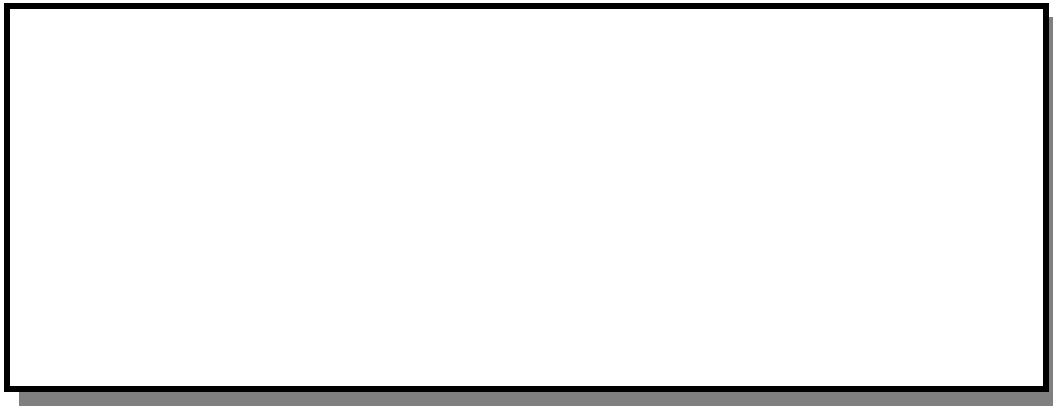
Context always refers to that which goes before and which follows. Any time we break into the middle of a passage, we always need to look at its context. Every major cult is built on a violation of this principle.

Having examined (observed) the evidence, the detective must try to reconstruct the scene of the crime. A key question to be explored is motive. Why was this done?

The goal of interpretation is to discover the original meaning of the author in writing a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, section or book. Consequently, asking and answering the question of motive is pivotal. Does the author state his purpose directly? Does he state it indirectly? Or must we infer motive from his words? In any case, motive is crucial. Crucial not only for accurate interpretation but, as we will later discuss, crucial for sound application as well.



BARRIERS TO DETERMINING THE ORIGINAL INTENT



SIX HELPFUL TOOLS (See handout)

- ① Study Bible
- ② Exhaustive Concordance
- ③ Bible Dictionary
- ④ Bible Handbook
- ⑤ Bible Atlas
- ⑥ Commentaries



<http://www.laprecept.com/StudyHelps.htm>

WORD STUDIES

- [1] Determine the Greek or Hebrew word which is being translated.
<http://www.blueletterbible.org/search.html>

- [2] Discover the range of meanings for the word.

Occurrences in the Bible.

Occurrences for this author.

Occurrences for this book or psalm.

- [3] Evaluate the range of meaning in light of this context and select the appropriate meaning.

PRINCIPLES

- 1- Interpret Normally -- give every word the same meaning it would have in normal usage [writing, speaking & thinking]. Figures of speech and symbols should be obvious from the context.
- 2- Clear passages have priority over obscure passages. Final interpretation should be in harmony with the rest of Scripture.
- 3- Be willing to admit that there are some passages that are difficult to get beyond a "possible" or "probable" interpretation.
- 4- Priority must be given to the original languages in which the Bible was written.

II. Application: Hearers Become Doers

A. Applicational Principles

After careful observation and interpretation state key principles arising out of the passage.

Exs. [1] *There is no blessing without obedience!*
[2] *An unguarded heart will be a divided heart soon.*

B. Applicational Spheres

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH **God...**
MY RELATIONSHIP WITH **Self...**
MY RELATIONSHIP WITH **Satan...**
MY RELATIONSHIP WITH **Family...**
MY RELATIONSHIP WITH **Church...**
MY RELATIONSHIP WITH **Non-Believers...**

“The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity; it was written to change your life.”