

Herman Who?

The Art and Science of Interpreting Scripture

Todd Friel

Teacher's Guide

Dear Teacher:

Words can't express how glad I am you are leading *Herman Who?*.

Your efforts will bear much fruit:

- **Students will learn to interpret the Word better.**
- **Your church will better defend the truth.**
- **Everyone will grow in their knowledge and love for the Lord.**

Thank you for your efforts to these ends.

This is a VERY simple class to teach.

- 1. Make copies of the student workbook for everyone in the class.**
- 2. Show the video from the DVD.**
- 3. Have students fill in the blanks and answer questions.**

There will be a few times when I ask you to stop the DVD and do some independent work...but don't worry; you don't need to prepare for that. It will be self-explanatory.

This study contains twelve chapters for a twelve-week study, but you can taper this to fit your needs.

Three-week study: Lessons 10, 11, 12.

Six-week study: Lessons 7-12.

It is my hope that you and your students will find this an eye-opening and walk-changing experience. Thank you for your passion for the Word and for those you are teaching.

Todd

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LESSON 1: The Urgency of Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the art and science of interpreting Scripture.

Evander Holyfield believes that he can knock out all people through Christ who strengthens him.

Clearly we can't do ALL things through Christ.

What is many people's favorite life verse? Jeremiah 29:11

A woman walks into her pastor's office and misquotes Ephesians 4:24.

The pastor who proof-texts cherry-picks one verse at the exclusion of all the other verses on the same subject.

The Power of the Pull is based on what verse?

Hermeneutics is not a subject for seminarians. This is earnest and urgent for all believers.

All or most of this would come to a crashing halt if correct Biblical Hermeneutics were studied and applied.

What are the benefits of hermeneutics?

1. To know God rightly.
2. To know God better.
3. To instruct our children rightly.
4. To recognize and combat false teaching.
5. To show others the glory of God.

Good and bad hermeneutics is the difference between truth and lies, life and death, heaven and hell.

Why didn't God just give us a rulebook?

1. There are a trillion situations and the Bible would be a really big book.
2. It would be boring.

Hermeneutics: Literally to explain or interpret.

Our working definition: The art and science of interpreting Scripture.

- Art because there are nuances, and you get better with practice.
- Science because there are definite rules.

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling [or cutting] the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

The law of the angle: Off a little in the beginning, off a lot in the end.

We have to work hard to be those who cut the Word straight.

We use the **Grammatical-Historical method** to read it right.

Grammatical-Historical method interprets the text while:

- Using correct grammar.
- Possessing an historical understanding of the text and the original audience.

We are NOT going to be deductive: Making a conclusion and then finding evidence to support the conclusion.

We are going to be Inductive: Examining the data and then drawing a conclusion and then an application. This is also known as “the parts to the whole.”

The inductive method always moves from observation to application.

We do Exegesis: Reading OUT OF Scripture. Understanding what the author intended to say to his original audience.

We do NOT do Eisegesis: Reading INTO Scripture. Eisegesis is reading into the text what we want the verse to say, versus what the author intended.

Analogy of Scripture: The Bible interprets the Bible. The clear interprets the unclear.

LESSON 2: The History of Hermeneutics

Who is smarter? Early church, reformers, us?

Chronological snobbery: The false understanding that we are the smartest generation ever; therefore, we can dismiss the work of other Holy Spirit-filled men. This is also called epistemological arrogance.

First Century—Christological: Jesus, and then the writers of the New Testament, were **Christocentric** in their approach to Bible interpretation.

- **Typology:** Fuzzy pictures of Jesus in the Old Testament, revealed in Him in the New Testament.
- **Messianic fulfillment:** To prove Jesus was the Christ.

We should be Christocentric also. Our interpretation must always keep Jesus in mind without mangling the text.

We must be Christological without getting carried away and neglecting other theologies. Balance is crucial.

Genesis 3:15 is the thesis statement of the Bible.

The rest of the Bible is pointing to that seed.

“Leadership Lessons from Nehemiah”

Or “Who Is Your Goliath?”

You cannot understand the Bible without a Christological perspective.

Late Antiquity: AD 200 till middle ages.

Third Century—Two Schools:

1. **The Antiochene School** stressed a literal and historical meaning of the text.
2. **The Alexandrian School** stressed allegorical readings, frequently at the expense of the text's literal meaning.

Allegorical interpretation: Assumes the text has a meaning other than what the literal wording says.

Allegory was used by early church fathers and the Catholic Church until:

The Protestant Reformation

The Reformers neither embraced nor fully rejected the allegorical interpretation.

Modern Day Allegorizers

IHOP: (International House of Prayer) and Mike Bickle.

Song of Solomon is primarily a book of romantic love between spouses. It is not a manual for intimacy with God.

Zola Levitt: Festivals mirror the development of the fetus in the womb.

Note: Jesus never used this method.

Modern Hermeneutical Methods

Skeptical, Existential, mystical, philosophical: They all tend to deny the miraculous and work of the Holy Spirit.

Trajectory hermeneutics: The Bible is developing a theme and becoming more sophisticated as it goes.

Rob Bell taps into this method.

Numerology

Equidistant Letter Sequence or System: The discovery of letters that are spaced equidistantly which reveal a secret code.

Gammatria: Hebrew and Greek letters are assigned a numeric value revealing hidden messages, meanings or presumed significance.

We shouldn't need a computer to interpret the Bible.

Reader Response Method: What does the text say to me?

Try Reader Response with a STOP sign or an electric bill.

What is the right Hermeneutic?

Grammatical Historical Method: Understanding the grammar and historical setting of the text to understand the text as the original audience would have understood it.

Authorial intent: What did the author intend for it to say? How would the original audience have understood the text?

Rule: If you understand it differently than the original audience, you have it wrong.

Inductive Method: Finding what the text means and then making your conclusion.

(Not) Deductive Method: Making a conclusion and then finding evidence to support the conclusion or belief.

Exegesis: Reading out of the text what it says and means.

(Not) Eisegesis: Reading into the text what we want it to say.

Reader Response: What the text says to *me*.

That is why we choose the Grammatical Historical method of Biblical hermeneutics.

LESSON 3: Definitions

General Revelation: God reveals Himself through creation (and even science). This revelation is limited to God's attributes (Psalm 19:1-6).

Creation speaks, but its vocabulary is limited. We can conclude:

- God is big.
- God is powerful.
- God is very intelligent.
- God is creative.
- God is artistic.
- God is unchanging.

Specific or Revealed Revelation: God's inspired Word. Psalm 19:7ff.

Specific revelation can only be found in the Word.

Not all truth is valid truth; the Word must affirm it.

Autographs: The original documents.

Translation: The transformation of the written text from the source language (Hebrew or Greek) to the receptor language.

Can a translation contain errors? Yes.

Transliteration: A word-for-word equivalent.

Formal equivalent: As close to word-for-word as possible while maintaining readability in the receptive language, not wooden or stiff

though. This is a more “literal” translation that is less prone to interpreter error. (NASB, ESV, KJV, NKJV)

Functional (dynamic) equivalent: A less formal translation intended to convey the meaning of the text, not a word-for-word literal translation. Intended to eliminate the historical difference and impact the modern audience the same way as the original. (NIV, NLT)

Paraphrase: The author’s understanding of the original meaning of the text, used in current language that does not necessarily reflect the original. This is the furthest away from the original language and should be avoided and only used if it matches a correct interpretation of the text.

A list in order from formal to liberal translations:

KJV

NKJV

NASB

RSV

NRSV

ESV

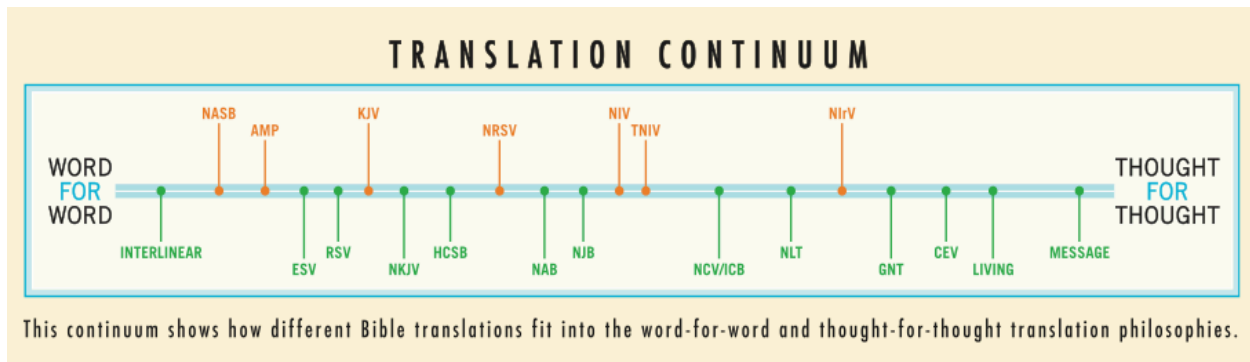
NIV

NET

NLT

GNB

THE MESSAGE



Which translation should you use? The right tool for the right job.

Biblical genres: The various styles/forms of literature that God chose to write the Bible: historical narrative, poetry, proverbs, biographies, epistles, apocalyptic.

We read each genre as literally as it was intended to be read.

The Gospels and Epistles are different from Revelation.

The Proverbs are different from historical narrative.

The Epistles are different from Acts.

Acts and Old Testament history books are both Descriptive and Prescriptive.

Descriptive revelation/historical narrative: The author is merely re-telling the event. This form of narrative is not necessarily intended to be replicated or made a law. It may be an example of a law, but we cannot turn historical narrative into a law, unless it reflects something of the character and nature of God revealed elsewhere.

Note: Sometimes the author describes an event that is bad without telling us. *Ex:* David's many wives, the book of Judges.

Note: Historical narrative will regularly have abbreviated descriptions of events. Consider Paul's sermons in the book of Acts. Cf. Acts 17.

Prescriptive revelation: This is clear and direct language (commands) intended to prescribe a lesson or behavior to all generations for all time. The Epistles are prescriptive (also known as didactic, or teaching).

Progressive revelation: God chose to gradually reveal details about Himself and His plan of salvation over a long period of time (Heb. 1:1-2; Eph. 3:5, 9; Col. 1:23; Is. 52:15).

Inspiration: God's chosen means of communicating all the information His church would need for all time.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

2 Peter 1:20-21

Like wind that fills a sail, so the Holy Spirit moved men along without violating their personalities to write exactly what He wanted them to write.

Plenary inspiration: Plenary means full, or complete. Every word of the Bible is inspired by God. This is what Jesus taught: Matthew 4:4

Note: There are not degrees of inspiration. Some sections may APPLY more, but they are no less inspired.

Verbal inspiration: God superintended every word, tense, grammatical choice, etc. to convey what He wanted us to know.

Did the authors know they were inspired?

I Corinthians 2:12-14

I Corinthians 14:37-38

2 Peter 3:14-16

Contrast this to the Koran: Allah dictated to one man; the many authors of Scripture were inspired.

Inerrancy: There are no errors or contradictions in the original manuscripts.

Infallibility: The Bible is NOT CAPABLE of errors.

Sufficiency: The Bible is sufficient for all of life and godliness (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Canonization: The process by which God protected the inspired writings to be the books we currently have in our Bibles.

Five reeds/standards:

1. Written by an apostle or a disciple of an apostle.
2. Nearest to the actual event.
3. Acceptance from West and East.
4. Orthodox.
5. It feels like Scripture.

Apocryphal: “Of a story, fiction.”

Pseudepygraphal: “With false title, spurious.”

Manuscripts: Original, or replications of the original, documents.

Textus Receptus: The best manuscript available in 1611, used for the KJV and NKJV.

Eclectic Text: The modern text that consists of multiple sources that have been determined to be the most accurate. These texts include: NASB, ESV, NRSV, NIV, NLT

Textual Criticism: The study of manuscripts to determine which manuscript most accurately reflects the original.

Six Reeds of Textual Criticism. A reed is a standard.

- Oldest manuscript is preferred, but not necessarily the most accurate.
- Widest geographical support (from West to East).
- The reading that most easily explains the other readings is preferred.
- The reading that is most characteristic of the author.
- The reading that does not reflect doctrinal bias.
- The shorter reading is preferred.

Variants: Discrepancies in the early manuscripts.

Textual divisions: The originals were written in all capitals, without spaces or punctuation marks or divisions.

Chapter divisions were added in the 13th century by Stephen Langton, and verse divisions were added by Stephanus in the 16th century.

Interpretation: Understanding the text as it was originally intended.

Application: How the reader can and should respond to the message of the text. “What does it mean?” should always precede “How does it apply?”.

LESSON 4: The Role of the Holy Spirit

Does the Holy Spirit just help us understand the text?

I Corinthians 2:14

The Holy Spirit helps us:

1. Know it is true.
2. Apply it to our lives.

A pagan can understand the Bible, but not believe it or apply it.

Does He give us the correct interpretation?

We need to use the brains He gave us.

This tells us there is an intellectual and methodological way to interpret.

“Cut it straight” like a carpenter or tentmaker.

1. You need right knowledge.
2. You need the right skills.
3. You need the right tools.
4. You need to practice.
5. You need to do the work.

Should we ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand and apply the Word?

Should we ask Him to give us the right interpretation?

Should we therefore neglect to work hard to use correct tools and skills to understand the Word?

LESSON 5: Lose your Pre-understandings

Presuppositions: Unshakable, unmovable, non-compromisable beliefs about the Bible. These include: inspiration, infallibility, sufficiency, inerrancy, non-contradiction.

Pre-understandings: All of your preconceived beliefs and understandings about the Bible and your understanding. You **MUST** be willing to adjust these...while holding on to your presuppositions.

List some things about YOU that could affect your interpretation:

Trevin Wax: Where You Live Changes What You See When You Read the Bible

Lesson one: Know your sources and know your people.

Lesson two: We all bring pre-understandings to Scripture.

Lesson three: Consult commentaries from people in societies different from our own.

LESSON 6: Grammar and Greek

Noun: Person, place or thing. *Example:* Cat.

Adjective: A word that modifies/defines/describes a noun. *Example:* The lazy cat.

Pronoun: A word that replaces a noun/thing. *Example:* This or that.

Personal pronoun: A word that replaces a person. I, you, he, she, it.

Definite Article: A word that modifies the noun identifying which. *Example:* The cat.

Indefinite Article: The word “a” which modifies a noun. *Example:* A cat.

Verb/predicate: A word that shows action. *Example:* The lazy cat slept.

Be verb: This is a connecting verb: Is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been.

Adverb: A word typically ending in the letters l and y that modifies a verb or noun. An adverb helps us understand where, when, why or how something happened. *Example:* Bob ran quickly to see the lovely girl.

Adverbial phrase: An adverbial phrase can modify an adverb, adjective or verb. It is usually accompanied by other words (like prepositions). *Example:* The boy ran to his mother as quickly as he could.

Infinitives: A verb that functions as a noun to describe the action or state of something. *Example:* My mom knows how to cook.

Preposition: Shows the relationship between two words. *Example:* The cat slept with the dog.

Object of a Preposition: A noun or pronoun that follows a preposition (over, under, through, etc.) that completes its meaning. *Example:* Bob is at the movies.

Direct object: A noun that is directly affected by the action of the verb.

Example: Bob hit Tim.

Indirect object: A noun that is indirectly affected by the action of the verb.

Example: Emily gave a ball to Jack. An indirect object can usually be identified with the preposition “to” in front of it.

Predicate Nominative: A noun that is connected to the subject with a “be” verb. *Example:* Haley is my daughter.

Predicate Adjective: An adjective that is connected to the subject with a “be” verb. *Example:* Haley is beautiful.

Dependent clause: A clause that cannot stand alone. *Example:* While I am singing.

Independent clause: A clause that can stand by itself. *Example:* I like to sing.

Syntax: The study of the rules for the formation of sentences in a language.

LESSON 7: History Matters

Historical and Cultural Context

1. Who wrote it and to whom was it written?
2. What is the author's reason for writing? What is going on? What is life like? What are the circumstances? Major events?
3. From where and to where is he writing?
4. When did he write it?
5. What is the situation (his and theirs)? What were they going through?
6. Understanding the times and history is important (pagan practices, in slavery, delivered from slavery, attitudes).
7. What is the commerce/trade/industry/geography/crops/geo-politics?
8. Setting: *Example*: Judges.

As you read, always keep the following thoughts floating through your brain:

- Author
- Place of writing
- Date of writing
- Recipients of writing
- Location of recipients
- Opponents
- Culture
- Commerce
- Quality of living
- Transportation
- Trade

- Agriculture
- Industry
- Occupations
- Perceptions
- History
- Peace or war
- Religion

Caution: This information cannot be elevated over the text. History does not stand over Scripture.

Example of why this is helpful: Revelation 3:15-16.

Let's study the history of Laodicea.

- Banking industry
- Wool industry
- Eye salve
- Water issue
- Collassae, cold water, good church
- Hieropolis in the north had hot springs, good church

Bottom line: Know what was going on inside the text and what was happening OUTSIDE the text.

Warning: Make sure you don't elevate this knowledge over the text.

Example: John 4:1-39

LESSON 8: Genres

Genres: A category of literature. Types, styles, kinds.

Genre can make a major difference in our understanding of words and meanings; the same thing is true with the Bible.

We automatically interpret a word a certain way when we know the genre.

Lawyers read briefs with rules: habeas corpus vs. corpus delecti.

You read poetry differently than the newspaper.

The Bible has: laws, poetry, proverbs, letters, prophecy, apocalyptic literature, Gospels, historical narrative.

Genre and context will help you determine the meaning of a word and the meaning of a passage.

This is why it is best NOT to say, “I read the Bible literally.” Instead, we should say, “I read the Bible based on the genre of literature being employed.”

Old Testament Genres:

Old Testament Narrative

These are the true story books, like Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, etc.

We will call this type of literature Historical Narrative. This is the accurate telling of the history of the Jewish nation, out of which the promised Seed of Genesis 3 would come.

There is some theology in these books, but it must be carefully gleaned from mere narrative.

Old Testament Law

Law in the Old Testament can mean:

1. The entire Old Testament.
2. The Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy).
3. The Ten Commandments.
4. Exodus 20 through Deuteronomy 33: The Mosaic Law.

Context must help us understand what the author had in view.

There are three ways to determine which moral/ceremonial/civil laws, if any, apply to the New Testament believer.

1. The law is separated into three categories: moral, civil and ceremonial. Only moral applies. Problem is, the Old Testament doesn't make this distinction.

2. All of the Old Testament laws are in place unless the New Testament repeals them. This is a little tricky when it comes to farming and clothing because those rules are not repealed in the New Testament.

3. None of the Old Testament laws apply, unless New Testament reiterates. Consider: Hebrews 8:13

- We can still use the Old Testament principles to learn from these laws.

- God's moral precepts never change.
- FYI: The New Testament affirms nine of the Ten Commandments, less the Sabbath.

Old Testament Poetry

Old Testament Poetry (found mostly in the Psalms) is our feelings literature.

Poetic literature is designed to help us understand God on an emotional level.

We do NOT want to base theology on experience or emotions, but we do want to rightly enjoy and deal with the emotions that God has given us (joy, anger, sorrow).

Old Testament Proverbs

Proverbs 1:1-7

Proverbs are written to teach us the difference between right and wrong in a way that is easy to remember.

Proverbs are not promises, but general principles which, if followed, result in overall life going better.

Proverbs are also known as Wisdom Literature.

Proverbs must be read in light of other Scripture, like Job.

Proverbs must be understood in light of God's sovereignty.
The shorter the proverb, the less likely it is to be precise.

Proverbs must be understood in light of other proverbs.

To fully understand a subject (like “fools”), all proverbs on the subject must be considered, not just one verse.

Old Testament Prophecy

Prophecy differs from New Testament apocalyptic literature (vivid images/symbolism).

Very little of the Old Testament prophecy is predictive:

- 2% is Messianic.
- 5% describes the New Covenant age.
- 1% describes events that are yet to come after the New Covenant era.

Prophecies can have multiple fulfillments in one prophecy. (Isaiah 7, Matthew 1)

There are prophecies that have near and distant predictions.

Mountain top prophecies: The author is seeing the peaks only and not the valleys.

Example: Jesus in Luke 4:16-21; Isaiah 61:1

New Testament Genres:

Gospel: A theological, historical biography of Jesus.

Biographies were different then than now...they didn't include every detail or even write in order. The theme dictated the content.

The theme and purpose of each Gospel should be kept in mind.

MATTHEW wrote to Jews to proclaim Jesus as King.

MARK wrote to Romans to present Jesus as a servant.

LUKE wrote to the Greeks (Theopholis) to declare that He was the ideal man.

JOHN wrote to the world to announce Jesus is God.

Why four books? Different perspectives and lessons are seen.

Matthew, Mark, Luke = synoptics. Mostly the same content.

John: 70% unique content.

Miracles: The authors did not write about miracles as myths, but actual events.

Speculation: No Gospel gives every detail of every event, and we must be careful not to speculate on something God clearly didn't want us to know.

Parables: A long, fictitious story that moves from the known (every day stuff) to the unknown (the spiritual or moral lesson).

As a rule, parables have just one point.

Now we settle on TRIADIC structure:
God and two responses: one good, one bad.
Example: The prodigal son. Luke 15:11-32

Consider the point, not the details (Matthew 25:14-30).

Acts

Acts is mostly Historical Narrative mixed with theology and teaching.

The biggest challenge is, how do we determine if the narrative is prescriptive or descriptive?

1. Does it sound like a command?
2. Is the activity repeated and not just a one-time event?
3. If it is repeated, are the details the same? Consider Acts 2, 8, 10, 19, re. the giving of the Holy Spirit.
4. If the action is something new, proceed with caution.
5. Interpret historical narratives with the Epistles in mind.
6. If the narrative contradicts Scripture, it is not intended to be repeated.

Epistles

For the most part (but not entirely), the Epistles apply directly to the modern church. The Epistles are didactic as a rule.
However, there are some things that are cultural or specific.

Epistles are legal documents written for a specific reason.

“If you forget the occasion (correction, encouragement, rebuking), then you are just listening to one side of a phone conversation.”

God had the epistles written with us in mind, but they were not written directly to us.

The Book of Revelation.

Revelation is apocalyptic literature.

This form of literature was quite common from the 7th century BC until the 2nd century AD.

Revelation can be divided into two parts:

- Ch.1-3: Current events at the time of the author.
- Ch.4-22: Future events.

Tips:

1. Read Revelation like an editorial cartoon.
2. If the symbol is not normal, it is probably a symbol.

Example: Revelation 9:7-8

Howard Hendricks recommends ten principles:

1. Use the literal sense unless there is some good reason not to.
2. Use the figurative sense when the passage tells you to do so.
3. Use the figurative sense if a literal meaning is impossible or absurd.
Figurative language can be both descriptive and precise.
4. Use the figurative sense if a literal meaning would involve something immoral. *Example:*
5. Use the figurative sense if the expression is an obvious figure of speech.

6. Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation goes contrary to the context and scope of the passage. *Example:*

7. Use the figurative if a literal interpretation goes contrary to the general character and style of the book. God is not a chicken.

8. Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation goes contrary to the plan and purpose of the author – understand the context of the text.

9. Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation involves a contradiction of other Scripture.

10. Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation would involve a contradiction in doctrine.

LESSON 9: The Right Definition

Semantic Range: One word can have lots of meanings, but can only have one meaning in the text.

Example: charis.

Concordance and Lexicon to the rescue!

A concordance is an index book, an alphabetical listing of all words used in the Bible, with references to each chapter and verse.

How to put your concordance and lexicon (Greek dictionary) to work:

1. Look up your word, read the definition, find your verse.
2. Use your Concordance number to look it up in your Greek lexicon/dictionary to get a deeper understanding of your word.

10 Reasons to use your concordance:

1. To find a verse's address. Simply look up the most unusual word in the verse.
2. To study all of the verses that use your word for a word study.
3. To gather background information. To learn about a person, place or thing, look up your word and study everything about it in the Bible. You can also use related words for this.
4. To compare Scripture with Scripture.
5. To develop a systematic theology, you must study every time your subject is discussed in the Bible.
6. To see how often your author uses a particular word in his writings.
7. To determine the semantic range of a word.

8. To understand how your author uses your word in each book.
9. To study word association. By discovering associated words, it will help you understand the meaning of your word.
10. To discover the word in the original language.

Example: John 3:16. What does *world* mean?

◀ 2889. kosmos ▶

Strong's Concordance

kosmos: order, the world

Original Word: κόσμος, ου, ό

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: kosmos

Phonetic Spelling: (kos'-mos)

Short Definition: the world, universe

Definition: the world, universe; worldly affairs; the inhabitants of the world; adornment.

It will then list the 187 verses it appears in in the New Testament.

Now, take your number 2889 and grab a Greek lexicon.

Blue Letter Bible on-line Lexicon:

Aa

κόσμος

Transliteration

kosmos

Pronunciation

ko'-smos (Key)

Part of Speech

masculine noun

Root Word (Etymology)

Probably from the base of **κομίζω (G2865)**

κόσμον — 45x

κόσμος — 32x

κόσμου — 73x

κόσμῳ — 37x

KJV Translation Count — Total: 187x

The KJV translates Strong's G2889 in the following manner: **world (186x).**

Outline of Biblical Usage [?]

- I. an apt and harmonious arrangement or constitution, order, government
- II. ornament, decoration, adornment, i.e. the arrangement of the stars, 'the heavenly hosts', as the ornament of the heavens. 1 Pet. 3:3
- III. the world, the universe

- IV. the circle of the earth, the earth
- V. the inhabitants of the earth, men, the human family
- VI. the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ
- VII. world affairs, the aggregate of things earthly
the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments riches, advantages, pleasures, etc, which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ
- VIII. any aggregate or general collection of particulars of any sort,
. the Gentiles as contrasted to the Jews (Rom. 11:12 etc)

Strong's Definitions [?](Strong's Definitions Legend)

κόσμος **kósmos**, kos'-mos; probably from the base of [G2865](#); orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration; by implication, the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively (morally)):—adorning, world.

Pythagoras is said to have been the first to use the word.

Context, context, context.

What do we do with this?

1. Using our concordance, we can see how the author and others use our word by cross-referencing.
2. Using your lexicon you can get a richer understanding of your word.

Ten Considerations:

1. How does the author usually use the word? This does not guarantee your verse uses it this way.
2. If the word is repeated by the author in the same book, he probably had the same meaning in mind, especially if he uses it near your verse.
3. How is the word used in other books?
4. If your selected meaning undermines the meaning of other verses, you got it wrong.
5. Does the author's argument suggest a meaning?
6. Does the historic situation give us insight?
7. Does the theme of the book give us a hint?
8. Consider nuances of a word.
9. Look for an immediate contrast.
10. How do other first-century writers use the word? *Ex.* Josephus

Warning!

English-only fallacy: Do not use an English dictionary as a study tool.

Root fallacy: A word means what it means to the users, not what its etymology is. *Ex.* metanoia

Time frame fallacy: What the word meant before or after the original audience. Words change meanings and mean different things at different times in history. *Ex.* Gay

Overload fallacy: A word means one thing, not the entire semantic range.

Word count fallacy: Don't give the word the same meaning every time it occurs.

Context is King!

Context helps us understand the definition of words and meaning of verses.

Greg Koukle warns, "Never read a Bible verse." Read the paragraphs surrounding it.

Examples: John 12:32; John 10:27

Context guides to the meaning of an entire verse or section of Scripture.

Example: Mark 8:16-9:13

Theme: Jesus is the ideal man.

Setting: Jesus had just performed the miracle of feeding thousands.

LESSON 10: The Four-Step Process

1. Observe the text.
2. What does the text say to the original audience?
3. What is the principle for all time?
4. How do I apply the text?

1. Observation.
2. Interpretation.
3. Principlization.
4. Application.



Step One: Observe. Observe. Observe.

Step Two: What does it say and what does it mean? Interpretation.

Step Three: What is the principle? Consider how wide is the river between the original audience and us?

The five river considerations are:

1. Time
2. Culture
3. Language
4. Situation
5. Covenant

Step Four: Application Can I apply this to me?

You will do well to memorize these four points exactly.

1. **Observation**.
2. **Interpretation**.
3. **Principlization**.
4. **Application**.

Remember: Lose your presuppositions.

Remember: The purpose of the book.

Remember: History and culture study.

Remember: Before I read my verse, I should read several paragraphs before and after my text.

Step One: Observe

Read your text multiple times.

Look for:

- Repetition of words (Col. 1: In CHRIST, CHRIST, Pronouns for Him)
- Contrasts
- Comparisons
- Lists
- Cause and effect
- Figures of speech
- Conjunctions
- Verbs
- Mood
- Pronouns
- Word order

When reading paragraphs, look for:

- The theme or main thought
- General to specific
- Specific to general
- Questions and answers
- Dialogue
- Purpose statements
- Conditional clauses
- Emotional language
- Tone

Always keep the purpose of the book in mind.

Avoid ridiculous observations:

- Number of words per passage
- The verse begins with a capital letter
- A repeated letter
- Alliteration

Always watch for connectives between sentences, paragraphs or chapters.

Avoid making an interpretation or application instead of an observation.

Diagramming is very helpful.

Figures of speech are important.

- **Simile:** A comparison of two things using like or as.
- **Metaphor:** A comparison introduced by a “be verb.”
- **Hyperbole:** Deliberate exaggeration with an impossible fulfillment.
- **Overstatement:** Deliberate exaggeration that some might think could be imagined.
- **Irony, personification, anthropomorphism, sarcasm,** etc.

Three big questions:

1. What is the text saying about God?
2. What is the text saying about man?
3. What is the text saying about Christ and salvation?

Look for inclusios = bookends. *Example:* John 14 and 16; II Corinthians 4:1 and 16.

Tricky part: We know more than the original audience. We cannot understand the text more than the original audience, but we still need to keep that knowledge in mind as we interpret the text.

Order of Observation

1. Observe your text.
2. Observe verses around your text.
3. Observe other texts that talk about your subject.
4. Then consult other sources: commentaries, dictionaries, lexicons, concordances, etc.

Practice a text: Romans 12:1-2

Step One: Observation

Rome: Capital of the Empire.
Time of persecution for believers.
Paul had not been there yet, but wanted to.

Romans is the magnum opus of Paul.
Written to the church, therefore, us.
Theologically rich.

First 11 chapters: Theology.
Chapters 12-16: Application.

Start with verses before: Romans 11:33-36

Practice (stop video): Two volunteers read a verse and give their immediate observations. Then have the class do it again after studying it for 10 minutes. Write the original observations and then the class observations on a board to compare. Choose any of the following verses for practice: Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:16; I Peter 3:15

Step Two: Interpretation

- Understand the grammar/syntax. Use dictionaries or lexical aids.
- Language: How were your words used at that time?
- Time: We can't impose our scientific or historical knowledge on their understanding of the text.
- Remember the genre.
- Remember, Scripture does not contradict Scripture.

- Scripture interprets Scripture
- Interpret unclear in light of clear

Stop video: What is your interpretation of Romans 12:1-2? Have each individual write their interpretation. Give five minutes, and then return to video.

Todd's interpretation of Romans 12:1-2:

We are commanded to not be like the world, but to worship God with our entire lives with changed thinking by renewing our mind through knowledge of what He has done.

Step Three: What is the PRINCIPLE in general terms? **CROSS THE BRIDGE!**

Rules:

1. History and culture: Apply what you learned about the history and culture before you principlize your text.

2. Setting: What is the original audience's setting vs. ours?
3. Time: We live thousands of years after them with much more knowledge and church history.
4. Language: How has the language changed? Does the word mean something different today? We cannot make an anachronistic error.
5. Covenant: Old Testament or New Testament? Old Testament believers were blessed with prosperity and peace. New Testament believers receive a peace that surpasses understanding despite prosperity. The cross makes a difference.
6. The principle must be timeless (not connected to a particular incident or culturally bound), or you have it wrong.
7. If the original audience would not understand or accept your principle, then you have it wrong.

Now we can write a principle in a single sentence.

This is not the interpretation as much as it is the POINT/Command/Purpose/Rule.

Stop video: Write your principle for Romans 12:1-2. Return to DVD and Todd's principle after five minutes.

Todd's principle: Romans 12:1-2: Christians are not worldly, but are supposed to worship God every minute of the day by having a changed mind and a changed life because of what Jesus has done for us.

Step Four: Application

Three big rules:

1. We must be specific with our application.
2. We cannot understand the verse differently than the original audience.
3. We know more than the original audience.

Five Categories of Application:

1. Specific command: If God commands it, we do it.
2. Specific prohibition: If God says, “Don’t,” then we don’t.
3. Cultural issues: Were there specific commands/prohibitions given to the original audience that do/don’t apply to us?
4. Principles but not practice.
5. Adiaphoron: Alcohol, movies, smoking, dancing, schooling, etc.

Remember: If original audience wouldn’t accept your application, then you shouldn’t either.

Stop video: Take five minutes and write your application of Romans 12:1-2 and then return to see Todd’s application.

Application of Romans 12:1-2

If I want to worship God all the time, I must die to self in light of what He has done in Christ and continually have a transformed mind through the study of God’s word.

Potential questions: Romans 12:1-2

Why should you sacrifice your whole life for Christ?

What is worship? Is it more than singing?

Does worship lead to transformation?

What role do emotions play in this process?

What are you putting into your mind?

Am I worshipping all day?

Does my life look like worship to others?

What parts of my body are slow to be transformed?

How much time do you spend each day being transformed?

When I am not behaving rightly as a believer, what is my problem?

Why is my life not an ongoing sacrifice?

Congratulations! You made it through your first verse!

LESSON 11: Practice Makes Proficient: Old Testament Verses

Jeremiah 29:11

History and culture

Context:

Chapters 1-9: You've been sinful and rebellious and I am going to punish you.

Chapter 10: Your idolatry is really, really stupid. Satire.

Chapter 11-28: Jerusalem's destruction is nigh.

Chapter 29: A message to those who are in exile from Israel.

V. 1-9: Settle in, have kids. This is going to be a while.

V. 10-14: *"For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.'"*

Step One: Observation

Step 2: Interpretation

God offers His children hope that He will keep His promise to deliver His chosen people from Israel and restore their fortunes.

Step 3: Principlization

Principle: When God makes a promise that is for US, He will never fail to deliver.

Step 4: Application

God has promised us many wonderful things. Just as God was faithful to His promises with the Jews in the Old Testament, God will be faithful to the wonderful promises He made in the New Testament. God does not promise prosperity to the church; He offers a future hope.

Application Questions:

What am I failing to remember when I fear the future?
Should I listen to anything Joel Osteen says about this verse?

Exodus 21:28-29

28 *"If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall go unpunished."* (It is the ox's fault.)

29 *"If, however, an ox was previously in the habit of goring and its owner has been warned, yet he does not confine it and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death."* (It is the owner's fault.)

Step One: Observation

A law for a certain people at a certain time.

What does it say? If your animal kills someone, kill the animal. If the animal has a history of hurting people and the owner didn't take a precaution to prevent the animal from killing someone, then the animal and the owner should die.

Step Two: Interpretation Write your own!

Step Three: Principlization

God values human life so much that a human who is responsible for the death of another should be put to death. God also expects us to be responsible for our property.

Step Four: Application

1. God is ok with the death penalty.
2. God expects us to be responsible for our animals/children.

Application Questions:

Why are humans so precious that a murderer must be killed?

Do I make sure people are safe from my animals and property?

What does this tell me about the death penalty?

I Chronicles 16:22—Touch not God’s anointed.

Step One: Observation

Context? Making a tent for the Ark of the Covenant.

Covenant? Old.

Event? Making a tent for the Ark.

Who are the anointed ones? Kings of Israel.

Who are the prophets? The Old Testament prophets under the Levitical system.

What does it mean to touch? Harm, strike, hurt.

Step Two: Interpretation

Old Testament saints were not to harm God’s kings or priests.

Step Three: Principlization

How wide is the river?

Principle: We are not given permission to do harm to leaders, rulers and false teachers.

Step Four: Application

We do not have permission for overthrowing rulers or harming Benny Hinn.

What is the problem with interpreting this to say: Don’t criticize men and women who claim to be prophets?

1. *Touch* does not mean *criticize*.

2. We have clear verses instructing us to critique (Romans 16:17).
3. We have entire books warning us to judge false teaching and teachers.
4. We are all anointed...not just preachers.

Application Questions:

Do I honor my pastor and those in authority?

Do I rightly critique wrong teaching?

Do I gossip about my pastor?

2 Chronicles 7:14

Step One: Observation

Step Two: Interpretation

If God's chosen people will repent, then He will respond with forgiveness, mercy and healing.

Step Three: Principlization

How wide is the river?

Principle: If I repent, God will relent.

Step Four: Application

1. God threatens to discipline, but if we repent, He will relent.

2. God doesn't delight in punishment; He prefers forgiveness and healing.
3. God doesn't want His children to sin.
4. There are consequences for sin.
5. When I am weak, I can remember that God is a saving and healing God.
6. God is good and kind.
7. God can forgive even me.
8. I would do well to be a repenting Christian and not face discipline.

Application Questions:

When am I usually weak?

How do I respond in those times?

What is lacking when I am weak?

Am I always remembering God is good?

Do I repent quickly when I sin?

How does God respond to me when I am a repenting Christian?

LESSON 12: Practice Makes Proficient: New Testament Verses

Philippians 4:13

Step One: Observation

Context:

Chapter 1: To live is Christ, to die is gain.

Chapter 2: We are to be humble and endure, like Jesus (vs. 1-12).

Chapter 3:1: Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.

Chapter 4: Think of good things, and look at how I endure whether I have much or little.

Our verse:

Compare and contrast: humble means and prosperity; being filled and going hungry; abundance and need.

This verse says that Paul can endure the hardship and suffering he is experiencing for serving Jesus because Jesus will give him strength to do so.

Step Two: Interpretation

I, Paul, can be victorious over/endure sufferings by the power of Jesus, who strengthens me.

Step Three: Principization

Principle: Jesus will give believers the strength to endure hardships that come from living like a Christian.

Step Four: Application

For this verse to apply, we must meet the criteria in the context; like Paul, we must be a persecuted Christian for doing God's work.

Examples:

- Unequally yoked woman.
- Passed over at work...because they know you are a believer.
- Sued because you won't bake a cake.

This is a verse of comfort, not overcoming!

We also see that Paul sometimes had little, sometimes prosperity. God does not believe in socialism.

Application Questions:

How do I respond in poverty?

How do I respond when things are going well?

Whose strength am I relying on when I am persecuted?
Do I ever find myself feeling hopeless in my circumstances?
What is missing when I am sinfully worried about my situation?
The next time someone wounds me for being a believer, how could I respond joyfully, like Paul?

Hebrews 12:1-2

Step One: Observation

Audience:

Tone:

Purpose:

Our context: What is the therefore there for?

There are a lot of fellow believers.

We should do everything to not sin.

Our salvation is from Jesus.

We must keep our eyes on Him if we want to make it to the finish line.

Jesus is the best runner.

Jesus is God, sitting at the Father's right hand.

Jesus is sitting, not standing like other priests whose work was never done.

Word study:

GREAT cloud of witnesses. Someone who is watching or testifying?

Let us...encouragement/command. It is also PLURAL. All of us are in the race.

EVERY encumbrance.

EASILY entangles.

We are commanded to run...sports analogy. The race is set before us, not our own path.

The finish line is Jesus, who began our faith and will bring it to the end.

Jesus is our example. He did it for JOY/reward. He endured the cross.

Keep our eyes on the author (can mean champion). Many other runners have made it. We need to be on the right path to run and arrive.

The race analogy is our guide: this is a long-distance run that requires effort, training and sacrifice, stripping anything away that hinders us.

What does the text say? The author uses the imagery of long-distance running to encourage his audience to endure despite opposition by remembering others and especially Jesus and what He has done and Who He is.

Step Two: Interpretation

Since so many believers have come before us, run the long race of faith by disentangling yourself from the world and keeping your eyes on Jesus, who is God, the best example we can have.

Step Three: Principization

How wide is the river?

Principle: God has made a path for me and I am to strive to finish the race by working hard to fight sin.

Step Four: Application

Encouragement

- I am not alone in this Christian walk.
- I have ancestors.
- Jesus never failed.
- My salvation is secure.

Exhortation

- If I am not keeping my eyes on Jesus, then I won't make it to the finish line.
- My battle with sin is a war I must engage in wholeheartedly, willing to set aside anything that leads me to stumble.
- This is a long race; run with endurance. How do I get endurance? Jesus. I must study Him and know Him or I will fall.

Theology

- Salvation is of the Lord. He saves me.
- My salvation is secure.
- Jesus is God!

Application Questions:

How serious am I about my run?

Am I remembering those who have gone before me?

Am I getting entangled in sin? Which ones? Why won't I put them off once and for all?

Do I ever worry about my salvation?

Am I trying to keep myself saved or just be obedient?

Do I remember Jesus is God when I think about Him or pray to Him?

Revelation 4:9-11

Step One: Observation

Apocalyptic literature

Author:

What is the main point?

Outline:

Questions:

Who are the living creatures?

Who is the One seated on the throne?

Who are the 24 elders with white robes and crowns?

What are these crowns for?

These details not nearly as important as what is happening and therefore, what we will be doing.

The redeemed will worship the Lord. The 24 elders (representatives of the church) will throw their crowns at the Lord in an act of praise, recognizing the works were the Lord's.

We see God is eternal.

We see that God is the Creator of all things (not a created being), and it is all here for His glory and good pleasure.

What does this text say? For all eternity, the creator God will be worshipped by His redeemed, with praise and acts of worship (falling down/casting crowns).

Step Two: Interpretation

The redeemed and the representatives of the church will praise God with acts of worship and praise for the One who is the worthy creator of all things.

Step Three: Principilization

Principle: For all eternity God's saints will worship the One we were created to worship because He is worthy.

Step Four: Application

We have much to look forward to.

These events will take place.

God is the center of all things, not me.

Application Questions:

How do I worship God? Is it like this scene?

Is God my buddy or my Creator who is worthy of all praise?

Why is God worthy of this worship?

When I am not worshipping like this, what could be the reason?

Ephesians 2:4

Step One: Observation

Ephesus: Smith's online Bible Dictionary

Our Text

But, the first of two contrasts.

We used to be dead pagans, but now we are alive believers.

Second contrast, vs. 5: We were dead, but now alive because of HIM.

What kind of dead? Physically or spiritually?

God is rich in forgiveness because we are saved by grace alone (repeated in vs. 8-10).

Not only are we raised, but we are seated with Him in the heavenly places.

The purpose of our salvation is to bring glory to God.

Notice: Two “in-Christ.” We are in Him. He is our source, security, safety, salvation.

What does this verse say? We were spiritually-dead sinners who are made alive by a gracious God who seats us in the heavenly places if we are IN Christ.

Step Two: Interpretation

Our merciful and loving God makes dead sinners alive by grace and seats us in the heavenly places because we are in Christ for the praise of His name.

Step Three: Principlization

Principle: Salvation of dead sinners is totally of God because of Christ.

Or: Dead sinners can’t save themselves; God must, and does in Christ.

Step Four: Application

Theology:

- Our sin has caused us to die spiritually. We go to hell because we sin, not because we don’t believe in Jesus.
- We cannot make ourselves alive: this puts an end to decisional regeneration or Pelagianism.
- God must do a supernatural work.

- Our salvation is outside of us: what a comfort and assurance.

Encouragement:

- We have so much to look forward to.
- How amazing is God for saving dead sinners and raising us up?
- Salvation and being seated with Christ is NOT up to us.

Application:

- When you doubt, remember you are in Christ.
- When you lack assurance, remember your salvation is outside of you.
- When you think you have to work to get saved, the work has already been done by Jesus.

Application Questions:

Do I remember I was once dead?

Should I think that I saved myself in any way?

When I am concerned about my salvation, what am I failing to remember?

Have I forgotten that my sins killed and condemned me?

Am I hating the sins I still commit in light of that?

What am I failing to remember when I complain about my circumstances? (My biggest problem has been solved.)