

Emmaus Equipping College Bible Classes

Assignment # 2: The Interpretive Journey

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1. Describe the five steps of the Interpretive Journey.

The five steps of the Interpretive Journey are:

(1) Grasping the Text in Their Town

This step is telling us the need to ask ourselves “what did the text mean to the original audience?” It is crucial to not divorce the text from its original audience. The understanding of the biblical audience of text serves as a foundation for future audience. This include understanding its historical and the literary context.

(2) Measuring the Width of the River to Cross

In this step, the reader is to note the differences between the original audience and modern audience. This include noting the descriptive and theological differences.

(3) Crossing the Principlizing Bridge

Here the reader seeks out the universal principle that connects the ancient to the modern audience. What is the common denominator? What was the author trying to communicate? The principle will apply across all times regardless of cultural, linguistic and time differences. This universal principle is the meaning the author intent. It is not created by the reader. It must agree with the rest of the Bible.

(4) Consult the Biblical Map

This is the step where the reader must test the principle to see if it is consistent with rest of God’s word. The reader should find what other biblical writers have added to the principle. If the principle is a valid one, it will correspond with the rest of God’s word.

(5) Grasping the Text in Our Town

This step translates the principle into practical ways applicable to modern readers. The principle must have utility in real life situations. It must also have personal applications to various people speaking to them at different life situations depending on their relationship with God.

2. What are the guidelines for developing theological principles?

Theological principle must be found in the text, timeless, relevant to all people of all cultures, agrees with the rest of the Scriptures and must apply to people of the past and present.

3. A scriptural example to apply the five steps of interpretive journey and theological principle.

Deuteronomy 22:9-11: “You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled. “You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. “You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together.”

Most modern readers would struggle how this scripture could have any application to a modern person. A person may protest: “I have no farm, farm animals nor have garments as such.” That person would conclude that the scripture could not possibly apply to him. Once a person realises that the law is not always in black and white colour and it is something to be meditated on to find meaning, they would not make such a conclusion.

Apostle Paul fleshed out the universal principle for us in the **II Corinthians 6:14-18:** “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”

Step 1: What did the text mean to the ancient Israelites?

The ancient Israelites were an agrarian society with lands for plantation, animals for farming and various kinds of fabrics or clothing. They might have an application of the law relevant to their time and culture. However, those who

meditate on the law might have understood the principle that was being communicated.

Step 2: Most of us in our today's world live in urban society where we do not live in farms with animals or wear similar kinds of clothing.

Step 3: The principle the author intent for God's people of all time is what the Apostle Paul drew out: that believers should not put themselves in situations that will compromise their obedience to God. It would be like sowing a field with different seeds or farming with an ox and donkey – two animals with different sizes and strength or wearing clothes that do not fit together.

Step 4: Is this principle confirmed by other biblical authors? Yes, Jesus spoke of this principle when He was asked why His disciples were not fasting when the Pharisees and John's disciples were fasting. He told them that you cannot put a new wine into old wineskin or stitch a new piece of cloth on an old garment. Jesus was telling His audience that His teachings and the way of life He was bringing will not fit with the prevailing traditions and norms. So, it was not worth the effort trying to combine them.

Revelation 18:4 instructs the faithful to come out of Babylon and to not be partakers with it and share of its plagues. The principle that is being communicated is the importance of maintaining differences where unity would result in a situation unfavourable to both parties. The division of Israel kingdom into House of Israel and Judah is another example where this principle is highlighted. God told Rehoboam to not unite the kingdom. It was God's will that the two kingdoms are rule by different dynasties.

Step 5: The application of that principle in our modern world would include not entering into business deals with people who will put you at a disadvantage or who will not keep their part of the deal or making friendship with unbelievers who will corrupt your conduct or marrying a person from other faith that will not tolerate your religion such as Islam. The applications for this principle are endless.

The principle is found within the text; it is timeless and applicable for all people of all cultures and in agreement with the rest of God's word.