

UNDERSTANDING THE BIG PICTURE

Interpreting the Bible

How do we interpret the Bible?

- ◆ By taking a step of faith
- ◆ Accepting the Bible as the word of God

Why is this necessary?

- ◆ This is what the Bible claims for itself: *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness”* (2 Timothy 3: 16)
- ◆ We are meeting a person not just reading a book
- ◆ We need the Holy Spirit to interpret scripture for us

Why is this reasonable?

- ◆ History
- ◆ Consistency
- ◆ Prophecy
- ◆ Influence

What does this mean?

- ◆ The Bible is completely trustworthy: *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”* (Ps 119:105)
- ◆ *“The inerrancy of scripture means that the Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact”* (Grudem ‘Systematic Theology’)

WARNING

Don't use your theology as a weapon to attack others

Note:

- ◆ The Bible was not dictated to its writers
- ◆ The Bible speaks in ordinary language, e.g. the sun rises; approximate numbers

Having taken this step of faith how do we interpret the Bible?

Don't switch off your brain!

Context

1.Historical context

2.Linguistic context

3.Cultural context

“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.” (Ephesians 5:22-28)

4.Literary context

- ◆ Old Testament Narrative
- ◆ Law
- ◆ Prophets
- ◆ Psalms
- ◆ Wisdom
- ◆ Apocalyptic (Revelation)
- ◆ Gospels
- ◆ Parables
- ◆ Acts
- ◆ Epistles (Letters)

Highly Recommended

‘How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth’ by Fee & Stuart

Two Warnings

- ◆ **Read out (exegesis) don't read in (eisegesis)**
“The test of good interpretation is that it makes good sense of the text. Correct interpretation, therefore, brings relief to the mind as well as a prick to the heart.”
Fee & Stuart. How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth
- ◆ **You have to live it to understand it!**

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