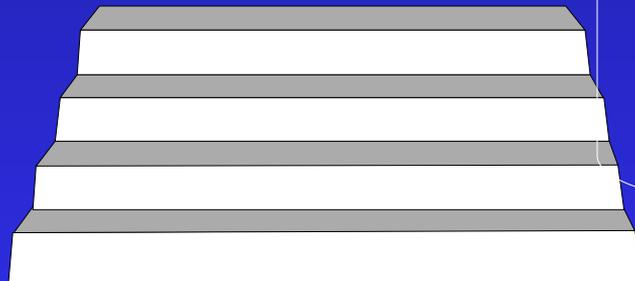


III. Basic Steps in Biblical Interpretation

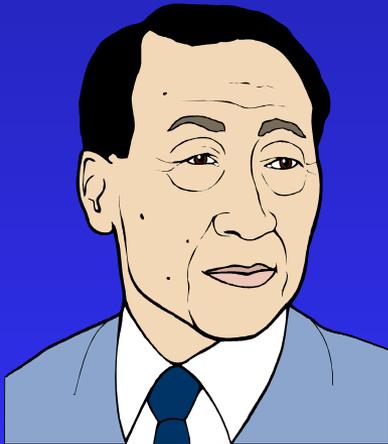


Summarize and make it simple.



The Challenge

How can I go
about studying the
Bible correctly?



I'll help you
get started.



Where Are We?

I. Course arrangements

II. Foundations of biblical interpretation

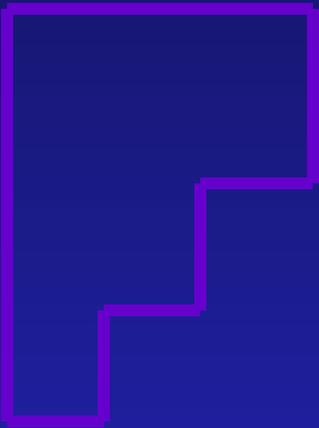
III. Basic steps in biblical interpretation

Elaborating on the steps:

IV. Application

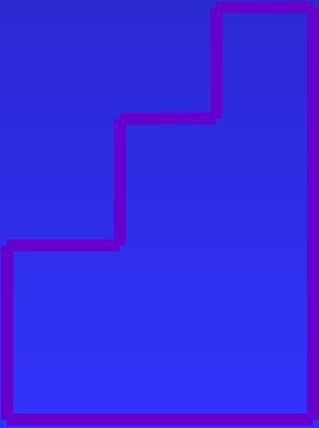
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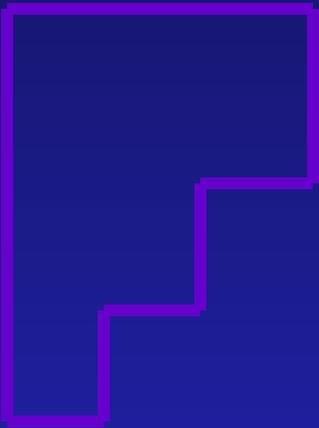
◆ Look at the first practical steps.



A. An Example of Interpretation

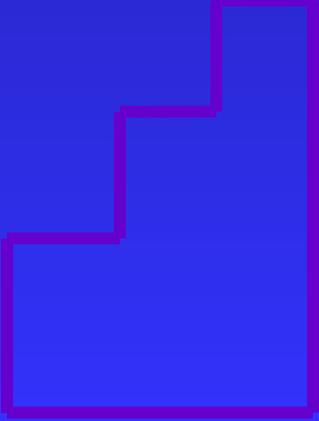
Revelation 13:1-10





B. Our Goal in Interpreting

To Serve God



Function of the Bible

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps. 119:105).

- The Bible illumines all of life.
- Purpose of serving God: “your servant.”



All of life.



Function of the Bible

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps. 119:105).

- The Bible illumines all of life, knowledge, behavior, attitudes, public and private, the heart.
- With the purpose of serving God: “your servant.”

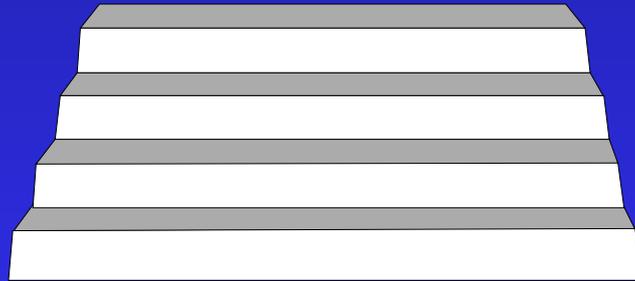
All of life.



Obstacles to Interpretation

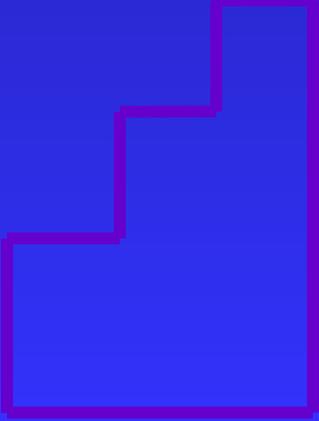
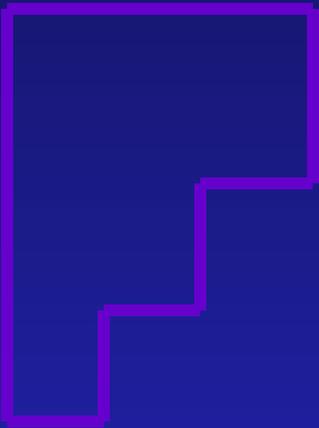
- Ignorance 2 Kings 22:13 Christian veneer
- Misunderstanding 2 Pet. 3:16 liberals, cults
- Inaction James 1:22 dead orthodoxy

C. Basic Steps in Interpretation



Elementary
but important.





1. Defining Interpretation in Three Steps

Remedy for the Obstacles

- Ignorance
- Misunderstanding
- Inaction
- Observation
- Interpretation
- Application

Solution.



Defining the Three Steps

- Observation
- Interpretation
- Application
- What does it say?
- What does it mean?
- How does it change me?

We need
all three.



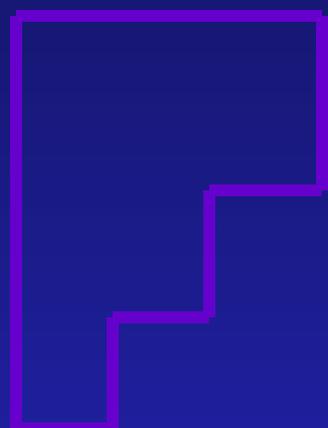
Illustration: Bezalel in Exodus 31

- Observation
- Interpretation
- Application
- Listen:
description of the ark.
- Think about it:
how does it fit together,
and how can I make it?
- Do it!
Bezalel produces the ark.

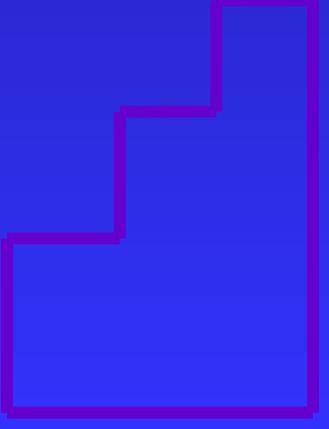
Illustration:

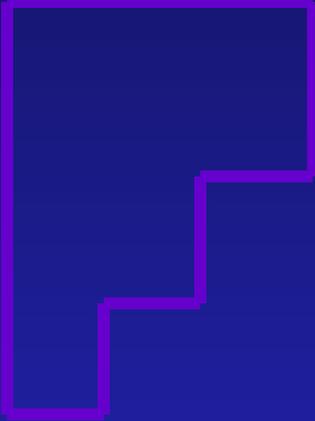
Bezalel in Exod. 31

- Observation
- Listen: what does God say to describe the ark?
- Interpretation
- Think about it: how does the description all fit together, and how can I bring the design about in production?
- Application
- Do it! Bezalel produces the ark.

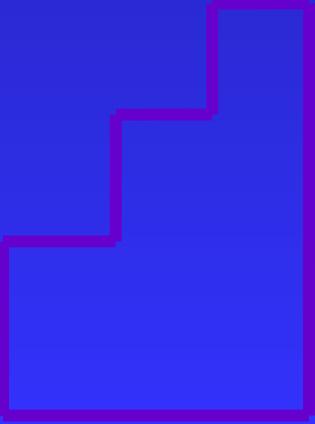


2. Importance of Observation





PARIS
IN THE
THE SPRING



Defamiliarizing the Text

- Passages become “overfamiliar.”
- We think that we know, and do not observe.
- Make yourself “look again.”
- Do not shortcut the observation step.



It's not saying
what I expected!



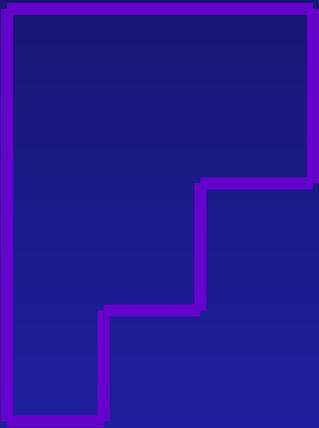
Open your eyes!

Defamiliarizing the Text

- When we have read the Bible, many passages may become “overfamiliar.” We think that we know what they say and cease to observe what they really say.
- How do we make ourselves “look again”?
- Do not shortcut the observation step.

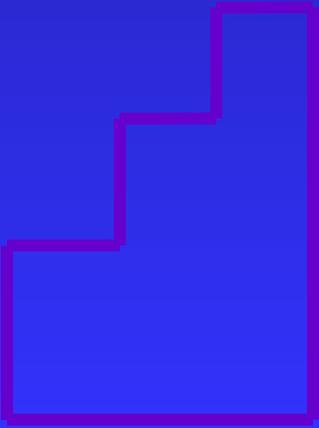


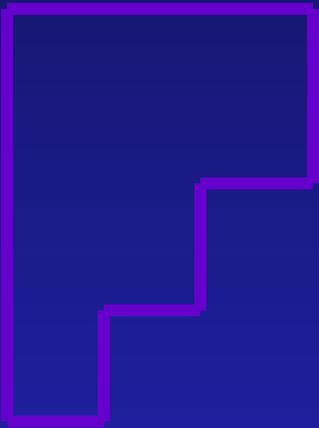
Open your eyes!



3. An Example from Ephesians 2:1-10

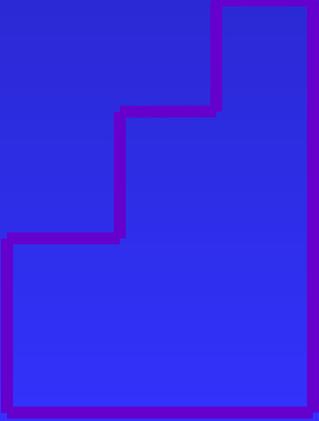
See the attached pages
3.3a and 3.3b.





4. Distinguishing the Three Steps

What distinguishes observation,
interpretation, and application?



Observation

- Note each word, each phrase.
- Note arrangement of words.
- Ask who, what, when, where, how:
 - ❖ When and where did this happen?
 - ❖ Who is mentioned?
 - ❖ What are they doing?
- “What does this word contribute?”
- Ask all kinds of questions.
- Answer questions whose answer is obvious.



Look!

Observation

- Note each word, each phrase, and each arrangement of words into sentences.
- Ask who, what, when, where, how:
 - ❖ When and where did this happen?
 - ❖ Who is mentioned?
 - ❖ What are they doing?
- Ask all kinds of questions, particularly, “What does this word mean, and what does it contribute to the passage?”
- Answer questions whose answer is obvious.

Interpretation

- Answer questions from “Observation.”
- Unpack any obscurities.
- Note how parts fit together.
- Find general principles.
- Look for main points.
- Overall structure.



Wrestle!

Interpretation

- Answer questions raised under “Observation.”
- Unpack any obscurities.
- Note how the parts reinforce and qualify one another.
- Make inferences about general principles embodied in the passage.
- Draw conclusions about the main points and overall structure of the passage.



Wrestle!

Application

- What should you now believe or do?
- Do it!



I'm going to have to change my life!



Don't stay in bed!

Application

- Ask and answer questions about what you should believe or do on the basis of the passage.
- Do what you have seen you should do.



Don't stay in bed!

5. Teaching the Three Steps

- Have a block to teach hermeneutics.
- The three steps are simple.
- Books by Sterrett and Wald have further resources.



I'll have to
organize it to
make it clear.



Pass it on!

5. Teaching the Three Steps

- If you become a teacher of the Bible, have blocks in your schedule for teaching hermeneutical principles.
- The three steps above are simple enough to be taught and practiced by laymen.
- See books by Sterrett and Oletta Wald for further resources.



Pass it on!

D. Correlation: a Fourth Step

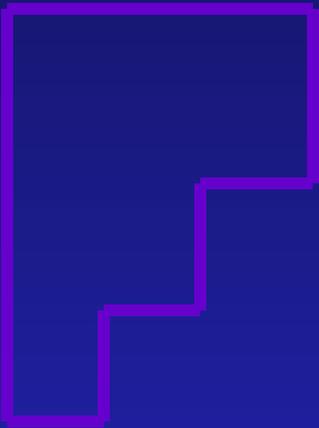
- “Correlation” means comparing passages.
- Correlation belongs between Interpretation and Application.
- Correlation can distract from focus.
- But use it for broader view.

Don't forget
the rest of the Bible!

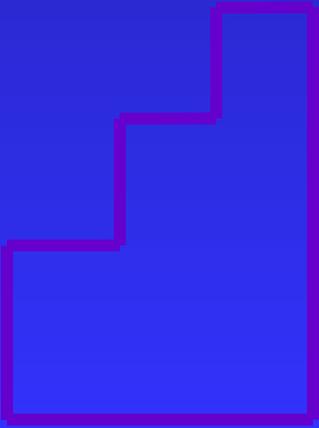


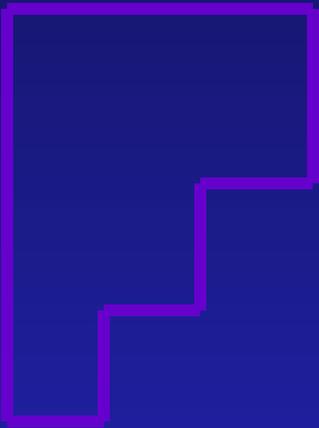
D. Correlation: a Fourth Step

- “Correlation” means examining how one passage fits in with other passages on the same topic or theme.
- Correlation is a fourth step inserted between Interpretation and Application.
- If you wish to concentrate only on one passage, Correlation can distract.
- But if your purposes are broader it may be useful.



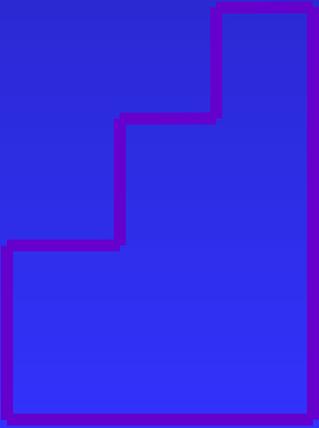
E. Practicing the Three Steps





1. An Example: Ephesians 2:1-10

See attached sheets.



Ephesians 2:1-10 TEXT

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,
2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.
3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.
4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

Who is you?

How dead?

Difference of terms?

Past time--when?

World? Ruler?

What kingdom?

Gentiles.

Spiritually.

Nuance.

Before Christ.

Pattern of life.

Evil order.

Satan as powerful,

Remember

before Christ.

Only God

gives new life.

Pray for those

captives to Satan

The Transition in Ephesians 2:1-10

Before

- Dead
- Dominated
- Damned
(opposite to God)

After

- Alive
- Enthroned
- Blessed and a
display (reflecting
God)

out of love, by grace