

The Methods for Understanding the Bible & Preaching Biblical Expository Messages

{This methodology is intended to be used in conjunction with the two separate documents that are entitled, "What Qualifies as Expository Preaching of the Bible???" and "Core Beliefs"}

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE:

PART I -- SPIRITUAL LIFE & VITALITY

- **Regeneration**, by God, of the reader/preacher is an **absolutely essential prerequisite to the coming to a correct understanding of Holy Scripture:**

1 Corinthians 2:11-14 (NASB95)

¹¹ For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now **we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,** ¹³ **which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.**

¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

PART II -- PRAYERS for SANCTIFICATION

- **Prayer** to God, by the reader/preacher, for his own:
 - **Belief in the Lordship/Sovereignty of God** – power & authority , as communicated by the Scriptures
 - **Faith in the Holy Scriptures**
 - 2 Tim 3:16 (NASB95)
All Scripture is inspired by God
 - Hebrews 4:12 (NASB95)
¹² **For the word of God is living and active** and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and **able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**
 - 2 Tim 3:16 (NASB95)
profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness
 - Matthew 5:18 (NASB95)
¹⁸ "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, **not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.**
Luke 21:33 (NASB95)
³³ "Heaven and earth will pass away, but **My words will not pass away.**
 - **Humility**
 - **Ability to understand**
 - **Grace to obey/Commitment to obey**
 - **Repentance**
 - **Love of God and His Word**
 - **Gratitude to God**
 - **Illumination by the Holy Spirit of His Word**

PART III -- CAREFUL, COMPETENT, FAITHFULL HARD WORK

- **Carefully read** and then **re-read** the passage of Scripture, paying attention to capture enough of what comes before and after so that meaning is **not** derived or applied out of context (remember that the chapters, verses and subtitles are not inspired, and therefore sometimes need to be disregarded/corrected). When working with the text, in your native language, use **several** excellent translations for difficult or controversial passages. They should represent literal, dynamic/functional equivalent **and** paraphrased methodologies of translation, however they **all** must be excellent in their fidelity to the original languages, as well as their clarity and precision of expression. Select both older and newer translations.
- **Identify the literary form (genre) of the writing and understand its meaning in ways appropriate to that form.**
 - **Simile** – expressed comparison
 - **Metaphor** – unexpressed comparison
 - **Proverb** – expressed or unexpressed comparison
 - **Parable** – an extended Simile – comparisons are expressed and kept separate – story and meaning are kept separate
 - **Allegory** – an extended Metaphor – comparisons are unexpressed and are intermingled – story and meaning flow along together
 - **Signs/Shadows/Types** – there must be a notable resemblance/analogy between signs and their substance, shadows and their objects and types and their anti-types. The type must have been appointed by God to represent the anti-type. Types pre-figure something in the future.
 - **Prophecy** – predominantly, in Holy Scripture, a calling of God's people back to God and to a lesser degree a prognostication of the future. Generally prophecy is figurative and symbolic. Watch for the supernatural aspects of prophecy e.g. angels, visions, dreams, Theophanous revelation and etc. Note the unseen realities and world that lie behind that which constitutes the visible realm. Be sure to see the ongoing super-intention and ultimate and sure intervention of the Sovereign God.
 - **Apocalyptic** – writings or tracts during difficult times – high use of symbols and figures, intertwining of the close present and the distant future.
 - **Poetry**
 - **Psalm/Hymn**
 - **Gospel**
 - **Chronicle**
 - **Narrative**
 - **Hortatory** – exhortation, admonishment
 - **Didactic** – teaching
 - **Kerygmatic** – preaching
 - **Wisdom**
 - **Pessimistic**
 - **Epistle**
 - **Law**
 - **Metonymy** – one name stand for another because of its association
 - **Synecdoche** – one part stands for the whole or the whole stands for one part
 - **Personification**
 - **Anthropomorphism**
 - **Apostrophe** – exclamation addressed to inanimate objects
 - **Irony** – opposite
 - **Hyperbole**
 - **Euphemism**
 - **Repetition**
 - **Parallelism**
 - **Oratory** – public speeches
- Pay attention to **connecting/separating words**.
- While understanding the scope of the definitions of each term, **seek to know the single/best meaning of each term as dictated by its particular context, which always must reign supreme**. This is where harmonization of each and every passage of Scripture to the whole of Scripture, which is an absolute necessity, must begin to occur.

- **Outline** the extended passage/**diagram** the focus passage.
- **Identify significant themes**
- **Identify interpretive challenges**
- Research the historical and cultural features of the time and place of the writer/writing and his immediate readers. **Pay special attention to those features that affect the meaning or significance of specifically what is being written.**
- Determine the **purpose** the writer had in writing.
- Understand **how the passage fits into the larger immediate context** of the given piece of literature (e.g. chapter of a Book of the Bible)
- Note any contrasts the writer makes between **the way things really are and how they appear.**
- Distinguish between **description** and **prescription** of truth.
- **Theological analysis of the passage should begin in light of the revelation available to the readers of the original writing before it is understood in light of the totality of the Holy Canon.**
- **See all Scripture Theo-centrally/Christo-centrally**
- **Check each understanding against the Historic/Orthodox Confession of the Church** and use **extreme caution** when making any departures. New or novel views are to be examined critically in order to ascertain if they are supported by significant and compelling arguments.
- **Check all work against other commentaries from a cross-section (conservative/progressive, ancient/old/contemporary, U.S/European and etc.) of scholarly, competent works.**

BIBLICAL EXPOSITORY PREACHING:

PART I -- PURPOSE

- **Make the sense of the Scriptures**
 - **Nehemiah 8:4-8 (NASB95)**
⁴ Ezra the scribe stood at a wooden podium which they had made for the purpose. . . ⁵ Ezra **opened the book in the sight of all the people** for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, **all the people stood up.** ⁶ Then **Ezra blessed the LORD** the great God. And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and **worshiped the LORD** with *their faces to the ground.* . . the Levites, explained the law to the people **while the people remained in their place.** ⁸ They **read from the book, from the law of God,** translating to **give the sense so that they understood the reading.**
- **Obedience.**
- **Show forth Core Beliefs.**
- **Show forth the underlying heart attitudes and world views of what constitutes biblical expository preaching.**
- **Teach the correct techniques of understanding by modeling the methods.**

PART II -- REQUIREMENTS

- **Be called and gifted by God – never self appointed/church**
- **What is ordination????**

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NASB95)

¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (NASB95)

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. ⁶ There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons.* ⁷ But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

See Additional Sheet on Biblical Elders

- **Have full confidence in God and His Methods.**
- **Make compelling and persuasive arguments for a particular interpretation/understanding.**
- **Be clear and coherent.**
- **Commit to long-term discipleship.**
- **Pray for the hearers' hearts.**
- **Exhort the hearers of their own responsibility to check all they hear against the Word of God, which is their Standard.**
- **Exhort the hearers of their own responsibility to take the work of understanding further.**
- **Exhort the hearers of their own responsibility to make application of the word in all areas of their lives.**
- **Exhort the hearers of the absolute necessity that all right doctrine must lead to right practice.**

PART III -- DELIVERY

- **Do not showcase/spotlight oneself for glory, only shame.**
- **Encourage the hearers to come spiritually and materially prepared.**
- **Encourage close work with the Word and with note taking.**
- **Encourage questions and discussion for a later time.**
- **Do not distract with the unimportant.**
- **Do not waste the hearers time with "ice-breakers" and personal antidotal stories.**