#### III. Basic Steps in Biblical Interpretation

Summarize and make it simple.



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#### The Challenge

How can I go about studying the Bible correctly?

### I'll help you get started.





#### **Reading Assignments**

#### Required:

Kuhatschek and Bunch, *How to Lead a LifeGuide Bible Study*, Chaps. 6-7, pp. 31-39
Optional:
Kuhatschek and Bunch, *How to Lead*, Chaps. 3-5.
Clowney, *CM: Christian Meditation*.

#### Where Are We? I. Course arrangements II. Foundations of biblical interpretation **III.** Basic steps in biblical interpretation Elaborating on the steps: IV. Application

Look at the first practical steps.

#### **Implications of** *Lex Christi*

7C intimacy implies the elementary accessibility of the Bible

A. An Example of Interpretation Revelation 13:1-10

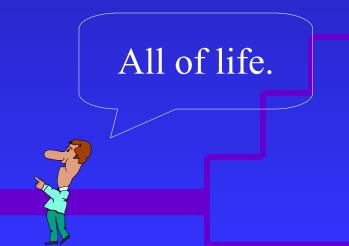
### **B. Our Goal in Interpreting** To Serve God

#### **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."

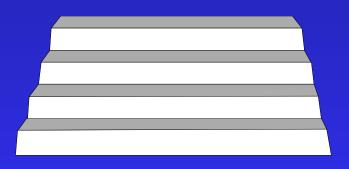




#### **Obstacles to Interpretation**

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 importan<mark>t</mark>.

#### 1. Defining Interpretation in Three Steps

#### **Remedy for the Obstacles**

Ignorance
 Misunderstanding
 Elucidation (earlier called "interpretation")
 Inaction
 Application

Solution.

#### **Defining the Three Steps**

ObservationElucidationApplication

What does it <u>say</u>?
What does it <u>mean</u>?
How does it <u>change me</u>?



#### **Illustration: Bezalel in Exodus 31**

Observation

Elucidation

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.

Application

2. Importance of Observation

### PARIS IN THE

#### THE SPRING

#### **Defamiliarizing the Text**

Passages become "overfamiliar."
We <u>think</u> that we know, and do not observe.
Make yourself "look again."
Do not shortcut the observation step.



# **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, elucidation, 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 <u>questions</u>. Answer questions whose answer is obvious.

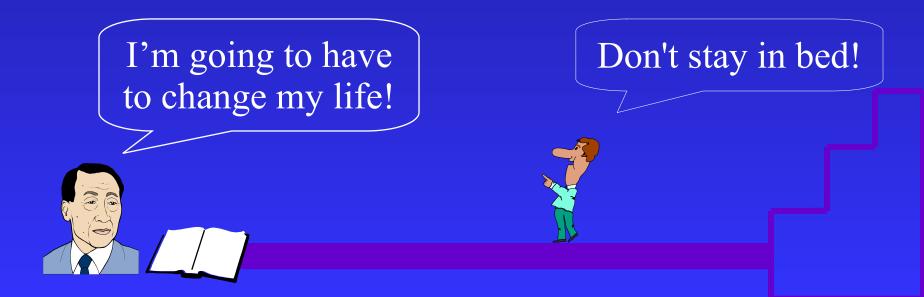
Look!

#### Elucidation

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



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



#### 5. <u>Teaching</u> 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.

#### **D.** Correlation: a Fourth Step

"Correlation" means comparing passages.
Correlation belongs between Elucidation and Application.
Correlation can distract from focus.

But use it for broader view.

Don't forget the rest of the Bible!

#### E. Practicing the Three Steps

#### 1. An Example: Ephesians 2:1-10

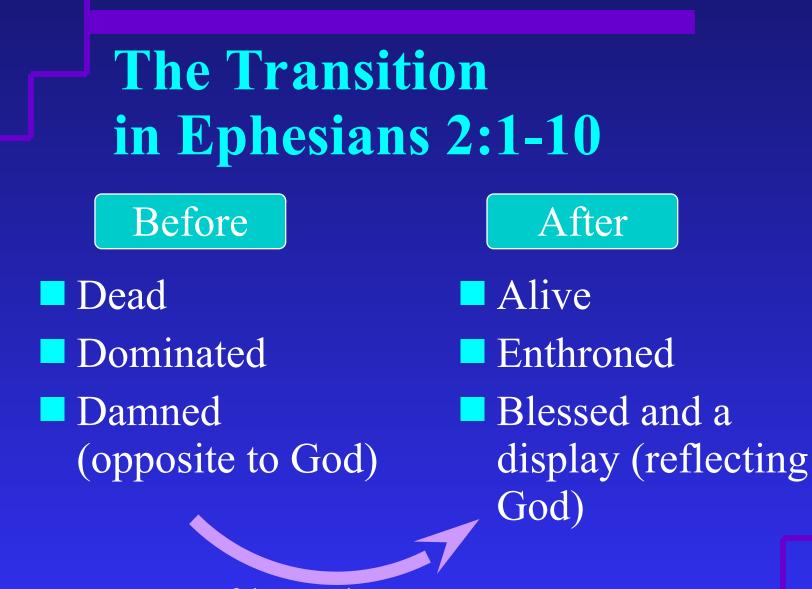
See attached sheets.

#### Ephesians 2:1-10 TEXT

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,

**OBSERVATION ELUCIDATION APPLICATION** Who is you? How dead? norilles Remember Difference of terms? Nuance. before Christ. Only God Past time--when?Before Christ. Pattern of life. World? Ruler? Evil order. sives new life. What kingdom? Satan as powerful.



out of love, by grace

2. Homework Exercise: Ephesians 1:15-23 **Apply Three Steps to Ephesians 1:15-23** 

- Do your work on page 3.5a.
- Focus on the passage, not on the rest of the Bible.
- Observe, observe again.
- Do not use commentaries or Greek.
- Study the text first-hand.

**F. A More Elaborate Series** of Steps for Interpretation Preparing Sermons and Talks

#### The Character of the Steps

Attached pages give the full listing.
The list is idealized.
\*No time to do every detail.
\*Not every step relevant.
\*The steps interact.

#### Advice on Using the Steps

Not rigid, but flexible guidelines.
Integrate what I have separated.
Judge when you can skim a step.

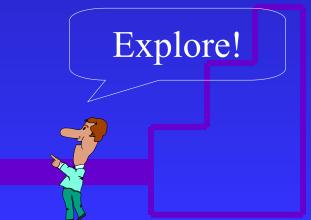
#### 1. Preliminary Acquaintance

0. Memorize the passage (and some context)

Value of memorizationHints on memorization

#### 1. Preliminary Acquaintance (cont.)

- a. Define the limits of the passage
- b. Pray for insight and submission.
- c. Read the whole book.
- d. Try to make connections.



#### 2. Exegesis in the Original Setting

- a. Learn about speaker, audience, and circumstances. (Historical background.)
- b. Translate Greek or Hebrew.
- c. Make a decision on textual variants.
  \*In NT, Nestle-Aland.
  - \*In OT, Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.

d. Solve difficulties with reference tools: \*Grammars Greek grammar: Blass-Debrunner-Funk or Burton (Wallace secondary) Hebrew: Gesenius-Kautsch-Cowley Aramaic grammar: Rosenthal \*Lexicons Greek: Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich Hebrew-Aramaic: Brown-Driver-Briggs Bible encyclopedia New Bible Dictionary (best one volume) International Standard Bible Encyclopedia \*Atlases: Beitzel, *Moody Atlas*.

### 2. Exegesis (cont.)

e. Identify the genre.
\* Of your passage.
\* Of larger sections.
f. Outline the passage.



**3. Interrelations with Other Passages ("Correlation")** a. Use cross references to passages. \* ASV, NASB, RSV, NIV, or ESV reference Bibles. ✤ Nestle-Aland Greek NT. b. Trace 2-5 key words through OT and NT. Same for semantically similar words. \* NT: Moulton-Geden or Englishman's \* OT: Even-Shoshan or Englishman's ◆ LXX: Bagster. \* Or Bible software with Greek and Hebrew.

#### 3. Interrelations (cont.)

- c. Follow theological issues.
- d. Reevaluate exegesis using previous canon.
- e. Summarize in a single sentence.
- f. Check exegetical commentaries.

# 4. Role in History of Redemption

- a. Locate in an epoch.
- b. Analyze sources and later uses.
- c. Brainstorm for further connections.
  - How does the passage proclaim Christ?
- d. Assess how situation affects application.

#### 5. Presentation ("Application")

- a. Formulate three or four applications.
- b. Consult others about relevance.
- c. Make a one-sentence summary with "you."
- d. Adapt application to your audience.
- e. Focus on one principal application.

#### 5. Presentation (cont.)

- f. Fill in the outline.
  - Whole sentences, not phrases.
  - Apply every major point.
  - Include illustrations.
  - Prune ruthlessly.
- g. Let it sit for six months.
- Don't go to commentaries before 3.f.



#### **G.** Elaboration of Exegesis

#### See attached sheet.

There's always more to do.