

An Overview Of The Interpretive Process

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SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERPRETING THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE

(A Summation)

I. STUDY THE BOOK AS A WHOLE.

1. Consider the questions of date, authorship, recipients, and purpose (general matters of introduction.)
2. Develop an outline of the entire book (study Bibles and commentaries will be helpful).
3. Examine the relationship of the passage under consideration in both its near and far context.

II. ESTABLISH THE BEST TEXTUAL BASE POSSIBLE:

1. Use the original language if you can.
2. Compare various versions and translations.

III. INVESTIGATE THE TEXT LINGUISTICALLY (E.G. WORD BY WORD).

1. Make a lexical (definitional) study of crucial words.
2. Research the passage for key words, phrases, and ideas.
3. Track the verbs!
4. Cross Reference.

IV. EXAMINE THE FORM OR FORMS OF THE MATERIAL IN THE PASSAGE.

1. What is the literary type (history, poetry, prophetic, apocalyptic)?
2. What literary devices are used?
3. Is there any indication of the life situation from which the material came?

V. ANALYZE THE STRUCTURE OF THE PASSAGE.

1. Determine if the material constitutes a literary unity.
2. Is there a logical sequence of ideas present?
3. Isolate the basic themes or emphases.
4. Outline the passage you are studying. Use the outline as the framework for your *teaching*.