

How to Read/Study the Bible

Week #5: Interpret Scripture in View of Christ



Review: Homework

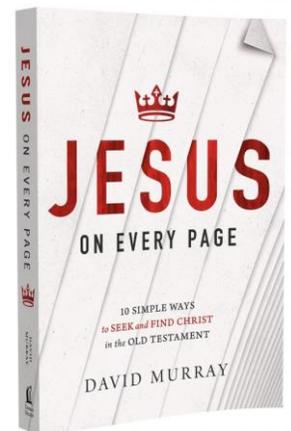
Any examples of “rules of faith” or “creeds” that you heard people claiming as the thing they by?

Jesus on Every Page

To introduce this principle, we turn to David Murray’s book and how he realized what Jesus was doing with the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Resource

Jesus on Every Page
David Murray (Thomas Nelson, 2013)



For years, I’d been asking myself and anyone who would listen, “What’s the Old Testament all about?” The Author, the divine Author behind the human authors, had already given the answer to similarly confused disciples [on the road to Emmaus] about two thousand years ago. Jesus told them the Old Testament was all about *Him*.

Having patiently listened to His still-mourning disciples tell of their disappointed messianic hopes, the freshly resurrected Jesus intervened with a rebuke of their foolish ignorance and unbelief: “You foolish people! Your dull minds keep you from believing all that the prophets talked about. Wasn’t it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:15-16, Common English Bible; Murray uses a different translation).

Jesus told them that their account of His life and death matched exactly the predictions of the Old Testament prophets. They had believed *some* of the prophet’s writings—the parts that spoke of the Messiah’s glory. But they had not believed *all* that the prophets had spoken—especially the parts that spoke of the Messiah’s sufferings and death.

Jesus titled His Emmaus road sermon “The Things Concerning Himself.” He took a big text—Moses, *all* the Prophets, and *all* the Scriptures. And it had two main points—His sufferings and His glory. In other words, the whole Old Testament was about Him.

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I went back and started reading the Gospels again and discovered that this [teaching] didn't just emerge at the end of Jesus' ministry. Right from the start He presented Himself not as a complete contrast to the Old Testament but as its climax and fulfillment (14,15).

1. Have you ever felt like David Murray — that you were confused on what the Old Testament has to do with Jesus? What made you feel that way?
2. How does this brief story/explanation help you see the Scriptures “in view of Christ,” seeing Jesus on every page?

Different Ways of Pointing at Jesus

This principle is “Interpret the Scriptures in view of Christ.” In other words, when we read and study the Bible, we see the entire Word of God through Jesus. Where does the Bible point our attention? To Jesus. As Jesus Himself said, “You pore over the scriptures for you imagine that you will find eternal life in them. And all the time they give their testimony to me!” (John 5:39, J.B. Phillips Bible).

There are THREE WAYS that the Scriptures point to Jesus:

Scriptures Point Directly to Jesus

There are places that point directly to One who will be sent by God the Father to come and save His people. (Burgland, 43)

3. Look up Isaiah 35:4. How does this point directly to Jesus?

Scriptures Point Indirectly to Jesus

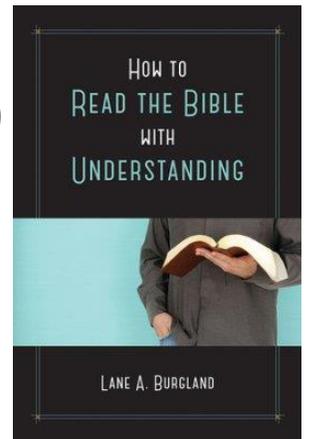
There are places that “show us patterns that later are repeated and fulfilled” (43-44).

4. Look up Exodus 12:21-23. How does this point indirectly to Jesus?

Need a hint? Look up John 1:29 to see what title John the Baptist gives to Jesus.

Resource

How to Read the Bible with Understanding (2nd edition)
Lane A. Burgland (CPH, 2016)



Scriptures Foreshadow Jesus

There are places where what happened or how God worked in the past foreshadow (give an image) of how God will ultimately work through Jesus. (44).

5. Look up John 3:14-15. What does Jesus point to as a foreshadowing of His work?

Need the whole picture? See Numbers 21:4-9 for the account of the bronze serpent.

6. Look up John 12:40. What does Jesus point to as a foreshadowing of His work?

Need the whole picture? See Jonah chapters 1-3 for the account of the great fish.

This Principle at Work in Evangelism

Read Acts 8:26-40.

Context

7. The Ethiopian is a eunuch. In your group, use study Bible notes on Acts 8:27-28 to help you understand more about this man. (If no one at your table has a study Bible, see if you can borrow an extra from a different table).
8. Why was this Ethiopian reading the Hebrew Scriptures?
(Did your study notes help with this?)
9. The fact that the Ethiopian is reading from a scroll—what does that tell us about the status of this official? *(Did your study notes help with this?)*
10. Why would Philip “overhear” the Ethiopian studying the Bible?

Make your guesses and then see the next page for an explanation.

Ancient manuscripts [scrolls of the Scriptures] were written in capital letters with no spacing or punctuation between words and sentences. Imagine trying to read a book like that! One had to read out loud, sounding out the words (42). [For many centuries, even when the manuscripts and writing techniques changed, the practice was to read the Scriptures aloud to help with meditating on them].

Pointing to Jesus

11. What section of Scripture is the Ethiopian reading?

Use the notes in your Bible to figure it out. Write down reference but don't go there yet!

12. Why does the Ethiopian say that he can't understand the Scripture passage?

13. What does Philip know that helps him to properly interpret the Scripture passage?

14. How does the Ethiopian respond to Philip's teaching?

15. In what way does this Scripture passage point to Jesus?

Now look up the passage that the Ethiopian was reading.

Paying attention to the context, in what way(s) do these verses point to Jesus?

See the next page for final section.

Bible Disciples

Life-long learners, following God's Word in our daily lives

16. How might this principle of interpretation help you when trying to decide what a passage in the Bible means—especially when reading the Old Testament?
17. In worship, when you hear the Scripture readings (Old Testament, Psalm, Epistle (New Testament Letter, and Gospel), how might this principle of interpretation help you meditate on the Word of God and see why those passages are selected to be together?
18. At times, we have held an open, free-flowing spiritual conversation at Starbucks called Venti31. The name comes from the large size of a coffee at Starbucks ("venti" which means 20, as in 20 ounces). Add "31" and that points us to John 20:31. How does this principle relate to John 20:30-31?

Venti31

Coffee and Conversation about Jesus



How does John 20:30-31 and this principle of interpretation relate to your hope for your family and friends?

Challenge

Interested in seeing Venti31 happen again. Pastor Squires would love that, too, but he needs you to do the legwork. Here's what you do:

1. Get 3 friends from Bethel who want to "host" a Venti31.
2. Give Pastor Squires a few times that would work for you to meet for a Venti31. Usually 1 hour to 90 minutes. Pastor will see which of those times works for his calendar.
3. Each of you invites 2-3 non-Bethel people—including people who aren't sure about their spiritual beliefs.
4. Tell Pastor some basic questions or topics that might be a good theme for the conversation—although the conversation is flexible.
5. Hold the Venti31 and see where the Lord works.