

Reading and Study Guide for ***How to read the Bible for All Its Worth***

These questions are to facilitate the reading of the New Testament sections of *How to read the Bible for All Its Worth*. They attempt to point out the most important concepts in the book that relate to the course “New Testament History and Religion.” You will not have to have exhaustive knowledge of all the details of this book for the exams. However, you will be responsible for the general ideas presented in the book, and for those details of the book that are also referred to in class lectures and discussions.

pp. 17-31 (Interpretation)

1. What is the aim of good interpretation of the Bible?
2. Be able to summarize how our prior understanding, assumptions, and experiences influence how we read the Bible.
3. What is the antidote to “bad interpretation” of the Bible?
4. What are some of the implications in saying that the Bible has both “eternal relevance” and “historical particularity?”
5. How does the statement that “God’s word to us was first of all his word to them” help us read Scripture?
6. What is “exegesis?”
7. What is the key to good exegesis?
8. Be able to define and summarize the importance of both *historical* and *literary* context.
9. Be able to explain the significance of the principle “A text cannot mean what it never meant.”

pp. 33-53 (Translation)

10. In what three languages was the Bible originally written?
11. What is the problem with using only *one* translation of the Bible?
12. What are the three basic issues *of the text* that raise problems when deciding how to translate a biblical passage?
13. What is “text criticism?”
14. What is the *Septuagint* (LXX)?
15. Why is “text criticism” not an exact science?
16. Be able to summarize the three basic approaches to translation and the kinds of translation each produces: “formal equivalence” (literal), “functional equivalence” (dynamic equivalent), “free translation” (paraphrase).
17. Be able to give examples of specific translations that fit each of these categories.
18. What is “historical distance?”
19. What are some examples of “historical distance?”

pp. 127-162 (Gospels)

20. What are two obvious facts from which most problems of understanding the Gospels arise?
21. Why are there four Gospels?
22. Why is it important to understand that the Gospels are “two-level documents?”
23. Why is it significant to realize that the various Gospel writers often place sayings of Jesus into different historical contexts?
24. How does the historical context of the Gospel writer affect how the Gospel is written?
25. Be able to summarize the importance of “think horizontally” and “think vertically” as guidelines for reading the Gospels.
26. Be able to summarize how the Gospel writers select, arrange, and adapt material to compose the Gospels.
27. What is the difference between a “true parable,” a “similitude,” and a “metaphor?”
28. What is the primary function of a parable?

pp. 107-125 (Acts)

29. Why is a “restoration mentality” a problem in reading Acts?
30. Be able to summarize the basic outline of the Book of Acts.
31. In what way can the Book of Acts serve as a model for us today?
32. What are some of the issues involved in deciding whether the descriptions of “what happened” should also function to tell us “what *should* happen?”

pp. 55-87 (Epistles)

33. What are the differences between “real letters” and “epistles?”
34. Be familiar with the literary form of both ancient and New Testament letters.
35. What is the significance in understanding that New Testament letters are “occasional documents?”
36. Why is “historical context” important in understanding NT letters and epistles?
37. Why is it important to “think paragraphs” in reading epistles?
38. Why should we not be dogmatic about the meaning and application of passages that are not immediately clear to us?
39. What are some problems associated with “cultural relativity?”
40. What is the greatest problem with “common hermeneutics?”
41. What are the two basic guidelines or “rules” for applying epistles to today?
42. How do we decide what are “matters of indifference” when trying to apply the epistles within modern culture?
43. Be able to summarize the issues related to “cultural relativity” and the “historical particularity” of the epistles.

pp. 249-264 (The Revelation)

44. What three types of literature are combined to produce The Revelation?
45. What are some characteristics of the literary form of “apocalypse”?
46. In what sense is The Revelation prophecy?
47. What is the primary principle in interpreting The Revelation?
48. Why should the details of the visions and the imagery **not** be pressed into *allegory*?
49. Why is “historical context” important in interpreting the book?
50. Be able to discuss the statement: “pictures of the future . . . express a reality, but they are not themselves . . . the reality.”
51. Why should The Revelation **not** be seen as precise prediction of future world events?