

He Gave Us Scripture: Foundations of Interpretation

Lesson 7

Applying Scripture

Lesson Guide



thirdmill

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ABOUT THIRDMILL

Founded in 1997, Thirdmill is a non-profit Evangelical Christian ministry dedicated to providing:

Biblical Education. For the World. For Free.

Our goal is to offer free Christian education to hundreds of thousands of pastors and Christian leaders around the world who lack sufficient training for ministry. We are meeting this goal by producing and globally distributing an unparalleled multimedia seminary curriculum in English, Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish. Our curriculum is also being translated into more than a dozen other languages through our partner ministries. The curriculum consists of graphic-driven videos, printed instruction, and internet resources. It is designed to be used by schools, groups, and individuals, both online and in learning communities.

Over the years, we have developed a highly cost-effective method of producing award-winning multimedia lessons of the finest content and quality. Our writers and editors are theologically-trained educators, our translators are theologically-astute native speakers of their target languages, and our lessons contain the insights of hundreds of respected seminary professors and pastors from around the world. In addition, our graphic designers, illustrators, and producers adhere to the highest production standards using state-of-the-art equipment and techniques.

In order to accomplish our distribution goals, Thirdmill has forged strategic partnerships with churches, seminaries, Bible schools, missionaries, Christian broadcasters and satellite television providers, and other organizations. These relationships have already resulted in the distribution of countless video lessons to indigenous leaders, pastors, and seminary students. Our websites also serve as avenues of distribution and provide additional materials to supplement our lessons, including materials on how to start your own learning community.

Thirdmill is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) corporation. We depend on the generous, tax-deductible contributions of churches, foundations, businesses, and individuals. For more information about our ministry, and to learn how you can get involved, please visit www.thirdmill.org.

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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or manuscript versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:20)

Application:

Appropriately connecting the original meaning of a biblical document to contemporary audiences in ways that impact their concepts, behaviors and emotions.

Original Meaning:

The concepts, behaviors and emotions that the divine and human writers jointly intended the document to communicate to its first audience

Proper application must be faithful to the original meaning and also take into account modern times, cultures and individuals.

II. Necessity (5:27)

To benefit properly from Scripture, we have to be impacted by it; our concepts, behaviors and emotions have to be changed.

Paul applied Old Testament stories to the New Testament church by connecting the two audiences and by considering developments that had taken place.

III. Connections (11:29)

The connections between ancient and modern audiences make biblical texts relevant for modern people.

A. God (11:54)

The original and modern audiences both have the same God.

God is immutable, meaning he doesn't change.

1. Eternal Counsel (15:30)

God's eternal counsel, or ultimate plan for history, is immutable.

God knows everything and directs history toward the ends for which he created it.

2. Character (17:23)

God's character, his essence, persons and attributes, never change.

God's immutable character means there will always be significant connections between the original meaning and modern application of Scripture.

3. Covenant Promises (18:48)

God only promises when he takes a vow, makes a covenant, or swears an oath.

Where God hasn't made a promise, his words are best understood as threats of curse and offers of blessing.

B. World (20:45)

We live in a similar world to the one inhabited by the first audiences of Scripture.

The connections between our world and that of Scripture's first audiences can help us determine modern applications of the Bible.

C. People (23:20)

We're the same kind of people as the original audience of Scripture.

1. Sinful Images (23:55)

God created humanity in his image, but we have all fallen into sin.

All recipients of Scripture, whether ancient or modern, share the same sinful nature.

2. **Religious Divisions (27:46)**

Both the original and modern audiences of Scripture suffer religious divisions.

Readers of Scripture fall into one of three religious groups:

- Unbelievers: People who refuse to submit to God.
- False believers: People who make superficial commitments to God.
- Believers: People who make faithful commitments to God.

3. **Classes (29:36)**

The same classes of people exist for both the original and modern audiences.

Many portions of Scripture are directed toward particular classes.

The connections we share with the classes of people that exist in every age can help guide our application of Scripture.

IV. Developments (31:39)

The developments between original and modern audiences should influence our application.

A. Epochal (32:34)

We need to account for the epochal developments of redemptive history when we apply the Bible to modern life.

The Bible's perspective on world history in three stages:

- Creation: When God first made the world.
- Fall: When humanity first committed sin and was cursed by God.
- Redemption: God redeems us from our sin.

The progressive nature of God's rule over creation has resulted in periodic developments that create discontinuity between epochs.

B. Cultural (37:33)

Many cultural developments distinguish our cultures today from the cultures directly addressed in the Bible.

C. Personal (42:00)

We need to recognize the many differences between modern and ancient people if we hope to apply biblical texts properly.

V. Conclusion (43:24)

5. What do we mean when we say that the Bible is complex in nature?

6. How can the uniqueness of the biblical interpreter lead us to multiple summaries of biblical texts? Why are multiple summaries important to interpretation?

7. Explain why we should adapt our summary of a biblical passage to the needs of the intended audience?

Application Questions

1. Do our presuppositions always influence our biblical interpretation? If so, how do we guard against faulty interpretation in light of our individual backgrounds, assumptions and concerns?
2. How has your knowledge of biblical writers influenced your interpretation of Scripture? Give at least two examples.
3. Which features of a biblical text have been most helpful in your own interpretive efforts (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, etc.)? What effect has studying all the features of a biblical text had on your reading and interpretation?
4. Why should you make investigating the historical setting of a biblical book a regular part of your bible study?
5. How much do you know about the Bible's original audiences, and how has this information influenced your interpretation?
6. Of the intentional fallacy, the graphic fallacy, and the affective fallacy, which has been your greatest weakness when interpreting Scripture? Why?
7. Give an example of two legitimate summaries for the same biblical passage. In what circumstances would each summary be most effective?
8. Give some specific examples of times when another person's summary of Scripture has been useful to you in your previous and/or present ministry context.
9. What background and gifts do you bring to ministry? How do your gifts and background help you in summarizing biblical passages? How do they hinder you?
10. What benefits have you gained from studying the Scriptures in a group setting? Has studying the Scriptures with others been easier or more difficult than studying on your own?
11. In your current work or ministry, how do you discover the needs of your audience? What has helped you in adapting the Scriptures to their circumstances?
12. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

Glossary

application – Appropriately connecting the original meaning of a biblical document to contemporary audiences in ways that impact their concepts, behaviors and emotions

believers – People who make sincere, faithful commitments to God and are redeemed from sin and saved from God’s eternal judgment

covenant promises – Things God has sworn to do by oath

epoch – A distinct period of time in history; in theology, a period of time established by divine revelation and characterized by a substantial and long-lasting transition that distinguishes it from other periods of time

eternal counsel – God's eternal plan for the universe, established before his work of creation

false believers – People who make superficial commitments to God and may have the appearance of believers but don’t have true faith and aren’t redeemed from eternal judgment

immutable – Term meaning "unchanging"; used to express the unchanging nature of God's character and perfections

original meaning – The concepts, behaviors and emotions that Scripture's divine and human writers jointly intended the document to communicate to its first audience

Ten Commandments – Commandments given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai; expressions of God's eternal law that transcend all culture and times; also called the *Decalogue*

unbelievers – People who make themselves God’s enemies by refusing to submit to him, including those who have not heard of God’s special revelations to Israel and the church and many who have