



# UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE

## How to Read and Study the Bible

This is a companion study using “Understanding Scripture — How to Read and Study the Bible” by A. Berkeley Mickelsen and Alvera M. Mickelsen. This course will teach us basic principles to help guide our study and correctly interpret the Bible.

**Directions** - As you read each chapter of the book, fill in the appropriate questions with more than one word answers (unless otherwise directed). We will do one chapter each week. Included are Bible Study Worksheets for future use.

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3. What are five approaches to Bible study we should be aware of that work against our gaining all we can from Bible study? Give a brief definition of each.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

4. What is a result of Christians practicing “selective literalism?”

5. What occurs when we approach the Bible with a “fortress mentality?”

6. What two questions are asked of Bible passages in order to follow sound interpretation?

A.

B.

## **Chapter 2 • HOW CAN WE KNOW WHAT THE BIBLE MEANS?**

7. List and define two categories that many of the Bible's teachings fall into.
  - A.
  - B.
8. How can we distinguish between the highest norms and regulations?
9. What part of the Old Testament Law is relevant for us today?
10. Read 1 Timothy 5. Which aspects represent highest standards found in the Old and New Testament and which were regulations for the people of Paul's day?

## **Chapter 3 • WHAT MAKES THE BIBLE DIFFERENT?**

11. How is the Bible similar to other books that have been written? How is it different?
12. From whom does the Bible claim its authority? Why?

13. Briefly define the basic Hebrew words or phrases which are used in the Old Testament to declare that God is speaking.
- A. Neum
  - B. Amar
  - C. Davar
14. How would *you* account for the differences in detail about the account of the life of Christ?
15. Briefly explain the important basic themes which unify the books of the Bible.
- A.
  - B.
  - C.
  - D.

16. What areas of diversity are there within the framework of the books of the Bible?

A.

B.

C.

D.

17. Why is the book of Esther, which does not mention the Name of God, included in the progressive revelation of God?

#### **Chapter 4 • WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN BIBLE TRANSLATIONS**

18. What must a good translator be the master of?

19. Name the three languages in which the Bible was written?

A.

B.

C.

20. How are Aramaic and Hebrew related to each other?

21. In what particular passages was the Aramaic language used?

22. What is relationship of the Aramaic language to Hebrew?
23. Biblical languages were more \_\_\_\_\_ than \_\_\_\_\_.
24. How were the ancient Hebrew and Aramaic written, and how was the exact word determined?
25. When were the divisions of the Bible into chapters and verses added?
26. What was the Septuagint and why was it so important?
27. What language did Jesus primarily speak?
28. Name the two major types of Bible translations. Briefly explain their strengths and weaknesses and give examples of each.
- A.
- B.

### **Chapter 5 • HOW THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN AND COMPILED?**

29. When were the books of the New Testament probably written?
30. When were the writings of the Apostle Paul collected as group?

31. What Church Father quotes the writings of Paul in his letters between A.D. 95 and 110? Why is this significant?
32. Who was Marcion? Describe what he believed, and what “positive” influence he had on the early church.
33. What factors influenced the early church to recognize a writing as canonical?
- A.
  - B.
  - C.
34. What four Church Fathers were important in recognizing the New Testament writings as authoritative? Give dates.
- A.
  - B.
  - C.
  - D.
35. Describe the society in which this process took place.



36. When was the list of New Testament books established? How do we know this?
37. Who were the Samaritans and what books of the Old Testament did they recognize as authoritative?
38. Define the following:
- A. Canon
  - B. The Septuagint
  - C. The Talmud
  - D. The Apocrypha

## **Chapter 6 • THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BIBLE PEOPLE**

39. How does the Christian view history?
40. What does the German expression, "Sitz im Leben," mean and what does it include?
41. What does the German expression, "Sitz im Glauben," mean and what does it include?

42. What does a good Bible atlas provide? What does a good commentary provide?

A.

B.

43. What six factors must be kept in mind when studying any passage of Scripture?

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

### **Chapter 7 • WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE TALKING ABOUT?**

44. True or false \_\_\_\_\_ Context determines the meaning of a Biblical word.

45. Name and describe the three types of context.

A.

B.

C.

46. What are the three *aspects* of context?

A.

B.

C.

47. What normally controls the exact meaning of a specific passage of Scripture?

A.

B.

48. What are the advantages of studying parallel writings in the Bible?

49. What sections of the Old Testament and New Testament give no context?

A.

B.

## Chapter 8 • THE BIBLE IS RICH IN FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

50. Define the terms “figurative” and “literal.”

A.

B.

51. Define the following and give Scriptural examples (try to give examples not given in the book).

A. Similes

B. Metaphors

C. Anthropomorphism

D. Anthropopathism

E. Words of association

F. Personification

G. Euphemism

H. Hyperbole

I. Irony

## **Chapter 9 • PARABLES AND ALLEGORIES**

52. What is a parable?

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

53. What is an allegory?

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

54. What is allegorizing?

55. What did many of Jesus' parables focus on? Give examples.

56. Give examples of allegories from the Old Testament.

57. Give examples of allegories from the New Testament.

### **Chapters 10 • WHAT WERE THE PROPHETS SAYING?**

58. Define "Prophets."

59. What was the one basic aim the Biblical Prophet had in mind as he/she prophesied?

60. What was the purpose of predictive prophecy and what was it never intended to do?

61. Explain the two erroneous views of predictive prophecy.

A.

B.

62. Give three ways God revealed His message to His Prophets.

A.

B.

C.

63. What does the phrase, "The Prophets were not outsiders looking in" mean?

64. What are three common methods interpreters use to handle prophetic language?  
Which is the view held by the authors?

A.

B.

C.

65. Briefly state the five principles in understanding prophecy.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

## **Chapter 11 • THE LANGUAGE OF GENESIS AND REVELATION**

66. What type of descriptive language is deeply woven into the fabric of Jewish thought?

67. Why did God not allow the Bible to be written in the scientific language of our day?



68. What three issues affected the writers of Genesis or Revelation?

A.

B.

C.

69. What number signified fullness or totality to the Hebrew people?

70. What philosophical and theological errors does Genesis correct?

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

71. Why is the use of anthropomorphisms effective in Revelation?

72. Why is figurative language used in the accounts of creation and climax?

**Chapter 12 • UNDERSTANDING THE POETRY OF THE BIBLE**

73. How many Old Testament books are all or nearly all poetry?

74. How does Hebrew poetry differ from Western poetry?

75. Define “synonymous parallelism.”

76. Define “acrostic” in Hebrew poetry and give an example.

77. What five guidelines are there to help us understand poetry in the Psalms?

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

78. What four guidelines are there to help us understand poetry in the Proverbs?

A.

B.

C.

D.

79. Which book do the authors consider to contain the greatest poetry in the Old Testament? Why?

### **Chapter 13 • HOW DO WE BUILD DOCTRINE AND THEOLOGY?**

80. Define “doctrine” and “theology.”

A.

B.

81. What is the one main purpose of doctrine and theology?

82. What needs to be emphasized and reemphasized about doctrinal truth?

83. Describe the two basic differences between Biblical and systematic theology?

A.

B.

84. What are the three areas in which Biblical theologians center their study?

A.

B.

C.

85. What does proper “proof-texting” never do?

## Chapter 14 • BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

86. Why is it important for a Christian to have a solid knowledge and understanding of the Bible and how to interpret it?

87. What two important principles do the authors leave the reader with? Briefly explain each one.

A.

B.

88. How will this course in “Understanding Scripture” now help you in reading the Bible? What has changed in the way you read God’s Word?



# BIBLE STUDY WORKSHEETS

## BIBLE STUDY WORKSHEET PATTERN

Bible text to study \_\_\_\_\_

I prayed for Holy Spirit revelation and understanding.

### 1. IDENTIFY THE TYPE OF LITERATURE

A. Is it a narrative, psalm, prophecy, proverb, poetry, epistle, etc.?

### 2. CONTEXT

A. Who wrote the text? And to whom was it written?

B. When was it written and why was it written?

C. What is the location of the writer, readers, or events?

D. What geographic, political, or cultural aspects are relevant to the passage?

E. What is the literary context, the verses preceding and following the text?

### 3. OBSERVATION – LOOK! What does it say?

A. Who are the characters involved?

B. Describe what is happening – where, when, why, and how do the events happen?

### 4. INTERPRETATION – LEARN! What does it mean?

A. Why did the writer say what he did? What did he mean?

- B. What is the significance?
- C. What is the implication?
- D. Define key words.

**5. CORRELATION – LINK! How does it relate?**

- A. How and where does this passage relate to major Biblical themes and doctrines?

**6. APPLICATION – LIVE! How does it apply?**

- A. State the commands to obey.
- B. Are there errors to avoid? Are there sins to forsake?
- C. Are there promises to claim?
- D. State the important eternally applicable truths I learned from this passage.
- E. What does this passage suggest I should be or do as a believer?

## WISDOM WORKSHEET

1. Read **Proverbs 3** and summarize the intent in the following verses. Use the back if necessary.

1-2

3-4

5-8

9-10

11-12

13-18

19-20

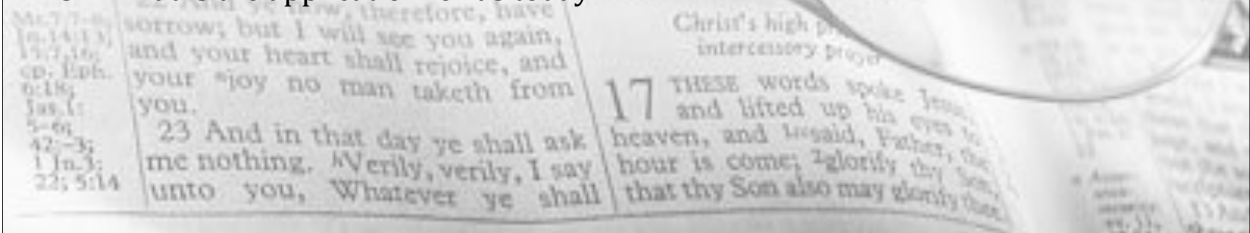
21-26

27-30

31-35

2. What values can we learn from these?

3. What is the application for us today?





## MINOR PROPHETS WORKSHEET

Read the book of **Malachi** and answer the questions. (Malachi was written to a postexilic Israel, after 538 BC.)

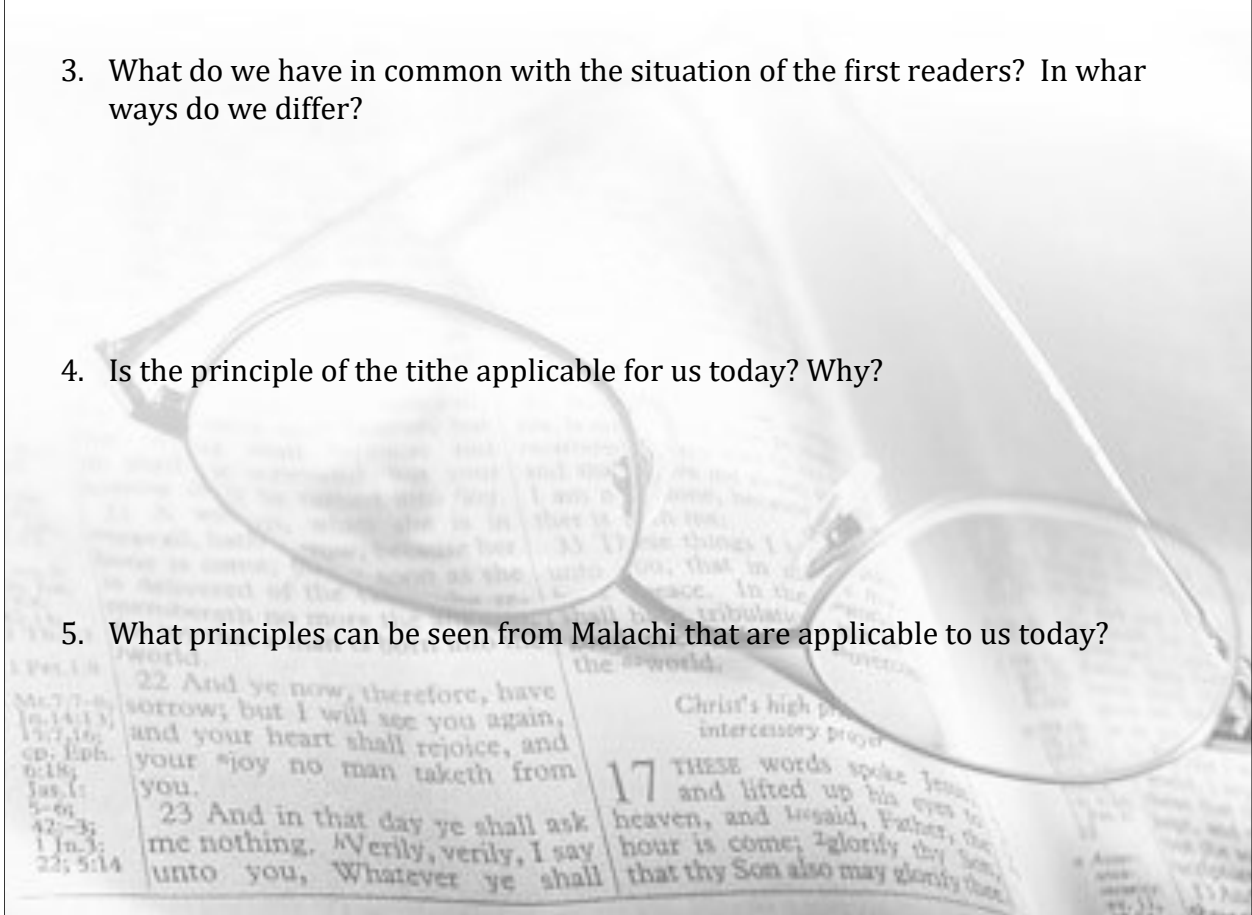
1. Describe the history, life situation, and the problems of the people during the time this was written?

2. What is the faith situation, the relationship the people and the nation had with God?

3. What do we have in common with the situation of the first readers? In what ways do we differ?

4. Is the principle of the tithe applicable for us today? Why?

5. What principles can be seen from Malachi that are applicable to us today?

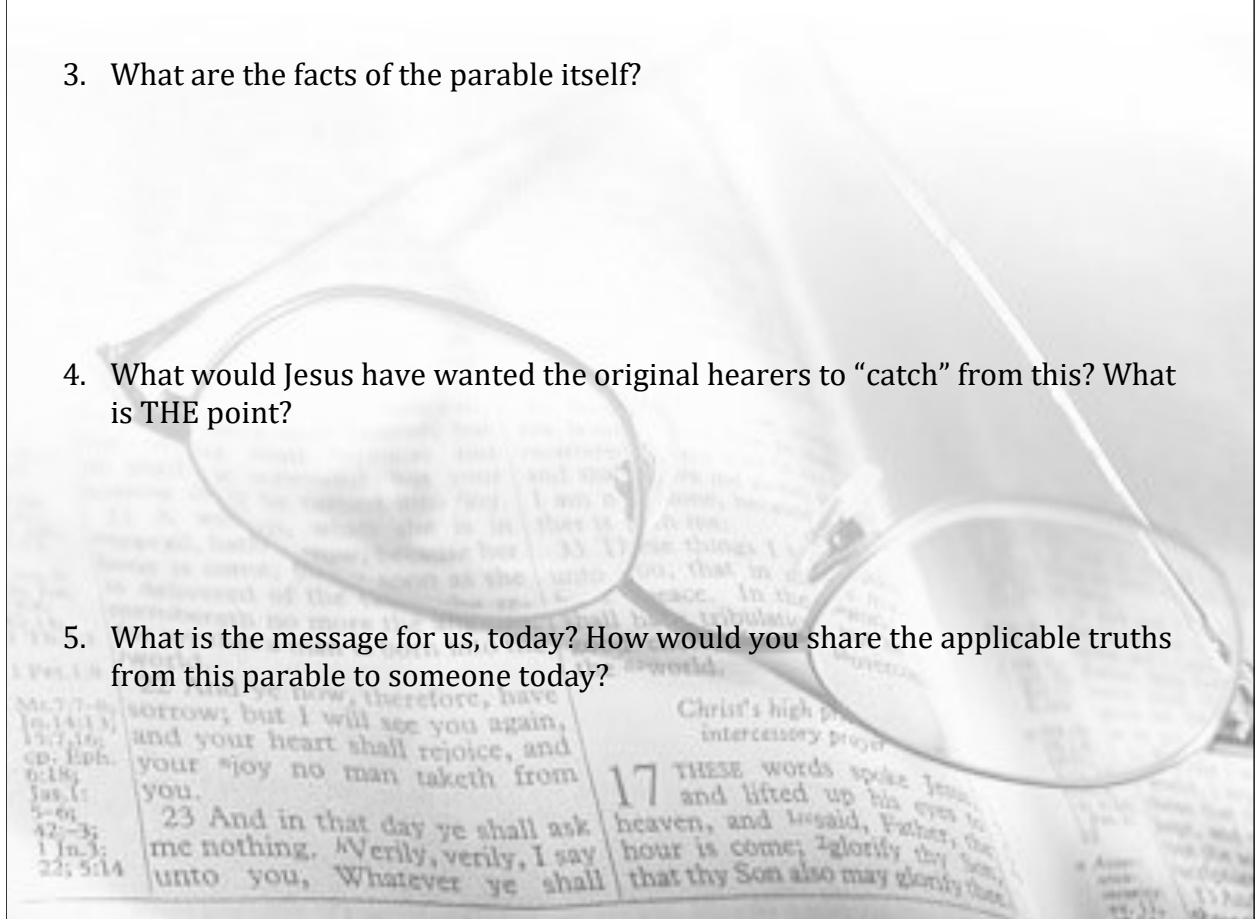


## PARABLES WORKSHEET

A parable is a short fictional story that teaches a lesson by comparison and usually focus on only one, main point. When Jesus explained the parable of the Sower, He also stated a very important idea in Mark 4:13, *Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?* Jesus wanted them to know that if they understood this parable they would be able to understand all the parables!

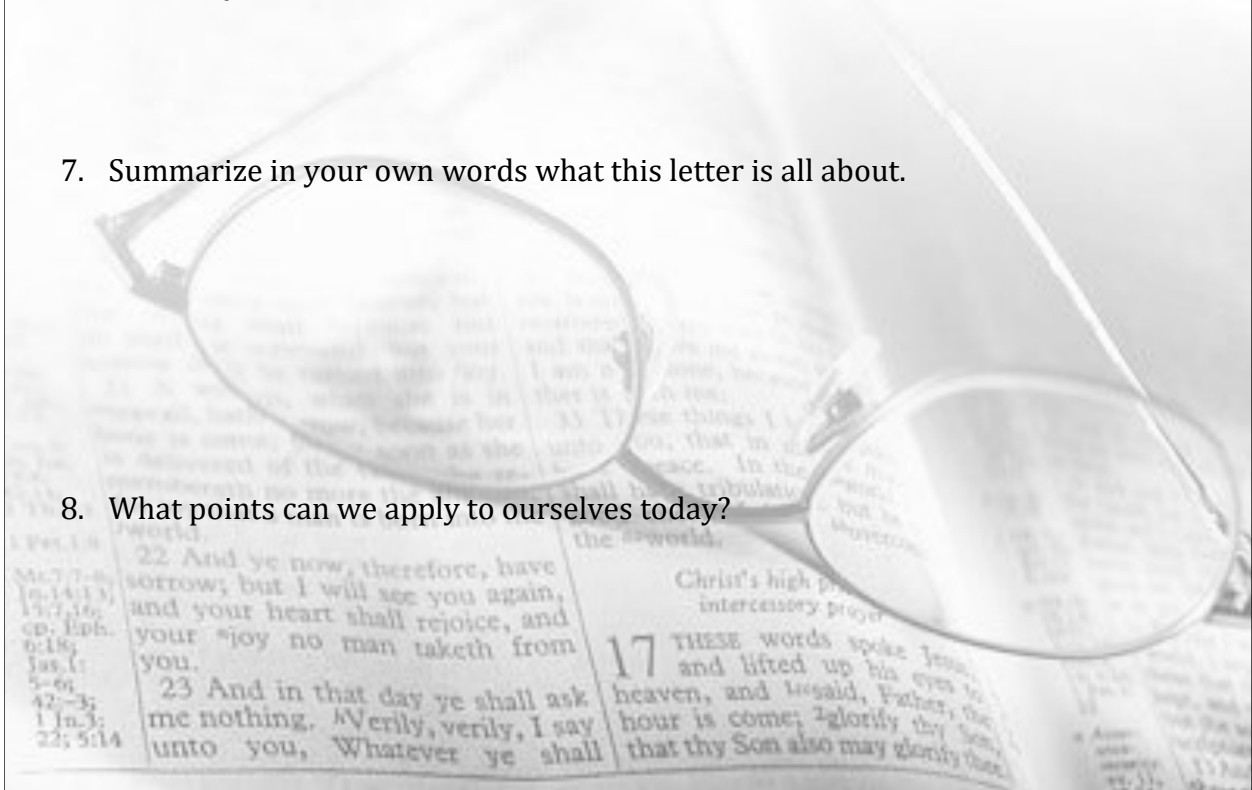
Read **Luke 10:25-37** (The Good Samaritan) and answer questions.

1. What events surround the parable?
2. What prompted Christ to speak the parable and to whom was the parable spoken?
3. What are the facts of the parable itself?
4. What would Jesus have wanted the original hearers to “catch” from this? What is THE point?
5. What is the message for us, today? How would you share the applicable truths from this parable to someone today?



## EPISTLE WORKSHEET

1. Read Paul's letter to **Philemon** and answer the questions. Pay attention to "small" details throughout.
2. What kind of writing is it? (Narrative, psalm, prophecy, letter, etc.)
3. Who is the author and who are all the recipients? (Verses 1b-2)
4. How does the writer begin the letter? (Verses 4-7)
5. Describe the purpose of the letter. (Verses 8-16)
6. Describe the author's attitude. (Verses 17-22) What is Paul really saying? In what way does Paul behave as Christ?
7. Summarize in your own words what this letter is all about.
8. What points can we apply to ourselves today?



## THINGS GOD IS SHOWING ME...

