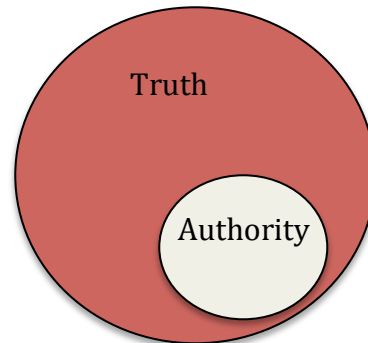


# Introduction to Biblical Languages

## I. Interpreting the Bible: Truth vs. Authority

If we draw conclusions from a passage that the passage itself is not communicating, even if it is true, it does not have the authority of Scripture behind it.



### A. Scripture as Communication

Scripture is God's communication to His people about Himself.  
Ask: What is this passage telling me about God?

### B. Flawed ways to approach the Bible

1. Scripture as behavioral guidebook

2. Scripture as role model

3. Scripture as metaphor

4. Scripture as horoscope

5. Scripture as promise

6. Scripture as proof text

7. Reading Scripture in speculative ways

C. Where should we begin?

Examine the historical context

Examine the theological context

Seek wise counsel

Look for “belief points,” not “action points”

## II. Principles of Word Study

A. How do we know which words to study? (*see chart below*)

B. Things to keep in mind

1. Don't focus too much on the individual words
2. Definitions are not interchangeable for every passage
3. Be careful not to read the entire theological expanse of a word into every occurrence of that word
4. Consider the date in which the author wrote

## III. Free Internet/Smartphone Tools

A. Bible Hub

Biblehub.com or the app

B. Blue Letter Bible

Blueletterbible.org or the app

C. Logos Bible app

Contains many free resources and it is free to sign up with any email

# Steps for an Effective Word Study

## **Step #1:**

### **Determining which word (or phrase) to study:**

- Is it a name of God?
- Is it a character quality of God?
- Is it a theologically loaded word?
- Is it a rare word or usage of that word?
- Do translations differ on how to interpret it?
- Is it contextually important?
- Does it allude to other passages?
- Do commentaries spend time on it?

## **Step #2:**

### **Determine the general meanings of the word:**

- Look up the word in a lexicon or other Bible dictionaries
- Always study a word within the context of a specific passage

## **Step #3:**

### **Determine the contextual meaning of the word:**

- How is this word used within the book?
- How does the same author use this word in other books?
- If there aren't parallels within books written by the same author, how do other Biblical authors use this word?
- If there are no other occurrences within Scripture, look at materials written around the same time (i.e: the Apocrypha, Josephus, etc.)

## **Step #4:**

### **Going further:**

- If you are studying an OT word, how does the NT expound upon the meaning?
- How does the NT author use the word in the same way as the OT author?
- How does the NT author extend the meaning or use it in a different way?
- What words conceptually overlap? How are they similar? How are they different?

### **III. Steps for Interpretation | How can we know what a passage means?**

Step 1: Evaluate different Biblical manuscripts

*Sometimes this will be a footnote in your English Bible*

Step 2: Translate

Step 3: Determine the literary context, or the genre, of the passage

Step 4: Evaluate the structure of the passage

Step 5: Carefully study important words and figures of speech

Step 6: Research the historical and theological context of the passage

Step 7: Draw conclusions with Biblical theology in mind

Step 8: Interpret within community

Step 9: Application

### **IV. Sentence Diagramming**

*See handout below*

# Steps for Sentence Diagramming

**Step 1: Break the passage down into essential clauses**

**Step 2: Indent clauses that are grammatically dependent, leaving the main subject and verb furthest to the right**

**Step 3: Indent clauses that are logically dependent**

Cause/effect clauses:

- Concession (Answers the question: “why?”)
  - Key words: though, although, but
- Condition
  - Key word: if
- Means of (Answers the question: “how?”)
  - Key word: by
- Purpose (Describes the outcome)
  - Key words: in order that, in order to, that, so that
- Reason (Answers the question: “Why this result?”)
  - Key words: because, for
- Result (States what happened)

Info/Content clauses

- Time of
- Location of
- Circumstance of

Clarification

- Identification
  - Key words: who, which that
- Comment
  - Provides a personal assessment or point of view
- Amplification
  - Restates main statement and adds to it
- Manner
  - Gives two points of difference and one or more similarity

**Step 4: Keep similar ideas the same distance from the left**

*This involves alternatives (or), sequential events, simultaneous ideas, and parallel ideas (these have a feature in common, purpose or result)*

## V. Verb Word Studies | Things to Remember

### A. Greek verbs have aspect

Present: focuses on a point in time

Imperfect: focuses on the action

Aorist: describes the action as a whole

Perfect: conveys the felt effects of an action

Future: describes how the action will be felt

### B. Hebrew verbs can have a completely different meaning depending upon the stem

Qal: active voice

Niphal: passive voice

Piel: intensive voice

Polel: passive intensive voice

Hiphil: causative voice

Hophal: passive causative voice

Hitphael: reflexive voice