

Assignment #2 – The Epistles

In Lecture No. 3 (Jan.24, 2007) we learned that paramount to interpreting the Epistles is learning the skill of thinking “paragraphs” and not “verses.” We have to re-condition our thinking away from chapters and verses and learn to read the letters as they were originally received... as well-organized segments of thought.

QUESTION

One of the most famous passages a person learns in their teenage years if they grow up in church is **2 Corinthians 6:14**...

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?”

According to most, this verse means that Christians are forbidden by God to marry non-Christians. Using the skills and methods you learned from class, can you make a declarative statement as to whether this is a correct interpretation or not?

INSTRUCTIONS

Please understand what I am looking for here. What I do not want is for you to read a commentary or website and then, quoting that, give me your opinion. Instead, I am looking for a comprehensive analysis of this passage that follows the same steps we discussed in lecture to interpret 1 Cor. 3:16-17.

The Steps

1. Read through the letter in one setting. (Your choice of version) If you have time, read through it twice. In your second read-through, please take notes on the following:
 - a. Who are the recipients?
 - b. What are Paul's attitudes towards them?
 - c. Can you discern the occasion (the reason) for the letter?
2. Next, try and write out an outline for the entire letter showing what YOU think the major divisions of the letter are. (Consult the example in your class notes for guidance)
3. Now, locate the “segment” or “division of thought” that 6:14 occurs in. How large this is will be completely dependent on your answer to #2. Take this segment and break it down into paragraphs using the handout given in class. Write out the paragraph's “limits” (the verses it spans) and briefly note 2 or 3 main points that summarize what Paul is talking about in light of the letter's larger context. (*Hint: Take your time on this. Pray through it. Allow yourself to leave the assignment for a while and come back to it later. You want to make sure that the Holy Spirit has ample time and space to illuminate this to you. Ask Him for wisdom and believe that He will give it. (James 1:5)*)
4. Now, look at the verse in the light of (A) the letter's occasion, (B) the division of thought you placed it in, and (C) the context of it's paragraph. Do you agree with the interpretation that Paul is teaching that Christians should not marry non-Christians? What was Paul saying to the Corinthians? (Keep in mind here that I am not asking you whether or not that is a valid truth or wisdom for young teens... What I am asking is whether or not 2 Cor. 6:14 is teaching that. Many times we teach valid truth but simply use the wrong verses to do so.)
5. Based on your “exegesis” of the passage and your conclusion on what was being said back in that time... can you create a “hermeneutic” for the passage? In other words, can you give one or two modern-day applications for the passage?

In order for your conclusion to be considered “grade-worthy,” you have to show all your work regardless of how sloppy your handwriting or how random your thoughts. Make sure you have included your “Outline of the Letter” as well as you paragraph breakdown of the division the passage is in. You may consult a Bible dictionary or commentary for historical background ONLY!!! *All assignments are due by Wednesday, January 31, 2007 at 8:45 PM. If e-mailing, please send them to Ann Jones at ajones@cag.org. Please post questions on the FORUM BOARD at our website... www.howtostudythebible.net*