

Genre of New Testament Epistles

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INTRODUCTION TO ANCIENT EPISTLES

Letters as a Literary Genre

- Genre refers to the type or style of writing.
- Every culture has a distinctive style of writing letters (e.g., cover letters)

Two Types of Ancient Letters

- Letter—Personal form of communication intended for private reading (ca. 87 words).
- Epistle—Formal means of communication intended for public reading (ca. 300-1000 words).

Occasional (Situational) Documents

- Letters and epistles are written to address a specific situation (historical particularity).
- The author and reader usually shared a common cultural perspective.
- Letters and epistles are often part of an ongoing conversation.
- Later readers are only hearing one side of the conversation.

STRUCTURE OF ANCIENT EPISTLES

Opening

- Sender and Recipient
- Greeting (Salutation)—*charis humin kai eirene* ("grace to you and peace")
- Thanksgiving/Prayer (often foreshadows the body of the letter)

Body

- Content of the letter

Conclusion

- Final Greeting
- Farewell
- Benediction ("grace to you")

Question: Why is Galatians missing the thanksgiving section?

NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES

Pauline Epistles (by date of writing)

- Galatians (ca. A.D. 48)—2,230 words
- 1 Thessalonians (ca. A.D. 50-51)—1,481 words
- 2 Thessalonians (ca. A.D. 50-51)—823 words
- 1 Corinthians (ca. A.D. 54)—6,830 words
- 2 Corinthians (ca. A.D. 55-56)—4,477 words
- Romans (ca. A.D. 57)—7,111 words
- Ephesians (ca. A.D. 60-61)—2,422 words
- Colossians (ca. A.D. 60-61)—1,582 words
- Philemon (ca. A.D. 60-62)—335 words
- Philippians (ca. A.D. 60-62)—1,629 words
- 1 Timothy (ca. A.D. 60-63)—1,591 words
- Titus (ca. A.D. 62-63)—659 words
- 2 Timothy (ca. A.D. 64-65)—1,238 words

General Epistles (by date of writing)

- James (ca. A.D. 49)—1,742 words
- Hebrews (ca. A.D. 60)—4,953 words
- Jude (ca. A.D. 60)—461 words
- 1 Peter (ca. A.D. 60-63)—1,684 words
- 2 Peter (ca. A.D. 63-65)—1,099 words
- 1 John (ca. A.D. 90)—2,141 words
- 2 John (ca. A.D. 90)—245 words
- 3 John (ca. A.D. 90)—219 words

Characteristics of Paul's Letters

- Paul's letters average 2,500 words.
- Paul expected his letters to be read aloud (I Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16)
- Paul expected his letters to be circulated (Col. 4:16)
- Paul often used an amanuensis (1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17; Philemon 19).

INTERPRETATION OF ANCIENT EPISTLES

Historical Setting

- What is known about the author?
- When did the author write the letter?
- Where was the author located at the time of the writing?
- What is known about the original readers?
- Where were the readers located at the time of the writing?

Literary Structure

- Where in the letter does the passage occur?
- How does the passage contribute to the flow of thought in the letter? (thematic outline)
- The author is often developing an argument.
- For example, Romans 1-3 set the stage for Romans 4.

Literary Forms

- What literary form is the passage?
- What are the implications of this literary form for interpretation?

Grammatical Analysis

- Introductory: Look for basic grammatical constructions.
- Intermediate: Identify prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses.
- Advanced: Diagram sentences according to grammatical constructions.

Word Studies

- What is the definition of key words in the passage?
- How do these words nuance the meaning of the passage?

LITERARY FORMS EMBEDDED WITHIN THE EPISTLES

Creeds—Confessional Statements Repeated by the Early Church

“Regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 1:3-4).

"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

"yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live" (1 Cor. 8:6).

“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:23-26)

"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and then he appeared to Peter, and the to the Twelve" (1 Cor. 15:3-5).

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men" (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God" (1 Pt. 1:18-21).

Baptismal Formulas—Instructions on Christian Baptism

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Rom. 6:4).

"having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12).

Hymns—Antiphonally Sung by the Early Church (poetic structure)

"Who being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Kenosis Passage, Phil. 2:5-11).

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. All things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all the fullness dwell in him. And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Christ Hymn, Col. 1:15-20).

Household Codes—Reciprocal Responsibilities within the Family

"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. 'For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is

right. ‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise— ‘so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.’ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him” (Eph. 5:22-6:9).

"Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism” (Col. 3:18-25).

“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor. Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ‘He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.’ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ‘He himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed.’ For ‘you were like sheep going astray,’ but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers” (1 Pt. 2:13-3:7).

Paraenesis—Concise Ethical Instructions (Exhortations, Admonition)

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good” (Rom. 12:9).

"Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21).

"Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other" (Gal. 5:26).

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess. 5:16-18).

Topoi—Extended Topical Instructions

"Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established..." (Rom. 13:1-7).

“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables..." (Rom. 14:1-23; cf. 1 Cor. 8:1-13).

“Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night..." (1 Thess. 5:1-11).

Vice and Virtue Lists—Catalogue of Representative Right and Wrong Actions

"They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless" (Rom. 1:29-31).

"Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10)

“The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal. 5:19-23).

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Eph. 4:31-32).

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” (Col. 3:12-14).

“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere” (James 3:17).

“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love” (2 Pt. 1:5-7).

Slogans—Proverbial Sayings Widely Accepted in the Ancient World

“Everything is permissible for me” (1 Cor. 6:12).

“Food for the stomach and the stomach for food” (1 Cor. 6:13).

“It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman” (1 Cor. 7:1).

“We all possess knowledge.” (1 Cor. 8:1).

“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor. 15:32).

“Bad company corrupts good character” (1 Cor. 15:33, Greek poet Neander).

“A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough” (Gal. 5:9; cf. 1 Cor. 5:6).

Liturgical Fragments—Blessings and Doxologies

Maranatha--“Come, O Lord” (1 Cor. 16:22).

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (1 Thess. 5:28).

“Glory to God” (Rom. 11:36; Gal. 1:5; 1 Tim. 6:16)

Diatribes—Anticipates Objections from an Imaginary Opponent

“What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God’s faithfulness?” (Rom. 3:3).

“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” (Rom. 6:1).

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?” (Rom. 6:15).

“What then shall we say? Is God unjust?” (Rom. 9:14).

“I ask then: Did God reject his people?” (Rom. 11:1).

“But someone will ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?’ (1 Cor. 15:35).

“Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God?” (Gal. 3:21).

GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS

DEFINING OUR TERMS

Grammar. The study of rules governing language.

Morphology. The study of word forms.

Semantics. The study of word meanings.

Syntax. The study of word relationships.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING GRAMMAR

Grammar is a Shared Literary Convention

- In inspiration, God did not bypass human language.
- Language includes genre, grammar, and words.

Meaning is Grammar-Bound

- Words take on specific meanings within the context of sentences.
- Sentences make sense within the context of paragraphs.
- Authors select grammatical structures to communicate meaning.

PARTS OF SPEECH

Nouns. Words that name something, e.g., person, place, or thing.

Adjectives. Words that modify a noun, attributing a quality to it.

Pronouns. Words that substitute for a noun, e.g., I, who, this.

Verbs. Words that express action or existence.

Adverbs. Words that modify a verb, expressing time, place, manner, degree.

Prepositions. Words that introduce prepositional phrases.

Conjunctions. Words that connect words, phrases, and clauses.

SYNTACTICAL UNITS

Phrases: Group of words that do not include a subject or verb.

Prepositional Phrase—Group of words introduced by a preposition.

Participial Phrase—Group of words introduced by a participle.

Infinitival Phrase—Group of words introduced by an infinitive.

Clauses: Group of words that include a subject and verb.

Independent Clauses—Clauses that function as complete sentences, including a subject and verb but also adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions.

Coordinate Clauses—Clauses that are independent yet connected to other clauses by coordinating conjunction, e.g., and, also, but, yet, or, etc.

Subordinate Clauses—Clauses that are dependent on other clauses, connected by subordinating conjunctions, e.g., if, as, so, that, because, etc.

Sentences: Group of words that include at least a subject and verb.

Simple Sentence—Sentences that have only a single independent clause.

Compound Sentence—Sentences that connect two independent clauses.

Complex Sentence—Sentences that have at least one dependent clause.

INTRODUCTORY GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS

SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

Inferential: Author is drawing an inference from the previous sentence or paragraph.

- Sentence begins with the following conjunction: therefore.
- Example: “**Therefore**, with minds that are alert and somber...” (1 Pt. 1:13).

Coordinate: Author is connecting an additional element.

- Sentence has the following conjunctions: and, also, even.
- Example: “Just as sin entered the world through one man, **and** death through sin” (Rom. 5:12).

Contrastive: Author is introducing a contrast or opposing thought.

- Sentence has the following conjunctions: but, yet, though, however.
- Example: “The world and its desires pass away, **but** whoever does the will of God lives forever” (1 Jn. 2:17).

Temporal: Author is providing the time of the action.

- Sentence has the following conjunctions: before, until, when, while, after.
- Example: “**When** they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate” (1 Pt. 2:23).

Causal: Author is providing the basis for the action.

- Sentence has the following conjunctions: because, since.
- Example: “We know that we have passed from death to life, **because** we love each other” (1 Jn. 3:14).

Conditional: Author is introducing a condition to the action.

- Sentence has the following conjunction: if.
- Example: “**If** we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1:9).

Comparative: Author is introducing a comparison or an analogy.

- Sentence has the following conjunctions: like, as, thus, in this manner.
- Example: “**As** obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you live in ignorance” (1 Pt. 1:14).

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

Agency: Author is identifying the personal means of the verbal action.

- Sentence has the following conjunctions: by, through.
- Example: “**Through** him [Jesus], you believe in God” (1 Pt. 1:21).

Means: Author is identifying the impersonal means of the verbal action.

- Sentence has the following prepositions: by, through.
- Example: “For it is **by** grace you have been saved, **through** faith” (Eph. 2:8).

Separation: Author is indicating separation from the modified noun.

- Sentence has the following prepositions: from, away from.
- Example: “They went out **from** us, but they did not really belong to us” (1 Jn. 2:19).

Source: Author is indicating the origin of the modified noun.

- Sentence has the following prepositions: from, out of.
- Example: “You, dear children, are **from God** and have overcome them” (1 Jn. 4:4).

Advantage: Author is indicating the advantage of the modified noun.

- Sentence has the following prepositions: for, for the sake of, on behalf of.
- Example: “While we were still sinners, Christ died **for** us” (Rom. 5:8).

INTERMEDIATE GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS

One: Identification—Identify the Type of Clause or Phrase*

- What conjunction introduces the clause?
- What preposition introduces the phrase?

Two: Explanation—Explain How the Clause or Phrase Contributes to Meaning

- Is the clause or phrase modifying a verb or noun?
- What additional information does the clause or phrase provide?

CHART OF SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

| Subordinating Conjunctions | Type of Clause | Explanation of Clause |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| because, for, since | Causal clause | Reason for action in main clause |
| that, in order that, so that | Purpose clause | Goal of action in main clause |
| so, so that | Result clause | Consequence of action in main clause |
| if, unless, since, although | Conditional clause | Condition of action in main clause |
| as, just as, thus, like | Comparative clause | Comparison to main clause |
| though, even though | Concessive clause | Concession is made to main clause |
| when, while, after, before, until | Temporal clause | Time of action in main clause |
| beside, above, below, where, on, over, at | Local clause | Place of action in main clause |

CHART OF COORDINATE CLAUSES

| Coordinating Conjunctions | Type of Clause | Explanation of Clause |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| and, also, even | Continuative clause | Continuance of main clause |
| but, yet, rather, however | Contrastive clause | Contrast with main clause |
| or, than | Disjunctive clause | Alternative to main clause |
| therefore, for this reason | Inferential clause | Inference from previous sentence |
| for, namely | Explanatory clause | Explanation of previous sentence |

EXAMPLES OF SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

Causal Clause—Reason (why?) for the Action in the Main Clause

"We know that we live in him and he in us, **because** he has given us of his Spirit" (1 Jn 4:13).

Conjunction: because

Identification: causal clause

Explanation: The indwelling Holy Spirit is the reason that we know we are Christians.

"When you ask you do not receive, **because** you ask with wrong motives" (James 4:3).

Conjunction: because

Identification: causal clause

Explanation: Asking with wrong motives is why prayer are sometimes not answered.

"That is why we labor and strive, **because** we have put our hope in the living God" (1 Tim. 4:10).

Conjunction: because

Identification: causal clause

Explanation: Paul's hope in God is the reason why he labors and strives.

Purpose Clause—Goal/Intention (why?) of Action in Main Clause

"these are written **that** you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (Jn. 20:31).

Conjunction: that

Identification: purpose clause

Explanation: John wrote his gospel for the purpose that people might believe in Jesus.

"he gave his one and only Son, **that** whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

Conjunction: that

Identification: purpose clause

Explanation: God gave his Son for the purpose of saving believers.

“Give the people these instructions, **so that** no one may be open to blame” (1 Tim. 5:7)

Conjunction: that

Identification: purpose clause

Explanation: Timothy should instruct people for the purpose of keeping from being open to blame.

Result Clause—Outcome/Consequence (what?) of Action in Main Clause

"Jesus healed him, **so that** he could both talk and see" (Mt. 12:22).

Conjunction: so that

Identification: result clause

Explanation: The man could talk and see as a consequence of Jesus healing him.

"God so loved the world **that** he gave his one and only Son" (Jn 3:16)

Conjunction: that

Identification: result clause

Explanation: God's gift of Jesus was a consequence of his love for people.

“a furious storm came up on the lake, **so that** the waves swept over the boat” (Mt. 8:23).

Conjunction: that

Identification: result clause

Explanation: Waves sweeping over the boat was a consequence of the furious storm.

Conditional Clause—Condition Must be Met for Action to Occur (contingency)

"**If** any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God" (James 1:5).

Conjunction: if

Identification: conditional clause

Explanation: Lacking wisdom is the condition for asking God.

“**If**, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about” (Rom. 4:2)

Conjunction: if

Identification: conditional clause

Explanation: Justification by works is the condition by which Abraham has something to boast.

“**if** we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him” (Rom. 6:8).

Conjunction: if

Identification: conditional clause

Explanation: Dying with Christ is the condition by which we believe that we will live with him.

Comparative Clause--Analogy (how?) between Two Ideas

"Be as shrewd **as** snakes [are shrewd]" (Mt. 10:16).

Conjunction: as

Identification: comparative clause

Explanation: Our shrewdness as Christians should be analogous to the shrewdness of snakes.

"I do not run **like** a man running aimlessly" (1 Cor. 9:26).

Conjunction: like

Identification: comparative clause

Explanation: Paul's living is not analogous to a man running aimlessly.

“forgiving each other **just as** God in Christ forgave you” (Eph. 4:32).

Conjunction: just as

Identification: comparative clause

Explanation: Our forgiveness of each other should be analogous to God's forgiveness of us.

Temporal Clause—Time (when?) of the Action in the Main Clause

"**before** the law was given, sin was in the world" (Rom. 5:13).

Conjunction: before

Identification: temporal clause

Explanation: Sin preceded the giving of the law.

"**Until** I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture" (1 Tim. 4:13).

Conjunction: until

Identification: temporal clause

Explanation: Timothy should commit to the public reading of Scripture while waiting for Paul.

"And **when** you pray, do not be like the hypocrites" (Mt. 6:5).

Conjunction: when

Identification: temporal clause

Explanation: Jesus' followers should not be hypocrites while praying.

Local Clause—Place (where?) of the Action in the Main Clause

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, **where** moths and vermin destroy" (Mt. 6:19).

Conjunction: where

Identification: local clause

Explanation: Destruction by moth and vermin is the place where treasures on earth are stored.

"**where** your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt. 6:21).

Conjunction: where

Identification: local clause

Explanation: What you treasure is the place where your heart will be.

“**where** the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:17).

Conjunction: where

Identification: local clause

Explanation: The Holy Spirit is the place where there is freedom.

EXAMPLES OF COORDINATE CLAUSES

Continuative Clause—Connects an additional thought to the main clause.

“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone **and** to be holy” (Heb. 12:14).

Conjunction: and

Identification: continuative clause

Explanation: In addition to living at peace with other, believers should strive to be holy.

“who raised him from the dead **and** glorified him” (1 Pt. 1:21).

Conjunction: and

Identification: continuative clause

Explanation: In addition to raising Jesus from the dead, God glorified him.

“you have an anointing from the Holy One, **and** all of you know the truth” (1 Jn. 2:20).

Conjunction: and

Identification: continuative clause

Explanation: In addition to having an anointing from God, believers know the truth.

Contrastive Clause—Introduces a contrasting thought to the main clause

“I have not come to abolish them [the law and prophets] **but** to fulfill them” (Mt. 5:17).

Conjunction: but

Identification: contrastive clause

Explanation: In contrast to abolishing the law and prophets, just came to fulfill them.

“you are not under the law, **but** under grace” (Rom. 6:14).

Conjunction: but

Identification: contrastive clause

Explanation: In contrast to being under the law, Christians are under grace.

“Therefore do not be foolish, **but** understand what the Lord’s will is” (Eph. 5:17).

Conjunction: but

Identification: contrastive clause

Explanation: In contrast to being foolish, believer should understand God’ will.

Disjunctive Clause—Provides Opposite or Related Alternative to the Main Clause

“It is better not to eat meat **or** drink wine” (Rom. 14:21).

Conjunction: but

Identification: disjunctive clause

Explanation: A related alternative to eating meat is drinking wine.

“Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, **or** by believing what you heard?” (Gal. 3:2).

Conjunction: but

Identification: disjunctive clause

Explanation: An opposite alternative to receiving the Spirit by works is receiving the Spirit by faith.

“Should we pay **or** shouldn’t we [pay]?” (Mk. 12:15).

Conjunction: but

Identification: disjunctive clause

Explanation: An opposite alternative to pay is not paying the imperial tax to Caesar.

Inferential Clause—Provides Conclusion or Summary to Previous Section

“**For** we maintain that a person is justified by faith” (Rom. 3:28).

Conjunction: for

Identification: inferential clause

Explanation: Conclusion is drawn from the previous verses about boasting.

“**Therefore** I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses” (2 Cor. 12:9).

Conjunction: therefore

Identification: inferential clause

Explanation: Conclusion is drawn from the previous verses about sufficiency of grace.

“**Therefore** each of you must put off falsehood” (Eph. 4:25).

Conjunction: therefore

Identification: inferential clause

Explanation: Conclusion is drawn from the previous verses about putting off the old self.

Explanatory Clause—Provides Additional Information to Clarify Previous Section

“**Therefore**, get rid of all moral filth” (James 1:21).

Conjunction: therefore

Identification: Explanatory clause

Explanation: Clarification is provided for previous verse about anger.

“**For** you were like sheep going astray” (1 Pt. 2:25).

Conjunction: for

Identification: Explanatory clause

Explanation: Clarification is provided for previous verse about dying to sin.

“**F**or sin shall no longer be your master” (Rom. 6:14).

Conjunction: for

Identification: Explanatory clause

Explanation: Clarification is provided for previous verse about not letting sin reign in our bodies.

CHART OF PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

| Prepositions | Type of Phrase | Explanation of Phrase |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| by, through | Preposition Phrase of Agency | Personal means of verbal action |
| by, through | Prepositional Phrase of Means | Impersonal means of verbal action |
| in, with, without | Prepositional Phrase of Manner | Circumstances of verbal action |
| in, into, on, among, to, toward, at, beside | Prepositional Phrase of Place | Location of verbal action |
| while, when, during | Prepositional Phrase of Time | Time of verbal action |
| because of, on account of | Prepositional Phrase of Cause | Reason for verbal action |
| for, for the purpose of, to, in order to | Prepositional Phrase of Purpose | Goal of verbal action |
| as a result of, so that | Prepositional Phrase of Result | Consequence of verbal action |
| from, away from | Prepositional Phrase of Separation | Separation from modified noun |
| from, out of | Prepositional Phrase of Source | Origin of modified noun |
| for, for the sake of, on behalf of | Prepositional Phrase of Advantage | Benefit of modified noun |
| against, upon | Prepositional Phrase of Disadvantage | Drawback of modified noun |
| with | Prepositional Phrase of Association | Accompanies subject of verbal action |
| according to, in accordance with | Prepositional Phrase of Reference | In relation to modified noun |

EXAMPLES OF PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

Agency—Personal Means of Verbal Action (who/how?)

"to fulfill what the Lord said **through** the prophets" (Mt. 1:22).

Preposition: through

Identification: prepositional phrase agency

Explanation: Prophets were the agents through whom the Lord spoke.

"they were baptized **by** him in the Jordan River" (Mt. 3:6).

Preposition: by

Identification: prepositional phrase agency

Explanation: John was the agent by whom the people were baptized.

Means—Impersonal Means of Verbal Action (what/how?)

"the church of God, which he bought **with** his own blood" (Acts. 20:28).

Preposition: with

Identification: prepositional phrase of means

Explanation: Jesus' blood is the means by which the church was bought.

"all who sin under the law will be judged **by** the law" (Rom. 2:12).

Preposition: by

Identification: prepositional phrase of means

Explanation: The law is the means by which those under it are judged.

"For it is **by** grace you have been saved, **through** faith" (Eph. 2:8)

Preposition: by and through

Identification: prepositional phrase of means

Explanation: Believers are saved by the means of both grace and faith.

"to reconcile both of them to God **through** the cross" (Eph. 2:16).

Preposition: through

Identification: prepositional phrase of means

Explanation: The cross is the means by which Jews and Gentiles are reconciled.

Manner—Circumstances Surrounding Verbal Action (how?)

"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, **with** a loud command" (1 Thess. 4:16).

Preposition: with

Identification: prepositional phrase of manner

Explanation: A loud command is the manner by which Christ will return.

"live your lives as strangers here **in** reverent fear" (1 Pt. 1:17).

Preposition: in

Identification: Prepositional phrase of manner

Explanation: Reverent fear is the manner by which Christians live as strangers in the world.

"I also want women to dress modestly, **with** decency and propriety" (1 Tim. 2:9).

Preposition: with

Identification: prepositional phrase of manner

Explanation: Decency and propriety is the manner by which women should dress.

Place—Location of Verbal Action (where?)

"it [the lamp] gives light to everyone **in** the house" (Mt. 5:15).

Preposition: in

Identification: prepositional phrase of place

Explanation: The house is the place in which the lamp gives light.

“they [the paralytic’s friends] went up **on** the roof “(Lk. 5:19).

Preposition: in

Identification: prepositional phrase of place

Explanation: The roof is the place where the paralytic’s friends went.

"before the law was given, sin was **in** the world" (Rom. 5:13).

Preposition: in

Identification: prepositional phrase of place

Explanation: The world is the place in which sin was located.

Time—Time of Verbal Action (when?)

“Therefore judge nothing **before** the appointed time” (1 Cor. 4:5).

Preposition: before

Identification: prepositional phrase of time

Explanation: We should not judge before the appointed time.

“do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, **during** the time of testing in the wilderness” (Heb. 3:8).

Preposition: during

Identification: prepositional phrase of time

Explanation: Don’t hard your hearts during times of testing.

“Then **after** three years, I went up to Jerusalem” (Gal. 1:18).

Preposition: after

Identification: prepositional phrase of time

Explanation: Paul went to Jerusalem three years after his conversion.

Cause—Reason for the Verbal Action (why?)

“you were alienated from God...**because of** your evil behavior” (Col. 1:21).

Preposition: because of

Identification: prepositional phrase of cause

Explanation: Our evil behavior is the reason why we are alienated from God.

“they are loved **on account of** the patriarchs” (Rom. 11:28).

Preposition: on account of

Identification: prepositional phrase of cause

Explanation: The patriarchs are the reason why the Jews are loved by God.

“your sins have been forgiven **on account of** his name” (1 Jn. 2:12).

Preposition: on account of

Identification: prepositional phrase of cause

Explanation: Jesus’ name is the reason that our sins have been forgiven.

Purpose—Goal/Intention of the Verbal Action (why?)

“Repent and be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ **for** the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38).

Preposition: for

Identification: prepositional phrase of purpose

Explanation: The purpose of repentance and baptism is the forgiveness of sins.

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many **for** the forgiveness of sins” (Mt. 26:28).

Preposition: for

Identification: prepositional phrase of purpose

Explanation: The purpose of Jesus’ poured blood is the forgiveness of sins.

“preaching a baptism of repentance **for** the forgiveness of sins” (Mk. 1:4).

Preposition: for

Identification: prepositional phrase of purpose

Explanation: The purpose of John’s baptism with the forgiveness of sins.

Result—Outcome/Consequence of Verbal Action

“your sorrow led you to repentance” (2 Cor. 7:9)

Preposition: to

Identification: prepositional phrase of result

Explanation: Repentance is a consequence of sorrow.

“There is a sin that leads to death” (1 Jn. 5:16)

Preposition: to

Identification: prepositional phrase of result

Explanation: Death is a consequence of certain sins.

Separation—Separation from Modified Noun

“you were separate from Christ” (Eph. 2:12)

Preposition: from

Identification: prepositional phrase of separation

Explanation: Christ is the person from whom we were separated while non-Christians.

“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

Preposition: from

Identification: prepositional phrase of separation

Explanation: We are separated from Satan when we resist him.

Source—Origin of Modified Noun

“Grace and peace to you from God our Father” (Eph. 1:2)

Preposition: from

Identification: prepositional phrase of source

Explanation: God is the origin of the grace and peace to which Paul refers.

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness” (Col. 1:13).

Preposition: from

Identification: prepositional phrase of source

Explanation: The origin of our rescue is the dominion of darkness.

Advantage—Benefit of Modified Noun

“Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food” (Rom. 14:20).

Preposition: for the sake of

Identification: prepositional phrase of advantage

Explanation: We should not destroy God’s work for the benefit of food.

“I do all this for the sake of the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:23).

Preposition: for the sake of

Identification: prepositional phrase of advantage

Explanation: Paul does all things for the benefit of the gospel.

Opposition—Opposition to Modified Noun

“you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes” (Eph. 6:11).

Preposition: against

Identification: prepositional phrase of disadvantage

Explanation: The full armor of God allows believers to oppose the devil’s schemes.

“friendship with the world means enmity against God” (James 4:4).

Preposition: against

Identification: prepositional phrase of disadvantage

Explanation: You are opposed to God if you are friends with the world.

Association—Accompanies Subject of Verbal Action

“God made you alive with Christ” (Col. 2:13).

Preposition: with

Identification: prepositional phrase of association

Explanation: Believer were made alive in association with Christ.

“the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men” (Acts 15:22).

Preposition: with

Identification: prepositional phrase of association

Explanation: The church was associated with the decision of the apostles and elders.

Reference—In Relation to Modified Noun

“this we proclaim concerning the Word of life” (1 Jn. 1:1).

Preposition: concerning

Identification: prepositional phrase of reference

Explanation: The apostle’s proclamation was about Jesus (Word of life).

“Do not be anxious about anything” (Phil. 4:6).

Preposition: about

Identification: prepositional phrase of reference

Explanation: Believers are not to be anxious concerning anything

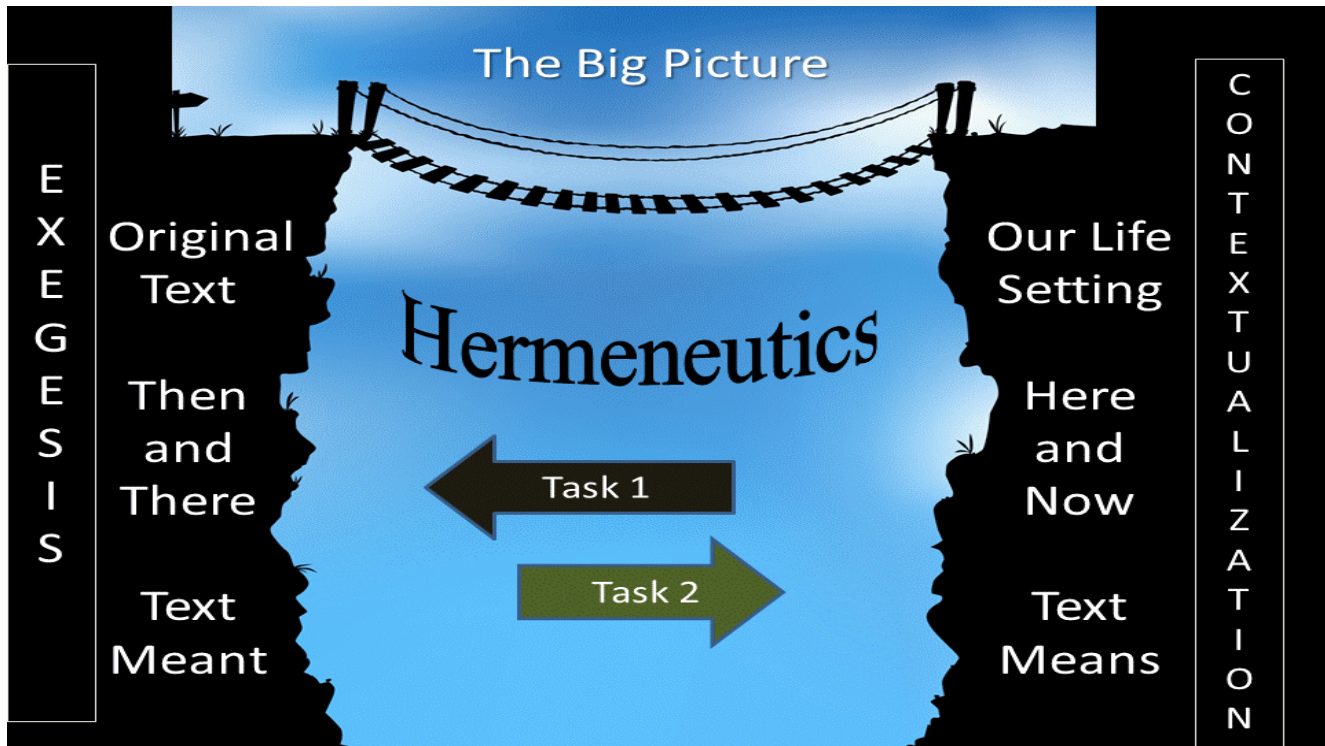
Example: Romans 5:1-4

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.

GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS

| Clause/Phrase | Identification | Explanation |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Therefore...we have peace with God | | |
| since we have been justified | | |
| through faith | | |
| with God | | |
| through our Lord Jesus Christ | | |
| through whom we have gained access | | |
| by faith | | |
| into this grace | | |
| And we boast... | | |
| in the hope | | |
| but we also glory | | |
| in our sufferings | | |
| because we know | | |
| that suffering produces character... | | |

CONTEXTUALIZATION: A METHOD FOR CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION



Explanation of Contextualization

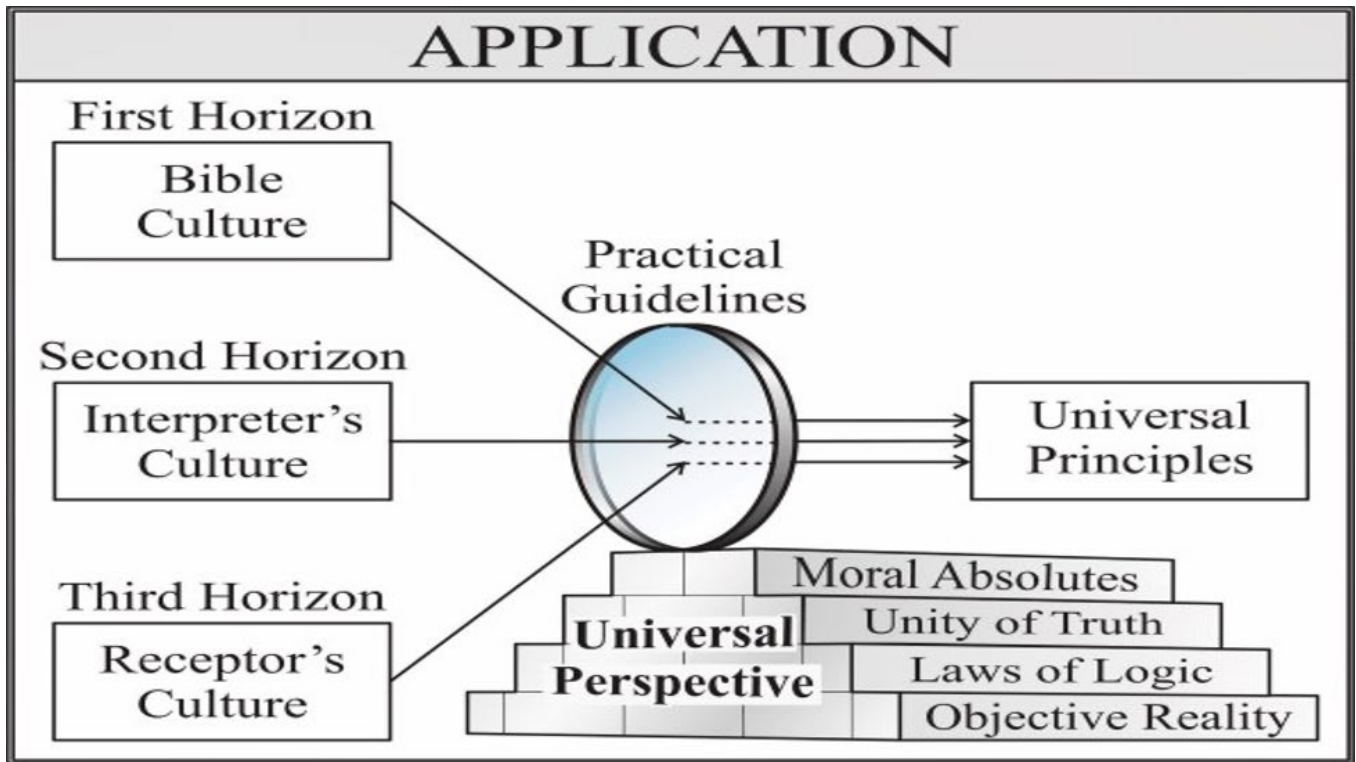
- Transferring meaning from one context to another
- Moving from historical meaning to contemporary application.
- Contextualization "translates" the unchanging content of biblical truth into a form that is meaningful to another culture.

Assumptions of Contextualization

- God's Word has eternal relevance for all believers.
- Biblical texts have historical particularity.
- Valid contextualization should be based upon thorough exegesis.

Three Culture Model of Contextualization

- Author's Cultural—Context in which author encodes meaning.
- Interpreter's Cultural—Context in which interpreter decodes meaning.
- Receptor Cultural—Context for which interpreter recodes meaning.



CULTURE AND CULTURAL SPECIFICITY

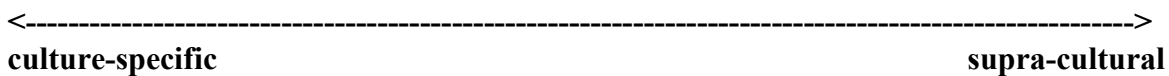
What is Culture?

- Beliefs, values, and practices
- Art and literature
- Customs and traditions
- Morals and values
- Housing and architecture
- Social relationships and institutions
- Work and leisure

How Culturally Specific is a Text?

- Texts are frequently clothed in cultural conventions.

Range of Cultural Specificity



THREE STEPS OF CONTEXTUALIZATION

STEP ONE: DETERMINE APPLICABILITY

Full Application

Text Has a Supra-Cultural Meaning

- Text has supra-cultural meaning, i.e., it transcends culture
- Meaning is rooted in the nature of God or order of creation
- Affirmed elsewhere in Scripture (analogy of Scripture)
- Not surpassed by later revelation (progressive revelation)
- Contemporary meaning is same as historical meaning

Examples of Full Application

- Love God with heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37)
- Love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:39)
- The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)
- Believe in Jesus for eternal life (John 3:16)

Partial Application

Text Has Culture-Specific Meaning

- Text conveys a cultural expression of a universal principle
- Eternal principle has a specific application in this culture
- Cultural expression does not carry same meaning today

Examples of Partial Application

- Wash One Another's Feet (John 13:14)
- Greet with a Holy Kiss (II Corinthians 13:12)
- Slaves and Masters (Colossians 3:22-24; Ephesians 6:5-9)
- Head-coverings for Women (I Corinthians 11:13)
- Meat Sacrificed to Idols (Romans 14:1ff).

No Application

Text Has History-Bound Meaning

- Text was intended for a specific person or community.
- Text was intended to be descriptive, not prescriptive.
- The meaning was superseded by later revelation.
- Since the meaning is history-bound, there is no application.

Examples of No Application

- God asks Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 12)
- God called Hosea to marry a prostitute (1:2)
- John the Baptist ate locust (Matthew 3:4)
- Jesus turned water into wine (Jn. 2:1-11)
- Paul asked Timothy to bring his cloak (II Timothy 4:13)

STEP TWO: DISCOVER TIMELESS PRINCIPLE

- If no application, there is no timeless principle.
- History-bound meaning is true but not applicable.
- If full application, timeless principle equals historical meaning.
- If partial application, generalize to determine timeless principle.

STEP THREE: APPLY TO CONTEMPORARY SITUATION

Consider Original Application

How was the timeless principle originally applied?

- Command to obey
- Principle to follow
- Example to imitate or avoid
- Promise to claim
- Truth to embrace

Where was the timeless principle originally applied?

- Within the family
- Within the church
- Within the world

Determine Cultural Equivalents

- Is the cultural expression of timeless principle still valid?
- If not, are there cultural equivalents expressed today?

Examples of Cultural Equivalents

- Acts of humble service equivalent to foot washing
- Handshake and hug equivalent to holy kiss
- Obedience to employer equivalent to obedience to masters
- Tolerance equivalent to eating meat sacrificed to idols

Provide Concrete Examples of Specific Application

- How does passage apply to current situation?
- Make the application specific and practical.