

HOW DO I INTERPRET THE BIBLE?

BOOKS

J Scott Duvall *Journey Into God's Word* Zondervan
& J Daniel Hays

Gordon Fee & *How to read the Bible for* Scripture Union
Douglas Stuart *all its worth*

GOAL

'our goal is to grasp the meaning of the text God has intended. We do not create meaning out of a text; rather, we seek to find the meaning that is already there.'
(Duvall & Hays p 14)

DIFFICULTIES

Barriers that separate us from biblical audience:

Culture & Customs
Language
Situation
Time
Covenant (Old Testament)

THE INTERPRETATIVE JOURNEY

1) **Grasping the Text in their Town – What did the text mean to the biblical audience?**

Read the text carefully – observation skills – look at the grammar, significant words, repetition, contrasts/comparisons, lists, cause and effect – historical and literary contexts. How does passage relate to the one that preceded it and the one that follows?

2) **Measuring the width of the River to Cross – What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?**

How wide is the river we are attempting to cross? Sometimes very wide – sometimes not so wide. What are the significant differences between our situation today and the

situation of the biblical audience? If Old Testament passage then need to identify those theological differences which are the result of life/work of Jesus Christ.

3) Crossing the Principlizing Bridge – What is the theological principle in this text?

Identify the theological principle or principles reflected in the meaning of the text. Remember not creating the meaning but discovering the meaning intended by the author. Looking at differences and similarities between biblical situation and our own.

Principles should be:

Reflected in the text

Timeless and not tied to a specific situation

Not bound to one particular culture

Correspond to teaching from the rest of Scripture

Should be relevant to both the biblical and a contemporary audience

4) Grasping the Text in our Town – How should individual Christians today apply the theological principle in their lives?

How does it apply in real-life situations today. May well be numerous applications.

(Extracted from Duvall & Hays – chapter 1 – ‘The Interpretative Journey’ p15-18)