

## **STAGE FIVE – DETAILED OBSERVATION OF THE TEXT – PART 1**

### **Introduction**

STAGE FIVE – DETAILED OBSERVATION OF THE TEXT – PART 1 is a detailed look at the text, the sentences, the phrases, and the words. Completing this stage can seem like a never-ending task, but the effort will be well worth it. **Competent Bible study is a “crock pot” experience and NOT a “microwave” event.** The goal is to get it right, and not to merely get it done!

During STAGE FIVE of the Bible study exercise, the Bible student will need to read, re-read, meditate, **THINK**, and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance about the text (and its pieces and parts) in a more literal (or formal) translation (e.g., New American Standard Bible 2020 update, English Standard Version, and the like) in an effort to answer or respond to the following questions. These questions pertain to a universe of things that relate to the text, the sentences, the phrases, and the words that comprise the text.

Resources to develop these questions come from a multitude of sources. The sources are set forth below:

Gordon Fee, God’s Empowering Presence – The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul, (1994), Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI.

Peter Krol, Knowable Word – Helping Ordinary People Learn to Study the Bible, (2014), Cricuform Press, Minneapolis, MN.

Kay Arthur, How to Study Your Bible – The Lasting Rewards of the Inductive Method, (1994), Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR.

Andy Deane, Learn to Study the Bible, (2009), Xulon Press.

### **Ever-Present Overarching Questions of the 5 W’s and H**

The 5 W’s and H questions are suitable to ask all the time during the Bible study exercise. The Bible student needs to have these questions in front of them at all times. These questions are below.

W- Who?

W – What?

W – When?

W – Where?

W – Why?

H – How?

### **Primary Questions to Consider about the Text as a Whole**

The following questions pertain to the text as a whole. Please note that there may be some overlap between the questions and the questions in the other categories (i.e., the sentences, the phrases, and the words).

- In order to be understandable, does the text have a presupposition (i. e, requires an antecedent in logic or fact)? If so, identify the presupposition.
- Does the text have major parts? If so, identify the major parts.
- Do any of the major parts of the text have any smaller parts (i.e., subparts)? If so, identify the subparts.
- Describe the relationships between the major parts and subparts?
- Are there patterns between major parts and the subparts? If so, describe these patterns.
- Is there an internal flow within the text? If so, describe the internal flow.
- Is there a flow of the text relative to the surrounding text? If so, describe the flow.
- Describe how the text fits within the text before and after it?
- Is there a timeline in the text? If so, describe the timeline.
- Does the text pertain to salvation? If so, describe how it pertains to salvation.
- What is the primary theme of the text?
- Does the text have a heart or primary concern? If so, describe the primary theme or heart.
- Does the text have a goal? If so, describe the goal(s) of the text.
- Can you formulate a brief thesis statement of the text? If so, please do so.
- Are there other passages in other books of the Bible that relate or impact the text? If so, identify these passages and describe the relationship(s) and impact(s).
- Are there any meaningful differences in the English translations? If so, describe these differences. Will these differences impact the outcome of this study? If so, how will they impact the outcome?
- Does the text raise or answer any questions? If so, describe these questions or answers.
- Does the text present a problem or offer a solution? If so, describe the problem(s) or solution(s).
- Does the text contain any commands, warnings, or promises? If so, what are they?

- Does the text contain any illustrations? If so, what are they?
- Does the text set forth a list? If so, identify the lists.
- If there are biblical characters, what are their attitudes?
- OPTIONAL: If meaningful differences in the translations will impact the outcome, will definitions from the original language help resolve the differences? If so, you may want to consult a lexicon. Check with commentaries to confirm original language-based statements.
- OPTIONAL: Are there grammatical issues with the original language? If so, you may want to consult a commentary about the grammatical issues.

### **Primary Questions to Consider about the Sentences**

The following questions pertain to the sentences. Please note that there may be some overlap between these questions and the other questions set forth in this exercise.

- Identify the sentences in the text.
- OPTIONAL: Identify the Greek sentences for NT texts.
- How closely tied together are the sentences?
- Does the sentence use connectors (e.g., “and”)? If so, how are they used?
- Does each sentence build on one another? If so, does it do so?
- Does the sentence form a part of an argument? If so, what is the argument?
- Does the sentence explain what went before or what follows? If so, elaborate.
- Is the sentence conditional? If so, what is the condition?
- Can the sentence stand on its own? If not, on what does it depend?
- Does the sentence “fit” with the passage? Explain.
- What is the structure or form of the sentence?
- Does the sentence express a word order that is chronological or theological? If so, explain the reason for your affirmative answer.
- Does the sentence reference an earlier passage? If so, what is that passage?
- Describe the logic of the sentence?
- Describe the reason for the sentence.

- Does the sentence emphasize a specific point or concept? If so, describe that point or concept.
- Does the sentence contain contrasts? If so, describe those contrasts.
- Does the sentence contain comparisons? If so, describe those comparisons.
- Does the sentence contain analogies? If so, describe those analogies.
- Is there something in the sentence (e.g., phrase or word) that is a surprise or seems to be out-of-place? If so, describe the surprise and your underlying reasons for saying so.
- Is the sentence present to catch the reader's attention? If so, describe how the sentence catches the reader's attention.

### **Primary Questions to Consider about the Phrases**

The following questions pertain to the phrases in the text. Please note that there may be some overlap between these questions and the other questions in this stage.

- Identify the prepositional phrases (Greek or English). What does each prepositional phrase modify?
- What is the point of the phrase?
- Is the phrase qualified? If so, how is it qualified?
- Is there anything "striking" about the phrase? If so, how is it striking?
- Does the phrase refer to salvation? If so, how does it do so?
- Does the phrase refer to repentance? If so, how does it do so?
- Does the phrase refer to forgiveness of sins? If so, how does it do so?
- Does the phrase refer to the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- Does the phrase refer to Jesus Christ? If so, how does it do so?
- Does the phrase refer to or presuppose Jesus' crucifixion? If so, how does it do so?
- Does the phrase refer to or presuppose Jesus' resurrection? If so, how does it do so?
- Does the phrase refer to or presuppose Jesus' appearances? If so, how does it do so?
- Does the phrase refer to or presuppose Jesus' ascension? If so, how does it do so?
- What is the context of the phrase?
- Is the phrase linked to something else? If so, what is that something else?
- Is the phrase an explanation of something else? If so, what?

- Does the phrase have a special cultural or societal meaning? If so, describe that meaning.
- Does the phrase redirect the focus of the sentence or text? If so, how does it do so?

### **Primary Questions to Consider about the Words**

The following questions pertain to the individual word. Please note that there may be some overlap between these questions that pertain to the words and those questions that deal with the text as a whole, the sentences, and the phrases.

- Does the word contain a message? Is, describe the message.
- Is the translation of the original word crucial? If so, describe how the translation is crucial. Please note that details about how to conduct a word study are in a later stage.
- Are any of the words names or titles? If so, what are they? Describe any significance they have in this Bible study exercise.
- Is there a usage of a metaphor? If so, describe the usage.
- Is there a change in the metaphors? If so, describe the change.
- Can you develop a comparable metaphor relevant to 21<sup>st</sup> Century culture? If so, what is it?
- Is there a usage of a simile (an expressed or stated comparison of two different things using the connectors of like, as, such as or a word pair “as ... so”? If so, describe the usage.
- Is there a usage of an exaggeration (a deliberate exaggeration for effect or emphasis)? If so, describe the usage.
- Is there a usage of a metonymy (a figure of association, when the name of one object or concept is used for that of another)? If so, describe the usage.
- Is there a usage of a synecdoche (another figure of association where the whole can refer to the part or the part to the whole)? If so, describe the usage.
- Is there a usage of a personification (an object is given characteristics or attributes that belong to people)? If so, describe the usage.
- Is there a usage of an irony (a statement which says the opposite of what is meant)? If so, describe the usage.
- Is there a usage of a type (when one thing supplies a suggestion or forecast of another)? If so, describe the usage.
- Is there a usage of an apostrophe (an exclamatory passage directed toward an absent individual)? If so, describe the usage.

- Is there a usage of an anthropomorphism (attributing physical human behavior to God)? If so, describe the usage.
- Is there a usage of an anthropopathism (describing God as displaying human emotions)? If so, describe the usage.
- Are there things (e.g., word choices) that are difficult to explain? If so, describe these difficulties.
- Do similar usages of words appear in the NT? If so, do these usage have impact and describe the impact on this study.
- Is the word used elsewhere for the same meaning? If so, describe the usage.
- Are there word alternatives? If so, describe these alternatives.
- Is this one of the writer's commonly used expressions? If so, how does he do so?
- Is the word repeated in the text? If so, describe the usages.
- What is the word count of the key words?
- Does the context of the letter help define the words? If so, how does it do so?
- Does a word present an ambiguity? If so, how does it do so?
- Does the word have more than one meaning? If so, describe the meanings.
- Are there any key words that are vital to understanding the meaning of the text? If so, what are these words and why are they "key?"
- Is there a usage of two different words to express the same reality? If so, describe the usage.
- Does the cultural gloss on a word add significance to its usage? If so, how does it do so?

### **Conclusion**

Whew!!!

Once the Bible student completes their considerations of these questions about the text, the sentences, the phrases, and the words, they should have a good understanding of the text and relationships between the pieces and parts that comprise the text.