

Tiffany Black:5-3-1 February 28th, 2023

QUESTIONS:

1. How should one read the Epistles?
2. The New Testament letters are often referred to as what by Biblical scholars?
3. How do we use internal evidence to gain insight into the historical context of the Epistles?
4. Describe how our perceptions of the New Testament letters can be significantly enhanced if we make the effort to identify its historical origins?
5. Describe how one should read the New Testament letters theologically?

ANSWERS:

1. We ought to read a whole epistle straight through several times, perhaps with different English translations, until we become quite familiar with its contents, the concerns and apparent purposes of the author, the way the argument is developed, and so forth.
2. Biblical scholars look at the letters of the Apostle Paul wrote his letters to address specific historical needs. These were not theological essays that he happened to write rather they were specific and intentional to the churches he wrote.
3. As a rule, we depend on internal evidence – the information that we can get out of the letters themselves. The problem is that this evidence, for the most part, is indirect. The result is, we have to “read between the lines” so as to reconstruct the historical context.
4. Treating the New Testament letters historically is important to the need to read letters as whole documents. We will be able to appreciate the total message of the letters and be better able to solve any specific interpretive problems that we may come across.
5. Even after we have made a special effort to understand the epistles as whole documents, inquiring into their historical context and literary structure, we are left with a crucial task – theological interpretations.

TERMS:

Literary Genre – is a category of literature. Genres may be determined by literary technique, tone, content, or length. They generally move from more abstract, encompassing classes, which are then further sub-divided into more concrete distinctions.

Historical Context – provides information about the period, the place, and the events that created, influenced, or formed the backdrop to the historic resources.

Theological Interpretation - is the reading of biblical texts that consciously seeks to do justice to their nature as the Word of God, embracing the influence of theology on the interpreter's enquiry, context, and methods, not just results.

SUMMARY:

Chapter 11 brings us to the New Testament - Epistles and the proper way to read these "letters" that were written to the various churches. The authors identify rather early in the chapter that being able to decipher an alphabet and being able to identify words in addition with having the knowledge to infer the meaning of sentences and paragraphs are invaluable when reading a letter. Understanding both the historical context and the theological interpretations of each letter and having insight into what these things meant in the context these letters were written is extremely important. In closing the bible is recorded/written by man but is God inspired meaning that everything in the pages of the bible needs not only our reading but our understanding and application for our current context as well.