

What Does it Mean?

INTERPRET *Refer to Appendix*

1. Create and answer any two of your own interpretive questions from this passage. For instructions, see page 96.

a)

b)

2. According to this passage, what changes resulted from Christ's work on the Cross?

3. What does Paul mean by saying that in the past Gentiles, non-Jews like most of us, lived without hope and without God? To find out, answer the questions below. Use the following passages to develop your answers: Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Numbers 15:14-16; 1 Kings 8:41-43; Psalms 147:19-20; Isaiah 56:6-7; Acts 14:16-17; 17:24-31; Romans 3:1-2; 9:3-5.

- Did God care about Gentiles during Old Testament times?

- Could Gentiles have a relationship with God during Old Testament times? If so, what did God require of them?

Observation Task 2: List 2-3 primary themes you see in the passage each week

A primary theme is the big idea, the central truth, or command that the passage focuses on. After reading the passage, write your themes as single words or short phrases. Identifying these themes at the beginning of your study will help you develop a good overall grasp of the passage.

Observation Task 3: Write two or more observations per verse

Our observations might identify people, places, or events, point out repeated words or key terms, record important connections between words and sentences, or even point out something missing that we expected to see.

Observation Task 4: Record your own interpretive questions

Here are a few examples:

WHO IS	WHAT IS THE	WHY DID THE AUTHOR	HOW
<ul style="list-style-type: none">... Paul talking about?... accomplishing the action?... benefiting from the action?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">... meaning of this word?... significance of this phrase?... implication of this statement?... relationship between these phrases?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">... choose this word?... include this phrase: statement or command?... not say _____?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">... was this action accomplished?... will this situation occur?

INTERPRET:

Our observation of a passage should stir interesting yet challenging questions, leading us to the second stage of our Bible study: interpretation. Fortunately, we do not have to run to a commentary or study Bible for answers (though these are helpful tools to check our conclusions). Use the following six methods, as needed, to tackle a variety of questions.

Interpretation Method 1: Use the context.

Look for important clues in the sentences and paragraphs that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow the author's flow of thought through the whole chapter. This may take you to the previous lesson, so have it handy as a review. You may need to read ahead for clues.

Interpretation Method 2: Study cross-references.

Cross references are simply other passages in any book of the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as you seek to understand your passage. A few such cross references can be found in the margins of most English Bibles, but more can be found by visiting the online reference www.biblestudytools.com. Simply type in the book and chapter in the box to the left of the "Search" button and then click "Search." All of the chapter will appear on the screen. Be sure that "New American Standard" is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then click the box next to "Cross References" so that numbers appear throughout the passage. Clicking any of these will move your screen to the bottom of the page where you will find a series of cross references for specific verses within the passage. This is a great tool for answering tough questions!

Interpretation Method 3: Look up key words.

While looking up a key word in English is helpful, doing so in Greek is far better and is surprisingly easy, thanks to the internet. Simply log onto www.biblestudytools.com, and as an example, type in the book and chapter in the box to the left of the "Search" button and then click "Search." All of the chapter will appear on the screen. Be sure that "New American Standard" is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then click the box next to "Strong Numbers" so that most of the words will be highlighted in blue. Clicking on any of these will bring up a new screen that will tell you the Greek word used here, its possible definitions, and the total number of times it is used in each book of the New Testament

APPENDIX

A. BIBLE STUDY TOOLS OVERVIEW

OBSERVE:

Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is, "What do I see?" This is the crucial skill of observation, which lays the groundwork for the rest of our study. Here are four tasks involved in observation which should be performed in the order below:

Observation Task 1: Mark up the passage by visually identifying the following specific elements:

- **Underline** all verbs. A verb is a word or group of words used to indicate either that an action is taking place ("we will reign with Him") or that a state or condition exists ("we are faithless"). Verbs are often the most significant indicators of the author's flow of thought.
- **Circle** key words or phrases. These are words or short phrases that are important theologically or thematically (they set the theme or main idea for the passage).
- **Highlight** repeated words or phrases. Also, include words and phrases that are closely related even if not exact duplicates (such as "suffer hardship" and "endure suffering"). You'll also want to highlight things that are repeated from previous passages.
- **Box** connecting words. These important words indicate the logical connection between words, phrases, and clauses. Here are eight types of common connecting words to look for:
 1. **Comparison** either points out similarities between two or more related ideas or simply joins like ideas. Comparison words include: and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so.
 2. **Contrast** points out dissimilarities between ideas. Contrast words include: but, rather, yet, however.
 3. **Purpose** indicates the intended goal of an idea or action, whether or not it was realized. Purpose words include: that, so that, in order that.
 4. **Result** is similar to "purpose," but indicates the actual consequence, whether or not it was intended. Result words include: that, so that, as a result, with the result that.
 5. **Cause** expresses the basis or cause of an action. Cause words include: because, since, and sometimes for.
 6. **Explanation** is what follows and further explains the previous idea, giving reasons why it is true, why it occurred, or simply adding additional information. Look for the key word "for."
 7. **Inference** provides a logical consequence, conclusion, or summary to the previous discussion. Inference words include: therefore, for this reason.
 8. **Condition** presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can take place. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e., it could be hypothetical). Key word is "if."