

# Finding the Theme of the Ancient Text

ULBC Teacher Training #2 (Pastor Jeff McKeever)

## A. From Text to Application – Sound Bible teaching requires three basic moves

1. *Determining the original meaning*
  - a. What pressures were they under?
  - b. What needs did they have? What mistakes did they make?
  - c. What were their beliefs/attitudes (right or wrong)?
  - d. What did the author want them to see/learn?
  
2. *Determining the meaning in the context of the whole Bible*
  - a. Where do we see these same questions answered or problems developed through the timeline revealed in the Scriptures?
  - b. Do we need to learn the lesson of this text before God reveals more of His plan to us? (i.e., What comes next?)
  - c. See Pivotal points of redemptive history: Creation...Redemption in OT...Redemption in Christ...New Creation
  - d. See narrative at levels: Personal History, National History, Redemptive History
  
3. *ONLY THEN . . . Determining the application of this meaning for us*

## B. Grammatical-Historical-Literary-Redemptive Interpretation

1. *Grammatical*
  - a. Word choices
    - i. Verbs (strong words)
      - “throw/cast” in Genesis 37:20, 24 & “put under” 21:15
      - “abolished” in 2 Timothy 1:10
    - ii. Words related to time – e.g, Mark 1:35; 2:23; 1 Samuel 1:1
    - iii. Words connecting to other events
      - Explicit – Deuteronomy 20:1-4; Matthew 24:37; Luke 17:28
      - Implicit – Joshua 3:17 (Cf. Exodus 14:22; Genesis 8:13)
    - iv. Words related to other people/people groups – e.g., “Haman, the Agagite” Esther 3:1, 8:3, 5
    - v. Idioms/euphemisms – e.g., Gen. 1:1; Gen. 24:2; Exodus 4:22; Acts 7:60;
  - b. Repetition of words (or related words)
    - i. Gen 39:20-23
    - ii. 1 Samuel 1 (similar to 2<sup>nd</sup> half of Genesis 11)
    - iii. Esther 5:1-8
    - iv. Mark 14:26-72, esp. 55-63; Mark 15:13-32, esp. 21-32
    - v. Romans 2:1-5
    - vi. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
    - vii. Colossians 2:6-15
    - viii. Titus 2:11, 13; 3:4

- c. Verb tenses
  - i. Romans 8:29 – “glorified”
  - ii. 1 Timothy 4:10 – “fixed our hope”
- d. Greek grammar rules (e.g., Granville-Sharp Rule)
  - i. Granville-Sharp Rule - "We have Granville Sharp's rule here, which says that when there are two nouns in the same case connected by a kai (and), the first noun having the article, the second noun not having the article, the second noun refers to the same thing the first noun does and is a further description of it." – Wuest
  - ii. Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1-2

## 2. Historical

- a. World powers
  - i. Persians in Esther’s time
    - **Babylonian Captivity**
      - ✓ Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem (598-597 BC) – See 2 Chr 36:17-20
      - ✓ Nebuchadnezzar dies (562 BC)
    - **Medes & Persians**
      - ✓ Two tribes in what is now Modern-day Iran
      - ✓ Medes – in northwestern-western area (south of Caspian Sea)
      - ✓ Persians – in southeast area (north of the Persian Gulf)
      - ✓ Persians were initially vassals of the Medes
  - ii. Roman Empire during Jesus’ time & that of the apostles (and regional rulers, Jewish leadership scheme – Sadducees, Pharisees, etc.)
- b. Major events
  - i. Calamities – e.g., locust plague, famine
  - ii. God’s judgment for sin – enemy’s overtaking, Israel’s captivity
  - iii. God’s rescuing from enemies
- c. Cultural
  - i. Festivals – e.g., Matthew 26:5; Luke 22:2
  - ii. Customs
    - For Genesis 14 (Suzerain – Vassals)
    - For Genesis 38
      - ✓ First-born’s inheritance
      - ✓ Custom of Levirate Duty
    - For Esther
      - ✓ Esther 8:2, 8, 10 (“signet ring”/“king’s ring”)
      - ✓ Esther 4:10-11 (cf. 8:4) (“held out the golden scepter”)
      - ✓ Esther 1:19 (Law of the Medes & the Persians) –cf. 8:5-12
    - Mark 7:1-5; 11-12
    - Acts 7:58

## 3. Literary

## 4. Redemptive