How To Study The Bible. Part 4 *Bible Class*

First Step In Bible Study Is To Survey A Bible Book.
Second Step Is To Study The Book One Passage At A Time.
Third Step To Read The Passage Carefully.

Fourth Step Is To Determine The Literary Style Of The Passage.

DISCOURSE Literature

1. Discourse literature involves a presentation of ideas in an argumentative or logical form. It presents the truths in terms of a "chain of logic" or "ideas." Many times, commands are found in this type of literature.

2. The gospels and epistles use a great deal of discourse literature.

NARRATIVE Literature

1. The Bible contains more of this type of literature than it does any other kind (over 40% of the Old Testament is narrative).

2. Narratives are stories. Their purpose is to show God at work in His creation and among His people. 21 Old Testament books are largely or entirely composed of narrative material.

In the New Testament, large portions of the four Gospels and Acts are narrative.

PARABOLIC Literature

1. The parable employs the principle of analogy. This is indicated by the significance of the word "parable" which is a combination of the Greek terms "para" and "ballo" and therefore connotes "that which is thrown or put forth beside something else" (hence analogy). A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

2. Thus a parable consist of two parts, the spiritual truth which is being illustrated and the brief narrative which is used as the vehicle to illustrate it.

3. How do we interpret parabolic literature? We must recapture the "punch" or the "primary teaching" in each parable.

a. "What is the primary teaching of this passage?

Luke 16:19-31 "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

24 And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' 27 And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house-- 28 for I have five brothers--so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' 29 But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.' "

This parable is in the context of money

Luke 16:13-15 "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." 14 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. 15 And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.."

The Pharisees considered wealth to be a proof of a person's righteousness.

Jesus startled them with a story where a diseased beggar is rewarded and a rich man is punished. Just because your wealthy doesn't mean that you are guaranteed a place in heaven.

b. What is the primary teaching of this passage?

Matthew 18:21-35 "Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. 23 "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'

30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.
31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.
32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

Since God has forgiven us of our sins, we must forgive our fellow man when he sins against us.

POETRY

1. Biblical poetry has three main characteristics.
First, it utilizes figurative language (ie. Is characterized by "a chain of images" or "imagery").

Second, it is emotional in nature.

Third, it employs parallelisms of different types.

Psalms, Proverbs contain the most poetic type of literature.

2. How do we interpret biblical poetry? We must not take every word in poetry literally. Instead, we must realize that the poet employs flexible language and that he expresses feelings rather than rigid logical concepts.

Psalms 17:1-15 A Prayer of David. "Hear a just cause, O LORD; attend to my cry! Give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit! 2 From your presence let my vindication come! Let your eyes behold the right! 3 You have tried my heart, you have visited me by night, you have tested me, and you will find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress. 4 With regard to the works of man, by the word of your lips I have avoided the ways of the violent. 5 My steps have held fast to your paths; my feet have not slipped. 6 I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me; hear my words. 7 Wondrously show your steadfast love, O Savior of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand. 8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings, 9 from the wicked who do me violence, my deadly enemies who surround me. 10 They close their hearts to pity; with their mouths they speak arrogantly. 11 They have now surrounded our steps; they set their eyes to cast us to the ground. 12 He is like a lion eager to tear, as a young lion lurking in ambush. 13 Arise, O LORD! Confront him, subdue him! Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword, 14 from men by your hand, O LORD, from men of the world whose portion is in this life. You fill their womb with treasure; they are satisfied with children, and they leave their abundance to their infants.

15 As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness."

Does God have wings? No, wings represent "shelter"

Psalms 63:7 "for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy."

Psalms 91:4 "He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler."

This image comes from the animal world, comparing God's protective care to that of a bird with its young.

So David was praying to God for care and protection from his enemies.