How To Study The Bible. Part 5 *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, Narrative, Parabolic, Poetry

Apocalyptic Literature

1. The term "apocalypse" literally means "uncovering" or "revelation." Apocalyptic literature is a type characterized by the use of symbolism and imagery and contains descriptions of fantastic visions that describe unseen realities or events to come. The books of Ezekiel, and Daniel in the Old Testament and the book of Revelation in the NT are good illustrations of this type of literature.

2. How do we interpret apocalyptic literature? In interpreting apocalyptic literature, it is imperative that we do several things:
a. First, we need to remember that apocalyptic literature uses a great deal of imagery. We should seek to understand what the imagery teaches before we try to understand its language as a literal description of reality.
(1) Who are the seven golden lampstands? Revelation 1:20 "As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches." **The seven churches.**
(2) Who is the great dragon? Revelation 12:9 "And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world--he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him." **Satan.**
(3) Who is the woman in Revelation 17:18? "And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth." **Rome.**

b. Second, it is essential that we seek to establish what an apocalyptic passage must have meant to the original audience who heard it read for the first time.

Ask questions like:
(1) How did it speak to their situation?
(2) What would it have meant to them?
(3) What was the original writer trying to convey to his audience?

E. The Fifth Step In Bible Study Is To Tentatively Determine The Theme Or The Major Point Of The Passage.

1. When the writer wrote a passage, he had a purpose in mind. There is a central theme to every passage. It is up to us to figure out what that purpose is.
2. After we read the passage several times, we should ask and answer the question,
a. What is the writer trying to say?
b. What is the major idea of this passage?
3. The theme of a passage could be a word or a phrase that expresses the essential idea.
4. The theme could be found in the beginning, center or end of a passage.

5. What is the central idea or theme of these passages?
a. Matthew 6:25-34 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

The central idea is "do not worry about your life" (v. 25).

b. Matthew 8:1-4 When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. 2 And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." 3 And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them."

The central idea is "immediately he was cured of his leprosy" (v. 3).

c. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." 20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

The central idea is "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (v. 24).

6. Once we find the theme, it is easier to understand the teachings of the passage.