

Next Steps with the Bible

Going Deeper and Growing Stronger

Week 12: Understanding How to Apply the Bible

For my thoughts,
are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,
declares the Lord.

For as the heavens are
higher than the earth,

so are my ways higher

than your ways and
my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9

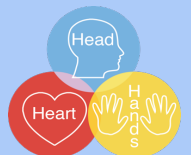




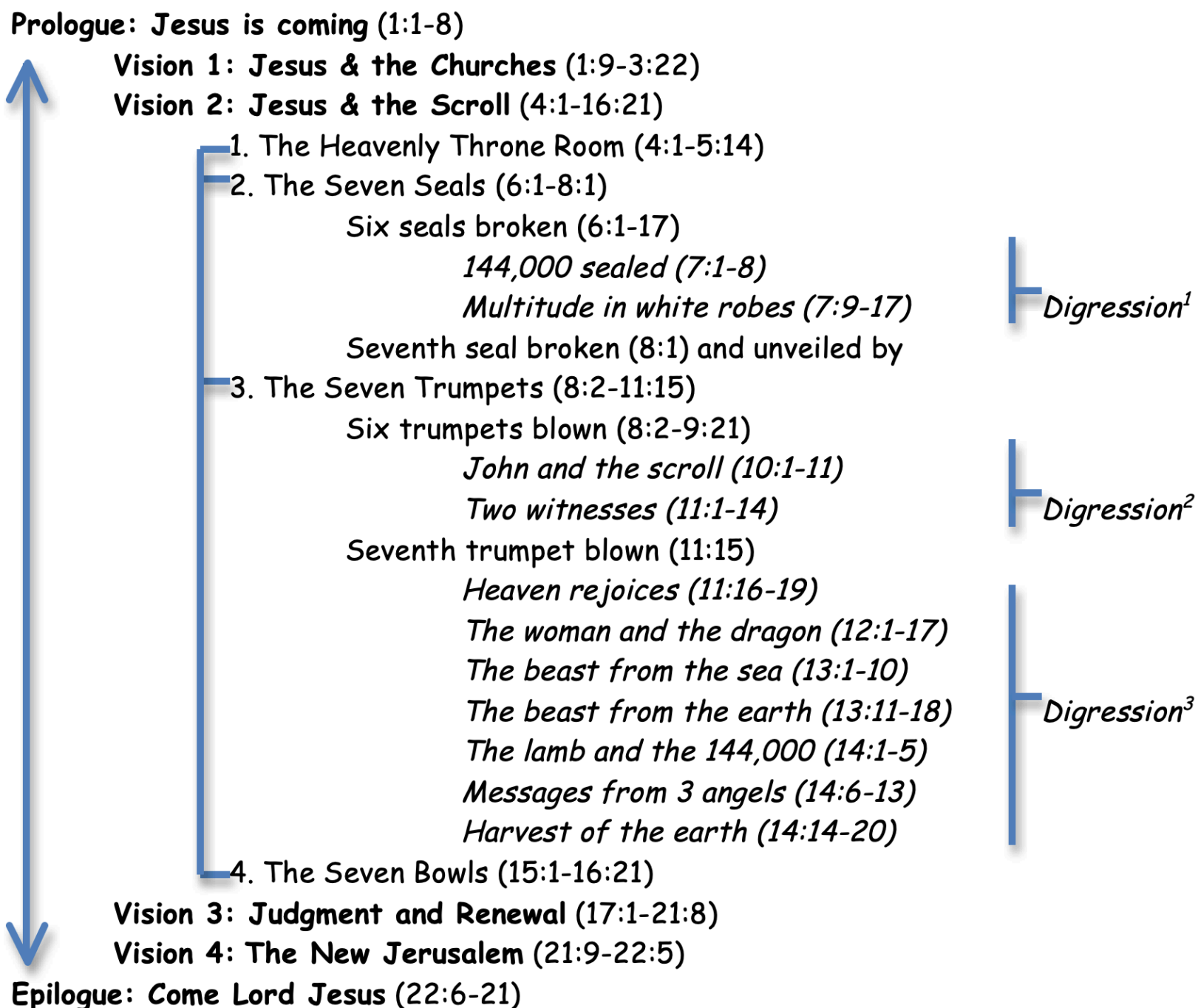
Applying the Bible

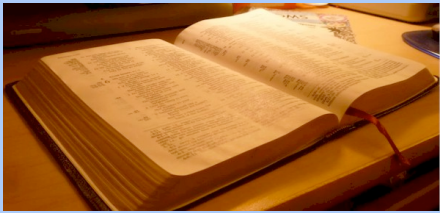
1. Review of Week 11: Apocalyptic

- **Biblical apocalyptic is visionary prophecy** that portrays catastrophic judgment as the only solution to pervasive sinfulness and the persecution of God's people.
- Prophets are enabled by the Spirit to see a visual message and tell others what they saw.
- Prophetic accounts of visions use this-worldly imagery to portray other-worldly realities:
 - "His face was **like the sun** in all its brilliance" (Rev 1:16 NLT).
- Apocalyptic gives us hope during tough times: we will win our *battles* eventually because Jesus already won the *war* on Good Friday and Easter.



• How Revelation fits together

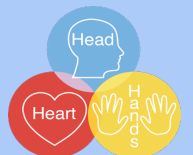




Applying the Bible

¹³ And they cast lots, as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate. ¹⁴ And the lot eastward fell to Shelemiah. Then for Zechariah his son, a wise counsellor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward. ¹⁵ To Obededom southward; and to his sons the house of Asuppim. ¹⁶ To Shuppim and Hosah the lot came forth westward, with the gate Shallecheth, by the causeway of the going up, ward against ward. ¹⁷ Eastward were six Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day, and toward Asuppim two and two. ¹⁸ *At Parbar westward, four at the causeway, and two at Parbar.* ¹⁹ These are the divisions of the porters among the sons of Kore, and among the sons of Merari.

(1 Chronicles 26:13-19 KJV)

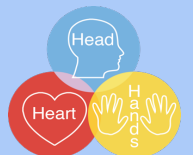




Applying the Bible

²³ From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some boys came out of the town and jeered^a at him. “Get out of here, baldy!” they said. “Get out of here, baldy!**” ²⁴ He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse^a on them in the name^b of the LORD. Then **two bears came out of the woods** and mauled forty-two of the boys. ²⁵ And he went on to Mount Carmel^a and from there returned to Samaria.**

(2 Kings 2:23-25 NIV)

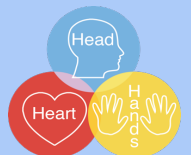


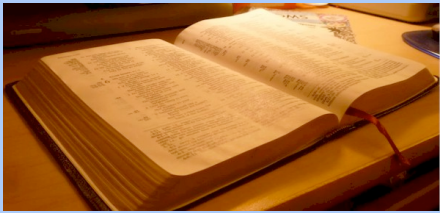


Applying the Bible

2. What does it mean to “apply” the Bible?

- The Bible was written *for* us, but it was not written *directly to* us.
- To apply the Bible is to move from what it ***meant*** *to its ancient audience* to *what it **means** to its contemporary audience.*
 - Our tendency is to move *immediately* to what it *means*, ignoring the historical, cultural, situational, and theological **distance** between us and the original biblical audience.

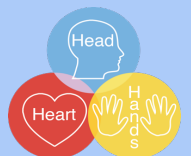




Applying the Bible

2. What does it mean to “apply” the Bible?

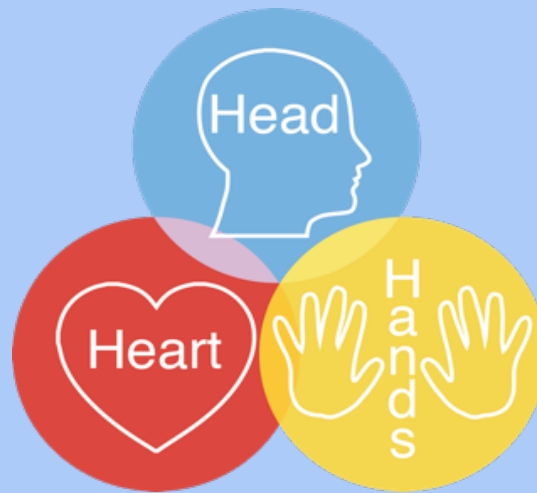
- We tend to apply the Bible *spontaneously* “as the spirit leads.”
 - What “spirit” are we listening to? What is the source of that “still small voice”?
- What kind of day are we having? Our Bible reading is influenced by our momentary emotional state.
- Confirmation bias is real.
- We need to apply the Bible *thoughtfully and intentionally* as a check on our tendency to see what we want to see in the Bible.



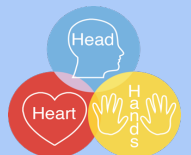


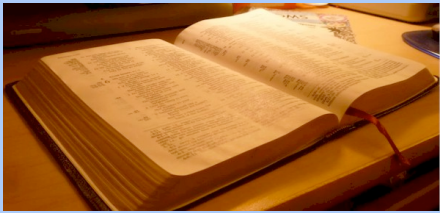
Applying the Bible

2. What does it mean to “apply” the Bible?



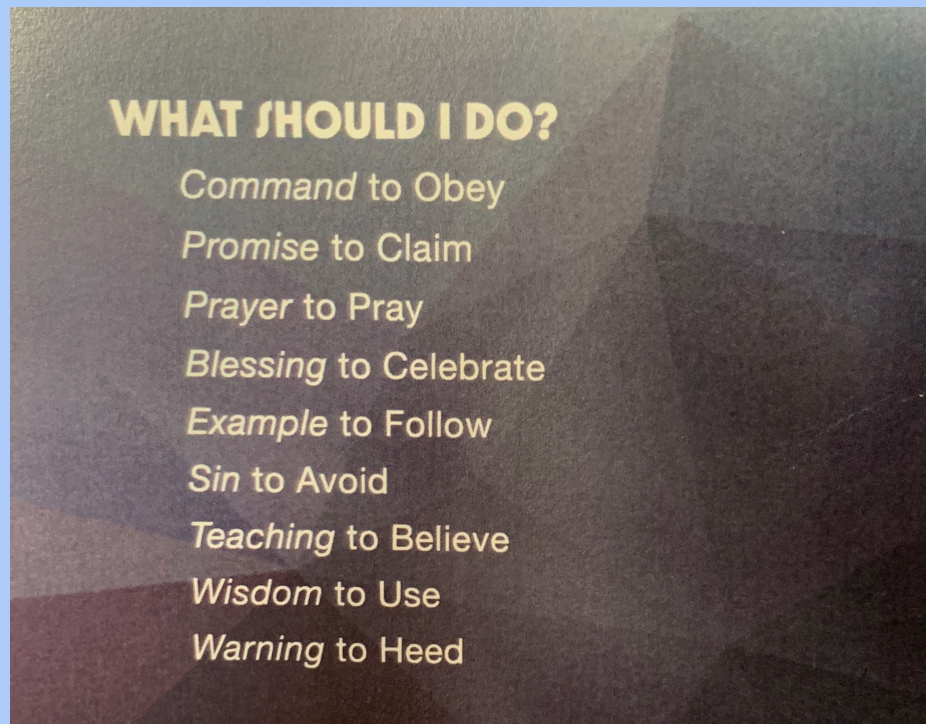
How does this logo guide us in applying the Bible?



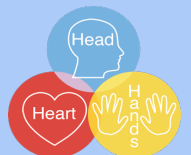


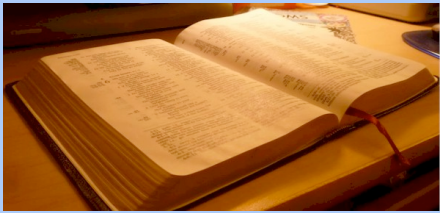
Applying the Bible

2. What does it mean to “apply” the Bible?



Chapel Pointe’s “Best Practices for Bible Reading” give us some specific questions to ask.

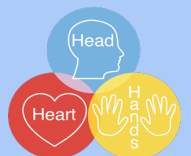




Applying the Bible

3. Principles of biblical application:

- ***Submission:*** applying the Bible begins with *humility* before God and prayerful *dependence* on the Holy Spirit.
- ***Study:*** applying the Bible requires *understanding* of the Bible. Genuine transformation comes from accurate information.
- ***Start here:*** What was the *original* application intended by the biblical author? Is the *current* application the same as the *original* application?
 - **Sometimes it might not be!**

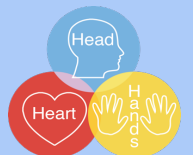




Applying the Bible

3. Principles of biblical application:

- *Narrative and norms*: Events or practices found in biblical narratives do not *automatically* transfer to us as normative patterns or precedents that must be obeyed today.
 - *Remember Elisha and the juvenile delinquents?*
- This is especially important when we study **Acts**. *E.g.*:
 - **Casting lots**
 - **Pentecost**
 - **Community of goods**
 - **Antioch sending Barnabas and Saul on a mission.**

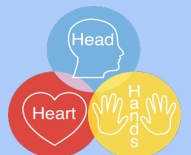




Applying the Bible

3. Principles of biblical application:

- *Cultural relativity*: Ancient practices from biblical near-eastern cultures do not have the same significance in current western cultures.
 - **Kinsman redeemer** (Ruth)
 - **Slavery** (Eph 6; Philemon)
 - **Holy war** (Exodus, Joshua)
 - **Eating meat offered to idols** (Acts 15:20, 29; Rom 14; 1 Cor 8)
 - **"Greet one another with a holy kiss"** (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26)
 - **Head coverings** (1 Cor 11:4-16)





Applying the Bible

4. Case Study:

How should we apply the message of Jude to . . .

*. . . our **personal** lives?*

*. . . our family and social **relationships**?*

*. . . **Chapel Pointe**?*



Applying the Bible

So What? How does all this impact us?

Information* → *Transformation* → *Action

Accurate knowledge

Wise values

Missional Lifestyle

- **We are richly blessed to have the Bible** in our language, along with the freedom and opportunity to study and teach it.
- **Are we faithful stewards of this blessing?**



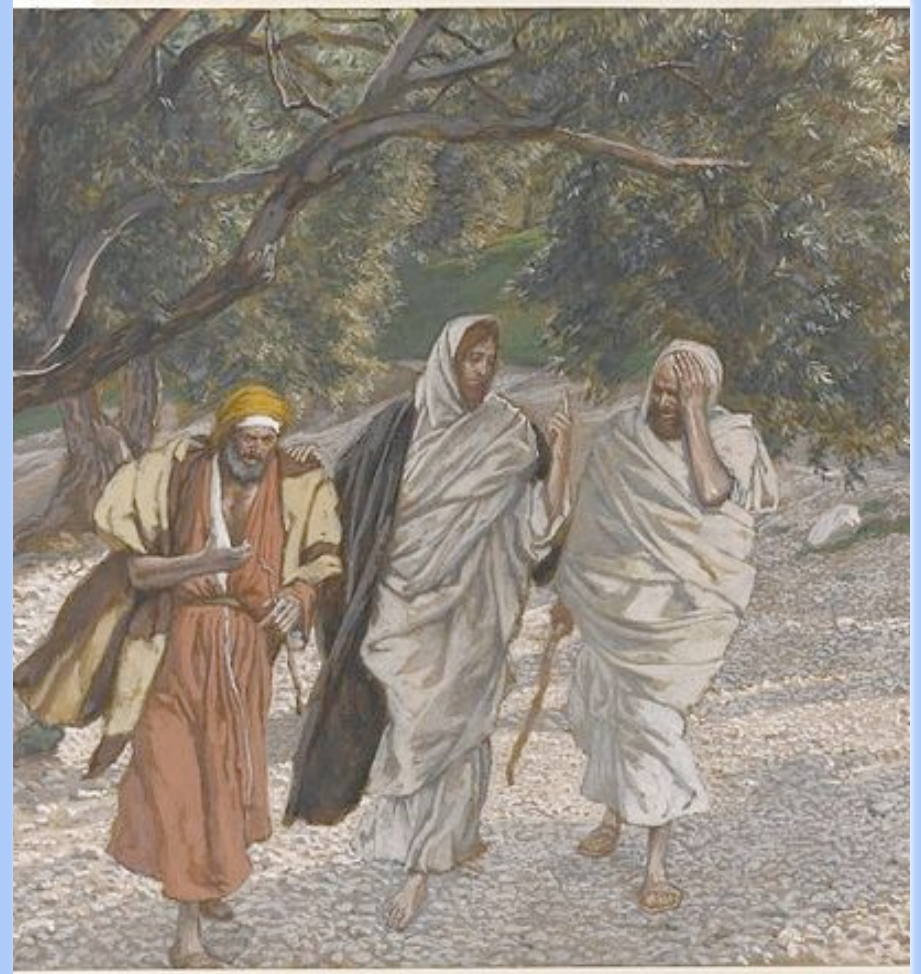
Understanding Biblical Apocalyptic

Luke 24

²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, **he explained to them** what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. . . . ³² They asked each other, “**Were not our hearts burning within us while he . . . opened the Scriptures to us?**” . . .

⁴⁴ He said to them, “. . . **Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me** in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

⁴⁵ **Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.** ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ **You are witnesses of these things.**



James Tissot (1836-1902)