

One-to-One Bible Reading

by

David Helm



COMA Questions for the Gospels and Acts

Context

- What has happened so far in the narrative? Have there been any major events, characters or themes?
- What has happened just prior to the section you are reading?

Observation

- What do you learn about the main characters in this section? How does the author describe them? How do they describe themselves?
- Is time or place significant in the events that happen in the passage?
- Is there a conflict or high point in the passage?
- Do you think there is a main point or theme in this section of the story?
- What surprises are there?

Meaning

- Are there any 'editorial' comments from the author about the events in the narrative? How do these comments illuminate what is happening?
- Does someone in the narrative learn something or grow in some way? How? What does this person learn?
- What does the passage reveal about who Jesus is, and what he came into the world to do?
- How could you sum up the meaning of this passage in your own words?

Application

- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
- Is there some attitude you need to change?
- What does this passage teach you about being a disciple of Jesus?



COMA Questions for Old Testament Narrative

Context

- What has happened so far in the narrative? Have there been any major events, characters or themes?
- What has happened just prior to the section you are reading?

Observation

- What do you learn about the main characters in this section? How does the author describe them? How do they describe themselves?
- Is time or place significant in the events that happen in the passage?
- Is there a conflict or high point in the passage?
- Do you think there is a main point or theme in this section of the story?
- What surprises are there?



Meaning

- Are there any 'editorial' comments from the author about the events in the narrative? How do these comments illuminate what is happening?
- Does someone in the narrative learn something or grow in some way? How? What does this person learn?
- How does the passage point forward to what God is going to do in the future? Does it prophesy or anticipate Jesus Christ in some way?
- How could you sum up the meaning of this passage in your own words?

Application

- How does this passage challenge your understanding about who God is and what he is like?
- Is there some attitude or behavior you need to change?

COMA Questions for the Epistles

Context

- What can you learn about the person or situation to which the letter is written?
- What clues are there about the author and his circumstances?
- What was the main point of the passage immediately before this one? Are there logical or thematic connections to the passage you are reading?

Observation

- Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text? Are there key connecting words (for, therefore, but, because) that indicate the logical flow of the passage?
- What is the main point or points? What supporting points does the author make?
- What surprises are there in the flow of the argument?

Meaning

- How does this text relate to other parts of the book?
- How does the passage relate to Jesus?
- What does this teach you about God?
- How could you sum up the meaning of this passage in your own words?

Application

- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
- Is there some attitude you need to change?
- How does this passage call on you to change the way you live?



COMA Questions for Hebrew Wisdom Literature and Poetry

Context

- Are there any clues about the circumstances in which the passage was written?
- What has happened so far?



Observation

- Are there repetitions or multiple instances of similar ideas? Do these repetitions make a particular point, or point to the structure of the passage?
- What images or metaphors does the author use? What do they indicate about God or the other people in the text? What might they indicate about modern readers?
- What is the tone of the passage? What emotions is the author arousing?
- What is the main point or points?
- What surprises are there?

Meaning

- Are there specific instructions/commands given to the reader? Does this passage mention any consequences for not following God's commands?
- How does the author motivate the reader/audience, or make his appeal?
- What does the passage teach us about God, and his people, and life in his world?
- Does the passage point forward to Jesus? Is the gospel anticipated or foreshadowed in some way?

Application

- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
- Is there some attitude you need to change?
- How does this passage call on you to change the way you live?

COMA Questions for Prophetic Literature

Context

- Are there any clues about the circumstances in which the prophecy was given or written?
- Are any people or places mentioned that you aren't familiar with? (Chase them up in earlier parts of the book, or refer to a Bible dictionary or commentary.)
- Are other bits of the Old Testament mentioned or alluded to in the passage? What part do these 'memories' play in the text?

Observation

- Are there repetitions or multiple instances of similar ideas? Do these repetitions make a particular point, or point to the structure of the passage?
- Paying attention to when the prophet is speaking and when God is speaking, what does the passage tell us about God's plans? What does it tell us about God's character?
- What kind of human behavior, if any, is condemned or rewarded? What response is called for (if any)?
- What is the main point or points?



Meaning

- Are there specific instructions/commands given to the reader? Does this passage mention any consequences for not following God's commands?
- Does the text have a sense of expectation about something happening in the future? What is to be expected and when? How should this motivate action in the present?
- Does the passage point forward to Jesus? Is the gospel anticipated or foreshadowed in some way?

Application

- How is your own situation similar to or different from those being addressed?
- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
- How does this passage lead you to trust God and his promises in Jesus?
- How does this passage call on you to change the way you live?



COMA Questions for Apocalyptic Literature

Context

- Are there any clues about the historical circumstances the literature is addressing?
- Are other bits of the Bible mentioned or hinted at in the passage? What part do these 'memories' play in the text?

Observation

- What images are used in the passage? What effect do they have?
- What emotions does the passage arouse (e.g. fear, expectation, awe)?
- How does the passage seek to reveal what God is like? Where in this passage might we find hope for men and women?
- Is there a crisis in the passage? What is the tension/conflict about, and how does it relate to readers?

Meaning

- Are there specific instructions/commands given to the reader? Does this passage mention any consequences for not following God's commands?
- Does the text have a sense of expectation about something happening in the future? What is to be expected and when? How should this motivate action in the present?
- Does the passage point to Jesus? Is the gospel foreshadowed or looked back upon in some way?

Application

- How is your situation similar to or different from those being addressed?
- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
- How does this passage lead you to trust God and his promises in Jesus?
- How does this passage call on you to change the way you live?