



How to Read The Bible



Outline

Much of this course is taken from *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* by William Klien, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr. References to this book are found with a page number in brackets: ie. (98). All other references are found in the footnotes.

Part 1- The Task of Interpretation

1. The Need for Interpretation
2. The History of Interpretation
3. Literary and Social-Scientific Approaches to Interpretation
4. The Canon and Translations

Part 2 – The Interpreter and the Goal

5. The Interpreter
6. The Goal of Interpretation

Part 3 – Understanding Literature

7. General Rules of Hermeneutics: Prose
8. General Rules of Hermeneutics: Biblical Poetry

Part 4 – Understanding Bible Genres

9. Genres of the OT
10. Genres of the NT

Part 5 – The Fruits of Interpretation

11. Using the Bible today
12. Application

The Need for Interpretation

Overview

Course Objectives

1. Develop a passion for reading and interpreting God's Word
2. Be able to ask many literary and contextual questions of Scripture.
3. Begin developing a personal hermeneutical method that seeks a correct interpretation of Scripture, with humility.

What are we about to learn?

1. What is Hermeneutics?
2. The History of Interpretation
 - The Different methods taken from Ancient Israel to today
3. The Bible, specifically the Canon
 - How did they choose the 66 books and why?
4. The Interpreter – *You*
 - What part do we play either positively or negatively in the task of interpretation?
 - Looking at who we are and how it influences our interpretations
5. What is the Goal in interpretation?
6. Understand Biblical Literature
 - General rules for Prose and Poetry
7. Understand Biblical Genres
 - Genres of the OT and NT
8. Fruits of Interpretation
 - How do we use the Bible today?
 - How do we apply it to our lives?

Why do we need to learn this?

- The Bible is God's Word to us – His Special Revelation
 - Not just a human book
 - God Breathed.
 - Authoritative and True
 - Spiritual – can change lives
 - Both Unity and Diversity – Communicated to Humanity through Humanity
 - Understandable
 - Intended to be understood and known by humanity.
- Without an organized approach or means to understanding, we would not be able to comprehend anything.

How to Read the Bible

- Taking Responsibility for your faith

Richard Foster: Human beings seem to have a perpetual tendency to have someone else talk to God for them. We are content to have the message second-hand. One of Israel's fatal mistakes was their insistence upon having a human king rather than resting in the theocratic rule of God over them.¹

13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. *Hebrews 5:13-14*

You need to ask lots of questions. A lot of questions...

- “What is this text saying to me and what difference should it make in my life if any?”
(42)

Terms to learn

Hermeneutics: Correctly understanding the thought of an author and communicating that thought to others.

- *Hermeneuo* – To explain, interpret or translate
- *Hermeneia* – Interpretation or Translation (40)

Exegesis – Reading the author's original meaning out of the text

Eisegesis – Reading your own meaning into the text

Eisegesis is the process of interpreting text in such a way as to introduce one's own presuppositions, agendas or biases. It is commonly referred to as reading into the text. It is often done to "prove" a pre-held point of concern, and to provide confirmation bias corresponding with the pre-held interpretation and any agendas supported by it.

Eisegesis is best understood when contrasted with exegesis. Exegesis is drawing out a text's meaning in accordance with the author's context and discoverable meaning.

Eisegesis is when a reader imposes their interpretation of the text. Thus exegesis tends to be objective; and eisegesis, highly subjective.²

How do we begin to exegete correctly? CONTEXT! CONTEXT! CONTEXT!

The Role of the Interpreter

- We need to do our best to make the meaning of scripture **CLEAR**
- We will be learning how to exegete. How to do proper exegesis. The need here is to be *objective*.
- “No one comes to the task of understanding as an objective believer. (45)
- We often approach the text with our own presuppositions and preunderstandings.

¹ Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline*. New York, NY: HarperCollins 1998, 24.

² Author unknown. *Eisegesis*. Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eisegesis>, accessed 2021-12-30.

How to Read the Bible

- “Wonderful Things in the Bible I see, most of them put there by you and me” - Plymouth Brethren Elder in Ireland. (44)
- Our role is not to read our own ideas and interpretations into the text.

What is the role of the Spirit in our interpretation?

- The HS is responsible for giving us the Bible
- The HS aids us in reading scripture (illumination)
 - o Convinces the reader that the Bible is True
 - o Apprehension, not comprehension
 - o Leads to CONVICTION of the truth of the word
- The HS does not inform us of Scripture’s meaning (41)

Words and Meaning

Locution – **Text** – What is spoken or written – Matt. 5:14 – “You are the Light of the World”

Illocution – **Author** – Identifies the intention the speaker or writer has by the specific words used. (Words have meaning)

- What do they want to accomplish? Energy employed, content conveyed?
- Look at Matt. 5:16 – What was the author seeking to do? Encourage, inform?

Perlocution – **Hearers** – What the author envisioned the outcome or results to be. (46)

We are simply given the locution and must take care to assess and learn the illocution and perlocution of the authors words.

Read the Bible and read it deeply. If you do not understand something, look it up.

- If you do not understand a word, **do not use Websters Dictionary**. Use a Lexicon.
- If you do not understand the context of book, read an *Introduction or Survey*.
- If you cannot picture the geographical location, distance from, or other landmarks, consult an *Bible Atlas*.
- If you do not understand a topic, consult a *Biblical Encyclopedia*
- If you do not understand the passage after first going through the proper steps of exegesis yourself, consult a *Commentary*.

“To take a literary approach to the Bible means entering, living, and understanding its world before we move beyond it to abstract meaning.” (48)

Impact of Distance

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There are barriers and challenges that we must face when interpreting scripture.

Temporal – We are separated by time from the events in Scripture

Cultural – We live in a very different culture here in NA than those in the ANE

Geographical – Understanding the geography of scripture helps us to understand distances travelled, locations and much else that helps with the context of the passages

Language – Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic provide a barrier to modern languages. We must take great care to understand and have humility in our ability to translate ancient languages into our modern contexts. If you can't read the original languages or do not have the ability to learn them, be mindful of the translations that you use.

Proper Biblical Interpretation is needed because the Bible was originally written to

- Someone else
- Who lived a long time ago
- Across the world
- Speaking another language
- Had different cultural values (59)

Exercise: Read 2 Timothy 4:6-13, 21

What are some of the questions that you could be asking from this passage?

What are the distances between you and the text that need to be addressed?

What pieces of context are you missing?

“True interpretation of the Bible combines both an exercise in ancient history and a grappling with its impact on our lives. Indeed, to understand fully what a text meant to its original recipients requires that we grasp something of that original impact ourselves, to the extent we are able.” (62)

Summary

1. To Discern God's message
 - a. What did God intend to communicate to us?
 - b. Avoid Scriptural abuse through *proof-texting*. Do not use individual texts out of context, simply to prove your viewpoint.
2. To Avoid or dispel misconceptions or erroneous perspectives and conclusions about what the Bible teaches.

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- a. Implementing correct interpretive methods will help you ‘sound the alarm’ when incorrect ideas emerge. You will begin to hear and challenge the misconceptions of others in Bible study, church, and in your everyday lives.
3. To be able to apply the Bible’s message to our lives.

Always make space for God to Speak/Teach whenever studying Scripture.

- It is really easy to become so focused on the context and the passage, that we fail to remember that it is God’s Word, speaking to us and into our lives.
- The goal is not to become a walking database for ancient facts.
- The goal is to correctly interpret the meaning from the text so that you can communicate God’s love to others.

We must always understand that even though the bible was written by human hands, it is ultimately God’s Word. We must take care to keep in perspective the eternal implications of the text, seeking to understand God’s message to His people. (60-62)

History of Interpretation

Session 2

Overview

Objectives

1. Learn Key Issues
2. Understand Dynamics of Biblical Reading
3. Acquire humility – Accept challenges that history presents – We don't necessarily know best in our modern time!

What are we about to Learn?

- A brief and quick overview of interpretation throughout History from ancient Israel to the modern day
- We will also expand briefly on some of the postmodern approaches that we see regularly in Biblical interpretation

Why should we know about this?

Jewish Interpretation

- Inner Biblical Allusion
 - o Reworking and interpreting of texts throughout the periods of the OT.
 - Ex. 1 and 2 Kings get reworked as 1 and 2 Chronicles from a post-exilic perspective. (67)
 - o Scribes become authors themselves as their interpretations became authoritative.

Pre-exilic	Exilic	Post-exilic
Jer. 25:11-12	Jer. 29:10	2 Chr. 36:21
<i>Seventy Years</i>	<i>Seventy Years</i>	<i>Sabbath rest</i>

Read: 2 Chr. 36:20-21, The author sees the events in hindsight. The scribe takes an understanding of the seventy years as written in Jeremiah, not solely as the time allotted for Israel's exile, but also for the land to enjoy a sabbath rest.

- Post-Biblical Interpretation: The Transition
 - o The first interpreters known by name: Ezra publicly reads the Mosaic law (in Hebrew), *Levites explained* to the crowd (in Aramaic)
 - Instituted the *Targum*. Oral reading and interpretation from Hebrew Scripture readings into the common language of Aramaic.
 - o Hellenistic and Roman empires forced Jews to *define and preserve* their religious identity (69)

How to Read the Bible

- Interpretation was made into a central and fundamental religious activity, establishing the basic methods and patterns of how to read the Bible that would be used for centuries and even to today.
- Hebrew to Aramaic to Greek
 - School in Alexandria of Jewish Scholars produced the Septuagint (LXX) (70 authors) – later became the Bible of the Early Church. (70)
 - Allegorical method – a text’s true meaning is found behind the written words – Plato - An extended metaphor (71)
 - Philo – One could disregard a text’s literal meaning when it: (71)
 - Said anything unworthy of God
 - Contained some insolvable difficulty, unusual grammar, or unique rhetoric
 - Involved an obvious allegorical expression
 - From a modern viewpoint, Philo’s approach too often seems dependant on subjectivity, arbitrariness and artificiality. (71)
- Qumran Community
 - Mined OT prophecies to explain involvement in the events of their own day (77)
- Rabbinic Jerusalem
 - Depends heavily on earlier revered Rabbi’s interpretations. (74)
 - Rabbinic commentators often interpreted Scripture literally (75)
 - “Motives were pastoral – to give logical biblical teaching for situations not covered directly in Scripture.” (75)
 - Desired to apply Scripture to the problems of a modern audience.

Christian Interpretation

Apostolic Period (AD 30-100)

- Used many of the same principles as other Jewish Groups, but now revered Jesus as the new Moses and an authority more superior to the law of Moses. (77)
 - Radically new perspective!
- Interpreted the OT through Literal Interpretation, Literal-contextual Interpretation, and Principle/Application Interpretation
 - *Literal* – Jesus literally fulfilling OT prophecy – Is. 61:1-2, 35:5-6
 - Reading the OT through the lens of Christ
 - *Literal/Contextual* – Interprets more broadly according to normal meaning and context (79)
 - Jesus cited Hosea 6:6 twice in its normal use against the Pharisees, “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice” (Matt. 9:13; 12:8)

How to Read the Bible

- *Principle/Application* – Not interpreted literally, but rather they applied the principle of the passage and applied it to a different but comparable situation than that of the original (79)
 - Paul quoted Hosea 2:23 in Rom. 9:25.
 - Not entirely pulled out of its context. Applied to a comparable context.
- Main Form was *Typology* - a representation of an actual, historical reference. According to Christian exegesis, biblical typology deals with the parallels between actual, historical (usually OT) figures or events in salvation history and their later, analogous fulfillment. Often NT events and figures are typologically understood and interpreted according to an OT pattern (e.g., creation and the new creation, Adam and Christ, the exodus and NT concepts of salvation,). On this basis typology became one of the four prevalent ways (together with the literal, the analogical and the spiritual) of interpreting Scripture in the Middle Ages. [Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 117.]

Patristic Period [*The Church Fathers*] (AD 100-590)

- Apostolic Fathers (AD 100-150)
 - Early Church leaders like Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and pseudonymous writer called Barnabas (81)
 - Occasionally used *Typology*
 - Favoured *Allegory* in interpreting the OT
 - Sparked many heretical groups such as the Gnostics
 - No canonical collection of NT scriptures yet
 - Needed to appeal to the authority of tradition
 - Started the hermeneutical approach of *traditional interpretation* (83)
 - The traditional interpretation being what the churches taught.
 - Valid interpretation was only what was taught by the current Church leaders allowing for the church to defend against the gnostics and other heretics.
- The Alexandrian School (AD 150-400)
 - Mainly Allegorical as adopted by Jewish scholar, Philo
 - Origen argued that Scripture has a 4-fold meaning in his approach to allegorical interpretation. See example of Lot and his Daughters - Gen. 19:30-38
 - The *literal* sense – what actually happened
 - Story as it is written
 - The *moral* sense – hidden principles for Christian Living
 - Lot – the rational human mind
 - Lot’s wife – the flesh inclined to pleasures
 - Lot’s daughters – pride.

How to Read the Bible

- The *spiritual* sense – doctrinal truth
 - Lot – OT Law
 - Lot’s daughters – Jerusalem and Samaria
 - Lot’s wife – Israelites who rebelled in the wilderness
 - The *anagogical* sense – eschatological
 - Origen had no comment in this case
- Church Councils (Ad 400-590)
- Church Fathers found refuge in their own claim to Apostolicity – they alone could interpret the apostles teachings correctly
 - Adhered to the Apostles’ teachings along with properly interpreted scripture to defend against heresies
 - Augustine – comprehensive orthodox interpretation
 - Refreshing change from the arbitrariness of allegory
 - **Interpretation goal is to lead readers to love God and other people**
 - Should be of a texts literal or historical meaning
 - Safeguard 1 – Interpret obscure passages in light of clearer ones
 - Safeguard 2 – Should conform to the Rule of Faith or the Church’s interpretation
 - Safeguard 3 – Conform to the “Rule of Context” Best fits the immediate context.
 - At the end of this period, Church leaders convinced a scholar named Jerome to translate the NT and OT into Latin, creating the Vulgate (common), becoming the official Bible of the Western Church. This also ceased any interaction with the original languages of Greek and Hebrew. (88-89)
 - Luke 1:28 – Hail Mary full *of grace*
 - Favoured one (Gk.)
 - You who are highly favoured (NIV)
 - Moved further away from a dependence on the original text as the source for its teachings.

Middle Ages (590-1500)

- 3 Approaches to Interpretation
- Traditional interpretation
 - Catena: Chain of interpretation – interpreting based on former interpretations
 - Continued dominance of the Allegorical method
 - Ex. Jerusalem
 - Literal – city of Jerusalem
 - Moral – The Faithful Christian Soul
 - Spiritual – Christian Church

How to Read the Bible

- Anagogical – The heavenly city
- Historical Interpretation
 - Thomas Aquinas
 - Scholasticism – Main concern was to sort out the relationship between Christian Faith and human reason. (90)

Exercise – David and Goliath – 1 Samuel 17:38-40 – Allegorize this story

- **Who does David represent?**
- **What does the ill-fitting armor represent?**
- **What could the stones represent?**
- **What does Goliath represent?**

Reformation (1500-1650)

- Erasmus laid the egg, Luther hatched it.
- Luther and Calvin –
 - Scripture trumps tradition and clergy (*sola scriptura*)(96)
 - Scripture is its own best interpreter – Goodbye allegory and dependence on Church fathers. Welcome back Christo-centrism and the Holy Spirit.
- Reformers did not always agree
 - Calvin, Luther, the Anabaptists (radical reformers)
- Beginning of denominations and separations due to theological differences
- Counter Reformation - *Council of Trent* (96)
 - The Catholic church was authoritative
 - Vulgate was primary as the scripture of the Church and the guiding scripture rather than original languages

Post-Reformation (1650-1750)

- Pietism (97)
 - Movement of home bible study and prayer
 - Sought to recover Christianity as a way of life/morality
 - Sought spiritual food for their souls and moral guidance
 - Evangelicalism spawns out of pietism and later revivalism that took place in North America in the 18th-19th century
- Enlightenment/Rationalism
 - “The human mind in an independent authority capable of determining truth” (98)
 - Study scripture like any other book
 - Divine inspiration written off in rational arguments
 - Bernard Spinoza – Reason trumps scripture
 - Promoted radical divorce of faith and reason

How to Read the Bible

Modern Period (1750-Present)

19th Century

- Everything needed to be studied by Science
 - Historical-critical method (99)
 - Supernatural intervention excluded
 - Bible was timebound not timeless
 - Bible is just another book
 - Developmentalism (99)
 - Change or progress is inevitable
 - 2 histories – The bible (Suspect) and real history
 - Other voices
 - Restoration Movement to recover 1st century Christianity
 - Pentecost revivals
- Post World War I
 - Karl Barth
 - Return to the authority of Scripture as the word of God
 - The necessity of a personal encounter with God
- Post World War II
 - Biblical Theology Movement
 - Publications and journals sought to recover the Bible's Theology
 - New methods
 - Redaction criticism – deal with whole final texts
 - Canon criticism – sought to recover Scripture as the church's authoritative book
 - Literary Criticism – study of the literary artistry within Scripture
 - Deconstruction
 - Quests to recover the Historical Jesus/Real Jesus
 - Pentecostal Studies
 - Perspectivalism – hermeneutics from different perspectives/advocacy groups
 - Different ethnic groups
 - Feminist, LGBT hermeneutics,

21st Century

- New commentary series
- Theological commentaries
- Reception history
 - Music, film, pop culture
- Recovery of church father's works

What has History Taught us?

- History has taught us that we face an ongoing challenge with reading the bible. We must look at what it means to worship God with all of our heart and minds, looking at the tension between rationalism and piety. The recovering of ancient manuscripts, contemporary translations and our desire to grow and learn through scripture push us to explore how Scripture serves the church. Our spiritual formation has been given us a head start as we live in this modern age having access to God's word through the development of history.

Literary and Social-Scientific Approaches to Interpretation

What is a Criticism? - the analysis and judgment of the merits and faults of a literary or artistic work

Literary Criticism - study of the literary artistry within Scripture

- Narrative Criticism
 - o Addresses the surface features of the text
 - Plot, theme, motifs, characterization
 - Meter, rhyme, parallelism
- Structuralism
 - o Addresses the 'deep structures' of the text
 - o 1970's-80's
 - o Analyzing *How* a sender communicates an object to a receiver through subject, potentially helped or opposed (119)
 - o Few exegetical insights resulted from this method.
 - o Not used much at all today
- Poststructuralism (part of Postmodernism)
 - o Reader-response criticism
 - o Deconstruction

How to Read the Bible

Narrative Criticism

- Analyzes Scripture for ordinary narrative features
 - Plot, theme, motifs, characterization, style, figures of speech, symbolism, foreshadowing, repetition, narrative time, point of view, etc. (119)
- Samson (Judges 13-16)
 - Samson's characterization is quite complex
 - Heroic death and continual filling of the Spirit in His life make him someone to emulate, though not in every aspect
- Saul (1 Sam 9 - 2 Sam 1)
 - Someone not to emulate as he was given everything and while knowing better, lost everything.
- Nicodemus (John 3:1-15; 7:50-52; 19:39)
 - Did he become a disciple? We are not given conclusive information.
 - Do we view him as someone who eventually came to faith against the pressure of his peers both slowly and secretly?
 - Or as someone who failed to make a decisive break from his past as discipleship requires? (120)
- Helps us focus on main points rather than side details (climax)
- Understand repetition
- Helps us understand the depth of characters
- Distinguish implied and real authors and texts
- Stories are told from a narrators point of view
- Strengths of Narrative Criticism
 - Helps us to see parts of the text we would not otherwise see
 - Can be used in standard exegesis and theology
 - Allows us to bracket historical debates about what really happened or didn't
- Weaknesses of Narrative Criticism
 - Presupposes a fictional nature of the stories – Which it doesn't need to do.
 - Can indefinitely postpone the theological interaction with the text (125)

Poststructuralism/Postmodernism

Convictions and Values of Poststructuralism

- Ideological pluralism – No one religion or worldview contains absolute truth.
- Impossible to have an objective interpretation
- Communities are important in shaping interpretive traditions
- Rejects modernist devaluation of religion/spirituality
- Emphasizes aesthetic, symbolic, and ancient tradition
- Stories are formative in making meaning in our world
- Language is determinative of thought and meaning (126)

How to Read the Bible

- Strengths
 - o Leaves room for spiritual, symbolic, aesthetic
- Weakness
 - o Conflicts with the Bible's metanarrative (The Big Picture of the Bible)

Reader-Response Criticism

- o Claims that meaning *is the product of individual readers* in interaction with texts; there is no objective meaning in a text itself. (128)
- o Focuses on the diverse way that readers respond to the text and not the author's intentions
- o Focuses on narrative gaps – Did Uriah know what was going on when David brought him back from battle?
- o Need to distinguish between fixed meaning and contemporary significance/application

Deconstruction

- o Seeks to show how all text deconstruct (undermine) themselves; texts make no absolute claims on readers (128) ***This is the root of the deconstructed faith today***
- o We should not take on this approach as Christians
- o Looking for tensions and paradoxes however can be illuminating

Advocacy Movements

- o Liberation Hermeneutics
 - Based in Christian response to world poverty
 - While biblical in nature, can easily become moralistic and forced
- o Cultural Criticism
 - Movement about what happens after liberation.
 - Ex. The fall of communism
 - Benefits to the cultural criticism movement is that we should each be aware of the cultural factors that shape how we interpret the bible

Denominational/Church history	Norms/Standards valued besides the Bible	Working Theology
Ethnicity	Gender	Social Class
Educational Background	Community Priorities	Explicit Political position
Implicit political stances	Customary exposures to the bible	Bible translations used
Use of other bible study tools	Past exposure to Biblical preaching	Orientation toward biblical scholarship
Family influences	Life crises	Spiritual and divine guidance

How to Read the Bible

Feminist Hermeneutics

- Evangelical and non-evangelical – what is authoritative?
 - Is the text liberating?
- Complimentarianism vs. egalitarianism – What does Paul mean by the word *authentain* in 1 Timothy 2:12?
 - Usurp authority? KJV
 - Exercise ordinary authority? (Many Modern translations)
 - Assume authority? (John Calvin) (NIV)
 - Assumption of legitimate or illegitimate authority
- Understanding the term “helper”
 - Less than?
 - Complimentary?
 - Equal to or superior to?

LGBT Hermeneutics

- William Webb’s book *Slaves, Women, and Homosexuality*
 - Belief in a redemptive trajectory throughout Scriptures narrative
 - Slavery becomes less acceptable
 - Women begin to have more rights and respect
 - Homosexuality as a practice?...
- Often mistakenly read examples of homosexuality into passages and stories of close friendships in which there is no evidence.
 - Ruth and Naomi
 - David and Jonathan
 - Jesus and the beloved disciple.

This is an exploration of the many ways in which interpretation has been approached throughout history through to the present. The ways in which interpretation has been approached, have shaped the ways in which we currently interpret whether through specific teaching of how to read Scripture or through the influence of our culture and world-views.

What are some of the approaches that you have seen yourself work out of as you interpret Scripture?

Why does this matter?

We need to start with an understanding of the complex nature and history of interpretation. It helps us to see areas where we have failed to interpret well in the past and the dangers that incorrect interpretation can have in the church. It also shows the ways in which the

How to Read the Bible

church flourished under healthy methods of interpretation. It helps us start to understand the various methods that we use when approaching the text ourselves.

The history of interpretation also shows us a grand view of the grace and power of God through His imperfect people. We must be humbled by the fact that even if we get our interpretations wrong at times, Christ will still be growing his kingdom and bringing people to Him.

Jesus said, “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Matthew 9:13.

God desires our heart and our love above all.

The Canon and Translations

Session 3

Objectives

1. Understand how authoritative writings developed the Canon
2. Understand and appreciate the various translations and their benefits to our growth in faith and in interpretation.

The Canon of the OT

- Still divides Roman Catholic and Protestant Scholars
- Apocrypha – 1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (or Wisdom of ben Sira[ch]), Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, the prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three young Men, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasseh, and 1 and 2 Maccabees.
 - o Some are books of history (Maccabees)
 - o Books of wisdom, additional proverbs and psalms
 - o Historical fiction/novels that teach spiritual truth
- Never considered canonical by Judaism
- Not officially canonized until the Protestant Reformation - Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox maintain the Apocrypha in their collection of the OT Scriptures –) at the Council of Trent (166)
- Apocrypha appeared in the Septuagint (Greek OT)
 - o Preserved because there were viewed with Christological meanings through allegories in the writings (168)
 - Wisdom of Solomon
 - o Contains some non-NT doctrines such as, prayers for the dead being redemptive. (2 Maccabees 12:44-45)
 - Catholics hoped to pray the dead through a speedier process in order to get out of purgatory and on to Heaven (168)
 - o Considered by many Catholics as less authoritative as deuterocanonical (second canon).
- Agreed books of the Canon
 - o Torah - First 5 books - Canonized in 5th Century BC or earlier
 - o Former and latter prophets – Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Isaiah through Malachi minus Daniel – Canonized at the latest 200 BC.

How to Read the Bible

- Writings – Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations, and Daniel – Origins most disputed chronologically. Mid 2nd century shows that most of these had been considered authoritative. Reference found in Sirach and 1 and 2 Maccabees.
- Possible early debates about some of the books left in the Old Testament canon
 - Proverbs – Some proverbs seem to contradict one another
 - Ezekiel – Questions surrounding 9 chapters outlining a new temple. Would this be fulfilled literally?
 - Song of Songs – Sexualized content – Allegorized or not?
 - Esther – name of God not mentioned

- Current order of the OT Canon follows the ordering given by the Septuagint (LXX)
 - Original Hebrew ordering of the books
 - The Law, The Prophets, The Writings
 - Our Current arrangement of OT books are set to be a combination of being both chronological and topical in order.

The Canon of the NT

- Why add new books to the Canon? Why would they add to the OT?
 - Already a Old Testament precedent of adding parts
 - Jesus claimed to be the fulfillment of the OT Scriptures
 - Jesus sending The Holy Spirit to help and lead the Disciples into all truth
 - Parallel between the Old covenant and the New Covenant
 - Covenant with Moses and fulfillment of Jeremiah's new covenant
 - Letters of Paul reference writings in the Gospels as authoritative.
 - 1 Timothy 5:18 rf. Luke 10:7
 - Peter even considers some of Paul's writings as authoritative.
 - 2 Peter 3:16

Second Century NT Canon

- Second century quotations referencing NT writings as authoritative
- A very anti-semitic heretic named Marcion proposed a canon of edited versions of the Gospel and various letters from Paul but nothing else (174)
- Roman persecution made one think about which books one was willing to die for.
- Discussion seemed to have begun around AD 150 but would not be agreed upon until AD 350

Fourth Century NT Canon

- Muratorian fragment from the 2nd century included:

How to Read the Bible

- Four Gospels, Acts, 13 letters attributed to Paul, 1+2 John, Jude, and Revelation
- Ireneaus, byshop of Lyons
 - Added 1 Peter to the Muratorian list
- Tertullian
 - First used the word *testamentum* in reference to the Greek word for covenant
 - Maintained 23 books of the NT as authoritative but omitted:
 - James, 2 Peter, 2+3 John
- Origen
 - Included all 27 of our current books
 - However notes six of them as being disputed:
 - Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2+3 John, and Jude
- Athanasius, bishpo of Alexandria
 - AD 367 – endorsed all 27 NT books without hesitation
- Councils of Hippo (AD 393) and Carthage (AD 397)
 - Formally solidified the NT Canon

Modern fascination with the Pseudepigrapha (books of the Gnostics)

- Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Truth, the Gospel of Truth, the Apocryphon of James, the Gospel of Philip, and the Treatise on the Resurrection
- Argument is that the canonizing of specific books over others is due to a power grab at the time of Roman emperor Constantine. (Constantine legalized Christianity and made it Rome's official religion)
 - As can be seen above, development of the Canon predates the 4th Century and Constantine.

Order of the NT Canon

- 4 Gospels – Stories of Jesus as the foundation
- Acts – Sequel to Luke and follows chronologically from the Gospels
- Pauline Epistles – Longest to Shortest, Churches to People
- Hebrews – comes after because of debate of authorship although often attributed to Paul
- General Epistles – possibly ranked due to the earliest they had become authoritative
- Revelation – Most likely written last and also about *Last Things*

Criteria of Canonicity

- Apostolicity – have apostolic connections: written in the 1st century and closely associated with an apostle or Jesus
- Orthodoxy – shared same theology and ethics, implies that they do not contradict one another
- Catholicity – Proved useful for a large number of churches

How to Read the Bible

The process of Canonization did not grant biblical books authority. Rather, books that were recognized as authoritative were admitted into the Canon. (180)

Textual Criticism

- The Study of ancient manuscripts in order to construct a probable original text

Manuscripts (MSS)

- OT
 - Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)
 - Masoretic Text (MT)
 - Septuagint (LXX)
 - Others
- NT
 - 5,800 in Greek
 - 10,000 in Latin
 - 9,300 in other languages
- Other literary works
 - Homer ~ 1000 MSS
 - Euripedes ~ 300 MSS
 - Plato ~ 260 MSS

The struggles with Translating

- Hebrew vowels missing (Genesis 1:1-2)
 - NTHBGNNNGGDCRTDTHHVNSNDTHRTHNDTHRTHWSFRML
SSNDMPTYDRKNSSWSVRTHSRTHSRFCFTHDPNDTHSPRTFG
WSHVRNGVRTHWTRS
- Greek vowels included (John 1:1-2)
 - INTHEBEGINNINGWASTHEWORDANDTHEWORDWASWITHG
ODANDTHEWORDWASGODHEWASWITHGODINTHEBEGINNI
NG
- Written in all Capital letters
- No Spaces
- No punctuation
- No chapter or verse markers

With a large number of MSS there are a large number of variations from scribes making small errors in copying the texts.

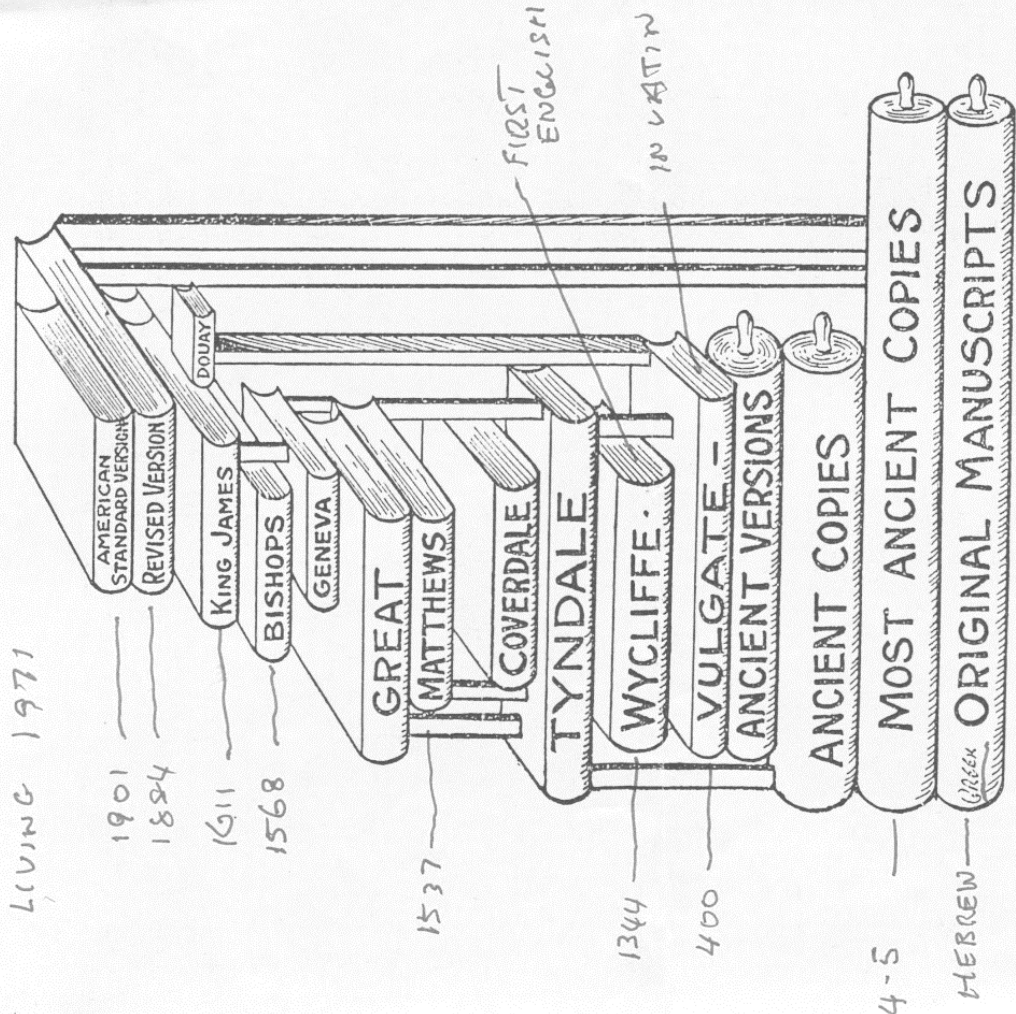
Translations

Discussion

How did we get from the initial autographs of the early biblical authors to the abundance of manuscripts and versions of the Bible?

Can we have confidence in our modern versions?

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE



In the above drawing is shown the gradual development of the English Bible as well as the foundations upon which each successive version rests. We are living in an age of printing.

It is hard for us to realize that when the books of the Bible were originally written, there was no printing press to multiply the copies.

Each copy must be made slowly and laboriously by hand. Under these conditions it was inevitable that many ancient books should be lost. This largely accounts for the fact that all the original manuscripts of the Bible have perished.

The question arises, what have we then as the literary foundation of our Bible? (1) We have the most ancient copies made from the original manuscripts. We mention only three principal ones.

- (a) **The Codex Sinaiticus**, originally a codex of the Greek Bible belonging to the fourth century. Purchased from the Soviet Republic of Russia in 1933 by Great Britain and is now in the British Museum.
- (b) **The Codex Alexandrinus**, probably written in the fifth century, now in the British Museum. It contains the whole Greek Bible with the exception of forty lost leaves.
- (c) **The Codex Vaticanus**, in the Vatican library at Rome, originally contained the whole Bible but parts are lost. Written probably about the fourth century.

THE ANCIENT VERSIONS.

- (a) **The Septuagint Version.** The Translation of the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, made at Alexandria about 285 B. C.
- (b) **The Samaritan Pentateuch**, not strictly speaking a version, but the Hebrew text perpetuated in Samaritan characters.
- (c) **Peshito or Syriac.** The whole Bible, date uncertain (first or second century?) apparently a translation into the common language of certain portions of Syria.
- (d) **The Vulgate.** The entire Bible translated into the Latin language, by Jerome at Bethlehem. Completed about 400 A. D. For a thousand years this was the standard Bible in the Catholic Church.

ENGLISH VERSIONS.

During the dark ages very little Bible translation was attempted. There were a few minor translations of portions of the Bible. The Word of God was locked up in the Latin tongue which was unknown to the common people. 1320-1394. **Jno. Wycliffe**, a great English scholar and Bible student, conceived the plan of translating the whole Bible into common English. He first translated the New Testament about 1380. Exactly how much more he did before his death is uncertain. His friends completed the work after his death. By consulting the drawing it will be seen that his work rests upon the Latin Vulgate.

William Tyndale was the next in order of the great English Translators. He was an early and courageous reformer and was determined that the English common people should have the Bible in their own tongue. Persecution made it impossible for him to do his work in England, so he crossed over to the Continent and his New Testament translation was issued in 1525 and the Pentateuch in 1530.

By referring to the drawing it will be seen that his Version does not rest entirely upon the Latin Vulgate and Wycliffe's. Tyndale was a ripe Greek scholar and had access to the Greek text of Erasmus and other helps which Tyndale did not possess. Moreover he had a fine command of accurate English which left its impress upon all later versions. He was martyred before he completed the Old Testament but it is generally thought that he left the material which appeared later in the Matthews' Version.

Miles Coverdale. A friend of Tyndale, prepared and published a Bible dedicated to Henry the VIII in 1535. Coverdale's New Testament is largely based on Tyndale's. He explicitly disclaimed originality but the Latin, and other versions as helps, as well as Tyndale's Version.

Matthews' Bible. 1537. About the same time as the second edition of the Coverdale Bible another edition appeared. Its authorship is somewhat uncertain, but although it bears the name of Matthews it is really credited to John Rogers, a friend and companion of Tyndale. This scholar, it is thought, had come into the possession of Tyndale's unpublished translation of the historical books of the Bible. It contains Tyndale's translations in their latest forms but also gives evidence of Coverdale's work.

The Great Bible. 1539. It will be noted by consulting the drawing, that this translation is based upon the Matthews, Coverdale and Tyndale Bibles. The first edition was prepared by Miles Coverdale and was ordered to be set up in every parish church. It was a large-sized volume chained to the reading desk in the churches, where the people flocked to hear reading of the Word of God.

The Geneva Bible. 1560. This translation was made at Geneva by scholars who fled from England during the persecution by Queen Mary. It was a revision of the Great Bible collated with other English translations. A very scholarly version, handy in size, and for many years a popular Bible in England.

The Bishop's Bible. 1568. Prepared under the direction of the Archbishop of Canterbury during the reign of Elizabeth. Mainly a revision of the Great Bible although somewhat dependent upon the Geneva Version, used chiefly by the clergy, not popular with the common people.

The Douay Bible. A Roman Catholic Version made from the Latin Vulgate. The New Testament published at Rheims, 1582. The Old Testament at Douay, 1609-10. It contains controversial notes. It is the generally accepted English Version of the Roman Church.

The King James or Authorized Version. 1611. The translation now generally used by the English-speaking people. Made by forty-seven scholars under the authorization of King James I of England.

The Bishop's Bible was the basis of the new version, but the Hebrew and Greek texts were studied and other English translations consulted with the view of obtaining the best results. It has held the first place throughout English-speaking world for over three centuries.

The Revised Version. 1881-1884. Made by a company of English and American Scholars. It will be noted by glancing at the drawing that the Revised Version, while it was supposed to be a revision of the Authorized Version, has one distinct advantage over all its predecessors. It reaches down and touches most ancient copies of the original scriptures.

Some of these ancient codices were not available at the time of the translation of the Authorized Version. **The American Standard Version.** 1900-1901. This version incorporates into the text, the readings referred by the American members of the Revision Committee of 1881-5.

How to Read the Bible

- 1611 – KJV bypassed the Vulgate by translating the best couple dozen Greek and Hebrew Manuscripts available to them. (192)
- 400 yrs. later, English has changed, Access to better manuscripts, Many better translations have emerged

Parallel Translation Exercise

Compare and Contrast the passage 1 Corinthians 3:1-4

NIV

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

NASB

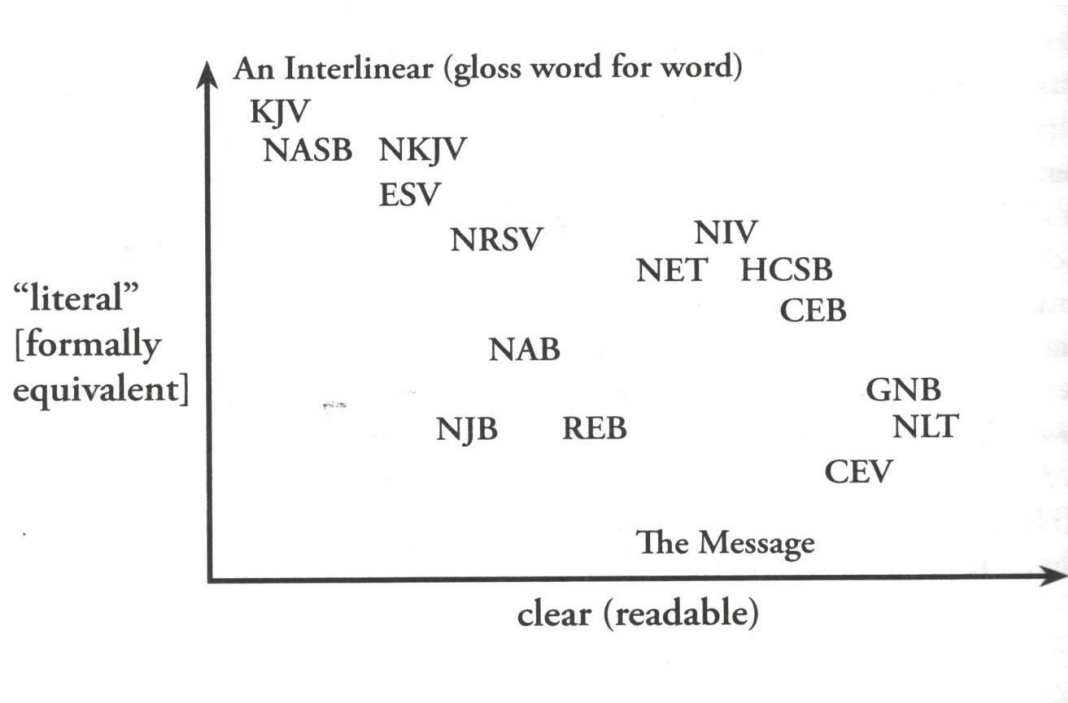
And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not mere men?

Make note of any differences by writing or drawing on the passage.

How to Read the Bible

Formal vs. Functional

More Formal					More Functional				
KJV	NASB	RSV	NRSV	NAB	NIV	NJB	NCV	GNB	The Message
ASV	NKJV	HCSB	NET		TNIV	REB	NLT	CEV	
	ESV								



Translations should be chosen based on *purpose or occasion*. Use more literal translations to help understand the original languages and form more closely. Use paraphrases to help provide insights when doing devotions and reflecting on God's word.

The Interpreter

Session 4

Qualifications for the Interpreter of Scripture

- ❖ A reasoned Faith in the God who Reveals
- ❖ Willingness to Obey its message
- ❖ Willingness to Employ Appropriate Methods
- ❖ Illumination of the Holy Spirit
- ❖ Membership of the Church

A Reasoned Faith

- The essential qualification for a full understanding of the Bible is to know God and to believe that he is speaking through it (202)
- We are best to understand the scripture if we are immersed in a faith of Jesus Christ

Obedience

- We cannot genuinely understand what a text meant without allowing it to affect our lives in the ways the text intends. (205)
- We must put it into practice to truly understand the meaning of the text
- Requires us to submit our will to hear and respond to the text in a faithful manner (205)

Illumination of the Holy Spirit

- A dynamic comprehension of the significance of Scripture and its application to life, only provided to those indwelt by the HS (206)
- The Holy Spirit cannot be your only help for interpreting Scripture. It may sound very spiritual but is in fact a veiled egotism and a confusion between inspiration and illumination. Relying solely on the illumination of the Spirit will often result in incorrect interpretations. We have the tools to work within proper methods and techniques. The Holy Spirit gives us comprehension when we approach interpretation correctly. Often in an “AHA” moment! (207)
- Gives us the ability and desire to understand and put the text into practice.
- Works in tandem with critical methods.

Membership in the Church

- You are not isolated in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- “We must recognize our membership in the Body of Christ, the church.” Local and Global (208)
- “If we can’t communicate our interpretation to ordinary laypeople in ways that will ring true to at least an important cross-section of them, there’s a good chance we haven’t understood the text quite correctly.” (208)
- We need to also listen humbly to other believers in the church.

How to Read the Bible

- The church gives us mutual accountability.

Willingness to Employ Appropriate Methods

- We must be aware of the worlds of the texts. 200 years of ANE and the Roman Empire
- Use the methods suited for a particular discipline,
 - A. Road cycling vs Mountain Biking - I don't ride with my seat up when Mountain Biking because it will make me crash
 - B. Painting a Car vs a Canvas – You don't paint a car with a brush
 - C. Interpreting Scripture has its own special methods to help you understand the text correctly. Using inappropriate methods will lead you to an incorrect interpretation.
- Strive for as much competency as your situation in life allows.

Exercise

Write down as many factors in you life that could shape your worldview or the lenses through which you view and interpret Scripture.

Presuppositions

- ❖ There is no such thing as presuppositionless interpretation
 - ❖ They are important and necessary
 - ❖ The foundations for which we do our work in interpretation
- Admit that you have presuppositions
 - Identify your presuppositions
 - Evaluate your presuppositions
 - Embrace or Rid yourself of valid or invalid presuppositions

Presuppositions about the Nature of the Bible

- Inspired Revelation
- Authoritative and True
- Spiritual Document
- Unified and Diverse
- Understandable

How to Read the Bible

- Forms a canon as Holy Scripture (211)

Inspired Revelation

- The Bible is a supernatural book, God's written revelation to his people given through prepared selected spokespersons by the process of inspiration

Authoritative and True

- If God revealed the Bible then what He has authored must be viewed as true and therefore authoritative over our lives

Spiritual Document

- Because it is God's word to His people, it is spiritual in nature. It changes peoples lives because people are engaging the Living God through the text. It is living and active.
- Not just a human document, written by human hands

Unified and Diverse

- God authored it through human people, which gives it unity through the entire narrative of Scripture.
- It is a diverse collection of writings – narrative, legal, historical, poetic, prophetic, gospel, epistles, and apocalyptic. (220)
- It tells one big story through a diverse collection of different stories and different people

Understandable document

- The HS is central to this presupposition
- God's message to God's people.

Forms a Canon of Holy Scripture

- All 66 books of the Protestant canon are the authoritative/inspired works of God, holding value for our relationship with God.
- "canon" meaning "ruler" or "measuring rod"

Presuppositions about Methodology

- ❖ We should use all useful and valid methods to help us understand
- ❖ We must reject naïve dogmatism
 - We cannot make the meaning of the Bible what we want to make it to be.
- ❖ We must approach the text with humility, understanding our presuppositions and yet approaching the text with proper exegetical methods.
- ❖ We must oppose the Postmodern claim that we create meaning
- ❖ The point of interpretation is to 'get it right'
- ❖ We use all means at our disposal

Presuppositions about the Ultimate Goal of Hermeneutics

How to Read the Bible

- ❖ We desire to arrive at the meaning of the text that the original writers intended their audience to understand (224)
- ❖ Eisegesis vs Exegesis

Presuppositions are a fact of life for all Interpretation

Your task is now:

- *Admit* that you have presuppositions
- *Identify* those presuppositions that you bring to the task
- *Evaluate* or *assess* your presuppositions
- *Embrace* those presuppositions you believe are valid
- Take steps to *jettison* those presuppositions you deem invalid

Preunderstandings of the Interpreter

- ❖ Refers more specifically to who we are
- ❖ We stand in our own historical context and traditions
- ❖ Preunderstandings come in 4 different categories
 - Informational
 - A. The information that we already possess before approaching the text
 - Attitudinal
 - A. Our disposition as we approach the text
 - Prejudice
 - Bias
 - Predisposition
 - Past experiences colour our world
 - Ideological
 - A. Bring our distinct world views to the table
 - Evolution
 - Feminism
 - Abortion
 - BLM
 - Methodological
 - A. Our approach to explaining a text
- ❖ There is a danger of approaching the text with a theological agenda already formulated
 - What are we looking for before we even begin with the Text?
- ❖ Danger of Familiarity

How to Read the Bible

- Has a certain text become boring and stagnant?

The Role of Preunderstanding

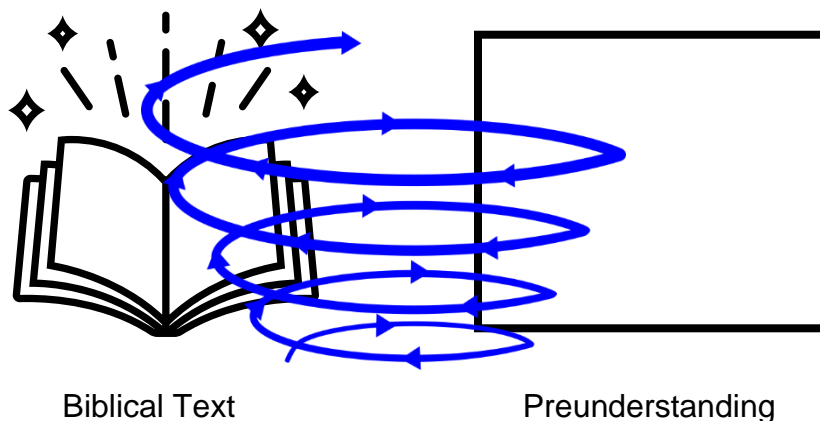
- Colours, if not determines, what we can see in a text.
- May turn out to be an *asset* – aiding or enabling what interpreters find in a text
- May turn out to be a *culprit* – prohibiting or retarding what one is able to see (228)

Testing Preunderstandings

- We must subject our preunderstandings to the test of “critical realism” (N.T. Wright) (237)
 - A. We must start with a certain hypothesis that we test and either accept or reject (237)
 - B. We must evaluate the evidence for the Christian claims in light of all the alternative truth claims (237)
 - C. Presuppositions: Whether we are convinced of the truthfulness of the Bible and not what is simply “true for me”.
- We can rest in the strong footing of our Christian Preunderstandings

Hermeneutical Spiral

- Our preunderstandings develop as we dig deeper into the text. It is as if we are being transformed by the renewing of our minds Rom. 12:2. (240)
- New questions are formed and the process happens all over again, progressively growing the interpreter in their relationship with God and their ability to understand and apply the text more effectively (240)
- If we are open to the Biblical text, it changes us.



The Goal of Interpretation

Session 5

- ❖ Speech Act Theory – 3 elements
 - Locution – The words
 - Illocution – Identifies the intention the speaker or writer has by the specific words used. (Words have meaning)
 - Perlocution – What the author envisioned the outcome or results to be

“We may want to assume that what an author intends to communicate corresponds precisely to the meaning of the text. However, an *author* may not frame the message correctly, so the *reader* may misconstrue the intention.” (245)

- We need to distinguish among authorial intention, textual meaning, and perceived meaning.
- ❖ 3 Meanings (246)
 - Meaning the author *intends*
 - Meaning the reader *understands*
 - *Actual* Meaning conveyed by the grammar and words on the page
- ❖ We have the Locution (words on the page)
- ❖ We need to determine the Illocution
 - The communicative intent
- ❖ Also need to determine the Perlocution
 - Authors desired action taken from the text

Locution – “FIRE!”

Illocution – We will be alarmed by the word

Perlocution – Get out quickly, calmly, and safely.

Does a text have one meaning or several meanings?

Options:

1. Meaning is limited to what the author intended
 2. Readers make texts mean whatever they wish (Multiple meanings)
- ❖ What is meant by meaning? (249)
 - Tied to the intention of the author?
 - Language based? – Words, grammar, genre, etc....
 - Does it describe what a reader sees in or brings to the text?

Matthew 2:15 and Hosea 11:1

Israel as the son or Jesus as the son?

How to Read the Bible

Options of Potential Meanings (250)

1. Only one meaning that is intended by the Author
 - ❖ Hebrews 1:8-9 – Quoting Psalm 45 ~ Did the OT author have the Messiah in view?
 - ❖ The best option, the sole object of exegesis.
2. The author intended the text to have multiple meanings
 - ❖ Upcoming Birth in Isaiah 7:14
 - Immediate Future – Isaiah 8:1-10
 - Distant Future – Matthew 1:23
 - ❖ We cannot prove that the original text contained additional meaning
 - ❖ What about applications?
 - 1 Meaning – Many applications
 - Do not confuse significance (applications) with meaning.
 - ❖ Difficult to defend
3. A later reader could invent a meaning not intended by the author
 - ❖ Reject reader-response (danger of DMM)
 - ❖ The historical meaning of the text must play the controlling role
4. NT authors discovered meanings intended by the HS though not by the human OT authors – the deeper meaning (255) *Sensus Plenior*
 - ❖ Matthew became aware of a meaning embedded in Hosea's prophesy by the Holy Spirit. Thought to be a *fuller* meaning
 - ❖ Does all Scripture have a fuller meaning? If some do not how can we tell which ones do?
 - ❖ Hard to replicate with exegetical methods
5. The NT author sees meaning not intended by the OT author, but which conforms to patterns of God's work and is consistent with the historical sense.
 - ❖ Typology is not the same as Sensus Plenior
 - Typology detects patterns (types) of how God works in history
 - Typological sense is not a second meaning but a fuller meaning
 - ❖ Use creative exegetical methods to discover additional valid meanings. May or may not be repeatable.

Author-Centered textual Meaning

- ❖ This should be our central goal in exegesis
- ❖ The text has one meaning that the Author intended.
 - All we have for study is the Biblical text from which we can discern the author's intended meaning.
 - God's Intended meaning is conveyed through this text
 - In interpreting the text using the normal canons of exegesis, we can arrive at God's message for people.

We must investigate with curiosity leaving no stone unturned, understand the big picture, see the details, and not draw our conclusions too quickly.

Validating our Interpretation

- ❖ What does the text tell us about the authors intention?
- ❖ The interpreter's personal biases?

Criteria for probable interpretation (281)

- ❖ Is the interpretation likely given the text's original context?
- ❖ Does it account for all of the evidence?
- ❖ Is it consistent with the conventions of its genre?
- ❖ It must make sense

Challenging Personal Biases (283)

- ❖ Weigh all evidence pertaining to the texts most probable meaning and the interpreter's personal biases
- ❖ We have to account for prejudice, narrow-mindedness, sin, depravity, social, sexual, racial, political, economic, and religious factors (282)
- ❖ We need to read and listen to others (Church Fathers, Commentaries, etc....)
- ❖ Agree to disagree, Church unity is of utmost importance
- ❖ Consult with other believers, here in NA as well as interpretations from other cultures
- ❖ Do these views work in real life and in the Church

We need to be trying to find the Author's original intention for their text

Creative Interpretation of a text must meet these 4 criteria (287)

- ❖ Conforms to Orthodox Christian Theology
- ❖ Corresponds to patterns of God's Truth
- ❖ Works in the crucible of the Christian experience, producing godliness, fruits of the spirit, etc....
- ❖ Finds confirmation along the full spectrum of orthodox (generally or traditionally accepted as right or true) Christians.

Understanding Literature

Session 6

General Rules For Hermeneutics: PROSE

Prose – the ordinary language people use in speaking or writing

Literary Context

- ❖ Context is the whole of which some piece is a part
- ❖ Literary context is the context within which a specific text is located (295)
- ❖ John 13:26-30
 - Jesus told him, What you are about to do, do quickly.
 - A. What is he supposed to do?
 - B. Who is being talked to?
 - Read in the fullness of the passage to understand context
- ❖ Context establishes the Flow-of-thought
- ❖ Provides accurate meaning of words
- ❖ Delineates correct relationships among units: words, Sentences, Paragraphs

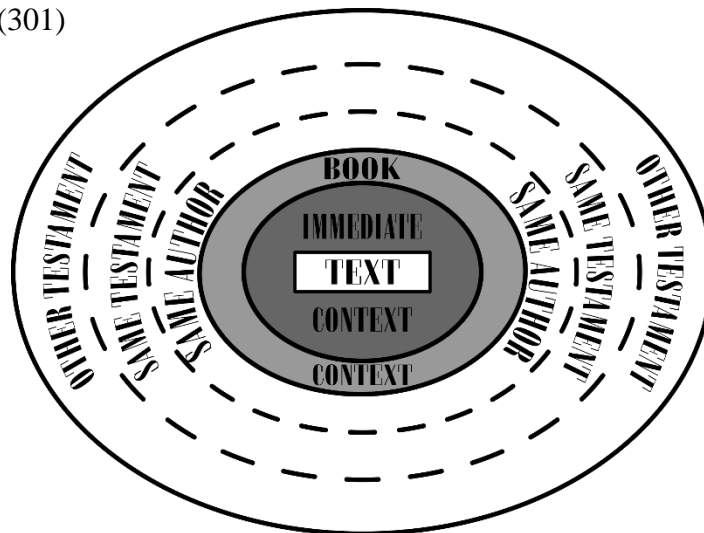
Divisions in our modern Bibles are recent divisions. We need to read the whole book to understand the context of each smaller paragraph

- ❖ Words can have more than one meaning!
 - Word's only have meaning in context

Context helps guard against **eisegesis**. Reading into the text our own ideas

- ❖ We need to identify the Author's literary Strategy (300)
 - What are the main themes, content, message or argument?
 - Does it fit logically with the passages before and after to advance the argument of the entire book?
 - How is it designed to produce that effect?

Circles of Context (301)



How to Read the Bible

Immediate Context

- Focus on *Theme* and *Structure*
 - What is the main theme of the passage?
 - What is the structure of the passage?
 - Chronological sequence
 - “Then this happened...”
 - Thematic sequence
 - Thematic continuity of thought progression
 - Logical sequence
 - Abrupt Transition
 - Psychological sequence
 - Author jumping between thoughts as subjects trigger other thoughts.

Book Context

- What is the book's purpose or controlling themes?
- The basic outline of the book
- Parallel passages within the book that deal with the same subject
 - “saving faith” in James 2:14
 - Will also need to look at other references to faith by James. (1:3, 5-8; 2:1; 5:15)

Context of the entire Bible

- Same author
- Same Testament
- Other Testament

Historical-Cultural Background

Interpretation is cross-cultural

- ❖ Colossians 1:15 – What does the firstborn mean?
 - Read Psalm 89:27 – David will be the firstborn (status not chronology)
- ❖ The Good Samaritan – What is the significance of the Samaritan?
- ❖ 1 Cor. 11 – Head Coverings and Hair length...
- ❖ *Explore the whole historical background of the book*
 - Author
 - A. Circumstances at the time of writing
 - B. Motivation for writing
 - C. Relationships with Recipients

How to Read the Bible

- Recipients
 - A. Circumstances at the time of writing
 - B. Characteristics
 - C. Type of community
- Date of Book

- ❖ What are the Historical facts mentioned in the text
- ❖ Key players and events
- ❖ Cultural features reflected in the passage

Word Meanings

- ❖ Words are arbitrary signs
 - Regob
 - Hacithly
 - Neritle
 - Tree
 - *Words are signs that only have meaning within a certain language.*
- ❖ Meanings overlap
 - Synonyms
 - A. Hit and strike as in punching
 - B. Hit and strike in baseball are not synonymous
 - Context matters
- ❖ Have a range of meaning
 - Hand
 - A. Attached to an arm
 - B. A group of cards
 - C. Clapping
 - D. Height measurement of a horse
- ❖ Can change over time
 - 1 Thess. 4:15
 - A. KJV – use of prevent
 - B. NIV – use of precede
 - C. Prevent means something different back then than it does today
- ❖ Have connotative and denotative meanings
 - Dog denotes a specific animal but connotes an insult
 - Judges 7:4-7 – drank from cupped hands lapping like *dogs*.

Select important words to study

- Difficult words
- Crucial words
- Theological words

How to Read the Bible

- Rare words
- Figurative words
- ❖ 1 Cor. 7:1 compare and contrast NIV 1978, NRSV, NLT, NIV 2011
- ❖ Discover the range of meaning through some quality commentaries

The goal of Word Studies is to narrow down a word's likely sense in specific context at the time that it was written

Grammatical-Structural Relationships

- ❖ Grammar is **Morphology + Syntax** (344)
- ❖ Helpful to know English grammar
- ❖ Helpful to learn the Biblical languages
- ❖ Crucial: Being willing to listen to experts and to weigh their views
 - Use the best resources available and use more than one

Steps for grammatical Study (main divisions of the text) (352-355)

1. Identify main statement (clause) in each sentence
2. Identify the subordinate clause and phrases that modify or qualify
3. Determine which word each subordinate clause or phrase modifies
4. Determine the type of clause or phrase – Who, What, Where, When, Why, How
5. Notice the verb forms – mood, tense, voice – take note of Greek or Hebrew uses of tense
6. Evaluate the connectives
 - a. Conditions, time, location, etc...
7. Adjectives and adverbs add colour
8. Understand use of Pronouns

General Rules of Hermeneutics: BIBLICAL POETRY

1/3 of the OT is Poetry

- ❖ Every book contains some figurative language
- ❖ Poetry study can help us understand God's word more effectively and enjoy it

Hebrew Poetry vs. Prose (364)

- ❖ Basic Unit – Single line vs sentence
- ❖ Unit's Length – Symmetrical vs Variable
- ❖ Language – Evocative, inventive vs Variable
- ❖ Grammar – Concise, Simple Sentences vs Complex Sentences
- ❖ Syntax – End of Line Pause vs Variable
- ❖ Rhythm – Free, Variable vs Variable
- ❖ Reading Rate – Slow vs Fast

How to Read the Bible

Hebrew use of Sounds

- ❖ Alliteration (repetition of consonants) and Assonance (repetition of vowel sounds)

The Structure of Hebrew Poetry

Parallelism

- Proverbs 19:5
 - A. A false witness will not go unpunished
 - B. And he who pours out lies will not go free
- Isaiah 1:10
 - A. Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom
 - B. Listen to the instruction of our God you people of Gommorah!

Main Types of Parallelism (380)

Type	Definition	Line Relationship
A=B	A Equals B	A and B are interchangeable B echoes/contrasts A
A>B	A is Greater than B	A states the main idea B qualifies it further
A<B	A is Less than B	A prefaces the main idea B states the main idea to complement/complete A

Parallel Line Terminology (376)

- ❖ Each line is called a 'stich' or 'colon'
- ❖ Two parallel lines together are called a 'couplet' or 'di-stich'
- ❖ Each line is indicated by a capital letter, ('A' 'B' or 'C')
- ❖ Each line may have sub-parts ('a' 'b' or 'c')

Psalm 77:1 abc//a'b'c' – A=B (comparison)

A	a	b	c
	I cried out	to God	for help

How to Read the Bible

B a' b' c'
 I cried out to God to hear me

Proverbs 14:34 abc//-a'-b'-c' A=B Contrast

A a b c
 Righteousness exalts a nation,
 but -a' -b' -c'
 B Sin is a disgrace to any people

Exodus 15:21 A>B (Reason)

A "Sing to the Lord (Statement)
 B for he is highly exalted. (Reason)
 C Both horse and driver
 D he has hurled into the sea."

Psalms 137:1 A<B (Time)

A By the waters of Babylon we sat and wept (Statement)
 B When we remembered Zion. (Temporal Clause)

Type	Definition	Line Relationship
A=B	A Equals B	1. Echo 2. Contrast
A>B	A is Greater than B	3. Subordination Means Reason Time
A<B	B is greater than A	4. Continuation 5. Comparison (similes) 6. Specification Spatial Explanation Dramatic Effect Purpose 7. Intensification

How to Read the Bible

Other Poetic Structures

Staircase parallelism –AB, ABC, ABCD

- Ps 57:8

A. Awake, my soul!
B. Awake, harp and lyre!
C. I will awaken the dawn

Chiasm – ABCDED’C’B’A’

- Center of Chiasm becomes a structural hinge (392)
- Luke 1:71-74

a Salvation from our *enemies*

 and from the hand of all who hate us

b to show mercy to our *ancestors*

c and to remember his holy covenant

b’ the oath he swore to our *ancestor* Abraham

a’ to rescue us from the hand of our *enemies*,

 and to enable us to serve him without fear

Understanding Biblical Genres

Session 7

Overview

What are some examples of different literary genres that we have today?

Example: Historical, Self-Help, Teen fiction...

Just as there are many different literary genres today, there are many different Biblical genres. Today we would not read and understand the information found in a historical book documenting World War II as we would a letter from a close friend. Each Biblical genre, likewise, has its own unique characteristics to consider and as such, cannot be read and understood in the same way as the other. As you look at the context surrounding a specific passage, consider the genre that it has been written in and what implications may come from that specific genre.

Genres of the OT

Make use of Bible Dictionaries, Commentaries, Atlases, and even Google

OT Narratives (422)

Reports

- Anecdote
- Battle Reports
- Construction Reports
- Dream reports
- Epiphany reports
- Dream epiphany reports
- Historical stories
- A history
- Memoir

Heroic Narrative

- Epic
- Cosmic
- Ancestral
- Prophet Story
- Comedy
- Farewell
- Speech

OT Legal material

How to Read the Bible

- Casuistic Law – “If” clause describes the case, “then” clause describes the penalty – Exodus 21:18-19 (439)
- Unconditional Law – Prohibitions, Admonitions, Curses, Participial Sentences, Legal Series, Legal Instruction
 - Address audience personally
- Participial Sentences are personal crimes
- The Law is actually GRACE – when it protects the vulnerable holds oppressors accountable. (444)

OT Poetry

Prayers

- Protest, Royal Protest, Imprecation, Penitential Psalm, Dirge

Songs

- Thanksgiving, Liturgies, Wisdom Psalms, Hymn, Personal Hymn, Coronation Hymn, Zion Hymn, Yahweh-Kingship Hymn, Love Song, Royal Wedding Song

Psalm 22 Structural outline

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------|----------|
| I. | Protest | 22:1-21 |
| | a. Invocation, Protest | 1-2 |
| | b. Report: Struggle | 3-11 |
| | i. Confidence | 3-5 |
| | ii. Protest | 6-8 |
| | iii. Confidence | 9-10 |
| | iv. Petition | 11 |
| II. | Thanksgiving, Praise | 22:22-31 |
| | a. Thanksgiving Hymn | 22-26 |
| | i. Vow | 22 |
| | ii. Call to Praise | 23-24 |
| | iii. Vow | 25 |
| | iv. Blessing | 26 |
| | b. Hymn of Praise | 27-31 |

OT Prophecy

Types of Prophecy

- Prophecy of Disaster – Jer. 28:13-14 – “...put an iron yoke on these nations”
- Prophecy of Salvation – Jer. 28:2-4 – Hananiah’s bogus prophecy – “I will break the yoke of the King of Babylon”
- Commission – Go and Say
- Call to Hear – hear this word!
- Woe Speech – Woe to those!
- Dirge – Addressing Israel as a corpse ready for burial – Amos 5

How to Read the Bible

- Hymn
- Liturgy
- Disputation – Amos 3:3-8 – Does a certain thing happen?
- Against Foreign Nations – 1 Kings 20:28 – Against the Arameans
- Vision Report
- Narratives
- Apocalyptic

OT Wisdom

- ❖ Proverbs
 - Descriptive – Proverbs 11:24
 - Prescriptive – Proverbs 19:17
 - Better-Than – Better is... than being in a house with a contentious woman...
 - Numerical – Proverbs 30:18-19 – Three things I do not understand
 - Antithetical – Majority – Pr. 12:25
- ❖ Instruction
 - Pr. 8:33 – Hear instruction and be wise
 - Pr. 1-9
- ❖ Example story – Autobiographical – Pr. 24:30-34 – an example followed by a moral
- ❖ Reflection – Autobiographical
- ❖ Disputation Speech
- ❖ Hymn
- ❖ Avowal of Innocence

Genres of the NT

1. Gospels
 - a. A type of biography and Narrative
 - b. A one of a kind genre
 - c. Synoptics
 - i. Matthew, Mark, and Luke
 - ii. Q – Material found in Mt. and Lk but not Mk.
 - d. Not always written chronologically
 - e. Should be read Horizontally and Vertically (516)
 - i. Horizontal
 1. Parallel with other gospels
 - ii. Vertical
 1. Through the passage itself
 - f. Gospels written to different audiences
 - g. Key theological issues in the Gospels
 - i. The kingdom of God
 1. Reign not a realm
 2. Now but not yet
 3. Personal conversion

How to Read the Bible

4. Spiritual, not political
- ii. Ethics of Jesus
 1. Catholic – only select disciples are expected to follow the more austere rules
 2. Lutherans – Jesus’ ethics as seen as ‘law meant to drive us to repentance and faith in Christ
 3. Anabaptist – applied seriously to public life and to all people on earth, renouncing all violence
 4. 19th Century Liberals – “social gospel” of Human progress and moral evolution
 5. Existentialists – Christ’s teaching not being absolute but a precedent for ethical action – no moral absolutes
 6. Dispensationalist – the Kingdom ethic is reserved for the millennial age of Christians
 7. They are given to everyone to work on as a goal while growing in a relationship with Christ
- h. Forms
 - i. Parables
 1. Recognize key points and key symbols with the Main characters
 - ii. Miracle Stories
 1. Requires us to be open to the Supernatural
 2. Pointers to God’s kingdom
 - iii. Pronouncement stories (conflict)
 1. Conflicts with Religious Leaders
 - iv. Other forms
 1. Legal, beatitudes, woes, announcement, nativity, farewell, calling, etc..
2. Acts
 - a. Written as a sequel to Luke
 - i. Narrative
 - ii. Focus’s mostly on Peter and Paul
 - iii. Acts of the Holy Spirit moving among Jesus’ followers as the church began to spread
 - iv. Historically Reliable.
 - v. Parallels between Jesus in Luke and Peter/Paul in Acts
 - vi. Significance of Pentecost is central (Acts 2)
 1. Be careful to avoid the extremes of traditional dispensationalism and covenant theology
3. Epistles
 - a. Occasional writings (someone else’s mail)
 - b. Debates of authorship frequently come up. 6/13 Paul’s letters debated
 - c. Structure

How to Read the Bible

- i. Greetings
 - ii. Opening thanksgiving
 - iii. Body: information
 - iv. Body: exhortation, commands
 - v. Closing
 - d. Variations should be noted
 - e. Subdivisions
 - i. Exhortation letters – 1 Thess.
 - ii. Diatribe - Romans
 - iii. Letter of introduction/recommendation – Philemon
 - iv. Apologetic Letter of Self-Commendation – 1 Cor. 1-7
 - v. Family Letter – Philippians
 - f. 3 species of Rhetoric
 - i. Judicial rhetoric – arguing a case as in court
 - ii. Deliberative – relaxed and reflective
 - iii. Epideictic Rhetoric – praise or blame
 - g. Hebrews and General Epistles
 - i. Hebrews is a sermon (Heb 13:22)
 - ii. James is a complex chiasmus full of themes
 - iii. 1 John – deliberative homily
 - iv. Jude – Midrash – an OT commentary
 - h. Pauline Epistles
 - i. Is there a unifying center of Pauline Theology?
 - ii. Does Paul’s theology develop from one period of time to another therefore changing his mind?
 - 1. Gal 1-2 and 1 Cor. 9
 - 2. 1 Thess 4:13-18; 2 Cor. 1:8-11; Phil. 1:20-28
4. Apocalypse (Revelation)
- a. An epistle written to 7 churches
 - b. Hybrid of 3 genres
 - i. Epistle – What would these churches have thought of when hearing this message? It cannot mean something that would have been incomprehensible to the original audience.
 - ii. Prophecy
 - iii. Apocalypse – Think of a political cartoon – Without understanding the historical context, the pictures are meaningless.
 - 1. Revelation promises God’s intervention into His people’s dire circumstances, assuring them of his ultimate victory over their enemies (563)
 - 2. Warns that in the meantime, things may go from bad to worse
 - 3. Portrays its message in highly symbolic, other-worldly terms
 - 4. Assures, encourages, and warns God’s people in the midst of their trials.

How to Read the Bible

While general hermeneutical principles are able to be applied across each form of text, it is important to take note of the special considerations needed when approaching each different genre. Each genre has its own implications for interpretation when we enter into the text.

The Fruits of Interpretation

Session 8

Using the Bible Today

Scripture reading is not a check on the checklist of Christianity. It is much more important than that.

Use of the Bible

- ❖ To gain information and understanding
 - History, insight into the ancient world
- ❖ To motivate and enrich Worship
 - Use in public worship
 - Use in private worship
- ❖ To Construct Liturgy
 - Corporate and individual readings to allow Scripture to change us daily
- ❖ To Formulate Theology
 - Theos (God) + Logos (Word)
 - Study of God through His general and special revelation
 - **We need to make sure that Scripture is shaping our theology and not let our theology shape the way we read scripture. Hold our Theology in an open hand**
 - Step 1 – Study
 - Step 2 – Sort
 - Step 3 – Organize
 - Different types
 - A. Exegetical – exegesis of specific biblical texts to understand their theological teaching
 - B. Biblical – Theological themes of specific biblical authors, books, sections
 - C. Systematic – Organize the Bible's teaching on specific themes and issues
 - D. Historical – Traces the issues and beliefs of the church as they developed over the centuries of church history
 - E. Practical – Applies theology in the situations of life and the church
- ❖ To Preach
 - Expository, topical, thematic, textual
 - What qualifies a sermon to be Biblical?
 - Should always convey what the original author intended
 - Should always preach Christ
- ❖ To Teach
 - Teach what to believe and how to live
 - Explain carefully what the bible teaches and how to put it into practice
 - A. Catechism

How to Read the Bible

- B. Theology
- C. Explanations of how to live “Christianly”
- D. Discipleship
- ❖ To Provide Pastoral Care
 - Comforting the afflicted
 - Helping navigate the hardships of life
- ❖ To promote Spiritual Formation in the Christian Life
 - Develop Spiritual disciplines
 - That we might imitate Christ and God
 - That our wills will conform to God’s
 - Goal is to read the Scripture in depth not just length
- ❖ To enjoy its beauty as Literature
 - Meditation
 - “What are you saying to me in this text, God?”
 - It is fun to imagine and picture yourself in the story and what it would be like to be there in person.

From Living by the Book – Howard Hendricks

Application

Perlocution – The action taken from the reading of the text

Scripture is applicable and provides examples to practice in our lives

1 Cor. 10:6

Romans 15:4

2 Tim. 3:16-17

Avoiding Mistakes

- Total neglect of all context
 - Phil. 4:13 – I can do all things...
 - NIV 2011 – I can do all this (not as literal but harder to take out of context) (607)
 - You can’t open the bible and apply the one verse that your finger lands on.
- Partial neglect of Literary or historical context
 - Jer. 29:11
 - At least they read an entire sentence
 - Not a catch-all verse for troubled believers
- Insufficient Analogous Situations
 - Proper reading and interpreting the context but bringing to a situation that does not apply.

How to Read the Bible

- Luke 4:5-8
 - Satan quotes Ps. 91:11-12 – unintentional stumbling to a deliberate jump off?
- Luke 4:6
 - Read this and ask who said this?
- 4 Steps to Legitimate Application (610)
 1. Determine original application intended by passage
 - a. Questions: Is there a...
 - Command
 - Example to follow/avoid
 - Promise
 - Warning
 - Teaching to act on
 - Truth to believe
 - b. Pay attention to the overall narrative of Scripture
 - c. Covet your neighbours wife? Or donkey?
 - Wife is applicable today
 - What about coveting their donkey?
 2. Evaluate level of specificity of applications
 - a. Is it broad or specific principle found in another book?
 - b. Does the larger context limit or promote a more universal application?
 - c. Does subsequent revelation limit or qualify the application of a particular passage even if the book in which it appears does not?
 - Jesus' commands to leave belongings or to take things with. (Mt. 10:9-10 and Lk. 22:35)
 - d. Is the specific teaching contradicted elsewhere in ways that show it was limited to exceptional situations?
 - Hosea 1:2 – Marry a promiscuous woman – Mt. 19:9 – reconciliation not always possible with unfaithfulness. But does not mandate divorce.
 - e. Are cultural conditions identified in Scripture or assumed by its authors? Is it inappropriate to apply the text in the same way?
 - Head coverings and hair styles?
 1. Meanings aren't the same in our culture
 - f. Is the particular cultural form expressed in the biblical text present today? If so does it carry the same significance?
 - The Holy Kiss?
 - g. Is the rationale rooted in a creation ordinance, in the character of God, or in part of his redemptive plan for humanity?
 - Gal. 3:27-28 – we are all together under Christ because we have all been redeemed by Christ
 - h. Is the biblical command or application at variance with standard Christian norms of its day?

How to Read the Bible

- Timeless Christian values and applications
 1. Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the Church
- i. Does the Passage contain an explicit or implicit condition that limits its application?
- j. Should we adopt a “redemptive movement” hermeneutic that suggests we move beyond NT teaching?
 - Slavery? A good movement away from a norm of NT culture
 - Homosexuality?
- 3. Identify broader cross-cultural principles that can transfer
 - a. What is passage specific?
- 4. Find appropriately equivalent specifics in new context (634)
 - a. Duty: What to do
 - b. Character: What to be
 - c. Goal: what causes to engage in
 - d. Discernment: Distinguish truth from error

Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics

Roy Zuck

1. The HS does not give new revelation on a par with Scripture
2. He does not guarantee that our interpretations are infallible
3. He does not give one person new insights that no one else has
4. Many Non-Christians can apply sound hermeneutics to understand the meaning of Scripture; without the Spirit, however, they refuse to apply it adequately to their lives
5. Understanding is not the exclusive domain of biblical scholars
6. Spiritual devotion on the part of the interpreter is crucial
7. Lack of spiritual preparation can hinder correct interpretation
8. There is no substitute for diligent study
9. The Spirit does not rule out study helps
10. He does not override common sense and logic
11. He does not normally give sudden intuitive flashes
12. The Spirit’s role in hermeneutics is part of the process of illumination
13. He does not make all of the Bible equally clear
14. He does not ensure comprehensive understanding