

Reading The Bible: **Perspective Matters – Openness to an “Unfolding Truth”**

Most Christians in our culture are Greek (western), who think about the world in a much different way than the people of the Bible. As a result, much of the Bible is lost on our culture and lost even more as we try to explain it through a western lens. If we learn to “think Hebrew,” the Text will begin to come alive.

The prevailing paradigm of the church throughout the West has tended to make disciples primarily by transferring (mainly) doctrinal information about the Trinity, the church, salvation, eschatology, and so on. This is simply not the way Jesus taught us to develop disciples.

The Hebrew worldview was life-oriented and not primarily concerned with concepts and ideas in *themselves*. We simply don’t believe we can continue to try to *think* our way into a new way of acting; rather, we need to act our way into a new way of thinking.

Western Christianity has been so deeply influenced by Hellenistic, specifically Platonic, ideas of knowledge. By the fourth century, the Platonic worldview had almost triumphed over the Hebraic one in the church. Essentially, a Platonic view of knowledge is concerned about concepts, ideas, and the nature of being. The Hebraic, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with issues of concrete existence, obedience, life-oriented wisdom, and the interrelationship of all things under God.

Western: “Give me the answer”
Eastern “Enter the story, wrestle with the text”

Western: “Knowledge is Power”
Eastern: “Obedience is Wisdom”

Western: “read for information”
Eastern: “read for formation.”

Stop asking: “*What does this mean to me?*”
Start asking: “*What did this mean to them?*”

Deconstruction leads to deeper reconstruction

Hebraic way of thinking: (Knowledge of God)

Word Pictures & images
Stories
Poetry
Imagery
Symbolism
We act our way into a new way of thinking...

Western Way of Thinking: (Know Thyself)

Words
ideas
Definitions
Outlines
Lists and Bullet Points
If people get the right ideas, they will change behavior

(Rediscovering Discipleship, Robby Gallaty, pg.44)

Ways of Thinking: Words

Greek (Western) - Express truth using words, ideas, definitions
Prefer prose, outlines, lists, bullet points
Hebrews (Eastern) - Express truth using word pictures and stories.
Prefer poetry, imagery, symbolism

Ways of Thinking: Numbers

Greek (Western) - See numbers primarily as QUANTITY
Expl: $5 + 2 = 7$
Hebrews (Eastern) - See numbers primarily as QUALITY or SYMBOL
Expl: 5 Books of Moses + 2 Tablets of Moses = 7 Days of Creation

Life: Eternal Life

Greek (Western) - Detached from this world
Something that starts when this world is over
Celestian paradise where we spend forever with God in heaven
Hebrews (Eastern) - IN this world (and every)
Life lived in harmony with God

Expl: a kind of life, not linear
Kingdom of God begins in this life, and our existence after death is merely a continuation
Eternal life is life that is harmonious with God in the world He created

Life: Community vs. Individual

Greek (Western) - Focuses on INDIVIDUAL
Hebrews (Eastern) - Focuses on Community

Life: Error & Sin

Greek (Western) - Wrong belief or incorrect thinking
Emphasizes what a person KNOWS
Hebrews (Eastern) - Wrong behavior
Emphasizes what a person DOES

God: Existence

Greek (Western) - Tries to prove the existence of God
Hebrew (Eastern) - Assumes the existence of God

God: Description

Greek (Western) - Focuses on the nature of the being
What/who is this God?
Hebrew (Eastern) - Focuses on the nature of the relationship
How does this God relate?

God: Faith

Greek (Western) - Faith is intellectual Creeds, doctrines, belief statements
Proof-texting to support belief
Hebrew (Eastern) - Faith is relational Experiences of and with God
No attempt to rationalize

Truth: Ultimate Truth

Greek (Western) - Truth is rational and scientific Focus in Scripture is on HOW it was done Belief comes as one thinks through validation
Hebrew (Eastern) - Truth is religious/experiential Focus in Scripture is on WHAT was done and WHO Belief comes through the experience
True learning doesn't happen with the transformation of information, it happens because you discover a new truth. The art of discovery. Somewhere in the story is something the author wants you to discover.

Truth: Over Time

Greek (Western) - Truth is static and unchanging
Teach by making a point and then giving supporting evidences, logic
Hebrew (Eastern) - Truth is unfolding.
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(Adapted from)

Bema Discipleship Podcast #0: Introductory Lesson
Marty Solomon and Brent Billings have an introductory conversation about the world of the Bible, investigating the differences between eastern and western perspectives.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-bema-podcast/id1148115183?i=1000374806193>