

# HOW TO READ THE BIBLE FOR ALL ITS WORTH

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

THE NEED TO INTERPRET

DO WE NEED TO INTERPRET?

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# DO WE NEED TO INTERPRET?

- “You don’t have to interpret the Bible. Just read it and do what it says.”
- “Anyone with half a brain can read it and understand it.”
- “The Bible was written so all can understand it.”

# DO WE NEED TO INTERPRET?

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- The Bible MUST be read and understood by all believers.

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- In fact, our problem is often not “Right Belief”, but “Right Practice.”

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  - Do everything without grumbling or arguing

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- The goal of good interpretation is not “uniqueness” or “cleverness”

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- The goal of interpretation is:

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To get at the plain  
meaning of the text

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  - The Nature of the Reader

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  - The Nature of the Reader
  - The Nature of Scripture

# THE NATURE OF THE READER



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- However, we bring all of us into the text (experiences, culture, preconceived opinions)

# THE NATURE OF THE READER

- The Cross

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- The Cross
- Church

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- The Cross
- Church
- Worship

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- Romans 13:14

# THE NATURE OF THE READER

- Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

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- “Flesh”

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  - If it means, “sinful nature”, then the text is referring to self-centered existence

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  - However, our version is the *end result* of scholarly effort

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  - Deity of Christ (Jehovah's Witnesses - Arianism)
  - Baptism of the Dead (Mormon's)
  - Baptism – Believer vs Infant?
  - Salvation – Secure or Able to Be Lost?

# THE NATURE OF THE READER

- The Goal:

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  - To affirm our inclination towards poor interpretation
  - Bad interpretations cannot cause us to avoid interpretation

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- “The Bible is the Word of God given in human words in history.”

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- The Tension of Scripture:

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- The Tension of Scripture:
  - God's Word

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  - Eternal Relevance

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    - Eternal Relevance
  - Human words in history
    - Historical Particularity

# THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURE

“Interpretation of the Bible is demanded by the *tension* that exists between its ***eternal relevance*** and its ***historical particularity***.”

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  - The Bible is also God's voice spoken "within the particular circumstances and events of human history."

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- The Tension of Scripture:
  - Understanding the “Then and There” of the text

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    - Hermeneutics

# THE ‘THEN AND THERE’ (EXEGESIS)



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- General Rules applying to all words

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- Literary Forms (genres)

# THE ‘THEN AND THERE’ (EXEGESIS)

The attempt to hear the Word as the original recipients were to have heard it, to find out what was *the original intent of the words of the Bible*.

# THE ‘THEN AND THERE’ (EXEGESIS)

- When should exegesis be employed?

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    - 1 Thess 5:22 – “Reject every kind of evil.”,  
“Abstain from all appearance of evil.” (KJV)

# THE “THEN AND THERE” (EXEGESIS)

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.

# THE “THEN AND THERE” (EXEGESIS)

“A text without a context is a  
pretext for a proof text.”

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  - Theophylact in his 11<sup>th</sup> century commentary

# THE “THEN AND THERE” (EXEGESIS)

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  - Read well and thoroughly
  - Ask appropriate questions
    - What is the context of the passage?
    - What is the content of the passage?

# EXEGESIS - CONTEXT



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- Historical

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    - Historical context it was a full day's wage

# EXEGESIS - CONTEXT

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- Matthew 20:1-6 – Denarius = ??
  - Penny in KJV
  - Historical context it was a full day's wage
- Use a Bible Encyclopedia or Dictionary

# EXEGESIS - CONTEXT

- Literary

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- Literary
  - The *crucial* task of exegesis

# EXEGESIS - CONTEXT

- Literary
  - The *crucial* task of exegesis
  - Often, able to complete without “experts”

# EXEGESIS - CONTEXT

- Literary Purpose

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- Literary Purpose

- Words only have meaning in a sentence
- Sentences, typically, only have meaning in relation to surrounding verses

# EXEGESIS - CONTEXT

- Literary Questions

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  - What's the point?

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  - What is the author saying and why does he say it right here?

# EXEGESIS - CONTEXT

- Literary Questions

- What's the point?
- What is the author saying and why does he say it right here?
- What is he saying next and why?

# EXEGESIS - CONTEXT

- Literary Difficulties

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  - A translation that recognizes poetry and paragraphs makes this easier

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- A translation that recognizes poetry and paragraphs makes this easier
- KJV (and to some extent NASB) represent each verse individually, therefore making units of thought difficult

# EXEGESIS - CONTENT

- Content

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  - Meaning of Words

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  - Choice of the original text when the manuscripts (original copies) differ from one another

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- Content
  - Meaning of Words
  - Grammatical relationships in sentences
  - Choice of the original text when the manuscripts (original copies) differ from one another
  - Overlaps with some of Historical Context

# EXEGESIS - CONTENT

- 2 Corinthians 5:16 (NASB)

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  - Therefore from now on we recognize no one **according to the flesh**; even though we have known Christ **according to the flesh**, yet now we know Him **in this way** no longer.

# EXEGESIS - CONTENT

- 2 Corinthians 5:16 (NIV)
  - So from now on we regard no one **from a worldly point of view**. Though we once regarded Christ in **this way**, we do so no longer.

# EXEGESIS - CONTENT

- 2 Corinthians 5:16 Differences NASB vs NIV

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# EXEGESIS - CONTENT

- 2 Corinthians 5:16 Differences NASB vs NIV
  - According to the Flesh (NASB)
    - Could mean either “Christ as man” or “from our human perspective”
  - From a Worldly Point of View (NIV)
    - Clearly shows “perspective” is the intent

# EXEGESIS - TOOLS



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- Multiple translations of the text

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- Multiple translations of the text
- Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia

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- Multiple translations of the text
- Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia
- Exegetical Commentary

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- Exegetical Commentary
  - Must ensure a “good” commentary

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- Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia
- Exegetical Commentary
  - Must ensure a “good” commentary
  - This is the last step to take in the process

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- Hermeneutics describes the entire scope of “interpretation”, inclusive of exegesis
- It is also more narrowly defined as “seeking the contemporary relevance of ancient texts.”

# “HERE AND NOW” - HERMENEUTICS

- Order of Interpretation

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# “HERE AND NOW” - HERMENEUTICS

- Order of Interpretation
  - Beginning with the “Here and Now”
    - Texts are easily taken out of context
    - Out of context, the “plainness” of the text can be easily manipulated
    - Interpretation must be objective

# ORDER OF INTERPRETATION

- Beginning with the “Here and Now”

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  - Prosperity Gospel – 3 John 2

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# ORDER OF INTERPRETATION

- Beginning with the “Here and Now”
  - Prosperity Gospel – 3 John 2
  - Baptism of the dead – 1 Corinthians 15:29
  - Snake Handling – Mark 16:18
  - A result of “There and Then” being ignored

# NECESSITY OF INTERPRETATION

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- We desire to know what the Bible means *for us*
- Often, we decide what it means based on what we want it to mean and then give credit to the Holy Spirit

# HOLY SPIRIT LED INTERPRETATION

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  - John 16:13 - But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth
  - The rest of John 16:13 - He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

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# HOLY SPIRIT LED INTERPRETATION

- Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth
  - The Spirit led men to write Scriptures in the “Here and Now”, and “Then and There”
  - Using Scripture only for the “Here and Now” limits the Spirit’s work in the text

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- Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth
  - ‘The Spirit’s help for us will come in our discovering the original intent and in guiding us as we try faithfully to apply that meaning to our own situations.’

# INTENT OF INTERPRETATION

- “A text cannot mean what it could never have meant for its original readers/hearers”

# INTENT OF INTERPRETATION

- “A text cannot mean what it could never have meant for its original readers/hearers”
- “The true meaning of the biblical text for us is what God originally intended it to mean when it was first spoken or written.”

# WAYS TO READ THE BIBLE



# WAYS TO READ THE BIBLE

- Devotional Reading

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- Learning and Understanding

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- These both must be done

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- Devotional Reading
- Learning and Understanding
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- This class focuses on Learning and Understanding, but do not stop Devotional reading