

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?

- The Bible IS clear and straightforward.

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

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- The Bible MUST be read and understood by all believers.
- In fact, our problem is often not “Right Belief”, but “Right Practice.”

DO WE NEED TO INTERPRET?

- Philippians 2:4
- Do everything without grumbling or arguing

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 - Do everything without grumbling or arguing
 - The goal of good interpretation is not “uniqueness” or “cleverness”

DO WE NEED TO INTERPRET?

- The goal of interpretation is:

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To get at the plain
meaning of the text

DO WE NEED TO INTERPRET?

- If the Bible is plain and the goal of interpretation is plainness, then why not just read?

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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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- Church
- Worship
- 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.

THE NATURE OF THE READER

- “Flesh”

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- If it means “body”, then this is about “bodily appetites”
- If it means, “sinful nature”, then the text is referring to self-centered existence

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- Different Translations

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- Our version is the *beginning point* of our study
- However, our version is the *end result* of scholarly effort

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- The Obviousness of Plainness

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- Snake-Handling (Appalachians)

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 - Snake-Handling (Appalachians)
 - 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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- Not to unify to my (or your) *version* of what is “plain”

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- To affirm our inclination towards poor interpretation

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 - 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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- The Tension of Scripture:
- God's Word
 - 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 not only propositions and imperatives
 - The Bible is also God's voice spoken "within the particular circumstances and events of human history."

THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURE

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

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- Exegesis

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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 11th century commentary

THE “THEN AND THERE” (EXEGESIS)

- How do we exegete Scripture?

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THE “THEN AND THERE” (EXEGESIS)

- How do we exegete Scripture?
 - 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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- Matthew 20:1-6 – Denarius = ??

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 - Penny in KJV

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- Matthew 20:1-6 – Denarius = ??
 - Penny in KJV
 - 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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- Words only have meaning in a sentence

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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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- Literary Questions
- What's the point?

EXEGESIS - CONTEXT

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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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- Literary Difficulties

- 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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- Content
- Meaning of Words

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- Grammatical relationships in sentences

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

EXEGESIS - CONTENT

- 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)

EXEGESIS - CONTENT

- 2 Corinthians 5:16 (NASB)
 - 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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 - Could mean either “Christ as man” or “from our human perspective”

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 - Could mean either “Christ as man” or “from our human perspective”
- From a Worldly Point of View (NIV)

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

EXEGESIS - TOOLS

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 - Must ensure a “good” commentary

EXEGESIS - TOOLS

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

“HERE AND NOW” - HERMENEUTICS

- Meaning

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- Hermeneutics describes the entire scope of “interpretation”, inclusive of exegesis

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- Meaning
- 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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- Beginning with the “Here and Now”

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 - Texts are easily taken out of context
 - Out of context, the “plainness” of the text can be easily manipulated

“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

ORDER OF INTERPRETATION

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- Snake Handling – Mark 16:18

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

- We desire to know what the Bible means *for us*

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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

HOLY SPIRIT LED INTERPRETATION

- Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth
- 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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- The Spirit led men to write Scriptures in the “Here and Now”, and “Then and There”

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

HOLY SPIRIT LED INTERPRETATION

- Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth

HOLY SPIRIT LED INTERPRETATION

- 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

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- Devotional Reading

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- Devotional Reading
- Learning and Understanding

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- Learning and Understanding
- These both must be done

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