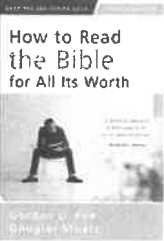


How to Read the Bible: Hermeneutics 101

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What Is The Bible?

- Collection of 66 books (*Biblios*)
 - 39 Old (First) Testament
 - 27 New Testament
 - Oldest written = book of Job
 - Last written = book of Revelation

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The Bible

- Written in three languages:
 - Hebrew
 - Aramaic
 - Greek
- Approximately over a 1500 year period
- 40 Writers
- 3 Continents

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The Bible

- Holy Scriptures – God reveals Himself to us
- God’s “Word” - Logos
- Divinely “Inspired” by the Holy Spirit
- God chose human authors – including their personalities, styles, vocabulary, etc.
- Inerrant, infallible
- No contradictions
- Moral guide and compass, teaches us how to live as followers of Christ

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The Bible

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

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The Bible

- “Canonicity”
 - Not in chronological order
 - Selection was a process over span of years;
 - Especially the Old Testament
 - NT criteria

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Choosing a Translation

- Reading versus listening (audio Bible)
 - Spending time with God
 - Listening usually means doing something else (driving, hobby, etc.)
- Choose a paper Bible!
 - Mark it up, highlight, notes in margins
- Avoid digital Bibles
 - Great for casual readings but not study!

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Why Are There So Many Translations Now?

- Older English Translations:
 - Tyndale Bible – 1535
 - King James Bible – 1611
 - Both used Textus Receptus, Byzantine text
- Discovery of manuscripts (over 5,000)
- Dead Sea Scrolls
- Modern Scholarship

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Why Are There So Many Translations Now?

- Better understanding of ancient languages & languages change
- Example Joshua 11:13, Hebrew *tel*
 - KJV – “But as for the cities that stood *still in their strength*, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn.
 - ESV – “But none of the cities that stood on *mounds* did Israel burn, except Hazor alone; that Joshua burned.”

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Translations

- Translation vs. Interpretation:
 - Translation = translators translate the text from the original language to English (Although the translators do some interpretation to capture meaning)
 - Interpretation = what we do when we read what was translated from the original language to English in search of the meaning

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Choosing a Translation

- Formal (literal) vs Functional (dynamic)
- In order from “formal” to “functional”
 - King James Version
 - ESV (English Standard Version)
 - NIV (New International Version)
 - NLT (New Living Translation)
 - Message – (Not a translation, paraphrase)
- Others, HCSB, RSV, NASB, etc.

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How to Read Your Bible

- I will share information about the Bible which will help us read and study it
- To gain more knowledge about God and His will
- To draw closer to Him
- To help remove the stigma that the Bible is “too hard to read”

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First Things First, You

“The Bible was not given for our information but for our transformation.”
D.L. Moody

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First Things First, You

- Always start with PRAYER!
 - Ask for the Holy Spirit's presence!
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in Truth!
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to convict us!
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to transform us!
 - Ask for Illumination! (Lord what do you want me to know?)

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Second Things First, You

- Family
- Experiences
- Traditions, Church, Denominations
- Teachings (arriving at the truth, how?)
- Presuppositions/Ideologies/Secularism/Culture
- All influence how you read and interpret the Bible!
- Not always correct or inline with God's Word!
- Searching for truth vs. defending what we believe is true

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Hermeneutics

Fancy word for how we interpret the Bible

Different hermeneutical or interpretation methods:

- **Literal meaning**
 - Exact meaning, or word for word
- **Allegorical meaning**
 - Hidden spiritual meaning, symbolism (be careful here)
- **Metaphorical meaning**
 - A figure of speech

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Hermeneutics, cont.

More fancy words: Exegesis vs Eisegesis

- **Exegesis** – what does the text say and mean – pulling the meaning out
- **Eisegesis** – we twist what the text says by adding what we think it should mean to fit our agenda, ideas, presuppositions

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Hermeneutics, cont.

- Primary vs Secondary sources
- Primary source – Bible
- Secondary sources – commentaries, dictionaries, devotionals, etc.

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Genres

The Bible contains different genres!

What is a genre?

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Genres in the Bible

Examples:

- Narrative
- Prophecy
- Prose
- Wisdom
- Songs
- Epistle
- Poetry
- Apocalyptic

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Genres, cont.

- We cannot read/interpret each book the same way!
- Narrative versus prophecy
- Wisdom versus apocalyptic
- Epistle versus Gospel
- **Example:**
 - Genesis (Historical narrative) vs Proverbs (Wisdom)

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Genres, cont.

Another example:
Matthew vs. 1 Corinthians

- Matthew (Narrative, Gospel)
- 1 Corinthians (Letter, epistle, "occasional")

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Authorial Intent

- Why did the author write what was written?
- To whom?
- Original audience?
- We miss this part!
- We want to make the Bible about us! (especially Revelation!)
- Example – 1 Corinthians

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Context

- Authorial intent
- Historical, socio-economical, political information
- Bible itself – overarching message

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Context, cont.

- Do not take a verse(s) out of context! (eisegesis)
- Something can never mean what is was never meant to mean

Example #1: Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

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Context, cont.

Example #2: Isaiah 65:21 "They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit." (References to Deut. 28:30, Ezek 28:26)

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Context, cont.

- Narrative is not normative
- Bible as a "metanarrative"
- One continuous story of God's redemptive plan for creation
- Especially, Old Testament
- Be careful not to allegorize (example, Ephraim (UK) and Manasseh (US) or Great Babylon is...)

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Context, cont.

- Pay attention to literary devices:
 - Inclusios (bookends)
 - Conjunctions (therefore, but, and, moreover, etc.)
 - Imperatives (commands)
 - Rhetorical questions

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Process of Reading/Studying

- Zoom in and out!
 - Verse
 - Co-text
 - Chapter
 - Book/Epistle
 - Testament
 - Bible

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Three Questions

1. What does the text say?
 - Simply, prayerfully read it!

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Three Questions

2. What does the text mean?
 - Authorial intent
 - Original audience
 - What was going on when written?
 - Scripture interpreting Scripture

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Three Questions

3. What does the text mean to me/significance?
- In its original context
 - How can I/we apply the meaning today?
 - What is God saying to me/us?
 - Universal truths vs. one-time events/occasions

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The Bridge

When we read and study the Bible we must interpret what was written **then** so that we can apply it to our lives **now!**

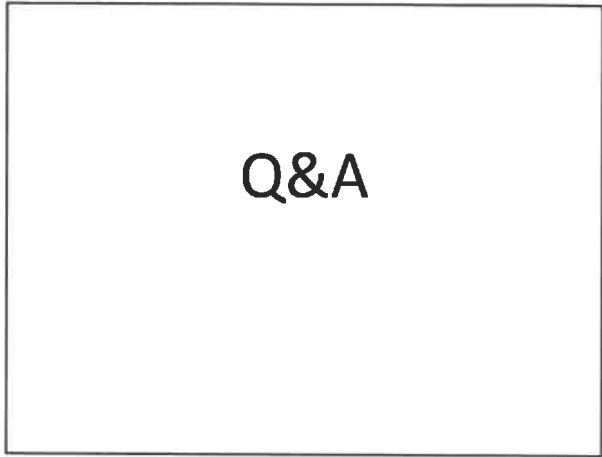
Interpretation is a **bridge** we construct so that we can walk back and forth.

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Review

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