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New Testament Bible Survey

Introduction and Class Overview

Welcome to the Faith of the 1st Century!

"To God I commit my cause.

It is His to perfect my way,

His to make straight my heart.

He, in His Charity, will wipe away my transgression.

For He from the Wellspring of Knowledge has made His light to burst forth,

and my eye has gazed on His wonders;

and the light that is in my heart has pierced the deep things of existence.

He is ever the stay of my right hand,

the path beneath my feet is set on a mighty rock unshaken before all things.

For that rock beneath my feet is the truth of God,

and His power is the stay of my right hand;

from the fountain of His charity my vindication goes forth.

But I – I belong to wicked humanity,

to the communion of sinful flesh.

My transgressions, my iniquities and sins,

and the waywardness of my heart condemns me to communion with the worm and with all that walk in darkness.

For a mortal's way is not of himself,

neither can a man direct his own steps.

The judgment lies with God,

and it is His to perfect man's way.

Behold, if I should totter,

God's mercies will be my salvation.

If I stumble in the waywardness of flesh,

I shall be set aright through God's righteousness ever-enduring.

If distress breaks out,

He will snatch my soul from hell,

and set my foot on the path.

For He, in His compassion, has drawn me near to Him,

and His judgment upon me shall be rendered in His Mercy.

In His righteous truth He has judged me,

and in His abundant goodness will sever my iniquities,

and in his righteousness cleanse me from all the pollution of humanity and the sin of humankind,

that I may acknowledge to God His righteousness,

and to the Most High His majestic splendor."

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Welcome to New Testament Survey

- We are here to journey through the second section of the Bible, the New Testament
- Class purpose:
  - To read the New Testament over 10 weeks
  - To better understand the context of the letters and books so we can be better interpreters
  - To work together to answer our questions about the message and implications of the NT

"People often get upset when you teach them what is in the Bible rather than what they presume is in the Bible" – N.T. Wright, Senior Research Fellow, Oxford University

What do YOU want to get out of this class?

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Welcome to New Testament Survey

“The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.”

- L.P. Hartley in *The Go-Between*

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What is the Bible?

- The story of God's relationship with humanity
- 2 major sections:
  - Old Testament, also called the Hebrew Bible – 39 books
  - The New Testament – 27 books
- The Old Testament has 3 sections
  - Pentateuch – first 5 books, aka "Torah"
  - Nevi'im – the Prophets
  - Ketuvim – the Writings



- The Old Testament focuses on how God moves to regain his relationship with humanity through a special group of people, the Patriarch Abraham and his descendants.
- The plan was to bless "all nations" through this group.

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The Story of the Hebrew Bible

- The nation largely fails at this, preferring to become “like other nations” and accepting worship of other gods in their midst.
- God repeatedly responds with grace and forgiveness, calling them to repent via the Prophets
- God removed the northern tribes of Israel via the Assyrians (722 BCE); exiled the southern tribes via the Babylonians (587 BCE)
- A small remnant returns to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and Jerusalem; the OT ends with a Persian (gentile) king ruling and a rededication to ethnic and religious purity
- This trend continues in the Intertestamental Period – a time of huge social, political, and religious upheaval
- In the midst of the redefinition of Judaism, the New Testament Period is born.



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Are We Still in Exile?

- The major issue of the 1st century is: “What does it mean to live as faithful Jews in a world ruled by others?”
- This led to the question if God’s covenant people were STILL in the Exile and, if so, when will God rescue them?
- Theme of divine rescue plays out in numerous ways in the Hebrew Bible
- Find hints throughout:
  - Numbers 24:17 - *“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.*
- Picked up in later Intertestamental writings: *Psalms of Solomon*



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New Testament Introduction

- Contains 27 books
- Contain a variety of genres, purposes for writing, authors
- Contain materials traced back to Jesus' time – oral traditions
- Books written anywhere from around 50 CE to the late 90s CE (dating is a highly disputed, but largely inconsequential activity)
- All point to one central message:
  - The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the fundamental point of moment of history
- The NT writers understood their message to be a continuation of the OT's message – a re-statement that God's redeemed people include both Jews and Gentiles

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New Testament Introduction

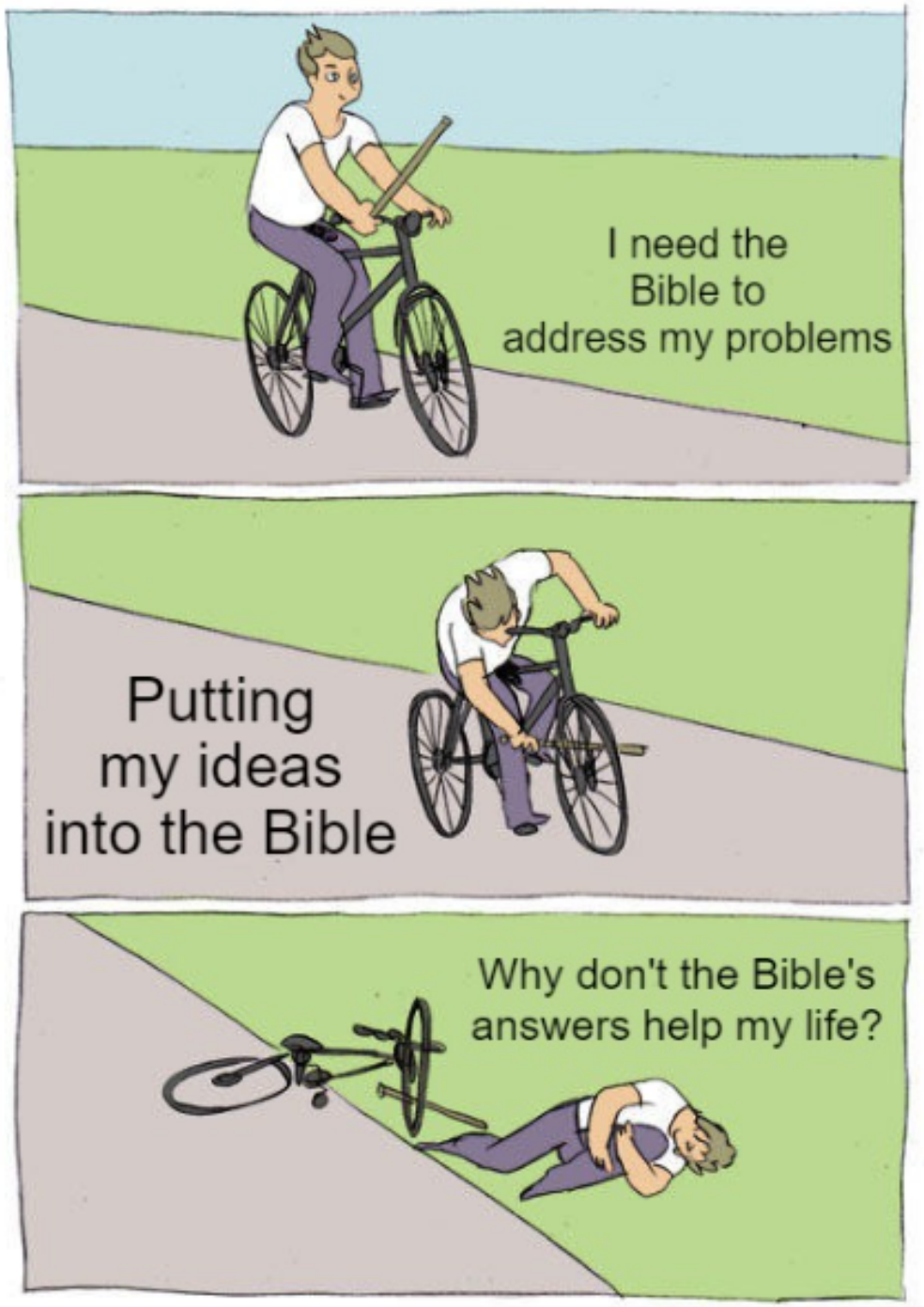
A word of warning!

#1 - Beware placing ourselves over God's Word by reading our own ideas INTO the Bible – we call this ***eisegesis***

#2 – Beware of ***biblicism*** – the idea that we don't have to interpret the Bible when we read it, which ignores historical or cultural contexts in favor of our own modern concerns

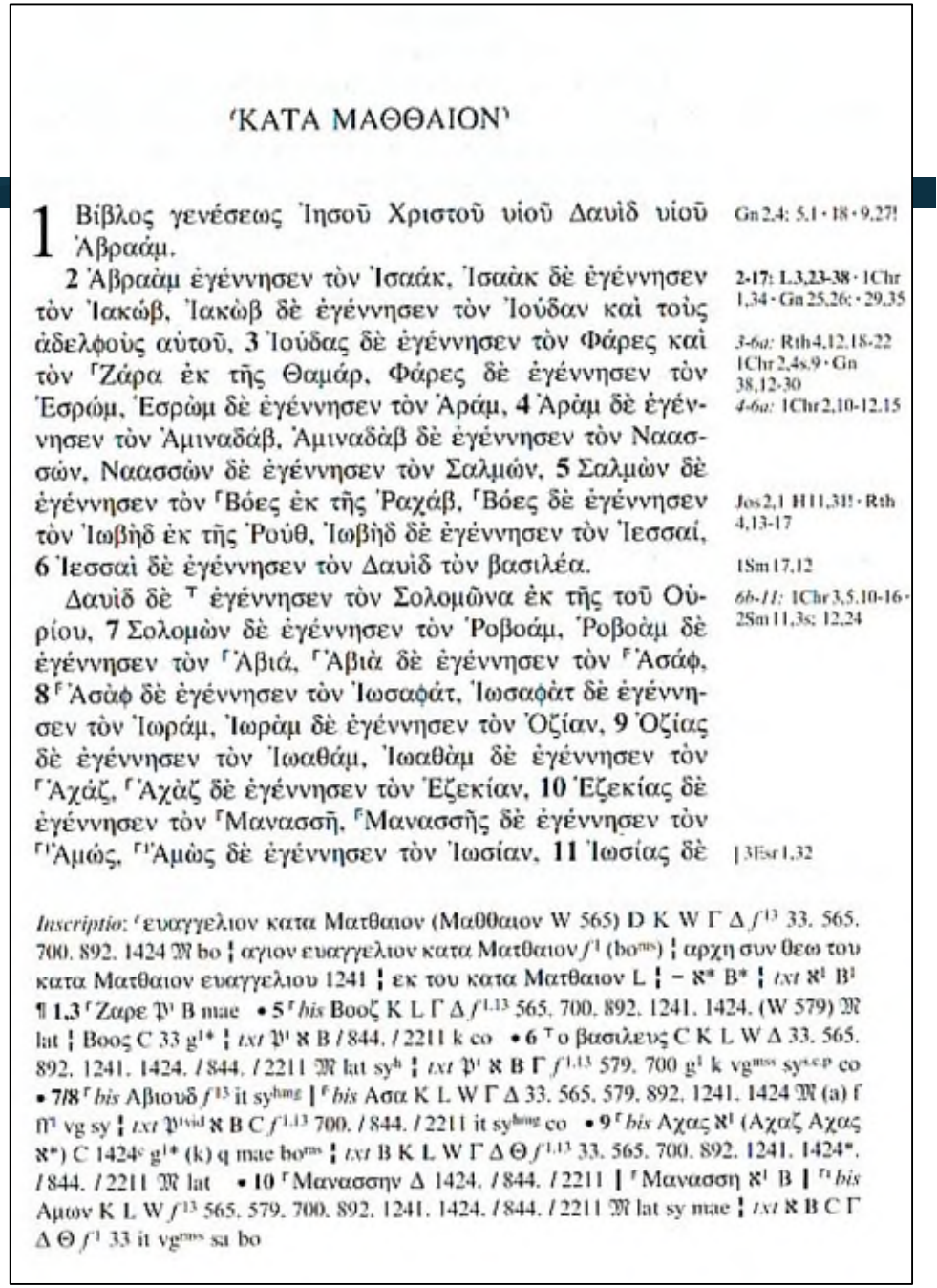
To stay away from these errors, we must follow a 3-step process to properly interpret the Bible:

1. What does the text say?
2. What is the historical context?
3. What does it mean to me today?



3 Critical ?s: The Text

- Ancient Text
  - *Koine* Greek, not Classical Greek (or English)
  - Modern translations use “eclectic” text
- Genre is Key
  - Gospels – unique form of ancient biography
  - Epistles – addressing specific issues and situations
  - Revelation - letter, prophetic, and apocalyptic literature
- Different Grammatical Rules
  - No punctuation
  - Gendered nouns, verbs with mood/tense
  - THEY LOVE PARTICIPLES!!!!



ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΘΘΑΙΟΝ

1 Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ.

2 Ἀβραὰμ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰσαάκ, Ἰσαὰκ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακὼβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ, 3 Ἰούδας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Φάρες καὶ τὸν Ζάρα ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ, Φάρες δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἑσρώμ, Ἑσρὼμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀράμ, 4 Ἀρὰμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμιναδάβ, Ἀμιναδὰβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ναασσών, Ναασσὼν δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαλμών, 5 Σαλμὼν δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Βόες ἐκ τῆς Ῥαχάβ, Βόες δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωβὴδ ἐκ τῆς Ῥούθ, Ἰωβὴδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεσσαί, 6 Ἰεσσαὶ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Δαυὶδ τὸν βασιλέα.

Δαυὶδ δὲ ⊤ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου, 7 Σολομὼν δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ῥοβοάμ, Ῥοβοὰμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀβιά, Ἀβιὰ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀσάφ, 8 Ἀσὰφ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσαφάτ, Ἰωσαφὰτ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωράμ, Ἰωρὰμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ὀζίαν, 9 Ὀζίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωαθάμ, Ἰωαθὰμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀχάζ, Ἀχὰζ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐζεκίαν, 10 Ἐζεκίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Μανασσῆ, Μανασσῆς δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμώς, Ἀμὼς δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσίαν, 11 Ἰωσίας δὲ

Gn 2,4; 5,1 · 18 · 9,27!

2-17: L 3,23-38 · 1Chr 1,34 · Gn 25,26c · 29,35

3-6a: Rth 4,12.18-22 1Chr 2,4s.9 · Gn 38,12-30

4-6a: 1Chr 2,10-12.15

Jos 2,1 H 11,31! · Rth 4,13-17

1Sm 17.12

6b-11: 1Chr 3,5.10-16 · 2Sm 11,3s; 12,24

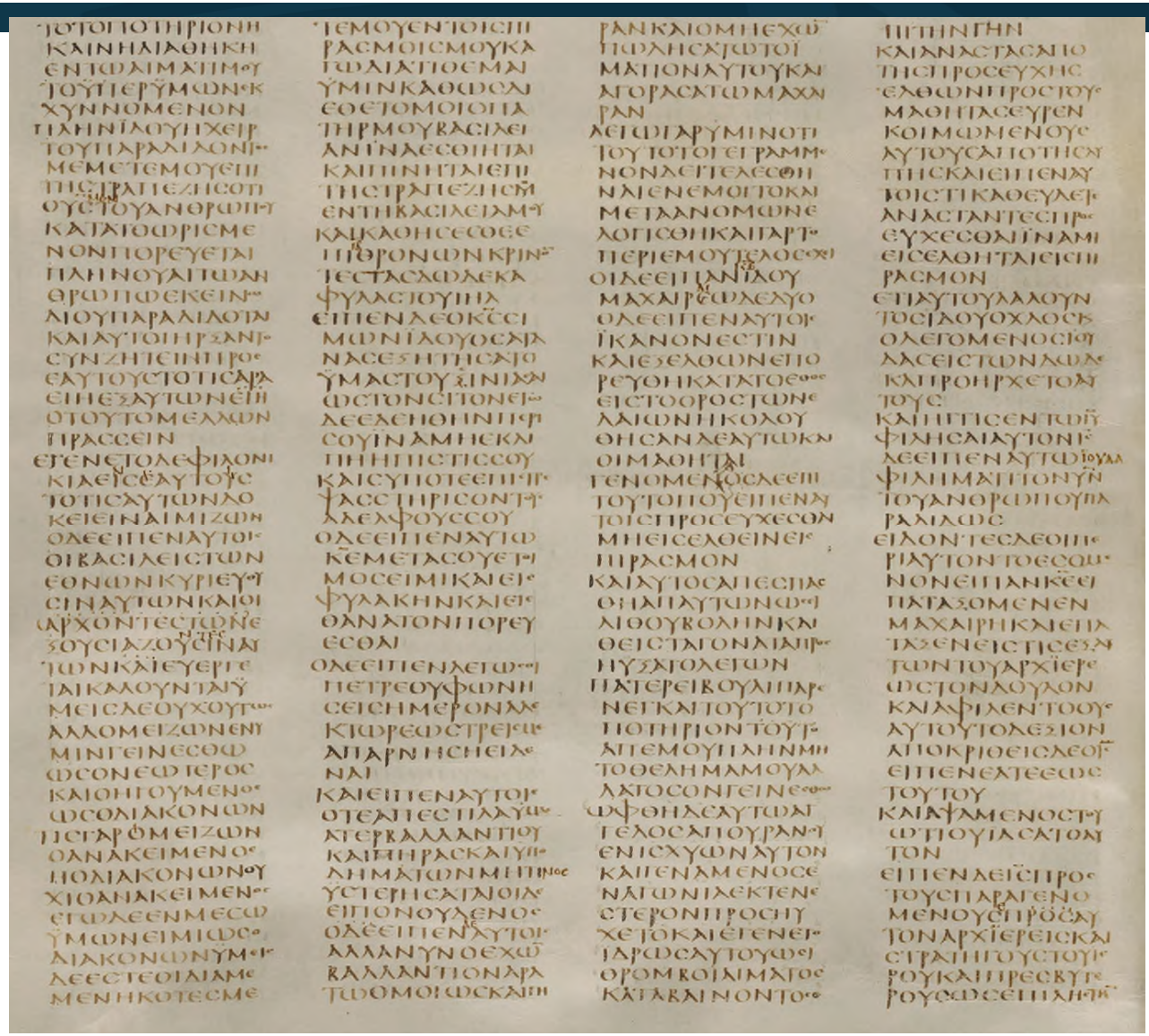
| 3Esr 1.32

Inscriptio: ευαγγελιον κατα Ματθαιον (Μαθθαιον W 565) D K W Γ Δ f^{13} 33. 565. 700. 892. 1424 𝔐 bo ¦ αγιον ευαγγελιον κατα Ματθαιον f^{1} (bo^{ms}) ¦ αρχη συν θεω του κατα Ματθαιον ευαγγελιου 1241 ¦ εκ του κατα Ματθαιον L ¦ – ℵ* B* ¦ *txt* ℵ¹ B¹

¶ **1,3** Ζαρε 𝔓¹ B mae • **5** *bis* Βοοζ K L Γ Δ $f^{1.13}$ 565. 700. 892. 1241. 1424. (W 579) 𝔐 lat ¦ Βοος C 33 g^{1*} ¦ *txt* 𝔓¹ ℵ B / 844. / 2211 k co • **6** ⊤ ο βασιλευς C K L W Δ 33. 565. 892. 1241. 1424. / 844. / 2211 𝔐 lat sy^{h} ¦ *txt* 𝔓¹ ℵ B Γ $f^{1.13}$ 579. 700 g^{1} k vg^{mss} $sy^{s.c.p}$ co • **7/8** *bis* Αβιουδ f^{13} it sy^{hmg} | *bis* Ασα K L W Γ Δ 33. 565. 579. 892. 1241. 1424 𝔐 (a) f ff² vg sy ¦ *txt* $𝔓^{vid}$ ℵ B C $f^{1.13}$ 700. / 844. / 2211 it sy^{hmg} co • **9** *bis* Αχας ℵ¹ (Αχαζ Αχας ℵ*) C 1424ᶜ g^{1*} (k) q mae bo^{ms} ¦ *txt* B K L W Γ Δ Θ $f^{1.13}$ 33. 565. 700. 892. 1241. 1424*. / 844. / 2211 𝔐 lat • **10** Μανασσην Δ 1424. / 844. / 2211 | Μανασση ℵ¹ B | *bis* Αμων K L W f^{13} 565. 579. 700. 892. 1241. 1424. / 844. / 2211 𝔐 lat sy mae ¦ *txt* ℵ B C Γ Δ Θ f^{1} 33 it vg^{mss} sa bo

3 Critical ?s: The Text

- Rhetorical Structure
  - Don’t read everything as flat/literal – Gal. 5:12
  - 2 Corinthians – not 3 letters smashed together!
- Word Studies – Yes!
  - Can highlight usage among many types of literature – *semiotic field*
- Word Studies – No!
  - Some words we have to take educated guess on – *authentein* in 1 Tim 2:12 (6 occurrences in all Greek literature)
  - Translation is never 1:1



3 Critical Issues: The Context



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3 Critical Issues: The Context

- We must examine the historical context of the New Testament including its background, place, and contemporary ideas
- Examples of context in the NT:
  - What does it mean when Jude incorporates two extra-biblical Pseudepigrapha, 1st Enoch & *Assumption of Moses?*
  - How does the variety of contemporary apocalyptic literature like 2 Esdras helps us understand the images of Revelation?



We must recognize the inherent tension between understanding the historical background of the Scriptures and the application to our current day.

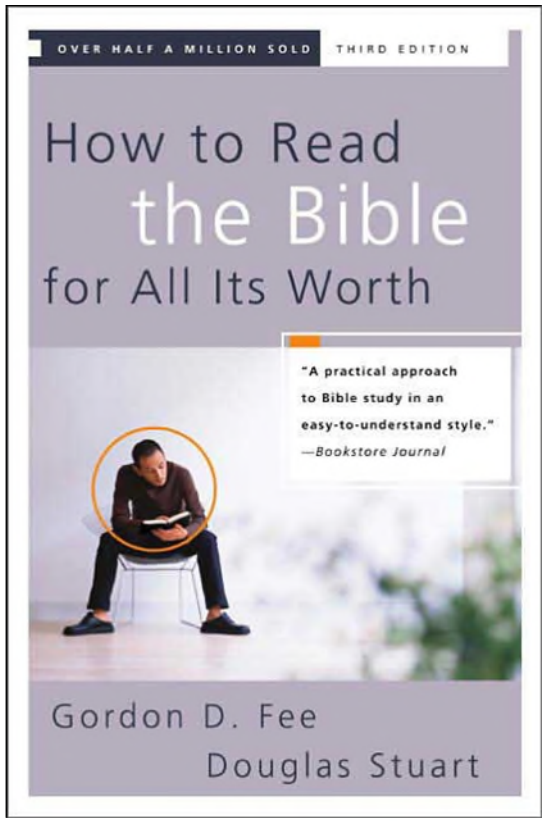
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3 Critical ?s: The Context

Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart –

"…because God chose to speak his Word through ***human words in history***, every book in the Bible also has ***historical particularity***; each document is conditioned by the language, time, and culture in which it was originally written (and in some cases also by the oral history it had before it was written down). Interpretation of the Bible is demanded by the 'tension' that exists between its ***eternal relevance*** and its ***historical particularity***." [their emphasis]

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, pg. 17.



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3 Critical ?s: What Does It Mean Now?

- Only after we answer the first two questions can we attempt ? #3
- Application is where most of our disagreements occur!
- Applications can change, because our culture changes (any ladies wearing gold earrings or curls?)
- That's where we need humility and to remember the final important ingredient…



Overarching: The Holy Spirit

- We must actively submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit to prevent warping the Word to our sinful hearts.
- We must be courageous enough to questions not just the biblical text, but ourselves, our loyalties, and our prejudices.
- This is IMPOSSIBLE without the Holy Spirit.
  - **2 Timothy 3:16 – "All Scripture is God-breathed (*theopneustos*)."**
  - **2 Peter 1:20-21 – "…all prophecy of Scripture is not of its own interpretation. For by the will of man then prophecy was not brought, but being carried by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God."**

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The Full Picture of Scripture

Study not just the words on the page, but the full picture by understanding what is going on in the first century

- **Galatians 3**:**28**, NIV –

"There is neither **Jew nor Gentile**, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

- ***Psalms of Solomon* 17:21 – 23 (1st c. BCE) -**

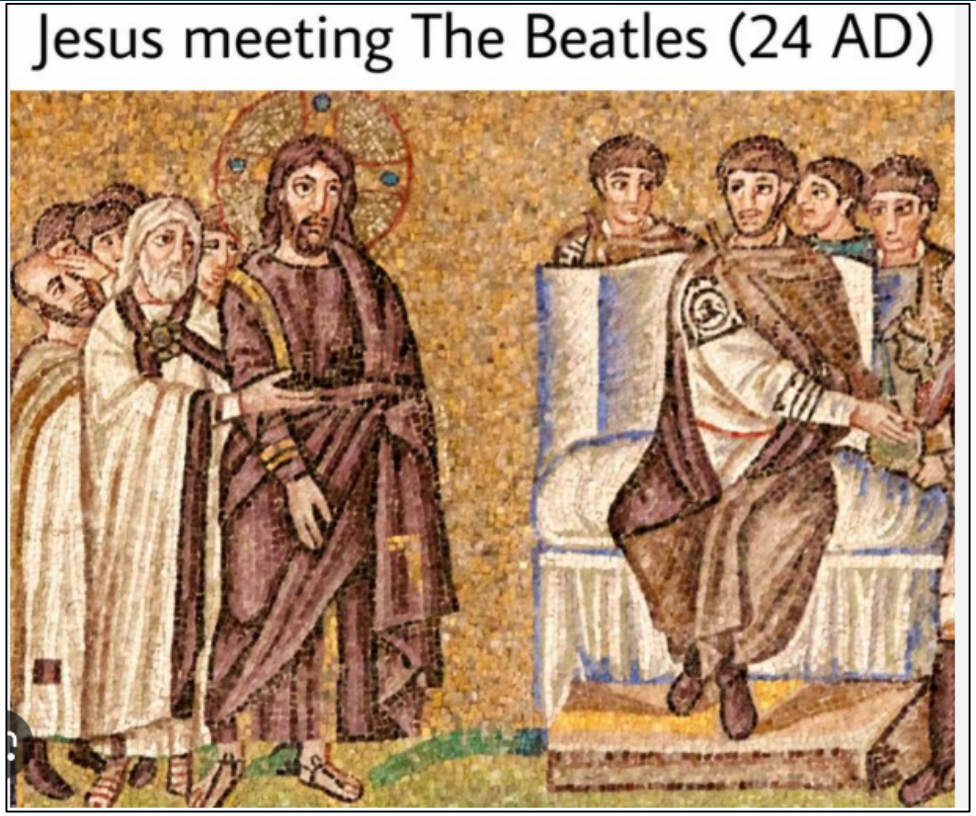
"See, Lord, and raise up for them their king, the son of David, to rule over your servant Israel in the time known to you, O God. Undergird him with the strength to **destroy the unrighteous rulers**, to **purge Jerusalem from gentiles** who trample her to destruction; in wisdom and in righteousness **to drive out the sinners** from the inheritance; to **smash the arrogance of sinners** like a potter's jar."

The Full Picture of Scripture

- The New Testament demonstrates that the early church was more:
  - Diverse
  - Divided (somewhat)
  - Effective

  than we often believe!

- The New Testament is the continuation of the revelation of God in the Old Testament, revealing God's specific plan in the person and work of Jesus Christ for the rescue of humanity.



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Today's Takeaways

- The New Testament is the continuation of the story of redemption, building on the Old Testament
- Ask 3 critical questions when reading and interpreting the Bible:
  - What does the text say?
  - What is the context?
  - What does it mean to me?
- We must be brave enough to question our own loyalties and prejudices when reading the Bible

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Preparation for Next Week

- NT Diagnostic Test – NO GRADES!!!!
- What is a “theological ditty?”
  - ½ page, single-spaced reflection on a question
  - See sample ditty for an example
  - Due before class next week
  - Question: “What is theology?”

- Reading:
  - Gospels According to Mark, Matthew
  - Burge / Green – Chapters 8, 9

