

POWER PRINCIPLES OF EXEGESIS

A Tool to Find Gems in the Word of God



Psalm 119:105

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

B r o o k y R S t o c k t o n

Power Principles of Exegesis

Version 1.5



Brooky Stockton, Ph.d.

**Ret. Professor of NT Theology
Trinity Seminary
P.O. Box 884
Tijeras, NM 87059**

Revised August 2025

**This E-Book is not for sale.
Freely Received, Freely Given**

**<https://nikeinsights.famguardian.org/>
<https://famguardian.org/>
<https://sedm.org/>**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
PREFACE	5
PURPOSE OF THIS WORK	6
POWER PRINCIPLES OF EXEGESIS	7
1. DEFINITION OF EXEGESIS	7
2. UNDERSTAND STEWARDSHIP	11
HANDLE GOD’S WORD WITH INTEGRITY	12
TRUST GOD’S WORD	14
KNOW THE VALUE OF SCRIPTURE	16
3. SECURE THE TEXT	18
4. EXAMINE THE CONTEXT	20
5. DISCERN TO WHOM THE TEXT WAS ORIGNALLY WRITTEN	23
6. DISCOVER THE PROBLEM ADDRESSED	26
7. KNOW THE GENRE OF LITERATURE YOU ARE STUDYING	29
8. CAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF THE PASSAGE	33
9. EXERCISE COMMON SENSE IN INTERPRETATION	36
THE FORMAL RULES OF HERMENEUTIC	37
10. UNDERSTAND THE GOAL OF EXEGESIS	44
11. LEARN THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINITIONS	47
12. LEARN ENGLISH GRAMMAR	50
13. THE POWER OF EXEGESIS	51
14. EXEGESIS IN PREACHING	55
15. KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS	56
16. APPRECIATE THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE	57
17. FIND THE PROBLEM ADDRESSED	60
18. STUDY THE MEANING OF GREEK WORDS	62
19. LEARN HEBREW GRAMMAR	64
20. LEARN GREEK GRAMMAR	68
21. KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEBREW AND GREEK	70

22. BE ACQUAINTED WITH LATIN GRAMMAR	73
23. HANDLE THE IMPERATIVE CORRECTLY	77
24. LEARN ABOUT PRINCIPLES OF REASONINNG	80
25. INTERPRETATION V. APPLICATION.....	84
26. VERIFY WITH OTHER REPUTABLE SOURCES	87
27. EXPOSITORY PREACHING.....	88
ADDENDUM	91
28. I KNOWS MY BIBLE.....	91
29. THE VALUE OF GOD’S WORD	93
Psalm 19:7-10	93
30. THE SUPREMACY OF THE SON	99
Hebrews 1:1-3.....	99
31. A PROMISE FOR HEALING	107
James 5:16-20	107
32. A BENEDICTION OF PEACE.....	117
Hebrews 13: 20-21	117
33. A CRUSHED SNAKE	121
Romans 16:20	121
34. GOLDEN SILENCE	127
Habakkuk 2:20	127
35. THE CALL TO HOLINESS IN.....	136
2 Corinthians 7:1.....	136
REFERENCES	143
PUBLICATIONS	145

PREFACE

Q: If you were sent to speak at a Pastor's Conference in Eastern Europe, what would you speak on?

In May 2025 Parker Bible Church in Denver Colorado, associated with Master's College in Los Angeles, sent a team to a pastor's conference in Eastern Europe to speak on How to Exegete Scripture.

How appropriate!

Learning the Power Principles of Exegesis will make the pastors competent Bible students and assure the strength of their churches.

In contrast to exegetical preaching, I went to hear a pastor who when preaching appeared to be jumping up and down on a trampoline and practicing his skills of sliding into third base to stress his sermon points. I left exhausted having learned nothing. What a waste of time!

Develop skills in exegesis and you too will be a powerful influence for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, this work on the **Power Principles of Exegesis** will help you to become a better, powerful, teacher of the Scripture of whom Pastor John MacArthur is a master model.

Brooky Stockton, ret. Pastor / Professor of Theology

P.S. These chapters are seminary teaching notes. Thus, this is not a professionally edited work; your patience is appreciated.



PURPOSE OF THIS WORK

- To equip hungry men eager to know Scripture with the skills of exegeting Biblical texts.
- Thus, this work is a guide for men searching for how they can be a better Bible student and to teach the Word of God accurately and clearly.

POWER PRINCIPLES OF EXEGESIS

1. DEFINITION OF EXEGESIS

FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- The word "Bible" comes from the Greek word "*biblia*" in Matthew 1:1. It means "the scrolls" or "the books".
- The Bible has two divisions: the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT) or the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.
- There are 66 books in the Bible.
- It was written over period of 1500 years -- 1400+ BC - 70[?] AD.¹ An argument can be made that the Bible begin with Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and was preserved by Jacob's family and re-constructed by Moses (Genesis 2:2; 5:1; 10:1, 11:10; Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 31:24).
- It was written on three continents: Asia, Africa, Europe
- There are 39 human authors -- All Hebrews
- The Bible was written in three languages: Hebrew, Biblical-Aramaic Hebrew, and Greek
- There are 66 Books in the Bible

¹ BC or B.C. (Before Christ) is preferred to B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) – a liberal ploy seeking to overthrow Christianity and the authority of the Bible; to create a world that accepts the religious view of “monism” – that all religions are good as opposed to the gospel which teaches that Christ is “the way, the truth, and the life” – (John 14:6).

- Stephen Langton, a 13th-century English Cardinal and Archbishop of Canterbury, is credited with dividing the Bible into chapters. Around 1551, Robert Estienne, a French printer, added the verse divisions completing the system we use for referencing Bible passages.
- There are 1,189 chapters in the Bible
- The KJV Bible contains 31,102 verses.
- There are 783,137 words in the Bible
- The middle verse in the middle of the Bible is Psalm 118:8-9
- According to the Chabad, the Torah scroll contains 304,805 Hebrew letters.
- The Bible is the most translated and bestselling book in history.
- The Bible is the first book ever printed. It was first printed on the Gutenberg printing press, and has been translated into hundreds of languages.
- As of 2023, the complete Bible has been translated into 756 languages, the New Testament into an additional 1,726 languages, and smaller portions of the Bible into another 1,274 languages. This means at least some portions of the Bible have been translated into a total of 3,756 languages.
- The Bible encompasses various literary forms, including poetry, prose, history, and even romance
- Rabbis call the Old Testament the Tanakh -- an acronym formed from the first letters of its three main sections: Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim (law, the prophets, and the writings). The Tanakh consists of twenty-four books, counting as one book each 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles, and Ezra–Nehemiah. The Twelve Minor Prophets (עשר תרי) are also counted as a single book. In Hebrew, the books are often referred to by their prominent first words.

- The Jews call the first five books of the Bible “the Torah.” Christian-Bibles called the Torah the Pentateuch (five books) in the second century and the Greek translation of the OT the Septuagint (LXX).
- Hebrew-Jews translated the OT into the Greek language in the 3rd century following the Hellenization of the world under Alexander the Great (333 BC) – the first known book ever translated into another language. The LXX is considered authoritative in ascertaining the original wording of an OT text. It is corrective in clearing up the fog regarding the genealogy age-numbers in Genesis 10.
- The most expensive book ever sold at auction is the Codex Sassoon (9th-10th century), an ancient Hebrew Bible, which sold for \$38.1 million dollars. This makes it the most valuable manuscript ever sold. It is believed to be the oldest and most complete copy of the Hebrew Bible Source: (Internet websites, Google AI (2025)).
- David said the Word of God was more valuable than gold . . . than fine gold (Psalm 19:10).

In Matthew 4:4 Jesus reminded Satan that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

To fulfill this rule, one must read 30 words a day for 70 years to fulfill this commission. It will take three years and three months to read the Bible through if one reads a chapter a day.

The art of studying the Bible and understanding its words is called Exegesis.

FACTS ABOUT THE BRAIN

Pastor Fred Bergloff (CA) pointed out the following:

- The human body contains 78 organs, about 40 trillion cells, and 172 billion cells.
- Our body has 37,000 billion chemical reactions per second. That is: 37,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 37 followed by 21 Zeros.

- Number of galaxies in observable Universe: Approx. 200 million! 200,000,000 2 followed by 8 zeros! And/or as many as two trillion galaxies total if we use the infrared spectrum -- 2,000,000,000,000; that is 2 followed by 12 zeros; i.e. atoms in the Universe? 10^{80} th Power!
- The average human brain has about 86 billion neurons or human brain cells with an addition 86 billion glial cells that protect and nourish the brain.
- The synapses or connections in adult brain are estimated to be 1 million per second. "The overall number of synapses in the adult brain is estimated to be in the range of 86 billion to 17.2 trillion action potentials per second" (Astra Bryant, Neuroscientist).
- The number of atoms in the observable universe is estimated to be between 10^{78} and 10^{82} .
- Dr. Bryant says there are "100 trillion synapses, each with an independent firing rate range of < 1Hz to ~200 Hz. So a range of 100 trillion to 20 quadrillion" – that's more synapses than all the atoms in the universe (<https://www.neuwritewest.org/blog/4541>)

So, man, the summit of God's creation, has no excuse for not reading, studying, and memorizing pivotal portions of the Word of God.

DEFINITION OF EXEGESIS

Exegesis is foundational to sound theology, responsible preaching, and faithful application of the Holy Scriptures.

It is a **skill** that must be learned and not a gift to be received.

Accurate and rich interpretation involves the art of observation. A good Bible student notes the meaning of words, context, syntax, grammar of the original Greek or Hebrew word, and theological adhesiveness.

Exegesis is the critical explanation or interpretation of a sacred, Biblical text. The term comes from the Greek term *exēgēsis*, meaning "to lead out," and it refers to drawing out the text intended meaning from a passage rather than reading one's own ideas into it.

DEFINITION OF EISEGESIS

Eisegesis involves the human tendency to read into the text what is not there; to interpret the vocabulary, problems addressed, and syntax through the lens of modern man.

See Stockton's irony Article in the Addendum, "I KNOWS MY BIBLE."

2. UNDERSTAND STEWARDSHIP

Every man is accountable for how he handles the Word of God . . . for seeking first the kingdom of God . . . and studying to show himself "approved unto God" (Matthew 6:33; 2 Timothy 2:15)

► *1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.*

The "man" refers to anyone evaluating Paul's missionary team.

The verb "account" (*logizestho*) is a passive imperative whereby Paul commands them to mentally discern his appointment as a steward (custodian) of the mysteries of God.

The term "mysteries of God" refers generally to the revelation of God and specifically to the gospel of Christ. "Mysteries" does **not** refer to something unknown and inexplicable, but to the revealed will of God made plain to men in the Sacred Writings.

The problem is that men fail to grasp the treasures of the gospel or clutter the message with personal prejudice and cultural bias. Consequently, churchmen tend to pass on a warped, defective, eclectic gospel to their congregation

Main application: Christian-ministers need to see themselves as security guards of the golden gospel with a duty to transfer it to the next generation in tack as it was received from the apostle (2 Timothy 2:2; 1:12-14).

“We are dealing with God’s thoughts: we are obligated to take the greatest pains to understand them truly and to explain them clearly.” (D.A. Carson, the Gospel Coalition)

James 3:1 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

The term “masters” (*didaskaloi*) is a plural noun referring to a teacher or rabbi.

The verb “be” is negated by the adverb (not); that is, James discourages religiously ambitious men from seeking the status and position of a pastor-teacher in the church because it involves great accountability.

Romans 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

“So then” refers back to Paul argument that men should choose God-approved habits – customs that protect the consciences of other men.

The context refers to differences of lifestyle choices between Jewish and Gentile Christians.

The word “account” (*logos*) refers to giving a chronicle response to one’s manager in relation to one’s assigned duties.

MAIN INTERPRETATION

Ministers are custodians of the gospel. Each will stand before the Judge and give account for his management of the Scriptures and particular the treasured gospel given to him in the New Testament.

MAIN APPLICATION

Handle the reading of the Scriptures and teaching of the Bible with integrity. Know your limitations and improve your skills of observation in studying this Literary Masterpiece.

HANDLE GOD’S WORD WITH INTEGRITY

Paul, the apostle, clearly understood the need to be whole and to handle his stewardship of the gospel accurately and carefully. Do we?

► *2 Corinthians 4:1-2 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

“Therefore” refers back to the hope in 3:12.

The context is Paul’s defense against the spurious criticism of the Corinthians against the apostle.

“We” refers to Paul and Timothy. In a larger sense to men who have accepted responsibility for teaching the gospel.

“This ministry” refers to gospel proclamation, evangelism, and church planting.

“faint not” (*ekkakeo*) means “to become discouraged” but its basic scaffolding includes the idea of “giving into evil.” The adverb “not” negates the temptation to quit and give into ordinary passions.

“renounced” (*apeipomen*) augurs for a spirit of rejection, giving up common evils among ambitious men.

“dishonesty” is a translation of the Greek word *aischune* to shameful deeds like lying and deception.

“hidden things” (*kruptos*) refers to secret, private matters that are hidden from public view. Dishonest people are highly skilled at hiding their intentions and perverted actions.

“craftiness” (*panourgia*) refers to cunning, specious, devious, tricky acts of deception.

“nor handling the word of God deceitfully” – “nor” negates the verb and adverb “handling deceitfully” – the main lesson all Christian ministers must learn.

“but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.” “but” (*alla*) is a strong adversative. The word “manifest” contrasts with “hidden things” and “deceitfully:” that is, Paul lived his life as an open book so all could see. His life was lived in such a way that his habits did not offend the conscience of different types of people group.” When in Rome do what Romans do; in Spain what Spaniards do; in England avoid doing what offends the English.

“in the sight of God” sheds light on Paul’s ultimate obligation.

MAIN INTERPRETATION

Paul ministered among the Corinthians responsibly and handled the Word of God with integrity.

MAIN APPLICATION

Writing tests the accuracy of a man; speaking tests the spirit of a man.

When teaching God’s Word handle every noun, verb, and adjective responsibly, honestly, and accurately the best you can.

Billy Graham: “If you are ignorant of God’s Word, you will always be ignorant of God’s will.”

TRUST GOD’S WORD

► *Proverbs 30:5 Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.*

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Matthew 5:18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

These passages teach that God’s Word is perfect -- a shield of truth against the lies of the age; that His Word is eternal and will have its intended effect in history. Therefore, the best men among us trust the Word of God explicitly.

THE PROBLEM MODERN MAN FACES

Americans live in a very liberal, relativistic society where words can mean anything the speaker wants them to mean. Consequently, when the average Christian reads the Bible they do not believe the text or take words seriously. Men are more apt to see the Bible as a “old fashion,” “irrelevant,” “disconnected,” “tangential,” and “unrelated” to modern life than they are as “God’s Ultimate Revelation to Man” and Source for spiritual growth.

But, nothing could be further from the truth. Words shape how we think, communicate, and understand the world. Clear word meanings help us articulate complex ideas and emotions. Misunderstood words can lead to confusion, strife, and every evil work (James 3:1).

The Word of God addresses the common needs men have had from the beginning of time to this present day. Technology changes but man’s disposition hasn’t changed since Adam ate from Satan’s Yum Yum tree.

MAIN INTERPRETATION

- The Bible contains the true and only message of salvation.
- The Bible remains deeply relevant today – not just as a historical or religious document, but as a living guide for personal growth and moral transformation.
- The Bible addresses universal human struggles: pride, ambition, rashness, guilt, greed, injustice, fear, and suffering.
- Scripture reveals God’s character, His will, and His plan for humanity.
- The Bible is God’s Compass that keeps a man from losing his way in life.
- Moreover, it is able to make the man “perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:17).
- His Word will not fail. Heaven and earth may disappear, but His Word out lasts all creation.

MAIN APPLICATION

- Because God places a premium on His Word we must interpret it correctly, handle it accurately, and minister it faithfully.

Charles C. Ryrie: “The Bible is the greatest of all books; to study it is the noblest of all pursuits; to understand it, the highest of all goals.”

James Montgomery Boice: “Bible study is the most essential ingredient in the believer's spiritual life... Christians hear Christ and discover what it means to follow Him.”

B. Stockton: The Bible declares truth about the faith, feeds the soul, comforts the weary, and inspires action for service.

KNOW THE VALUE OF SCRIPTURE

God’s Word is a Golden Treasure of truth.

► *2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*

OBSERVATIONS

The “Scripture” (graphie) is singular noun; that is, Paul announces a fact. Lacking the article, it refers to the individual words of Scriptural texts as well as the whole of Scripture. Paul is not saying every author of the Bible was inspired with passion; or that every translation is inspired; or that its copies are flawless. Rather, he affirms the absolute accuracy of the original writings – that every word was divinely guided and imprinted on the mind of author. That these words are accurate, dependable, and reliable.

Thus, the best scholars among us believe in the *verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture*; i.e. that every word in the original text is accurate and trustworthy.

The word “*inspired*” (*Theopneustos*) literally means “spirit inspired” or “God breathed” (Robertson).

The adjective, “profitable,” means “valuable,” “useful,” and “beneficial.”

The context of Paul’s truth claim is the corruption of the age (3:1) and the worldly hucksters that pestered Paul and Timothy – the persecutions that followed and the apostle’s encouragement to Timothy to remain faithful to the Scriptures even though he was harried by the terrestrial imposters.

PAUL CLAIMS FOUR BENEFITS OF THE SCRIPTURE

1. “Profitable for doctrine” – The word “doctrine” comes from the Greek word “*didaskalian*” means “teaching.” The Scripture is accurate the Christian faith and the doctrines it espouses; that is, the Word of God is the ultimate authority on all subjects it addresses; that is, it tells a man what is right.
2. “For reproof” (*elegchos*) means correction; that is, the Scripture tells a man what is wrong with his course in life.
3. “For correction” (*epanorthosis*) means “to set straight” – to take a broken leg and to set it straight; to take a transgressor and to put on the straight, safe, and narrow path; that is, Scripture tells a man how to correct what is wrong.
4. “For instruction in righteousness”- The Scripture teaches a man about how to do what is right.

MAIN INTERPRETATION

When plagued by secular antagonists promoting love of pleasures and love of self, and love for money, a godly man will seek the Holy Scriptures which is able to correct him and instruct him in the way of righteousness.

MAIN APPLICATION

We live in “perilous times” where believers are constantly harassed by pretenders of religious good will. These pressures must be resisted.

Since God's Word is accurate and instructs us on how to live righteously, we need to understand the nouns, verbs, and syntax of each text in order to have correct doctrine and a faithful walk with God.

3. SECURE THE TEXT

The Bible is "God-breathed" and divinely inspired in its original manuscripts. Consequently, it is the most translated work of all time.

But, it also has a human history. Scribes copied the text from the originals. But the original instruments wore out and had to be destroyed.

Though strict rules required scribes to be 100 percent accurate they faced the aging problem of smears, rips, and tears in the parchment. Though they did the best they could, a few variations occurred. None effect any serious doctrine of the Christian faith, but they may be a concern when seeking the proper interpretation of a text.

Textual criticism is the art of reading manuscripts in Hebrew or Greek to best determine the validity and accuracy of a disputable passage.

That is, the first duty of every serious interpreter of Scripture is to secure the text.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. Consider how you would handle the textual variation in Jude 1:5? Some translations insert the appellation "Jesus" and other "Lord." Which is it? ² Why the variance? What difference does it make?

² There is a textual variance here. Some translations use the term "Lord" or "kurios", while others use the name "Jesus" as the one delivering and judging. If the proper translation is "Lord" (kurios), Jude implies that it was "Jesus" was the One who led Israel out of Egypt (v. 4). The best Manuscripts A, B, 33, 81, 322 and others require the insertion of "Jesus" indicating that it was the Lord Jesus Christ that delivered the

KJV, ESV, NIV – “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that **the Lord**, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

The best Manuscripts A, B, 33, 81, 322 and others require the insertion of "**Jesus**" “Now I desire to remind you (even though you have been fully informed of these facts once for all) that **Jesus**, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, later destroyed those who did not believe.

2. Consider how an interpreter ought to handle Mark 16:9-20 which is missing in the Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus.³
3. How would you secure the text in Romans 8:1 knowing that early Greek manuscripts do not contain the phrase, “who walk not after the flesh”? How do you explain its insertion in late manuscripts?⁴

people out of Egypt. (See Bruce Metzger, "Textual Commentary", p. 657). The context in Jude favors the ESV and Berean translations: ^{ESV} Jude 5 reads, "Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe."

³ Mark 16:9–20 is one of the most debated issues in New Testament scholarship. This passage, often called the "Long Ending of Mark," raises questions about its authenticity and authorship. The two oldest and most respected Greek manuscripts, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, end Mark at 16:8, omitting verses 9–20. Some believe the long ending was added to provide a more satisfactory conclusion of Mark. While the long ending affirms the resurrection of Christ, its style is different than the rest of Mark's writings. Because the passage is disputed, doctrine should not be derived from. Recognize the historical variance, but don't quote it with authority to prove a matter of doctrine.

⁴ The long reading is supported by KJV, NKJV, and MEV and is supported by late Greek manuscripts. But, the omission or shorter reading is found in the ESV, NASB, NIV. Moreover, the omission is supported by the most respected manuscripts; Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph) and Codex Vaticanus (B). Doctrinally, the shorter reading best supports a believer's security in Christ, and the longer reading places a condition of accurate walking "no condemnation" – an addition explained by an overzealous monk who sought motivate people to holiness by fear – a monk involved in works program.

4. How do you account for the insertion “for thine is the kingdom” in Matthew 6:13 as it is not found in the best manuscripts?⁵

Translation work has a human history and is not part of the “inspired” original text. No, God did not promise to protect his word from human error and aging of manuscripts. There are dozens of Scribal variants (misspellings, smudges, repetitions, and clarification notes). There are about 50 minor textual variants in Greek and Hebrew translations that are unresolved. Thus, the first duty of the Bible student is *to secure the text* and with the help of honorable textual critics and their books, it is now possible for the pastor to make proper textual judgments.

Recommended authors: Kurt and Aland, Bruce Metzger, Peter Gurry, Roger Omanson, and Harold Greelee to mention a few.

4. EXAMINE THE CONTEXT

It has been said there are three rules of interpretation: context, context, context.

Knowing the time and circumstance, the genre of literature, the historical background, and epistolary or legal framework of the passage is required to properly interpret a text and to narrow its application.

► *2 Timothy 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

⁵ The Lord’s Prayer became part of the Sunday School Teaching literature of the early church (The Didache) where readings were modified to fit the poetic preferences of the times. Some scribe added “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen” to an early church Didache (teaching book) to fit poetic practices of the day which is honorable. But, a scribe doing translation work from memory inserted the phrase into his translation work on the “Lord’s Prayer” in Matthew. Though an error, the mistake was so beautiful, no translator had the courage to remove it. Because it affects no doctrine and complements the prayer, we use the text in our recitations of the Lord’s Prayer today.

“rightly dividing the word of truth” involves avoiding mere “proof texting” – a Baconian method of compiling verses together to prove a maxim.

Exegesis demands the student discover the meaning from the context in which the text was written.

It has been said there are three rules of interpretation: context, context, and context.

Knowing the time and circumstance, the genre of literature, the historical background, and epistolary or legal framework of the passage is required to properly interpret a text and to narrow its application.

Without context words can be twisted, misunderstood, and stripped of their intended meaning. Without context the interpreter can conjure up a false doctrine and misapply the text to his own personal life.

Remember, there are genres of literature in the Bible.

Some passages are an historical narrative like Genesis, Numbers, Joshua, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Esther, the gospels, and the Book of Acts.

Here *the literal grammatical rule* of interpretation comes into play, but using this same rule in the Psalms, Zechariah, or the Book of Revelation would be seriously inappropriate. Scripture interprets history; history does not interpret Scripture. Poetry phrases are not fact, but an artistic express of truth.

Interpreting and applying the psalms accurately requires an understanding of the character of Hebrew poetry especially parallelism, imagery, metaphors, rhythm, emotional depth, and the author’s historical experience. Unlike Western poetry, which often relies on rhyme and meter, Hebrew poetry emphasizes **thought patterns and repetition** to convey meaning.

Interpreting the prophets requires one understand the time period of the prophet, the character of prophecy, the conflicts addressed, the nature of metaphors, and the rules of interpreting apocalyptic literature.

Interpreting the parables of Jesus requires careful attention to **literary structure, theological intent, and the historical context** in which the parable was told.

These short stories are **not** allegories where every detail has symbolic meaning—they convey **one central truth**. Over symbolizing a parable can distort the message. One must focus on the primary characters involved, their conflict, and Jesus' resolution. See Ladd's interpretation of Jesus' parables.

Legal and doctrinal portions of Scripture like Deuteronomy and the Epistles of Paul (and other epistles) are very precise, accurate, absolute, and authoritative. One learns facts from historical narratives, but one identifies the doctrines of the faith from doctrinal and legal genres of Scripture. It is foolish to build a doctrine on an historical event because doing so leads to speculative, forced conclusions. Events tell us what happened; doctrine tells us the meaning and significance of what happened. Likewise, cherry-picking events to support a theological perspective can distort truth and lead to inaccurate applications.

The Book of Revelation follows the rules of interpretation regarding apocalyptic literature. Imagery is not literal. Moreover, it is important to interpret the Book in light of how the first-century readers would have interpreted John's visions. Gross literalness leads to presumptions and wild postulations that lead to distorted views about end-times.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. How would you determine the meaning of the term “justified” in Genesis 15:6 just by the context? How would you expand that definition after looking at Genesis 20?⁶
2. How would you determine the meaning and character of “worship” from the context of Matthew 1:2; and, or from Genesis 22:5?⁷
3. Jesus preached, “The kingdom of God is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). How would you define the “kingdom” from the context of Luke 19:12? Cf. with George Eldon Ladd’s definition in footnote below.⁸
4. How would you determine the meaning of the word “salvation” in Philippians 2:12 from the context of Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi?⁹

5. DISCERN TO WHOM THE TEXT WAS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN

Each text and section of Scripture was written to correct or encourage a particular people group.

⁶ Does “Justify” mean to “make righteous,” to declare righteous, to forgive, or to treat one as innocent? The context provides the answer. By way of comparison see Romans 4:5.

⁷ See Stockton’s article on [Genesis 22](#) and [Matthew 2](#)

⁸ George Eldon Ladd defined the Kingdom of God primarily as God's sovereign rule and reign, rather than a specific location or realm. He emphasized that the Kingdom is both a present reality and a future hope. Ladd's view, often described as the "already but not yet" view, sees the Kingdom's power and presence inaugurated in the ministry of Jesus and the Church, yet still awaiting full consummation at Christ's second coming (Google AI).

⁹ The Philippians experienced emotional tensions in the church due to factions and personality conflicts. The apostle urged the church to be “one” and to model the humble attitudes of Christ. When he urges them to “work out their own salvation” he is not referring to “eternal salvation” as it relates to the kingdom of God but to work out their church conflicts with humility and selflessness – a kind of salvation from twisted, painful relational tensions.

The job of the interpreter is to identify the original readers and the problem being addressed. Reading yourself into every passage will destroy you – especially in the Prophets. For example, consider the following texts:

► *Matthew 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

This text was written to Jews who experienced minor indignities in the market place. Jesus is not addressing victims of criminal behavior. This instruction applies to daily life in the market place and not to judicial court proceeding involving malevolent criminal acts.

An accidental slap in the face is much different than an intentional fist in the nose.

Matthew 24:2-3 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Jesus addressed a question submitted by His disciples: “Tell us, when shall these things be?” That is, Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple and the disciples wanted to know when that event was going to happen in the future. Consequently, our Lord addresses the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. and was not referring to some presumptive event two-thousand years removed from the first-century.

Jesus was not addressing Christians living after 1900 A.D.

Romans 7:1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

Romans seven was written to Jews struggling with the purpose and nature of the Torah, **not** to Christians struggling with sanctification. Moreover, the use of “I” is used in the literary sense and is not a reference to the apostle’s existential experience as a Christian man. Not understanding the

audience has resulted in false doctrine and wrong applications of Romans 7 to believers.

James 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

The “sick” here are not those dying of cancer, but battered, discouraged church members struggling to live out the Christian life surrounded by gospel antagonists. Note the reference to trials and wars in James.

Revelation 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

The apocalypse was written to inform the Asian churches about the pressure of Rome coming up on them and to encourage the believers to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ even though all the apostles were dead except John. The book was **not** written to 16th century Christians struggling with the abuses of the pope; **nor** was it written to modern man frenzied with “end-time” events; that is, the interpreter must ask, “What did the whole book mean to the original readers and how would they have interpreted each chapter?”

Moreover, the interpreter must ask when Revelation was written, before 70 AD or way after 70 AD. Knowing the date of the book influences how one interprets the Apocalypse.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. How does a knowledge of the character of the Cretans (Titus 1:12) affect your interpretation and appreciation of Paul’s introductory address to Titus in verse 1:1?¹⁰

¹⁰ The key word in Titus is “godliness,” the exact opposite of what the Shabbat community and the Cretan culture exhibited.

2. How does a knowledge about Timothy's character affect your appreciation for Paul statement in 2 Timothy 1:7 - "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"? Why didn't Paul have to say this to Titus? ¹¹
3. Who is the author, and who is the audience in Psalm 45?¹²

6. DISCOVER THE PROBLEM ADDRESSED

Every book in the Bible addresses a need or problem men experience.

Discover the trouble and you can understand the sentence, passage, and book.

For example:

- Genesis addresses the begging of human matters related to the Creator.
- Exodus thru Deuteronomy addresses the enslaved mind void of divine law.
- Proverbs addresses the needs of a young man facing honey pots, laziness, pride, difficulties with matters of this life.
- Isaiah addresses a demoralized society lost in the chaos of idolatry, feminism, and lawlessness. Often called "the Fifth Gospel" it calls men to look forward to the coming Messiah.

¹¹ Titus appears to be more hearty, rugged soul than Timothy who appears to be tender, sensitive to criticism, humble, gentle, fearful, reserved, and timorous.

¹² Psalm 45 is a royal wedding hymn extolling the beauty and virtues of the king and the loveliness of his bride. Typically, the psalm is a vivid portrait of King Jesus and His church. The author is none other than the Holy Spirit.

- Ezekiel address the demoralization of Jewish captive in Babylon the goal of which is to inspire hope and expand Hebrew minds regarding God's eternal plan for His people.
- Matthew presents evidence that Jesus is the King of Israel; Mark that He is the Servant of the Lord; Luke that Jesus is the ideal Son of Man; and John that Jesus is the Son of God equal in nature with the Father.
- Acts records the facts regarding the development of Christianity and the transformation from Judaism in Jerusalem to the wider Greek and Roman world.
- The Letter to the Romans is a legal presentation of the gospel on how salvation is a gift of Christ's righteousness to those who believe.
- 1 Corinthians deals with ecclesiastical problems of a young, growing, struggling church seeking to make a transition from cultic Judaism to benevolent Christianity and rules of the church.
- II Corinthians is Paul's personal defense of his ministry to Jewish Corinthian critics.
- The purpose of the letter to the Galatians was to deliver the gospel from the clutches of cultic Judaism engulfed in Talmudic law.
- Timothy and Titus were written to young ministers struggling with Jewish myths, timid personalities, cultural demoralization designed to strengthen the man and his ministry in the Greek-Roman world.
- Hebrews addresses the languid, sparring Jewish mind struggling with a transition from cultic Judaism to the glories of the gospel which exalts Christ as king, high priest, and Savior of mankind.
- Revelation was written to inspire Greek churches to follow Christ even though they would soon be swarmed by the powers of the Roman State. John uses his apocalyptic vision to expand the churches hope that despite the seriousness of political conflicts the gospel would not only survive, but thrive.

R.C. Sproul: “We fail in our duty to study God's Word... not because it is difficult... but because it is work. Our problem is that we are lazy.”

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE:

1. Knowing that the historical backdrop of Psalm 46 was the Assyrian invasion of Jerusalem during the reign of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chronicles 32; Isaiah 36-37) how did this magnificent victory the creation of Psalm 46? Of Psalm 76?¹³
2. Looking at Colossians 2:8-10 and 2:19, how would you define the problem addressed in Colossae?¹⁴
3. To whom was the Book of Hebrews written?¹⁵ How does the knowledge of the audience affect one's interpretation of Hebrews 10:26 regarding the statement there “remaineth no more sacrifice for sins if we go on sinning”? Who is the “we” in this context? What was the danger facing the original readers?

¹³ The historical background of Psalm 46 and 76 was the terrifying Assyrian invasion of Sennacherib circa 701 BC – the most feared savages on earth. Hezekiah ordered the people to behave under the rule of silence and not to spread fear and unbelief through talking. The next day, Israel woke up and saw over 186,000 dead soldiers. These psalms share the spiritual lessons learned from this wonderful victory but terrifying war.

¹⁴ It appears the problem in Colossae was a low view of Christ and the church's failure to grasp the supremacy, wonder, and majesty of Jesus as seen by their flirty attraction to every whim and quirky doctrine than came through the city – specifically Jewish Merkaba Mysticism – a mystical, metaphysical encounter with angelic forces.

¹⁵ Obviously the book was a general epistle, probably by Paul, to Hebrews at large . . . to unstable, wobbly Jews who superficially engaged the gospel. Tottering on the fence between Judaism and Christianity many were in danger of returning to the familiarity of Judaism. Failing to grasp the greatness of Christ, souls were flirting with eternal destruction. Judaism could not save the soul. Only Christ's blood cleanses men from sin. To go back into Judaism meant forsaking the one and only Savior of mankind.

7. KNOW THE GENRE OF LITERATURE YOU ARE STUDYING

The Spirit was pleased to use a variety of literary conventions to communicate truth to men such as poetry, parables, stories, and the narrative.

► *Proverbs 1:6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.*

Solomon taught wisdom to his son using the convention of Hebrew poetry (Proverbs) – a type of verse that uses parallelism in order to strengthen his witty, bite-size insights into the great lessons of life.

The Bible is not only an inspired work, *it is a literary masterpiece* rich with historical facts, metaphors, poems, maxims, proverbs, analogies, stories, and parable.

To achieve a proper interpretation of a passage and to promote a correct application of Scripture a man must study the strengths and limitations of various literary styles, themes, and structures involved in communicating God's revelation to man in and through the canvas of Holy Scripture.

OBSERVATIONS

God spoke directly to Abraham (Genesis 15:1).

Isaiah taught God's will to the people from the visions he received (Isaiah 1:1)

David taught the people through poetry and songs (Psalms).

Jesus spoke to men in parables (Matthew 13:3).

John interpreted the meaning of Christ's history and penned it in his epistle (1 John 1:1).

John called his work in Revelation an apocalypse; i.e. apocalyptic literature (Revelation 1:1-2).

Scripture is not only the inspired word of God, it is rich literature with different genres of literary styles including but not limited to the historical narrative, law, poetry, allegory, prophecy, epistles, parables, and the apocalyptic.

This infers the Bible Student must learn the rules of interpretation for each category of scriptural literature.

LITERARY FORMS IN SCRIPTURE

Narrative: In the historical narrative, the author seeks to convey the facts of the events; that is, he must use the literal-grammatical rule of interpretation.

Law: Interpreting Biblical law requires a disciplined approach to phonology, syntax, and grammar. This approach respects the divine origin and covenantal context of law. Here, one must distinguish between moral law, ceremonial law, and civil law.

In seeking to understand law one must start with the plain meaning of the text, word meanings, grammar, syntax, and historical usage of terms. All law is written. If it is not written, it is not law. All deals with behavior. It is precise, but limited. Learn the limits of law. If it is not forbidden, it is lawful; if something is not included, it is excluded.

Poetry: Interpreting the poetic sections of Scripture like Job-Proverbs requires an understanding of the character of Hebrew poetry especially parallelism, imagery, metaphors, rhythm, emotional depth, and the author's historical experience. Poetry is meant for the heart and not only the head. It is made for the right side of the brain and not the left side of the brain. Cramping down on a literal, grammatical approach to poetry is like eating flour for breakfast. Lighten up and expand your emotional capacity to feel the truth of a passage.

Allegory: The Bible is not an allegory, but it does contain allegories like Solomon's allegory of old age in Ecclesiastes 12 or Paul's allegory of

Hagar and Sarah in Galatians 4:24-25. Here the interpreter needs to balance symbolic insights with textual integrity. The interpretation must not overreach the author's original intent. Often these allegories or "types" coalesce in Christ and His work at Calvary.

Prophecy: Interpreting prophetic portion requires one understand the historical context. Near fulfillment is preferred over double fulfillments (if any) and over long-range, end time fulfillments. Prophecies are often fulfilled within the prophet's lifetime.

Parables: Parables are giant metaphors or stories common to all cultures. Jesus used parables to conceal truth from his enemies as well as to reveal truth to his disciples. Each parable has one main lesson or single truth. One must ask, "What is the core of what Jesus was teaching?" and not to cramp down on some detail in the parable. To derive the main lesson of a parable one needs to understand the mind, political tensions, settings and cultural norms of the audience.

The Epistles: The epistles are letters written to readers experiencing some form of resistance to the gospel or overwhelming problem. Correct interpretation requires one understand the purpose of the letter, the challenges in the audience, and the author's theological purpose for penning the letter. The epistles often address legal matters of the Christian faith where one must apply the literal-grammatical rules of interpretation.

For example notice the word "*salvation*" in Philippians 2:12. What does it mean "*to work out your own salvation?*"

A proper interpretation requires the reader to observe the tensions existing in Philippi -- especially the friction between Euodias, and Syntyche.

The context requires one to interpret the term "*salvation*" in relation to resolving disputes with integrity and smoothing over strains in the church and not to interpret "*salvation*" in relation to salvation in the kingdom of God; that is, Paul is not telling the Philippians to work for their eternal salvation. Salvation is a gift and not a reward for work performed. The command "*work out*" require humble church members to

straighten out their relationships with integrity while holding up Christ as their model for matters of reconciliation.

Prophetic Literature: The Bible contains many prophecies in the form of oracles, visions, symbolic actions, poetry, and apocalyptic imagery. Timing is critical. A near fulfillment interpretation is preferred over a distant or “end of days” fulfillment. Moreover, there is no such thing as “double fulfillment.” There are **not** two Christ(s); two virgin births; two deaths, and two resurrections.

Apocalyptic Literature: Generally speaking, the authors of apocalyptic literature never meant for their text to be interpreted with strict literalism or with slide rule in hand. For example, Zechariah never meant for his prophecy regarding the cleavage of the Mt. of Olives to be taken literally – it is there for faith stimulation not rigid precision.

Apocalyptic literature is in place to expand one’s understanding of what God can do. It functions more like a “holy cartoon” you see in daily newspapers depicting tensions between elephants and donkeys than it does a mathematical graphic.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. How does knowing that Ecclesiastes 12:2-7 is an allegory impact your interpretation of each symbol in the passage?¹⁶
2. What does “lift up your heads, O ye Gates” mean in Psalm 24? Is this literal or symbolic? What then is David trying to tell us?¹⁷

¹⁶ The darkening of sun, moon, and stars refers to cataracts and blindness; keepers of the house refers to essential tremors in the hands; strong men growing weak refers to weakness in the legs; the grinders refer to the loss of teeth; windows grow dim hints at failing eyesight; Door shut refers to the loss of hearing; sound of grinding fades alludes to the loss of sensory perception; rising at the sounds of birds addresses the problem of insomnia; almond tree blossoms describes white hair; grasshopper drags along indicates the slow, out of balance, walking; desire no longer stirred refers to the loss of passion, sexual drives, and hunger. Other terms describe the horror of old age and death – the “great tribulation” for every man.

3. Define the phrase: “I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD” in Genesis 14:22.¹⁸
4. What does “kiss the Son” mean in poetic literature (Psalm 2:12)?¹⁹
5. To whom does “Ezekiel’s graveyard” (37) apply and what is the significance of his apocalyptic imagery in this prophetic portion of Scripture (593-517)? Is a near or far fulfillment predicted?
6. Why do you think George Eldon Ladd said the naming of tribes and the sealing of the 144,000 are not to be taken literally in Revelation 7?²⁰
7. Why did Ladd interpret the “great tribulation” in Revelation 7 as the death of the believer and not some proposed seven year tribulation period? Was he correct or in error? Look at the context and the genre of literature of which this text was written.²¹

8. CAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF THE PASSAGE.

¹⁷ Notice that the background of this psalm is David bringing the ark to Jerusalem, the death of Uzzah the priest a few months earlier, and the scoffing of Michael, David’s wife. Overwhelmed by the majesty of the ark coming to Jerusalem, David discerns the gates are too small; the people too frail; and the ceremony too impotent for the future dwelling of His Majesty on High.

¹⁸ This is a testimony about an oath, not worship; a statement of devotion to His Master; not hand waiving emotion. Cf. Deuteronomy 6:13; 32:4.

¹⁹ Kissing the ring refers to the eastern custom of kissing the ring of a king to show allegiance and devotion. It is the Spirit’s invitation to become a loyal subject of His Majesty.

²⁰ George Eldon Ladd’s commentary on Revelation 7, particularly the 144,000, it’s evident that he understood this passage to be symbolic rather than literally (Google AI).

²¹ “The great tribulation” is not a seven year period of trauma for earth, but the horrors of death – the crossing of the Jordan during flood season – the terror of old age and the grave.

► *Ruth 1:8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.*

This text is not a cold, harsh, bitter command by Naomi to her surviving daughter-in-laws, but a tender appeal by a broken widow burdened with grief for the welfare of her daughter-in-laws. Every verse in Ruth riffs with the fragrance of a crushed rose and hums to the tune of “Amazing Grace”. Enter into the feeling of the characters, and you will be well on your way to appreciating this book.

Exodus 20:1-3 And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

This passage informs us about the Source of Ten Commandments. The phrase “I am the LORD thy God” informs us the Source of the law is the sovereign God of Israel – the voice of authority. The phrase, “which brought the out of Egypt” informs us the law proceeds from a loving God concerned about the welfare of His people; that is, love is the motivation of giving Israel His law. Law is shrouded with authority but it improves and betters a society; that is, law is good for all men and all of man’s institutions.

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

The Book of Romans is a legal book grounded in the jurisprudence of the day. In the Book of Romans we see Paul the rabbi-attorney prosecuting sinners for their scandalous sins against the Creator (Romans 1-3); and, then we see Paul putting on his defense attorney rabbi-lawyer wig skillfully defending believers against the accusation of being law-breakers (Romans 3:2-8:31); that is, discern the legal nature of Romans and you be well on your way to understanding the forensics of the gospel.

Philemon 1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer,

In this letter we see the tender, righteous mediator skills of Paul seeking clemency for a run-away slave. Discern the spirit of this letter and you will be forever impressed with the highest applications of law and gracious diplomacy.

Reading the Scripture is a transformational encounter with truth, wisdom, and divine authority.

Reading the Scripture with meaning, inflection, and tone helps one capture the spirit and intent of a passage.

Speaking test the spirit of a man; writing test the accuracy of a man; but, reading the Scripture out loud tests whether one understands the “living and active” meaning of the text (Hebrews 4:12).

Personal example: one time I was at a pastor’s conference in Estes Park. On the first night of the conference, the organizers arranged to have a trained actor read Genesis 22. He read the passage with inflection assigning an appropriate voice to the words of God; an older, breathy tone to Abraham; a clear reasonable cadence to the narrator; and a young, enthusiastic inflection to Isaac. By the end of the reading there wasn’t a pastor in the audience that wasn’t on his knees in tears praising God silently.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. Try reading Psalm 23 like a healthy sheep talking to a sick sheep in another pen; then, try reading the psalm like a Shakespearian actor to capture the spirit and mood of this psalm.
2. What are the different moods in the room at the Last Supper in John 13-14?²² Try reading the mood of the narrator; then of Peter; then try reading the words of Jesus to Peter with the proper tone.

²² Consider the presence of Judas, the traitor; the mood of Jesus knowing this was his last supper; his last message to his disciples before his passion on the cross; the wounded pride of Peter for not be chosen for the honored place around the triclinium table.

3. What is the mood of Psalm 24? Of Psalm 99? Of Psalm 137? Of Jeremiah 15?²³
4. Describe the emotional and mental condition of the disciples in the storm²⁴ (Mark 4:35-41). Of their mental and emotional state seeing the maniac and the pigs run over a cliff into the sea (Mark 5:1-20).²⁵
5. Depict the mood and tone of Jesus' correction of Pilate in John 19:11
6. Describe the spirit Jesus' trial in Herod's court (Luke 23:11).²⁶

9. EXERCISE COMMON SENSE IN INTERPRETATION

► **2 Timothy 2:15** *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

OBSERVATIONS

The context of this text involved weariness of Timothy caused by conflicts and disputes with powerful men who sought to undermine the gospel (2:14). In light of confrontational clashes, Paul exhorted Timothy to tunnel deeply into God's Word.

²³ Psalm 24 = celebration; Psalm 99 = Solemn declaration for fact of God's reign; Psalm 137 – the wonder and phenomenon of the Babylonian return – a true miracle of history; Jeremiah 15 refers to Jeremiahs doubt, fears, and backsliding; His unwarranted complaint, and determination to repent.

²⁴ In this storm you can feel the fear, anger, frustration, desperation, doubt and many more.

²⁵ An maniac sitting down naked in his right mind; Two-thousand pigs oinking, snorting and running over a cliff. Who can describe the alarm, dismay, wonder, the bewilderment, angst, and confusion of emotions felt by the disciples?

²⁶ Jesus had three trials: Before the Sanhedrin; before Herod; and, before Pilate. Note the hostility, bias, and prejudice in each; the tone and atmosphere of each session; and, the rules broken. Discover the disposition of the Sanhedrin, Herod, and Pilate.

The word “study” (*spoudazo*) means “to hurry,” “to make haste,” “to be diligent and attentive.”

The word “shew” (appear) assumes Timothy’s accountability for his teaching ministry to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Greek term for “approved” is *dokimon* which refers to “passing the test;” i.e. having his teaching craft accepted by the Foreman.

Paul compares Timothy’s ministry among the recalcitrant Ephesians to a master craftsman selling his wares to critical consumers. Consequently, Timothy had to reject inferior idea-products peddled in the market and to tout the superior, premium, high-end gospel

THE KEY TO BIBLE STUDY

The key to being a great Bible student is to ask lots of questions: Who, What, Why, When, Where, How?

For example: Paul says to the Romans, “the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly . . . “

Q: What does Paul refer to the “God of peace”? Why doesn’t he address God’s power, sovereignty, wrath, anger, righteousness, or holiness?

Answer these questions and you are on your way to understanding why a Christian must be motivated by peace and not anger (Colossian 3:9-15).

THREE SKILLS OF BIBLE STUD

1. **Observation** – What does the text say?
2. **Interpretation** – What does it mean? What beliefs must change?
3. **Application** – How does it apply to life?

The rules of interpretation are known as Hermeneutics. The foremost are included here.

THE FORMAL RULES OF HERMENEUTIC

1. Practice exegesis and not eisegesis. Discover facts in the text.
2. Avoid reading your ideas, philosophy, and personal opinion into a text. This is called “eisegesis” – *a reading into the text what is not there*.
3. Interpreting the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other is called “Peshier Interpretation” – a bad methodology because it is a form of eisegesis.
4. For example many enthusiastic Bible teachers produce sermons about America in the Book of Revelation implying that certain texts foretell of the rise and fall of the United States as Babylon the Great. While a particular text may apply to America, the text is **not** about Western Civilization. Such eisegesis lacks hermeneutic integrity and does a disservice to Christians.
5. **Understand the value and limitations of the translation you are using.** There is no “final” “Authorized Version” of the Bible. Some translations are word-for-word renderings; others are thought-per-thought constructions. I like the King James, not because it is more accurate than other works, but because it has “majesty.” The NASB is good, but in some portions of Scripture it taste like chalk.
6. At all cost **avoid corrupted, discreditable** translations like the New World Translation (JW’s) and Tyndale’s “The Living Bible” – the most corrupt “translation” in history.
7. Learning the meaning and limitations of English words. Use your concordance / lexicon to understand Greek and Hebrew terms.
8. This rule demands the reader interpret words in their ordinary, natural, plain sense of terms – also called “the literal rule.”
9. Before Webster’s Diction (1828) words were understood by their Latin root; that is, Latin was known for its accuracy and limited semantic range. When Webster came out with his Dictionary, many Brits accused him of destroying the English language because of his polysemy – or multiplying definitions which caused confusion when reading anything especially the Scripture.

10. For example the word “run” has over 645 definitions; the word “set” 430; the word “go” has 360; and, the word “take” has 343 definitions.
11. For another example, consider the difference the Greek word “*allos*” (another of the same kind) vs. “*heteros*” (another of a different kind) or “love” as in “eros,” or “love” as in “charity” or “love as in “agape.”²⁷
12. Polysemy makes it extremely difficult to communicate and interpret the meaning of a word. Therefore, the reader of English must be careful to limit the meaning of terms or else he will drag multiple meaning of a word in the text and destroy the original intent of the passage.
13. **Employ the grammatical rule:** let the meaning be governed by syntax, morphology, and grammar.
14. For example a “past tense” Greek verb may be an *aorist tense* (punctiliar action in the past) or a *perfect tense* (durative action that started in the past with continued effects into the present). Knowing the difference will affect the refinement of a doctrine. Consider the nuances of the word “saved” in the following passages.

Romans 8:24 For we are saved (indicative, aorist, passive) by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved (perfect passive) through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

15. **Adopt the historical rule** - Interpretation must consider the cultural, political, and linguistic context of the original audience. For example understanding Roman law and Biblical law can clarify the injustice of the all night trial of Jesus before His crucifixion.

²⁷ Look at the word “another” (*heteros*) in Galatians 1:6 and mark the seriousness of the Galatian departure from the gospel.

16. **Study the context of a Biblical statement.** Remember, there are *three rules* of hermeneutics: *context, context, context*.
17. The meaning of words is primarily determined by context and not exclusively by Bible dictionary definitions. Though dictionaries are extremely helpful, the meaning of a word must be visible from the context. Refuse to isolate words from their context.
18. For example the word “light” can refer to sunlight (Genesis 1:15-16); or something is not heavy (Matthew 11:30); or it can refer to spiritual illumination or revelation regarding truth (John 8:12; 9:5). The context will expose the true meaning of word usage.
19. **Employ the verbal-plenary rule of interpretation:** Every word in the original text and every verse must submit to the whole of Scripture.
20. No single verse has authority over the whole of what Scripture says about a subject; that is, define words accurately and consistently in a particular text in light of how that word or phrase is used in (A) by the author; (B) by authors of the same time period; and (C) as used in Greek or Hebrew in the whole of Scripture.
21. For example take Romans 13:1. Does this text control the whole Bible or does the whole Bible control the text; i.e. does this text demand total submission to government all the time or does the whole of the Bible allow for resistance on some issues? Consider the Hebrew midwives and the three Hebrews in Daniel ordered to bow before Nebuchadnezzar’s image.
22. **Discover the Author’s intent.** Discovering the author’s intent promotes accuracy. The issue is not what it means to you, but what did it mean to the original author – to the original audience.
23. For example Luke’s intent in penning the Book of Acts was to report the facts of the spread of the gospel through Peter and Paul in the first-century and not expound or refine gospel doctrine.
24. Paul’s intent in writing the Book of Romans was not to report the history of Christ, but to expound the meaning and effects of Christ’s

glorious history on the believer. Paul, therefore, expounds on the meaning of faith, righteousness, justification, imputation, reconciliation, and glorification whereas Luke does not.

25. That is, learn the facts of Biblical stories from historical accounts; and, deliberate doctrine from doctrinal passages.

26. **Follow the consistency rule:** Truth harmonizes with truth and does not conflict with itself. If there appears to be an apparent contradiction, the problem is in the mind of the reader and not the Scripture.

27. For example the Bible expounds the virtues of law and grace. They must harmonize and not conflict. The opposite of grace is not law, but righteousness. The opposite of law is not grace, but lawlessness. The benefits of the gracious gospel are that it empowers the believer to keep the law, not to be saved, but to be holy. There is all the difference in the world between being saved by law, and being saved in order to keep the law.

28. **Clear passages take priority over unclear, obscure passages.** Precise, doctrinal meaning must come from the Greek and Hebrew texts and not English translations.

Augustine: "Scripture speaks openly in some places, and in other places expresses the same idea but with obscure similitudes."

29. **Obscure passage:** James 2:24 — "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone."

30. **Clear passage:** Ephesians 2:8–9 — "By grace you have been saved through faith . . ."

31. Distinguish between "translation," "interpretation," and "application."

- **Translation** involves the skill of accurately transmitting the words and ideas of a Greek or Hebrew text into English – a prerequisite skill for translation work is a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew.

- **Interpretation** is the process of discovering, explaining, or assigning meaning to a text, statement, action, or event especially when the true meaning is not obvious.
 - **Application** is taking the true meaning of a text and putting it into practice whether it is thinking correctly or behaving appropriately.
32. **Avoid interpreting Scripture in light of your experience**, or a current political problem, or newspaper headline. Let the Bible correct your thinking, responses, and actions. AI is not the voice of the Holy Spirit.
33. **Avoid psychologizing the Word of God** – that interpreting the Scripture through the lens of modern psychological theories – often prioritizing emotional or therapeutic frameworks over theological or doctrinal ones. Let the Word of God correct your thinking.
34. For example: Bill Moyer, a liberal journalist, led a study on Genesis 22 regarding the meaning of Abraham offering up his son Isaac.
35. Evangelicals correctly understand this account as a type of God offering up His Son Jesus to be the Savior of the world.
36. But, the discussion was swallowed up with a psychological prior rendition of the passage where members in the group saw Isaac as a victim of abuse; and Abraham as the cruel, heartless dad who viciously maltreated his son. Psychologizing the text caused the whole forum to miss the wonder of the event and its ultimate fulfillment at Calvary.
37. **Compare your conclusions with a reputable** source. You are not the first man to ever study the Bible. But, you are a man who has the right, even the duty to study God’s Word and compare your interpretation with historical scholarship.
38. If you cannot find a competent, conservative scholar that agrees with you, you may have misinterpreted the text.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. According to the context, who are the chosen people according to Colossians 3:12?²⁸
2. What is the purpose of prayer for heads of state in 1 Timothy 2:2?²⁹
3. What impact on interpretation does translating “men” (aner) in 1 Timothy 2:8 as “males” rather than anthropos have upon a feminized church culture?³⁰
4. What impact does translating “husband of one wife” (KJV) correctly as a “one woman” kind of man have upon the practical qualification of a man to be appointed to the position of and elder / pastor?³¹
5. What did Paul know about the nature of young widows (women) that modern men don’t seem to understand in 1 Timothy 5:11?³²

²⁸ The adjective “elect” (*eklektos*) means “chosen” – a direct reference to the Colossian church and to the church as a whole. True Christians are the chosen people of God – not unbelieving Jews in NY or in fake Israel.

²⁹ Note, the purpose of prayer is **not** to obtain God’s blessing on Caesar, but that the State might leave the church alone so it can conduct their gospel work. See Justice Louis Brandeis’s famous phrase – “the right to be let alone” – comes from his dissent in *Olmstead v. United States* (1928), a landmark case about wiretapping and privacy: “The progress of science in furnishing the Government with means of espionage is not likely to stop with wiretapping . . . Ways may someday be developed by which the Government... can reproduce [papers] in court... and expose to a jury the most intimate occurrences of the home.”

³⁰ 1 Timothy is about how to behave in church. Paul laid down the rules: (1) only holy males are permitted to pray; (2) the common man had to be silent; (3) Women were not allowed to pray or teach men, but are exhorted to be modest, silent, and to assume the role of godly, dutiful women.

³¹ The standard for pastors is not perfection or a life without ripples and rumbles. When it comes to marriage, the bishop must be a “one woman” kind of man and not a womanizer or adulterer. Celibacy is **not** preferred over wedlock.

³² Paul understood the nature of the “strange” woman, the “contentious” woman, and “the odious” woman in Proverbs. Women are about happiness and security. Paul knew young widows would follow their nature and not spiritual principles. Therefore, young women were prohibited from being placed on the church welfare role; that status was reserved for “widows indeed.”

6. What do you think is the observation that the word “evil” is not preceded by a definite article have upon the interpretation of 1 Timothy 6:10?³³

10. UNDERSTAND THE GOAL OF EXEGESIS

The goal of exegesis is **not** to show off how much you know or as a power play over the flock. The aim of all study and preaching is the glory of God and the edification of the saints.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

First, mark how the context of the command “do all to the glory of God” corrects the willful, independent, “free-wheeling” lifestyle choices of the Corinthians – choices that offended many church members; i.e. the goal of exegesis is the glory of God which includes holiness.

“We should not be entertained by the sins for which Christ died.” (John MacArthur).

St. John Henry Newman: “Holiness... consists in thinking as God thinks, and willing as God wills.

See the Appendix: THE CALL TO HOLINESS IN 2 Corinthians 7:1

Second, the purpose of the imperative is to rein in personal autonomy so that one is holy and that one’s lifestyle choices edify the flock to the glory of God.

³³ A word with a definite article refers to something known and very specific. A word without the article reflects the nature or quality of a thing. The adjective “all” is inserted for clarity, but may be misleading. Certainly, money is not the root of all evil; but, the love of money is evil and contains enough evil to destroy civilization.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Jerry Bridges: “Holiness is nothing less than conformity to the character of God.”

J.C. Ryle: “Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God... hating what He hates, loving what He loves, and measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word.”

Third, the goal of all Paul’s instruction was peace in the heart and peace in the flock

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

- The word “finally” (*loipon*) introduces the conclusion and the purpose of all Paul’s instruction.
- The word “farewell” (*chairo*) is an imperative commanding the splintered church “to rejoice” – Paul’s final word to the Corinthians.
- “Be perfect” (*katartizo*) is also an imperative meaning “to be restored” to a right thinking – a sound mind; to be restored one to another. It is the same word of the disciples mending their nets (Matthew 4:21; Mark 1:19)
- “be of good comfort” (*parakaleo*); that is, the echo of the psalm resounds with comfort and peace.
- In Hebrew the word “peace” is mentioned twice in Isaiah 26:3 indicating the need for double peace; *shalom shalom*.
- “live in peace” is also an imperative commissioned to calm hearts and to put an end to sheep butting. That is, the believers needed personal peace and public peace; inner peace and outer peace; peace in the heart and peace in the church.

- Peace is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
- Peace is the power that squashes Satan (Romans 16:20) – not devotion; not anger; not will-power.
- Peace stabilizes the man and helps him keep his footing in the battle (Ephesians 6:15)
- Peace is superior to intellectual skills and is the umpire on the gridiron of life (Philippians 4:7; Colossians 3:25)
- The reign of peace in the human heart makes a man a whole, complete gentleman (Hebrews 13:21; Colossians 3:12).
- See the Appendix for more information on the Peace of God: *A Benediction of Peace, and a Crushed Snake*.

Martin Luther: “His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure.”

Charles Spurgeon: “A Bible that’s falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn’t.”

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. Why did Paul say the “God of Peace” shall soon crush Satan under your feet” in Romans 16:20? Why did the apostle **not** refer to the God of righteousness or the God holiness or the God of power?³⁴
2. What does the phrase, “passeth all understanding” mean?³⁵

³⁴ Satan is at war with the God of Peace spreading hatred, anger, confusion, and lawlessness. Men cannot defeat violence with violence or war with war. Peace is a weapon against fear, crime, lust, and rebellion. The power in a heart ruled by peace is superior to intellectual powers. His peace can repair broken relationships and fractured friendships. Jesus calmed the storm by appointing peace to reign over it. In Pilate’s court, the serenity of Jesus persuaded the Roman governor that Christ was an honest man. Since God has determined to restore Paradise Lost, it is His peace that brings order and rest where there is war. His peace reconciles men to Himself and repairs what sin has broken. Peace is not natural; it is supernatural. It is not circumstantial; it is Biblically paranormal:

3. Why is the command “rejoice” mentioned twice in Philippians 4:4?³⁶
4. List the ways the Passover and the blood over the door post is a type of Christ as the Lamb of God. How does understanding the Passover as a type of Christ glorify the Father?³⁷

11. LEARN THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINITIONS

WORDS MEAN SOMETHING

Learning the meanings and limitations of word leads to great insights into the Word of God

► *Deuteronomy 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.*

OBSERVATIONS

³⁵ The phrase “passeth all understanding” shows the superiority of a spiritual matter. It denotes “to stand out,” or “be better than” or “surpass” something. Here it explains how the “peace of God” is superior to *nous* -- to an intellectual analysis of perplexing matters.

³⁶ “Rejoice” is a positive command that requires spiritual energy, devotion, determination, and an act of will. It is repeated twice for emphasis – because it doesn’t come naturally – because it is the most lacking virtue among God’s people; and because one of the most needed and charming fruits Christians can possess.

³⁷ The great lesson about the Passover is that blood is the currency of the spirit world. There are only two religions in the world; the religion of beans, broccoli, and beets (Cain) and the religion of blood (Abel). In this passage, we see the power of the blood is sufficient to save a nation; the Christ we see the power of blood sufficient for the whole world (John 1:29). Arthur Pink found 70 ways the Passover typifies Christ. See if you can find ten.

Manna did not come to the people until the 16th day of the second month after they left Egypt (Exodus 16:1, 6-7).

The Hebrew word “manna” means “what is this?” Manna was a mystery to the people, much like the Word of God is a mystery to modern men.

The LORD could have given the people manna immediately after they left Egypt, but He didn’t – for their good. It wasn’t until they felt hunger; they saw “the glory of the Lord.”

Humbling circumstances, suffering with deprivations, and dependence on God for provisions drives men to learn that *“man doth not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord. . . .”*

The word of God is compared to manna – something the Israelites ate every day to sustain them. Likewise, we need the Word of God every day to countenance our soul. Man is here to do the will of God and manna sustains him.

God reveals his will and truth to mankind through words; thus, the Bible is called “the Word of God.”

Words have a semantic meaning. Knowing the precise meaning of a word and its limitation is a fundamental rule of hermeneutics.

Words have meaning which is determined by its context and core concept or idea.

Words have objective definitions and limited meaning in the context of Scripture: They’re **not** just emotional expressions or flexible symbols that can mean anything you want them to mean.

Meaning is rooted in usage and context: A word’s sense is shaped by grammar, history, context, and intent.

Precision matters: Especially in Scripture, contracts, and doctrine, every word counts. A worldview rooted in precision and truth will change the man and his audience. A mature man uses precise, accurate, appropriate easy-to-understand terms so his message cannot be muddled.

For example, the Christian doctrine that Jesus is the “Son of God,” very God of God, is rooted in His use of “I Am” – a clear, intentional reference to the LORD (YHWH) in Exodus 3.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGES

1. Knowing the conjunction “and” can mean “even,” how would you determine the meaning of “water” in John 3:5 from the context of John 3:6; 3:8; and 3:34; 7:38-39?³⁸
2. Why does the term “firstborn” *not* mean “first-one birthed” in Colossian 1:15? What did the term mean to first-century Hebrew readers? c.f. Exodus 4:22³⁹
3. What does the word “faith” and “believe” refer to in Romans 3:22? ⁴⁰

Romans 3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is **by faith** of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that **believe**: for there is no difference:

Q: Why is the word “*pistis*” used twice in this text -- once as a genitive and the other as a present, active participle?

Q: The word “faith” can refer to one’s personal *faith* or can refer to *faithfulness*. To what does it refer here -- to *one’s response of faith* or to the *faithfulness of Christ*? ⁴¹

³⁸ In John 3 Jesus is talking about the necessity of being born again – a confusing subject to Nicodemus. This is not a command, but a spiritual truth. The agent of this new birth is the Spirit; not baptism; not rededication; not choice; and, not the church.

³⁹ The word “firstborn” is a clear family term that refers to the status of being the firstborn in a family; **the honored position**; the position that guaranteed a substantial, majority portion of family wealth.

⁴⁰ The word “believe” is a translation of the Greek word “*pistis*”. This word can be translated “faith,” “believe,” or “faithfulness.” The word “faith” in Greek is a genitive of agency “faith” referring to Christ’s faithfulness to obey His Father’s will / law and to the believer’s faith. It is Christ’s righteousness, **not** our faith, that satisfies the claims of a holy God. Yes, this righteousness is a gift of God given to men, but it is not a substitute for real righteousness – substantial righteousness that changes one status from “condemned” to “justified” in Romans.

12. LEARN ENGLISH GRAMMAR

1. **Nouns** are words that name a person, place, thing, or idea.

There are different types of nouns including but not limited to **proper nouns** like *Matthew, Jerusalem, hand, book, and mountains*; **abstract nouns** like *truth, facts, freedom*; **collective nouns** like *sheep, church, and disciples*.

Nouns serve as the **subject** or **object** of a sentence.

2. **Verbs** express *action* or a *state of being*. The different types of verbs include **state of being verbs** like *is, are, am, and become*; **action verbs** like *walk, speak, wash, and see*; helping verbs like *have* and *will*.

3. Verbs have a tense and a relationship to time: time (past, present, future).

4. **Verbs have a voice**; that is, they are either **active** or **passive**; i.e. doing the action or receiving the action: (e.g., "John threw the ball," or the "ball was thrown by John).

5. **Verbs** may function as an adjective like **running, hearing, or speaking**.

6. A sentence is group of words that expresses a complete thought.

7. Sentences have a **structure**; i.e. subject and a predicate; simple and **compound** clauses; independent clauses and double independent clauses linked by the conjunction "and" or "but." In English the subject come first then the verb; but, in a Latin or Greek agglutinative language the subject may be in the middle or even the last word in a sentence depending on the nature of the suffix.

⁴¹ The Greek word "*pistis*" is used twice; once to describe the faithfulness of Christ as the foundation of the gift of righteousness – the basis of a believer's justification, and once to inform men that they can gain a right standing by faith; i.e. *sola fide*.

There are different types of sentence: declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory

8. **Adverbs** modify and limit the extent of the verb like “quickly,” “eagerly,” and “slowly” Adverbs answer the questions “How? When? Where? To what extent?”
9. **Adjectives** modify and limit nouns like *red, huge, six, and small*. Adjectives answer the question: *What kind? How many? Which one?*
10. Sentences have **objects** that receive the action of a verb. These are categorized as (a) **Direct Objects** that receive the action directly (e.g., “He built a *house*,” and (b) **indirect objects** like “Jesus gave *me* eternal life.”
11. Sentences have **prepositions** that show relationships between nouns – i.e. direction, location, and time. Think of these gems in relationship to a box: *under the box, over the box, through the box, beside the box, on the box, with the box and many more.*

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. Is the text “you must be born again” (John 3:3) a statement or a command? Why is it important to know the difference?
2. Read John 3:16. What is the subject of the sentence; the verb; and the object?

13. THE POWER OF EXEGESIS

REVIEW OF THE DEFINITION OF EXEGESIS

Exegesis is foundational to sound theology, responsible preaching, and faithful application of the Holy Scriptures.

It is a skill that must be learned and not a gift to be received.

Accurate and rich interpretation involves the art of observation. A good Bible student notes the meaning of words, context, syntax, grammar of the original Greek or Hebrew word, and theological adhesiveness.

Exegesis is the critical explanation or interpretation of a sacred, Biblical text. The term comes from the Greek term *exēgēsis* meaning “to lead out,” and it refers to *drawing out* the text intended meaning from a passage rather than reading one’s own ideas, beliefs, and bias into it.

REVIEW OF THE DEFINITION OF EISEGESIS

Eisegesis involves the human tendency to read into the text what is not there; to interpret the vocabulary, problems addressed, and syntax through the lens of modern man.

THE WEAKNESS OF EISEGESIS

The most common errors of eisegesis include the following:

- Proof texting or stringing verses together in order to form a conclusion or create an application. The most famous example is as follows:

Judas... went away and hanged himself” (Matthew 27:5) “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37) “What you are about to do, do quickly” (John 13:27).

- Defining Biblical terms out of context wearing the lens of the modern mind.
- Using unrelated distant texts that distort the meaning.
- Ignoring the context or the genre of literature of textual studies.
- Multiplying prophecy or applying ancient, fulfilled prophecy to modern political matters.
- Claiming the text will produce success in sports and business.
- Declaring the interpretation of a single text controls the whole Bible; e.g., ministers often claim that Romans 13:1 controls all of Scripture on the relationship of the Christian to government; that is, there are Biblical limits of interpretation and application.

- Interpreting a verse based on one’s existential experience making one’s experience par for all Christians; e.g. claiming David’s victory over Goliath as the norm for believers; or that “speaking in tongues” is a fruit of the Spirit; or reading into a text the health and wealth values of modern material man.

IMPORTANCE OF EXEGESIS

John MacArthur placed **exegesis** at the heart of faithful biblical interpretation and preaching. His emphasis on this discipline is not merely academic—it’s deeply theological and pastoral.

Exegesis is absolutely vital for anyone serious about understanding Scripture — not just academically, but devotionally and practically.

Exegesis is the process of drawing out the original meaning of a biblical text by examining its words and grammar.

Exegesis is the only way to uncover the meaning of the author in the context of his time. Moreover, exegesis is the only way to avoid being guided by one’s personal bias, wishes, and spiritual agenda. Further, exegesis is the only way to have accurate doctrine and to separate one’s self from the woke, liberal, progressive agenda of modern man.

Thus, the power of exegesis is essential for accurate Bible Study and competence in teaching.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. What is the subject, verb, and object in Matthew 1:21 “he shall save his people from their sins.” Does the verb mean “save” or “help save?”⁴²
2. Look at Deuteronomy 22 and explain why Mary along with most young brides in Israel were virgins when they married.⁴³

⁴² “Jesus” is the subject of the sentence; “save” is the verb; and “His people” is the object. He did not come to help people get “saved.” He came to save them – a slap in the fact to the Arminian mind that believes Jesus saves men after they have done the best they can to do well.

3. What are the duties of husband /wife according to Paul (1 Corinthians 7:1-5)?⁴⁴
4. What does “I speak this by permission and not of commandment” mean in 1 Corinthians 7:6?⁴⁵
5. Since the word “depart” (chorizo) refers to “divorce,” what rules is Paul establish about marriage, separation, and divorce in this chapter (1 Corinthians 7:10)?⁴⁶
6. What is an odious woman in Proverbs 30:23?⁴⁷ (cf.7:5; 9:13; 14:1; 21:19; 27:15; 30:20 . . . and, what is it important to recognize socially?

⁴³ A woman had to be a virgin to be married in Israel. Severe penalties were attached to dishonor and deception. Mary was a virgin that came from a long line of virgins – a tradition honored by Hebrews; a state that guaranteed a pure Messianic line. That Mary was a virgin was not unique, but insemination by the Holy Spirit (Immaculate Conception) was the miracle. Her pregnancy was supernatural; the birth of Christ was natural.

⁴⁴ Celibacy is not a more holy state than matrimony – but, when one marries, duty is placed upon the man and the wife. These duties are the law; contract makes the law. The husband and wife become “one flesh” and neither has exclusive rights over their own body. Neither have a right to withhold sexual privileges and to use intercourse as punishment or as reward. To do so is a great sin against one’s spouse and it is a serious breach of covenant responsibility – even grounds for divorce.

⁴⁵ Paul discusses marital issues facing the Corinthian church. His instruction was not due to a direct revelation from Christ to him, but an exercise of apostolic authority after having studied the matter.

⁴⁶ Jesus taught that fornication / adultery was grounds for divorce. Paul added a second legitimate reason for divorce – abandonment. No one is obligated to remain married or bound to a covenant promise if one’s spouse abandon’s them emotionally, financially, or physically. Marriage is sacred but the covenant promise is not a ball and chain connection. Covenants can be broken, and if broken, the innocent partner is free to live as a single person or to seek another spouse. The deserting spouse is free to leave. Marriage is a consensual relationship and not a master-slave association. If real, substantial abandonment of marital duty occurs, divorce may be the only legitimate, lawful option to correct one’s course in life.

⁴⁷ The word “odious means” “hateful.” No man can live with an angry, bitter, contentious wife. No man! No family! No community! One angry, contentious woman can embitter the whole world. There are only two types of women in Proverbs: (1) a woman who fears the Lord and (2) the odious woman aka “strange,” “harlot-

7. What is the “uncleanness” that Moses addressed in Deuteronomy 24 that provided a way out of an impossible relationship?⁴⁸

14. EXEGESIS IN PREACHING

Exegetical Preaching

Whether one teaches topically or expositionally, accuracy demands an exegesis of the text and an explanation of the context. Skilled exegetical preaching has power that creates integrity, confidence, and courage to preach the truth.

Expository Preaching

An expository teacher teaches verse by verse, line by line chapter by chapter, and book by book.

Expository preaching permits when to teach topically if the verse is properly exegeted in its context.

Jesus did not teach expositionally and neither did Paul. Both were principle-based, need-based teachers.

Expository preaching is for the long-term pastor. It tends to be true, accurate, and safe – safe as in not being fired by an irate congregation angry at a pastor for addressing a **third-rail issue**.

seductress,” “contentious,” or “angry.” A white man once asked an Indian why he called his wife “Three Horse.” The Indian replied “because all she does is nag, nag, nag.” Thus, the reason for Proverb 30:23.

⁴⁸ The phrase “some uncleanness” (*ervat davar*) has sparked debate through the centuries. Jesus appears to side with the conservative school of Bet Shammai that narrowed the definition of “uncleanness” to some act of fornication or impurity and opposed the liberal school of Bet Hillel that enlarged the definition of uncleanness to include anything displeasing to a Jew. But, the term “uncleanness” may refer to any vile, inappropriate, improper defiling habit. However, the term certainly does refer to minor, petty, trivial ruffles that happen in marriage.

Third-rail issues are taboo subjects such as taxes, donkey-elephant political issues, psychology, the Charismatic trauma, and other deeply seeded private convictions people hold on various political and theological subjects can raise ire in the congregation. Sermonizing on these issues directly can get a good man fired from a nominal Baptist church.

However, an expository preacher can address sensitive subjects if he does it in the course of verse-by-verse preaching -- thus, the advantage of expository preaching.

Topical Preaching

If done correctly, topical preaching addresses theological needs in the congregation; changes minds; and, clarifies doctrinal positions.

Both Jesus and Paul and other apostles were need-based, topical preachers.

The great need of topical teachers is to slow down, avoid compiling proof texts, and to explain exegetical observations on the text as one delivers a sermon. Otherwise, the preacher acts more like a salesman than a Bible teacher.

The danger of topical preaching is that in addressing Third-Rail Issues one can alienate adversarial members. The preacher may be 100 % accurate and faithful to the text, but this kind of preaching tends to make the carnal-minded angry.

More ministers lose their pastoral position for being faithful to the text than for any other reason. Be faithful; and, be wise.

Let us remember, God did not call ministers to pet the sheep, but to feed the sheep. Therefore, wisdom must lead the pastor on how to manage sensitive, political subjects in order to mature the congregation.

15. KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS

► *Psalm 119:96 I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.*

The Good News Bible translates this verse as “I have learned that everything has limits . . . “

Knowing one’s limitations is a mark of maturity and wisdom and not a weakness.

Awareness of one’s limitations promotes honesty in Bible interpretation and humility as a teacher of God’s Word.

Every student of scripture is required to know his intellectual, spiritual, and scholarly deficiencies; i.e., one must know one’s cultural biases, personal prejudices, ambitions, and scholarly shortcomings to derive a correct interpretation of Scripture.

A person with a high school degree has no business criticizing the interpretation of a minister with a B.A. and masters in divinity.

An engineer may not have the emotional and scholarly capacity to appreciate poetic or apocalyptic portions of Scripture. Likewise, a mathematician may have extreme difficulties understanding the parables and the apocalyptic nature of the Book of Revelation.

Life is argument. But, a person who has never studied Hebrew or Greek should be humble and not pretend to be an expert on the phonology of Biblical words.

To succeed in a dispute over the meaning of Greek words, the novice must quote competent sources; that is, he must have substantial scholarly proof to prevail as parties apply the standard of preponderance of the evidence in a debate. Absolute proof beyond reasonable doubt is impossible.

16. APPRECIATE THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

► *2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

Scripture is not merely inspirational or historical—but the very Word of God, carrying His supreme authority on all matters of which it speaks.

It is “God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16), meaning its words originate from the Supreme Creator Himself.

There is no higher authority on earth regarding Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Hamartiology, Soteriology that the Word of God.

Neither the UN, Congress, the president, nor a flawed human judge has greater authority than the Christian with Bible in hand.

Jesus is the Son of God, very God of God, the Creator of the Universe, and Author of Holy Scripture. His words and interpretation of Scripture is superior to any word of man

The Bible is one book; not two. The New Testament has authority over the Old Testament; that is, Jesus and the New Testament authors had the expertise and competence to interpret the Torah and to apply it to daily life.

The Bible was written in two languages: Hebrew and Koine Greek. There is no evidence the Bible was written in Aramaic or that there is a Q document.

Hebrew is a language rich with metaphors, stories, rural analogies, metonyms, and poetic images.

The **Greek language** is a linguistic treasure with immense authority across theology, philosophy, science, and culture. Its influence spans millennia, shaping Western civilization and offering profound insights into human thought and divine revelation (AI).

But, the Hebrew does not have authority over the Greek language.

Both Koine Greek, the language used in the Pas Romana (27 BC to 180 BC), and Latin, the language of the courts, are a very precise, legal

languages; that is, the Greek can be relied upon to establish Biblical doctrine and to define the Christian faith.

Thus, the Greek has authority over Hebrew just as the New Testament has authority to interpret the Old Testament.

Using a negative example: Consider how many people call Jesus “Yeshua.” Do they know what they are talking about? The song, “Jesus is the Sweetest Name I know” was traditionally true to Christians. But, since the rise of the internet, it has become posh to refer to Jesus as “Yeshua.” None of the Biblical authors called Jesus “Yeshua.” They called him “*the Lord Jesus Christ*” in English or “*Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός*” in the Greek Roman world of the first century. The common use of Hebrew appellations appear to be used out of pride and not out of scholarly study or true knowledge of Hebrew.

There is no such thing as “separation of church from the State.” the Bible carries the full weight of God's own voice, will, and command. It is not merely influential—it is **supreme, binding, and final** in all matters of faith and practice; that is, study it, know it, quote it . . . and, never apologize for citing its authority.

Not interpretation in Scripture comes without friction – the pushback coming from the secular world.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

Look at Titus 2:1-6. What are the holiness duties of older men, of mature women, of young women, and young men.

1. What are the seven duties are older, mature Christian women supposed to teach younger women?⁴⁹
2. Why did Paul command that mature woman to teach young women to love their husbands twice.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Note the older women were teach the women practically regarding domestic skills and not general Bible doctrine. Seven subjects are mentioned.

3. Is Paul serious about young women being “keepers at home” and does it apply to modern Christian women?⁵¹
4. Why is there no command for men to love their wives?⁵²
5. Why is there only one command for young men?⁵³

17. FIND THE PROBLEM ADDRESSED

Every book or chapter in the Bible divulges a need or problem men experience.

Discover the trouble addressed and you can understand the sentence, passage, and book.

For example:

- Genesis addresses the begging of human matters related to the Creator.
- Exodus thru Deuteronomy speaks to the enslaved mind void of divine law.

⁵⁰ Two of the seven instructions have to do with teaching wives how to love their husbands. The reason for this is that married women, young or old, “just want to have fun” don’t have a clue about how to love and honor their husbands.

⁵¹ The most controversial instruction is for modern women “to be keepers at home.” Controversial, because feminism teaches that lie that real meaning to life can only be found on the 10th floor of a business complex behind a small desk. But, God’s will is far superior to the dreamland of odious women.

⁵² Why is anyone’s guess! Maybe, because men find it easier to naturally love a wife than wives can love a man. The general problem in marriages appears to be with unsubmitive wives rather than unloving husbands. An irritable wife can turn a man into a miserable monster, but gentlemen know how to treat a lady. The problem with many men is not lack of love for their wives, but a lack of control over their emotions and passions.

⁵³ Paul gives one instruction to young men: learn self-control in regard to passions. There is no command for men to love their wives, because love will flow out of a man who has learned to control himself; that is, the greatest need among men is to learn to control their minds, emotions, desires, and words.

- Proverbs addresses the needs of a young man facing honey pots, laziness, pride, difficulties with matters of this life.
- Isaiah instructs a demoralized society lost in the chaos of idolatry, feminism, and lawlessness. Often called “the Fifth Gospel” it calls men to look forward to the coming Messiah.
- Ezekiel addresses the demoralization of Jewish captive in Babylon the goal of which is to inspire hope and expand Hebrew minds regarding God’s eternal plan for His people.
- Matthew presents evidence that Jesus is the King of Israel; Mark that He is the Servant of the Lord; Luke that Jesus is the ideal Son of Man; and John that Jesus is the Son of God equal in nature with the Father.
- Acts records the facts regarding the development of Christianity and the transformation from Judaism in Jerusalem to converts in the Greek and Roman world.
- Romans is a legal presentation of the gospel and how salvation is a gift of Christ’s righteousness to those who believe.
- 1 Corinthians deals with ecclesiastical problems of a young, growing, struggling church seeking to make a transition from cultic Judaism to benevolent Christianity and rules of the church.
- II Corinthians is Paul’s personal defense of his ministry to Jewish Corinthian critics.
- The purpose of the letter to the Galatians was to deliver the gospel from the clutches of cultic Judaism engulfed in Talmudic law.
- Timothy and Titus were written to young ministers struggling with Jewish myths, timid personalities, cultural demoralization designed to strengthen the man and his ministry in the Greek-Roman world.
- Hebrews addresses the languid, flagging Jewish mind struggling with a transition from cultic Judaism to the glories of the gospel which exalts Christ as king, high priest, and Savior of mankind.

- Revelation was written to inspire Greek churches to follow Christ even though they would soon be swarmed by the powers of the Roman State. John uses his apocalyptic vision to expand the churches hope that despite the seriousness of political conflicts the gospel would not only survive, but thrive.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. What problems are addressed by Paul in the following passages⁵⁴: 1 Corinthians 5,6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

18. STUDY THE MEANING OF GREEK WORDS

God's word comes to us through English translations of Hebrew and Greek texts. Exegesis requires one to have access to scholarly tools like a lexicon, dictionary, and concordance.

Studying the meaning of biblical words in **Hebrew and Greek** is foundational for anyone seeking deep, accurate, and faithful interpretation of Scripture.

The Hebrew language is rich with metaphors and earthly illustrations, but it lacks the legal preciseness of Greek.

Greek, on the other hand, is very logical and legally precise but its prefixes and suffixes contain important linguistic nuances. For example one Greek verb has over sixty functions. The genitive noun has over 30 nuances. Discerning the subject, verb, and adverbs / adjectives goes a long ways in being accurate regarding interpretive decisions.

⁵⁴ Problems in Corinth beginning with chapter five: Fornication / incest, worldly lawsuits, abandonment, idolatry and lack of love, lack of support for ministers, a repeat of the sins of Israel, failure to honor the icons of Christianity: head covering, the bread and the wine; failure to honor spiritual gifts, failure to practice charity, abuse of gifts and disorder in the church, doctrinal deficiencies.

To appreciate these wonders consider the word “meditate” (*hagah*) in Psalm 2:2. Its lexical definition means “to delight in.” But, it is translated “a lion roaring over his prey” in Isaiah 31:4. A beautiful word picture that expands the mind on what it means to study God’s Word. When is the last time your spouse heard you growling over God’s Word?

Moreover consider the meaning of the word “baptism” (baptize) in Romans 6:3. Consider that Paul is not addressing “water baptism” but the believer being removed from the family Adam and being *placed into* the marvelous, victorious history of Christ. Just knowing the context and this fact can help one interpret the benefits of the gospel more clearly.

Consider the meaning of the word “flesh” (English) and “*sarx*” in Romans 8.

The NIV translate the Greek word “*sarx*” as “sin nature” which distorts the meaning of the whole passage. The lexical meaning of “*sarx*” is *flesh*; but, the context demands the student interpret the term “*sarx*” as all the resources of an unsaved man without God’s Spirit trying to keep God’s law – an impossibility for the unregenerated man. On the other hand, the Christian is in “the Spirit” having the power to keep God’s commands.

All Christians, young and old, have the Spirit; all non-Christians, Jews and Gentiles, are in the flesh with no internal power to keep God’s law (Romans 8:4-9). This interpretation is consistent with the context and Paul’s purpose. A wrong interpretation of “*sarx*” perverts Christian living.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. What does the term “translated” (*methistimi*)⁵⁵ mean in Colossians 1:13? What does the aorist tell you?

⁵⁵ “translated” (*methistimi*) mean to transport, transfer, or to move to another place. The aorist informs us this is a completed act. When Jesus saves a man, he takes him off Serf Island into the kingdom of God and bestows on him the riches of His reign.

2. What does the noun “redemption” (*apolutrosis*)⁵⁶ mean in Colossians 1:14?
3. What does the word “image” (*eikon*)⁵⁷ tell us about Christ in Colossians 1:15?
4. Exactly who is Jesus⁵⁸ according to Paul in Colossians 1:16-18?
5. What was the real problem⁵⁹ being addressed in the Colossian church according to Colossians 2:19?

19. LEARN HEBREW GRAMMAR

Hebrew is wonderful, but difficult to learn for English readers because there are no Hebrew words transcribed into English like Greek⁶⁰.

In many ways Hebrew grammar is much easier to learn than Latin or Greek, but like learning any new language, it takes work.

Foundational Features of Hebrew Grammar

⁵⁶ “redemption” (*apolutrosis*) means “release by payment of a ransom.” Jesus paid the sinner’s debt and then released him from the power of sin.

⁵⁷ The English word “icon” comes from the Greek word “*eikon*” which refers to a figure or stamp or likeness of something. It has no article signifying the quality of this icon. In this case, Jesus is the exact representation of the invisible God. One who has seen Jesus has seen God (John 14:9).

⁵⁸ Jesus is the firstborn and image of the invisible God, the Creator of all things and the One deserving worship, honor, and esteem; that is, our view of Jesus is too small.

⁵⁹ The real problem in this church was not honoring, esteeming, or respecting Christ as Head of the Church; of looking to other religious systems, philosophies, and teaching guidance, fulfillment, provision, wisdom, strength, and spiritual insight – much like brainwashed Americans look to psychology for spiritual help.

⁶⁰ Many common English words have Greek origins. Greek significantly influences scientific, technical, and philosophical vocabulary. Words like “democracy,” “echo,” “panic,” “cemetery,” “chaos,” “chronology,” “marathon,” and “atlas” are just a few examples. Even seemingly everyday words like “music,” “museum,” “narcissism,” and “thespian” have Greek roots.

Alphabet and Script

- *Hebrew uses a 22-letter alphabet, written from right to left.*
- No capital letters.
- Vowel sounds are indicated by *nikkud* (diacritical marks), though often omitted in modern texts.
- Individual letter may contain meaning, but avoid numerology as it is a make-it-up-as-you-go conundrum. Clarity and meaning can only be found in learning the meaning of words and their grammatical usage in the text.
- No, OT Hebrew is not more holy or sacred than NT Greek texts – a Jewish propaganda ploy to Judaize Christians.

Gender and Number

- Every noun, adjective, and verb is either *masculine* or *feminine*.
- Plural forms differ by gender:
 - Masculine plural often ends in *-ים* (-im)
 - Feminine plural often ends in *-ות* (-ot)

Root System (Shoresh)

- Most Hebrew words are built from *three-letter roots* Hebrew scholars call “the shoresh.”
- These roots convey core meanings and are modified with prefixes, infixes, and suffix patterns to form verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc.
 - Example: *ש-פ-ט* (sh-p-t) → *שופט* (*shofet*, judge), *לשפוט* (*lishpot*, to judge)
- Pronunciation and variations of meaning are determined by the Masoretic vowel markings in Hebrew.

Word Order

- Typically *Subject-Verb-Object (SVO)*, similar to English.
- However, Hebrew can be flexible depending on emphasis and style.
- A word upfront in a Hebrew sentence is in the emphatic position and may be significant to appreciate the nuance of the text.
- Use of double words should be of interest. For example

Verb Conjugation

- Verbs are conjugated by:
 - *Person* (1st, 2nd, 3rd)
 - *Gender* (masculine/feminine)
 - *Number* (singular/plural)
 - *Tense*: Past (עבר), Present (הווה), Future (עתיד)
- No verb “to be” in the present tense (e.g., “He is a teacher” = “He teacher”).

Prepositions and Articles

- *Definite article* is the prefix הַ (ha-), attached to the noun.

Inseparable prepositions (e.g., בַּ “in”, לִּי “to”, כִּי “like”) attach directly to words.

Pronouns

- Hebrew has *gendered pronouns* and distinguishes between singular/plural:
 - אני (*ani*) – I
 - אתה (*ata*) – You (m)
 - את (*at*) – You (f)
 - אנחנו (*anachnu*) – We
 - הם (*hem*) – They (m), הן (*hen*) – They (f)

A great resource for analyzing Hebrew definitions, grammar, and word functions can be found at Bible Hub / interlinear. It may be all you need to enjoy Hebrew.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

GENESIS 1:1							<i>Read right to left ←</i>
הָאָרֶץ	וְאֵת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	אֵת	אֱלֹהִים	בָּרָא	בְּרֵשִׁית	
HaAretz	v'et	HaShamayim	et	Elohim	Bara	B'reshit	
The Earth	and Essence (of)	The Heavens	Essence (of)	'God'	(He) Creates	In the Beginning	

1. How many Hebrew words are found in Genesis 1:1?⁶¹
2. What is the significance of the number seven?⁶²
3. What is the first word⁶³ in Genesis 1:1?
4. The forth word in Genesis 1:1 is Aleph Tav⁶⁴.
5. Q: How does John 1:1-3 support this interpretation?⁶⁵
6. Q: How does this text support the doctrine that Aleph Tav created the world *ex nihilo* (out of nothing)?

⁶¹ Seven words.

⁶² Significance of the number seven = divine perfection, completeness, and spiritual enlightenment.

⁶³ Answer (B'reshiyth) = "In the beginning."

⁶⁴ Aleph Tav = the first and last letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The two letters Aleph Tav are untranslatable. Grammatically they indicate direct object of "created" ((B'reshiyth). There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and the first letter is Aleph and the last letter is Tav. Some read this text as "in the beginning Aleph Tav created . . ." "Our Lord is the Alpha and Omega, the Aleph Tav, the Beginning and the End.

⁶⁵ The parallel between Genesis one and John one are unmistakable. John begins his gospel, "In the beginning was the Word . . ." A word is an expression of an idea; and, Jesus is the visible, tangible expression of God in human form: fully man; fully God -- The Creator of heaven and earth (John 1:1-3).

7. What is the relationship of this text to time, space, and matter?
8. How does Genesis 1-2 and Psalms form the foundation for interpreting John 1:1-3?⁶⁶

20. LEARN GREEK GRAMMAR

A Short Greek Grammar

The following is a brief explanation of Greek Grammar.

The Noun Cases

Noun cases have masculine, feminine, and neuter forms. Pronouns must agree with the case.

N: Nominative = subject or complement or case of specific designation' that produces or receives action.

GA: Genitive = possession or source, of It limits kind. Ablative = separation or departure ,from.

D: Dative = indirect object, trans. to or for. It is the case of personal relations.

L: Locative = defines a location like in Christ. It corresponds with in, on, among, at, or by.

I: Instrumental = expresses means and is usually translated by the word by.

A: Accusative = direct object. It limits the end, direction, or extent of the verb.

The Greek Verb System

Voice: Relation of the verb to the subject.

1. Active (act.): The subject produces the action.

2. Middle (mid.): The subject participates in the results of the action (Matt. 27:5), or additional stress is laid upon the subject as producing the action, i.e., "He Himself secured eternal redemption" (Reb. 9: 12).

3. Passive (pass.): The subject receives the action of the verb. This is the voice of grace.

⁶⁶ The preposition "In the beginning" was clearly designed by John to take the reader's mind back to Genesis 1:1 and to identify Christ as the Creator-God; the Logos who is very God of God; the "Word made flesh" in John 1:14. John wants his readers to know that mankind has experienced a Divine visitation in history in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mood: Relation of the verb to reality.

1. Indicative (ind.): The mood of reality or certainty. (This is the way it is. The modality of fact)
2. Subjunctive (subj.): The mood of potentiality or probability. (Maybe)
3. Optative (opt.): The mood of desire or possibility. (I hope or I wish)
4. Imperative (imper.): The mood of command or volition. (Do this ... , or Let him do this ... not yet a fact)

Tense: Time and kind of action of the verb.

1. Present (pres.): Generally continuous action at the present time.
2. Imperfect (imp.): Generally continuous action in past time (Repetitive action, not an act)
3. Future (fut.): Action planned for a future time.
4. Aorist (aor.): Action occurring in a point of time. (a) Aorist participle (aor. part.): usually denotes an action which precedes the action of the main verb in the sentence. The Aorist presents a fact . . . an event.
5. Perfect (perf.): Completed action with finished results that affects one in now time.
6. Pluperfect (Pluperf.): Completed action with finished results in past time. (rare)

Other Verbal Forms

1. Infinitive (inf.): It is the "to ____" form often used to express purpose or result: to cry, to help, to deliver . . .
2. Participle (part.): It is a verbal adjective and has an ing ending in English: knowing, running, having written. There are three types: (a) temporal ptc. expressed by "when" (when running); (b) the relative ptc. expressed by "the one" (the one running); (c) and circumstantial expressed by "while" (while running). "While" (While running), or attributive or relative participle (the one running) (adjectival).

Conditional Clauses (Begin with 'if')

- 1st class: If and it is true (Matt. 4:6)—Reality: (ei + the indicative).
- 2nd class: If and it is not true (Matt. 4:9; John 4: 10)—Unreality: (ei + an + past tense in the indicative)
- 3rd class: Maybe it is true and maybe it is not true (1 John 1:9)—Probability: (eavvn + subjunctive)
- 4th class: I wish it were true but it is not true (1 Peter 3: 14, 17)--Possibility.

Prepositions:

Like in English, prepositions can be understood in relation to a box: in the box, by the box, from the box, above or below the box, etc.

Note: You don't have to memorize 90 Greek Word endings or 30 noun ending to translate Greek correctly. But, you do have to understand the grammar.

Remember, Greek is a left-brain language that is very precise – a reasonable, legal, systematic language perfect for expressing doctrines of the Christian faith. Yes, Greek has authority over Hebrew just as the New Testament has authority over the Old Testament.

Every student should get acquainted Bible Hub / transliteration. It does all the analytical work for you. You need only to understand the meaning of grammatical terms which is included above.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

Get on Bible Hub or some other site that has an interlinear rendition for Hebrews 1:1-3. Do some Greek exegesis and grammar analysis of the text.

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

1. Define the major terms and phrases in this marvelous passage. For insights in these verses see Stockton's article on the "Supremacy of the Son" in the Addendum.
2. What is the answer to the question in Hebrews 2:3?

21. KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEBREW AND GREEK

Hebrews thought in terms of analogies and word pictures. David compared God to a mother hen gathering chicks under her wings – beautiful imagery – appealing to the artistic right side of the brain (Psalm 91).

Paul, the rabbi-lawyer, pastor-teacher thought like an attorney. He appeals to the logical, rational, left side of the brain.

Hebrew is beautiful, dynamic, and relationship based; Greek is precise, abstract, and idea- based.

Hebrew discovered meaning from life experience and significant relationships using the heart; Greeks discovered the meaning of life through reason and logic using their heads.

A competent study of Hebrew words ministers to the heart and emotions of men – perfect for the subjective side of men. . Greek word studies are more accurate, precise, and unequivocal – perfect for establishing legal, doctrinal positions.

WARNING:

Never use Greek or Hebrew semantics to show off your knowledge or as a power play over other believers.

Studying Biblical languages is for personal growth, not public power.

In preaching use Greek and Hebrew semantic, grammatical insights sparingly and carefully. Most HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGEs are resolved by clarifying the context and not by semantic insights.

Most importantly never beat an adversary over the head with Greek and Hebrew. Languages studies should edify the sheep and not pummel them. Greek and Hebrew studies should never be used as a beat stick! Linguistic insights should bring clarity about the Word and produce joy in the heart.

BEWARE of so-called “Jews,” their Gematra, and their search for hidden codes behind Biblical texts.⁶⁷ Yes, many rabbis have interesting insights into the Hebrew, but their tendency is to disbelieve the plain meaning of the text and search for esoteric information that promotes Judaism.

BEWARE of rabbis and Evangelical pastors that rely upon the Talmud for insights into the Old Testament. The Talmud in its oral tradition is what Jesus and the apostles renounced.

For example Rabbis teach that Ahasuerus, King Xerxes had a drunken party and demanded that Vashti come and “display herself” to her guests wearing only her crown is sheer Jewish sex-cult nonsense. The passage is all about the odious feminism of Vashti and her refusal to come and let the king introduce her to his guests with honor.⁶⁸

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. Psalm 2:3 reads, “Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” What is the significance that the verb “break” is a Piel stem and in the emphatic position in the verse?⁶⁹
2. Why are these verbs in the Piel stem? Psalm 2:5; 2: 7-8 (broken)⁷⁰

⁶⁷ The Scripture is about the clear meaning of sentences and words – **not** hidden Bible codes – a subtle, inadvertent attack on the clear Word of God and the gospel.

⁶⁸ Vashti’s sin was her refusal to obey her husband-king – a wicked example to the other governor’s wives. King Xerxes I (486-465 B.C.) wise-men (cabinet) advised the king divorce her for disobedience and to issue a Persian law that all women in the kingdom had to respect and obey their husbands – probably the greatest law ever issue by a secular government. Consistent with the Biblical law order, the King saved his kingdom from feminism and rebellious women. This, of course, explains Esther’s replacement of disobedient Vashti.

⁶⁹ The Piel stem in Hebrew expresses intensity. For example a sentence might read “It rained last night” but in the Piel stem is would read, “It poured last night.” The Piel stem shows the intensity and mule headedness of the rebels to God’s law-order.

⁷⁰ The Piel verb re-enforces the intense energy and determination of the rebels.

3. What is the significance of the word “bless” and “compass” being a Piel stem in Psalm 5:12: “For thou, LORD, wilt bless (Piel) the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass (Piel) him as with a shield”?⁷¹

22. BE ACQUAINTED WITH LATIN GRAMMAR

Learning about Latin grammar is helpful in studying law or one of vulgate translation so common before the Reformation. The Latin Vulgate reflects how early church scholars and theologians understood and interpreted the Greek New Testament.

The **Latin Vulgate** is not merely a translation of the Bible—it’s a literary and spiritual masterpiece that shaped Western Civilization for centuries.

Foundational Features of Latin Grammar

- *Inflected Language*: Latin relies heavily on word endings (inflections) (suffixes) and prefixes to convey meaning, rather than word order.
- *No Articles*: Latin lacks definite (“the”) and indefinite (“a/an”) articles.
- *Flexible Word Order*: Typically Subject–Object–Verb (SOV), but variations are common for emphasis. The subject or verb can be at the beginning, middle, or end of the sentence.

Parts of Speech

Part of Speech	Function	Example
Noun	Person, place, thing	vir (man)

⁷¹ God’s work of blessing his people required Him to give his all – the precious gift of His Son. When he decided to bless His people He reached down into his purse and spent all that He had to save men at the cross.

Verb	Action or state	vincere (to conquer)
Adjective	Describes a noun	magnus (great)
Adverb	Modifies verbs/adjectives	celeriter (quickly)
Pronoun	Replaces a noun	ego (I)
Preposition	Shows relationship	in, ad, ex
Conjunction	Connects clauses	et (and), sed (but)
Interjection	Expresses emotion	heu! (alas!)

Cases and Their Functions

Latin nouns, pronouns, and adjectives change form based on *case*:

Case	Function	Example (puella = girl)
Nominative	Subject	<i>puella</i>
Accusative	Direct object	<i>puellam</i>
Genitive	Possession ("of")	<i>puellae liber</i> (girl's book)
Dative	Indirect object ("to/for")	<i>puellae</i>
Ablative	Means, manner, time ("by/with")	<i>puella cum libro</i>
Vocative	Direct address	<i>puella!</i>
Locative	Location (rare)	<i>Romae</i> (in Rome)

Declensions

Latin has *five declensions*, each with its own set of endings. These determine how a noun changes across cases and numbers (singular/plural).

- **1st Declension:** Mostly feminine (*puella*)
- **2nd Declension:** Mostly masculine/neuter (*servus, bellum*)
- **3rd Declension:** Mixed genders, complex endings (*rex, corpus*)
- **4th & 5th Declensions:** Less common, often abstract nouns (*manus, dies*)

Verb Conjugation

Latin verbs are conjugated based on:

- **Person:** 1st, 2nd, 3rd
- **Number:** Singular, Plural
- **Tense:** Present, Imperfect, Future, Perfect, Pluperfect, Future Perfect
- **Mood:** Indicative, Subjunctive, Imperative
- **Voice:** Active, Passive

Example: amō (I love), amābō (I will love), amātus sum (I was loved)

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. How is the Latin Vulgate translation of Luke 1:28 so much richer than the translation of Nestle-Aland Greek text?
 - KJV – “Luke 1:28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored (perfect, passive, participle), the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.
 - Nestle-Aland - “Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you.”
 - Latin Vulgate – “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.”

2. Why does the Nestle-Aland translation taste like chalk?⁷²
3. How did the Roman Catholics misinterpret the perfect, passive participle in relation to Mary?⁷³
4. How did the Latin Vulgate mistranslate John 1:1 and what difference does it make?⁷⁴
 - Greek: “and the Word was God”
 - Latin Vulgate: “And God was the Word.”
5. Why does the KJV and the Latin translation of Matthew 6:11 make more sense than the literal word-for-word text?⁷⁵
 - Matthew 6:11 Give us this day our *daily bread*.
 - Literal rendition: “Give us bread for the next day or for the coming day.”

⁷² The Nestle-Aland text lacks any sense of majesty or grandeur. Thus, it tastes like chalk – dry, powdery, common, even profane. Let us remember the blessedness, purity, and humility of Mary. To be fair Nestle-Aland is all about literalness and preciseness -- not prose or poetic, wordsmithing nuances in translation work.

⁷³ Mary was pregnant with the Son of God; thus, she was full of grace because she was the chosen one; and, because Jesus was inside her. The text does not mean that her character was so superior to other women that God chose her -- an Armenian position; or that she was full of grace as in divine and therefore deserving of worship – the Roman Catholic position. This would be idolatry. Honored among women, Yes; Worshiped as Divine, No!

⁷⁴ The Greek is correct, “the Word was God.” Jesus is truly God; that is, He has a Divine nature – a nature shared with the Father and the Spirit . . . but not all of God was in Jesus. The Father and the Spirit remain separate from the Son. One in nature, Yes; one in personality, No!

⁷⁵ The literal translation not only taste like chalk it misses the point. God’s promises are primarily for today . . . not tomorrow . . . and not next week. The word “daily” is superior to the phrase “next day.” Looking to God daily for provision is sustained by the whole of Scripture rather screwing down on the literalness of one word.

23. HANDLE THE IMPERATIVE CORRECTLY

► *Psalm 119:1 ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.*

The text pronounces a blessing on those who walk consistent with the law of the Lord.

The text does not pronounce a blessing on girls who “just want to have fun” or on men who want to be “healthy and wealthy.”

The tendency among Christians is to treat the imperatives in Scripture as great suggestions and recommendations and not binding law.

The indicative expresses a fact; the subjunctive informs us about wishes and possibilities, but imperative is used to express commands, demands, and law. It is set apart from other moods because it is the most removed from reality; that is, that part of religion which is most needed among men, but least likely to be put into practice.

Religion is all about law. “gods” are the source of law in every nation. If you want to know the “god” of a society look at its laws and its source of law. The LORD God is the Source of law in Exodus 20. But, in America the source of law is “We the People” – thus, a democratic society smothered with confusion, pluralism, multiculturalism, and factions.

Psalm 119 informs us that law is good if it is limited and applied correctly.

The gospel is not law, *but it contains law and the power to keep it*. The gospel calls men to love, and love is the fulfillment of law. And “charity” is love in action (Romans 8:4; 13:8 1 Corinthians 13)

Men need clarity when address the subject of law and grace. The opposite of law is not grace, but lawlessness; and the opposite of love is not law, but permissiveness.

America is all about “freedom” and “having fun.” The spirit of antinomianism and hostility to the rule of law moves through society like a midnight storm and this spirit has infected the church.

The failure to see NT commands as case law is the product of more than a little evil. And, there is no greater heresy than the notion that men are free to choose their own law order . . . to choose their own values . . . to make their own choices as to the law they will serve.

God has already made that choice for the church and believers would do well to surrender their precious all to will of God.

Colossian 4:12 . . . , always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

There is all the difference in the world between *being saved by law and being saved in order to keep the law*. Law does not save the soul, but it does create an orderly society. When men punish crime and purge evil, society improves.

MAIN APPLICATION

Bible students must view the imperative as law – as binding commands for Christians and not great suggestions – as formal, authoritative instructions from the Only Sovereign for the good of men and for the health of society.

Diversity with its plurality of law is **not** a strength, but a weakness to overcome. God’s law is good for me because it is good for all men and all of man’s institutions.

If Jesus is Lord, it is not possible for believers to obey all of the State’s statutes. All compliance to State statutes must be cautious and limited.

But, no Christian needs to be cautious about obeying God’s Word.

Thus, the great challenge for ministers is not only to call Christians to obey God’s law, but to call Congressmen and Statesmen to obey God’s Lord.

This being said, the minister needs to keep in mind the Bible is not a lifeless, rule book, that preaching is not about telling men what they need to do and how bad they are, but to preach accurately from the Book that offers salvation to sin laden souls and comfort for the weary.

God forbid that preachers should use the Bible as a beat stick!

Grace (not permissiveness) is the key to make men great. What God commands, God gives. Both forgiveness and fortitude are from Him. Grace can overcome and triumph over “an eye for an eye” because of the cross.

1 Corinthians 15:10 By the grace of God, I am what I am.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

1. What is the gospel of the Old Testament in Psalm 97:1?⁷⁶ What are the two imperatives set in parallel verse in psalm 91:1?⁷⁷
2. What does the imperative “worship” mean in Psalm 97:8 and why is this a Histaphel imperative masculine plural?⁷⁸
3. What does the Greek word “reckon” mean in Romans 6:11?⁷⁹

⁷⁶ The Old Testament gospel is “The Lord reigns,” not man, not the rich, and not the rebellious nations, but the LORD God. He is sovereign.

⁷⁷ “Let the isles be glad” (a jussive) and “worship him, all ye gods” (97:7).

⁷⁸ The imperative, “worship” in verse seven means “to bow down.” The Histaphel stem is reflexive and causative meaning, “Work on yourself and cause yourself to bow down and acknowledge His authority.”

⁷⁹ This is the first command in the Book of Romans. “Reckon” (*logizomai*) means “to think,” “to reason,” “to account.” The least obeyed verse in the church. After considering the marvelous benefits of the gospel and Christian’s identification with Christ (6:1-3), his deliverance from the power of sin, and “baptism” into the victorious history of the Savior, Paul orders the believer to start thinking like a victorious Christian; *to stop thinking that he is a slave to sin and to start thinking he is alive to God.*

4. Is the word “reckon” a behavior, an emotion, an action, a mental term, or a spiritual attribute? Answer this question and you will become a saint.⁸⁰
5. In what mood is the word “farewell”⁸¹ in 2 Corinthians 13:11? Why?
6. The word “forgive” (απεσ) is an imperative in Luke 17:3. Why is the imperative “forgive” in the apodosis a subjunctive aorist contingent on the condition “if he repent” in the protasis?⁸²
7. The word “present your bodies” in Romans 12:1 is not an imperative but an aorist infinitive.

Q: What difference does this make?⁸³

Q: Why does Paul beseech of the Romans in relation to “bodies” and not “the spirit” of man?

24. LEARN ABOUT PRINCIPLES OF REASONING

⁸⁰ The word “reckon” is a mental term. It involves a change in thinking. It demands the believer consider his new status in Christ. It is not a command to change behavior, but a change in thinking will result in a change of behavior.

⁸¹ The word “farewell” (*chairo*) is an imperative that means “to rejoice” and “to be glad.”

⁸² Forgiveness is never automatic like some teachers insist – a doctrine that harms the family and the culture. Forgiveness bestowed is dependent on repentance executed. This is an “if then” argument. If the transgressor repents and asks for forgiveness, it is the duty of the offended to forgive and to continue to find grace to forgive.

⁸³ This is a reasonable exhortation and not an inflexible order. The request is for the believer to present his body to the service of Christ. He is not asking the believer to surrender his soul to the will of God, but his body. Because the believer is born again, he wants to please God. There is no need for the Christian to “rededicate” his heart to God because the regenerated Christian already accepted Christ as his Lord and Master. The problem, however, is that the regenerated believe lives in an unredeemed body with unregenerated thoughts, motivations, and physical desires that may need to be kicked, prodded, spurred, and coerced into doing the will of God.

Life is argument. Don't run from it.

► *Acts 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them,*

Many passages in the Bible are argumentative; that is, the author seeks to prove a faith claim or disprove a false claim; to support a faith claim or to refute a heretical claim. Anybody can claim anything, but where is the proof of claim?

Thomas heard the reports that Jesus rose from the dead. But, he was not gullible nor was he a fideist. This empiricist remained unconvinced about a man rising from the dead until Jesus offered Thomas proof of claim with strict proof of claim:

John 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

God invites reasoning: "Come now, let us reason together . . ." (Isaiah 1:18).

The Bible accommodates both **inductive** and **deductive reasoning**, especially in how people study and interpret Scripture.

Definition: Inductive reasoning moves from specific observations to broader generalizations

Definition: Inductive reasoning moves from specific observations to broader generalizations.

The Bible frequently uses a type of reasoning known as "**lesser to greater**", also called *qal va-homer* in rabbinic tradition. This is a form of a **fortiori reasoning**, meaning "from the stronger." It argues that if something is true in a lesser case, it must be even true in a greater case.

Matthew 12:11–12

"If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much

more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

Argument to an Objector: Reasoning that argues with an imaginary objector in mind as in James 2 or Romans 9 -- a process of responding to an imaginary someone who raises an objection – whether in legal, theological, or philosophical contexts – with clear, structured argumentation

James 2:16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

Romans 9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus?

The Bible supports **reasoning from the Scriptures**: Paul “reasoned with them from the Scriptures” (Acts 17:2), showing Christ’s fulfillment of prophecy.

When Jesus was tempted by Satan, He resisted saying, “It is written . . . ”

Jesus used the Socratic Method of reasoning when He asked, “. . . What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David” (Matthew 22:42).

Jesus used analogical reasoning to clarify spiritual truth:

“The kingdom of heaven is like...” (Matthew 13) – Thus, the parables use analogies designed to reveal hidden truths.

Identifying types of arguments bring clarity to discussions . . . but, *revelation* is superior to human reason (Proverbs 3:5-6; Colossians 2:8).

Jesus argued like a lawyer when the Pharisees criticized the disciples for eating without following the rabbinical tradition of ceremonial washing (Matthew 15). Notice how our Lord answered the formal complaint by citations of the law, observing facts, and offering a counter-claim: “*Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.*”

Procedural justice requires a plea, a legal claim, and logical reasoning. See how the daughters of Zelophehad filed their claim for land in Numbers 27.

Jesus offered an answer to a legitimate question about the “greatest commandment” by synthesizing the law and prophets (Matthew 22:34-40).

Jesus reasoned from real life events to promote prayer in Luke 18:1.

In response to the question, “Who is my neighbor?” our Lord reframed the question by presenting an historical event involving the kindness of a Samaritan to an injured Jew (Luke 10:25-37).

Jesus recognize specious arguments and exposed them saying, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's” (Matthew 22:17) . . . but in so doing left them with the question “what belongs to Caesar?”⁸⁴ and “What belongs to God?”⁸⁵

Jesus skillfully corrected Pilate’s false claim that life is a matter of choices and that he had the power to crucify Jesus or to release Him:

“Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power (authority) *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin” (John 19:11).

Learn the claims, the arguments, and counterclaims in Biblical passages and you will be an outstanding exegete and Bible teacher.

HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

⁸⁴ The answer is closer to nothing than something. Our lives, our bodies, our houses, and our money do not belong to Caesar.

⁸⁵ The answer is closer to everything than nothing. Everything we have comes from Him. However, He does not command us to give Him everything. All giving to God is for our benefit, not His.

1. In what kind of state was Jeremiah in? (Jeremiah 15:15-16)? What was his problem (context) and the remedy in 15:16? And, why was he forced to sit alone in 15:17?⁸⁶
2. What is the obvious conclusion about the relationship of the believer to sin in Romans 8:4. What is the application?⁸⁷
3. Explain the reasoning of John in 1 John 2:1. Why the “if” clause? Why the subjunctive? Why the present, indicative insertion “. . . we have an advocate with the Father.”⁸⁸

25. INTERPRETATION V. APPLICATION

► *James 1:22: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*

Learn the differences between interpretation and application.

⁸⁶ Jeremiah ministered for the Lord but received criticism and rejection from his people. This like fruit in his ministry caused him to question God’s calling even devising a complaint – a complaint not received by the YHWH. Immediately the Lord commanded Jeremiah to repent and get back on his feet.

⁸⁷ That the Ten Commandments have no application to the Christian life is denied. While Christians are not saved by the law, they are saved in order to keep the law. The Torah told a Jew what was right but it did not empower him to do it. Likewise for the Christian, the law tells Christian what is right and what is wrong, but unlike the Jew under law, the Christian **under grace** has the Spirit which gives him the power to keep the law; to be holy; to love; and to do what is right. The whole idea that the law has no application for Christians is heresy; antinomianism has no place in the church. After all, love is a fulfillment of the law (13:8)

⁸⁸ “And if any man sin” is a third class conditional clause (subjunctive) holding out the possibility that a man might not sin. Sin is not a fact to this apostle. That a Christian would sin is inconceivable to the apostle . . . but he also knows there is a possibility his “little children” might go astray. John wants us to know: “if any man sin, believers have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. The verb “have” is an indicative – a statement of fact; of certainty; and, of assurance. Unfortunately his “little children” do sin; and, the aged Apostle wants them to know there is comfort for them when they “fall short of the glory of God.”

Interpretation seeks to discover the meaning of Scripture; application seeks to implement it correctly to daily life.

To enter into the differences, look at Romans 13.

This chapter raises two questions:

Q: What does Paul mean when he commands Christians to submit to higher powers? Does this mean that believers must submit to every wish a whim of tyrants? In Britain, citizens are subjects; in the United States, Americans are considered sovereign citizens.

“Americans are sovereign under God and the Constitution, not subjects of government” (SEDM).

The history of early “Christian” America is not one of total compliance to total government, but resistance to tyranny.

Thomas Jefferson adopted the motto: “Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God” as his personal seal.

Q: How should a modern Christian apply the command, “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor” (Romans 13:7)?

American law is not Roman law; likewise, the tax laws of China are quite different from tax statutes of a Republic. To demand believers in America submit to presumptions about tax laws would destroy the American family.

The question remains: how do you properly interpret Romans 13 and apply it correctly in a constitutional republic – a system of government unlike Rome and tyrants like Caesar?

If the interpretation is incorrect, the application will be distorted. And an interpretation may be correct and the application astray.

To surrender to a vague, broad default position that Christians are required to obey all the laws of Congress is not only a flawed hermeneutic but totally out of sync with law.

For example take Romans 13:1 -

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.
For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are
ordained of God.

Many pastors use this passage to teach all governments are of God and that Christians are duty bound to obey every propaganda scheme is out of sync with the whole of Scripture. Surely, Paul's intent does not include for Christian-obedience to Stalin or Mao Tse Tung.

J.B. Phillips translated the text this way:

“Everyone ought to obey civil authorities, for all legitimate authority is derived from God's authority.”⁸⁹

That is, all cooperation with the State is limited and cautious.

Moreover, this passage calls for the payment of tribute.

Does this mean that if the State wants all that a man has, the man must surrender his precious all to the State?

Americans are not under tribute. This means the interpreter must apply the text correctly and in a limited way within the laws of the nation and not rely upon presumptions of law or color of law.

How one applies this text to Americans tax system or to the Japanese system may be quite different based on the legal requirements of its tax system.

Interpretation is one matter, application is another.

INTERPRETATION CHALLENGE

Interpret these passages in relation to the preposition used, and then seek an application

⁸⁹ The context justifies the insertion of “legitimate.” Surely, the Stalins and Pol Pots of the world are not worthy of obedience nor was Paul suggesting strict obedience to tyrants.

1. Q: What are the nuances in regard to the preposition used in the following texts:
 - Genesis 5:22 And Enoch walked **with** God . . .
 - Genesis 17:1 The LORD said to Abram, “walk **before** me . . .”
 - Deuteronomy 13:4 Ye shall walk **after** the LORD your God . . .
 - Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk **in** the Spirit . . .
2. Q: What is the application? ⁹⁰

26. VERIFY WITH OTHER REPUTABLE SOURCES

► *2 Corinthians 13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.*

Verification is the process of establishing the truth or accuracy of a truth claim.

There are many claims and interpretations of statements in the world. The job of the Bible interpreter is to establish, verify, and certify a claim. If one cannot find other scholars or reputable interpreters who agree, something is probably wrong with that interpretation.

The process of verification includes the following:

- Looking up the definition of a word.
- Knowing the etymology of a term.
- Using interlinear tools.

⁹⁰ The mature Christian walks with God as his Companion; Walks before the Father like a little child; walks after God as His servant; and, he does all this by the power of the Spirit.

- Consulting a Commentary or source of authority.
- Identifying the syntax – the arrangement of words in a sentence.
- Checking on the harmony of an interpretation by allowing the Word of God to verify itself.
- Consulting Christian-fathers and theologians to see how they handled a text.
- Consulting court cases, historical literature, and common law.
- Reflecting on historical creeds.
- Fruit test: does the interpretation honor Christ, produce godliness, and bear fruit for the glory of God.

In conclusion, the Bible is a gold mine. Use the tool of exegesis to discover its nuggets, and you will be a wealthy man.

27. EXPOSITORY PREACHING

The goal of exegesis is not to share everything you've learned in an exegetical Bible study, but to discover the facts underlying the central idea of the Biblical passage.

The purpose of preaching is not to show off your knowledge or preaching skills but to communicate the central message of the passage to a congregation that has been blown off course by carnal storms during the week.

Every passage of Scripture corrects a doctrinal error, a character flaw common to man, or worldly trend fanning through society.

Discover the problem the author addresses goes a long way in sermon preparation. For example discovering the problem of the Colossians being open to philosophical currents and their inability to cling to the wonders

of Christ or the godless character of the Cretan in Titus is absolutely necessary in interpreting the letters correctly.

The goal of the preacher is to discover the central message and structure of a passage, and the primary arguments of the author that support his reason for writing a section of Scripture.

Neither Jesus or Paul or Peter preached expositively; that is, they did not exegete Scripture. Rather, they were writing Scripture. Their letters were written with a purpose to correct doctrine, behavior, or matters of faith.

Likewise, the modern preachers ought to be purpose driven to know and to preach the central message of a passage.

In my opinion, every message should be designed to (1) persuade the congregation or (2) to equip the body to do the work of the ministry.

For example, take Colossians 1:15-18.

Purpose of a sermon: To persuade people to adopt a high view of Christ.

Topic sentence: *You should hold Christ in the highest esteem for the following reasons.* (1) He is the image of the invisible God; (2) He is God's First born; (3) He is the Creator that created all things; (4) He is pre-existent to creation; (5) He maintains all of creation; (6) He is the Head of the Church; (7) He is the Head of the new creation, the Firstborn from the dead . . .

For example, take 1 John 1:7

Purpose of the Sermon: to equip people to rejoice in the forgiveness of sins.

Topic sentence: *You can enjoy God's forgiveness by believing the following facts:* (1) Blood is the currency of the spirit world; (2) blood is the basis of forgiveness; (3) His blood is sufficient to cleanse every sin of man.

In summary, do not share every jot and tittle of what you study. Rather, discover the central idea of every passage; develop a purpose for your sermon, and then use the facts you studied to support the theme of your sermon.

Don't try to play the Holy Spirit, but trust God to use His word and the facts shared to build up the saints.

ADDENDUM

An Exegesis of Certain Texts

28. I KNOWS MY BIBLE

By Myown Hermenutica

Warning (irony-satire ahead): Built on true conversation.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves in Egypt. His name was Moses. The thieves were bankers who charged him interest on his loan for a boat he purchased to cross the Red Sea.

Along came a good Samaritan, a Creditor, who introduced Moses to a woman named Delilah, a debtor, who cut off his hair. Feeling weak he needed to rest in an Inn, but he had no silver. The Good Samaritan convinced the Inn Keeper that there is no such thing as money and that he needed to be generous and let Moses stay in the Inn free. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for an Inn Keeper who believes that he needs money to run his hotel business to enter into the Republic."

The next day Moses got into his sail boat on the Red Sea of Commerce to head to other side. In the fourth watch of the night, a storm came up and began to batter his ark and all the animals in it. Water came over the side. Water represents commerce.

Because Moses had not learned his lesson among the thieves, Moses and his farm animals were now drowning as a debtor in the Sea of debt. But Yesyoucan came walking on the water and threw some seeds on the waves

to calm the storm. Some seeds fell on dry ground. The seeds produced 30 fold because they represent equity which quieted the title against the lien on Moses boat.

Suddenly, Yesyoucan lifted up his rod, and the Sea parted, and dry land appeared. Then Moses saw the twelve stones placed in the Sea there by Joshua. While Yesyoucan walked on water, Moses tip-toed on the 12 pillars back to the other side of the lake leading his animals out of the ark two-by-two.

When they arrived, Moses and Yesyoucan were met by a naked-man possessed with a love for money. He lived among pigs in a graveyard. Yesyoucan explained to the deranged man that he was crazy because the thought like a debtor instead of a creditor. When the psychoneurotic finally realized there was no such thing as money, he was cured of his debtor status. Then the demons of commerce entered the pigs. The dirty swine stampeded down the side of the hill onto the dry land in the Sea by the 12 pillars. When the Egyptians pursued the pigs into commerce, Yesyoucan stretched out his hand over the Sea.

The waters splashed back over all the capitalists and the pigs of commerce died. Then, the walls of Jericho came tumbling down and destroyed the two bankers who placed liens on Moses boat. Standing on dry land, Moses put twelve more stones on the seashore to remind sinners what happens to moneymongers.

After Moses learned there was no such thing as money, he remembered the twelve stones in the Sea and God gave him twelve commandments. "Keep these," and "If you remember that you are a creditor and not a debtor" you shall be the one of the hundred and forty-four thousand in the Republic.

That's when a chariot of fire came down from heaven. Moses and Elijah talked with Yesyoucan on the Mount of Transfiguration about hermeneutics , all agreed that men were free to interpret the Bible anyway they wanted. Bright shining lights came out of Yesyoucan's garments because He was the true creditor who destroyed commerce in Egypt.

Don't you just love the Bible? You can make it mean anything you want.

29. THE VALUE OF GOD'S WORD

Psalm 19:7-10

The LORD reveals Himself in and through the Word of God – a golden treasure for the God-seeker.

The Word of God is Perfect

Psalm 19:7 The law (torah) of the LORD is perfect (taw-meem), converting (shuwb) the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

The word “law” is the Hebrew word “torah.” “Torah” is the word the Hebrew community uses to refer to the first five books of the Tanakh.

The word “torah” is a general word that refers to God’s laws – the objective revelation of God’s character. “Torah” also refers to the Ten Commandments” (Exodus 24:12) as well as specific instructions on various ceremonies and rituals (Leviticus 6:2). Jesus is the living Torah, the subjective reflection of God’s character.

Christendom believed itself to be God’s realm because it was governed by the law of God as set forth in the Scriptures. Moreover, it saw itself as the new Israel of God and no less subject to the moral teachings in Torah.

It is a modern heresy that holds that the law of God has no meaning and no binding force on men today. Those who keep the Torah are blessed (Psalm 119:10). It takes understanding to keep God’s Torah (Psalm 119:34). It is “wicked” to depart from the Torah (Psalm 119:53; Isaiah 30:9). Embodied in the word *Torah* is the whole concept of the authority of God (Is. 2:3). Unlike humanistic, man-made “laws” which are spurious and often frivolous, the Torah is fully sanctioned by YHWH. Every nation is responsible to the *torahs* of God (Isaiah 1:10; 24:5; 42:4).

YHWH is the Great Lawgiver, and to depart from Torah is to depart from righteousness.

Isaiah 33:22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.

The word “perfect” means “whole or complete or wholesome.” The Bible is the complete revelation of God to man. It began with God speaking to Adam and was completed during the apostolic age. Nothing more needs to be added. It is the completed, finished, perfect work of inspiration (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

Law cannot save the soul, but it can warn sinners of error and turn a sinner to Christ. The word “converting” comes from the Hebrew word *shuwb*, a Hiphil participle, which means “to turn,” “to bring back,” or “to refresh.” It is translated “turn” 185 times.

In Genesis 42:5, *shuwb* is translated “restored” in the story of Joseph where Joseph predicted that the chief butler in Pharaoh’s court would be restored to his former position in Pharaoh’s court. In Exodus 4:7, Moses’ leprous flesh was turned (*shuwb*) back to normal. In 2 Samuel 14:3 *shuwb* is translated “fetch home again.” David called for Absalom, his estranged son, and brought him home again. In Proverbs 25:13, *shuwb* is translated “refresh” where the text says a good servant refreshes his master. In Ezekiel 14:6 *shuwb* is translated “repent.” When a person repents, he turns from his sin back to God.

David is telling us that the Word of God has the power to convert the soul. A sinner who will read the Word of God can experience the “new birth” (regeneration). A straying Christian who reads the Word of God can be turned back to Christ because the Word of God can restore the heart.

The Word of God is Sure

Psalm 19:7b The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

The word “testimony” refers to the Torah, particularly to the Ten Commandments because the Ten Commandments are a witness to the character of God. The Torah is about God’s law. Because the law is based on God’s eternal character and comes as a direct reflection of the

character of God, the law is absolute, unchanging, and immutable (Psalm 119: 137, 138, 142, 144).

“I, the Lord, change not” (Malachi 3:6). God’s character is the basis of law, of ethics, of right and wrong. To study law is to study theology; to study theology is to study law. The practice of law is none other than applied theology. Men are not saved by keeping the law, but God saves men and empowers them to keep His law (Romans 8:4). The law does not save men, but when properly applied it purges evil men from society.

The word “sure” (*aman*) is a Niphal verb implying that the law of God has been acted upon so that it is made “sure.” The word “sure” means “faithful” or “trustworthy” or “reliable.” The Bible is reliable and is the canon of truth; i.e. it is a ruler which one can use to measure the truth of a thing.

The word *aman* is translated “believe” (Genesis 15:6), “verified” (Genesis 42:20), “amen” (Numbers 5:22, under an oath), “nursing father” (Numbers 11:12), and “faithful” (Numbers 12:7). The Bible can be trusted because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. This cannot be said of sources grounded in psychology and humanistic law.

The word “wise” (*chakam*) is the word for wisdom. It is translated “cunning” ten times (See I Chronicles 22:15 and 2 Chronicles 2:7,14). The word “subtle” and is used to describe Jonadab’s plot to rape Tamar. *Chakam* is translated “wise” 102 times in the OT. The psalmist is saying that the Word of God can make its reader sharp, intelligent, wise, and discerning. Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord, not a master’s degree in psychology, or a juris doctor’s degree by the BAR association (Proverbs 1:7).

The Word of God is Righteous

Psalm 19:8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The word “statutes” (*paqad*) refers to the legal regulations by God established in Israel. Statutes are specific prohibitions against certain acts. The term “right” (*yashar*) is the word “righteousness” or “straight”

in Hebrew. It is translated “please” in 2 Chronicles 30:4, “straight” in 2 Chronicles 32:30), “upright” in Job 1:1, and “righteous” in our present text. It means straight or true. The analogy before us is that of a plumb line used to construct a wall. The law (Bible) is our plumb line for what is equitable and proper. It is God’s tape measure for evaluating right and wrong. It is not only accurate on what it speaks; it is the sufficient guide for morals, ethics, integrity, virtue, and the way to heaven. Only God can define right and wrong, goodness, and evil. When man seeks to define morals, he tolerates evil and condemns truth.

The word “rejoicing” is the Hebrew word “*samach*” -- a Piel participle implying intense joyfulness. It is translated “be glad” 34 times in Scripture. It is used of Jonah’s glad heart over the relief he found under the shade of a gourd. In Exodus 4:14, the term is used of Aaron’s joy in seeing Moses after a forty day separation. It is translated “be merry” one time in I Kings 4:20. In the wonderful prosperous times of Solomon’s reign, the people were eating and drinking and making merry. Want to be happy? Then plunge into the Word of God.

The Word of God is Pure

Psalm 19:8b “the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

The word “commandment” is the Hebrew word *mitzvah* which refers to a code or law given by God. In Leviticus 4:2, a *mitzvah* is a prohibition to do a thing; that is, when a person does a “thou shall not” he breaks a *mitzvah*. He injures God and, or his neighbor.

The word “pure” (*bar*) is the word for clean or clear. It is translated “cleanness” in 2 Samuel 22:21 when David talked about clean hands. In law, a person who has clean hands is a person who has not injured another by his actions. The idea here is that God’s Word is like water that cleanses the eye so a man can see clearly (Ephesians 5:25-26).

Too often people say, “Well, the Bible is just too hard to understand.” But, this criticism is skewed. The Bible does not address all man’s questions, but it is clear on what it speaks and what it means. If there is a haze surrounding the Bible, it is in the dark mind of man.

Because the Bible is pure we should beware of those who want to integrate humanism with Christianity, psychology with theology, and Greek philosophy with the gospel.

A teacher asked this question, "What do you get when you cross a chicken with a cow? Answer: eggnog. Well, "What do you get when you cross theology with psychology?" Answer: psychoheresy! The Bible is pure and God's man will not pollute his ministry with the teachings of man.

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

The word "enlightening" (*ore*) means to light up as in when God lit up the universe on the day He set the lights in the sky (Psalm 97:4). It is translated "clear day" in Amos 8:19. It is translated "shine," "break of day" (2 Samuel 2:32), "kindle," and "set on fire." All these words refer to the giving of light enabling man to see. The Bible is like water in that it cleanses the eyes. It is like a lamp in that it gives light so the eye can see.

The Word of God is Clean

Psalm 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever:

The word "fear of the Lord" (*yavah*) is another title for God's Word. Fear is the effect of reading the Torah . A man should be afraid to disobey His commandments—to offend God or injure one's neighbor or his property. Fear is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7).

The word "clean" (*tawhowr*) means pure and unpolluted. It is translated "clean," "pure," and "fair." It is pure because God's Word is uncontaminated by the sin of man – of not of human origin says Peter (2 Peter 1:19-20). Though His Word came through flawed men, He superintended its inscription in such a way as to protect its purity. Because it is pure, it has a cleansing effect on those who read it. David could say, "Create in me a clean heart" (Psalm 51:10). A man can be clean by taking the soap of God's Word and scrubbing his soul (Psalm 119:9-11).

Further, God's Word "endures forever." Because the Torah is a reflection of God's character and because God's character is unchanging and immutable, God's Word is permanent. Because it "endures forever" it is absolute. Because it is absolute, it perpetuates moral absolutes and cleanses men of the moral relativism that infects this age.

The Word of God is True

Psalm 19:9 . . .the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

The Bible is called "the judgments of the LORD." The Hebrew word for "judgments" is *misphat*. The Bible is called the *Misphat* of the Lord because the Bible is a record of God's judicial decisions on what is right and what is wrong. Like a court recorder keeps a record of the judge's decisions, the Spirit created the judicial record of God's decisions.

The word "true" ('emeth) refers to something that is firm or faithful – something that conforms to reality. In this case, "true" refers to the faithfulness of God's Word. In other words, when the Bible speaks on fornication, family, marriage, abortion, feminism, or homosexuality, you are engaging truth and righteousness. When Paul addressed Felix on "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" he pierced the congested conscience of the governor by using God's Word.

God's Word is Righteous

Psalm 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

The Hebrew word for "righteous" is *tsadaq*, and it is different than the word "right" in the previous verse. *Tsadaq* means "just;" that is, it is balanced. Because it is symmetrically weighted it can meet the needs of every person. No matter what you need, the Bible addresses your concerns. If you need hope, encouragement, comfort, strength, wisdom, correction, or discernment, the Bible can minister to you.

The Value of God's Word

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Having given a sevenfold description of God's Word, the psalmist now estimates its value. It is more treasured than a pot of gold.

Throughout history all cultures have esteemed this golden metal as a precious commodity. Terms like "gold fever," "gold rush," "good as gold," "golden anniversary," "The golden years," and "go for the gold" clue us in to the historical lust men have for this shiny metal. It is a symbol of power, wealth, and success. It has provoked greed and lust. It has been hoarded and unspent, and it has been spent and dispersed as a man's greatest expression of love. Man's desire for gold and relentless pursuit of this precious metal is well founded in history. Brides have been won, and wars have been fought over gold.

30. THE SUPREMACY OF THE SON

Hebrews 1:1-3

INTRODUCTION

It is true that we think too much of ourselves, and too little of our Savior. Modern man is more fascinated with anthropology than Christology.

In Biblical times there was a danger of thinking too high of angels and too low of the Son; of angelology rather Christology.

The subject of angels is part of the Biblical record. An angel found Hagar. Angels met with Abraham, were part of Jacob's dream regarding his ladder to heaven, and guided Israel through the wilderness. They even strengthened Christ after his temptation (Genesis 16, 18, 31; Acts 7; Matthew 4).

Judaism stresses the importance of angels as mediators of the covenant. Jews believe that individuals have guardian angels. According to the Apocrypha great knowledge comes to man through angels. In the *Sefer ha-Razim* angels appear to be used for purposes of magic. The Talmud seems to teach that God creates angels everyday to praise God, then sink in the river of fire (*nehar di-nur*).

Though thoroughly humanistic, contemporary man is fascinated with angels. There are movies called “City of Angels,” “Touched by an Angel,” and “Ghost Rider.” Angels even appear in the outfield. It seems every store has a shelf where one can purchase icons of cherubs. Every day we are faced with reports about UFOs, alien sightings, and extraterrestrials. Just mention the term “angel,” and men are all ears.

As intriguing as angels have become, nothing compares with a study of Jesus Christ. Because of the importance Judaism placed on angels, there was a danger of these people neglecting the paramount revelation of the Son’s historical visitation to earth.

And, this is the purpose of the first chapter of Hebrews—to show the superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ to angels. It is far more important men investigate the wonders of Christ than to explore the presence of angels. He is as superior to the angels as a diamond is superior to clay.

HE IS A SUPERIOR BEING WITH A SUPERIOR NAME

Hebrews 1:4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Behind this treatise is the presumption that the readers of Hebrews were aware of the Christian gospel regarding the incarnation, mediation, and exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God.

Whatever angels are, the author of Hebrews wanted his readers to know that Christ is a superior Being with a superior name.

Angels are called “spirits” and “ministers” in this chapter, but the Son is called the “brightness of His glory and the express image (*charackter*) of

His person" (1:2). Sharing His transitive attribute, men are declared to be made in the image of God, not angels. The plural pronoun in Genesis 1:26, "Let *us* make man in our image" refers to a conversation between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that is, man was created a sentient being like the Divine Son. No angel could claim such a distinction.

Two angels are mentioned by name in the Bible—Michael and Gabriel. But, the name of the "Son" was superior to all names possessed by angelic beings.

Because men saw "spirit beings" as superior to "flesh and blood" beings, both Jews and the Gnostics had difficulty understanding how the incarnate Son could be superior to these ministering spirits. However, the work of redemption required the work of His Son, not angels. No angel was qualified to be the savior of mankind. It is through our Lord's incarnation and work as Mediator of the New Covenant that He assumes supremacy.

The task of removing sins as a barrier between God and man required the mediation of the Son, not angels. Just as a child lacks the capacity to represent the concerns of the United States before the UN, angels lack the capacity to effectively mediate between God and man. Thus, the name "Son of God" not only conveys the superiority of His person, but His solitary qualifications to be the Mediator between God and man.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

The emphasis here is on the Sonship of Christ. The quote is from Psalm 2:7. The interrogative "to which" (*tivi*) is meant to challenge our understanding of the Bible. Angels are not made in the image of God nor are they sentient beings. Though angels are generically called "sons of God" (Job 1:6), which one was qualified to be "God's Son?" What angel was of the same substance as God? Only Jesus could say, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:31f). No angel was ever called "a son." But, Jesus being a superior Being is called the "Son of God."

The term “today” informs us that at some time when there was no time, a relationship was declared wherein the Father called the Second Person of the Trinity the “Son” (Psalm 2). The term “begotten” does not mean “created.” It was a declaration not a creation; a pronouncement not an establishment; a relationship not workmanship. Jesus did not become the Son when He was born in Bethlehem. He was the Son before He came to earth. But, His incarnation brought into focus His unique relationship, alliance, accord, and affiliation with the Father. Being God’s Son He could represent Heaven’s interests to man; Being a man He could represent man’s interest before Heaven’s Tribunal.

HE IS SUPERIOR IN WORTH

6 And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

The quote is from Psalm 97:7, the Old Testament gospel psalm. The main truth of the psalm is that the LORD (Christ) reigns. Therefore, all creatures are called to bow the knee and acknowledge His authority.

Having established that the work of mediation (1:3) is reserved for the Son and not angels, the author demonstrates that even God's creature-angels are called to worship Christ and not the other way around.

Jesus is called the *prototokos* (begotten) which means “first born” or the one existing before creation. It does not refer to the order of creation or birth as Jesus was never created. It refers to his preeminent position in God’s household; that is, His respectability, supremacy, and intimacy.

The phrase “Let all . . . worship him” is a Hiphil imperative with legal implications. “All” implies angels; “Him” is the object of the action required. A Hiphil imperative means *to initiate action and to cause yourself to bow*. Angels, as well as men, are commanded to prostrate themselves before Him and to do His bidding; that is, to look to him as their Commander and Chief.

HE IS SUPERIOR IN AUTHORITY

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

The quote is from Psalm 104:4. The context of the psalm is about the greatness of God and his control over the forces of nature.

Calvin and others found no inference to angels in the psalm. The psalm informs us that God has jurisdiction over the wild uncontrollable forces of nature, wind and fire. Thus, the writer of Hebrews deduces that since Christ is the Creator of all the forces of nature, that He also the Maker of angels and their powers.

8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

The quote is from Psalm 45, and it is directed at the Son. But, He is not called “the Son” in this text. Rather, He is addressed as “God” (Elohiym in Hebrew; *Theos* in the LXX).

Psalm 45 is a Messianic Psalm and a royal wedding hymn. Enthralled with the beauty of the King, the Author of the psalm, Who can be no other than the Holy Spirit, scribes the virtues of the Bridegroom with eloquence and ease. The One “fairer than men” is addressed as “God” (*Elohiym*) in verse six of the psalm.

This royal Personage sits on a throne. Much like the “oval office,” the throne is a symbol of authority and the right to rule. The one occupying the throne has the power to judge and execute the law. A distinctive feature of this throne is that it is “for ever and ever”; that is, this throne is the seat of sovereignty of the eternal God. And, the One sitting on this cathedra is not an angel, but the Son of God Who is very God of God.

The scepter is also a symbol of authority. The distinctive characteristic of this icon of power is “righteousness.” All of Israel’s kings were deeply flawed men with differing ethical perspectives in their administration. Before us is a just King on a just throne exercising just power for the good of those in His kingdom. He is not an angel, but our “brother” in the

flesh—God incarnate. The One who “had no sin,” “knew no sin,” and “did no sin” sits at the right hand of the Father to mediate our concerns to Him.

HE IS SUPERIOR IN MORAL EXCELLENCE

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

History is replete with kings who love property, power, and pleasure. But this king loves righteousness—a general term for justice, goodness, and mercy. To love righteousness is to love God’s law and God’s people. This is no hypocrite. He isn’t two-faced or double tongued. Here is one with virtue running through His veins.

He not only loves what is right, He hates what is wrong. The word “iniquity” is “*anomia*” or *lawlessness* in the Greek. Christ loves the Ten Commandments. This could not be said of an angelic being. Moreover, one would be hard pressed to find kings in history that love righteousness and don’t exempt themselves from obeying God’s law.

This is not a king lusting for power, but loving righteousness. Further, this is not a permissive king flirting with sin and tolerating wickedness, but a king that despises evil. Hate is not a vice, but a virtue when it is directed against lawlessness and lawbreakers.

HE IS SUPERIOR AS THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

The quote is from Psalm 102:26-28. The psalmist exhorts Israel to declare the praises of the LORD in Jerusalem (102:21) in part because He created the world (102:25) and because He is immutable (102:26). The Spirit is pleased to reveal that this appellation is directed to the Son; that is, the Son is the LORD of the Old Testament, and He is called *kurios* (Lord / Captain / Master) in the New Testament. Here the work of creation is attributed to the hands of the Creator-Son, not angels.

In the Hebrew's quotation the pronoun "Thou" or "You" (su) is in the emphatic position emphasizing that it was the Son who was in the beginning. "In the beginning" draws us to Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" and John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word . . ." The author is telling us that Jesus is the God who created the world. Thus, the Son is the Creator, and as such is exceedingly superior to the angels. Further, we can conclude that the Son is the Creator of the angels, of men, and all that we can see and not see. He was "LORD" (YHWH) to the Jews, and the "Logos" to the Greeks (John 1:1-3).

Orthodox Christianity does not worship a generic, undefined deity. It worships the Son as the LORD-Theos-Creator of all things. He is the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything less is blasphemy.

HE IS SUPERIOR BECAUSE HE IS ETERNAL

11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

The "they" refers to the "heavens and earth." Created things, even angels, age and perish. In contrast to the aging creation is the staying-power of the Son.

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

He compares the creation to a cloth that can be folded up and put on the shelf. Robes and vestures wear out, but the Son does not change, does not age, and does not deteriorate.

The earth is like a clock that is slowly running down. The Second Law of Thermodynamics applies to everything but the eternal Son. At the last tick of this chronograph, the Son remains (present tense). Unlike the angels, He is immutable, unchangeable, and eternal. The Son has no need to change for He is complete and perfect in Himself. While we have need of everything, He has need of nothing. All things are dependent on Him,

but He remains independent of all things (John 1:2-3). As LORD He is the great “I AM,” the self-existent One!

HE IS SUPERIOR IN HIS HIGHLY EXALTED POSITION

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

This seventh quote is from Psalm 110:1, the most quoted psalm in the New Testament. “Sit Thou” is an imperative directed at the Son, not angels. The “right hand” implies priority, superiority, importance, power, privilege, and authority. It is a sovereign’s way of bestowing honor upon one who is victorious. This place of honor was not given to angels, but to the Son. The temporal clause “until” implies the Son will be on the throne until all His enemies are defeated; that is, He is on the throne now and will remain there to the end of time as we understand time.

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

The purpose of angels is now revealed. They are called “ministering spirits” (*leitourgika pneumata*)—a rather profane term referring to necessary but menial tasks of common, low-wage servants. The crouched place of angels as ministering servants is set in contrast to the salvic work and lofty position of the Son at the right hand of God. Their duties are connected to serving the “heirs of salvation”—but, the work of salvation is one that only the Savior-Son could achieve.

Hebrews 2:1-3 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

The work of angels is not insignificant. In our text their words are called “stedfast” and carried with it rewards and punishment.

Infatuation with UFOs, aliens, and angels is nothing short of blasphemy when one considers the grandeur and majesty of God's message to mankind in the Son.

So great is God's revelation to men through His Son, the author asks a question no one has been able to answer: "How shall we escape (from judgment), if we neglect so great a salvation?"

The greatest sin of all is the neglect of the Son of God. It is the one sin that God cannot forgive.

Let us think more of Christ and less of angels; more of the Son than men; more of Morning Star than the stars of Hollywood.

31. A PROMISE FOR HEALING

James 5:16-20

Q: What Does Sickness and Healing Refer to in James 5?

James 5:16. . . that ye may be healed

The Book of James is about Christian maturity. Mature Christians are ones who have been through the fires -- the hot flames that God uses to purify a man into the image of Christ.

It is a book on maladies that afflict men in the course of life; and, therefore a manual for physicians of the soul.

But, what should a Christian do when he feels like he has been down a hundred miles of bad road and wants to give up?

James immediately sets before us three possible circumstances in which Christians may find themselves. The great lesson that James wants us to grasp is that we need to allow OTHERS TO BE STRONG IN OUR WEAKNESS.

James 5:13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

The word "afflicted" (*kakopatheo*) is a combination of two Greek words, "bad" and "feelings" -- a reference to discouragement or emotional stress. It is translated "hardship" by Paul and "suffering" by James. We get the word "bad," "pathos," and "compassion" from this word.

Q: What should a Christian do when he is suffering?

When the storm on the inside of a man is often more terrifying than the storm on the outside, James says he should pray.

The word "pray" or "prayer" is used seven times in this passage. It is a present imperative verb. The use of the present tense suggests that a man in trouble should pray and keep on praying knowing the difference between saying prayers and praying.

After Jesus ascended into heaven the remaining disciples were "continually devoting themselves to prayer." The vigil lasted ten days (Acts 1:14). The word "continually devoting" (*proskarterountes*) is a present, active participle, which is translated as "continuing" (Acts 2:46), "constantly" (Acts 8:13), and "attendance" (Acts 10:7). On the tenth day, the Holy Spirit came with such force and power over 3000 people committed their lives to Christ. Thus, the birth of the church was conceived in prayer.

Likewise, if a man is to stand on his feet during a trial, he must first get on his knees.

Q: What should a Christian do if he is happy?

James says, "He is to sing praises." Note the present tense, that is, he should continue to sing praise. Praise is to God what grumbling is to the Devil. If complaining is the problem; praise is the cure. God dwells amidst the praises of His people, and praises strengthen the heart (Psalm 22:2). Praise and be pure or complain and be corrupted.

James 5:9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

Q: What should a Christian do if he is sick?

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Before we answer the question, we must expose two extreme positions on this subject. There are those who would lead us to believe that healing is always the will of God; that the kingdom of God has arrived in history and that a good Christian will never get sick or stay sick. This view can lead a person to a sense of guilt if he or a person he is praying for is not healed.

The second extreme view is an antithetical reaction to the first. This view holds that God does not exercise His healing power in this dispensation; that all healing awaits the arrival of the kingdom of God. This view can lead to hopelessness and despair.

A more balanced view keeps in mind that:

- (a) Christ is able, can, and does heal people today to the glory of God, but that He may not choose to do so for purposes known to himself. Paul received a thorn in the flesh and an abundance of grace to live with his affliction to the glory of God (2 Corinthians 12:9);
- (b) All healing is of God. From a tiny flesh wound to dreaded cancer, God is at work healing people;
- (c) There will be a time in each person's life when they will be afflicted with a disease that God will not heal in time;
- (d) Ultimate, final healing awaits the resurrection and the arrival of the kingdom of God in history.

Q: Since most of us know people for whom we have prayed and even been anointed with oil who have not been healed by prayer alone, how are we to reconcile such a strong promise in regards to prayer and healing?

Q: Is the problem our faith or is there something in this passage we do not understand?

Q: Should pastors and elders give medical advice and not encourage sick people to go to doctors?

Q: Is there something magical about "anointing" people with oil or is this religious hocus pocus?

The word "sick" in verse 14 (*astheneo*) is used 32 times in the New Testament -- an old verb meaning "to be weak" (Robertson). About half the time the word "astheneo" refers to physical sickness (the Gospels), and about half the time it refers to spiritual weakness or weariness of heart (the epistles) (Romans 4:19; 8:3; 14:1, 2).

The obvious problem in James is spiritual weakness that stresses out the body due to wrestling with the sins of the age: worldliness, war, conflicts, attacks of the Devil, pride, impatience, irritability, presumption, fraud, frustration, unbelief, and spiritual instability (James 4-5).

Remember the word of our Lord in Luke at the synagogue in Nazareth who came to "heal the broken hearted," to deliver those held captive by sin, to restore sight to those who (spiritually) blind, and to set free those who are spiritually shattered because of sin.

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Isaiah 58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Q: what does James mean by the term "shall save the sick"?

This is important because James emphatically says that a prayer of faith offered on behalf of the sick (*astheneo*) WILL RESTORE the one who is sick – NO Exceptions are presented.

Q: Who is this “sick” person?

I understand it to refer primarily to the individual who is experiencing spiritual weakness, that is, one who is weary and worn out due to the nature of afflictions going on in his life (James 4-5:1-8). I hold this view for the following reasons:

(a) James mentions the fact that many were experiencing various trials (:1:3ff; 2:3-5), lawsuits (2:6); problems with the tongue (3), fleshly wisdom (3:13), quarrels (4:1), wars with God (4:4), criticism of the brethren (4:11), arrogance (4:13), economic deprivation (5:4), and emotional stress (5:10) -- a failure to establish (make stable) the heart during unnerving trials including but not limited to being defrauded of one's income (5:8).

(b) Moreover, the word "sick" (*kamno*) means "weariness" or "discouragement" -- a reference to a tired soul weary of having to endure sin within and sin without. In Hebrews 12:3, Christians are warned about being “weary” (*kamno*) of heart. The word “weary” (*kamno*) is the word used for “sickness” in James 5:15. The use of *kamno* powerfully suggests a state of spiritual exhaustion, not a physical disease, malady, or infection.

(c) The problem in James 5 are matters of the heart in the midst of earthly troubles; penury, frustration, unbelief, complaining, and unbelief. Men are prone to seek remedies during financial affliction (fraud) than seek remedies for sins of the heart that arise because of monetary difficulties.

The financial problem

James 5:4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Consider how frustration, anger, disappointment, fear, impatience impacted the man.

The spiritual need

James 5:8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. James called for patience because they were impatient; for long suffering because the workers were agitated; for

spiritual stability because they were unstable; for faith because they were filled with doubt.

These observations lead me to conclude that the “sick” were spiritually, mentally, and emotionally exhausted from trying to navigate their lives through the storms of life that included being defrauded by the withholding of wages and having to live in a state of penury (5:1-5), not that they had an incurable disease (“sickness” of the physical sort).

A tired Christian needs prayer. A saint afflicted by unbelief needs faith. James exhorts the exhausted to call for elders of the church together for prayer.

Do not hear what is not being said. The passage does not say we should not pray for those who are physically sick, but that we should realize the precise problem James was addressing -- the problems of a weary warrior.

Q: What does it mean to “anoint with oil?”

The word, “anoint with oil” also challenges our interpretation of the passage.

Some Christians see this as some type of ceremonial practice whereby a priest, pastor, or group of elders are supposed to ceremonially anoint the sick and then pray for them. This position is supported by the phrase, “in the name of the Lord.” Others see this as something practical or medicinal.

Though no one is hurt by a ceremonial anointing, I agree with the latter.

- The word “anoint” is used eight times in the N.T. Four times it is used of Mary anointing the feet of Jesus – an esthetic act of love.
- In Matthew 6:17, the one fasting was to anoint his head, that is, practically wash his face and groom himself (using oil).
- In Mark 6:13, the disciples anointed the sick, but this could refer to natural, medicinal remedies.
- In Mark 16:1, the women anointed Jesus’ body—a practical burial custom of the day.

- In the story of the Good Samaritan, he poured wine and oil into the wounds of the victim -- a first aid remedy of the time. Here it is plain that oil had a medicinal value. Even today, olive oil is used as a base to hold the properties of herbs.

Furthermore, the word "anoint" could mean "rub." I don't know about you, but after a busy day, a little foot rub or neck massage revitalizes my whole being. Possibly, James is calling the elders to not only pray for the weary, but to do what they can homeopathically to relieve the stress in this person's life.

The Promise: This being the case, James promises spiritual healing: "the prayer offered in faith shall restore the sick." The word "sick" (*kamno*) discussed previously is an unfortunate translation in this text. A better translation of the word would be "weary" or "discouraged."

The word "shall *save* (*sozo*) the sick" should be translated "rescue" or "keep safe" from danger.

The word "shall raise (*ageiro*) him up" means that he will be lifted up out of his state of depression. The idea is to be saved from weariness.

Spiritual healing does not mean absence of problems, but the ability to be Christ-like in the midst of problems. It takes Christ-likeness to, "Count it all joy my brethren when you fall into various temptations" (1:3). Most of us are not very Christ-like when we are depressed and discouraged.

Prayer is the agency of delivering weary men from exhaustion.

Notice how positive James is about the prayer of faith:

- "shall be saved" from weakness,
- shall be raised up,
- shall be forgiven.

Spiritual healing has at least three conditions attached to it.

The First Condition of healing is the prayer of faith. The phrase, "prayer of faith" is a genitive. The idea here is that prayer is being offered to God on behalf of the discouraged that flows from a believing heart. What does

a discouraged Christian need? He needs faith, does he not? When believing men pray with the discouraged, God will use the faith of others to energize the weary -- that is, to raise him up.

James does not say the prayer of elders shall save the sick, but the prayer of faith shall save the sick. Not all "elders" have faith.

Notice, it is not the faith coming from the sick/weak/discouraged believer that promises restoration, but the prayer of faith coming from the elders that is coupled to the promise. From this we learn a very important principle. When we are going through some difficulty, we need to be around people of faith. We need to let others be strong in our weaknesses. There are days when we need to let others to be strong in faith when we are weak in faith, strong in hope when we are weak in hope, strong in prayer when we feel we can't pray. When the demons of unbelief invade our soul, James wants us to surround ourselves with angels of faith.

*The burden of faith is upon the petitioners (elders), and **not** upon the person being prayed for. While it is helpful if the weary person has faith, it is essential the petitioners have faith. How dare we pray for a person and then place a guilt trip on the sick person for not having enough faith. How cruel!*

5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

The second condition to healing is confession. The command, "confess your sins to one another" suggests that the state of weariness could be due to sin's activity in the heart of the discouraged believer. If one has been dancing in a hog trough, the heart needs to be searched (Psalm 139:23) and sin confessed (Psalm 32; 51).

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Use of the term "hands" suggests the discouraged has been doing something wrong. In the law, there is a doctrine called "the clean hands doctrine" which refers to a petitioner who is free of crime. Thus, the

unclean hands doctrine, is an equitable defense in law that prevents a party from receiving relief from a court if they have engaged in inequitable behavior. The same is true in prayer. The one seeking something from God must have clean hands. James is not advocating perfection, but a practical forsaking of known transgressions of God's law (Psalm 24:3-4). Look at the sins exposed in James 3, 4, 5.

James is encouraging the infirm to evaluate his condition and to be honest about why he is physically and spiritually weak. Discouragement often happens to us when we have a moral failure in our life, when relationships are disrupted due to our wrong emotional responses to people, and due to the activity of unbelief in our lives.

Confession of sin clears the way for God to forgive and bring healing in our life (Isaiah 55:7, 8; I John 1:9). But, James is not only encouraging confession on the part of the weary, but on the part of the prayer warriors. James is calling for 100% transparency by all who are doing the praying.

The third condition for healing is prayer from “a righteous man.” The “righteous man” infers not only the sick, but the elders doing the praying. James says the “working prayer” of a righteous man is “very powerful.” But, what is a righteous man? A righteous man is a Christian. He is a man who has been justified by faith. He is a “fessed up” man, that is, he is one who is honest about his failures and keeps short accounts with God through confession. He is a man who has “right” relationships in and out of church and one who practices his faith in the market place. He is a positive man praying to a positive God for a positive result.

In the context, the righteous man is an afflicted man who has not given himself over to unbelief, doubt, fear, anger, presumption, and slander.

5:17-18 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

James offers Elijah as an example of a righteous man performing the duty of a prophet-elder in ancient Israel. Elijah was the bold, rugged prophet

that called his idolatrous nation back to the Lord. Before Elijah's prayer was answered, he confronted wicked Ahab and ordered the execution of Jezebel's emasculated prophets. God listens to men who confront sin and offer up prayers on behalf of the distressed.

5:19-20 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

"err from the truth" refers to the many sins mentioned in James 4 and 5. Modern men call it "backsliding" into the sins of the flesh or love of the world. Both immorality and worldliness hinder prayer. Thus, James is not talking about physical illness, but erring, swerving, and straying from the faith -- the truth.

The word "convert" can be translated "turn" -- a reference to repentance and restoration -- getting one back on the narrow path of righteousness. The idea here is that the sick person is weary because matters of the conscience afflicted him -- a man who may have sins to forsake and confess.

"converteth the sinner (*harmateo*)" refers to a believer "who has fallen short" or "missed the mark" or let go of the pursuit of holiness -- something easy to do when one is overwhelmed with the burdens of this life. If spiritual healing is to occur, faith must replace doubt; truth must occupy the house where lies moved in.

James addresses the whole congregation and challenges them to be involved in the ministry of reconciliation. Like sheep, many strayed from the truth. Like a shepherd sends his sheep dog into the briars and thickets to round up the strays, James exhorts the healthy to do the work of a sheep dog and to do the thorn-piercing work of turning straying sinners back to the Lord.

"Death" is probably a reference to "dead faith" in James 2:14 and not physical death. Possibly, those who are sick and weary were once active in the faith, but strayed. Now, their faith is weak and in danger of dying. They are like the modern Christian who sits on the back row and sings bass. When a person no longer works for the Lord, he works for the Devil.

When he ceases to love the Lord, he loves the world (James 4:4). If a person is not praying, he is straying. If he is not praising, he is complaining. If he is not serving, he is sinning.

The great need today is for one-eyed, snaggle-toothed sheep dogs who will leave the comforts of the barn and go into the pasture and round up the strays. This duty is not assigned to the pastor alone, but to the “brethren.”

In conclusion, we live in a world of changing circumstances. Each change demands a spiritual response. If we have trials, let us activate faith; if we are troubled, let us pray; if we are happy, let us sing; if we are weary, let us draw on the strength and faith of others.

32. A BENEDICTION OF PEACE

Hebrews 13: 20-21

Hebrews 13: 20-21 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This is a prayer for the complete restoration of the sheep; that is, as silver is refined in the furnace, let us be refined so we might perfectly reflect His image under heat of trials.

The title “*God of peace*” is the subject of the sentence and “*make you perfect*” (*katartisai*) is the optative verb; that is, it is a wish, **not** a command and **not** a fact. *Katartisai* means “*to mend what is broken; to make whole or complete; to sew a rip in a garment.*”

Paul's prayer is grounded on the work of the "*God of peace*" – **not** the God of righteousness or holiness or power or mercy or grace, but the "*God of peace.*"

This "*God of peace,*" having been propitiated by the death of His Son on the cross; and, our debt having been fully discharged by the blood of Christ; and, God having forgiven us of our sins by the mediation of the Savior, reached into hell and raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.

Use of the title "*God of peace*" implies there was some kind of strife or conflict to which His work was needed. Possibly, (a) the strife and division among the Hebrews needed repair, or (b) the conflict regarding God and sinners having ended through Christ, God being at rest restored the life of His Son.

Jesus is called "*the great shepherd of the sheep.*" He was great in character; great in battle; great in love; great in holiness; great in courage; and great in His accomplishments, and great in Shepherding of God's flock.

We believers are called "*sheep*" probably because we do not understand what the Shepherd did for us at Calvary and does for us in His present exalted life. As the good shepherd, our Lord *died* for the sheep and protected them from Divine wrath (Psalm 22); as the great shepherd He *lives* and *provides* for His sheep (Psalm 23); as the Chief Shepherd he *reigns . . .* and *rewards* the sheep eternal blessings (Psalm 24).

"*The blood of the everlasting covenant*" implies that God works to mend us completely based on His covenant promise and consideration of the price paid for our salvation; that is, since blood is the currency of the spirit world, and we were purchased with His blood, "*making us perfect*" is His sight is a continuation of His promise.

Notes:

There is an illusion here to Isaiah 63:11 "*Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock?*" Here the shepherds are no doubt Moses and Aaron (Psalm 77:20), God having delivered the people from death also brought Moses and Aaron out of the Red Sea to lead His flock to Mt. Sinai.

His salvation at the Red Sea was based on the covenant of blood – a completion of His promise to deliver His people from bondage. The blood that saved the people from the death angel secured all other blessings including their redemption from Egypt by way of the Red Sea.

The great work of mending and bringing the people to perfection must have *a strong foundation*: God of peace, blood, covenant, raised from the dead, a living Shepherd, great in power, love, and peace.

The great work of conforming us to His will is total reconciliation of the total man to the total image of Christ; that is, that there might not be any part of the man that is not committed to the will of God. To wake up thinking one has a choice whether to do good or evil demonstrates the lack of reconciliation of the man to God. The perfect man has no choice but to do "*every good work*" and what is "*well pleasing in his sight.*"

When praying we do not look at ourselves, but to the resources of Another – *the God of peace*. We start with the fact of God's accomplishments through the Son, and reach for the impossible – perfection. Let us remember, the Good Shepherd died for us to save us from the penalty of sin and that the Great Shepherd lives to save us from the power of sin. One day the Chief Shepherd will come and save us from the presence of sin.

The "*God of peace*" is used six times in Paul's epistles (Romans 15:13; 16:20; Philippians 4:7; 4:9; Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23)

The title "*God of Peace*" acts like a benediction over our restless lives, unsettled hearts, and heated conflicts to bring us peace that we might walk where angels walk (Maclaren).

Tapping into the "*God of Peace*" would calm their fears, temper their anger, repair relationships, and restore their ability to pursue holiness.

This "*God of Peace*" dwells above the conflicts, gloominess, and irritations common to men; and in His presence the restless heart can find shalom. His peace can shed light on our shadows, calm the waves on our turbulent seas, minister sweetness where there is bitterness, and bring a dove's

wing where there are clenched fists and tight jaws. “My peace” I give unto you.

The only way to obtain peace is to be good – “Make you perfect in every good work to do his will . . . ” *There can be no peace on earth where there is not conformity to Heaven’s will.* Want peace? Then lighten the load on your ship and throw your mutinous captain-self overboard, your iron anchor attached to the underside of this world, your heavy burdens of collecting silver and gold, and your steel desires to have your way on this voyage.

Philippians 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you

Moreover, the peace of God orders our holiness (See: 1 Thessalonians 5:23). What a man needs for peace is to surrender his vessel to be captained by the Lord Jesus Christ, to allow His peace to be the steersman, and to debar frivolous anger, lusts, and bitterness from standing at the helm.

Exercising the peace of God impacts our relationships for good (Colossians 3:15).

The peace of God acts like an umpire guarding and protecting our hearts (Philippians 4:7).

This peace can only come by prayer. The heart is like a stormy sea tossing our ship on top of white caps and then burying our vessels under tons of wet darkness, fear, and marine debris. Only Christ can say, “Peace, be still!:

Come Thou fount of every blessing

Tune my heart to sing Thy grace

Streams of mercy never ceasing

Call for songs of loudest praise

This passage is the only reference to the resurrection of Christ in the epistle. We do not serve a dead martyr, but a living Savior – the high

priest of our profession within the veil – the living Shepherd – the Great Shepherd of God’s flock risen from the dead ready to perfect us.

We don’t have to live in the shadows away from the sunshine or sail our vessel on stormy seas on cold, windy nights. Believing in His peace and praying to the Great Shepherd increases the possibilities of happy, holy service. The power that raised Christ from the dead is available to us. There is no mountain we cannot climb; no river we cannot cross; and, no burden we cannot carry.

So, like a little bird, open your mouth and let him fill it. He lives to provide for you; to protect you, and to perfect you. Don’t worry about storms on the sea, or getting lost in the forest, or wolves in the pasture, or thorn bushes near the path. The Great Shepherd of the sheep leads. Will you follow?

33. A CRUSHED SNAKE

Romans 16:20



Maclaren titled this verse, "A Crushed Snake" and his thoughts are recorded here.

Romans 16:20: And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

"There are three other Scriptural sayings which may have been floating in the Apostle’s mind when he penned this triumphant assurance. ‘Thou shalt bruise his head’; the great first Evangel-we are to be endowed with Christ’s power: ‘The lion and the adder thou

shalt trample under foot’-all the strength that was given to ancient saints is ours; ‘Behold! I give you power to tread on

serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy'-
the charter of the seventy is the perennial gift to the Church."
(Maclaren)

"Echoing all these great words, Paul promises the Roman Christians that
'the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.'"

Now, when any special characteristic is thus ascribed to God, as when He
is called '*the God of patience*' or '*the God of hope,*' in the preceding chapter,
the characteristic selected has some bearing on the prayer or promise
following.

For example, this same designation, '*the God of peace,*' united with the
other, 'that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great
Shepherd of the sheep,' is laid as the foundation of the prayer for the
perfecting of the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews in every good
work. It is, then, because of that great name that the Apostle is sure, and
would have his Roman brethren to be sure, that Satan shall shortly be
bruised under their feet.

No doubt there may have been some reference in Paul's mind to what he
had just said about those who caused divisions in the Church; but, if there
is such reference, it is of secondary importance.

Paul is gazing on all the great things in God which make Him the God of
peace, and in them all he sees grounds for the confident hope that His
power will be exerted to crush all the sin that breaks His children's peace.

Now the first thought suggested by these words is the solemn glimpse
given of *the struggle that goes on in every Christian soul.*

Two antagonists are at hand-grips in every one of us. On the one hand,
the '*God of peace,*' on the other, '*Satan.*' If you believe in the personality of
the One, do not part with the belief in the personality of the other. If you
believe that a divine power and Spirit is ready to help and strengthen
you, do not think so lightly of the enemies that are arrayed against you as
to falter in the belief that there is a great personal Power, rooted in evil,
who is warring against each of us.

Ah, brethren! we live far too much on the surface, and we neither go down deep enough to the dark source of the Evil, nor rise high enough to the radiant Fountain of the Good. It is a shallow life that strikes that antagonism of God and Satan out of itself. And though the belief in a personal tempter has got to be very unfashionable nowadays, I am going to venture to say that you may measure accurately the vitality and depth of a man's religion by the emphasis with which he grasps the thought of that great antagonism. There is *a star of light*, and there is a *star of darkness*; and they revolve, as it were, round one centre.

But whilst, on the one hand, our Christianity is made shallow in proportion as we ignore this solemn reality, on the other hand, it is sometimes paralysed and perverted by our misunderstanding of it. For, notice, 'the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet.' Yes, *it is God that bruises, but He uses our feet to do it*. It is God from whom the power comes, but the power works through us, and we are neither merely the field, nor merely the prize, of the conflict between these two, but we ourselves have to put all our pith into the task of keeping down the flat, speckled head that has the poison gland in it. 'The God of peace' -blessed be His Name-'shall bruise Satan *under your feet*,' but it will need the tension of your muscles, and the downward force of your heel, if the wriggling reptile is to be kept under.

Turn, now, to the other thought that is here, the promise and *pledge of victory in the name, the God of peace*. I have already referred to two similar designations of God in the previous chapter, and if we take them in union with this one in our text, what a wonderfully beautiful and strengthening threefold view of that divine nature do we get!

'*The God of patience and consolation*' is the first of the linked three. It heads the list, and blessed is it that it does, because, after all, sorrow makes up a very large proportion of the experience of us all, and what most men seem to themselves to need most is a God that will bear their sorrows with them and help them to bear, and a God that will comfort them. But, supposing that He has been made known thus as the source of endurance and the God of all consolation, He becomes 'the God of hope,' for a dark background flings up a light foreground, and a comforted sorrow

patiently endured is mighty to produce a radiant hope. The rising of the muddy waters of the Nile makes the heavy crops of 'corn in Egypt.' So the name 'the God of hope' fitly follows the name '*the God of patience and consolation.*'

Then we come to the name in my text, built perhaps on the other two, or at least reminiscent of them, and recalling them, 'the God of peace,' *who, through patience and consolation, through hope, and through many another gift, breathes the benediction of His own great tranquility and unruffled calm over our agitated, distracted, sinful hearts.*

In connection with one of those previous designations to which I have referred, the Apostle has a prayer very different in form from this, but identical in substance, when he says 'the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' Is not that closely allied to the promise of my text, '*The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*'?

Is there any surer way of '*bruising Satan*' under a man's feet than filling him 'with joy and peace in believing' ? What can the Devil do to that man? If his soul is saturated, and his capacities filled, with that pure honey of divine joy, will he have any taste for the coarse dainties, the leeks and the garlic, that the Devil offers him? Is there any surer way of delivering a man from the temptations of his own baser nature, and the solicitations of this busy intrusive world round about him, than to make him satisfied with the goodness of the Lord, and conscious in his daily experience of 'all joy and peace'? Fill the vessel with wine, and there is no room for baser liquors or for poison. I suppose that the way by which you and I, dear friends, will most effectually conquer any temptations, is by falling back on the superior sweetness of divine joys. When we live upon manna we do not crave onions. So He '*will bruise Satan under your feet*' by giving that which will arm your hearts against all his temptations and all his weapons. Blessed be God for the way of conquest, which is the possession of a supreme good!

But then, notice how beautifully too this name, '*the God of peace,*' comes in to suggest that even in the strife there may be tranquility.

I remember in an old church in Italy a painting of an Archangel with his foot on the dragon's neck, and his sword thrust through its scaly armor.

It is perhaps the feebleness of the artist's hand, but I think rather it is the clearness of his insight, which has led him to represent the victorious angel, in the moment in which he is slaying the dragon, *as with a smile on his face, and not the least trace of effort in the arm*, which is so easily smiting the fatal blow. Perhaps if the painter could have used his brush better he would have put more expression into the attitude and the face, but I think it is better as it is.

We, too, may achieve a conquest over the dragon which, although it requires effort, does not disturb peace. There is a possibility of bruising that slippery head under my foot, and yet not having to strain myself in the process. We may have 'peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation.' Do you remember how the Apostle, in another place, gives us the same beautiful-though at first sight contradictory-combination when he says, 'The peace of God shall garrison your heart' ?

'My soul! there is a country
Far, far beyond the stars,
Where stands an armed sentry,
All skilful in the wars.'

And her name is Peace, as the poet goes on to tell us. Ah, brethren! if we lived nearer the Lord, we should find it more possible to '*fight the good fight of faith,*' and yet to have '*our feet shod with the preparedness of the gospel of peace.*'

'*The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet*'; and in bruising He will give you His peace to do it, and His peace in doing it, and in still greater measure after doing it. For every struggle of the Christian soul adds something to the subsequent depth of its tranquility. And so the name of the God of peace is our pledge of victory in, and of deepened peace after, our warfare with sin and temptation.

Lastly, note the swiftness with which Paul expects that this process shall be accomplished.

I dare say that he was thinking about the coming of the Lord, when all the fighting and struggle would be over, and that when he said '*God shall bruise him under your feet shortly,*' there lay in the back of his mind the thought, '*the Lord is at hand.*' But be that as it may, there is another way of looking at the words. They are not in the least like our experience, are they? '*Shortly!*'-and here am I, a Christian man for the last half century perhaps; and have I got much further on in my course? Have I brought the sin that used to trouble me much down, and is my character much more noble, Christ-like, than it was long years ago? Would other people say that it is? Instead of '*shortly*' we ought to put '*slowly*' for the most of us. But, dear friend, the ideal is swift conquest, and it is our fault and our loss, if the reality is sadly different.

There are a great many evils that, unless they are conquered suddenly, have very small chance of ever being conquered at all. You never heard of a man being cured of his love of intoxicating drink, for instance, by a gradual process. The serpent's life is not crushed out of it by gradual pressure, but by one vigorous stamp of a nervous heel.

But if my experience as a Christian man does not enable me to set to my seal that this text is true, the text itself will tell me why. It is '*the God of peace*' that is going to '*bruise Satan.*' Do you keep yourself in touch with Him, dear friend? And do you let His powers come uninterruptedly and continuously into your spirit and life? It is sheer folly and self-delusion to wonder that the medicine does not work as quickly as was promised, if you do not take the medicine. The slow process by which, at the best, many Christian people '*bruise Satan under their feet,*' during which he hurts their heels more than they hurt his head, is mainly due to their breaking the closeness and the continuity of their communion with God in Jesus Christ.

But, after all, it is Heaven's chronology that we have to do with here. '*Shortly,*' and it will be '*shortly,*' if we reckon by heavenly scales of duration. *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

'The Lord will help her, and that right early.' 'The Lord is at hand.' When we get yonder, ah! how all the long years of fighting will have dwindled down, and we shall say 'the Lord did help me, and that right early,' and though there may have been more than threescore years and ten of fighting, that, while we were in the thick of it, did not seem to come to much, we shall then look back and say: 'Yes, Lord, it was but for a moment, and it has brought me to the undying day of Eternal Peace.'" (Maclaren).

Isaiah 30:15 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In (your) returning and rest shall ye be saved; in (your) quietness (rest) and in (your) confidence (trust) *shall be your strength*: and ye would not.

34. GOLDEN SILENCE

Habakkuk 2:20

What comfort Habakkuk must have felt knowing that God was going to judge corruption within Babylon!

Habakkuk was wonderfully blessed by God's revelation to him. His message concludes with this thought:

The Holy Temple

Habakkuk 2:20 "But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him."

The conjunction "but" presents a contrast between the nothingness of the nations, and the everything of God . . . between dinky idols, and the uttermost of the Almighty . . . between gods that don't exist, and the God Who does exist . . . between deeply flawed men, and the infinite perfections of the LORD.

Having declared the powerless of the nations and all that is not God, Habakkuk summons the nations to enter His Court and to shut their mouths before Him Who is the great "I am."

His temple refers to Solomon's temple which is a giant metaphor for the Presence of Sovereignty. "He reigns" is the gospel of the Old Testament (Psalm 97:1).

The Lord is in His holy temple with gavel in hand. "The temple of God" is an icon for God's rule . . . His throne . . . His authority . . . His universal jurisdiction over mankind . . . His law-order . . . His justice . . . His courtroom chambers where He permits the ancients to study Him. Only repentant, devout men can gain a hearing before His Majesty.

This presentment is not a contrast between heaven and earth. He is not more present in heaven than on earth. Nor is He more available to angels than to men. "God is wholly everywhere, and the whole of Him is nowhere." His temple could be damaged, but God's care for His people could not be destroyed (1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 79:1).

When David declared, "the Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven" he meant Court is in session 24 hours a day, seven days a week (Psalm 11:4; and, Psalm 18:6, Psalm 18:9).

His eyes see the sons of men. Not only did the LORD know about the evil among His people, He planned to use the Chaldeans as His chastening rod. Israel's Judge would severely chastise Israel, but He would not crush them. Not only did God know all the horrific crimes the Babylonians would commit, He had already pronounced sentence upon them! Unlike Israel, they would be utterly ruined and buried in the graveyard of the nations.

The great message of the Book of Habakkuk is that the LORD reigns. Court is in session. International complaints against nations are heard in His chambers.

Parties summoned, charges are presented. Matters are serious. He knows the facts of each case. He prosecutes. He defends. He judges. He

commands. He executes. Destinies of nations are in His hands. He makes judicial decisions and nations are shattered (Psalm 75:7).

Therefore,

“let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

BE SILENT means “Hush!” The object of the interjection “Hush!” is addressed to all the faces of men on earth. Quiet, court is in session.

Like Habakkuk, we are often tangled in knots over the mysteries of our age. What good man has not been bewildered by the spread of lawlessness during his time (1:2-5)? In His presence, the problems regarding the mystery of our being are solved (Barnes).

Therefore, “let all the earth keep silence before Him.” Since the all-wise, all-present, all-powerful God is in Heaven beholding the deeds of His people, “let all the earth keep silence before Him.” The Spirit is telling us get into His Presence, “shut up and put our ears on.” “Shema, O Israel . . .”

Let us come into His Presence, and let Him release us from the chains and shackles that bind our souls and minds with the sins of our own heart and the contradictions of this world.

We are investigating the meaning of Habakkuk 2:20. Disturbed by the wickedness of his people, the prophet fell to his knees to pray. God’s Answer disturbed him, so he prayed again.

In the Lord’s second answer, he learned that the LORD knew about the wickedness of his people, and about the horrific crimes of the Babylonians. He had already pronounced a sentence against the greatest city-state in the world. The LORD reigns!

Habakkuk 2:20 “But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.”

The great message of the Book is that the LORD reigns. Court is in session. Matters are serious. Charges against defendant peoples are heard

in His chambers. He knows the facts of each case. He judges. Destinies of nations are in His hands. Show respect. Be silent and learn.

The command “keep silent” is preceded by the protasis, “the LORD is in His holy temple;” that is, because the Court is in session.

Men need to enjoin the wisdom of silence. We are surrounded by shrieking sirens, roaring engines, 18 wheelers thundering down interstates, honking cars, alarm clocks beeping, cell phones invading your day, and TV enticing us with zillions of commercials. These disruptions and demands on our souls are unbearable! Connectedness is the curse of our times. The tyranny of the urgent requires our immediate attention. Fluffy stuff takes precedence over weighty matters. The need of the hour is silence in order to focus on the important things.

Silence is golden in the presence of God, Yes I believe it is true, Because in that golden silence, my thoughts are filled with You.

Habakkuk accused God of going *sub silentio* in regards to his prayer (1:2); now, the LORD commands him and “all faces” to be silent.

We need to find God, but we cannot find him in the noise of the city, or the rearranging of chairs at a school pep rally. He is in His temple as King and Judge. Court is in session. The Spirit whispers to us, “Shhhh! Hush! Silence in the gallery! These matters are serious. Listen and learn!”

The idea here for “red necks” is slow down, shut up, shush, zip the lip, chill out, cork it, and get your ears on. But, the LORD is not this crude or rude. He simply posts His rule, “Silence. Court is in session!”

A fool is known for his many words, but a man of wisdom for his silence.

Proverbs 18:2-3 Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their own opinions.

When you are in the Divine Library of wisdom and knowledge the rule is “Quiet Please!” The great enemy of the Christian is the boom and buzz in the beehive of life. A broken wheel makes the most noise. A broken Christian has turned his back on silence. He is so busy running computers and punching buttons that he drowns out the voice of the Spirit. Busyness

keeps him from prayer; noise deafens him to the sweet sounds of the Word of God.

Francis Bacon said,

“Silence is the sleep that nourishes wisdom.” Listen to the sun, moon, and stars making their journey across the heavens. Without clamor, clangs, and clatter they bless man with light for his journey through life. As a well-mannered gentleman is known by the noise he doesn’t make when sipping his soup.

Likewise, a wise man is known by the lack of hullabaloo in his heart. Like a rainbow arches in the sky after the thunder claps of a storm displaying its glorious color, wisdom comes to men when silence returns to the heart.

There is too much clamor in the world.

In His Presence, the mysteries of our being are solved . . . and . . . all the miseries of humanity can be attributed to the inability of men to be alone . . . silent . . . with Bible in hand.

Silence isn’t empty; it is bursting with answers for the man who “keeps silent before Him.” The quieter you are, the more you hear. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isaiah 26:3).

Moreover, the “Holy, Holy, Holy” LORD God is in His Holy Temple! Selah (Isaiah 6:1-6).

Barnes observes regarding the “repetition” of a name, or of an expression, three times, was quite common among the Jews. Thus, in Jeremiah 7:4, the Jews are represented by the prophet as saying, “the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these.”

Thus, Jeremiah 22:29: ‘O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord;’ Ezekiel 21:27 : ‘I will overturn, overturn, overturn;’ see also 1 Samuel 18:23 : ‘O my son Absalom! my son, my son;’ see also the repetition of the form of benediction among the Jews, Numbers 6:24-26. (Isaiah 6). In light of NT revelation regarding the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, how can it be doubted that this is a reference to the Holy Trinity?

See the triple use of *Hashem* (the Name) in the Aaronic Benediction, the *Barakh*.

Numbers 6: 24-26 The LORD (YHWH) bless (barakh) thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

Because Israel's Great Lawgiver, Judge, and King is in His holy temple, silence is the order of the hour (Isaiah 33:22).

As, Habakkuk sat silently digesting the Word of God, what did He learn about the LORD as Lawgiver?

As Israel's Lawgiver, the LORD was the nation's Source of law. The LORD announced His law to the nation, and the people accepted it; that is, they consented to be governed by the law of the LORD God.

Furthermore, His law formed the basis of His judgment (Exodus 20:1ff). His law is a product of His sovereignty . . . and His love for His people. Because the LORD God loved them, He gave them His law . . . not to save them but to create a safe, orderly society. The enacting clause reads, "I am the LORD thy God (Sovereignty in action), which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt (love for His people), out of the house of bondage (for the love of freedom) . . . (1) Thou shall have no gods before me" (Exodus 20:1-3). His law or Torah is an indirect reflection of His character; Jesus is the Living Torah, the direct representation of His character. Because He is eternal, His law is absolute (Psalm 105:10; 119:42; Hebrews 1:1-3).

Habakkuk knew that God's law was not only good for Israel, but good for all nations — not only good for him, but good for all men and all of man's institutions.

As, Habakkuk sat silently digesting the Word of God, what did He learn about the LORD as King? Let us consider the following texts.

As Israel's King, the LORD is the one and only Sovereign subject to none. The temple complex was not only a religious center administrated by priests, it was the center of Israel's civil government where the King's

court executed justice. Not only is the LORD the King of Israel, He is the King of the Nations. As the Spirit of God summons Israel to acknowledge the LORD's authority over them, so the Spirit calls the nations to acknowledge the LORD's authority over them. We hear much about the Christians duty to obey "God-ordained authorities" (Romans 13:1), but seldom do we hear preachers calling heads of State to obey Habakkuk's God.

Consider the following texts:

Jeremiah 10:7 Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee.

Deuteronomy 4:39 "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.

1 Chronicles 16:31 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; And let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."

1 Chronicles 29:11 "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all."

Psalms 29:10 The LORD sat as King at the flood; Yes, the LORD sits as King forever.

Psalms 47:2 For the LORD Most High is to be feared, A great King over all the earth.

Psalms 135:6 Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

Daniel 4:35 "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of

heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

Psalm 2:6, 9-12 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

That the LORD is King of Israel means He is in control. Though things seemed out of control to Habakkuk, silence taught Him that the LORD reigns. With mouth shut, and ears open, Habakkuk came to a place where he was content to know that he was not in charge of the world. The LORD reigns — a tough lesson to learn for proud, liberal, independent, self-willed, autonomous, Armenian men.

The prophet must have found rest in the following Scriptures:

Psalm 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Isaiah 41:10 "fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Proverbs 16:4 The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.

As Israel's Judge, He dispenses justice to the nations. He knows the facts; and, He judges justly. As Habakkuk waited in silence he learned that the LORD's Court is in session 24/7 and never in recess. His judgment is without bias, without prejudice, without error, and absolute. All must appear before Him. As Israel's crimes came before the LORD's Court, so did Babylon's . . . and so does the sins of the United States. And, there are no appeals. [There is a difference between God's judgment on individuals and His judgment on the nations; individually, all men must appear

before Him after death (Hebrews 9:27). But, the sins of nations as a whole are judged in time.]

Psalm 9:8 And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity.

Psalm 9:19-20 Arise, O LORD, do not let man prevail; Let the nations be judged before You. Put them in fear, O LORD; Let the nations know that they are but men. Selah.

Psalm 110:6 He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country.

Joel 3:12 Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations.

Daniel 7:9-10 "I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.

Jeremiah 17:10 "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

In conclusion, the message of Habakkuk is that the LORD is on His throne as King of the Nations. Court is in session. Take off your shoes. You are on holy ground. Be silent. The Judge knows the facts, He will render a judgment, and the gavel will come down on the side of justice against the wicked. Trust the LORD to do what is right. When politics becomes burdensome, trust and obey!

Golden Silence

“Silence is golden in the temple of God, Yes I believe it is true;
Because in that Golden Silence, my thoughts are filled with
You.

Your throne is above the stars, that shimmer and shine; In this
Golden Silence, I learn that I am Thine.

You are greater than the thunder storm, that causes me to
quiver; No greater love than Calvary, that excites my heart
forever.

You are my paradise, my oceans wide, My mountain standing
tall, So in this golden silence, I understand Your call.

Silence is Golden in the temple of God, Yes I know it is true; I
have riches greater than gold, As my thoughts are filled with
You” (Shelagh Bullman).

35. THE CALL TO HOLINESS IN

2 Corinthians 7:1

Perfecting holiness ought to be the intense concern of every Christian.
But, how can we do it?

To answer this question, we must go backward from 2 Corinthians 7:1 into
chapter 6 and into chapter 5.

First: Holiness begins with a volitive act.

► *2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

The participle "cleanse" comes from the Greek words *karthirizo* which means "to purge." We get the word "*cartharsis*" from this term which means "to purify" or "to cleanse."

The Greek participle (cleanse) is a subjunctive, volitive aorist referring to a completed action in the past and not an ongoing, moment by moment process; that is, it refers to the quality of a decision – to start now if you have not done so! Paul holds out the hope and duty that all Christians have made a decision to separate themselves substantially from “filthiness . . . ” and dedicated themselves to the perfection of holiness. “Perfecting holiness” is dependent on a once-for-all decision to separate from evil and to seek God’s will.

“Perfecting holiness,” however, is a present participle implying continual separation from “unclean” matters in this life and continual devotion of the man wholly and totally to the will of God.

“holiness” is an attribute of God that refers to His righteous and unique character (5:21).

“holy” is an adjective describing one's separation from sin's corruption and one's devotion and nearness to God or being Christ-like.

“perfecting holiness” comes from the present, active participle “*epi-teleo*” which means “to complete” or “to finish” -- to arrive at the goal line of holiness. It carries the idea of being totally consecrated and devoted to God and His purposes for members of His family.

“to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit” is the negative side of holiness; that is, the phrase references what we must separate ourselves from.

“filthiness” refers to all those things that defile and dirty a man morally and spiritually.

First, the positive side of holiness is drawing near to the Lord.

“in the fear of God” describes the motivation for holiness . . . the fear of displeasing him . . . and, his love to draw us to Christ while saving our souls “reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ” (5:18-19).

Second: Holiness seeks the fulfillment of His promises.

"Having therefore these promises" is a reference back to 2 Corinthians 6:17.

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

The pledge "I will receive you" refers to the Father's promise to accept, love, and provide for His holy ones. He is a Father to His children, but to enjoy Him, one must fulfill three conditions of the promise:

Condition one: "come out from among them," that is, a man must separate himself from the impious and their idolatries.

Condition two: "be ye separate" refers (negatively) to building a fence between yourself and the faithless as well as (positively) dedicating one's self to the Lord.

Condition three: "touch not the unclean thing." The word "touch" (*hatomai*) is an imperative commanding the believer to not "embrace," "fellowship," or "make a commitment" to enjoy the unclean (*akathartos*) "pleasures of sin" for a season (Hebrews 11:25).

Condition Four: Holiness avoids worldliness and the unequal yoke.

2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Background: This verse is often used to warn Christians about marrying a non-Christian, but it involves other applications.

Corinth was a major commercial center. To be a business man and to sell a product or service, one had to be a member of a craftsman's guild -- a commercial corporation. Each guild had a "god" or an "idol" that allegedly

helped partisans to build and sell their crafts to shoppers. These guilds set up conventions, exhibitions, and expos not only to market their products but to honor the "god" or "idol" allegedly giving them success. Feasting, drinking, and celebrating these gods involved intoxication, frolicking, and debauchery. Many Corinthians participated in these festivals for commercial gain and to build rapport with other merchants. But, in so doing they became a stumbling block or "an offence;" i.e., they hindered the progress of the gospel (See 5:3).

Paul pounds the hammer of truth on these compromisers: ". . . what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" Separation was the order of the day.

Herein lies a principle: Christians are in the world, but not of the world. They can interact with and interface with unbelievers, but believers cannot do what infidels do; say what they say; or go where they go without compromising the faith. Holiness is not contagious, but worldliness is. Therefore, the Christian must avoid certain social events in order to carry out his calling to be holy. "Others may, I cannot."

Condition Five: Holy people do "not receive the grace of God in vain."

2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

"as workers together with Him (Christ)" means that Paul's missionary team was in the harness pulling the gospel plow. They were Christ's co-workers (*eugernountes* - 6:1) co-servants (*doulos*) and co-ministers (*diakonos* - 6:4); that is, they were ministers that gave up certain rights in order please God and to serve Him.

"We beseech you" glows from the sunshine in Paul's spirit: "beseech," *parakeleo*, expresses the tender warmth of Paul's love. He pleads with them to perfect their calling (7:1) and not to receive the grace of God in vain (6:1).

The word "vain" means without complete effect or impact on the soul; i.e., . . . uselessly, fruitlessly, pointlessly. It is like a man being bootless in the jungle. A Christian who understands the love of God in Christ gives Him his all. He doesn't hold back. He yields his mind, will, emotions, and body to Him. Fans of a football team will cheer after a win. Something is wrong if fans don't shout and smile. Likewise, something is wrong if believers don't yield their precious all to Christ after discovering the marvelous benefits of being reconciled to God.

The Corinthians, however, woke up every morning feeling like they had a choice to serve God or not serve God; to obey His law or not to obey His law; to do good or to do evil. Ellicott explains,

"Those to whom he wrote had believed and been baptized, and so they had "received the grace;" but "the freedom of the will to choose good or evil remained . . ."

A true minister of Christ has no choices in life in regards to good and evil; that is, he knows the Lord has already made that choice for him; and, he is obligated to surrender to his Lord.

Condition Six: holiness requires the man to have totally reconciled to God in his spirit, soul, and body.

2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation . . . Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye (totally) reconciled to God.

One of the problems with the Corinthians was that they were fond of the Lord, but not in love with the Lord; that is, they were half-baked, cursory, superficial, and slipshod in their devotion to the Lord.

The inexplicable love of God for us is compressed into the text, ". . . all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. . . . to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. "

"All things are of God." The definite article related to "things" directs us back to "all things" being new in Christ Jesus; and, to Paul's ministry of preaching a gospel of reconciliation to God (5:17-18).

Barns: "He makes the statement general, however, showing his belief that not only these things were produced by God, but that all things were under his direction, and subject to his control. Nothing that he had done was to be traced to his (Paul's) own agency or power, but God was to be acknowledged everywhere."

This is the first time Paul uses the word "reconcile" in his epistles.

The word "reconciliation" in 5:19 comes from the Greek word "*katallage*" which refers to balancing the books, of enter-changing currency to give the correct change; that is, to make things balanced or right.

The emphasis here is about God working in Christ to reconcile men to Himself; and, not upon men being reconciled one to another -- a complete impossibility until the return of Christ.

In punishing Christ for our sins, God' balances the books, delivers us from debt, forgives our sins, and makes it possible for us who were once enemies of God to become reconciled to Him. God did the reconciling, we need only to receive it . . . and let it have its full impact on our soul.

Think of a man on death row: accused, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death when suddenly the judge appears, announces a pardon, pays the debt, and sets the man free. How should the free man respond? The beneficiary of such grace falls on his knees in thankfulness and offers his precious all to the benefactor. Any other response is insane.

Paul exhorted the Corinthian church to be totally reconciled to God in their minds, emotions, and will; to respond correctly to this grace and be totally devoted to the Lord in the home, at work, and in the church; to have no will, but His will. To let every aspect of grace have its full effect; that is, to grow from babyhood into manhood spiritually.

The Corinthians seem to have been a church where the grace of God had not yet penetrated the whole man.

- They needed to grow in compassion -- 2 Corinthians 6:12
- They need to grow in a holy and separated life -- 2 Corinthians 6:14
- They needed to grow in generosity and giving - 2 Corinthians 8:7

Every command in Paul's letter addressed a shriveled condition of the Corinthians.

The true mark of carnality is one that believes he still has choices in life. The true mark of a Christian impacted by such grace is that he surrenders his precious all to the will of God: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done!"

Holiness does **not** involve "speaking in tongues," jumping up and down in a pew, or waiving one's hand in the air trying to touch this holy God. Rather, holiness involves humility, separation from the world, and total devotion to the will of God -- the road less followed.

Perfection is the opposite of a glass half-filled with water.

Alan Redpath: "There is no short-cut to holiness. You do the beholding—He does the transforming."

REFERENCES

Holy Scripture			
1 Corinthians 10:31	44	James 5:14	25
1 Corinthians 4:1	11	Jeremiah 15:15-16	84
1 Corinthians 7:10	54	John 1:1	29, 67, 76, 105
1 Corinthians 7:1-5	54	John 1:1-3	67, 105
1 Corinthians 7:6	54	John 3:16	51
1 John 2:1	84	John 3:3	51
1 Timothy 2:2	43	John 3:6; 3:8; and 3:34; 7:38-39	49
1 Timothy 5:11	43	Luke 1:28	75
2 Corinthians 13:1	87	Luke 19:12	23
2 Corinthians 13:11	45, 80	Mark 4:35-41	36
2 Corinthians 4:1-2	13	Matthew 1:2	23
2 Timothy 1:7	26	Matthew 1:21	53
2 Timothy 2:15	11, 20, 36	Matthew 24:2-3	24
2 Timothy 3:16	16, 58	Matthew 4:17	23
2 Timothy 3:16-17	16	Matthew 5:18	14
Acts 15:2	81	Matthew 5:39	24
Colossians 1:13	63	Matthew 6:11	76
Colossians 1:14	64	Philemon 1:1	34
Colossians 1:16-18	64	Philippian 4:4	47
Colossians 2:19	64	Philippians 2:12	23
Colossians 3:15	119, 120	Proverbs 1:6	29
Deuteronomy 13:4	87	Proverbs 30:23	54
Deuteronomy 22	53	Proverbs 30:5	14
Deuteronomy 24	55	Psalm 119:1	77
Deuteronomy 6:13	33	Psalm 119:96	57
Deuteronomy 8:3	47	Psalm 137	36
Ecclesiastes 12:2-7	32	Psalm 2:12	33
Exodus 20:1-3	34, 132	Psalm 2:2	63
Exodus 4:22	49	Psalm 2:3	72
Galatians 5:16	87	Psalm 2:5; 2: 7-8	72
Genesis 1:1	67, 105	Psalm 23	35, 118
Genesis 14:22	33	Psalm 24	32
Genesis 15:6	23, 95	Psalm 24?	36
Genesis 17:1	87	Psalm 45	26, 103
Genesis 22:5	23	Psalm 46 and 76	28
Genesis 5:22	87	Psalm 5:12:	73
Hebrews 1:1-3	70, 99, 132	Psalm 97:1	79, 128
Hebrews 13: 20-21	117	Psalm 97:8	79
in Romans 16:20	46	Psalm 99	36
Isaiah 30:15	127	Revelation 1:20	25
Isaiah 40:8	14	Romans 1:1	34
Isaiah 63:11	118	Romans 12:1	80
James 1:22	84	Romans 14:12	12
James 3:1	12	Romans 3:22	49
		Romans 6:11	79
		Romans 7:1	24

Romans 8	63	Titus 1:12	25
Romans 8:4	63, 77, 84, 95	Titus 2:1-6	59
Ruth 1:8	34		

PUBLICATIONS

Books we have written:

1. [Biblical Standards for Civil Rulers, Form #13.013](#)
2. [Should Christians Always Obey the State?, Form #13.014](#)
3. [The Crisis of Church Incorporation, Form #13.017](#)
4. [A Family Under God, Form #17.001](#)
5. [Origin of the Bible, Form #17.002](#)
6. [The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, Form #17.003](#)
7. [Five Pillars of the Gladiator Gospel, Form #17.004](#)
8. [Prayer Puts Power In Your Life, Form #17.005](#)
9. [Old Testament Theology, Form #17.006](#)
10. [Towards Exegetical Eschatology, Form #17.007](#)
11. [A Commentary on Revelation, Form #17.055](#)
12. [Commentary on Romans 13, Form #17.056](#)
13. [What is the Date of the Biblical Flood?, Form #17.057](#)
14. [Behold His Glory, Form #17.059](#)
15. [Proverbs for Wisdom, Form #17.060](#)
16. [The Pursuit of Piety, Form #17.061](#)
17. [101 Sermons on God and Government, Form #17.062](#)
18. [Marriage Counseling Manual, Form #17.063](#)
19. [Words for the Weary, Form #17.064](#)
20. [Correcting the Upside Down Gospel, Form #17.065](#)
21. [Sermons on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, Form #17.066](#)
22. [If I Could Do Church Again, Form #17.067](#)

23. The Feminist War Against God's Law, Form #17.068
24. The Case for Head Coverings and Restoring God's Law Order to the Church, Form #17.069
25. The Sovereignty of God and the Madness of Politics, Form #17.070
26. The Pilgrim's Songbook, Form #17.071
27. The Route of the Exodus, Form #17.073
28. Commentary on the Book of Psalms. Form #17.074
29. Imprecatory Psalms, Form #17.075
30. Political Psalms, Form #17.076
31. Psalms for the Troubled Heart, Form #17.077
32. Psalms Messianic, Form #17.078
33. Psalms of Asaph, Form #17.079
34. Double Through Discipleship, Form #17.080
35. The Art of Conflict Management, Form #17.081
36. Know Who You Are In Christ, Form #17.082
37. From Corinth to American Churches, Form #17.083
38. When Satan Goes to Church, Form #17.084
39. Nike Greek Grammar Manual, Form #17.085
40. The Magna Carta, Form #10.017
41. The Case for Common Law Marriage, Form #13.022
42. The Matthew 24 Preterist Interpretation, Form #17.086
43. The Passover Seder, Form #17.087
44. You Can Be Your Own Lawyer, Form #17.088
45. Justification v. Sanctification, Form #17.089
46. Doctrinal Issues in Modern Times, Form #17.090

47. Opting Out of the Tax System, Form #10.018
48. Opting Out of Property Tax, Form #14.023
49. Freedom Documents, Form #10.019
50. Jewish Myths, Form #17.091
51. America's Worst President, Form #17.092
52. Our Greatest Heroes, Form #17.093
53. Solomon's Sex Education for Sons, Form #17.094
54. Why So Much Suffering in WWII?, Form #17.095
55. Learning to Say No, Form #10.020
56. Winning in Traffic Court, Litigation Tool #10.022
57. Apostasy and the Man of Sin, Form #17.096
58. The Proper Place of God's Law Today, Form #17.097
59. God's Christmas Storm, Form #17.098
60. The Greatest Need in the Church, Form #17.099
61. Grampa's Prayers and Poems, Form #13.023
62. Grampa's Family Fun Poems, Form #13.024

Works we have contributed to:

1. Laws of the Bible, Litigation Tool #09.001
2. Ten Commandments of Freedom Form #13.016
3. SEDM About Us Page, Section 9
4. Proof of Claim: Your Main Defense Against Government Greed and Corruption, Form #09.073. [Click Here](#) for the article this publication is based on from this site