

# 1. Translations, Tools, and Methods

## What do you want of this class?

### The Need for Biblical Interpretation

- Combating “Deconstruction”: It keeps people in the faith.
  - Many people reject a god, but it’s not the God of the Bible.
  - Youth Minister Jason Jackson: Went to seminary because of youth group questions that he didn’t have answers for. **Seminary is not for everyone in ministry, but proper principles for interpretation are.**
- Preaching and Teaching Faithfully to God’s Command: 2 Timothy 2:15: “2 Timothy 2:15: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”
- Our Desire and Delight: We get to experience life to the full when we’re living rightly arranged under God’s Word.

### Quote on Humility and the voice of God

Alexander Campbell (d. 1866), founder of Bethany College, from his essay “Christian System” about reading Scripture.

Humility of mind, or what is in effect the same, contempt for all earth-born pre-eminence, prepares the mind for the reception of this light; or, what is virtually the same opens the ears to hear the voice of God. Amidst the din of all the arguments from the flesh, the world, and Satan, a person is so deaf that he can not hear the still small voice of God's philanthropy. But, receding from pride, covetousness, and false ambition; from the love of the world; and in coming within that circle, the circumference of which is unfeigned humility, and the center of which is God himself - the voice God is distinctly heard and clearly understood.

### OT

- Reading semantically Exodus 12:37: “Exod 12:37 The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.”
- Reading canonically (book and Bible context): Jeremiah 29:11: “Jer 29:10 This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all

your heart. 14 I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”

- ~Alternative verse Isaiah 6:8: “Here am I. Send me!” But he sends Isaiah to preach destruction: “9 “Go and tell this people: // “ ‘Be ever hearing, but never understanding; // be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’ 10 Make the heart of this people calloused; // make their ears dull // and close their eyes. // Otherwise they might see with their eyes, // hear with their ears, // understand with their hearts, // and turn and be healed.” // 11 Then I said, “For how long, O Lord?” // And he answered: // “Until the cities lie ruined // and without inhabitant, // until the houses are left deserted // and the fields ruined and ravaged, // until the LORD has sent everyone far away // and the land is utterly forsaken. // 13 And though a tenth remains in the land, // it will again be laid waste.
- Reading historically: Elijah and Elisha: Double portion: 2 Kgs 2:9: When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?” // “Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied.
- Reading contextually: Matthew 18:20: “Where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” Look at 18:15–20 as a whole.

## Translations

- Framework
  - Typically linear: Word-for-Word to Thought for Thought to Paraphrase
  - Lawson Stone: Two axis quadrant is more helpful: culture and language
    - Culture: Ancient vs. Modern: 1–10
    - Language: Word vs. Thought: 1–10
- Translations I recommend:
  - See Matthew 6:2, 7; 7:12 as examples
  - Reference points: BHS and GNT and the MESSAGE
  - The MESSAGE: Language (10) and Culture (10)
  - NLT: Language (7) and Culture (7)
  - NIV: Language (4) and Culture (4)
  - ESV: Language (3) and Culture (4)
  - NRSV: Language (2) and Culture (3)

## Methods

### History, Literature, Theology

- These are the three keys.

## Inductive Bible Study Method

- This is literature study.
- This is only part of the journey.

## The Journey: Bringing the Keys Together

- Journey metaphor
  - It's a journey!
  - Stephen King says writing is telekinesis; interpreting is learning to receive the telekinetic messages. That is, interpretation is the journey of understanding someone else's mind.
- The Journey itself
  1. Grasping the Text in Their Town
  2. Measuring the Distance Between Our Town and Theirs
  3. Crossing the Principlizing Bridge
  4. Grasping the Text in Our Town
- Examples: John 3:16
  - History: Typically in Jewish history, God has a special love for the Jews, but now his love is explicitly worldwide. No expression previously showed his love like this. This is different.
  - Literature:
    - "World" in John (see below). IVP NT Background commentary: "Those who are not yet following God's will"
    - "Life" in John 10:10 is "full life" and John 10 it's also safe life (shepherd).
  - Theology: Only begotten son: This has only been used of Abraham's son Isaac. So we can read it canonically and typologically: He is the antetype of Isaac.
- World in John:
  - John 1:9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.
  - John 6:33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."
  - John 7:7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil.
  - John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
  - John 12:31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.
  - John 14:19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.
  - John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

- John 17:9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.
  - John 17:18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.
- Applied: Principle: God loves everyone the same to the extent that he would show the penultimate love through sacrificing himself as the only begotten of God, and we can have vibrant life because of him.
- Cultural vs. Universal

## Question-Observation Method

- Write them out in columns!

## The Assignment: Step 1: Prepare for Reading

- Pick a book
  - Jonah
  - Psalm 22
  - Ephesians
- Get a copy you can write on
  - Go to Biblegateway.com
  - Select the book and translation you want
  - Remove footnotes, verse numbers, and headings
  - Paste that into a document and print
- Get a notebook or journal

## Tools

% Bible Study Tools

## History Tools and Resources

- Study Bibles: NRSV, NIV, NLT translations
- *Dictionary of Old Testament Background* (The IVP Bible Dictionary Series): a set of reference books for studying the OT
- *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (The IVP Bible Dictionary Series): a set of reference books for studying the NT

## Literature

### Tools

- Bible Gateway ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)): For various translations and for word studies. Lots of translations. Great for conducting word searches (easy interface), plus a good audio Bible too. Known for its desktop version.
- YouVersion Bible App: <https://www.youversion.com/>: For various translations, plans, and devotionals. Great for word searches, plus reading in community and discussing as you go through the app! Good audio Bible too. Known for its mobile app.
- Blue Letter Bible ([www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)): For various translations, commentaries, and word studies linked to Greek and Hebrew from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. This is great for customized searches; solid and free commentaries; includes resources, like history tools, other online tools don't have.

### Resources

- David R. Bauer and Robert Traina's *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014 [2011]). A great manual on a particular method—and a good one at that!
- Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart's *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2014 [1981]). Focuses on the genres, very practical and down to earth.
- J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays's *Grasping God's Word*, any edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001 [2005, 2012, 2020]). Covers this throughout but not exclusively focused on literary analysis as a method.

### Theology Resources

- Walter Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: An Introduction*
- I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel*
- Matthew Bates, *Gospel Allegiance*
- N. T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus: a background to Jesus' life*

### Commentaries: History, Literature, and Theology Together

- *New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (NICOT): the standard commentary series, and searchable on Accordance and Logos.
- *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (NICNT): the standard commentary series, and searchable on Accordance and Logos.
- *Tom Wright for Everyone* series: practical, down to earth, relatable but rich.
- William Barclay's commentary series: reliable, helpful, and practical.

## Other Digital Tools of Note

- Fun: She Reads Truth // He Reads Truth // Kids Read Truth: Reading Plans and Resources (Products, Devotionals, and Podcasts; CSB translation). A fun way to read the Bible with beautiful aesthetics.
- Scholarly: Accordance Bible Software and Logos Bible Software: for scholar-level research and the highest level of searchability in various translations and languages.

## Syllabus

## Q&A