



Grasping God's Word



Sundays | 9:20–10:55am

Starting June 7th

Meeting on [zoom](#)

Taught by Vinnie Angelo

Summer 2020

When: June 7—August 30, 2020

Time: 9:20am—10:30am

Class Webpage: www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

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Check the media sections for articles/videos pertaining to that week's topic
Each reading/assignment should be completed prior to that week's class

Week 1: Christocentric Hermeneutics & Biblical Theology

Assignment:

Watch videos/read articles on TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Week 2: Bible Translations & Who Controls the Meaning?

Assignment:

Read Luke 15:1-32 in the following three translations ESV, NIV, and KJV

Note any differences/similarities that you find interesting

You can do this for free on www.BibleGateway.com

JIGW Reading:

Chapter 7

Week 3: The Interpretive Journey, Levels of Meaning & Word Studies

Assignment:

Find 30 observations in Luke 15:1-2 (make a list)

Don't make any interpretations/applications—just observations

Word Study

1. Watch the video on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20 for instructions on "*how to do a word study*" (located in the week 3 video playlist)

2. Look up Luke 15:15 on www.StudyLight.org and do a word study on the word "*hired*"

3. What did you find?

JIGW Reading:

Chapters 1 & 2

Week 4: How to Read Paragraphs & Discourses, & The Literary Context

Assignment:

Reading Luke 15:1-32, how should this chapter be organized/structured?

How many parables does Jesus tell in this chapter?

JIGW Reading:

Chapters 3 & 6

Week 5: What Do We Bring to the Text & The Historical Context

Assignment:

Read through Luke 15:1-32

With your best guess, write down any words/phrases that could have a meaning that's different from our modern understanding.

Samaritans/Samaria:

Read the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-39

Then read the article on "Samaria" or "Samaritan" on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20 (or in a Bible dictionary) and make a list of the ways the article helps you understand the conversation between Jesus and the woman

JIGW Reading:

Chapters 4 & 5

Week 6: The Role of the Holy Spirit & Application

Assignment:

Watch videos on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Write a story that retells the original parable of Luke 15:12-32 so that the *effect on the contemporary audience* is equivalent to the *effect on the original audience*

JIGW Reading:

Chapter 8

Read articles/watch videos on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Week 7: Letters

Assignment:

Read the introductions to the following letters, and note the differences:

Phil 1:1-11; Col 1:1-14; Gal 1:1-5

JIGW Reading: Chapter 9

Bible Reading: Romans

Week 8: Gospels

Assignment:

Watch videos on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Read Mark 13

How does this compare to Matthew 24:1—25:46 and Luke 21:5-38?

Based on the context, what event is Jesus primarily referring to?

JIGW Reading: Chapter 10

Bible Reading: Mark

Week 9: Acts & OT Overview

Assignment:

Watch the GHCC sermon “*We Are Witness*” from the Acts series

This can be found on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

In Acts 7, what does Stephen's speech communicate about the importance of the OT?

JIGW Reading: Chapter 11

Bible Reading: Acts

Week 10: Law & Wisdom

Assignment:

Watch videos on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Read through Proverbs: do you notice a difference between chapters 1—9 and 10—31?

JIGW Reading: Chapter 13; “Mosaic Covenant” article (on TheologyClass.org/GGW20)

Bible Reading: Gen. 1—2; Exod. 20; Proverbs

Week 11: Prophets & Poetry

Assignment:

Watch videos on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

What do you think of when you hear the words “prophet/prophecy”? How much of this understanding comes from the Bible, and how

JIGW Reading: Chapters 14 & 15

Bible Reading: Isa. 40—53; Micah 3 & 6; Psalms 1, 2, 102, 110

Week 12: Revelation—Apocalyptic Literature

Assignment:

First watch the videos/read the articles on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Then read the entire book of Revelation, focusing on:

1. Who Jesus is and what he does
2. What the people of God are called to do
3. Don't “Theologize” the book (just read the text and observe what's happening)

JIGW Reading: Chapter 12

Bible Reading: Revelation

Grasping God's Word—Week 1

Christocentric Hermeneutics & Biblical Theology

Assignment:

Watch videos/read articles on TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Terms of the week:

Biblical Theology: A way of reading the Bible that looks for themes that run throughout the biblical story.

Christocentric: To see Christ at the center of the biblical story.

Exegesis: To draw the intended meaning out of a text.

Foreshadowing: When something is anticipated in the future (e.g., God installs priests to serve sacrifices in Israel; foreshadowing/anticipating the eternal priesthood of Jesus)

Hermeneutics: The theory and art of interpreting a text.

Typology (type/antitype): This is a literary device that introduces characters, places, events, sayings, or institutions that God specifically designed to correspond to, and predictively prefigure, their antitype fulfillment. For instance, Adam, Moses, and David are all a type of Christ (with Christ being the antitype).

I. What is the Bible about?

A. Purpose of the Bible

1. What is the Bible about?
2. Jesus said the Bible was about himself:
 - a. John 5:39, 45-47
 - b. Luke 24:27, 44-46
 - c. Christ-centered (**Christocentric**)
3. Ultimate purpose of the Bible
 - a. God reveals Himself through His Son
 - b. To demonstrate His redemption of creation
 - c. To transform people into Christ's image
 - d. The Bible isn't a moral-guide book/behavior manual
 - e. Jesus is the hero of the Bible (Genesis—Revelation)

II. Where is Jesus in the text?

A. Jesus in the OT

1. Every story stands in relation to Jesus
 - a. Every page of scripture directly, or indirectly, speaks of Christ
 - b. Because he was always the plan of God to redeem creation to Himself
 - c. 2 Cor 1:20

C. Questions to ask:

1. How does the OT pre-reveal Christ?
 - a. How to find Jesus where Jesus isn't mentioned?
2. Is the OT story showing:
 - a. A type of Christ? (**typology**)
 - i. David: The great king sitting on the throne of Jerusalem, a man after God's heart
 - ii. Jesus: The greatest king who sits on God's throne in the New Jerusalem and rules the world, the God-man who is completely pure in heart
 - b. Prediction
 - i. Is 53:5
 - c. **Foreshadowing**
 - i. Sacrifices/Law are just a shadow of the good things to come (Hb 10)

III. Why do we read it this way?

A. This is how the NT audience read the OT

1. Isa 40:3 (Cf. Mal 3:1)
 - a. Mark 1:2-3
2. Joel 2:28
 - a. Acts 2:16-17
3. Ps 102:25-27
Heb 1:8, 10-12

IV. Cautions

A. Avoid moralizing

1. Making the goal of the text a mere behavior modification
2. Acting in a way that doesn't depend on God's justifying you through the cross
3. Acting in a way that doesn't depend on the Holy Spirit who empowers you

B. Avoid spiritualizing

1. Any mention of wood doesn't automatically connect to the cross
2. Any mention of blood/the color red doesn't automatically connect to his spilled blood

C. Don't skip the original context/meaning

1. Maintain faithful **exegesis/hermeneutics**
2. We find Jesus once we find out what the text meant

D. Does the cross hover over every text of the Scriptures?

1. If you were to give a talk/sermon/Bible Study on the OT, would it eventually lead to the cross?
2. *"If a Muslim/Jew liked/agreed with your (OT) sermon, then you didn't teach a Christian sermon"* - Piper

I. What is theology?

A. 4 Boxes

1. Exegesis/Scripture
2. **Biblical Theology**
3. Systematic Theology
4. Practical Theology

B. Biblical Theology

1. Themes
2. Assumes the harmony of the Bible
 - a. The many authors are telling one story, culminating in Christ
 - b. This is why we practice a Christocentric reading of the Bible
3. Assumes a central “script” that has an overarching narrative

II. The Main Narrative of the Bible

A. The Bible is the story of:

1. Creation
 - a. God dwelling w/ his people, the Garden
2. Fall
 - a. Humankind separated from God, Blessings & Curses
3. Redemption
 - a. Jesus perfectly obeys and receives blessings; the cross & resurrection; all in Christ are heirs
4. Restoration
 - a. New Jerusalem, all things have been made new

B. 4-part story

1. This is the background that we read the Bible from
 - a. Always ask which part of the story you're in

III. Exploring different themes

A. Two Seeds/Offspring

B. The Temple

Grasping God's Word—Week 2

Week 2: Bible Translations & Who Controls the Meaning?

Assignment:

Read Luke 15:1-32 in the following three translations ESV, NIV, and KJV

Note any differences/similarities that you find interesting

You can do this for free on www.BibleGateway.com

JIGW Reading:

Chapter 7

Terms of the week:

Exegesis: To draw the intended meaning out of a text.

Eisegesis: To read a meaning into a text.

Hermeneutics: The theory and art of interpreting a text.

Manuscript/Autograph: Manuscripts are copies of biblical books. The Autograph is the original.

Translation: Putting the original languages of the Bible into other languages.

Transmission: The process of copying a book of the Bible over generations.

Grasping God's Word: Bible Translations

I. Intro:

A. Class Goals (misnomers/misapplied verses)

B. Goal of interpretation:

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. Where is Jesus in the text?
4. How do I apply this to my life?

II. Foundations of Biblical Interpretation

A. Important Terms

1. **Exegesis**
 - a. To pull out/discover the original meaning of the text
 - b. "What is the text?"
2. **Hermeneutics**
 - a. The process and method of interpretation
 - b. "This is what it means and how we apply it"
3. **Eisegesis**
 - a. Reading a meaning INTO the text

B. The Grammatical-Historical-Christocentric Method of Interpretation

1. Grammatical
 - a. What do the words mean?
 - b. This includes literary context
2. Historical
 - a. What is the historical context?
 - b. What are the cultural/historical/etc. details that shed light on understanding?
3. Christocentric
 - a. Christ-centered
 - b. Finding Jesus as the point of each story

III. How did we get our English Bible?

A. The **transmission** of the Bible

1. God inspires the words of the biblical writers
 - a. Paul isn't inspired, his words are
 - b. God used real people
2. The autograph is sent to its audience
 - a. It is then read to the audience, copied (manuscript), and redistributed
3. The early church began collecting/assembling early writings
 - a. Purpose of the NT writings
 - b. These writings are collected by the early church; becomes the "canon"
4. Circulating **Manuscripts**
 - a. Copied in regions, sent all over
 - b. As it's copied, "variants" come into existence
 - i. Not all copies are the same
 - ii. Reconstructing the original

- B. Uncial Text
- C. Textual Variants

IV. Translations

A. Bible Translations

1. The first Bible translation
 - a. Septuagint (LXX)
2. Basis for all translations
 - a. From the Greek Text, scholars translate the Greek in the common tongue
3. From the Critical Text comes the “Greek Text”
 - a. Most translations come from one Greek Text
 - i. NASB, ESV, NIV, NLT, etc.
 - b. The KJV/NKJV are based on a different Greek Text (*Textus Receptus*)
 - i. Not based on oldest manuscripts
 - ii. Contains extra verses
 - iii. Passages crept into the manuscripts
 - (a). 1 John 5:7-8
 - (b). Acts 8:37
 - iv. Original ending of Mark?
 - (a). Mark 16:9-20
 - v. Probably something Jesus said, but not in the original
 - (a). John 7:53—8:11

B. Translations for Study

1. Types of translations
 - a. Formal equivalence
 - i. “word for word” or “literal” translation
 - ii. Translators seek to translate each word from the original language into an equivalent English word
 - iii. e.g., NASB, ESV, KJV, RSV/NRSV
 - b. Dynamic/functional equivalence
 - i. “Thought for thought”
 - ii. Translators seek to translate the meaning/message of the original language into an equivalent English word OR expression
 - iii. e.g., NIV
 - c. Paraphrase
 - i. Translators seek to translate the main idea in a way that is very fluid and understandable to the modern language
 - ii. NLT, the Message
 - d. The “smoother” the translation the more interpretation involved

Grasping God's Word: *Who Controls the Meaning?*

I. Who Controls the Meaning, the Reader or the Author?

A. Who determines meaning?

1. Modernistic Worldviews:

- a. *Pre-Modern*: the gods/God reveal truth
- b. *Modern* (Enlightenment): We have knowledge through science and reason
- c. *Post-Modern*: Can knowledge/truth actually be known?

B. The Author determines the meaning

- 1. Authorial intention: The text means what the AUTHOR wants it to mean
 - a. Always strive to determine the Sender's Intended Meaning
- 2. To ignore the author's intention can produce serious consequences for the readers

C. Application

1. Identify what God communicated

- a. The meaning is the same for all people
- b. The meaning isn't subjective, and does not change from reader to reader

2. Determine application

- a. Never ask "what does this mean to me"

Grasping God's Word—Week 3

Week 3: The Interpretive Journey, Levels of Meaning & Word Studies

Assignment:

Find 30 observations in Luke 15:1-2 (make a list)

Don't make any interpretations/applications—just observations

Word Study

1. Watch the video on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20 for instructions on “*how to do a word study*” (located in the week 3 video playlist)
2. Look up Luke 15:15 on www.StudyLight.org and do a word study on the word “*hired*”
3. What did you find?

JIGW Reading:

Chapters 1 & 2

Terms of the week:

Descriptive: When a passage describes what happened historically

Prescriptive: When a passage prescribes (commands) an outcome for all people

Spiritualizing: Trying to find a deeper meaning than is actually intended

Literary: The author’s intended meaning, based on background, genre, etc.

Grasping God's Word: *The Interpretive Journey*

I. Process of Interpretation

A. The basic method to understand and apply the Bible

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. Where is Jesus in the text?
4. How do I apply this to my life?

B. The process

1. Exegesis
 - a. The process of discovering the meaning of a text
 - b. *Eisegesis* = the process of inserting a meaning into the text
2. Hermeneutics
 - a. Interpreting the text and learning how to apply it

C. Prescriptive vs Descriptive

1. Descriptive
 - a. When a passage describes what happened historically, but isn't making a command for people outside of that situation
 - b. e.g., The Wall of Jericho
2. Prescriptive
 - a. When a passage prescribes (commands) an action or desired outcome
 - b. e.g., The Great Commission

Grasping God's Word: *Levels of Meaning*

I. Things to look for in sentences

A. Repetition of Words

1. 1 John 2:15-17

B. Contrasts (differences, items, ideas, individuals that are contrasted with each other)

1. Prov 14:31
2. Rom 6:23

C. Comparisons (similarities, items, ideas, individuals)

1. Prov 25:26
2. James 3:3-6

D. Lists

1. Make lists (explore their significance)
 - a. 1 John 2:16

E. Cause and Effect

1. Writers state a cause/the effect of that cause
 - a. Prov 15:1

F. Figures of Speech

1. Words used in a sense other than the normal, literal sense
 - a. Ps 119:105

G. Conjunctions

1. and, for, but, therefore, since, because, etc.
 - a. 2 Tim 1:7-8

H. Verbs

1. Action (past, present, future - progressive, passive, continued, indicative, imperative)
 - a. Col 3:1-4

I. Pronouns

1. Our, us, you, them, he, etc.
2. What/who is the antecedent?

II. Spiritualizing

A. What is “Spiritualizing”?

1. Finding a “deeper meaning” past the actual meaning
2. The search for individualistic-spiritual significance

B. Spiritual vs. Literal

1. Literal mean?
 - a. Historical? Physical?
 - b. Literary (literarily) = the meaning the authors have intended
 - i. Literarily = the type of literature, the context, the historical background, the grammar, the word meaning
 - ii. The literary meaning is literal/spiritual/etc. (the TRUE MEANING)
2. Spiritualizing = secret meanings the authors never intended
 - a. Our imagination
 - b. i.e., “My God, My God”

III. Common Word-Study Fallacies

A. Word-Count Fallacy

1. When we insist a word must have the same meaning every time it occurs.
 - a. “Word meanings are determined by context, not word counts” —Bock
 - b. Immediate context takes priority over secondary context

B. Word-Concept Fallacy

1. When we believe that since we've studied one word, we've studied an entire concept
 - a. *Ekklesia*
 - i. Body of Christ, temple of the Holy Spirit, household of faith?

IV. Words & Meanings

A. Semantic Range

1. The range of meaning/semantic range = all the possible meanings of a word
 - a. “Draft”
 - b. A word's range of meaning = possible meanings of a word
 - c. Find the range of meaning for a Greek/Hebrew word
 - i. English dictionary are a mistake
 - d. Don't pick ANY meaning
2. Context determines word meaning
 - a. Everything that surrounds the word paragraph, subject matter, author's argument, historical situation, the original audience, etc.
 - b. “Circle of Context”
 - c. Give more weight to the writings of by the same author
 - d. Make interpretive choices with conviction and humility

Grasping God's Word—Week 4

Week 4: How to Read Paragraphs & Discourses, & The Literary Context

Assignment:

Reading Luke 15:1-32, how should this chapter be organized/structured?

How many parables does Jesus tell in this chapter?

JIGW Reading:

Chapters 3 & 6

Terms of the week:

Pericope: A section of scripture that forms a coherent unit

Genre: A style, kind, or form of writing

Context: Everything in and around a verse that helps provide understanding

I. Reading Paragraphs

A. General and Specific

1. Does the author introduce an idea?
2. Gal 5:16-23

B. Questions and Answers

1. A rhetorical question
 - a. Romans 6:1-4
 - b. Diatribe: A way to teach without dropping lots of information on your audience

C. Dialogue

1. Always observe:
 - a. Who are the participants?
 - b. Who is speaking to whom?
 - c. What is the setting?
 - d. Are other people around?
 - e. What is the point of the dialogue?

D. Purpose/Result Statements

1. Sentences that describe the reason, result, or consequence
 - a. Matt 1:22

E. Means

1. Look for the means that brings about an action, result, or purpose
 - a. Heb 9:12

F. Conditional Clauses

1. The conditions whereby some action, consequence, reality, or result will happen.
 - a. "If/then"
 - b. 1 Cor 15:12-19

G. The Actions/Roles of People and the Actions/Roles of God

1. Phil 2:1-8

H. Emotion & Tone

1. Relationships
 - a. Hab 1:2
 - b. 1 Thes 1:2-7
 - c. Gal 1:6-9

II. Discourses

A. Connections between Paragraphs and Episodes (pericope)

1. How paragraphs/episodes relates to and connects with the other paragraphs/episodes that come before and after
 - a. Romans 1—11 & 12—16

B. Story Shifts: Major Breaks & Pivots

1. Look for critical places where the story seems to take a new turn
 - a. This could be a major break in a letter
 - i. Eph 1—3 (indicative) & 4—6 (imperative)
2. A plot change
 - a. Nineveh repenting, and God not destroying them

I. What is Literary Genre?

A. **Genre**: form/kind

1. Different biblical genres
 - a. OT genres:
 - i. narrative
 - ii. law
 - iii. poetry
 - iv. prophecy
 - v. wisdom
 - b. NT genres:
 - i. Gospel
 - ii. History
 - iii. Letter (epistle)
 - iv. Apocalypse

II. What is the Surrounding Context?

A. Immediate **Context**: the text being studied

1. The immediate context circle
2. Give the highest priority to the immediate context

B. Surrounding Context: The texts that surround the passage you are studying

1. Words, sentences, paragraphs, and discourses that come before/after

C. Ignoring the Surrounding Context

1. "Never read a Bible verse"
2. Chapter/verse distractions
 - a. Not part of the original documents

D. How to Identify the Surrounding Context

1. Main goal: identify how an author's thought flows from part to whole
2. Identify how the book is divided into paragraphs or sections
 - a. Items that mark changes or transitions:
 - i. conjunctions
 - ii. change of genre
 - iii. change of topic/theme
 - iv. changes in time/location/setting
 - v. grammatical change

3. The most accurate interpretation best fits the passage's surrounding context

Grasping God's Word—Week 5

Week 5: What Do We Bring to the Text & The Historical Context

Assignment:

Read through Luke 15:1-32

With your best guess, write down any words/phrases that could have a meaning that's different from our modern understanding.

Samaritans/Samaria:

Read the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-39

Then read the article on “Samaria” or “Samaritan” on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20 (or in a Bible dictionary) and make a list of the ways the article helps you understand the conversation between Jesus and the woman

JIGW Reading:

Chapters 4 & 5

Terms of the week:

Culture: The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.

Historical-Cultural Context: Anything surrounding a text that is either stated, implied, or assumed. The HCC might not be obvious to the modern reader.

Preunderstanding: Sub-conscious beliefs that are often the result of one's upbringing, socio-economic status, culture, and family heritage.

Grasping God's Word: *The Historical-Cultural Context*

I. Why bother with Historical-Cultural Context?

A. Our task is to discover what the Sender originally intended his audience to understand.

1. Interpretation to be valid = consistent with the historical-cultural context
 - a. If it doesn't make sense then, we are on the wrong track

II. Identifying Historical-Cultural Context

A. **Historical-Cultural Context** of the Entire Book

1. The author
 - a. Who was the author, what's his background?
 - b. When did he write, what's the nature of his ministry?
 - c. What kind of relationship did he have with the audience?
 - d. Why was he writing?
2. The audience
 - a. Who was the biblical audience?
 - b. What were their circumstances?
 - c. How was their relationship to God?
 - d. What kind of relationship did they have with each other?
3. Historical/cultural background
 - a. What was happening at the time the book was written?
 - b. Other historical-cultural factors?
 - i. Geography/Topography
 - ii. Social Customs
 - iii. Economic Issues
 - iv. Political Issues

B. Tools

1. Bible Dictionaries
 - a. Have general articles about the Bible
2. Old Testament and New Testament Introductions and Surveys
 - a. Supply detailed background information on each book of the Bible
3. Commentaries
 - a. Information about the historical-cultural context of the book
 - b. Know the background of the scholar you're reading
4. Historical-Cultural
 - a. The geography, politics, religion, economics, family life, social customs
 - i. Bible Atlases
 - ii. Commentaries
 - iii. Background Commentaries
 - iv. Old Testament and New Testament Histories
 - v. Special Studies in Ancient Life and Culture

III. Dangers Associated with Studying Background

- A. Inaccurate background information
- B. Elevating the Background of the text
- C. Don't let yourself evolve into nothing more than a walking database of ancient facts

Grasping God's Word: What do we bring to the text?

I. Preunderstanding

A. Preunderstanding

1. Our preconceived notions and understandings that we bring to the text
2. Specific experiences
3. Previous encounters
4. Anything that makes us assume that we already understand something

B. Culture

1. The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group
 - a. The set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization
2. National heritage
 - a. school, YouTube, language, customs, stories, movies, jokes, literature, national habits

C. Relationships

1. Having a loving-caring family
2. Having a negligent/abusive family

D. Interpretational Reflex

1. We fill gaps from our culture
 - a. family's socio-economic situation and outlook
2. Our cultural background preforms a parameter of limiting possibilities for a text even before we grapple with the intended meaning
 - a. We create a world of interpretive possibilities and impossibilities
 - b. "The challenge is to critique our culture with the Bible, and not vice versa."
3. What about revolutions and Romans 13?
 - a. e.g., Boston Tea Party

E. Familiarity happens when we're thoroughly familiar with a passage

1. We know all there is to know
 - a. Familiarity with a passage creates preunderstandings
2. Avoid coming to the text with a theological agenda already formulated

F. Cultural Baggage

1. Culture weighs us down
2. Examples of subconscious
 - a. Jonah (Pinocchio)
 - b. Jesus/Moses (biblical movies)
3. "What would Jesus do?"
 - a. We interpret to not conflict with our cultural norms

G. Total Objectivity

1. This is impossible [not the goal]
 - a. Reading the Bible apart from faith does not produce objectivity
2. The goal is to SUBMIT to the text and interact with it
 - a. Allow your preunderstanding to change

Grasping God's Word—Week 6

Week 6: The Role of the Holy Spirit & Application

Assignment:

Watch videos on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Write a story that retells the original parable of Luke 15:12-32 so that the *effect on the contemporary audience* is equivalent to the *effect on the original audience*

JIGW Reading:

Chapter 8

Read articles/watch videos on
www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Terms of the week:

Descriptive: when a passage describes what happened historically

Prescriptive: when a passage prescribes (commands) an outcome for all people

Grasping God's Word: *The Role of the Holy Spirit & Application*

I. Can We Grasp God's Word Apart From The Spirit?

- A. The unbeliever's ability to understand the text is limited
 - 1. Sin has had an effect on the whole person
 - 2. Unbelievers can understand the basic message, but reject the gospel
 - a. Unbelievers won't be persuaded of its truth/live out a biblical ethic

II. The Spirit and the Christian Interpreter

- A. Interpretation is more than possession of the Spirit
 - 1. The Spirit doesn't make a valid interpretation automatic
 - a. False (and common) view
 - b. The Spirit won't do everything for you
- B. God (the Spirit) DOES EXPECT us to use our minds
 - 1. Matt. 22:37
 - 2. God works with/through people
 - a. Think clearly, reason soundly, study diligently and faithfully
- C. We understand as we mature
 - 1. Spiritual maturity
 - a. Beware of young/zealous interpreters

III. Interpretation & Meaning vs. Application

- A. Meaning
 - 1. The passage means what the author intended to communicate
 - a. There is only one meaning to every text
 - b. It means what it means (in its original context)
- B. Application
 - 1. Our response to the meaning of the inspired text
 - a. Or it can be contextualized to a specific life situation
 - b. This can be a 1:1 application

IV. How to Apply the Meaning

- A. Steps 1—3
 - 1. What does it say?
 - 2. What does it mean?
 - 3. Where is Jesus?

B. Step 4: How do I apply it to my life?

1. Ask if the passage is **Descriptive** or **Prescriptive**?

- a. Descriptive: when a passage describes what happened historically
 - i. If something is descriptive, then application can be drawn from the basic principle of the situation
 - ii. Deut 22:8
 - iii. Deut. 18:20
- b. Prescriptive: when a passage prescribes (commands) an outcome for all people
 - i. If something is prescriptive, then its direct principle is to be obeyed for the people of God in all generations
 - ii. Matt 28:19-20
- c. Descriptive/Prescriptive is not always obvious, and often results in theological disputes among the church
 - i. 1 Cor 14:33b-35

2. The Process

- a. Ask ourselves “what does this passage MEAN, and how do I LIVE IT OUT in my life”
- b. The Spirit doesn't change for our purposes/circumstances
 - ii. Don't adjust the meaning to fit your situation/purposes/feelings

3. Discover a parallel situation in a contemporary context

- a. Be students of the ancient world, as well as students of the modern world
- b. Don't create a parallel meaning/application where there isn't one
- c. “Real-world scenarios should accurately reflect the meaning of the biblical text and be relevant to contemporary life”

C. Application through the church

- 1. Corporate application is just as important as individual application
- 2. “Personal interpretation” as a downfall of the Reformation
 - a. It's not just “me and God”
 - b. It's God and His people

V. Personal Prayer & Devotional

A. *Lectio Divina*

- 1. Silence (prepare your heart/slow down)
- 2. Lectio (read a passage slowly, out loud; don't interpret, but see yourself as part of the story)
- 3. Meditation (read the passage over and over, which words/phrases are popping out at you?)
- 4. Pray (respond by praying through the passage as you read it again)
- 5. Contemplate (rest and wait patiently in the presence of God)

VI. Conclusion

A. The Holy Spirit guides us in meaning & application

- 1. Meaning and application shouldn't be private
 - a. Scripture is for the church, not just for individuals

Grasping God's Word—Week 7

Week 7: Letters

Assignment:

Read the introductions to the following letters, and note the differences:

Phil 1:1-11; Col 1:1-14; Gal 1:1-5

JIGW Reading: Chapter 9

Bible Reading: Romans

Terms of the week:

Epistle: The Greek word for “letter”

Catholic epistle: Meaning “universal” letter (not to any specific church or person)

Grasping God's Word: Letters

I. Intro

A. Distinction between Pauline and catholic epistles

1. Paul

a. Undisputed letters:

Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians,
1 Thessalonians, Philemon

b. Disputed letters:

Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus

2. catholic (universal)

a. Hebrews

b. James

c. Peter's epistles

d. Jude

e. John's epistles

II. Characteristics of NT Letters

A. Authoritative substitutes for personal presence

1. A substitute

a. A personal document

2. Authority in the name

a. The authors write as *apostles*

B. Situational

1. NT Letters are situational/occasional

a. Address a specific situation

b. Correct a doctrinal issue/confront behavior

2. Not exhaustive dictionaries of Christian doctrine

a. Letters deal with theology, but aren't written to expound it

b. Don't conclude too much from one letter

i. Occasional letters = Reconstruct the situation

ii. One end of the phone conversation

iii. Study the original situation

iv. it's not a systematic theology text

c. Paul moves the paradigm to create emphasis/prove a point

i. Galatians = law is bad (3:10-13)

ii. Romans = law is good (7:7-12)

III. The Form of the NT Letters

A. Modern Letter Structure

Letter Opening

Body

Letter Closing

B. Ancient Letter Structure

Letter Opening

Standard: X to Y, greetings

Thanksgiving period

Body

The purpose of the letter

Letter Closing

Greetings

Blessing/doxology

C. Making a point

1. Normal Structure to make your point clearly

2. Changing Structure

a. Skip/extend a greeting

b. Skip/extend a thanksgiving

3. Expanding Structure

a. Add extra words/titles

D. Pauline Letter Openings

Greetings:

“grace and peace”

IV. How to Interpret NT Letters

A. What did the text mean to the biblical audience?

1. Read in one sitting

a. Don't be distracted by chapters/verses

b. Look at the big picture

2. Remember they are situational letters

a. Reconstruct the situation [one end of the phone conversation]

b. Historical-Cultural issues become more complex

i. Eating food offered to idols (1 Cor 8:4)

B. Is the command/principle Prescriptive or Descriptive?

1. If it's Prescriptive

a. Do it in the closest way possible (paying attention to any cultural differences)

2. If it's Descriptive

a. How is it consistent with the rest of Scripture?

b. Find the best way to adapt the principle to your situation

3. If it's unclear

a. Seek out the best possible interpretation (survey various scholars)

b. Pray and be open to truth

c. Be charitable to others who may come to a different conclusion

Grasping God's Word—Week 8

Week 8: Gospels

Assignment:

Watch videos on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Read Mark 13

How does this compare to Matthew 24:1 —25:46 and
Luke 21:5-38?

Based on the context, what event is Jesus primarily
referring to?

JIGW Reading: Chapter 10

Bible Reading: Mark

Terms of the week:

Euangelion: The Greek word for “good news.” This has the Greek background of a military/political victory.

Kingdom of God: God’s establishing His rule and reign through His messiah (which was foretold in the OT)

Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These are similar in how they read (in contrast to John)

Grasping God's Word: Gospels

I. What Are The Gospels?

A. *Euangelion*

1. Political/Military background
 - a. Mark 1:1
2. OT background
 - a. Gen 3:15; Isa 40—55
 - b. Ps 67:12; Is 60:6
4. **Kingdom of God**
 - a. The Gospels present the establishment of the Kingdom of God
 - b. Mt. 12:28; 19:24; Mk. 1:15; 10:14-25; Lk. 4:43; 8:1-10; Jn. 3:3-5
4. Different emphasis
 - a. *Mark*: God's Kingdom has arrived, so repent, believe, and join
 - b. *Matthew*: Jesus is the greater Moses who fulfills the OT story; the Kingdom is established through his life/death
 - c. *Luke*: God's royal servant (Isaiah) who brings God's light to the nations; the Kingdom is the fulfillment of the law/prophets
 - d. *John*: Jesus is Yahweh who has stepped into his own creation; One becomes a member of the Kingdom by believing

B. Parallels in the Gospels

1. **Synoptic Gospels**
 - a. "With the same eyes/viewpoint"
 - b. The similar gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke
 - c. Harmony of the Gospels
2. Authors arrange the stories to best communicate to their audience
 - a. paraphrase, summarize, expand, explain/assume Jewish terms
 - b. The goal = tell the Jesus story in a faithful, relevant, persuasive way

C. The Gospels are "biographies"

1. Memoirs of the apostles
2. Differ from [modern] biographies
 - a. Gospels don't cover the whole life of Jesus
 - b. They are specific to the good news of the Kingdom/rule & reign
3. Stories are arranged topically, not chronologically
 - a. Different set of rules
 - b. Same story, details vary from each perspective/purpose

II. How Should We Read The Gospels?

A. Trees/forest

1. What does this small story tell us about Jesus?
2. The flow:
 - a. Each *pericope*
 - b. Author's communication by connecting stories?

B. Outline of Mark:

I. The Kingdom of God is at hand in Jesus 1:1-8:31

A. John the Baptist prepares the way (in accordance with Isaiah) 1:2-11

1. Jesus is led into the wilderness, tempted by Satan 1:12-13

B. Jesus proclaims the Gospel: "The Kingdom of God is at hand, REPENT!" 1:14—5:20

1. Jesus calls disciples 1:16-20

2. Jesus taught with authority, rebuked spirits 1:21-28

- a. Heals many people, preaches, casts demons, forgives sins 1:29-2:12

- b. Jesus calls disciples (Levi), eats with sinners 2:13-22

3. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath 2:23-28

- a. Jesus heals on the Sabbath, casts out demons 3:1-6

- b. Crowds follow Him, apostles have authority to cast demons 3:7-35

4. Jesus teaches to more large crowds 4:1-9

- a. Jesus teaches about the Kingdom of God (parables) 4:10-34

- b. Jesus calms the storm (rebuked it) 4:35-41

5. Jesus heals a man with a demon 5:1-20

- a. Jesus heals the bleeding woman/Jairus' daughter 5:21-43

III. Special Literary Forms in the Gospels

A. Exaggeration

1. Exaggeration/hyperbole

- a. Occurs when a truth is overstated for the sake of effect

- b. This makes a literal fulfillment impossible/ridiculous

- c. Matt 5:29-30

B. Comparisons

1. Metaphors: comparison is implicit

- a. John 15:5

2. Simile: comparison is explicit

- a. Lk 22:44:

C. Parables

1. What is a parable?

- a. Something cast beside something else

2. The Kingdom of God

- a. The KOG stands at the center of the story

3. Parables are best understood in light of these features:

- a. 1st century Palestine

- b. The concerns of Jesus with fulfilling the OT story

- c. Parables have a surprise element

4. The details

- a. Not an allegory

- b. Look for the main point of the parable

IV. Gospel Takeaways

A. Ask yourself

1. How the Kingdom of God fits within each chapter?

2. If you're identifying with Jesus/disciples, or the Religious Leaders in each story?

Grasping God's Word—Week 9

Week 9: Acts & OT Overview

Assignment:

Watch the GHCC sermon “*We Are Witness*” from the Acts series

This can be found on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

In Acts 7, what does Stephen's speech communicate about the importance of the OT?

JIGW Reading: Chapter 11

Bible Reading: Acts

Terms of the week:

Theological History: An ancient way of recording historical events, but having more of a focus on the theological idea that is presented

Tanakh: The Hebrew Scriptures (Law, Prophets, and Writings)

Torah: This can either refer to the Law (the five books of Moses), or to the entire OT

Septuagint: The first translation of the Bible: the translation of the OT from Hebrew into Greek. This started around 300 BCE, and was probably completed sometime during the 1st century AD.

Apocrypha: Books from the “inter-testamental period” (after the completion of the OT, but before the NT) that tell the story of the Jewish people. These books are contained in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Bibles, but not for Protestants.

Dead Sea Scrolls: A collection of writings found in 1947 CE which predate the 1st century. Every book (but Esther) was found in the DSS, along with other Jewish writings.

Grasping God's Word: Acts

I. What Kind of Book is Acts?

A. A story

1. Acts is a narrative
 - a. Sequel to Luke
 - b. Gospels focus on Jesus
 - c. Acts focuses on several key church leaders
 - i. Peter: Mission to the Jews: chapters 1—12
 - ii. Paul: Mission to the Gentiles: chapters 13—28

B. Acts is **Theological History**

1. Luke writes in theological history in his Gospel and Acts
2. Recorded speeches = historical records with a theological purpose
 - a. Not verbatim, but reliable summaries
3. Look for repeated themes and patterns

II. Purpose/Themes of Acts

A. Discipleship

1. Holy Spirit, prayer, community, ethnic inclusion, missions, etc.

B. The Resurrection

1. The central message of the early church
 - a. 2:23-24; 3:15; 4:1-2, 10, 33; 5:30; 7:56; 10:38-41; 13:16-33; 17:18, 31; 26:22-23

D. The Church

1. The Spirit works through the People of God to accomplish His will
 - a. What Jesus began the Spirit continues in the Church (2:1-13)
2. The Spirit creates a healthy community
3. The church prays a lot
4. They suffered (following Jesus)

E. Gentiles

1. The Gospel is to go to the end of the earth
 - a. 1:9
 - b. Chs 10; 14; 15
 - c. The gospel spreads to the Gentiles to fulfill the mission of God's People
 - i. Cf. Gen 12:1-3; Gal 3:9

III. Applying Acts

A. Apostles

1. *Apostolos*: A messenger, one who is sent
 - a. 12 Apostles were called by Jesus to be sent out to proclaim the good news
2. Church office for today, or temporary position?
 - a. Big A: The temporary office of Apostle: called by Jesus, experienced the resurrection
 - b. Small a: The ongoing office of apostle is still available to the entire church, as we're commissioned to go out into the world
 - i. We're all called to be apostles, as missions continue

Grasping God's Word: *Narratives & OT Overview*

I. Narratives

- A. Speeding up/Slowing down
 - 1. Speeding up: less details
 - a. etc. Gen 1 – 11
 - 2. Slowing down: more details
 - a. etc. Gen 12 – 50

II. Old Testament Overview

- A. Timeframe
 - 1. The writings of the Bible span a time of over 2000 years
 - a. The writings themselves: 1400's BCE – 95 CE
 - b. The stories themselves: 2100's BCE – 95 CE
- B. The Book
 - 1. "Old Testament"
 - a. Hebrew Scriptures/Jewish Bible
 - 2. Genre:
 - Law, Narrative, Poetry, Prophecy, Apocalyptic, Wisdom, etc.

C. Categories/Identification

1. *Tanakh* (TNK)

- a. *Torah* (Law)
- b. *Nevi'im* (Prophets)
- c. *Ketuvim* (Writings)

Torah (*Pentateuch*) (*Law*)

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

Nevi'im (*Prophets*)

(Narrative Books: Entry into the Promise Land to the Babylonian Exile)

Joshua
Judges
Samuel (I & II)
Kings (I & II)

(Oracular Books)

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel

(the Book of the Twelve)

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Ketuvim (*Writings*)

(Lyrical/Wisdom Books)

Psalms
Job
Proverbs
Ruth
Song of Songs
Ecclesiastes
Lamentations

(Narrative books: period of exile to the return)

Esther
Daniel
Ezra-Nehemiah
Chronicles (I & II)

III. Other Books

A. Septuagint

1. Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures
 - a. LXX
 - b. 3rd cent. BCE to 1st cent. CE
2. The Bible used in 1st Century Palestine
 - a. Most all OT quotes in the NT are from the LXX

B. Apocrypha

1. Collection of important books, telling the history of the Jewish people between the 3rd cent BCE and 1st cent CE.
 - a. Considered “deuterocanonical” by RCC & Greek Churches
 - i. Not included in Protestant canon
 - b. e.g., 1 & 2 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon
2. Produced in Palestine, Alexandria (Egypt), Antioch (Syria), in Greek, Hebrew, & Aramaic
 - a. Purpose:
 - i. Encourage the Jewish people to remain faithful to Torah
 - ii. To persevere through times of persecution

C. Dead Sea Scrolls

1. Scrolls found between 1947-1956 at Qumran
 - a. NW shore of the Dead Sea
2. Date from 150 BCE to 70 CE
3. The *Essenes*
 - a. Secluded Jewish group who lived in segregation
4. The Scrolls
 - a. The Scrolls contained fragments from every book in OT
 - b. Strong preservation
 - i. Isaiah most significant
 - c. Prior to this, the oldest MT dated to 10th cent CE
 - i. DSS are 1,000 years older (placed around the time of Christ)

Grasping God's Word—Week 10

Week 10: Law & Wisdom

Assignment:

Watch videos on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Read through Proverbs: do you notice a difference between chapters 1—9 and 10—31?

JIGW Reading: Chapter 13; “Mosaic Covenant” article (on TheologyClass.org/GGW20)

Bible Reading: Gen. 1—2; Exod. 20; Proverbs

Terms of the week:

ANE (Ancient Near East): A term scholars use to describe the period of the Middle Eastern/Mesopotamian region from the periods of the 4th millennium BC to the 4th century BC.

Law: The *law* means variously the OT in general, the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), the Ten Commandments, or the several codes of conduct that identified Israel as set apart and in covenantal relationship with God.

Torah: The first part of the Hebrew canon (Gen-Deut). It is traditionally translated “*law*” but is more literally the *instruction*. The term can also be used of the OT as a whole.

I. What is the Torah?

A. *Torah*

1. Law/instruction

B. Moses' writings

1. Pentateuch
2. Gen—Deut

C. Mosaic Law

1. Ex 20

II. Creation & the ANE

A. How to approach the OT?

1. The OT is true and teaches truth!
 - a. But don't ask questions the ancient world didn't
2. Creation account
 - a. Science/cosmology/evolution/age of earth?
 - b. Is the text addressing this topic?
 - c. Author's meaning?

B. Genesis

1. Moses instructing the Hebrews
 - a. Israel during the Exodus
 - b. 400+ years in captivity
 - i. Polytheism
2. Correcting theology
 - a. 1:6
 - b. 1:20
 - c. 1:16
 - d. Moses is teaching theology

C. How to interpret Gen 1 & 2?

- a. Original audience

III. Law

A. Understanding Law

1. Our difficulty

B. Traditional Approach?

1. Tripartite

- a. Moral Law
- b. Civil Law
- c. Ceremonial Law

C. Problems with the Traditional Approach (tripartite)

1. Jews don't use this categorization
 - a. The Bible always speaks of the Law in a singularity (not plural)
 - b. To break a ceremonial law is to break a moral law

D. How to read the Law?

1. The 10 Commandments = the covenant/law Yahweh made with Israel
 - a. Cf. Ex 24:12; Deut 4:13
2. Everything else is "Case Law"

E. Apply it today?

1. Yes, the 10 Commands are all relevant today!
2. We don't read the Law as our covenant-law, but as prophecy and wisdom
 - a. The Torah shows what it looks like to love God and others
 - b. Love is the center of the Torah
 - i. Lev 19:17-18
 - ii. Deut 6:5
3. Jesus fulfilled the Law
 - a. Therefore, we can too!
 - b. Matt 5:17-19
 - i. Jer 31:31-34
 - ii. God has written His Law on our hearts
 - iii. Because Jesus has fulfilled the Law, we too can follow Him and fulfill the Law, by loving God and neighbor

Grasping God's Word: Old Testament: Wisdom

I. Wisdom Literature

A. The genre

1. Instruction based on experience, tradition, and the way the world works, rather than emphasizing direct divine disclosure as the source of truth
 - a. Usually addresses the issue of what is wisdom?
2. Often uses imagery, poetry, allegories, riddles, narrative, etc.

II. Proverbs

A. Practical Wisdom

1. Short, pithy statements that teach
 - a. Usually have a parallelistic structure
2. Not taken as unbending rules
 - a. 26:4
 - b. 26:5
3. Not legal guarantees from God
 - a. Cf. Job
 - b. 22:6
4. Language
 - a. Uses exaggeration/symbolism
 - b. Makes it difficult to draw theological conclusions
 - c. Read it for what it is, not for what it's not

B. The Collection

1. Chs 1—9 need to be read as a collection
 - a. The theology is found in light of the entire story
 - b. Folly vs. Wisdom
 - i. 1:2-7
 - c. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge
 - i. Fear: reverence
 - ii. Comes from the root “yada”
3. Chs 10—29 are traditional proverbs
 - a. Two short lines of poetry expressing one general truth of wisdom
 - b. No specific order to these
 - c. Understanding historical-cultural context is important

C. Interpretation Difficulties

1. What applies to us (the principle vs. the promise)
 - a. Tithing 3:9-10

III. Wisdom Books

A. Watch the YouTube videos from the BibleProject (found on TheologyClass.org/GGW20)

1. The Book of Job
2. The Book of Ecclesiastes
3. How to read the Bible: The Books of Solomon

Grasping God's Word—Week 11

Week 11: Prophets & Poetry

Assignment:

Watch videos on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

What do you think of when you hear the words
“prophet/prophecy”? How much of this understanding
comes from the Bible, and how

JIGW Reading: Chapters 14 & 15

Bible Reading: Isa. 40—53; Micah 3 & 6; Psalms 1, 2, 102, 110

Terms of the week:

Covenant: An agreement made between two people (a greater and a lesser), in which the greater agrees to provide something for the lesser as long as the lesser is faithful to the covenant.

Prophets: *Call their contemporaries to repentance/return to Torah, or judgment; covenant enforcers.*

Poetry: Conscience phrases using figurative/symbolic language that are meant to tug at the emotions.

Parallelism: Two (or more) lines that compliment each other in various ways (synonymously, antithetically, etc.).

Grasping God's Word: Old Testament: Prophets

I. Intro

A. The context of John 15:1-10

1. The Vine

- a. Is 5:1-7; Is 27:2-6; Jer 2:21; 6:9; 12:10-13; Ez 15:1-8; 17:5-10; 19:10-14; Hosea 10:1-2; 14:7

2. Israel is the Vine/Vineyard

- a. Her job was to bring forth fruit
- b. Jesus the Messiah FULFILLS Israel's destiny as the true Vine of God
- c. Faith in Jesus replaces keeping the Law as the decisive characteristic for membership among God's people

3. The NT is made up of OT Imagery

- a. We cannot understand the context of the NT without understanding the OT

II. The Job Description of the Prophet

A. What is a Prophet?

1. **Prophets**: *Call their contemporaries to repentance/return to Torah, or judgment*

- a. Prophets: critiques and criticize society (kings/corrupt priests)
- b. Focus wasn't "secular" but the people of God!
- c. Job description: The Prophets were Covenant Enforcers!

B. The **covenant** defines the terms of Israel's living in the land

1. If Israel obeys the Torah they stay (blessed), if they disobey they leave (cursed)

2. Deut 27—32

- a. 27:1-2 If/then (conditions to stay in the land)
- b. Curses for disobedience 27:15-26; 28:15-68; Cursed be the man who...
- c. Blessings for obedience 28:1-14

3. Israel did not stay faithful (broke Torah), was sent into Exile (cast out of the Land)

- a. Northern Kingdom: 2 Kings 17:7-23 (720 BCE)
- b. Southern Kingdom: Jeremiah 29:1-14 (597 BCE—539 BCE)
- c. Understand Israel's history/context at the time of the prophets to understand their purpose

C. Prophecy and the End Times?

1. Stipulations of a prophet

- a. Deut 18:22

2. The prophets speak to their present

- a. Less than 2% is messianic
- b. Less than 5% describe the new covenant age
- c. Less than 1% concerns events yet to happen

III. Covenant Violations

A. Idolatry

1. Syncretism

- a. Blending religions/worship

B. Social Justice

1. God is concerned with the weak, and how they are treated

- a. Deuteronomy (Torah) demands Fair Treatment (Dt. 24:14)
- b. Justice in court (Dt. 19:15-21)
- c. Special care for the Orphans/Widows/Foreigners (Dt. 24:17-22)

2. Violation voids their Sacrifices to Yahweh (Jer 5:28-29)

C. Religious ritualism instead of authentic devotion

1. Rituals are good

- a. Self-discipline & symbolism to worship

2. Don't make the ritual more important than the relationship

- a. Legalism/bad religion

IV. Predictions

A. There is hope beyond the judgment for a glorious, future restoration

1. The Prophets proclaim, there will be a future:

- a. Future exodus (Is 40:3)
- b. New covenant (Jer 31:31-33)
- c. New presence of the Spirit of Yahweh (Joel 2:28-29)

2. All the prophecies of Christ fall into this category

- a. Obvious fulfillment
- b. Other fulfillment (Life, Death, & Resurrection)

B. Future: Near and Far

1. What was future to the prophets/people, what is future to us now?

- a. near view—far view problem

2. Difficult, have humility and charity!

- a. The goal of studying “prophecy”

V. Interpretation & Application

A. Always understand the original historical-cultural context first!

1. You also need to understand the theological context (story)

- a. We're not in the Old Covenant
- b. We're not a theocracy

B. How to heed the Prophets' command?

1. Repent and return to Torah!

- a. Lev 19:17-18
- b. Mt 22:34-40

Grasping God's Word: Old Testament: Poetry

I. Intro

A. Wide usage in the OT

1. Poetry is used in: Psalms, prophets, wisdom, Genesis, etc.

B. Poetry & Theology

1. Don't develop doctrine/theology primarily from the Psalms
 - a. The purpose of the Psalms/poetry is to expression emotion with word pictures, it's not systematic/legal/doctrinal
2. The purpose of the Psalms
 - a. Give us models of how to sing/talk/mediate about God
 - b. A guide to worship

C. Psalm(s)

1. Plural: Psalms
2. Singular: Psalm

D. Themes in the Psalms

1. Yahweh as King
2. Yahweh as Refuge
3. Yahweh as Creator

II. The Artistry of Hebrew Poetry

A. Terseness

1. Concise, neat, brevity, minimal number of words
 - a. Not meant to be systematic theologies

B. Figurative Language

1. Figures of speech are more effective, persuasive, impactful
 - a. Nursery stories as teaching lessons (not dictating from a behavior manual)
2. There is no end to the amount of figures of speech in Hebrew poetry
 - a. As a non-native reader, we need to work hard to recognize what is a FOS
3. Analogy: using two different things to make a point
 - a. Simile: like/as
 - i. 102:6
 - b. Metaphor: an analogy between items without the use of like/as
 - i. 18:2
 - c. Hyperbole: Conscious exaggeration for effect
 - i. 119:136
- d. Attributing attributes to different entities
 - i. Personification: attributing human features/characteristics to nonhuman entities
 - ii. 77:16
 - iii. Anthropomorphism: representation of God with human features/characteristics
 - iv. 139:16

C. Structure

1. Parallelism

- a. The text is structured around lines of verse
 - i. Thoughts are usually expressed in 2 lines
- c. Synonymous parallelism
 - i. Both lines are similar
 - ii. Ps 69:7
- d. Contrastive (antithetical)
 - i. The 2nd line contrasts/is opposite of the 1st
 - ii. Prov 15:20
- e. Chiasm is said in opposite order
 - i. Gen 1:26

D. Problem Psalms

1. Imprecatory Psalms

- a. Psalms that are vigorous towards one's enemy
- b. 5, 10, 17, 35, 58, 59, 69, 70, 79, 83, 109, 129, 137, 140

2. 137:9

III. Jesus and the Psalms

A. Read the Psalms Christologically

- 1. In the OT the Psalms were sung to YHWH
 - a. In the NT, the Psalms were applied to Jesus
 - b. Ps 102:25-27 (YHWH's hand in creation)
 - i. Heb 1:10-12 (Jesus being superior to the angels)
 - c. Other NT uses of Ps 110
 - i. Matt. 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42, 43; Acts 2:34, 35; Eph. 1:20, 22; Col. 3:1; 1 Cor. 15:25; 1 Pet. 3:22; Heb. 1:3, 13; 2:8; 5:6; 6:20; 7:21; 8:1; 10:12, 13; 12:2

B. Interpreting the Psalms in light of Jesus (Christologically)

- 1. Interpret the psalm according to its OT context
- 2. Consider how the psalm anticipates the coming of Jesus
- 3. Ask how the song may be sung to Jesus
 - a. Yahweh as King
 - b. Yahweh as Refuge
 - c. Yahweh as Creator

Grasping God's Word—Week 12

Week 12: Revelation—Apocalyptic Literature

Assignment:

First watch the videos/read the articles on

www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Then read the entire book of Revelation, focusing on:

1. Who Jesus is and what he does
2. What the people of God are called to do
3. Don't “Theologize” the book (just read the text and observe what's happening)

JIGW Reading: Chapter 12

Bible Reading: Revelation

Terms of the week:

Apocalypse: A genre of writing that developed near the close of the OT. It told the stories of cosmic battles between good/evil, encouraging the people of God to persevere during times of oppression.

Epistles: Letters. These were written from someone to a particular group of people to deal with a situation that had arose.

Prophecy/Prophets: Biblical prophets were covenant enforcers who called the people of God to repentance and to obey the covenant God had made with them.

Grasping God's Word: *Apocalypse*

I. Intro

A. Overview

B. History of *Apocalypse*

1. Not invented by John
 - a. In the OT
 - i. Dan 7—12; Ezek 40—48; Zech 1—6
 - b. In the NT (apocalyptic)
 - i. Mark 13 (Luke 21; Matt 24—25)
 - ii. 1 Thes 4:13—5:11; 2 Thes 2:1-2; 2 Pet 3:1-13
 - c. Non-canonical
 - i. 1 Enoch 88:1-2
2. John is using a familiar Jewish literary tradition

C. Interpretive Presuppositions

1. Futurist
 - a. It's a literal description of future events
 - i. Modern popular view
 - b. Events happen in the last 3.5 or 7 years before the return of Christ
2. Idealist/Eclectic
 - a. These things happen from the resurrection of Jesus till the 2nd coming
 - b. Focuses on the theme/message, not using as a key/map to the future

II. Interpretive Keys

A. Jesus

1. 1:1 *The revelation of Jesus Christ*
 - a. of = about/from

B. OT background/influence

1. A very Jewish book
2. Allusions
 - a. Uses 400-600 OT allusions
 - b. Always search the OT to find the answers/look backwards
 - c. John is interpreting the OT through the lens of Jesus

C. John's original audience was expected to obey

1. 1:3
2. 22:7

III. The Literary Genre(s) of Revelation

A. Letter and Prophecy

1. *Epistle* (1:4-5; 22:21)
 - a. Single letter to be circulated
 - b. Epistolary structure of Revelation
 - i. Begins as a letter
 - ii. Ends with "Amen"

- iii. Contains 7 “letters”
- 2. **Prophecy** 1:3
 - a. Role of the prophet
 - i. Speak to their contemporaries
 - ii. Covenant enforcers
 - b. The 7 epistles are largely prophetic
- B. Apocalypse
 - 1. 1:1 *“The revelation of Jesus Christ”*
 - a. *Revelation*
 - i. Apocalypse = to reveal/unveil
 - ii. Unfamiliar modern way of telling stories
 - 2. Characteristics of Apocalypse
 - a. Encouragement to God’s people during times of distress
 - b. Presented as divine revelation
 - i. “otherworldly” creature
 - ii. Well known Angel/heavenly
 - c. God will intervene in human history, overthrow evil, establish kingdom
 - d. Use of images
- C. Literal or Symbolic?
 - 1. Rev 1:1 ... *He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...*
 - a. *semaino*
 - b. *made it known* (ESV, NIV, NRSV), *communicated it* (NASB), *signified it* (KJV, HCSB)
 - i. *signify*: communicate by symbols
 - c. Dan 2:28 (2:45 LXX) *“A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this.”*
 - d. Order of interpretation?
 - i. Symbolic then literal
- D. Apocalypse & Chronology
 - 1. What’s the timeline?
 - a. Presents future in the current
 - b. Chronology becomes one of the major hermeneutic issues for the book
 - 2. E.g., Satan falls from heaven in the future tribulation? (12:8-9)
 - a. Luke 10:17-20
 - b. Jesus is speaking of the same event, Revelation is not (entirely) future
 - c. Jewish writings aren’t concerned with chronology

IV. Themes of Revelation

- A. Worship
 - 1. What is true worship?
 - a. Ch 4—5 The One who sits on the throne, and the Lamb
 - b. In the New Jerusalem 22:1-5
 - 2. Warning against false worship
 - a. False worship is tied to the *nations
 - b. Rome in the ancient world
- B. Overcome (conquer/victorious) = *nikao*
 - 1. to win in the face of obstacles, *be victor, conquer, overcome, prevail*

- a. As in battle
- 2. Jesus became King by overcoming
 - a. 5:5
 - b. 12:11
 - c. 17:14
- 3. The People of God imitate the King
 - a. 3:21
 - b. 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:26-27; 3:5; 3:12; 21:7

C. OT Symbolism

- 1. Rev 10:8-11 (John is told to eat scroll)
 - a. Ezek 2:8-3:5
 - b. John is being commissioned to be a prophet, like Ezekiel
- 2. Seven-bowls of wrath (Exodus plague imagery)
 - a. Painful sores 16:2
 - i. Ex 9:9-11
 - b. Sea like blood 16:3
 - i. Ex 7:17-18
 - c. Sun scorched people with fire 16:8
 - i. Ex 9:22-24
 - d. Darkness 16:10
 - i. Ex 10:21-22
 - e. Water dried up/3-unclean spirits, like frogs 16:12,13
 - i. Ex 14:21-22
 - ii. Ex 8:2-3
 - f. Great hailstones 16:21
 - i. Ex 9:22
 - g. (also)
 - i. Judgment scene of Daniel 7 and Rev 20
 - ii. Marking/sealing of Ezek 9 with Rev 7
 - iii. Doom of Babylon in Jer 50, 51 with Rev 17, 18
 - iv. Temple imagery and language throughout the Pentateuch

D. Numbers?

V. What does this mean for us?

A. Conclusion

- 1. John's reading the OT in light of Jesus, tells God's people what and how to live
- 2. It's about Jesus, his fulfillment of the OT—it would have made sense to original

B. Jesus is Lord

- 1. Resurrected God and Lord of all creation who will come in the future
 - a. JESUS IS LORD
- 2. We are called to be imitators of Jesus
 - a. Be imitators of Christ
 - i. 1 Cor 11:1; Eph 5:1-2
 - b. The first description of Jesus in Rev (1:5 Jesus is the faithful witness)
 - i. Jesus is the model/example, so we can reign on earth as kings and priests
- 3. We *overcome* by keeping his word (just as Jesus overcame)

Grasping God's Word—Appendix

Anachronism: Looking back in time (from our modern perspective) and assuming the past is like the present

Ancient Near East (ANE): A term scholars use to describe the sociological period of the Middle Eastern/Mesopotamian region (Israel, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria, etc.) from the periods of the 4th millennium BC to the 4th century BC (this covers the Bronze and Iron Age, through Alexander the Great). Biblically, this is the Old Testament period.

Antecedent: A thing or event that existed before

Antinomian: A term used to characterize believers in the early church who wrongly thought that salvation by faith in Jesus Christ freed them from all moral obligations and that they could sin with impunity (Gk *anti*, “against,” + *nomos*, “law”). The problem of antinomianism is addressed in such NT passages as Romans 6:1–11 and 1 John (cf. 1 Jn 1:9–10). Some scholars link this attitude to early forms of Gnosticism, where knowledge was placed above ethics.

Argument from silence: Coming to a conclusion based on what is NOT present (e.g., Matthew’s Gospel was written prior to the destruction of the temple, because Matthew doesn’t mention the event).

Apocalyptic literature: A genre of writing that developed near the close of the OT. It told the stories of cosmic battles between good/evil, encouraging the people of God to persevere during times of oppression.

Biblical Languages: The Old Testament was primarily written in Hebrew, with a few passages (Daniel, Ezra) in Aramaic, which is a sister language to Hebrew. The New Testament was written entirely in Greek.

Biblical Theology:

Christocentric: Reading the entire Bible seeing Jesus at the center of every story.

Context: Everything that surrounds a passage that helps shed light on it.

Eisegesis: Reading one’s own meaning into a text, rather than pull the meaning out of the text.

Election: God does not foresee an action or condition on our part that induces Him to save us. Rather, election rests on God’s sovereign decision to save whomever He is pleased to save.

Epistle (letter): These were written from someone to a particular group of people to deal with a situation that had arose.

Eschatology: Derived from the Greek term meaning “last,” *eschaton* refers to the ultimate climax or end of history wherein Christ returns to earth to establish his eternal kingdom of righteousness and justice among all nations. Eschatology, then, is the theological study that seeks to understand the ultimate direction or purpose of history as it moves toward the future, both from an individual perspective (What happens when a person dies?) and from a corporate perspective (Where is history going, and how will it end?). In the twentieth century at least three basic forms of eschatology have developed. *Consistent, or thoroughgoing, eschatology* is the view that the teaching of Jesus and the apostles is thoroughly concerned with proclaiming the imminent end of history. *Realized eschatology* views the first coming of Jesus Christ itself as the full presence of the kingdom of God. *Inaugurated eschatology* sees the first coming of Christ as the beginning of the kingdom in the present, while acknowledging that the consummation or fulfillment of the kingdom of God is yet to come.

Exegesis: Literally, “drawing meaning out of” respectively. Exegesis is the process of seeking to understand what a text means or communicates on its own. *Eisegesis* is generally a derogatory term used to designate the practice of imposing a preconceived meaning onto a text, even if that meaning could not have been originally intended at the time of its writing.

Foreshadowing: This occurs when something is anticipated in the future. For instance, when God installs priests to serve sacrifices in Israel, this is foreshadowing (anticipating) the eternal priesthood of Jesus, as the perfect sacrifice.

Genre: A type or kind of literature. The Bible contains multiple genres; everything from narrative, law,

Gospel: A form of ancient biography, which tells the good news of military leaders/rulers and the conquests and victories they’ve had. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John take this Greek/Roman way of telling stories and apply it to Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

Hermeneutics: Theories of interpretation. The term *hermeneutics* was first used with respect to interpretive methods and discussions of biblical interpretation; now the term has a broader use as the theory and art of interpreting any text.

Jewish Christians. Jews who were disciples of Jesus or converted to Christianity by confessing Jesus as the Messiah and were baptized “into the name of Jesus” (Acts 2:38). Sometimes this group of early Jewish Christians is described as Palestinian Christians because the movement was largely confined to Palestine. It appears that Jewish Christians, under the leadership of James (Acts 15:1–35; 21:17–26), particularly those in and around Jerusalem, retained many of their

Jewish traditions and beliefs—in other words, they continued to “live Jewishly” and saw no need to cease being Jews because they converted to Christianity. It is likely that some of these Jewish/ Palestinian Christians (Judaizers) insisted that Paul require Gentile converts to obey Jewish laws in addition to putting their faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 2–3).

Justification: A forensic (legal) term related to the idea of acquittal, *justification* refers to the divine act whereby God makes humans, who are sinful and therefore worthy of condemnation, acceptable before a God who is holy and righteous. More appropriately described as “justification by grace through faith,” this key doctrine of the Reformation asserts that a sinner is justified (pardoned from the punishment and condemnation of sin) and brought into relationship with God by faith in God’s grace alone.

Law: The *law* means variously the OT in general, the Torah (especially the Pentateuch or first five books of the Bible), the Ten Commandments or the several codes of conduct that identified Israel as set apart and in covenantal relationship with God. Jesus summarized the law with two commandments: to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself. Paul declares that the law is fulfilled in Jesus, who sets humans free from the law’s penalty of death. *Legalism* is the attitude that identifies morality with the strict observance of laws or that views adherence to moral codes as defining the boundaries of a community. Religious legalism focuses on obedience to laws or moral codes based on the (misguided) assumption that such obedience is a means of gaining divine favor.

Literarily: Reading a piece of literature (like the Bible) and interpreting it based on the

genre, and other indicators that best reflect the author's intent.

Manuscript (autograph): The first copy of a book of the Bible is called the "autograph." After it is copied manuscripts exist. We don't have any autographs, but we have thousands of manuscripts.

Parallelism: A common form of Hebrew poetry. In parallelism, the second (and possibly third line) parallels the first. Parallelism is very common in the Psalms, but will also be found in many other genres, including, the Law, Prophets, and Wisdom literature.

Proverb: A brief, popular saying summarizing a piece of wisdom about common human experiences: "A penny saved is a penny earned." The biblical proverbs are intended as instructions on the "art of living well" and invite the reader to look at the world from the distinctive view of faith, the "fear of the Lord." Proverbs require both skill and discernment to plumb the art of living well (cf. Prov 1:2–7 and 1–9 generally). In the NT, note Matthew 6:21 ("For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also") and 26:52 ("For all who take the sword will perish by the sword").

Parousia: A Greek word used to refer to the second coming of Jesus Christ at the end of history. Literally, the term means "presence." Hence it designates Christ's return as the point at which he will be fully present to the world or his presence will be fully revealed. The term was used of kings/dignitaries who would "come" into a kingdom.

Predestination: the doctrine that because God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and completely sovereign, he "from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass,"

Prescriptive/Descriptive: *Prescriptive:* To prescribe/command something, which is to be applied to all people for all time.

Descriptive: To describe a historical event, but the application might not carry over in to the future.

Presuppositions: When someone carries a pre-understanding of something (everyone does this to some level).

Prophet: This was a role God called people into (not born into). The primary responsibility of the prophet was to be a "covenant enforcer," as prophets called the people of God to repentance for breaking Torah (the Law), and to return to the proper worship/ethics of Yahweh.

Righteousness: An attribute of God's being; God's right and just character, actions and judgments. God's righteousness as understood in a covenantal context includes God's right judgment of both God's own people and those who oppress them, as well as God's salvation and mercy extended to those to whom the covenanting God has promised to be faithful. Righteousness and salvation are summed up in and provided for all those who believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By extension, righteousness denotes the type of life that ought to characterize Jesus' disciples. Believers are to "imitate" God and thereby become righteous in life just as God is righteous. *God's Righteousness* also refers to the act by which God declares sinful people to be just in his sight.

Second Temple Judaism: This is the period in Jewish history (in the Palestinian region) from 515 BC until the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. This is the period of the development of the Hebrew canon, post-Exilic Jews, the rise of Jewish sects like the Pharisees, an emphasis in

monotheism, and the expectation of the Messiah who will deliver Israel from oppression and exile, and will once again rule as Yahweh's kingdom on earth.

Semantic Range: All the possible meanings a word can have. To discover the meaning of a word in question, attention should be paid to the context, and how that author tends to use that word (if applicable).

Septuagint (LXX): The first translation of the Bible, done from Hebrew to Greek. This began around roughly 300 BCE, and was finished around the time of the first century.

Theology: *Theology* commonly refers to the ordered, systematic study or interpretation of the Christian faith and experience of God based on God's divine self-revelation. Theology seeks to "harmonize" what the Bible (along with church history) has said about a particular topic (e.g., the Trinity; hell; baptism).

Theologizing: To speculate about theology; to render/insert a theological conclusion; to treat theologically, oftentimes at the expense of exegesis.

Torah: The first part of the Hebrew canon (Gen-Deut). It is traditionally translated "*law*" but is more literally the *instruction*. The term can also be used of the OT as a whole, including even the Talmud, so it comes to have the sense of God's revelation as a whole and not just commands or laws. Instructive are passages such as Psalm 1:2, where the righteous "delight" in Torah, and Psalms 19 and 119, which are extended poems on the worth of Torah. Torah sets forth the fundamentals of Israelite faith and functions as the norm for judging all subsequent experiences of God.

Translation: When the Bible is translated from its original language to another.

Transmission: How the Bible has been copied through the generations.

Typology: This is a literary device that introduces characters, places, events, sayings, or institutions that God specifically designed to correspond to, and predictively prefigure, their antitype fulfillment. For instance, Adam, Moses, and David are all a type of Christ (with Christ being the antitype).

Wisdom Literature. Biblical literature characterized by instruction based upon experience, tradition. Biblical wisdom books are traditionally identified as Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes (Song of Songs is also included in some lists), and Sirach and Wisdom of Solomon in the Apocrypha. We also find strong wisdom influence in the Psalms (e.g., Ps 1) and in many other books (e.g., the Joseph stories in Genesis and the stories of Daniel and his friends, to which some would add the story of Esther). Defining and delimiting wisdom literature is often problematic. Wisdom is open to all, since it seeks to instruct people to live a well-ordered life, a life lived acknowledging God's ways and intentions for his creation. Wisdom has its source in God, the "fear of the LORD" (Prov 1:7).

Yahweh (the LORD): This is the special, covenantal name of God.

Online Tools

TheologyClass.org
BiblicalTraining.org
BiblicalELearning.org
BibleStudyTools.com

Commentaries

"The New Bible Commentary" edited by Wenham, Motyer, Carson, France (IVP Press, 1994)
The "NIV Application Commentary" series (Zondervan)

Dictionaries

"The Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary" edited by Chad Brand (Holman Reference, 2015)
"The IVP New Bible Dictionary" edited by Marshall, Millard, Packer, Wiseman (IVP Press, 1996)

Misc. tools

"Intro to the New Testament: A Short Guide" by Carson & Moo (Zondervan, 2010)
"Intro to the Old Testament: A Short Guide" by Tremper Longman (Zondervan, 2012)
"The IVP Bible Background Commentary on the OT and the NT" by Craig Keener (IVP Press, 2000)
"The ESV Study Bible" (Crossway, 2008)

Christocentric Interpretation

"Exalting Jesus: Christ Centered Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary" series (Holman Reference)
"How to Read the Bible Through the Jesus Lens" by Michael Williar (Zondervan, 2012)
"Jesus on Every Page" by David Murray (Thomas Nelson, 2013)

Biblical Theology

"According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible" by Graeme Goldsworthy (IVP, 1991)
"Far as the Curse is Found" by Michael Williams (P&R Publishing, 2005)
"The King in His Beauty" by Thomas Schreiner (Baker, 2013)
"God Dwells Among Us" by G.K. Beale (IVP Books, 2014)
"Understanding Eschatology: Why It Matters" by Rob Dalrymple (Wipf, 2013)

Biblical Interpretation

"How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth" by Fee, Stuart, 4th edition (Zondervan, 2014)

Reading Revelation

"*Follow the Lamb*" by Rob Dalrymple (2018)
"*Reading Revelation Responsibly*" by Michael Gorman (Cascade Books, 2011)
"*The Theology of the Book of Revelation*" by Richard Bauckham (Cambridge University Press, 2012)
"*More Than Conquerors*" by William Hendriksen (Baker Books, 2007)
"*Unholy Allegiances: Heeding Revelation's Warning*" by David DaSilva (Henrickson Publishing, 2013)