

## Interpreting Scripture – Part 2

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### **Hermeneutics Continued:**

**3. Goal of Interpretation:** To discover, communicate, and apply the human *author's (sender's)* & Divine *Author's (Sender's)* intended meaning, or “the meaning of the text as intended by the author/sender.” The “author’s intended meaning relates ONLY to the text. How the Spirit engages our mind and heart in relation to the text is subject to cultural and historical adaptation – this requires discernment, wisdom, and insight. Those most at risk of falling into false teachings and theological quagmires are those who don’t really know what they believe. Thus, the goal of discipleship is to produce mature, well-equipped and disciplined followers of Jesus, being transformed progressively through the work of the Spirit.

### **3.1 Model of Communication**

**3.1.1 Elements of communication** include two parties – the Sender and Receiver.

#### **3.1.2.1 Sender:**

- 3.1.2.1.1 The sender is the active party.
- 3.1.2.1.2 The receiver is actively and prayerfully listening, but these are more passive elements.
- 3.1.2.1.3 The Message is the Sender’s product – the delivery of which is God’s responsibility, and in which we participate as willing receivers.
- 3.1.2.1.4 The Medium is the actual communication of the sender through language – which is shared: verbal or non-verbal, oral or written.

#### **3.1.2.2 Receiver:**

- 3.1.2.2.1 The receiver has the responsibility to properly interpret [decipher, understand] the sender’s [author’s] intended message.
- 3.1.2.2.2 The sender had a specific thought to convey, proper interpretation puts us in touch with that thought – this is the primary goal of interpretation.
- 3.1.2.2.3 There may well be additional thoughts [messages] included in or peripheral to the author’s intended message – which have contextual and/or historical/cultural significance.
- 3.1.2.2.4 Hermeneutics is the disciplined process of unraveling the author’s intended message into today’s context.

#### **3.1.2.3 Transfer of information:**

- 3.1.2.3.1 The transfer process is not so simple as computer download or “file transfer protocol.”
- 3.1.2.3.2 The serious disciple must place themselves into the context where understanding may occur. This requires the mental process of study, as well as Spiritual process of sensitivity. Discipleship is all about ‘mind’ and ‘heart’ – ‘hands’ is the outcome of a sharpened mind and a softened heart.
- 3.1.2.3.3 Imagination plays a major role in this process as well – we need to place ourselves into the situation being revealed and imagine how we would feel or think if the unfolding drama revolved around us. An intriguing reality of God’s choice to reveal Himself in story, is that story invites people to utilize their imagination.
- 3.1.2.3.4 The message as sent is static; the message as received is dynamic. The basic message will not change, but the application will change through time with cultural influences.

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### 3.1.2.4 Feedback:

- 3.1.2.4.1 When originally given vocally and face-to-face, the sender is reading body language, facial expressions, etc. to observe if the message is being properly received. Also the receiver sends subtle and direct messages back to indicate they are tracking with the sender's thoughts.
- 3.1.2.4.2 When given through the written medium, it is up to the receiver to fill in the missing pieces to obtain the proper message.

### 3.1.3 Goals of communication:

- 3.1.3.1 Is first and foremost the understanding of what is in the mind of the sender.
- 3.1.3.2 When the understanding is the same or consistent between both – we have a successful communication experience.
- 3.1.3.3 When the understanding varies significantly between both – we have a failed communication experience.
- 3.1.3.4 Corrupted communication occurs when the goal of communication is to purposefully confuse the receiver, or when the receiver doesn't want to hear and understand what is being said.
- 3.1.3.5 The receiver is always attempting to understand the sender's message.
- 3.1.3.6 The goal of communication is understanding – where sender and receiver come together.
- 3.1.3.7 Art and music are also forms of communication where the artist attempts to draw you into an experience where thoughts, or emotions can be transmitted.
- 3.1.3.8 Modern art primarily conveys an emotional message – what do you feel when you interact with the work of art?
- 3.1.3.9 Contemporary art provides the benefit that you can inquire of the artist what they intended to say.
- 3.1.3.10 Ancient art is more difficult – we have to discover what the artist was trying to convey, and we cannot ask them if we are correct. The most reliable way to interpret is to inquire of a scholar who has made this particular art form or artist their life's work – they can provide answers and insights into what the sender was saying based upon their knowledge and familiarity with the author.
- 3.1.3.11 The sender invents meaning; the receiver discovers meaning.
- 3.1.3.12 Personal application occurs after the receiver understands the sender's message. The meaning of the message remains the same as the sender intended, but the life experiences of the individual may expand the appreciation of the message. In a sense, it now has a "new meaning to me" but it is not a different meaning than the sender intended.

### 3.3.2 Potential problems

- 3.3.2.1 Faulty encoding – is the language being delivered properly understandable? The message can be rendered more difficult through improper use of language – accents that affect delivery, inflection, slang, and colloquialisms all complicate language.
- 3.3.2.2 Faulty decoding occurs from a number of failures on the part of the receiver:
  - 3.3.2.2.1 Do we have a sufficient command of the language to properly understand what is said?
  - 3.3.2.2.2 Are we being lazy or dishonest in our hearing, translation or interpreting?
  - 3.3.2.2.3 Are we actively involved – asking questions of the speaker or the writer?
  - 3.3.2.2.4 Do we presume too much?

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### 3.3.3 Observation:

- 3.3.3.1 Is the intentional process of seeking what is there – it is pursuing the raw data.
- 3.3.3.2 You cannot start interpretation until observations are made – it is an intentional, self-conscious grasping of clues and information to render the message meaningful. It requires thoughtful work!
- 3.3.3.3 Facts are meaningless until brought into connection [context] with some law or principle we understand.
- 3.3.3.4 Wise observers practice different kinds of observing – they ask questions of themselves as well as the source they study. They list their thoughts and assumptions, and then challenge those thoughts and assumptions.
- 3.3.3.5 Be aware that “you see what you want to see, and hear what you want to hear” – great quote made by the ‘Rockman’ from the animated movie “The Point” by Harry Nilsson in the 1970’s.
- 3.3.3.6 Keep an open mind and seek and find complexities – hidden thoughts and ideas. Don’t allow your pre-conceived beliefs to so color your observations that you can’t find the truth. Don’t let your theology blind you to otherwise obvious truth.

### 3.3.3.7 **Deductive** – is working from general to more specific – homiletics [preaching/teaching] is deductive, and tends to be more intuitive and less scientific.

- 3.3.3.7.1 Deductive reasoning, also called Deductive logic, is reasoning which constructs or evaluates deductive arguments. Deductive arguments are attempts to show that a conclusion necessarily follows from a set of premises. A deductive argument is valid if the conclusion does follow necessarily from the premises, i.e., if the conclusion must be true provided that the premises are true. A deductive argument is sound if it is valid AND its premises are true. Deductive arguments are valid or invalid, sound or unsound, but are never false or true.
- 3.3.3.7.2 An example of a deductive argument: All men are mortal, Socrates is a man, therefore, Socrates is mortal
- 3.3.3.7.3 The first premise states that all objects classified as 'men' have the attribute 'mortal'. The second premise states that 'Socrates' is classified as a man- a member of the set 'men'. The conclusion states that 'Socrates' must be mortal because he inherits this attribute from his classification as a man. Deductive reasoning is sometimes contrasted with inductive reasoning.
- 3.3.3.7.4 Deductive arguments are generally evaluated in terms of their *validity* and *soundness*. An argument is *valid* if it is impossible both for its premises to be true and its conclusion to be false. An argument can be valid even though the premises are false.
- 3.3.3.7.5 This is an example of a valid argument. The first premise is false, yet the conclusion is still valid. Everyone who eats steak is a quarterback. John eats steak. Therefore, John is a quarterback.
- 3.3.3.7.6 This argument is valid but not sound. For a deductive argument to be considered sound the argument must not only be valid, but the premises must be true as well.
- 3.3.3.7.7 A theory of deductive reasoning known as categorical or term logic was developed by Aristotle, but was superseded by propositional (sentential) logic and predicate logic.
- 3.3.3.7.8 Deductive reasoning can be contrasted with inductive reasoning. In cases of inductive reasoning, it is possible for the conclusion to be false even though the premises are true and the argument's form is cogent.

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### **3.3.3.8 Inductive – is working from specific to general – exegesis is inductive [study], and is more scholastic and scientific.**

3.3.3.8.1 Inductive reasoning, also known as induction or inductive logic, or educated guess in colloquial English, is a kind of reasoning that allows for the possibility that the conclusion is false even where all of the premises are true. The premises of an inductive logical argument indicate some degree of support (inductive probability) for the conclusion but do not entail it; i.e., they do not ensure its truth. Induction is employed, for example, in the following arguments:

3.3.3.8.1.1 All of the ice we have examined so far is cold. Therefore, all ice is cold.

3.3.3.8.1.2 The person looks uncomfortable. Therefore, the person is uncomfortable.

3.3.3.8.2 The words 'strong' and 'weak' are sometimes used to praise or demean the goodness of an inductive argument. The idea is that you say "this is an example of strong induction" when you would decide to believe the conclusion if presented with the premises. Alternatively, you say "that is weak induction" when your particular world view does not allow you to see that the conclusions are likely given the premises.

3.3.3.8.3 True observations can lead to false conclusions – if the observations are limited in scope, too colored by preconception, or taken apart from the whole.

3.3.3.9 **Micro observations** – are verse-by-verse, or word-by-word.

3.3.3.10 **Macro observations** – are taken from the whole message by section, chapter or book.

3.3.3.11 Observations need to be adequately descriptive so the reader will understand what you saw. Employ brief explanations of your observations – work at clarity and developing/communicating succinct thoughts. More is not better! A few words chosen wisely clearly communicate, where a multiplication of words can often obscure the message.

3.3.3.12 Avoid commentary, editorializing or restating the text. Just give the text your voice.

3.3.3.13 Focus on the message of the book or passage when looking for detailed clues. The author is not trying to confuse you, He wants the message to be known and understood.

### **3.3.4 We fail by**

3.3.4.1 Being lazy – Making presumptions without careful investigations.

3.3.4.2 Jumping to conclusions – by making intuitive leaps of faith without going back and readdressing the facts to see if they bear out our thoughts.

3.3.4.3 Being too simple – expecting the message to be clear, concise or overly general – they may well be subtle, complicated, or below the surface.

3.3.4.4 Being arrogant – presuming we understand something that no one else has ever seen or thought of before.

3.3.4.5 Being naive – expecting that others will accept our thoughts because we love them, not because we can defend them.

### **3.3.5 Summary — “We wonder . . . why there are so many diverse views as to what the Bible teaches. God is neither the author of confusion nor of error. The fault does not lie with Him or with the Bible, but with us” (Sproul, AOD, 34).**

## **3.2 Definitions of terms – be precise, be consistent in your use of all terms**

3.3.6 Meaning — The actual [objective] idea in the mind of the sender, which He has endeavored to communicate in words through the text.

3.3.7 Interpretation — The receiver’s [subjective] reconstruction as interpreted and applied through Spirit guided disciples in the culturally relevant present. Such reconstruction may or may not be

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the correct sender's message.

- 3.3.8 Understanding — The correct perception of the meaning; that is, when the receiver's subjective interpretation matches the sender's objective meaning [to be distinguished from a faulty understanding... espousing an understanding inconsistent with the sender's intended meaning].
- 3.3.9 Exegesis — The application of sound methodology in accordance with the science of hermeneutics in order to arrive at an accurate and valid interpretation. It is simply – the act [work] of interpreting the text.
- 3.3.10 Significance — Has to do with the relevance of the meaning to me – it is the application of the truth.

### 3.3 Exegesis NOT Eisegesis –

- 3.3.11 Exegesis discovers meaning within the confines of the text [sender's intended message – SIM].
- 3.3.12 Eisegesis – is rendering a meaning that is outside the text – it is based rather on the reader/receiver [reader's intended message – RIM]. Too much teaching is in the form of eisegesis, which is shaped by theology not the Word, and focused on the preacher's point being made not the truth.
- 3.3.13 Proclamation – Scripture is powerful on its own... we don't need to help it. Speak it and make it known... give it a voice and it will do the work intended.
- 3.3.14 Prophetic proclamation – is making the path straight in our world setting... it is pointing people back to Scripture to encounter the God being revealed through it. It is speaking the Truth in Love.
- 3.3.15 Exegetical sermons – are not merely discovering or distilling teaching principles.
  - 3.3.15.1 It is the responsibility of the teacher/preacher to discuss God's meaning [SIM] and preach it to the congregation being faithful to the SIM.
  - 3.3.15.2 Preaching and teaching are **prophetic ministries** – where the Word is studied and God's message proclaimed by the disciple of Jesus; where we become 'the man of God' teaching God's people.
  - 3.3.15.3 Teachers and preachers will be held accountable for their words... and the impact they make on others.

### 3.4 Textual not historical interpretation

- 3.4.1 Scriptural Inspiration – ALL the WORDS are INSPIRED. Verbal = words; plenary = all.
- 3.4.2 Event vs. text – the object of interpretation are the words on the page, NOT the event the text relates.
  - 3.4.2.1 The event occurred in the past, the author's intended meaning is in the words written about the event – because the event cannot be recreated, we must rely on the description of the event provided.
  - 3.4.2.2 Different meaning can be attached by different people to the event. People can have a slightly or substantially different perspective of the event or its significance.
  - 3.4.2.3 The author(s) who observed the event attached their own significance and meaning to the event – that is all we have that we can go forward with. One of the things we should be asking, is why did they write about this? What did they think was important about it?
- 3.4.3 Non-neutrality of biblical authors
  - 3.4.3.1 The meaning is not in the event; the meaning exists in the written words – thus it is the author's assigned meaning we are after.
  - 3.4.3.2 The authors may or may not have been aware of the divine purpose for which they wrote, but

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they knew it was important which is why they preserved it. It is reasonable to presume that they may have had a vested interest in the words/message they wrote, but because scripture is Divinely Inspired – the Author behind the author is what is critical, our job is to figure out what God said, and what He meant.

**3.4.3.3** It is this assigned meaning that we can deduce/interpret.

**3.4.3.4** The story is the author's account of the event – and he is allowing us to see the matter through his eyes and through his feelings, and often with his sense of significance.

**3.4.3.5** Thus, it is incorrect to leave the text behind and seek to recreate the event and assign new meaning to it.

**3.4.3.6** We must stay with the text that God provided us.

### **3.4.4 Practical Examples:**

**3.4.4.1** “Text is no more the event than a restaurant review is the meal that the reviewer ate.”  
(student, Fall 00)

**3.4.4.2** A given event can be assigned different meaning by different authors.

**3.4.4.3** *The biblical writers intended to communicate heavenly truth, not earthly history. It's still important – crucial – that the report is true, that Jesus actually arose. But the task of an interpreter – which is what we are when we read [Bible] – is to interpret what an author wrote.*

**3.4.4.4** *If our goal is the “sender's intended meaning” that is that we want to know what God said; and He has chosen to communicate to us through to us the text), the object (that ‘thing’ which we seek to interpret; direct object of verb, “interpret”) is “text,” and hence not “event.”*

**3.4.4.5** *But event preaching is so much easier than text preaching:*

*Vivid story telling is legit in preaching; but it is fallacious for the preacher to think that he discovers God's message by such event re-creation. Differentiate between the message to be proclaimed (interpretation and theologizing) and the most effective way to deliver it (homiletics)*

**3.4.4.6** Invalidity of biographical studies (Elijah and depression)

*The Bible is never merely telling what happened, Never mere history. It is never enough merely to answer, “What happened?” or “What lesson?” or even “What did Jesus mean?” (though the author's meaning can never be wholly different than Jesus'). The answer to the question, What was the author doing with this event-pericope?, is never a subjective-reader supplied ‘moral of the story.’ If the correct answer is of the form, ‘moral,’ it must be an objective moral that originated in the mind of the author and is actually in the text, often by implication, always requiring an appreciation of the literary context.*

**3.4.5 Conclusion: Our concern – ultimately – is not “what happened?” but “what did God say (= mean)?”**

### **3.5 Two errors are common when reading or studying Scripture:**

**3.5.1** Concluding that there is no artistic form included or intended in Biblical literature. The Bible includes wonderful and intricate literary qualities as does any literature or history. The beauty of scripture adds to the experience of the truth, and in many instances is a part of the revelation.

**3.5.2** Concluding that the historical nature of the Bible is the meaning or message. Truth is not about the event the story relates, but the author's point in relating the story... it is all about God's intended message and meaning.

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### 4. Theory of Interpretation: “Literal” or “Grammatical [Literary]-Historical” sense of the text?

#### 4.1 Meaning of the term, “Grammatical-Historical”

- 4.1.1 Much of the message is couched in literary packages in an historical context – thus prosaic or poetic imagery and the historical setting are critical for interpretation and understanding.
- 4.1.2 Work seriously with the wording, assuming precision and intentionality by the author.  
At the same time, don’t force a more rigid standard than the author intended. The apostle Paul for example, was a scholar and used a highly sophisticated form of Greek in his writings, while the apostle John was a fisherman and used a very simple and straightforward form of Greek. And don’t forget the authors were referring both to real spiritual concepts.
- 4.1.3 Work seriously with the historical context; assuming meaning is synchronically based in the historical & cultural setting.
- 4.1.4 For the revelation to have been meaningful to the original hearers, they would need to understand it from their own perspective. We need to “catch up” with what the hearers of the original message would have understood.
- 4.1.5 The Work of the Spirit is to render the message fresh and vital to succeeding generations. Not to reinvent meaning... but to reinterpret it, making it applicable to the present.

#### 4.2 Meaning of the term, “literal”, as we use it refers to the text [language employed] as the exact and proper means to meaning, rather than being illustrative or figurative. It is based on “Sender’s Intended Message” [SIM] – which is fixed, though the illustrations [hyperbole, simile, etc.] would need to be refreshed to succeeding generations. Deconstruction says meaning comes for neither sender nor the text; rather it comes from the receiver/interpreter. The deconstructional approach is fluid and diverse, it has multiple meanings to multiple persons.

##### 4.2.1 “Single meaning” Contrasted to “multiple meanings”

- 4.2.1.1 Deconstruction is subjective – it is based on the receiver rather than the sender, and is thus irrelevant because it can mean anything and everything. Allegorical interpretation is non-literal.
  - 4.2.1.2.1 Augustine taught that there were 4 Types of meaning expressed in scripture:
    - 4.2.1.2.1.1 Allegorical
    - 4.2.1.2.1.2 Spiritual
    - 4.2.1.2.1.3 Eschatological
    - 4.2.1.2.1.4 Moral
  - 4.2.1.2.2 Artistic literature is characteristically allegorical. And Biblical Literature is some of the most beautiful literature of all times.
- 4.2.1.3 “Occasionally a remarkable blind spot prevents people from seeing the meaning.” DA Carson
  - 4.2.1.3.1 People tend to see what they want to see – beware the “brilliant observation” unsupported by conventional hermeneutical thinking. New insight doesn’t mean it isn’t true, but it is wise to proceed with caution... it might not be and then you would be guilty to promoting false truths.
  - 4.2.1.3.2 Approach all thoughts and personal revelations with humility – there are a lot of very wise people who have wrestled with these things for thousands of years with many different observations and conclusions.

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- 4.2.1.3.3 Beware the “spiritual insight” in contradiction of the facts. Maintain an open mind and a soft heart – pray for brutal honesty in understanding yourself and seeing God’s Truth.
  - 4.2.1.3.4 Look for the obvious meaning first, and then dig for secondary meanings.
- 4.2.2 A combination of “direct” and “figurative language” is normal human language. “By ‘literal meaning’ – the writer refers to the usual or customary sense conveyed by words or expressions at the time or writing. This view of literal meaning is not to be confused with the idea that language, like the multiplication table, is made up of units that always have the same value. This is far from the truth. By ‘figurative meaning’ – the writer has in mind the representation of one concept in terms of another because the nature of the two things compared allows such an analogy to be drawn.
- 4.2.2 Objective Truth – Contrast to Subjective:
- 4.2.2.2 Reader-centrism – revelation will often be ‘personal’ and ‘objective’ – such is the Nature of the Spirit Who leads us into all Truth.
  - 4.2.2.3 Neo-orthodoxy – ‘orthodoxy’ was the norm of the 1800’s. In the 1900’s ‘liberalism’ was the new Moralism. The counter to liberalism is ‘conservatism’.
  - 4.2.2.4 ‘Fundamentalism’ – conservatism distilled down into core concepts is the basis of fundamentalism. However, fundamentalism tends to be rigid and inflexible and divides people into camps – this runs counter to the call of Unity in the Body.
- 4.2.3.1 Meaning is Definitive
- 4.2.3.1.1 Literal and grammatical interpretation requires a defining of the material where one meaning prevails.
  - 4.2.3.1.2 It presumes the meaning is finite, not infinite.
  - 4.2.3.1.3 Application of the meaning however, can be infinitely diverse. One meaning with a myriad of applications.
- 4.2.3.2 Textual Understanding
- 4.2.3.2.1 The text is not the same as the event – a description of an event is not the same as the event. We cannot go back and witness the event, we can only understand what the observer reveals to us in their description of the event.
  - 4.2.3.2.2 The event is illustrative of the meaning the author wants to declare. What does the event declare about God, about a person, or a people?
  - 4.2.3.2.3 Interpretation is rightfully ‘of the text’ – rather than ‘of the historical or biblical events’ related in the text.
  - 4.2.3.2.4 The context is critical for interpretation; ultimately the author wrote what they wrote for a specific purpose with well-chosen words, and with artistic literary devices, all within an historical/cultural context. Finding that purpose is the purpose of interpretation.
  - 4.2.3.2.5 Unlike the English language, which has a plethora of words and word usages, Hebrew and Greek are languages with few words – the meaning of the usage is formed out of the context in which the word is used. Thus, looking at a Hebrew or Greek Lexicon, you can see the variety of usages available. Which one is right depends on the

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context. The English language has some words that are dependent on context, but most have a precise and specific meaning. When interpreting, don't allow your presumption that all languages are like ours guide your thinking – they are not alike.

4.2.3.3 The Net Effect – the meaning is in the whole thought or statement.

### **4.3 MEANING COMES FROM CONTEXT WITHIN THE TEXT, NOT FROM DICTIONARIES.**

Dictionaries and commentaries are valuable tools in evaluating scripture – they are the results of scholars who have great experience and knowledge in interpreting scripture, translating & contrasting language to understand what the text means. However bright or wise these people are, they were not inspired to write scripture, they may only provide their evaluations of it. You cannot “cherry-pick” words out of a passage and hope to understand its meaning. Because of the way translation works, the meaning of the word comes out of the passage... it is shaped and formed by the surrounding text. Meaning is birthed in context. This is especially true of ancient texts where the limitations of words and word usage necessitated a different form of deriving meaning. We presume in arrogance that the great specificity we enjoy in our time and culture existed throughout time... it did not. Though they used words, it was a significantly different means of literary communication taken in whole, not in part.

Therefore, always work from macro to micro (*i.e. the analytical continuum works downward from: book, section, paragraph, sentence, word*).

4.3.1 Literature was written and is meant to be read as a whole... not merely in part.

4.3.1.1 “He jumped” is a declarative statement – our initial thought is that we know what this means. However, without context it is meaningless. Who was it that jumped? What compelled him to jump? What did he jump into – or out of? Was it a positive or negative act? What are/were the consequences of the act? What does this story say about the Nature of God? About the nature of a person or humanity as a whole? Is there a principle to be applied to my life today? Etc.

4.3.1.2 “Jesus wept” – is a similar declarative statement. What does it mean? Bear in mind Jesus knew that Lazarus would die, and remained where He was to allow it to happen – this was a good thing for the faith of the disciples. Jesus knew what he was going to do, raising Lazarus wasn't a spur of the moment decision – Lazarus is only sleeping.... So why did Jesus weep? What was the message of the author? That knowing all these things, Jesus entered into the emotional pain of the friends and family around Him. He was moved by their emotions. God cares about how we feel – that's the message.

4.3.2 Relation of synthesis (macro) and analysis (micro)

4.3.2.1 Meaning comes from the ‘macro’ – the whole story and proceeds into the ‘micro’ – the sentence and words used to comprise it.

4.3.2.2 Basic unit of meaning – is the whole work.

4.3.2.3 Basic unit of language – is a word. A word is not a basic unit of meaning.

4.3.2.4 Analysis requires moving from the whole down into the word.

#### **Dictionary definitions:**

**Analysis:** “the separation of an intellectual or substantial whole into its constituent parts for individual

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*study”*

**Synthesis:** *“the combining of separate elements or substances to form a coherent whole” Thus, the basic unit of language is a word, but the basic unit of meaning is the whole thought or story.*

### **THEOREM: THE BASIC UNIT OF MEANING IS THE NOT THE SMALLEST PART (SENTENCE OR WORD) BUT THE LARGEST WHOLE, THE WHOLE PIECE OF LITERATURE**

#### EXAMPLES:

1. Heb 6:4-6 – you cannot understand these verses without a good knowledge of the whole epistle.
2. Utilize discussion of the “Tree of Life” – Gen 3 and Rev 2.—you cannot understand God’s purpose without knowledge of the whole Bible.
3. John 16:13 & Rom 3:27 – ambiguity & clarity are deliberate literary and oratory devices. They may be demonstrated in a play on words, or a cloaked statement such as the parables.

Thus, don’t add words to scripture – let the text speak for itself. Our job is to give the text a voice – our voice – In time, space, culture, situation, predicament, etc. – but the Word of God remains itself.

***“context does not merely help us understand meaning—it virtually makes meaning.”***

#### ***Circles of context***

1. *“The biblical author has an idea to convey, and it takes the entire biblical document to communicate that idea. . . . words must be understood within the context of a phrase; phrases within a sentence; sentences within a passage; passages within a section; sections within a book.” (student, Fall 94)*
2. *“It is not the thread, but the whole tapestry of text that conveys meaning.” (student, Fall 00)*
3. *Consciously or unconsciously, PEOPLE ALREADY HAVE SETTLED THE BIG PICTURE, CORRECTLY OR INCORRECTLY, before they go to the detail. The reality is, it is impossible to go to the detail at once without settlement of the big picture.*
4. *If we have not consciously, carefully, and accurately appraised the big picture, it is doubtful (though not impossible) that one will have the same sense of the details as the author meant.*

### **4.5 Differentiating between Interpretation and Pre-Interpretation**

Pre-interpretation is the preliminary work you invest in to understand the genre [the type of literature and the means by which it communicates]; context of historical situation, cultural values, and word usages – so we can approach the text from the position of the writer’s context.

- 4.5.1 The goal of the interpreter is to think like the author. It becomes as comfortable as reading a newspaper today – you already know the surrounding context – issues, values, struggles, etc. Think how hard it would be to comfortably read a newspaper from an earlier historical period – such as 1900.
  - 4.5.1.1 We must realize that most of the historical data in the author’s setting was already known by their readers. We must go and place ourselves in that context – through our imagination. The reason the author wrote was to convey a prophetic & theological message to the people of God.
  - 4.5.1.2 **Catching up with original readers – is what we are calling ‘pre-interpretation’** – it is the necessary background work to know or at least understand what they would have heard when

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the message was originally presented. This includes the study of extra textural, and cross textural related things – such as theology, commentary, word knowledge lexicons, and dictionaries.

### 4.5.2 Interpretation begins after we have caught up with the things the ancient writers and readers understood and took for granted.

#### 4.5.2.1 Start with the Date

4.5.2.1.1 The date of the publication is crucial to catch up with the original readers.

4.5.2.2.1 The date allows us to cross-reference other period and historical writings that shed light on the text and help us interpret the meaning.

#### 4.5.2.3 Understand the historical setting

4.5.2.3.1 What was happening in the social/political/cultural world at that time into which the message spoke?

4.5.2.3.2 Many if not most messages occurred at times of trials and testing, we need to understand why the message was written.

#### 4.5.2.4 Understand the structure of the message

4.5.2.4.1 Structural outlines help focus the entire scope of the text.

4.5.2.4.2 Various structural schemes were employed for meaning as well as artistry.

#### 4.5.2.5 Understand the theology of the writer

4.5.2.5.1 The human author's theology is part of the message.

4.5.2.5.2 Every author is saying something about God – what is the message?

4.5.2.5.3 How does the theology fit into the scope of the overarching themes of scripture.

4.5.3 **The original writers may have written scrolls in parts, however the “human author” or ‘editor’ who assembled the scrolls into one work is the one who bestowed the final prophetic ministry of the writing.** All were inspired to do their work in providing God's message to humanity. What they provided in scripture is what we need to go by. We need to trust God's leading on them at that time, as well as trust on God's leading of us today. A great example of this is the compiled works of 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, and Psalms – all had many authors and editors who compiled them into the shape we now have.

#### 4.5.4 Applied Meanings:

4.5.4.2 The struggles the tribes had during the period of the Judges demonstrated they were preyed upon by neighboring Kings who stole from them or demanded tribute.

4.5.4.2.1 Tithes – were the involuntary tribute required by the Law or treaty or ordinance – where the vassal king was compelled to support the Suzerain Lord or Emperor. The amount was specified and terms or support were spelled out in a formal agreement or treaty [AKA: covenant], as were penalties if they failed to give [blessings and curses]. Tithing is tribute paid because you must.

4.5.4.2.2 Offerings – were the voluntary gifts presented out of love and respect. An offering is a form of worship; tithing is tribute paid to the overlord by compulsion, not worship [like taxes].

4.5.4.2.3 Tithing is the norm of the Old Covenant... while love offerings are the norm of the New Covenant.

4.5.4.3 Kings and Chronicles are examples of history interspersed with prophetic revelations. Same also with the prayers of Daniel.

4.5.5 Big Picture Thinking – when you can see the big picture, then move into the specifics of the

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text, then you are interpreting.

- 4.5.5.2 Developing hypothesis and proving them out get you to the “macro” – where you see the meaning, the “a-ha moment” you have defined the macro. It is like the blue-print of a building – looking at the prints is not the same as looking at the building, and the building is more than the prints can hold, but it is how we get to building the building. The building is the essence of macro.
- 4.5.5.3 The micro helps put ‘meat on the bones’ of the macro. The blueprint is the essence of the micro.
- 4.5.6 Sometimes pre-interpretation involves hypothesizing – or using your imagination to put yourself into the situation.
  - 4.5.6.2 An example is 1 John 2:19 – who are “they” that John is speaking about? John knew, and his readers knew – they all probably knew their names and identities, their faces and addresses – but we don’t know.
  - 4.5.6.3 1 John 4:1-3 is another example – these 2 events bespeak of the aftermath of a church split. John is reassuring the remaining believers, and affirming what is right about remaining, and asserting those who left were wrong. He is comforting and encouraging the faithful believers.
  - 4.5.6.4 1 John 2:1-6 ‘we know that we know Him if’ – John and his readers knew all about this event as well. Reconstructing the background is pre-interpretation. In doing so, we come up with an opinion or hypothesis as to what shaped the meaning of the text, and then we test it against itself and other pertinent texts to see if it is a valid understanding. Is it consistent with the whole of the message of 1 John? Insight should flow logically in conformance with the entirety of the message.
  - 4.5.6.5 Pre-interpretation is always partial – we cannot reach a 100% understanding of the original writer and readers. However, the meaning in the text and a valid interpretation and application of it is still possible. We don’t have to enter into the original language to interpret either, we can interpret from the pages on an English written text. But it is wise to utilize other resources to shape our thinking along the way – to keep us out of the weeds and gullies of false teachings.

## 5. Method of Interpretation

### 5.1 The basics

- 5.1.1 There are alternative interpretations, but the meaning cannot be different from that intended for the original hearers/readers. If the meaning you see would make no sense to them then, throw it out.
- 5.1.2 “Who, what, when, & where” – are observational questions made upon the recorded event – they are the raw data of the Biblical equation. These are **objective information**.
- 5.1.3 “How and why” are interpretative questions that are used in explaining meaning – they connect the dots of the data, they explain what the relevance is. These are **subjective information**.
- 5.1.4 The proper goal of the serious student is to understand the material presented on the pages. It is to get the content into the brain so you can process it and form preliminary conclusions – which are working hypothesis that need to be tested. Resist the temptation to jump to conclusions. Study the information first, but don’t ignore the elephant in the corner of the room. 1 Tim 2:11-12 is the elephant ... this is not a discussion of

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- “headship” or “covering” as many assume, rather Paul is teaching about servant leadership and mutual responsibility in submission to God and each other.
- 5.1.5 Logic – God has stamped the human brain with categorical logic – that is we have a pre-disposition to accept and follow logic. It is part of the nature of truth that draws us in when we hear the story presented in Scripture.
  - 5.1.6 A vast array of evangelical tools are now available to us – but it is not enough to have a toolbox full of tools, we also need to know which are the right tools to apply and when & how to apply them.
  - 5.1.7 Submission to God and humility are foundational – what is the place of faith and obedience in interpretation? The better work you do in faith believing, the more you’ll see and learn God’s ways. It will compel you to your knees.
  - 5.1.8 The main text has priority to extra texts and support materials, but each of the latter has an important place in interpretation.
  - 5.1.9 Synthesis is part of an adequate analysis – and analysis must always precede hypothesis and conclusion.
  - 5.1.10 Always major on the majors, and minor on the minors – stay with the main message and don’t be confused by minor issues. God wants to be found, He wants to be known – He is not a God of confusion, but He has provided the means by which He can be found and known.
  - 5.1.11 Interpret what is in the text before looking for what is not in it – don’t force a pattern that doesn’t exist. Preach the Word, and let God do the work of conviction and illumination.
    - 5.1.11.1 Revelation has a penchant for numbers: chapters 2-3 has 7 churches; chapters 6-8 has 7 seals; chapters 8-11 has 7 trumpets; 12-14 has no sevens; 15-16 has 7 bowls; 17 on has no sevens.
    - 5.1.11.2 Obviously 7 is an important number because it is a complete number – but this is not the main message of Revelation.
    - 5.1.11.3 We can get lost in secondary things and overlook the primary things. Be aware of the secondary as subservient to the primary.
- 5.2 **Primary Textual considerations** (2 Tim 3:16; *the writing [he graphe] is the Word from God for us*. All scripture is inspired God Revelation – it reveals different things and different aspects about God, and gives us enough information to be drawn into relationship with God, but scripture is not all that God is – it is an introduction, not the sum-total of all Truth.
- 5.2.1 **Macro-exegesis** (Synthesis) “*Instead of several parts that are seemingly unrelated, the reader attains a whole piece with parts that are harmoniously interconnected.*” (Student, fall 01) **BEGIN BY READING FOR THE BIG PICTURE.**
    - 5.2.1.1 **Macro-exegesis is all about literary themes, writing structure, and genre.**
    - 5.2.1.2 After your macro analysis, then begin microanalysis.
  - 5.2.2 **Literary Theme** – what is/are the main point(s) that the author is trying to communicate? We have to presume that the author intends his message to be found and understood. We also have to presume that the audience to whom the message was delivered had the tools and the means to appropriate and apply the message.
  - 5.2.3 **Writing structure** – the form the message is presented in is part of the message. Attention to the structural make-up and flow of the text will shine light on the author’s intended message. Part of the beauty of scripture ensues in the form the author used to convey his thoughts. Everything about scripture is very deliberate and purposeful.

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- 5.2.4 **GENRE** – BIBLICAL LITERATURE INCLUDES THESE GENRE: PROSE/POETRY, NARRATIVE, WISDOM, EPIC, PROPHECY, APOCALYPTIC, PARABLE, EPISTLE.
- 5.2.4.1 Definition of Genre – A category of artistic composition marked by a distinctive style, form, or content. Genres develop by evolving – it's a natural process of communication. Writers cannot invent something brand new, but they can tweak or hybridize existing methodologies to communicate in new ways. Genres constitute a group by reason of significant characteristics held in common with one another in distinction from others. They may include companion books – which convey a similar style – Chronicles, Ezra & Nehemiah; Genesis & Deuteronomy; Daniel & Revelation, etc.
- 5.2.4.2 *E. E. Johnson* – Defined genre as a kind of distant literature, where the group is subject to a known rule of operation.
- 5.2.4.3 *Poythress* – Group of discourses from a culture that would be recognized by that culture as having distinctions and rules governing the subject and form.
- 5.2.4.4 *Longman* – Writings are not created out of whole cloth, they are pieced together. Hence, there must be a connection to a known tradition for effective communication. They use similar forms through which the writer sends signals to the reader – some are intuitively know, some are not obvious – but they are there to be discovered by the astute reader.
- 5.2.4.5 \*\* “*We don't open a phone book and start reading as if it were a love letter.*”  
(*Student, 6/02*)
- 5.2.4.6 *Adler* – The book of Revelation could not be written in another genre – the message could not be carried by poetry or a comic strip.
- 5.2.4.7 Different genres will have different study value to exegete meaning. The issue is utility that is the appropriate strategy to discover the meaning intended. Genres are different methods of communication – a one-size study approach does not fit all.

### 5.3 **Attention to Genre:**

- 5.3.1 **Poetry** – “*Poetry, like the rest of literature, is the interpretation of human experience in an artistic form. It differs from other literary types by being a more concentrated form of discourse and being a more consciously artistic form than other literary types. Concentration is achieved through the use of images, symbols, allusions, metaphors, similes, emotive vocabulary, and multiple meanings. Poetry impacts the emotions and draws out an emotional response from the reader. Poetry is compressed language to convey heightened experience. Poetry engages the reader in a predictable manner whose beauty and power is overlooked if improperly read. The fact that poetry is artistic means that as an object of beauty a poem will display in fuller measure and with greater frequency the components of artistic form, including pattern or design, unity, theme, or centrality, balance, harmony, contrast, unified progression, recurrence, and variation.*”
- 5.3.1.1 Poetry like musical verse communicates in an unscientific manner – it is the language of emotion – of love and longing; sadness and lament. Trying to force a literal interpretation doesn't work – the message is couched in metaphor and simile which lifts the thought to another level – an experiential level, a contemplative level – where the soul connects with the soul of the author.

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- 5.3.1.2 “Only a Philistine could not love the psalms.” – Pastor/Professor Brian Morgan
- 5.3.1.3 Poetic verses are an extremely lyrical and dense form of writing – it is difficult reading, and more difficult to derive meaning from as we Westerners usually struggle with this writing form. Plus, Hebrew Poetry is a most challenging poetic art form... the disciple will need to meet the poet on his terms to derive his meaning, which is the object of hermeneutics.
- 5.3.1.4 Poetry is a means to join the poet in an experience – the meaning is separate from the experience, but the experience is foundational to the meaning.
- 5.3.1.5 Meter is more relevant to modern poetry than to many ancient and traditional forms of poetry. Where modern songs have beats per measure and words that compliment the measure, Hebrew poetry had *strophes* where the thoughts conveyed in twists and turns [strophe means “to turn”] in the verse, which is how the Hebrew poets created the rhythm in their poetry.
- 5.3.1.6 More than a third of the Hebrew Scriptures contain poetry.
- 5.3.1.6.1 Poetry is the main vehicle for expressing prayer & praise [Psalms], wisdom [proverbs], love [Song of Songs], complaint [Job], and prophecy.
- 5.3.1.6.2 Because so much of Scripture is poetic, we cannot properly understand the text apart from a concerted effort to both identify and digest the poetic genre.
- 5.3.1.6.3 Many books are a blend of genre, where you have to pay attention to see which is the poetic portion.
- 5.3.1.7 Poetic example – Job, like other wisdom literature is poetic. The conversations in Job are not literal... they were deliberately crafted at a later date. The writer didn’t sit there and take literal notes of the event as it occurred; rather he used the experience to communicate a truth he learned. Our job in interpreting is not to try and recreate the conversation or the event, but to allow the poet to draw us into his world and take us on a journey. Job and his friends shared a theology where virtue = blessing, and evil = punishment. God is communicating through the poet a notion of a higher calling beyond the here and now that we can’t see, but we can accept through faith. We can never know and understand the sum-total of what God is up to, but we can trust Him to be Faithful, because it’s His Nature to be so.
- 5.3.1.8 Levels in the Poem:
- 5.3.1.8.1 The poem as a whole.
- 5.3.1.8.2 Sections within the poem.
- 5.3.1.8.3 Stanza [usually 2 or 3 strophes].
- 5.3.1.8.4 Strophes – literally ‘turns’ within the text – rhetorical or argumentative design. A strophe has an internal as well as external cohesion: the strophe may:
- 5.3.1.8.4.1 Constitute one syntactic unit, such as one compound sentence, or a sentence extended in a different way.
- 5.3.1.8.4.2 Formulate or explain one thought.
- 5.3.1.8.4.3 Present its *cola* [one poetic line] as a clear series.
- 5.3.1.8.4.4 Be an imbedded speech, as a quotation.
- 5.3.1.8.4.5 Present or work out a metaphor or simile.

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- 5.3.1.8.4.6 Demarcate itself by means of an *Inclusio* or a frame that opens and closes a unit.
- 5.3.1.8.5 Verse – demarcated by semantics or meaning
- 5.3.1.8.6 Versets – or *cola*: is one poetic line – such lines are usually paired with a complementing or contrasting thought to expand its meaning – take the example of Proverbs 15... the author offers a thought in the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence, then expands it in the following. This pairing is atypical form of Hebrew poetry.
- 5.3.1.8.7 Words – word choices were carefully made, but word meaning is contextually derived.
- 5.3.1.8.8 Syllables – in the original language syllables were often paired to create meter.
- 5.3.1.8.9 Sounds – in the original language the sound of the words were paired for interest and beauty.
- 5.3.1.9 Hebrew poetry is very complex, but much of its intricacies are observable only in the original text.
  - 5.3.1.9.1 Poets made a point to create beauty as they revealed truth.
  - 5.3.1.9.2 Poets counted *strophes* and *colas* throughout the poem, and these numbers had significance as part of the revealed message.
  - 5.3.1.9.3 Poems almost always had ideas or thoughts stated in Pairs – which has the effect of binocular vision – stated one way, and then restated another provided focus for the thought and promoted understanding.
  - 5.3.1.9.4 Example: Isa 40:3bc –
    - ‘A’ cola - In the desert prepare... the way for the Lord;
    - ‘B’ cola - Make straight in the wilderness... a highway for our God.
- 5.3.1.10 Poems often had features where thoughts or emotions were developed into a crescendo.
  - 5.3.1.10.1 Example Micah 6:1-8 the crescendo rises to gargantuan proportions. Imagine the prophet railing at his audience until he is practically screaming by 6:7. Then in broken hearted grief in 6:8. Feel the emotion of the moment – this is what poetry helps convey.
    - 5.3.1.10.1.1 6:1-2 – God is using the mountains as His jury... why? Mountains are majestic, imposing, and permanent compared to fallible humanity. It also impugns that there were no worthy people to act as leaders in this capacity.
    - 5.3.1.10.1.2 6:3-5 – God sets the relational tone to rebuke and embarrass His people.
    - 5.3.1.10.1.3 6:6-7 is hyperbole – the ridiculousness of the magnitude in the offerings indicates that God doesn’t need these things.
    - 5.3.1.10.1.4 6:8 – problem is stated clearly – their moral and ethical failure is what God has convicted them of.
  - 5.3.1.10.2 Much Hebrew poetry was written so it could be chanted as part of their worship at Temple and later in Synagogue.
  - 5.3.1.10.3 Poems also had a descending feature where the thoughts started in general and then focused in particular.

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### 5.3.1.10.3.1 Example Ps 2:2

Why did the nations... rage,  
And the peoples... devise futile things?  
The kings of the earth... took their stand  
And the rulers... were gathered together  
Against the Lord, and  
Against His anointed One.

### 5.3.1.11 4 Characteristics of Hebrew poetry:

5.3.1.11.1 Parallelism – the most dominant characteristic of Hebrew poetry – you need to ask how is line “B” like line “A”, and how do they differ?.

#### 5.3.1.11.1.1 Example 1 - Is 40:3 –

Clear the way in the wilderness for the Lord.

Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.

Note – The “A” line makes a statement, the “B” line echoes the statement and intensifies it, expanding its thought.

#### 5.3.1.11.1.2 Example 2 – Is 1:3 –

An ox knows its owner, a donkey its masters manger.

Israel does not know, my people do not understand.

Note – This is a very unflattering statement about Israel. An ox was considered a noble beast, the donkey not so much.

Israel’s nobility was lost, and God’s people were dumber and more stubborn than a donkey.

5.3.1.11.2 Gapping – AKA terse expression as an economy of words is used to force the hearer/reader to fill in the blanks.

#### 5.3.1.11.2.1 Example 1 – Is 59:9 –

We hope for light, but behold, darkness.

For brightness, but we walk in gloom.

#### 5.3.1.11.2.2 Filling in the gaps we should understand:

We hope for light, but behold, we walk in darkness.

We hope for brightness, but behold, we walk in gloom.

5.3.1.11.3 Heightened style – be prepared to look for figures of speech that evoke strong emotions, for style forms and structure that elevates thought.

“The word sublimity [best describes Hebrew poetry, and is] that force of composition which strikes and overpowers the mind, which excites the passions, and which expresses ideas at once with perspicuity [made clear by specifics of perspective rather than reason] and elevation. The language of reason is cool, temperate, and humble, well arranged and clear... while the language of emotion is hot, extreme, noble, often scattered and unclear... reason speaks literally, while passion speaks poetically.” It is interesting that theology has been entrusted to poets.

5.3.1.11.4 Meter & rhythm – strophe:

5.3.1.11.4.1 Hebrew poetry is characterized by rapid shifts and changes – strophe means “turn” or “twist.”

5.3.1.11.4.2 Example – Ps 13 consists of three strophes:

5.3.1.11.4.2.1 Strophe 1:

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13:2a How long Yahweh; will you ignore me forever?

b How long will you hide your face from me?

:3a How long will I have cares on my mind,

b grief in my heart all day?

c How long will my enemy have the upper hand?

5.3.1.11.4.2.2 Strophe 2:

:4a Look at me, answer me Yahweh!

b My God, restore luster to my eyes,

c lest I sleep the sleep of death,

:5a lest my enemy say, I have overcome Him,

b lest my foes exult when I totter.

5.3.1.11.4.2.3 Strophe 3:

:6a But I trust in your faithfulness,

b my heart will exult in your deliverance.

c I will sing to Yahweh, for he has been good to me.

5.3.1.11.4.2.4 Cohesion in the first strophe is found in the chain of questions “how long” 4 times.

5.3.1.11.4.2.5 Cohesion in the second strophe is found in the contrast of the positive (4ab) and negative (4c-5b). The positive has 2 commands and 2 vocatives for God in a neat Chiasm, after which the negative.

5.3.1.11.4.2.6 Cohesion in the third strophe is shown in personal positive statements of faith, and a positive expected outcome.

5.3.2 **Historical Narrative** – these are stories couched in an historical context with people [generally historical entities] acting out a drama the author is utilizing to make their point. How do we enter into this? First, we need historical and cultural context, and then our imagination can be lead through the experience. Remember that historical narrative is NOT just history. The meaning behind the story is what’s important.

5.3.2.1 **Example:** Num 15:32-36 – the Sabbath breaker was put to death – what does that mean to us today?

5.3.2.1.1 Literary context 15:22-31

5.3.2.1.2 The issue is ‘unintentional sin’ versus ‘intentional/defiant sin’.

Forgiveness was provided for unintentional sin – cultis sacrifice covered for this sin. There was no method of providing forgiveness for intentional sin. In the community of God’s people, the deliberately sinful person was to be cut off from community fellowship, and from God.

5.3.2.1.3 Chapter 15: has didactic [morally instructive] prescriptions for sin.

Chapter 16: is historical narrative – for the Sabbath breaker [one who doesn’t love and long for God], looking at the event described in the text doesn’t make sense. For the Sabbath keeper [one who loves God and longs for His presence], looking at the text makes sense.

Rebellion against God and His purpose has many subtle facets, and all

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are utterly sinful.

- 5.3.2.2 Example: Hebrews 10:26-31 – plays off on Number 15 & 16 – there is one ordinance for Jew and Gentile alike... both are equal under the Law.
  - 5.3.2.2.1 Sinai covenant – obedience resulted in blessing, and the worst thing for willful defiance in sin is death.
  - 5.3.2.2.2 New covenant – believing in Jesus is blessing, and the worst thing for defying Jesus is hell.
- 5.3.2.3 History is the vehicle of the prophet’s message – **the text IS the message**. The author in effect, invents meaning to attach to the event described.
  - 5.3.2.3.1 It can be useful to approach historical narrative as if it is fiction in order to see the meanings intended. Many apologists are so busy looking for a literal meaning that they miss the message. Look for the whole message!
  - 5.3.2.3.2 Remember that the author wants their reader to understand their message – it may be subtle or couched in cultural/historical obscurity, but it is there for the patient and diligent disciple to find.
  - 5.3.2.3.3 In the case of the event, what happened? You cannot analyze the event – your reconstruction is doomed to failure. Rather, in the use of the text, what does it say? You can analyze the text – the meaning is preserved there, whereas you cannot analyze the event.
- 5.3.2.4 Story is a genre. It is a communicator’s means of communicating. The message is found in the place where we can enter into the story and discover the meaning of the message.
- 5.3.2.5 Example: What is the message of the story of David & Goliath?
  - 5.3.2.5.1 It demonstrates that Saul was unworthy of being king. He would not take up Goliath’s challenge – his fear overcame his sense of Godly outrage.
  - 5.3.2.5.2 David was worthy – his Godly outrage overcame his fear. More appropriately, David feared God more than men.
  - 5.3.2.5.3 When Saul proved himself faithless, David became God’s choice for king. That is the literary/hermeneutical message of this story. Reliving the event is not useful for hermeneutics.
  - 5.3.2.5.4 There are other thoughts that may be extrapolated from the story, but this is what the context focuses on.
- 5.3.2.6 Hermeneutics is all about receiving the author’s intended message.
- 5.3.2.7 Homiletics is all about preaching the author’s message through retelling the story in modern day situations.
- 5.3.2.8 Interpreting and preaching are two very different things.
  - Example – Sermon on the Mount: The story of feeding the 5000 is in all 4 gospels – which is significant. Matthew and John both were there and observed the event.
    - 5.3.2.8.1 In Matthew’s version, the 5000 were the Jews, and the 4000 were the Gentiles.
      - 5.3.2.8.1.1 Matthew organized his book on 5 discourses and employed historical narrative to lace them together: chap 5-7 is the sermon on the mount, chap 10 is the sending out of the

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- disciples, chap 13 are parables, chap 18 is the Kingdom of Heaven, chap 24-25 is the end of days – the focus is Jesus declaring the Truth of the Kingdom of Heaven to the people.
- 5.3.2.8.1.2 The 5-fold discourse structure suggests that Matthew was employing a pattern of the 5-fold Pentateuch written by Moses.
  - 5.3.2.8.1.3 This is a deliberate and strategic use of literary structure to punctuate the message that Jesus was more important than Moses – Moses was God’s chosen Prophet/leader, Jesus is God incarnate and thus has greater authority.
- 5.3.2.8.2 In John’s version, Jesus is God and is clearly portrayed as greatly superior Moses.
- 5.3.2.8.2.1 Moses delivered the Israelites out of slavery [bondage] to Egypt with the miraculous sign of crossing through the Red Sea. Jesus delivered humanity from the bondage to Sin, with the miraculous sign of walking on the water. Moses crossed on land, while Jesus walked on the water. Jesus can go and do what Moses [and man] cannot.
  - 5.3.2.8.2.2 Where Moses spoke face to face with God, Jesus is God and communed continually with the Father.
  - 5.3.2.8.2.3 Moses introduced the Sinai Covenant based on animal blood sacrifice and The Law – ritual and faith with the Temple practices at the center of community life. Jesus introduced a New Covenant – based upon His Own Blood whose value is appropriated by faith – the Temple is no longer needed and all humanity is included. The center of community life is now the indwelling Spirit that unifies all true believers – disciples who are progressively being transformed into the character and nature of Jesus.
  - 5.3.2.8.2.4 Thus Jesus is the new and vastly superior Moses, and God’s people [Israel] should obey Jesus as historical Israel obeyed Moses.
- 5.3.2.9 Biblical authors were less concerned about historical or scientific accuracy, and more focused on proclaiming God’s message – which is the words on the pages. We do a disservice to read it as mere history... it is theology delivered in a story in a particular historical setting. We also do a disservice to treat Scripture as science... Truth emerges but it is not intentionally scientific.
- Example: The book of Job is wisdom literature – Solomon is the father of wisdom literature. The book starts with a conversation between God and Satan – the readers are made aware of a celestial challenge, while Job never knew about this conversation, so Job labored and suffered in ignorance about the true nature of the challenge.
- 5.3.2.9.1 What was the author telling his readers? We cannot understand God’s purposes, but we can trust Him and continue to be faithful to Him.
    - 5.3.2.9.1.1 Understanding is not the solution, faith is the solution.
    - 5.3.2.9.1.2 The author of the book was probably Solomon, who also wrote

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Ecclesiastes – another very difficult book. What was he telling his readers? Whether we understand the matter or not, God can be trusted. ‘Obedience’ and ‘faith’ are the calling of humanity.

5.3.2.9.1.3 The message is that God will test His servants and loved ones. Testing is a common theme throughout Scripture. In the dialogue with God and Satan boundaries are set for what Satan is allowed to do to test Job. Job couldn’t understand what was going on, but he could and did continue to believe and hold to his faith... because of that, he was ultimately vindicated and blessed.

5.3.2.9.2 The Bible is a literary work – the message is in the text. The proper job of the interpreter is to discover the meaning intended. The proper job of the preacher is to deliver the message in a manner that people can understand and apply to their lives.

5.3.2.9.3 The Bible is never merely telling history or a story, it is all about revealing a message in the literary context, which is the vehicle for communication of God’s Love and Purpose.

5.3.3 **Epistle** – the pastoral letters were written by the apostles to the church leadership.

5.3.3.1 Typical structure is salutation & greeting => body of the message => conclusion.

5.3.3.2 Typical language is expository, it is direct talk, as a friend would use in a letter.

5.3.3.3 Epistles are primarily “occasional” – they are each directed to a particular situation in a particular setting to meet a particular need of the church.

5.3.3.4 One of the qualifying requirements of NT Scripture was that it was written by an Apostle or under his direct authority. Luke was a close companion of Paul and wrote his 2 volume set of Gospel & Acts. Mark was a close companion of Peter, and Hebrews was probably written by Barnabas... who was Paul’s initial mentor and teacher. The balance of the NT were directly apostolic.

5.3.3.4.1 The epistle is a letter written to a particular group of people or a particular church in response to problems they were having within their congregation. There was a sharp focus [purpose] to the letter.

5.3.3.4.2 While the letter was read to the entire congregation and often copied and shared with other congregations, the author’s message was targeted to a specific purpose – public reading helped support the necessary changes required... allowing the leaders to employ apostolic authority.

5.3.3.4.3 The purpose of the letter was to shepherd the church, to identify and correct wrong thinking or actions.

5.3.3.4.4 Paul’s letters particularly were written for a predominantly Greek/pagan culture – it is reasonable to expect that they would have problems separating themselves from their surrounding culture and past cultural habits.

5.3.3.4.5 Hermeneutically, you cannot take the content literally – you need to factor into the equation the cultural and historical situation the author is writing into to find the author’s intended meaning. Then you can work on modern-day application [homiletic explication].

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- 5.3.3.4.6 Interpreting scripture is hard work – one size does not fit all!!! Resist the tendency to add in things that were not included in the original message. Preach the Word – and let it do its work on the hearts and minds of people.
  - 5.3.3.4.7 Example: Ephesians is the most general epistle about theology. We can presume they needed reinforcement about the basic tenants of the faith. Their hearts were good, but their minds were wandering.
  - 5.3.3.4.8 Example: Corinthians were the most messed up because of their past pagan cultural habits. While they seemed to have had a mental grasp of the faith, their hearts were pulled astray and they were challenged to live a disciplined life out in their cultural setting.
  - 5.3.3.4.9 Example: the letter to the Romans has the most developed theology in the NT. Paul had not been there when he wrote the letter, but he knew people who had direct knowledge of their problems and knew the situation there and asked him to intercede into a difficult matter of a pending church split between Christian Jews and non-Jew converts to Christianity.
    - 5.3.3.4.9.1 The church is presumed to have been founded by Jews who were in Jerusalem for Passover and witnessed the events leading up to and following Christ's crucifixion.
    - 5.3.3.4.9.2 There were several ethnic quarters in Jerusalem, and the Jew were not thought highly of. Their knowledge of the OT brought them leadership prestige in the Christian community as Gentiles were turning to faith.
    - 5.3.3.4.9.3 These Jews had been the leaders and teachers in the church, but in 49AD they were driven out of Rome. In the several years following the non-Jewish Christians did well in maturing and running the church. The Christian Jews were allowed to return in 53AD and wanted to reclaim their place of leadership, which caused the problem Paul was writing into.
    - 5.3.3.4.9.4 Paul took the opportunity to make sure the church was given detailed theological teaching, while placing them on equal standing before God. And it is a good thing too... as Romans having been written in the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century provides a treasure of the theology of the early church that otherwise would have been lost to us.
- 5.3.4 **Wisdom - Knowledge**
- 5.3.4.1 Includes Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job.
  - 5.3.4.2 Wisdom literature is predominantly poetic – expect it to be difficult reading because of its density and imagery... not to mention the theological & philosophical heaviness of the content.
  - 5.3.4.3 There are 2 main types of wisdom literature:
    - 5.3.4.3.1 Proverbial wisdom – composed of short sayings whose goal is to promote contentment through proper thinking, and proper living.
    - 5.3.4.3.2 Speculative wisdom – deals with the problems of pain & suffering, the

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evident disparity of the wicked prospering and the righteous suffering while God seemingly allows matters to continue, and other problems of human existence.

- 5.3.4.4 The “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” is common to all 3 books – this is an important clue! Always look for such repeated sayings/usages.
- 5.3.4.5 “Lord” is the most important word.
- 5.3.4.6 Worship of the “True God” is crucial – in contrast to the idolatry that was prevalent in the “Nations.”
- 5.3.4.7 “Fear of the True God” is the rational result of even the most imperfect knowledge.
- 5.3.4.8 Many of the wisdom sayings were borrowed from older literary “pagan” sources – including Egyptian, and other middle-eastern cultures. The authors sifted through sayings which resonated with their spiritual hearts, and then expressed the truth they discovered in a new context with their own distinct theological perspective. These borrowings are not particularly troubling... as they bear witness that “Truth” may be known/discovered by the witness of creation.
- 5.3.4.9 Wisdom literature teaches truth through “aphorisms” or related thoughts that the reader can connect to.
- 5.3.4.10 Wisdom literature has a “reflective” and “contemplative” style. It invites the reader to enter into the author’s world of quiet and faithful contemplation. Reading in any other mindset will not avail an insightful result. You have to meet the author on his ground to understand what he is communicating to his audience... then after you have understood what he said, you can deduce how to apply it to our situation.
- 5.3.4.11 There are 3 appropriate approaches to wisdom:
  - 5.3.4.11.1 Meditation – which is “chewing on a thought or problem over a period of time... much as a dog chews on a bone.” Insight is eventually provided through the Spirit.
  - 5.3.4.11.2 Contemplation – is dwelling on God... on His greatness, wonder, etc. It is looking for fresh experience of Him. “This is like hitchhiking – you deliberately place yourself before God where you may encounter Him and allow Him to take you on an inner journey of discovery.”
  - 5.3.4.11.3 Reflection – allowing God’s Spirit to illuminate my heart and mind... it is dealing with my nature in my inner-being before God’s Spirit.
  - 5.3.4.11.4 There is an interesting combination of active work/quest on my part as well as passive reception. God being loving and respectful doesn’t force Himself on us, we have to deliberately seek Him, to put ourselves in His way... through prayer, especially worship, and Scripture. Isaiah, Daniel, and the Apostle John [as well as others] all had visions/experiences with God when they were praying... that is not accidental... it is a clue.
- 5.3.4.12 To the ancients, the quest of philosophy/theology meant to have a fundamental love of wisdom and truth. To this extent, wisdom literature is another means of expressing truth. To this end, Ecclesiastes is a commentary on Genesis.

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- 5.3.4.12.1 Sin has changed everything, and no amount of wisdom will avail or insulate you from pain, sin, futility, or evil. These are all part of the fallen world in which we live.
- 5.3.4.12.2 No amount of wisdom or knowledge will deliver you from life's pain and trouble.
- 5.3.4.12.3 No amount of piety or personal holiness will deliver you for these pains and troubles either.
- 5.3.4.12.4 All humanity must faithfully endure these aspects of our common heritage awaiting God's promised Messiah-Savior.

### **5.3.5 Psalm – Worship** – Psalms are poetic lyrics set to music – though the music is lost, the lyrics are preserved.

- 5.3.5.1 One basic component of psalms is a profound love for and appreciation of God. “What is Heaven but a song of gratitude and love and praise by everything created to the Source of its creation?”
- 5.3.5.2 Psalms are love songs devoted to God. Many focus on Praise, Adoration, and Gratitude; while others focus on lament, asking God to intervene in the events of man and bring justice and mercy. Many were used during Temple services much as modern hymns are used in church services. Others were used during the pilgrimage to the Temple for high-Holy days and festivals.
  - 5.3.5.2.1 The New Testament account of Luke includes Jesus being presented at the Temple (2:21-40; 41-52) would be such occasion for a celebratory pilgrimage. As would also be the Triumphal entry into Jerusalem before Passover.
  - 5.3.5.2.2 Ps 2 is about the Messianic King – and is one of the most quoted in the gospels.
- 5.3.5.3 Another basic component is prayerful supplication –
  - 5.3.5.3.1 Rejoicing in who God is and what He has done.
  - 5.3.5.3.2 Interceding on behalf of the faithful for God's active involvement in the world and in individual lives.
- 5.3.5.4 Another component is reflecting in piety on the Greatness and Majesty of God
  - 5.3.5.4.1 Ps 119 – the heavens declare – obviously the heavens have no voice, but this personification makes a point about God, not about science or the working of the universe.
  - 5.3.5.4.2 Ps 63 is David's love poem in the aftermath of Absalom's rebellion – a banquet in the desert.
- 5.3.5.5 Psalms like wisdom literature are poetic. As such, they are not to be taken literally, but rather figuratively. It is dense imagery with strong emotional import.
- 5.3.5.6 While wisdom is all about the head, psalms are all about the heart. They are dripping with feelings and emotions. The psalms display a genuine appreciation for the Greatness of God, and this is foundational for the love of God.
- 5.3.5.7 It is noteworthy that David wrote Psalms, while Solomon wrote proverbs.
  - 5.3.5.7.1 David is described as “a man after God's own heart.” While we merely accept this that God loved David, the reciprocal is often overlooked... David literally loved God.. thus sought His heart.
  - 5.3.5.7.2 Solomon proved that wisdom alone won't lead you into a love affair

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with God. Wisdom and knowledge cannot sustain an abiding relationship, but love can. It is not by accident that Jesus is Messianic in the line of David.

5.3.5.8 Psalm types include:

5.3.5.8.1 Lament – pouring out one’s complaint to God.

5.3.5.8.2 Praise & worship – expressing love and appreciation.

5.3.5.8.3 History – recalling God’s Glory/action in the past and hope for the future.

5.3.5.8.4 Kingdom – Kingdom of God is a major Biblical theme – worldly kings were to rule as vassals under the dominion of the Suzerain – the God of all.

5.3.5.8.5 Messianic – God’s Anointed who would establish God’s perfect kingdom on earth.

### 5.3.6 Prophecy

5.3.6.1 Prophecy are writings intended for the benefit of God’s people to direct them and/or redirect them as appropriate. Thus, the historical & culturally setting is crucial for interpretation.

5.3.6.2 We need to think of God’s people [ourselves included] in terms of “spiritual trajectory” – we are always moving toward or away or tangentially in relation to God’s redemptive perspective. We need to rely on the Spirit to keep our alignment correct – it is God’s perspective that’s important. God frequently needs to realign us... this is prophetic ministry.

5.3.6.2.1 Prophetic writings are closed... as is all of Scripture. The Bible is a completed work – the ongoing work is in the Spirit using the Bible as foundational resource.

5.3.6.2.2 The “Office of Prophet” in the OT was to serve as part of the “Triumvate” of prophet, priest, and king. The role of prophet was to call God’s people with Him, to identify and anoint the king, and to keep the king aligned with God. John the Baptist was the last OT prophet... he identified and anointed Jesus – then his role was to diminish as his purpose had been fulfilled.

5.3.6.2.3 Prophetic ministry continues – it is those who continue to “make straight” the Way of the Lord. Prophetic ministry is Word Ministry.

5.3.6.2.4 “Compelled to Preach” is an outstanding characteristic of the Holy Spirit inspired gift – you are unable to do otherwise, or you do otherwise to the detriment of your soul.

5.3.6.3 Prophecy is humanity delivering God’s message to His people.

5.3.6.4 Prophecy tends to have a dual focus – looking backward to the past, and forward to the future. By delivering a message into the here and now the prophet connects their audience to past revelation and action, to find application in the immediate situation, and looking forward to an uncertain future that only God knows.

5.3.6.5 Prophecy is hopeful – we can rely on God because of His past Goodness – we remember His past actions as a stimulus to faith in present and future actions.

5.3.6.6 Prophecy is not prediction, it is speaking for God. Prophecy is all about making straight the path that leads to the Lord – it is instructing God’s people about how

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to live and act as God's Holy Nation while living on sinful earth; and awaiting God's Glorious promise of restoration – that is restored humanity and a restored creation.

- 5.3.6.7 Prophets were individuals who were called and set apart for God's exclusive use.
- 5.3.6.7.1 With the exception of Jonah, prophets were sold out for God and aligned to His purposes.
- 5.3.6.7.2 They were not automatons in a trance... they were people submitted and God used their personality, temperament, etc.
- 5.3.6.7.3 Prophets were supernaturally enabled to perform God's work.
- 5.3.6.8 AW Tozer in his book The Pursuit of God observed, ***“God is so vastly wonderful, so utterly delightful that He can without anything other than Himself meet and overflow the deepest demands of our total nature... mysterious and deep as that nature is. Hearts that are ‘fit to break’ with love for God are those who have been in the ‘Presence’ of God, and looked with open eye upon the Majesty of Deity. Those of the ‘breaking heart’ had a quality about them not known to or understood by common men and women. They had been in the Presence of God and they reported what they saw there. They were prophets... not scribes – for the scribe tells us what they have read [studied], and the prophet tells us what he has seen [experienced]. Such experience is open to all of God’s children who decide to intentionally press into God and know Him experientially... such is the gifting and enabling of the Spirit. The question is... why don’t we do it?”***
- 5.3.6.9 The point of the future – is the Messiah. The point of the past – is Moses. God's peoples identity is defined and redefined by each.
- 5.3.6.10 OT prophets used Moses as the standard [Mosaic/Sinai Covenant], but looked forward to the Messiah and the New Covenant.
- 5.3.6.10.1 The Law was the custodian for the people of God until the Messiah was revealed and the New Covenant in Grace enacted.
- 5.3.6.10.2 Most of the OT writers had problems with Grace being poured out upon all the nations – they wanted it only for Israel – the inheritors of Abraham's faith and Moses' Law... not for the Gentiles.
- 5.3.6.10.3 Most had a very imperfect understanding of what God was doing.
- 5.3.6.10.4 Example 1: Jonah was called to preach to the Assyrians in Nineveh who were hated by the Jews. When Jonah got the call instead of going East to Nineveh, he went West to the sea. When the storm threatened the boat to turn back, Jonah had the sailors throw him into the sea... he was willing to die to refuse his calling. The giant fish saved Jonah so he could complete his task. He ultimately preached and the Ninevites repented... and Jonah was depressed. He did God's work begrudgingly. Jesus is the antithesis of Jonah – He joyfully did God's work, He calmed the sea, He entered the belly of the earth for 3 days and returned... etc.
- 5.3.6.10.5 Example 2: Parable of the Prodigal Son – the son that left was the nations [Gentiles]. The son who stayed was Israel. The nations ultimately are convicted and return to God who is delighted and

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celebrates. Israel begrudges the celebration because they wanted to be God's only chosen people. They were not aligned with God's redemptive purpose for all of humanity.

- 5.3.6.11 Occasionally, they had revelations leading to profound breakthroughs of God's plan of redemption of the Grace that was to come.
  - 5.3.6.11.1 Example 1: Joel 2:28 – “I will pour out my Spirit upon them” – is fulfilled at Pentecost. Until then the Spirit would come for a while then leave... He did not remain forever. The indwelling of the Spirit was somewhere most Jews couldn't go.
  - 5.3.6.11.2 Example 2: Psalm 51 – verses 1-17 were written by David. Textual criticism and study has revealed that the last 2 lines (18 & 19) were written by a later scribe/editor, because the Jews could not reconcile Law and Grace, so they couldn't accept the Grace David saw through the Spirit.
- 5.3.6.12 Much of the OT prophecy takes three forms:
  - 5.3.6.12.1 Oracles against the nations – the non-believers who have rebelled against God and His chosen people, who will be judged and punished. Habakkuk is a good example of this.
  - 5.3.6.12.2 Condemnation of Israel's failed leadership – including the kings, prophets, priests, and secular leadership – who followed the nations rather than God. Micah 6 is a good example of this.
  - 5.3.6.12.3 Clarification of the Abrahamic, Mosaic [Sinai] and Davidic covenants.
- 5.3.6.13 Prophetic writings have both poetic and narrative aspects – and you need to be mindful of which is being used to properly interpret the text. Most modern translations use a different script or indentation to give you a hint what is poetic and what is narrative – it is clear in the original language.

### 5.3.7 Apocalyptic

- 5.3.7.1 Apocalyptic writings are a form of prophecy focused on the last days of fallen & sinful earth, and the inauguration of God's Kingdom on a redeemed and perfected earth.
- 5.3.7.2 Apocalyptic verses wander throughout scripture, but predominate in Daniel and especially Revelation.
- 5.3.7.3 There are “Non-canonical” apocalyptic writings such as Enoch and Baruch – they focus on destruction and fantastic imagery. They are non-canonical because they were not written by a known and accredited prophetic source... they were instead anonymously written.
- 5.3.7.4 “In those days” is a common referral to the “end of days” or “end times.”
- 5.3.7.5 Apocalyptic writings speak about the ending of the failed past because of humanities many moral, ethical, and faith failures. They look forward hopefully to the triumphant new era when God establishes His rightful rule on earth as it is in Heaven.
- 5.3.7.6 Heaven and earth thus intersect and the fantastic and fanciful scenes described in visions of heaven, which will astonish and bring joyful praise to God's people, and bring dismay and judgment to God's enemies.

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- 5.3.7.7 God's people are encouraged that they can endure the present state of events, even when cruel or horrific, because of the certainty of God's faithful love. (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Micah)
- 5.3.7.8 God's adversaries are classified as:
- 5.3.7.8.1 Satan & demons – who are actively involved in Spiritual warfare to subvert God's plans. These creatures are described as inherently evil and will be punished when God's plans come to fulfillment.
  - 5.3.7.8.2 Rebellious wicked people – who have knowingly aligned themselves with evil. They will suffer the same fate as the evil spiritual creatures.
  - 5.3.7.8.3 Wicked and disobedient – are people who are more concerned with their earthly pleasures and refuse to submit to God's authority.
  - 5.3.7.8.4 Those who act in ignorance or have been deceived and promote self-interest or disobedience.
- 5.3.7.9 Apocalyptic writings like prophecy, are both poetic and narrative, and need to be interpreted accordingly.
- 5.3.7.10 Interpretation Conventions for Apocalyptic Literature:
- 5.3.7.10.1 The standard cultural-critical principles applicable to all prophetic Scriptures apply to Revelation, Daniel, etc (@ Pet 1:19-21).
  - 5.3.7.10.2 Apocalyptic is a type of divinely revealed prophetic writing – but it has an end time focus and imagery that identifies it.
  - 5.3.7.10.3 Since such writings have many figures of speech, it is important to ask the following questions to properly interpret:
    - 5.3.7.10.3.1 What is to be taken literally and what is figurative?  
Because the prophetic visions tend to be fantastic and since the author was attempting to describe what they observed for which normal verbal conventions didn't suffice, the literal and the figurative may be obscure. Beware claiming clarity where none is intended or given – definitive predictions are unwise, and possibly dangerous.
    - 5.3.7.10.3.2 Does the passage teach about chronological events or not?  
In many cases time is disjunct – it is often not literal and may be cyclical where events turn back upon themselves. The disjunct nature of time in such writings make distinct predictions difficult if not improbable. Again, don't insist for clarity where none is provided – even Jesus explained that He did not know the day or time of the end... only the Father knew.
    - 5.3.7.10.3.3 Is the prediction conditional or unconditional? Are “trigger events” listed – things that must take place first? Can these events be identified or are they obscure as well?
    - 5.3.7.10.3.4 What aspects were of immediate significance to the writer, and what are clearly in the future? Look for clues.
    - 5.3.7.10.3.5 What did the New Testament writers mean or intend when they included OT quotations in their passages were fulfilled?
      - 5.3.7.10.3.5.1 Some passages have been intentionally fulfilled – as

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“here comes your King riding upon a donkey” or the Law having been fulfilled.

- 5.3.7.10.3.5.2 It is often helpful to understand the larger passage of OT writings from which the quote was taken – there may well be something going on in the context of the quote that the author takes for granted his readers know.
- 5.3.7.10.3.5.3 Some passages were fulfilled during Christ’s 1<sup>st</sup> Advent (Mic 5:2), others are postponed for Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent – such as the final judgment of evil, restoration of creation, etc.
- 5.3.7.10.3.5.4 Some draw upon an apparent incidental point of similarity of past & future events – like Rachel mourning for her children (Mat 2:17).
- 5.3.7.10.3.5.5 Some have multiple applications – past, present, and future (Rev 5:10) may refer to reigning in the present age, a future age, and/or in the new Heaven and Earth.
- 5.3.7.10.3.6 Does a passage refer to God’s people individually (Spiritually) or collectively (institutionally)?
  - 5.3.7.10.3.6.1 Are predictions of Israel “Spiritual Israel” referring to the remnant and the Church, or to a restored national Israel?
  - 5.3.7.10.3.6.2 The same idea applies to the “Temple” – is the prediction referring to a restored temple in Jerusalem in a reconstituted cultic practice (institutional) or to the Temple of the human heart (Spiritual)?
- 5.3.7.10.4 Too often people’s theology determines what they believe... or what they have been taught by someone with deficient theology/hermeneutical conventions. Always let the text inform your thinking through the direction of the Holy Spirit. God gave us a brain, and He expects us to use it. He also gave us the Spirit to guide us, depend on Him to do so.