

How to Study the BIBLE



Axiom #1, the Bible is a human book

We are all
Bible
interpreters

Six corollaries

1. The Bible is written in language that follows the normal rules of grammar and syntax.
2. Each book of the Bible was written by someone — to specific people — in a specific historical, geographical situation — for a specific purpose.
3. The Bible is affected and influenced by the historical /cultural environment experienced by each human writer
4. Each biblical writing was accepted or understood within its context.
5. Each biblical writing was done in the style of a specific literary form, just like any other writing.
6. Each biblical writing was understood by its original readers by using basic principles of logic and communication.

Axiom #2, the Bible is a divine book

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The Bible is unique because it came to us from God himself.

1. The Bible itself makes that claim. “All scripture is God breathed.” 2 Tim. 3:16
2. Inspiration = the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, as he guided & superintended the writers of scripture so that they wrote the Word of God.
3. The writers “were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Pt. 1:21
4. The writers of the Bible knew that they were writing divine scripture. Mt. 1:22; 2:15; Mk. 12:36; 2 Pt. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:37

Axiom #2, the Bible is a divine book

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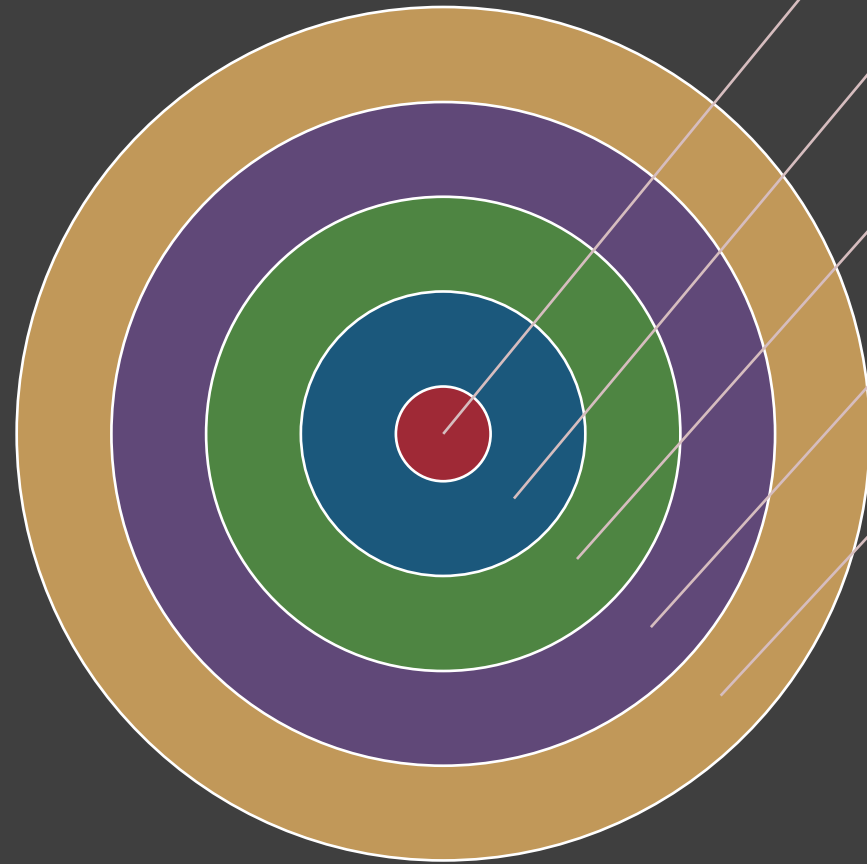
Four corollaries

1. The Bible is inerrant.
2. The Bible is authoritative.
3. The Bible has unity.
 - a. The Bible will not contradict itself.
 - b. Obscure & secondary passages should be interpreted in the context of its clear & primary passages.
 - c. The Bible often interprets itself.
 - d. Acknowledge the progress of revelation.
4. The Bible has mystery.
 - a. Prophecy
 - b. Miracles
 - c. Doctrine

Bridging the Historical / Cultural Gap

We are all Bible interpreters

Context includes



Verse

Verse before & after

Paragraph, chapters & Book

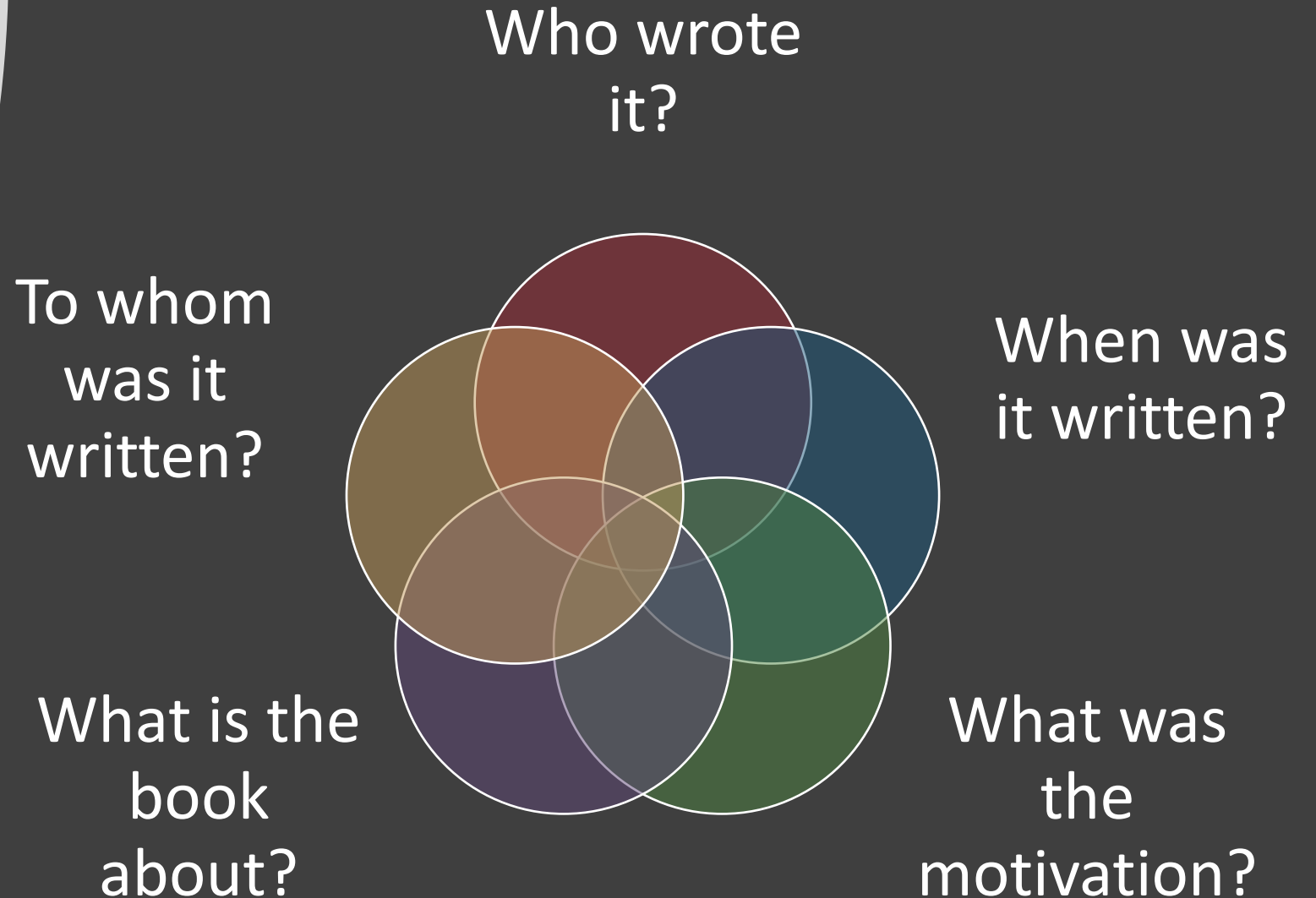
Dispensation & entire Bible

Historical / Cultural Setting

Bridging the Historical / Cultural Gap

We are all Bible interpreters

Circumstances of the Writing



Bridging the Historical / Cultural Gap

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What is Meant by History & Culture?

Economic

Culture = the total pattern of human behavior [including] thought, speech, action, & artifacts

Clothing

Legal

Military

Religious

Domestic

Agricultural

Political

Social

Geographic

Bridging the Grammatical Gap

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Why Is Grammatical Interpretation Important?

Three reasons:

1. The nature of inspiration.
2. The goal of exegesis.
3. The problem of communication.

Bridging the Grammatical Gap

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What Is Grammatical Interpretation?

Four things:

1. The meaning of words – lexicology
 - a. etymology — Usage over time
 - b. usage — Usage by authors
 - c. synonyms & antonyms — Similar & opposite words
 - d. context — Usage in different contexts.
2. The form of words – morphology. How words are structured & how that affects their meaning.

Bridging the Grammatical Gap

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What Is Grammatical Interpretation?

Four things:

3. The function of words - parts of speech.
4. The relationships of words – syntax.

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How do we learn the meaning of words?

The etymology of the words

Etymology = the root derivation & development of words.

- Compound words
- History of words

A biblical word should never be explained by using its English etymology

Bridging the Grammatical Gap

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How do we learn the meaning of words?

The usage of the words

1. Immediate context
2. Usage by same writer in same book
3. Usage by same writer in other Bible books
4. Usage by other writers in other Bible books
5. Usage by other writers outside the Bible

A word does not **always** have the same meaning every time it's used.

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How do we learn the meaning of words?

The usage of similar & opposite words

Similar words: Look at how the words have slightly different shades of meaning.

Translation Text Comparison – NASB 95 Base | Romans 14:13

Translation Text	Difference
NASB 95 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this— not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.	0%
LSB Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather judge this— not to put a stumbling block or offense before a brother.	25%
ESV Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.	43%
HCSB Therefore, let us no longer criticize one another. Instead decide never to put a stumbling block or pitfall in your brother's way.	45%
NIV 84 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.	49%

Translation Text Comparison – NASB 95 Base | Colossians 2:22

Translation	Text	Difference
NASB 95	(which all refer to things destined to perish with use)— in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?	0%
LSB	Which deal with everything destined to perish with use, which are in accordance with the commands and teachings of men;	28%
ESV	(referring to things that all perish as they are used)— according to human precepts and teachings ?	71%
HCSB	All these regulations refer to what is destroyed by being used up; they are commands and doctrines of men.	68%
NIV 84	These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings .	56%

Bridging the Grammatical Gap

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How do we learn the meaning of words?

The usage of similar & opposite words

Opposite words: Pay attention to the way a word contrasts with another.

Romans 8:4-9 “flesh” in contrast to “spirit”

Romans 6:23 “death” in contrast to “eternal life”

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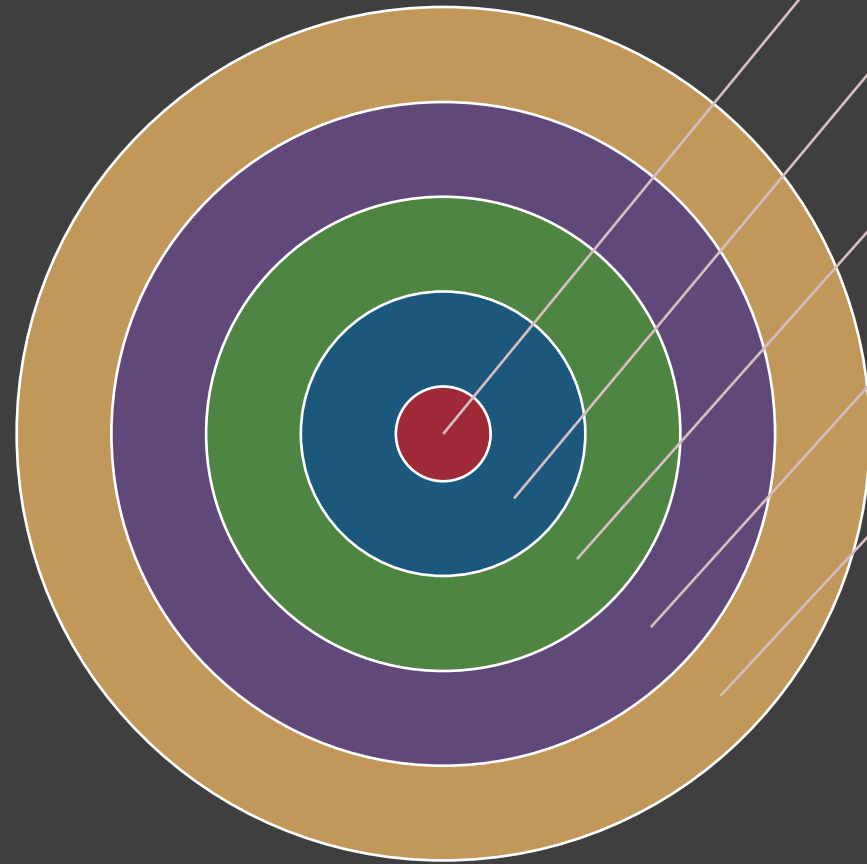
Consider the context

1. Words, phrases, & clauses can have several meanings.
2. Thoughts are usually communicated by a series of words or sentences.
3. Errors often happen because we have ignored the context.

Bridging the Grammatical Gap

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Context includes



Verse

Verse before & after

Paragraph, Chapter & Book

Dispensation & entire Bible

Historical / Cultural Setting

Bridging the Grammatical Gap

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Consider the context

Two corollaries of the whole Bible context

1. An obscure or ambiguous text should never be interpreted in a way that makes it contradict a plain one.
2. A complex, clever, or cunning interpretation should not be used in the place of a simple and more natural explanation.

Bridging the Grammatical Gap

We are all Bible interpreters

Consider the context

Basic rules of lexicology – word meaning

1. Word meanings change over time; learn what a word meant when it was used.
2. Do not read English word meaning back into Bible texts.
3. A Bible word usually, but not always, has the same meaning whenever it is used.
4. Each word or phrase normally has only one meaning, which is often revealed by its context.
5. A word should not be given every shade of meaning in one use.