Biblical Interpretation

**Course Facilitator: Keith E. Johnson, Ph.D.**

## *Institute of Biblical Studies*

**June 18 – 29, 2012**

**8:30-11:00am**

## Course Description

Poetry. Letters. Stories. Laws. Prophecy. Faithfully interpreting God’s Word requires understanding the various literary forms through which God speaks to us, applying sound hermeneutical principles, and connecting every passage to God’s redemptive message throughout the Scriptures that centers on Jesus Christ. Building on the foundation of Bible Study Methods, this course will introduce you to an interpretive process that will enable you to understand God’s Word and encounter the living God more profoundly. You will have the opportunity to learn this process working in small groups with the aid of a mentor who will guide you to handle the treasure of God’s Word faithfully and meaningfully.

Prerequisite: *Bible Study Methods*

## Course Objectives: Through this class, you can expect to . . .

1. Develop greater confidence in your ability to understand and apply God’s Word.
2. Be introduced to a process that can help you better understand Scripture and apply it to your life.
3. Better understand the redemptive story-line of the Bible that culminates in Christ.
4. Discover why it is important to relate every passage to the redemptive story-line.
5. Better understand five literary forms through which God speaks to us in Scripture: OT narrative, gospel, parables, poetry, and prophets.
6. Begin to discern the “fallen condition” and “redemptive solution” in a passage of Scripture.
7. Experience the gospel as you discover how Scripture exposes your brokenness/rebellion (fallen condition) and points your heart to find true life in Christ and the gospel (redemptive solution).
8. Be better equipped for future ministry by enabling you to apply sound interpretive principles to your future reading, study and teaching of Scripture.
9. Be prepared for the Biblical Communication course.

## Required Texts

Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart*. How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. [To rightly read Scripture, we must pay careful attention to the genre (literary form) through which a biblical writer communicates. This book provides a helpful introduction to the different genres through which God reveals himself in Scripture. It complements presentations you will hear in the lectures. While we will not discuss it extensively in class, it is foundational. If you are reading ahead, start by reading this book. NOTE: *Make sure you buy the third edition.*]

Roberts, Vaughan. *God’s Big Picture: Tracing the story-line of the Bible*. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2002. [Another key to rightly reading Scripture is seeing how a passage fits into the larger story of God. In 150 pages Roberts provides a helpful overview of the story-line of the Bible organized around the theme of the kingdom of God. We will discuss this book]

Piper, John.  Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2001. [The ultimate goal of biblical interpretation is seeing and savoring the glory of Christ. In this book Piper provides thirteen different portraits of the glory of Christ in the Scriptures. We will discuss several of these in our coaching groups. Each chapter is only a few pages*. We recommend that you wait to read this till the night before we discuss each chapter*.]

## Recommended Texts

*\*\*ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008. (IBSN: 978‑1‑4335‑0241‑5) [We highly recommend the ESVSB as a one-volume Bible-study resource. You will have online access to the ESVSB during the class.]

Bartholomew Craig G. and Michael W. Goheen. *The Drama Of Scripture: Finding Our Place In The Biblical Story*. Grand Rapids: Baker. 2004.

Doriani, Daniel M. *Getting the Message: A Plan for Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. Phillipbsurg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application.* Phillipbsurg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 2001.

Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Biblical-Theological Foundations and Principles*. Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.

Pratt, Richard L. *He Gave Us Stories: The Bible Student’s Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Narratives*. Phillipsburg: P & R Pub., 1993.

Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Revised and Expanded. Downers Grove: IVP, 2006.

Virkler, Henry A., and Karelynne Gerber Ayayo. *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Reading**: You are expected to read carefully the assigned texts by the start of class on the day that they are due. The last day of class you will turn in a reading report indicating your completion of the assigned readings.
2. **Participation**: You will be expected to come to the daily workshops ready to discuss the course material. (Be sure to bring *God’s Big Picture* to class each day along with other course materials.)
3. **Exegetical Worksheets**: The majority of work in this class will involve working directly in the biblical text. You will complete a series worksheets that will give you the opportunity to practice the specific skills on which we focus that day. Your work will be incorporated in your final paper.
   1. Worksheet #1: Passage Selection and Observation (graded)
   2. Worksheet #2: Context Analysis (graded)
   3. Worksheet #3: Textual Outline and ABI (graded)
   4. Worksheet #4: Draft of Explanation of ABI (feedback only)
   5. Worksheet #5: Theological Analysis (graded)
4. **Exegetical Project**: The exegetical project will give you the opportunity to apply all the skills you have learned to a particular passage of Scripture. You will report the results of your study in an exegetical paper. The paper should be 7-9 pages in length.

# Course Assignments

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Topic/Date** | **Reading Due** | **Worksheets and Project** |
| **The Drama of Scripture**  June 18 | Johnson, “Hearing the Music of the Gospel” | Select passage for exegetical project and make observations (Worksheet #1, graded, due 6/19) |
| **An Interpretive Process**  June 19 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 1  Roberts, pp.13-25 & ch. 1  Piper, c3  Read 1 Sam 3:1-21 | *Turn in Worksheet #1*  Complete Context Analysis (Worksheet #2, graded, due 6/20) |
| **Interpreting OT Narratives**  June 20 | Roberts, ch. 2  Piper, ch. 7 | *Turn in Worksheet #2*  Finish reading commentaries |
| **Interpreting Gospels**  June 21 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 5  Roberts, ch. 3  Piper, ch. 8  Read Luke 7:36-50 | Develop textual outline and Author’s Big Idea on your passage (Worksheet #3, graded, due 6/22) |
| **Interpreting Parables**  June 22 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 7  Roberts, pp. ch. 4  Piper, ch. 10 | *Turn in Worksheet #3*  Write rough draft of explanation portion on your passage (Worksheet #4, for feedback only, due 6/25) |
| **Theological Analysis**  June 25 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 8  Roberts, ch. 5  Piper, ch. 11 | *Turn in rough draft of explanation section (worksheet #4)*  Begin the Theological Analysis section of your passage (Worksheet #5, graded, due 6/27) |
| **Christ-Centered Application**  June 26 | Roberts, ch. 6  Doriani, “Reflecting on the Redemptive Thrust of Scripture” (online) | Complete Theological Analysis |
| **Interpreting Poetry**  June 27 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 11  Roberts, ch. 7 | *Turn in Worksheet #5* |
| **Interpreting the Prophets**  June 28 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 10  Roberts, ch. 8 | Work on Final Paper |
| **NO CLASS**  June 29 | Turn in reading report | Exegetical paper due at 5:00p.m. |

**EXEGETICAL PROJECT**

**OVERVIEW**

Your exegetical project is a 7-9 page essay that should be double-spaced and typed using a 12-point font and 1” margins. Your paper should be written in *paragraph* form and contain the following clearly marked sections designated in bold below. You will find a sample version of the paper posted on the IBS website that will help you with formatting.

**I. SURVEY THE BIG PICTURE: CONTEXT ANALYSIS (1 ½ to 2 pages)**

1. **Historical context** (In no more than a couple sentences, briefly discuss the author, audience and setting [i.e., When and where did the events in your passage take place?] In greater detail, identify and describe “historical” or “cultural” background necessary to understand your passage.)
2. **Literary context** (Discuss the literary context of your passage. How does your passage fit into the book in which it is found? Is your passage part of a larger unit in the book? If so, how does it relate to that unit? What occurs immediately before and after your section? How does your passage relate to what comes immediately before and after?)
3. **Redemptive context** (Discuss the redemptive context of your passage. In what chapter of redemptive history is this story found? What do you need to know about this particular chapter in God’s story to understand this passage properly? What redemptive themes emerge in this passage and its broader context? NOTE: You will explore redemptive themes further in the theological analysis section of your paper. Here you are simply taking a first step at identifying them.)

**II. EXPLORE THE PASSAGE: CONTENT ANALYSIS (3-4 pages)** [*Sections II.1 and II.2 will be turned in Friday, June 22; a draft of section II.3 will be turned in Monday, June 25*]

1. **Textual Outline** (Textual outline [i.e., a summary of the dramatic pattern in the case of narratives] with specific verses and complete sentences. This is the only part of your paper that will be in outline form.)
2. **Statement of the Author’s Big Idea (ABI)** (This should be one complete sentence.)
3. **Explanation of Author’s Big Idea** (In *paragraph* form, unpack the author’s big idea. Your discussion should be structured around your textual outline. Be sure to include headers from your textual outline and verse references for each section. You should explain what the author is teaching and how it contributes to the big idea. You should include appropriate interpretive insights gleaned from your personal study of the passage and engagement with the commentaries. This could include important observations, discussion of the meaning of key terms, explanation of the historical or cultural significance of certain practices, insights from your contextual analysis that shed light on the passage, etc. Remember that you will not be able to share everything you have learned. Select the most important insights that would help a reader understand the main points of the passage.)

***Continued on the following page*EXEGETICAL PROJECT (*continued*)**

**III. THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION (2-3 pages)** [*Sections III.1, III.2, III.3 and III.4 are due Wed., June 27*]

1. **Discontinuities**: (Describe any discontinuities in your passage related to cultural differences, personal differences, and redemptive history.)
2. **Continuities**: (Explain the continuities in your passage related to the nature of the triune God, the nature of humanity, and the redemption.)
3. **Statement of Theological Big Idea:** (Develop a one-sentence summary of the theological big idea using the criteria outlined in your notes.)
4. **Explanation of TBI:** (Provide a one paragraph explanation of your theological big idea. This will involve identifying and explaining the key elements you have chosen to include in the TBI from the immediate passage and its broader redemptive context. Tell us why you believe these elements should be part of the TBI. You might also describe the “translation” you are making in your move from your ABI to your TBI.)
5. **Application/Personal impact:** (Identify a fallen condition(s) of the original audience to which you can personally relate. Try to focus on the primary fallen condition of the passage. How do you see this fallen condition played out in your own life? Describe the “redemptive” focus of this passage. What does this passage reveal about your brokenness that requires the redemptive work of Christ? What’s the good news? How does this passage point you to Christ and the gospel? How has God used this passage in your life? Make it personal.)

**IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY (1 page)**

1. List any sources you consulted in the following format: Author. Title. City of publication: Name of Publisher, Date. Note: Within the body of your paper, simply use parentheses (and not footnotes) to cite works listed in your bibliography. For example: (Grudem, 124). You will find bibliographic information on the IBS website.

# COURSE GRADE

Reading 10 % (Turn in reading report on Friday, June 29)

Exegetical Assignments 40 %

Exegetical Project 50 % (due by 5 p.m. Friday, June 29)

Total 100pts

Grading Scale:

94-100 A

92-93 A-

90-91 B+

84-89 B

82-83 B-

80-81 C+

74-79 C

72-73 C-

65-71 D

0-65 F

**Reading Report**

(To be submitted to your coach along with your paper on Friday, June 29)

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Coach \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date Due** | **Assignment** | **Assigned Pages** | **# Pages Completed** |
| June 18 | Johnson, “Hearing the Music of the Gospel” [14] | 14 |  |
| June 19 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 1 [16 pgs]  Roberts, intro, ch. 1 [24]  Piper, ch. 3 [6] | 46 |  |
| June 20 | Roberts, ch. 2 [11]  Piper, ch. 7 [8] | 19 |  |
| June 21 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 5 [18 pgs]  Roberts, ch. 3 [9]  Piper, Ch. 8 [8] | 35 |  |
| June 22 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 7 [22 pgs]  Roberts, ch. 4 [29]  Piper, Ch. 10 [10] | 61 |  |
| June 25 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 8 [14]  Roberts, ch. 5 [16]  Piper, Ch. 11 [10] | 40 |  |
| June 26 | Roberts, ch. 6 [13]  Doriani, “Reflecting on the Redemptive Thrust of Scripture” [15] | 28 |  |
| June 27 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 11 [20]  Roberts, ch. 7 [13] | 33 |  |
| June 28 | Fee & Stuart, ch. 10 [24]  Roberts, ch. 8 [13] | 37 |  |
| June 29 | None | 0 |  |
|  | **TOTAL** | **313** |  |

**WORKSHEET #1**

**Passage Selection and Observations**

(To be submitted on Tuesday, June 19)

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Select one of the passages listed below. You will work in this passage throughout the class.

1. Joshua 2:1-24 (Rahab and the Spies)
2. 2 Sam 9:1-13 (David and Mephibosheth)
3. Mark 2:1-12 (healing of the paralytic)
4. Luke 5:1-11 (calling of Peter)

Using the “Observation Key” in the lecture notes, record observations about your passage below. Spend at least 30 minutes making observations.

**Observation Key for Worksheet #1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Observation Key:**  **Knowing What to “Look For”[[1]](#footnote-1)** | |
| **Setting** | Make note of *where* the events in this story took place. Pay attention to shifts in location. |
| **Characters** | Who are characters in the story? How are they described/presented in the narrative? Are any physical details provided about them that may be significant? |
| **Plot** | How does the story develop? Identify the scene breaks. |
| **Key Words/Phrases** | Look for words and phrases that are central to the meaning of the passage. Repeated terms or concepts may provide a clue. |
| **Connectives** | Connectives reveal important relationships. “For, because, or therefore…” often indicate a reason or cause. “But” often introduces a contrast. “So that, to, in order to…” often indicates purpose. |
| **Contrasts**  **Comparisons** | How does the writer use contrasts, comparisons and illustrations to amplify the concepts he wants to communicate? Comparison is the association of similar things while contrast is the association of things that are different. “But,” “however,” “rather,” or “on the other hand…” indicate contrast. “Like” and “as” indicate a comparison. |
| **Repetition** | Are there repeated words or phrases? Are there repeated thoughts? |
| **Reasons**  **Results**  **Cause/Effect** | When you observe admonitions, see if the writer gives you a reason for this advice. Is there a benefit that will result from following the writer’s instructions? Is there a danger to be avoided? Is there a cause/effect relationship (if . . . then . . .)? |
| **Illustrations** | Are there any illustrations? What images does the author employ? |

**WORKSHEET #2**

**Context Analysis: Survey the Big Picture**

**(Due Thursday, June 21)**

Name:

**Directions**

You are NOT composing the context section of your paper through this assignment. You are gathering the information you need to write the context section of your paper. Most of this information will go in the context section of your paper although some of it could be included in other parts of your paper. This worksheet will guide you through the context analysis process for your passage. The primary outside resource you need to consult for this assignment is the *ESV Study Bible*. The other commentaries we have posted discuss your passage and not background info. You *do not* have to write complete sentences to answer these questions. *You will find an electonic copy of this worksheet on the IBS website. Please type your responses to these questions. Be sure to include references when you are drawing on a particular resource—e.g., “(Davis, 234)”.*

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Who is the author of this book and to whom was this book written?

Approximately when and where did the events narrated in this passage take place? (*Note: We are not asking when the book was composed but roughly when the events in the passage occurred*.)

What historical/cultural elements in your passage might require clarification for contemporary readers?

**LITERARY CONTEXT**

1. What occurs immediately *before* your passage? What occurs immediately *after* your passage? How does your passage relate to what comes immediately before and after?
2. Is your passage part of a larger unit in the book? If so, how does it relate to that unit? How does this part fit into the whole book?

**REDEMPTIVE CONTEXT**

1. In what chapter of God’s story do the events in this passage take place? (To answer this question, you will need to consult the appropriate chapter in *God’s Big Story* by Roberts)
2. What is important to understand about this particular chapter in God’s story in order to rightly interpret this passage? How does your passage fit into God’s story? (To answer this question, you will need to consult the appropriate chapter in *God’s Big Story* by Roberts as well as your commentaries)
3. What redemptive themes emerge in your passage? (See the document entitled “Reading the Bible in light of the Whole Story: Tracing Key Redemptive Themes” in your course notes following lecture 2. Your commentaries will help you make some of these connections.)

**WORKSHEET #3**

**Textual Outline and Author’s Big Idea**

**(Due: Friday, June 22)**

For the passage which you have selected, create a ***Textual Outline*** and provide a statement of the ***Author’s Big Idea***. You will only turn in the results of your work (typed). You do not need to turn in this worksheet. Be sure to read the discussion of your passages in the recommended commentaries. *You will find an electonic copy of this worksheet on the IBS website. Please type your responses to these questions.*

* **Scenes**
  + Provide a list of the scenes with verse references. (You do not need to write sentences for the scenes.)
* **Textual Outline**:
  + Outline the pattern of dramatic flow writing a complete sentence for each of the elements.
    - Setting: sentence description (verse reference)
    - Rising Tension: sentence description (verse reference)
    - Climax: sentence description (verse reference)
    - Resolution: sentence description (verse reference)
    - Following Actions / Concluding Lessons: sentence description (verse reference)
* **Author’s Big Idea (ABI)**:
  + One complete sentence summarizing the major components of the passage
  + This will use specific names of the characters
  + This can tend to be a long sentence

**EXAMPLE - 1 Samuel 25**

**Scenes**

* 25:1-4
* 25:5-8
* 25: 9-11
* Etc.

**Textual Outline**

* **Setting**: While David was in the wilderness of Paran hiding from Saul, he heard that Nabal was sheering his sheep in Carmel (25:1-4).
* **Rising tension:** Nabal dismissed David’s gracious request for help which made David furious; Nabal’s wife Abigail discovered David was coming with 400 men to kill them and hurried to meet David (25:5-22).
* **Climax**: Abigail reminds David that God will care for him and fulfill his promise to establish him as king; she urges him not to act foolishly (25:23-31).
* **Resolution**: David accepted Abigail’s council as the Word of the Lord and abandons his quest for vengeance (25:32-33).
* **Following actions**: David sent Abigail home in peace; Abigail became David’s wife after Nabal died (25:34-44).

**Author’s Big Idea (ABI)**:

* While David is on his way to kill Nabal, Abigail reminds David that God will care for him and conquer his enemies; and David accepts her council and abandons his quest for vengeance.

**WORKSHEET #4**

**Explanation of the Author’s Big Idea**

**(Due: Monday, June 25)**

**Description**

In paragraph form, unpack the author’s big idea. Your discussion of the passage should be structured around your textual outline. Be sure to include headers from your textual outline and verse references for each section. You should explain what the author is teaching and how it contributes to the big idea. You should include appropriate interpretive insights gleaned from your personal study of the passage and engagement with the commentaries. This could include important observations, discussion of the meaning of key terms, explanation of certain practices, insights from your contextual analysis, etc. Remember that you will not be able to share everything you have learned. Select the most important insights that would help a reader understand the main points of the passage. *You will find an electonic copy of this worksheet on the IBS website. Please type your responses to these questions.*

NOTE: *Although the “Explanation” portion of your paper is NOT graded, you will receive feedback from your coach.*

#### WORKSHEET #5:

#### Theological Analysis and Personal Response

#### (Due Wed., June 27)

This worksheet will guide you through the theological analysis process for your passage. As you reflect theologically on your passage, be sure to read the “Bridging Contexts” and “Contemporary Application “ sections of the *NIV Application Commentary* for your passage. The Bridging Contexts section will help you identify continuities and discontinuities while the Contemporary Significance section will stimulate your thinking about application. *You will find an electonic copy of this worksheet on the IBS website. Please type your responses to these questions.*

1. Restate the author’s big idea (ABI)

2. Discern the theological discontinuity

1. Cultural changes:
2. Personal differences:
3. Redemptive developments:

3. Affirm the theological continuity of the passage:

1. Triune God (character, conduct, concerns)
2. People (created, fallen and redeemed)
3. Redemption (be sure to consult “Redemptive Themes” following lecture 2)

4. Develop a theological big idea by restating the author’s big idea that is . . .

* Faithful to the passage
* God-centered (*rather than man-centered and moralistic*)
* Relates the big idea to the larger story of Scripture
* True for our present chapter in God’s story
* For general application

**5.** Write a one paragraph explanation of your theological big idea. This will involve identifying and explaining the key elements you have chosen to include in the TBI from the immediate passage and its broader redemptive context. Tell us why you believe these elements should be part of the TBI.

6. Personal Application: Because it’s new, some of the process in this class may have felt very analytical and perhaps somewhat dry. Set aside your notes and pray through the passage. Ask God to show you how he wants you to respond to him through this passage. As you prayerfully reflect on the passage consider how it exposes your brokenness, the “good news” to which it points you and what practical steps you might take to live it out. Record these responses below.

1- Finding Our Place in God’s Grand Story

**Lecture One Objectives:**

By the end of the session, you should

1. Understand the importance of reading the Bible as one story.

2. Understand that all the Scriptures point to Christ

**I. Introduction:**

**II. Is there a unifying theme in the Bible’s Story?**

**III. The Six Acts of the Drama of Scripture**

Act 1. Creation: God Establishes His Kingdom

Act 2. Rebellion in the Kingdom: The Fall

Act 3. The King Chooses Israel: Redemption Initiated

Scene 1 A People for the King

Scene 2 A Land for His People

Interlude. A Kingdom Story Waiting for an Ending: The Intertestamental Period

Act 4. The Coming of the King: Redemption Accomplished

Act 5. Spreading the News of the King: The Mission of the Church

Scene 1 From Jerusalem to Rome

Scene 2 And into All the World

Act 6. The Return of the King: Redemption Completed

**IV. How Do We Fit in this Story?**

**V. Helpful Resources on Understanding the Biblical Story-Line**

Craig G.Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama Of Scripture: Finding Our Place In The Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker. 2004).

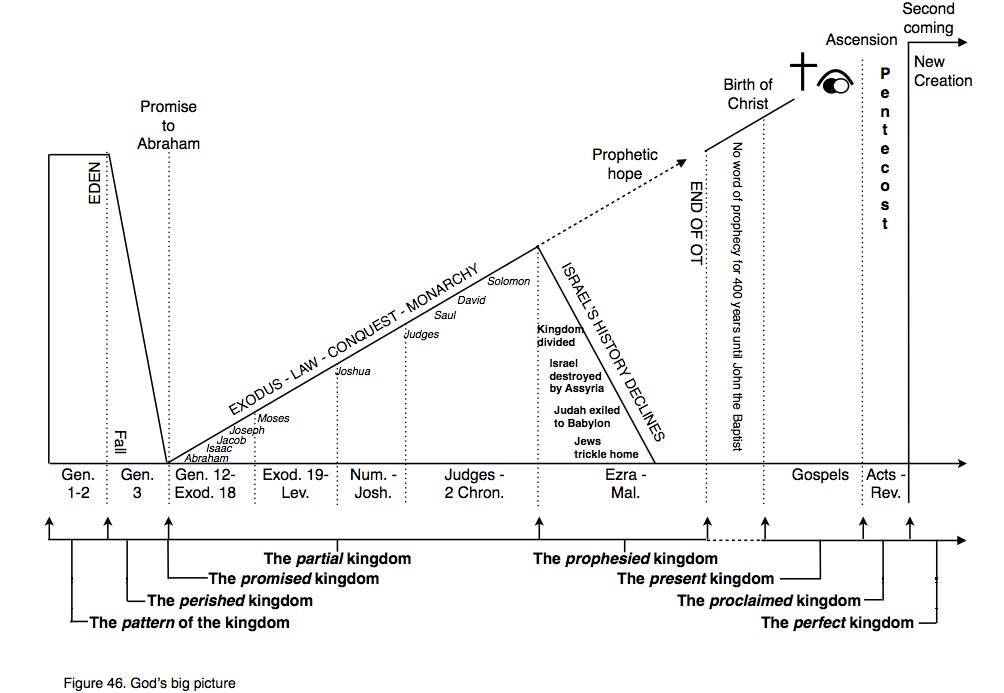
D.A. Carson, *For the Love of God.*  <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/loveofgod/>

<http://www.biblicaltheology.ca/> (This website has Power Point presentations you can download on the story-line of Scripture.)

<http://www.sok.org.uk/sok.html>

**VI. Comparing Several Versions of the Bible Story-Line**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Lecture** | **Backstory** | **Vaughn Roberts** |
| Creation | Intimacy | Pattern of the Kingdom |
| Rebellion | Betrayal | Perished Kingdom |
| Promise | Anticipation | Promised Kingdom  Partial Kingdom  Prophesied Kingdom |
| Redemption | Pursuit  Sacrifice | Present Kingdom |
| Proclamation | Invitation | Proclaimed Kingdom |
| New Creation | Reunion | Perfected Kingdom |

**Workshop #1:**

**Foundational Principles**

**I. Scripture is *both* a divine product and a human product. (2 Peter 1:20-21)**

**A.** What are some of the ramifications of a human author?

1. Biblical texts reflect culture and history

2. Biblical texts reflect the personality, style, and purpose of an author.

3. Biblical texts are situational.

4. Biblical texts are shaped by normal principles of grammar and language.

**B.** What are some of the ramifications of a divine author?

1. The Bible has one perfect author who has breathed out his message without err.

2. We can use the clear to interpret the unclear.

3. The Bible has enduring authority and is relevant for all time.

4. The Bible is central to life change and ministry.

**II. Understanding Authorial Intent**

One of the foundational elements of interpretation is to recognize that when reading Scripture we care about the author’s intent in a passage. This means simply that the Scriptures stand over against us as *other* than us and so our goal is not ONLY to ask what a passage means *to me*, but what the *author* is meaning to communicate, that is, what he is intending. This idea has always been a foundational element in reading Scripture well.

1. We must always remember that when we are talking about “authorial intent” in Scripture this does not just mean the *human* author (Paul or Peter or Matthew), but most importantly the *divine* author, God. The biggest implication of this is that because God is the ultimate author there are times when the meaning of a passage goes beyond what the human author may have himself understood. This is most obvious when it comes to how the NT understands OT passages.
2. Related to point number 1, because God is the author of Scripture we must recall that when reading the Bible God is addressing us personally. He knows us, He is before and beyond time, and He desires to transform us through His Word. Therefore, when we are reading Holy Scripture we are not just trying to figure out what Paul or James *meant*, but what God is saying to us.
3. Finally, we should note that in modern times “authorial intent” has often been used in an unhelpful and unrealistic way. That is, sometimes believers have been taught that “authorial intent” is the easily accessible, purely objective content of the Bible separate from the “significance” or “application” of the text. Further reflection reveals that “meaning” and “application” actually overlap significantly and therefore when we speak of the “authorial intent” we are also speaking of the application of a text to our lives.

III. “Now I know in part” (I Cor. 13:12)

A. We are more certain of some things than others.

B. We hold convictions with humility.

C. We affirm the clarity (perspicuity) of Scripture – clear enough for what we need to know but not everything we may want to know.

## 

Decreasing certainty

2 - Interpreting Scripture – A Process

**Lecture Two Objectives:**

By the end of the session, you should

1. Understand the three components of context analysis

2. Review an overview of content analysis.

# I. Survey the Big Picture (Context Analysis)

A. Historical context

**Helpful Resources for**

**Historical-Cultural Background**

* Commentaries
* NT/OT Introductions
* Bible Dictionaries
* Bible Encyclopedias
* Atlas

1. Author (Who wrote this?)
2. Audience (To whom was it written?)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Gospel of Matthew** | **Gospel of Mark** |
| Written to Jews | Written to Gentiles |
| Emphasizes how Jesus fulfilled the OT | Explains Jewish customs |

1. Date (When did the events take place?)
2. Historical-cultural background

2 Samuel 1:11–12 (ESV)

**11**Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him. **12**And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son and for the people of the Lord and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

1. Our own culture shapes the way we read and communicate the Bible

B. Literary Context

1. Literary context has to do with how the author has \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the material and how it \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

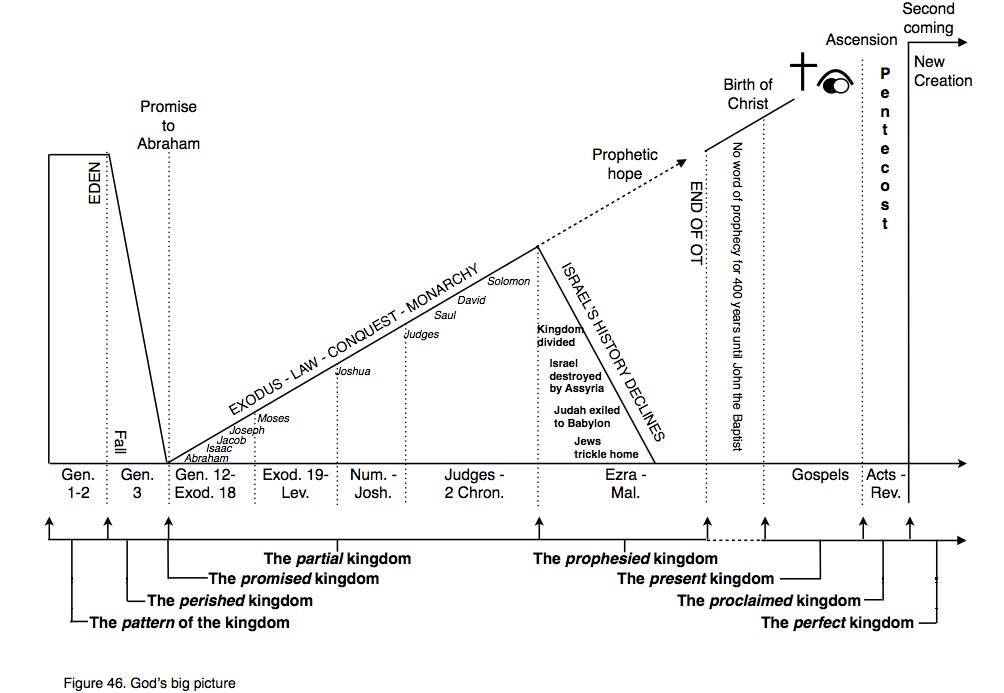
Example: “rush”

1. He *rushed* to the office.
2. He hated the *rush* of city life.
3. In their stunning victory over Ohio State, the University of Michigan *rushed* for nearly 400 yards.
4. They attended a *Rush* concert.
5. Fraternity and sorority *rush* begins the first week of classes.
6. How do we discover the literary context?
7. Example of the Importance of Literary Context: Mark 8-10

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Blindness** | **Suffering** |  | **Suffering** |  | **Suffering** |  | **Blindness** |
| Jesus heals a blind man  8:22-26 | **Jesus predicts his death #1**  **8:31** | Peter rebukes Jesus  8:32 | **Jesus predicts his death #2**  **9:30-32** | Disciples argue about who is the greatest  9:33-37 | **Jesus predicts his death #3**  **10:32-34** | James and John ask to sit on the right and left  10:35-45 | Jesus heals a blind man  10:46-52 |

C. Redemptive context

1. “Salvation history”: The chain of biblical, historical events through which God progressively reveals and accomplishes his redemptive plan (also called “redemptive history”).
2. Three Redemptive Questions
   * + Question 1: *Where* does this passage *fit* in God’s story (salvation-history)?



* + - Question 2: What do I need to *understand* about this chapter in God’s story to rightly interpret this passage?

Leviticus 4:2-4 (ESV)  
2 “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If anyone sins unintentionally in any of the Lord’s commandments about things not to be done, and does any one of them, 3 if it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then he shall offer for the sin that he has committed a bull from the herd without blemish to the Lord for a sin offering. 4 He shall bring the bull to the entrance of the tent of meeting before the Lord and lay his hand on the head of the bull and kill the bull before the Lord.

* + - Question 3: What *redemptive themes* emerge in this passage and its broader context?

See “Reading the Bible in Light of the Whole Story: Tracing Key Redemptive Themes” in your notes.

* + - * + God as savior/redeemer
        + Rebellion
        + God’s kindness despite unfaithfulness:
        + Blessed to be a blessing

1. Redemptive Themes: Two Examples
   * + Eph 6:10-20
     + Hosea 1

**II. Explore the Passage (Content Analysis)**

* Our main objective: *To identify the author’s big idea*

A. Identify the genre (literary form)

1. Scripture contains a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of literary forms (genres).

2. Genre relates to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ through which a writer communicates his message.

3. Each genre or literary form requires a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ interpretive approach.

B. Genre Specific Content Analysis

1. Isolate the literary unit

2. Identify the structure

3. Carefully explore the passage

**Exploring the Passage**

* Make careful observations regarding the structure
* Ask questions for understanding
* Consider interpretive options
* Compare English translations
* Study the meaning of key words
* Investigate what others have written (commentaries)

4. Develop a textual outline and summarize Author’s Big Idea (ABI)

a. Identify the major sections of the passage according to its structure.

b. Develop a one sentence summary statement of each major section.

c. Synthesize these sentences into one sentence that reflects Author’s Big Idea.

**III. Why does this matter?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Blindness** | **Suffering** |  | **Suffering** |  | **Suffering** |  | **Blindness** |
| Jesus heals a blind man  8:22-26 | **Jesus predicts his death #1**  **8:31** | Peter rebukes Jesus  8:32 | **Jesus predicts his death #2**  **9:30-32** | Disciples argue about who is the greatest  9:33-37 | **Jesus predicts his death #3**  **10:32-34** | James and John ask to sit on the right and left  10:35-45 | Jesus heals a blind man  10:46-52 |

**Reading the Bible in Light of the Whole Story:  
Tracing Key Redemptive Themes**

The Bible is not merely a collection of stories. Together these “little” stories tell a larger story that centers on what the Father is doing through the Son in the Spirit to redeem a broken world. In order to read Scripture rightly, we must consider how a passage we are studying fits into this larger drama. One way to do that is by identifying “redemptive themes.” Redemptive themes are the threads that hold the story together and point to Christ and his redemptive work. They run throughout the Bible, showing up at pivotal moments.

Below you will find a list of prominent redemptive themes, along with a brief description of each one. Use them to jumpstart your thinking and to reflect on the person and work of Jesus Christ. As you begin to approach scripture in this way you’ll find a greater sense of intimacy with the Lord and you’ll share the scriptures in more relevant ways with your audience.

1. **God as Savior and Redeemer**: Throughout the Old Testament God redeems (rescues) his people from their enemies, often through a divinely appointed leader (Psalm 18). Each of these events anticipates God’s ultimate redemption of His people from sin and death through Christ (Luke 1:68-79). You might ask a question like, “What does this passage reveal about God’s nature as the Redeemer?”
2. **Human Rebellion:** Rebellion against God runs from Genesis to Revelation and takes a variety of forms. Consider how the human rebellion reflects broader patterns in Scripture. One prominent way human rebellion expresses itself is idolatry. Idolatry is one of the major themes of the Bible, as evidenced by the first commandment: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). When we think of idolatry, we picture someone bowing down to a carved statue (Ezekiel 14:1-8). But even if we haven’t prostrated ourselves before an image of Zeus or Aphrodite we can still be idolatrous. In fact, idolatry takes place any time the trust of our heart shifts to someone or something other than Christ. An idol is anything we believe we absolutely must have, apart from Christ, to fulfill us. And as we chase after idols we experience alienation, inadequacy, and deficiency. Our idols offer a window into our need for redemption. As you read a passage, ask, “What does this passage reveal about human brokenness and rebellion that requires redemption”?
3. **God’s Kindness (despite Human Unfaithfulness)**: Throughout Scripture God offers grace in spite of human unfaithfulness. We saw it in the Garden when, in the midst of pronouncing judgment upon Adam and Eve, God also promised that a descendant of Eve would crush the head of the Serpent (Genesis 3:15). Another good example may be observed in the prayer offered by God’s people following their return from exile in the book of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 9:1-37). This prayer traces the history of Israel up through the exile and celebrates God’s goodness/kindness in spite of their unfaithfulness.
4. **God’s Wrath**: Another major theme in the Scripture is the wrath of God against sin and rebellion. It is this wrath that necessitates the redemptive of the triune God.
5. **Redemptive Work of Christ**: The work of Christ is not limited to the gospels and explicit proclamation of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection in the epistles. Some Old Testament passages predict aspects of his life and work (Micah 5:2). Many other passages prepared God’s people for the work of Christ. For example, OT laws help us see why we need a savior (Galatians 3:24). Worship practices anticipate aspects of Christ’s work (e.g., the Passover instituted in Exodus 12). Old Testament characters (e.g., Moses, David), offices (see Prophet/Priest/King below), and rituals (see Sacrifices below) prefigure Christ and his work.
6. **Blessed to be a Blessing**: One of the key themes is that God blesses his people so they can be a blessing to others. God told Abraham that he would bless him so that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him (Gen 12:1-3). We see this theme throughout the Bible. For example, when Paul talks about his calling in Eph 3:1-13, he talks about the grace that was given to for the sake of the Gentiles (v.2).
7. **Sacrifices/Atonement:** From as early as Gen 3, sacrifices were offered as payment for sin. Through Moses God gave an entire sacrificial system to Israel. As the book of Hebrews makes clear, these sacrifices pointed forward to the one great sacrifice of Christ on the cross.
8. **Prophet/Priest/King:** Throughout the OT God called prophets, priests and kings to advance his redemptive plan. The NT presents Jesus as the fulfillment of these roles. Jesus is the long-awaited King (Heb 1:5-14), the great High Priest (Heb 8:1-13), and the prophet like Moses (Acts 3:22-26). So when you see the actions of prophets, priests, or kings, ask whether they in some way point forward to the Christ as the fulfillment of those roles. You should note that sometimes the connection to Christ is the *opposite* of the example provided by the OT prophet/priest/king; in other words, where they fail, Christ obeys and embodies God’s character perfectly.
9. **Presence of God/Temple:** God walked and talked with Adam and Eve in the Garden before sin brought separation. God dwelled with his people through the tabernacle (which later became the temple). Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God dwelling with us (Matt 1:23; John 1:14) and that we will experience the fullness of this promise in the new creation (Rev 21:3).
10. **Grace of God**: Grace is more than unmerited favor. Bryan Chapell suggests that God’s grace can take at least five forms: (1) grace despite our sin (Eph 2:8-9), (2) grace overcoming the penalty of sin (Rom 3), (3) grace overcoming the power of sin (Rom 6), (4) grace empowering service (Eph 3:1-13; 4:7), (5) and grace compelling holiness (Titus 2:11-12).
11. **Covenants** – God’s relationship to his people can be understood as a series of covenants (Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New). When you read a passage of Scripture consider which covenants have already been given and which have not. Does this passage give evidence of fulfilling (even if partially) something promised earlier? Keep in mind too that all of the covenants in some way point to Christ, who in his person and work fulfills the covenants. The essence of covenant is expressed in the repeated formula, “You will be my people and I will be your God” (Exod 6:7; Lev. 26:10; Jer. 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; Ezek. 11:20; 14:11; 36:28; 37:27).
12. **People of God** – Regardless of how you understand the relationship between the nation of Israel and the church, it is legitimate to look for connections between how Israel responded (or failed to respond) to God and how the church is to do so. Consider 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, where Paul draws key lessons from Israel’s wilderness experiences.
13. **Kingdom of God** –One of the major themes spanning both testaments is the “kingdom of God.”  The kingdom of God simply means “rule” or “reign” of God. The phrase is best translated “the kingship of God.”  More specifically the Kingdom of God is “the redemptive rule of God in Christ defeating Satan and the powers of evil and delivering man from the sway of evil” (Ladd) culminating in the restoration of humanity and new creation.  The kingdom is both present and future.  Vaughn Roberts book *God’s Big Picture* is built around the unfolding of the kingdom of God: the Pattern of the Kingdom (Eden), the Perished Kingdom (The Fall), the Promised Kingdom (Abrahamic Covenant), the Partial Kingdom (Exodus through the Monarchy), the Prophesied Kingdom (During Israel’s decline), the Present Kingdom (Christ on Earth), the Proclaimed Kingdom (the Church Age), and the Perfected Kingdom (the Second Coming of Christ).

**An Introduction to Commentaries**

There are different kinds of commentaries. Some commentaries are more “technical,” dealing with the details of grammar and the like. They often cite Greek and Hebrew in the text (sometimes without translating it!). Others are written to help someone with preaching or application.

Of course, some commentaries are written from an evangelical perspective; others reflect more critical positions. *Bottom-line*: the best way to find a good commentary is to ask one of us or find someone who is familiar with the vast number of commentaries out there. Not only have we had commentaries recommended to us by professors; we’ve used many of them ourselves.

The following books will help lead you to the best commentaries:

* D.A. Carson, *New Testament Commentary Survey* (Baker)
* Tremper Longman, *Old Testament Commentary Survey* (Baker)
* John Glynn, *Commentary and Reference Survey: A Comprehensive Guide to Biblical and Theological Resources* (Kregal)

Should I look for a series or single volumes on particular books? The advantage of a series is that it covers all the books, either in the NT or OT or the whole Bible. One disadvantage, however, is that you often can’t find what you want in a single volume commentary because there is not enough room in a single volume to address all the issues. Also, in a series commentaries are written by different authors and the quality varies immensely.

The advantage of buying a quality commentary on a single book is that you get the “best” on that book and it is often a commentary that will really help you. We would encourage you to buy good commentaries as you need them and reimburse them. Since you are a “steward of the mysteries of God” as a full-time Christian worker, it is reasonable that you slowly acquire good tools to help you handle the Scriptures.

What is in a commentary? Commentaries are generally very similar in what they offer. At the front is introductory material: comments on the author, the audience, themes within the book, an outline, etc. This is followed by a verse-by-verse commentary. Commentaries generally help you with the text (first “island”). Rarely will they help with theological meaning or application. An exception is the NIV Application Commentary Series.

How do I use a commentary? *i) Learn to “drop into” different places in the commentary to find what you need*. Let’s say you are studying Matthew 5:17. Obviously you will turn to “Matthew 5:17” in the commentary. But there is material in other places that is quite important. Breeze through the Introduction to get an overview of the book. Matthew 5:17 is found in The Sermon on the Mount, which is in Matthew 5-7, so be sure you look in the introduction of the commentary for comments about the Sermon on the Mount and how this section fits into the whole book. But especially look at the material at Matthew 5:1, where the author will likely discuss the upcoming section, Matthew 5-7. Finally, look at specific comments on Matthew 5:17. In other words, there is key material about Matthew 5:17 in others places throughout the commentary. You can also look in the index for references to “Matthew 5:17.”

*ii) Learn to skip what you don’t need*. Some commentaries deal with issues that probably don’t concern you. A commentary on 2 Corinthians, for example, might have 30 pages defending the “unity” of the book. Critical scholars believe it was “pasted together” and not written as a single work by a single author. Skip sections like this if they don’t concern you.

*iii) Use a commentary to help your own personal study but do not turn to a commentary expecting it to “tell you what it says.”* First, you will likely have insights that the commentator does *not* make. Second, you will “own” the material better, and apply it better in your life, if you get into the Word yourself. And thirdly, a commentary will not help much in connecting a text to Christ and to a specific audience. You will need to do this from your own work. View commentaries as guides along the way to help you with the text.

*iv) Consult more than one commentary if possible*. Sometimes different commentaries disagree but more likely different commentators will help you see the passage through slightly different lenses. Each commentator has his or her strengths.

*v) Use a good commentary to help teach you how to study the Bible for yourself*. One of the best ways to learn to study the Bible is to read someone who does it well. A good scholar will help you learn how to study the text and help you see theological connections throughout the book.

For example: let’s say you want to study the Gospel of John over fall semester. You could 1) read the Gospel of John through several times over a couple of weeks and then 2) read the introduction in D. A. Carson’s commentary on John (skip anything that seems irrelevant to you). Then maybe read the Gospel through a couple of more times on your own, looking for themes and structure mentioned by Carson. 3) Then, following Carson’s section breaks, take the first pericope and study it on your own. Use what you’ve been taught in our class. 4) Finally, read Carson on that section. Slowly work your way through the Gospel. If you wear out after a couple of months in John, switch to something else. Using a commentary like this will really help you learn to handle the Bible better.

If you want to use a commentary in this way, I’d highly recommend D. A. Carson on Matthew (2 volume paper back), D. A. Carson on John, or Peter T. O’Brien on Ephesians. Others you might try like this could be Hubbard on Ruth (NICOT), Ross on Genesis (Creation and Blessing o/p), Dale Ralph Davis on Joshua, Judge, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 Kings (these paperbacks are really more expositions than commentaries, but they are God-centered thoughts on OT narratives, which are hard to come by!) or Edwards on Mark.

**Commentary Resources**

Exegetical Paper

You will find these resources in the IBS library and posted on the webpage for the Biblical Interpretation course. Go to ibs.campuscrusadeforchrist.com and select “Resources” and then “IBS courses” and then “Biblical Interpretation and Communication.” We recommend that you start with the ESV Study Bible. (Note: You will have free online access to the ESV Study Bible during the course.)

**Joshua 2:1-24**

1. *ESV Study Bible* (online)
2. *Joshua*, TOTC Series by Richard Hess
3. *Joshua*, NIV Application Commentary by Robert Hubbard
4. *Joshua* by Dale Ralph Davis

**2 Samuel 9**

1. *ESV Study Bible* (online)

2. *2 Samuel* by Dale Ralph Davis

3. *2 Samuel* in Expositors Bible Commentary Series

4. *First and Second Samuel* by Bill Arnold, NIVAC series

5. *Hesed* article by D. A. Baer and R. P. Gordon in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*

**Mark 2:1-12**

1. *ESV Study Bible* (online)

2. *Mark* by Edwards – Pillar Series

3. *NIV Application Commentary on Mark* by Garland

4. *Mark* by Lane –NIC Series

**Luke 5:1-11**

1. *ESV Study Bible* (online)

2. *Luke* by Bock (2 Vol) – BICNT Series

3. *Luke* by Bock (NIV Application Commentary)

4. *Luke*  by Marshall

**Workshop #2:**

**Context Analysis**

#### 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1

1 Samuel 3:1-4:1a (ESV)  
1 Now the young man Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, “Here I am!” 5 and ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. 6 And the Lord called again, “Samuel!” and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. 8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the young man. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.’ ” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” 11 Then the Lord said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. 14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.” 15 Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 16 But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” And he said, “Here I am.” 17 And Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” 18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him.” 19 And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. 21 And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord. 1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Who is the author of this book and to whom was this book written?

In the case of 1-2 Samuel, no one knows who the author is.

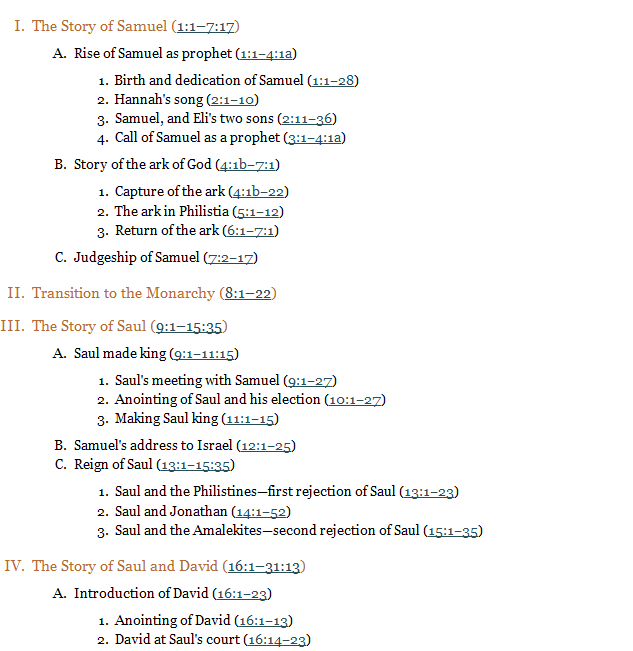
Written to Israelites

Approximately when and where did the events narrated in this passage take place? (*Note: We are not asking when the book was composed but roughly when the events in the passage occurred*.)

Probably around 1100 BC

What historical/cultural background might help contemporary readers better understand the events recorded in this passage?

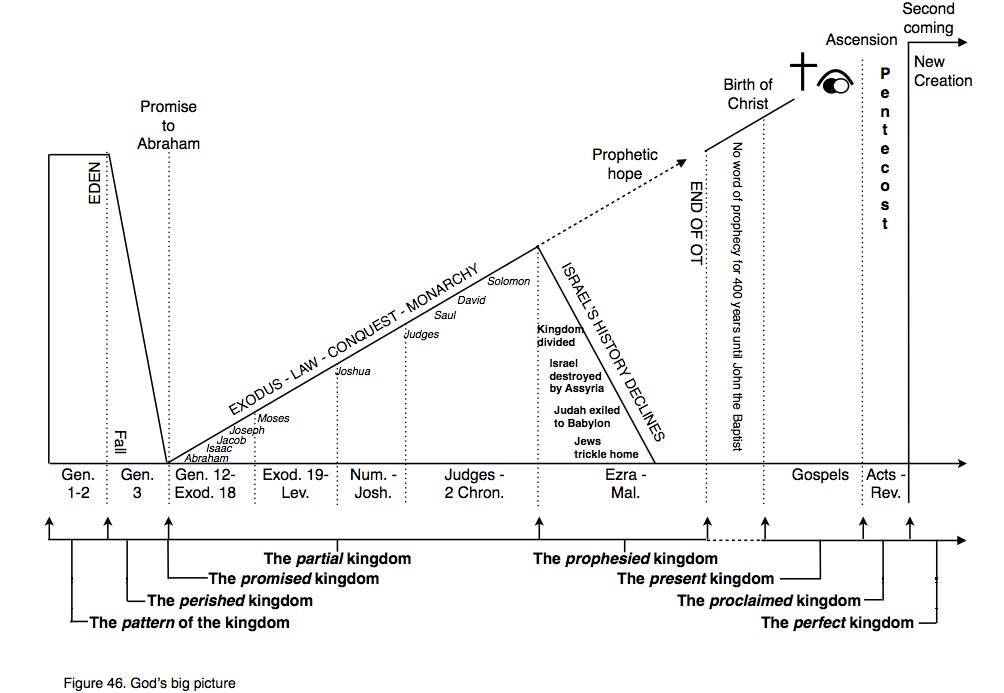
**LITERARY CONTEXT**

1. What occurs immediately *before* your passage? What occurs immediately *after* your passage? How does your passage relate to what comes immediately before and after?
   1. BEFORE: 2:11-36 contrasts Samuel’s growth in godliness with with the wickedness of Eli’s sons who “treat the offering of the Lord with contempt” (2:17). Through a “man of God” God exposes Eli’s failure: “29 Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’ 30 Therefore the Lord the God of Israel declares: ‘I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,’ but now the Lord declares: ‘Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 31 Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house” (2:29-31). This message ends on a bright note for Israel. In contrast to Eli, God would raise up “a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in [God’s] heart and in my mind” (2:35).
   2. AFTER: 4:1b-11 records Israel’s battle with the Philistines in which thousands of Israelites die, the ark of God is captured and Eli’s two sons (Hophni and Phinehas) die. (FYI: In chapters 4-7 Israel strays from whole-heartedly following God by trusting in the ark, instead of God. The ark is captured but in the midst of this “tragedy,” God displays his strength and sovereignty. It ends in chapter 7, with Samuel calling all of Israel to repent and follow God wholly.)
   3. RELATION: 3:1-4:1a continues the storyline from chapter 2. In chapters 4-7 Israel strays from whole-heartedly following God by trusting in the ark, instead of God. The ark is captured but in the midst of this “tragedy,” God displays his strength and sovereignty. It ends in chapter 7, with Samuel calling all of Israel to repent and follow God wholly.
2. Is your passage part of a larger unit in the book? If so, how does it relate to that unit? How does this part fit into the whole book?
   1. Most commentaries treat 1:1-4:1a as a literary unit beginning with the birth of Samuel and ending with his call to be a prophet of God. This is seen as part of the larger unit (c1-7). This passage plays a key role in introducing the calling of a key character in this book.

ESV Study Bible, p. 489

**REDEMPTIVE CONTEXT**

1. In what chapter of God’s story do the events in this passage take place? (To answer this question, you will need to consult *God’s Big Story* by Roberts)



1. What is important to understand about this particular chapter in God’s story in order to rightly interpret this passage? (To answer this question, you will need to consult the appropriate chapter in *God’s Big Story* by Roberts) How does your passage fit into the larger story?
   1. The Partial kingdom begins with Abraham and ends with the division of the kingdom following Solomon’s reign. During this time, God establishes a covenant with Abraham, Moses and David. God’s definitive act of deliverance (the Exodus) takes place during this time. Israel becomes a nation and inherits the land.
   2. A transition occurs from Israel being ruled by judges to Israel ruled by a king. 1 Samuel chronicles this transition. 1 Samuel introduces a new chapter in partial kingdom. The time of the judges (which ended in failure) is over. The reign of Israelite kings is about to begin. The lack of moral direction that characterizes the era of judges is over. The Prophets and Kings replace them as God’s anointed. Samuel is introduced as a prophet and in the future Israel grows from being a small little nation to a great power in the ANE.
   3. Ch 1-7 set the stage for this transformation. Israel is in crisis. Eli’s sons are wicked and he seems powerless to deal with them. Externally there is constant warfare against the Philistines. These chapters introduce the figure through whom God will resolve this crisis—namely, Samuel. His birth is a gracious act of God (1:1-2:8). Samuel plays a central role in these chapters as an instrument of God’s will.
   4. We are told that God’s Word was rare. This silence likely reflected God’s judgment—perhaps because of her corrupt priesthood (Davis, 34). God allowed Israel to wander in darkness. 1 Samuel 3, however, offers good news. God is breaking this silence. His Word will no longer be rare because there is a new prophet to whom and through whom he will speak. This represents a sign of God’s grace. One of the key redemptive themes in this chapter is the kindness and mercy of God to speak again to his wicked people
2. What redemptive themes emerge in your passage? (See the “Redemptive Themes” document in your course notes following lecture 2. Your commentaries will help you make some of these connections.)

3- Interpreting Old Testament Narratives

**Lecture Three Objectives:**

By the end of the session, you should

1. Understand the general nature of biblical narratives.

2. Learn the distinctives of Old Testament narratives.

3. Practice the interpretive process on an Old Testament narrative.

*“Narratives are stories—purposeful stories retelling the historical events*

*of the past that are intended to give meaning and direction*

*for a given people in the present.”*

Fee and Stuart

**I. Understanding Biblical Narrative**

A. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the OT is narrative

B. We struggle with OT narratives for several reasons . . .

1. Different culture
2. Ethical questions
3. Confusion about how to apply OT narratives
4. Not sure how they relate to Jesus

“Old Testament narratives are neither straightforward photographs nor surveillance videos; they do not give comprehensive, detailed accounts of events. On the contrary, Old Testament stories present creative portraits of Israel’s history.” Richard Pratt, *He Gave Us Stories*, 151.

C. OT narratives are not simply \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

D. OT narratives are highly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the details they present.

E. The basic unit of the Old Testament narrative is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

F. Like all stories, OT Narratives are structured around . . .

1. Setting (where)

2. Characters (who)

3. Plot (what and how)

“Individual Old Testament narratives are not intended to teach moral lessons. The purpose of the various individual narratives is to tell what God did in the history of Israel, not to offer moral examples of right or wrong behavior.” Fee/Stuart

G. The primary purpose of Old Testament narratives is not to teach \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lessons.

H. Old Testament narratives point us to Christ.

* 1. They show us our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for redemption, which is ultimately ours in Christ.
  2. They give us mini \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of redemption, which make us hungry for Christ.

**II. Interpreting Old Testament Narratives**

A. Survey the Big Picture

1. Historical Context

2. Literary Context

3. Redemptive Context

B. Explore the Passage

1. Isolate the literary unit

2. Analyze the characters and plot

a. Identify the characters

b. Identify the scenes

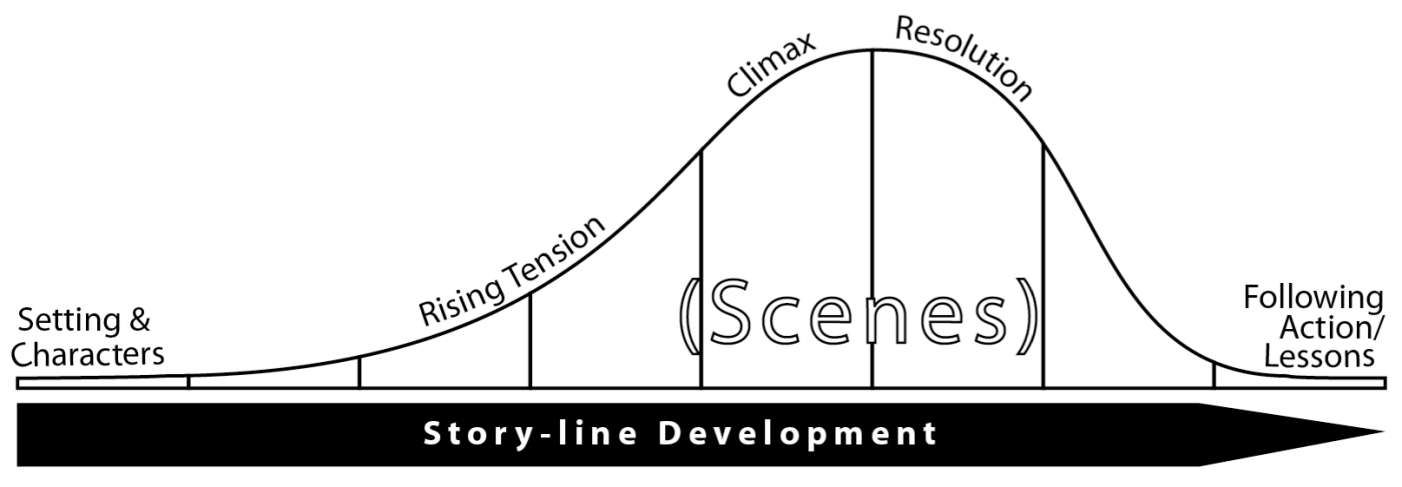
* Shift in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Shift in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Shift in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Shift in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

c. Group the scenes together and observe how the story develops

**\*\*NOTE**: We are using the term “climax” slightly differently than it is used in literature. In literature, the term “climax” often includes both the highest point of tension *as well as* the resolution of that tension. We are using the term climax merely to refer to the highest point of tension in the story.

* **Setting**: Biblical stories often begin by giving readers some kind of setting for the events to follow.
* **Rising tension**: Stories are driven by tension/conflict. Where does the narrative action in the story begin? (e.g., God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son)
* **Climax** **of tension\*\***: This represents the highest point of tension in the story (e.g., Abraham is holding the knife about to kill Isaac).
* **Resolution**: The tension in the story is resolved (e.g., God tells Abraham not to kill his son).
* **Following actions / Lessons:** These scenes follow the resolution of the action (e.g., God reaffirms his promise to bless Abraham).

Diagram below adapted from Daniel Doriani, *Getting the Message*

**

3. Develop a textual outline

a. Write a one sentence summary statement of each component of the episode.

* Setting
* Rising tension
* Climax (of tension)
* Resolution
* Following actions / Lesson

b. Synthesize these sentences into one sentence that reflects **Author’s Big Idea** considering:

* What does the dramatic structure emphasize in the episode?
* What phrases or images are repeated?
* What verses summarize the point?

C. An Example – 1 Samuel 25

1. Isolate the episode: 1 Sam. 25:1b-42

2. Identify the structure

a. Characters: David and his men, Nabal, Abigail,

b. Identify the scenes

**1 Samuel 25:1b–42 (ESV) – EACH SCENE IS A PARAGRAPH**

Then David rose and went down to the wilderness of Paran. **2** And there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. The man was very rich; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel. **3** Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. The woman was discerning and beautiful, but the man was harsh and badly behaved; he was a Calebite. **4** David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep.

**5** So David sent ten young men. And David said to the young men, “Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal and greet him in my name. **6** And thus you shall greet him: ‘Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. **7** I hear that you have shearers. Now your shepherds have been with us, and we did them no harm, and they missed nothing all the time they were in Carmel. **8** Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David.’ ”

**9** When David’s young men came, they said all this to Nabal in the name of David, and then they waited.

**10** And Nabal answered David’s servants, “Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters. **11** Shall I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers and give it to men who come from I do not know where?”

**12** So David’s young men turned away and came back and told him all this.

**13** And David said to his men, “Every man strap on his sword!” And every man of them strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword.

And about four hundred men went up after David, while two hundred remained with the baggage.

**14** But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal’s wife, “Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he railed at them. **15** Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them. **16** They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. **17** Now therefore know this and consider what you should do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his house, and he is such a worthless man that one cannot speak to him.”

**18** Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. **19** And she said to her young men, “Go on before me; behold, I come after you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

**20** And as she rode on the donkey and came down under cover of the mountain, behold, David and his men came down toward her, and she met them. **21** Now David had said, “Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good. **22** God do so to the enemies of David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him.”

**23 When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. 24 She fell at his feet and said, “On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant. 25 Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. But I your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent. 26 Now then, my lord, as the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, because the Lord has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. 27 And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. 28 Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. 29 If men rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the Lord your God. And the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling. 30 And when the Lord has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel, 31 my lord shall have no cause of grief or pangs of conscience for having shed blood without cause or for my lord taking vengeance himself. And when the Lord has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant.” 32** And David said to Abigail, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! 33 Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from avenging myself with my own hand! 34 For as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male.” 35 Then David received from her hand what she had brought him. And he said to her, “Go up in peace to your house. See, I have obeyed your voice, and I have granted your petition.”

**36** And Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal’s heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until the morning light.

**37** In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.

**38** And about ten days later the Lord struck Nabal, and he died.

**39** When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Blessed be the Lord who has avenged the insult I received at the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from wrongdoing. The Lord has returned the evil of Nabal on his own head.”

Then David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her as his wife.

**40** When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, “David has sent us to you to take you to him as his wife.” **41** And she rose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, “Behold, your handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.”

**42** And Abigail hurried and rose and mounted a donkey, and her five young women attended her.

She followed the messengers of David and became his wife.

c. Group the scenes together and observe how the story develops

* Setting, 25:1-4
* Rising tension, 25:5-22
* Climax, 25:23-31
* Resolution, 25:32-33
* Following actions, 25:34-44

3. Develop a textual outline

a. Develop a one sentence summary statement of each component of the episode.

* **Setting**: While David was in the wilderness of Paran hiding from Saul, he heard that Nabal was sheering his sheep in Carmel (25:1-4).
* **Rising tension:** Nabal dismissed David’s gracious request for help which made David furious; Nabal’s wife Abigail discovered David was coming with 400 men to kill them and hurried to meet David (25:5-22).
* **Climax**: Abigail reminds David that God will care for him and fulfill his promise to establish him as king; she urges him not to act foolishly (25:23-31).
* **Resolution**: David accepted Abigail’s council as the Word of the Lord and abandons his quest for vengeance (25:32-33).
* **Following actions**: David sent Abigail home in peace; Abigail became David’s wife after Nabal died (25:34-44).

b. Synthesize these sentences into one sentence that reflects **Author’s Big Idea** considering:

* What does the dramatic structure emphasize in the episode?
* What phrases or images are repeated?
* What verses summarize the point?

ABI: While David is on his way to kill Nabal, Abigail reminds David that God will care for him and conquer his enemies; and David accepts her council and abandons his quest for vengeance.

**III. Applying Old Testament Narratives**

1. Like all of Scripture, OT narratives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (2 Tim 3:16).
2. We apply OT narratives too narrowly, however, if we only focus on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to emulate.
3. Four questions to consider in applying OT narratives:
   1. What does this story teach me about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
   2. How does this story function as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ revealing my brokenness and rebellion?
   3. How does this story woo my heart hearts to find \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Christ?
4. An Example – 1 Samuel 25

**Workshop #3:**

**Old Testament Narrative**

#### 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1

1 Samuel 3:1-4:1a (ESV)  
1 Now the young man Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, “Here I am!” 5 and ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. 6 And the Lord called again, “Samuel!” and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. 8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the young man. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.’ ” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” 11 Then the Lord said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. 14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.” 15 Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 16 But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” And he said, “Here I am.” 17 And Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” 18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him.” 19 And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. 21 And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord. 1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

# I. Survey the Big Picture (Context Analysis)

(Already covered on Tuesday)

# II. Explore the Passage (Content Analysis)

A. Isolate the episode: 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a

B. Identify the structure and observe the text in light of the structure.

1. Make observations

2. Identify characters: ***Who are the characters?***

3. Identify scenes: ***What are the scene divisions that reflect a movement in time,*** place, character or narration? (mark the scenes in the text using a hash mark)

4. Chart the pattern of dramatic resolution: What is the dramatic flow in the passage? Align the scenes to the flow. Develop sentences that summarize the scenes in this flow.

* Setting:
* Rising tension:
* Climax
* Resolution
* Following Action /Concluding Lessons

D. Author’s big idea.

*What are the main ideas that need to be included in an ABI for this passage?*

*Are there any verses that summarize the ABI?*

*State the Author’s Big Idea:*

*4- Interpreting the Gospels*

**Lecture 4 Objectives:**

By the end of the session, you should

1. Understand the literary nature of the gospels.

2. Learn how to analyze a gospel narrative.

# I. Introduction to the Gospels

**A. Our Checkered History with the Gospels**

**B. The Gospel genre**

1. The Biblical Meaning of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. The Gospels as Biblical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**C. What is Our Goal in Reading the Gospels?**

**D. A Comprehensive Definition:**

*Our canonical Gospels are the theological, historical, and virtue-forming biographical narratives that retell the story and proclaim the significance of Jesus Christ, who through the power of the Spirit is the Restorer of God’s reign.* **(from JTPennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, p.35)**

**E. Relating This to Fee & Stuart**

# II. Interpreting the Gospels

**A. Survey the Big Picture (Context Analysis)**

.

1. Historical Context

2. Literary Context

* + - Interpret individual Gospel stories in light of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    - Look for specific \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as to how the author grouped information

3. Redemptive Context

* + - Jew/Gentile –
    - The establishment of the Kingdom of God

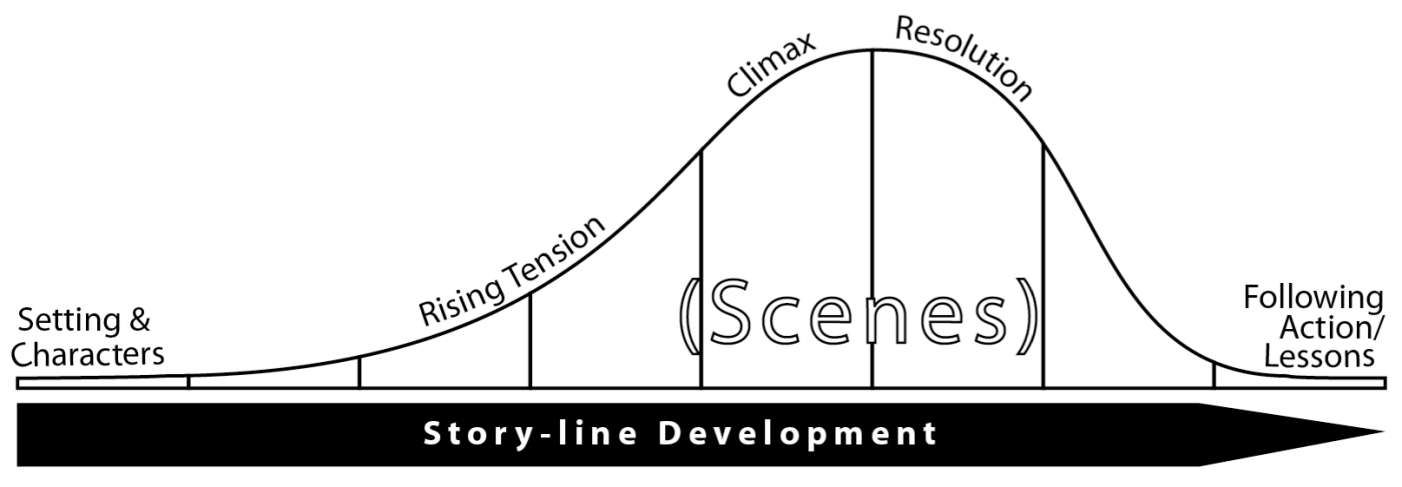
**B. Explore the Passage (Content Analysis)**

1. Isolate the literary unit

2. Analyze the characters and plot

1. Identify the characters
2. Identify the Scenes
3. Group the scenes together and observe how the story develops

* Setting
* Rising Tension
* Climax (of tension)
* Resolution
* Following Action/Interpretation

****

3. Develop a textual outline and **Author’s Big Idea.**

a. Identify the major sections of the narrative according to its dramatic flow.

b. Develop a one sentence summary statement of each major section.

c. Synthesize these sentences into one sentence that reflects the **Author’s Big Idea.**

*For narrative sections, just as with OT narratives:*

* Look for plot, setting, characters, etc.
* The climax and resolution of the story is important.
* With the Gospels in particular there will often be a concluding statement that gives an important clue to the meaning of the story.
* Observe how the characters in the drama respond to God/Christ.
* Focus on the key ideas of Revelation (of God in Christ) and Identification (us as disciples even as they were)

**III. Gospel Example: Mark 6:45-52**

Mark 6:45-52 (ESV)  
45 Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. 47 And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. 48 And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, 49 but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, 50 for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” 51 And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, 52 for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

A. Isolate the episode: Mark 6:45-52

B. Analyze the characters and plot

1. **Identify the characters**: Jesus and his disciples
2. **Identify the scenes** 
   1. 6:45
   2. 6:46
   3. 6:47
   4. 6:48a
   5. 6:48b-50a
   6. 6:50b-51a
   7. 6:51b-52
3. **Group the scenes together and observe how the story develops** 
   1. **Setting:** Sea of Galilee and Bethsaida disciples in a boat on the sea in the evening while Jesus is on land (6:45-47)
   2. **Rising Tension:** The disciples are alone at night on the sea, facing difficult waves, making little progress (6:48a).
   3. **Climax:** The disciples are terrified to see a ghost coming near them, walking on the water (6:48b-50a).
   4. **Resolution**: Jesus identifies himself and speaks words of peace and power to his disciples. He then gets into the boat and the storm ceases (6:50b-51a).
   5. **Following Action/Interpretation:** The disciples are astounded because their hardness of heart prevented them from understanding (6:51b-52).

C. Summarize the Author’s Big Idea

**ABI:** In the midst of a stormy lake, Jesus, walking on the water, reveals himself to his terrified

disciples and speaks words of peace, but they failed to comprehend his true identity for they failed to

understand the significance of the loaves due to the hardness of their hearts.

D. Applying and Teaching Mark 6:45-52

1. Identification with the disciples // Fallen Condition

2. Revelation of God in Christ // Redemptive Solution

**IV. The Significance of the Gospels for the Church**

A. A personal, upfront encounter with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

B. Exposure to the biblical emphasis on the coming \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Workshop #4**

**Gospels – Luke 7:36-50**

**Luke 7:36-50 (ESV)**

36 One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house and took his place at the table. 37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.” 40 And Jesus answering said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he answered, “Say it, Teacher.” 41 “A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” 43 Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.” 44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” 48 And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” 49 Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?” 50 And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

# I. Survey the Big Picture (Context Analysis)

**A. Historical Context**

* + Written by Luke
  + Narrates the events during Jesus’ ministry
  + Here are some elements that might require clarification for contemporary readers:
    - “meal” There were social connotations related to eating that we don’t have today. Note Luke 15:1, where Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of eating with sinners.
    - “Reclining at the table”: “reclining was the normal position for eating a special meal in the ancient Near East (9:14-15, 14:8, 24:30). Each person would lie on his side, facing the table, and with body and feet angling away from the table. Such reclining was common at a festive banquet, while family meals involved sitting” (Bock, Luke, Vol 1, pg 694).
    - “footwashing”: people needed to wash their feet due to the dusty roads. Washing was for both comfort and cleanliness and it was generally done by the lowest slave. Footwashing was a sign of hospitality. This is confirmed by Jesus’ reaction to not having his feet washed – it was a sign of lack of hospitality.

**B. Literary Context**

* + Luke is the only gospel with a sequel, the book of Acts. Luke introduces us to Jesus and his ministry in Luke and then shows how this ministry related to events in the early church. “Luke’s two-part work highlights God’s plan. It explains how Jews and Gentiles could become equals in a community planted by God, even though that community was rooted in a promise to Israel” (Bock, Dictionary the Gospels, pg. 495).
  + Most people see the gospel of Luke as being composed of geographical sections. Intro (1:1-2:52), Preparation for Ministry (3:1-4:13), Galilean ministry (4:14-9:50), Jerusalem ministry (9:51-19:44), Jerusalem – the Innocent Slain and Raised (19:45-24:53). So, Luke 7:36-50 is in the Galilean section of the book.
  + “Luke 7:1-8:3 concentrates on “who is Jesus?” and the appropriate response to him. A Gentile centurion understands faith better than do those in the nation (Lk 7:1-10). The crowd believes that Jesus is a prophet (Lk 7:11-17). John the Baptist wonders if Jesus is the Coming One, probably because of Jesus’ style of ministry. Jesus replies that his eschatological works of healing and preaching give the affirmative answer (Lk 7:18-35, Isaiah 29:18; 35:5-6; 61:1). An exemplary faith is displayed by the woman who anoints Jesus and by the women who contribute to his ministry (Lk 7:36-8:3).” Bock, Vol 1, pgs 22-23).
  + So, our narrative falls in a section where Jesus is doing miracles (raising the centurion’s son, raising a widow’s son, and forgiving a sinful woman) and men and women are grappling with the question, “Who is Jesus?”

**C. Redemptive Context**

* + Where are we in God’s story?
  + What do we need to understand about this chapter in God’s story?
  + What redemptive themes emerge?

# II. Explore the Passage (Content Analysis)

A. Isolate the episode: Luke 7:36-50

B. Analyze the setting, characters and plot

1. Make observations

2. Identify the characters:

3. Identify scenes: ***What are the scene divisions that reflect a movement in time, place, or narration?*** (mark the scenes in the text)

4. Group the scenes together and observe how the story develops

a. Setting

b. Rising Tension

c. Climax

d. Resolution

e. Following Actions/Lessons

C. Author’s big idea (ABI)

1. What needs to be included in the ABI?

2. Is there a verse that summarizes the ABI?

3. State the ABI:

5- Parables: Windows into the Kingdom of God

**Introduction**

**I. Why Consider Parables?**

A. The parables are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

B. About \_\_\_\_\_\_% of Jesus’ teaching is in parables.

C. Jesus’ parables are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ into the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God.

**II. What are the Components of Jesus’ Parables?**

A. The word “parable” means \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

B. Verisimilitude = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

C. “Cracks” in the lifelikeness point to a bigger \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*These are “cracks” in the realism that tease us into seeing more in (parables) than the surface story would call for. For all their verisimilitude, the parables have an element of arresting strangeness.[[2]](#footnote-2)*

D. Jesus began many of his parables with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

“This is what the Kingdom of God is like…”

Jesus Begins His Ministry

Mark 1:14–15

*14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”*

Table of Jesus’ Parables

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The Two Builders | Mt 7:24-29;  Luke 6:47-49 | The Good Samaritan | Luke 10:25-37 |
| The Children in the Marketplace | Mt 11:16-19  Luke 7:31-35 | The Friend at Midnight | Luke 11:5-8 |
| The Unforgiving Servant | Mt 18:23-35 | The Rich Fool | Luke 12:16-21 |
| The Wheat and the Tares | Mt 13:24-30, 36-43 | Faithful and Unfaithful Servants | Luke 12:42-48  Mt 24:45-51 |
| A Hidden Treasure / Valued Pearl | Mt 13:44-46 | The Barren Fig Tree | Luke 13:6-9 |
| The Dragnet | Mt 13:47-50 | The Mustard Seed and Leaven | Luke 13:18-21 |
| The Laborers in the Vineyard | Mt 20:1-16 | The Great Supper | Luke 14:15-24  Mt 22:1-14 |
| The Two Sons | Mt 21:28-32 | The Tower Builder / Warring King | Luke 14:28-33 |
| The Householder and the Thief | Mt 24:43-44  Luke 12:39-40 | The Lost Sheep and Lost Coin | Luke 15:4-10  Mt 18:12-14 |
| The Ten Virgins | Mt 25:1-13 | The Prodigal Son | Luke 15:11-32 |
| The Talents | Mt 25:14-30  Luke 19:12-27 | The Unjust Steward | Luke 16:1-13 |
| The Sower | Mark 4:3-9, 13-20 | The Rich Man and Lazarus | Luke 16:19-31 |
| The Seed Growing Secretly | Mark 4:26-29 | The Unprofitable Servant | Luke 17:7-10 |
| The Wicked Tenants | Mark 12:1-12 | The Unjust Judge | Luke 18:1-8 |
| The Two Debtors | Luke 7:41-43 | The Pharisee and Tax Collector | Luke 18:9-14 |

*The hour of fulfillment has come; that is the keynote of them all. The strong man is disarmed, the powers of evil have to yield, the physician has come to the sick, the lepers are cleansed, the heavy burden of guilt is removed, the lost sheep is brought home, the door of the Father’s house is opened, the poor and the beggars are summoned to the banquet, a master whose kindness is undeserved pays wages in full, a great joy fills all hearts. God’s acceptable year has come. For there has appeared the one whose veiled majesty shines through every word and every parable – the Saviour [[3]](#footnote-3)*

**III. Interpreting Parables: Special Issues**

* 1. Note the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
  2. Know your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Stock Imagery for Parables | |
| Father | God |
| Master | God |
| Owner | God |
| Judge | God |
| Shepherd | God |
| King | God |
| Son | Israel / Follower of God |
| Vineyard / Vine | Israel |
| Sheep | Israel |
| Seed | God’s word |
| Sowing | Teaching |
| Enemy | The Devil |
| Harvest / Grape Gathering | Judgment |
| Wedding / Wedding Banquet | Messianic Banquet |

C. Study the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*The correct interpretation of a parable… requires a recognition of the fact that certain elements in the parable are being compared to certain spiritual realities as in an analogy, with respect to one or more specific characteristics.[[4]](#footnote-4)*

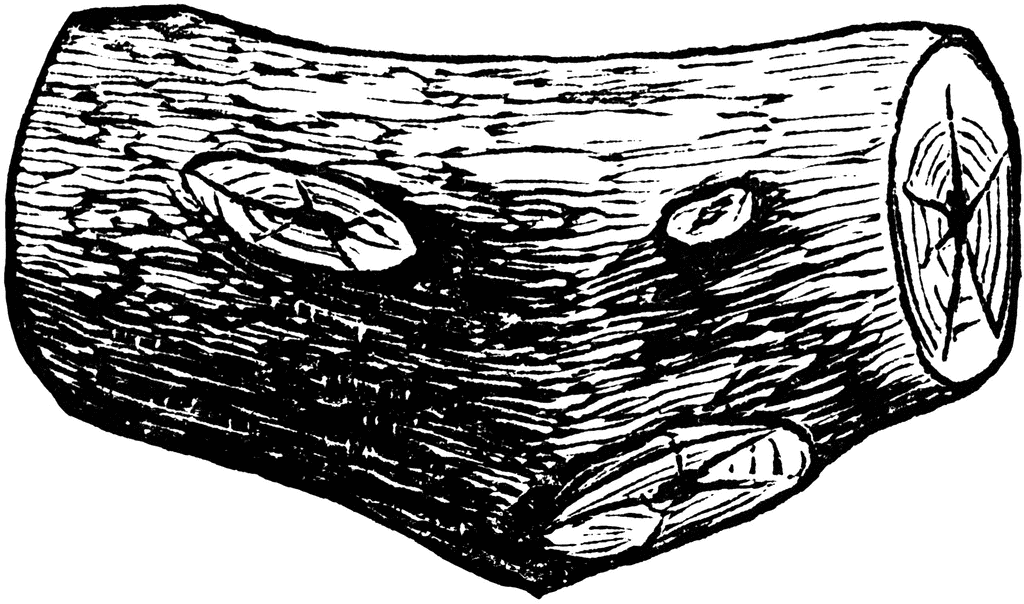
D. Consider the rule of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**IV. Learning from History**

*… for all their charm and simplicity, the parables have suffered a*

*fate of misinterpretation in the church second only to the Revelation.[[5]](#endnote-1)*

**Allegorical Interpretation**

** &**

**The Fourfold Meaning**

**of Scripture**

**(A.D. 100--1500)**

**Skepticism**

**&**

**Anti-supernaturalism**

**(1500 – Present)**

**Various philosophical lenses**

**Liberation theology**

**(Present day)**

A. Due to ancient and present errors in interpretation, many biblical scholars refrain from using the word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when speaking of the parables.

B. Others differentiate between allegories and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

C. Not every element in the parables has its own \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*Klauck concludes that important distinctions must be made between what he calls “allegory,” a rhetorical device applicable to many literary genres which gives a symbolic dimension to a text (and) “allegorizing,” which ascribes to a text hidden, often anachronistic meanings which its author never intended....[[6]](#footnote-5)*

**VI. Interpreting Parables - An Example: Mark 12:1-12**

  A. Survey the Big Picture

1. Historical Context

* Jesus was addressing representatives of the Sanhedrin
* The practices of wealthy landowners and tenant farmers
* Lease arrangements – collections at harvest time

2. Literary Context

* Jesus had recently entered Jerusalem as a king (Mark 11:1-11)
* He entered the temple, disrupted it, and taught the people (Mark 11:12-26).
* The Sanhedrin, desiring to destroy him, challenged his authority, but Jesus was undaunted (Mark 11:27-33).
* After this parable, they sought to arrest Jesus but could not, for fear of the people, so they continued to question him and even sent Pharisees to try to trip him up (Mark 12:13-40).
* Jesus directed attention to the faith of a widow, in contrast to the Jewish leaders (Mark 12: 41-44).
* Jesus prophesied the fall of the temple (Mark 13)

3. Redemptive Context

* Present Kingdom – Jesus on Earth
* Jesus was taking out the temple on his way to the cross.
* Jesus’ disciples have confessed him as Messiah, but they do not yet understand the full significance of his mission.

B. Explore the Passage

1. Isolate the literary unit

* A parable, specifically one that is a story.

2. Identify the characters and plot

a. **Characters:** Jesus, Sanhedrin representatives, a landowner, tenants, first servant, another servant, murdered servant, “many others,” a beloved son, “the people” (audience at the temple)

b. Make Observations.

* + The owner = God.
  + Faithful servants = faithful servants of God
  + the tenants = Jewish leaders – they’re “in control” of the temple
  + the owner’s son = Jesus.
  + The stone, capstone = Jesus.

c. Identify the Scenes

* + Jesus teaching a parable at the temple (Mk12:1a)
  + establishment of the vineyard (Mk 12:1b)
  + leasing of the vineyard (Mk 12:1c)
  + 1st servant sent and beaten (Mk 12:2-3)
  + 2nd servant sent – beatings escalate (Mk. 12:4)
  + 3rd servant sent and murdered (Mk 12:5a)
  + “And so with many others”! (Mk 12:5b)
  + Dialogue “They will respect my son” (Mk 12:6)
  + Dialogue “Come, let us kill him”! (Mk. 12:7-8)
  + Rhetorical question – the owner will kill them (Mk. 12:9)
  + Quote Psalm 118:22-23 (Mk. 12:10-11)
  + The Sanhedrin representatives understood and left (Mk 12:12).

d. Compare Translations/Consult commentaries

* **Nextbible.com** “Since the whole of the upper Jordan valley and a large part of the Galilean uplands were in the hands of foreign landlords at this time, such a practice was common.”
* **BKC** “Time and again God had sent prophets to Israel to gather fruits of repentance … but His prophets were abused, wounded, and killed (cf. Jer. 7:25-26; 25:4-7; Matt. 23:33-39).
* “So they conspired together and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.” Some say this predicts what would happen to Jesus: He would be crucified outside of Jerusalem…. But this presses the parable’s details too far here….

3. Develop a textual outline

a. Identify the major sections of the parable according to the narrative plot.

b. Develop a one-sentence summary statement of each major section.

* Setting and Characters (12:1): A man planted a vineyard, rented it to tenants, and went on a journey.
* Rising Conflict (12:2-5): At harvest time the owner sent a servant to collect his share of the harvest, but the tenants beat him and sent him back empty-handed. The next servant was beaten worse. Later servants were beaten and murdered.
* Climax (12:6-9a): The owner sent his son to enforce the collection, and the tenants murdered him in hopes of securing the vineyard for themselves.
* Resolution (12:9b-11): Jesus stated that the owner would come and destroy the tenants, and referenced Psalm 118:22-23.
* Following Action (12:12): Realizing that the parable was told about them, the religious leaders desired to seize Jesus but withdrew because of the crowd.

C. Write Author’s Big Idea.

After entering Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and confronted the Sadducees with a parable about a landowner who’s tenants abused and killed his servants and, eventually, his own son before he destroyed them and entrusted his vineyard to others.

**VII. For Further Study**

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**Workshop #5**

**Interpreting Parables**

#### Matthew 20:1-16

# I. Survey the Big Picture (Context Analysis)

Matthew 20:1-16 (ESV)

1 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ 5 So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ 7 They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ 8 And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ 9 And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. 10 Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. 11 And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, 12 saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ 13 But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ 16 So the last will be first, and the first last.”

A. Historical context:

It would be helpful to know a little about workers, vineyards, and labor practices. Also, you need to understand the strife between Jesus and the Pharisees.

B. Literary context:

* You first want to place this parable in the broader context of Matthew.
  + If you “drop in” Carson’s commentary on Matthew he titles the section in Matthew just prior to this section (Matt. 13:54-17:27) as *The Glory and the Shadow: Progressive Polarization*. His summary statement about this portion of Matthew is: *The Jews are becoming increasingly hostile and the cross is looming ahead* (pg. 334).
  + He titles this section (Matt 19:3-23:29), where this parable occurs, as *Opposition and Eschatology: The Triumph of Grace.* In these chapters, according to Carson *the opposition increases and Jesus begins to talk about the end more, highlighting God’s grace in the process* (pg. 410-411).
  + So the hostility between Jesus and the Pharisees is reaching a climax. Jesus is talking more and more about the end, especially noting God’s grace.
  + Also important is to understand that in the flow of Matthew this story is part of the section (18:1-20:34) that gives a variety of instructions and images about the newly constituted people of God. This section teaches many things about Discipleship and what life looks like in God’s kingdom.
* Now look for the *immediate context.* Look in Matthew before and after the parable. *What precedes it? What follows?*
  + Prior to this parable Matthew includes the story of the rich young ruler, who thought he could make it by works (Matt. 19:16-26). Jesus said no. The disciples were shocked. “Who, then, can make it?” But the kingdom of God isn’t as what they expected. Jesus tells them “with man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”
  + Then the disciples began to wonder – “Hey, we should make it. I mean, after all, we’ve left everything.” Jesus assures them of their inheritance. But again, Jesus teaches that the kingdom of God isn’t what it appears. Many who appear to be first won’t be. And many who have lost everything, will win in the end.
  + Following this parable Jesus predicts his death and resurrection (Matt. 20:17-19). Matthew then inserts the story of John and James’ mother requesting that her sons be the two chief big shots in the upcoming Kingdom, to which Jesus responds that they, like he, should be a servant. This, too, ends with Jesus pointing to his death (“The Son of Man has come to give His life a ransom for many.”)

C. Redemptive context:

* Present kingdom
* Redemptive themes: The Jews are rejecting Christ, which will result in the Gentiles getting in; the people of God have been reconstituted as those who have faith in the Christ; the Kingdom is here, and growing; there is great hostility between Jesus and the Pharisees because of their hardness of heart, etc

# II. Explore the Passage (Content Analysis)

A. Isolate the literary unit: Matthew 20:1-16

B. Identify the structure and observe the text in light of the structure.

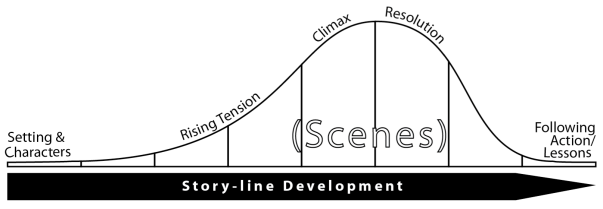
1. Make observations:

2. Characters: ***Who are the characters?***

3. Plot – Identify scenes: ***What are the scene divisions that reflect a movement in time, place, or narration?*** (mark the scenes in the text to the right)

4. Groups Scenes and Observe how the story develops

* Setting
* Rising Tension



* Climax
* Resolution
* Following Actions/Lesson

D. Author’s big idea (ABI)

1. What elements need to be included in the ABI?

2. Summarize the Author’s Big Idea

**Applying Parable of the Workers (Mt 20:1-16)**

**Option 1**: Those who came to work later must have accomplished as much in one hour as those who worked all day. So, the point of the parable is this: If you’re lazy, you’ll end up bitter at the compensation given those who work hard. On the other hand, if you work hard you’ll be more than compensated. Work hard!

**Option 2**: Jesus was a liberator. He fought against economic exploitation, de-humanization of the oppressed, and structural and individual sin. This parable shows that Jesus fought against unfair labor practices, like paying the last hired as much as the first. This parable is a frontal attack on the view that those who have more money have earned it and that the poor deserve their low economic status.

**Option 3**: The point of the parable is to show that the kingdom of God is not what you think – it is a reversal of the world’s values. We think those who seem most deserving get the kingdom. This is the “world’s way” but not God’s way. The shocking point of the parable is that the kingdom is instead built upon God’s grace, his generosity. Even the faithful in Matt. 19:27-29 receive far more than they deserve. The parable teaches that God gives to those who don’t deserve it, and that is all of us, and no one can complain about “fairness,” for he is God.

**Option 4**: The parable teaches that all people are equal before God and all will receive the same rewards in heaven. Some won’t think this is fair, but this is how the kingdom of heaven works.

6- Theological Analysis

Lecture Six Objectives:

By the end of the session, you should

1. Understand the need for theological analysis.

2. Learn the necessary perspective for and process of theological analysis.

**I. The Need for Theological Analysis.**

A. The Scriptures speak to two worlds.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ world

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ world

B. There are gaps between these two worlds.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ gaps

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ gaps

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ gaps

# II. The Perspective Necessary for Theological Analysis.

1. The author’s big idea/intent is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. God’s Spirit \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you.
3. “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14.

1. The doctrine of illumination[[7]](#footnote-6)
2. Any biblical text must be interpreted in light of the larger \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ story of Scripture.

## III. The Process of Theological Analysis.

**Step 1**: Discover the **author’s big idea (ABI).**

**Step 2:** Discern the **theological discontinuity** between the gaps (what’s changed?)

a. Cultural Gaps.

b. Personal Gaps.

c. Redemptive-Historical Gaps.

**Step 3:** Affirm the theological continuity of the passage:

1. The Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)

\*Character

\*Conduct

\*Concerns

1. People (Created, Fallen and Redeemed)

\*Created

\*Fallen [i.e., Fallen Condition(s)]

**NOTE**: Two of the most important continuities that will help you develop your message are (1) the fallen condition and (2) redemptive solution.

\*Redeemed

1. Redemption

\*General Redemptive Themes

\*Specific Redemptive Solution(s)

**Step 4:** Develop a **theological big idea (TBI)** by restating the author’s big idea that is . . .

* + Faithful to the passage.
  + God-centered (*rather than man-centered and moralistic*).
  + Relates the author’s big idea to the larger story of Scripture.
  + True for our present chapter in God’s story.
  + For general application.\*

\*This statement *will not* be bound to the time, people and events of the passage.   It *will* have broader application and fuller theological development.

## 

## IV. Theological Analysis – An Example

**Step 1**: Discover the **author’s big idea (ABI).**

1. Survey the Big Picture (Context Analysis)
2. Explore the Passage (Content Analysis)

c. ABI: **While Saul and the Israelites were paralyzed by fear, God won a**

**great victory for His people over Goliath and the Philistines through the unlikely shepherd boy, David, who was zealous for God’s honor.**

**Step 2:** Discern the **theological discontinuity** between the gaps (What’s different?).

a. Cultural Gaps.

b. Personal Gaps.

c. Redemptive-Historical Gaps.

**Step 3:** Affirm the theological continuity of the passage in three areas:

a. The Triune God (Character, Conduct, and Concerns).

b. People (Created, Fallen, and Redeemed).

c. Redemption (General Redemptive Themes and Specific Redemptive

Solution(s)).

**Step 4:** Develop a **theological big idea (TBI)** by restating the author’s big idea that is . . .

* + Faithful to the passage.
  + God-centered (*rather than man-centered and moralistic*).
  + Relates the big idea to the larger story of Scripture.
  + True for our present chapter in God’s story.
  + For general application.

***God raises up unlikely champions who are zealous for His name to win great victories on behalf of His people when fear-paralyzed.***

**Identifying the *Theological Big Idea***

After we have identified continuities and discontinuities, we are in a position to discern the **Theological Big Idea** of the passage. To arrive at the Theological Big Idea (TBI), we must restate the Author’s Big Idea (ABI) in light of the continuous story of redemption through Jesus Christ. The TBI is a restatement of the ABI in a way that is . . .

1. Faithful to the passage
2. God-centered (*rather than man-centered and moralistic*)
3. Relates the big idea to the larger story of Scripture
4. True for our present chapter in God’s story
5. For general application (*This statement will not be bound to the time, people and events of the passage. It will have broader application and fuller theological development.*)

**Example #1: Mark 5**

* ABI: Jesus sends out unclean spirits from a Gerasene man and heals a woman who hemorrhaged for twelve years on his way to raise a twelve year old girl from the dead to emphasize the need for faith rather than fear.
* TBI: Jesus’ authority over spiritual forces, physical bodies, and even life itself call for all people to respond in faith to Him rather than fear.

**Example #2: Gen. 12:1-9**

* ABI: In response to God’s promise to bless and make him a great nation that would bless all families, Abram obeyed God and left his family and went to Canaan.
* TBI: God invites his people to embrace his promises and enter his story of bringing blessing to all cultures and people we encounter.

**Example #3: Luke 1:26-38**

* ABI: God sends the angel Gabriel to Mary to tell her that the Holy Spirit will overshadow her so that she will give birth to the Son of God.
* TBI: The Lord graciously involves people in his plans, which are impossible for humans to bring about but are possible in the Spirit's power for the God who can do whatever he wants.

**Example #4: 2 Timothy 2:1-13**

* ABI: Paul charges Timothy to join him in suffering for the gospel as he remembers the risen and rewarding Christ.
* TBI: The grace of the risen Christ enables believers to endure hardship for the gospel as they hope in his return.

**Example #5: Acts 8:26-40**

* ABI: When God told Philip to share the gospel with an Ethiopian eunuch who was reading the Scriptures in his chariot, the eunuch came to faith, was baptized and went on his way rejoicing.
* TBI: When God’s people are obedient to share the message of Christ with those God brings their way, they can be confident of the gospel’s power to change lives.

#### Workshop #6:

#### Theological Analysis

## 1 Samuel 3

1 Samuel 3:1-4:1 (ESV)  
1 Now the young man Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, “Here I am!” 5 and ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. 6 And the Lord called again, “Samuel!” and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. 8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the young man. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.’ ” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” 11 Then the Lord said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. 14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.” 15 Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 16 But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” And he said, “Here I am.” 17 And Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” 18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him.” 19 And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. 21 And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord. 1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

**Step 1:** Re-state the author’s big idea (ABI)

*During a time when the Word of the Lord was rare, God spoke to Samuel confirming his judgment upon Eli’s house and establishing Samuel as a prophet of the Lord and spokesman to all of Israel.*

**Step 2:** Discern the theological discontinuity

* 1. Cultural changes:
  2. Personal differences:
  3. Redemptive developments:

**Step 3:** Affirm the theological continuity of the passage:

1. Triune God (character, conduct, concerns)
2. People (created, fallen, redeemed)
3. Redemption (general redemptive themes, specific redemptive solutions)

**Step 4:** Develop a theological big idea by restating the author’s big idea that is . . .

* Faithful to the passage
* God-centered (*rather than man-centered and moralistic*)
* Relates the big idea to the larger story of Scripture
* True for our present chapter in God’s story
* For general application\*\*

\*\*This statement *will not* be bound to the time, people and events of the passage.

It *will* have broader application and fuller theological development.

a. What elements would you want to include in your TBI?

b. Is there a verse that summarizes the TBI?

c. State the TBI

7- Christ-Centered Application

**Lecture Seven Objectives:**

By the end of the session, you should…

1. Be motivated to apply Scripture in a Christ-centered way to your life

2. Learn two key questions that will help you hear the music of the gospel.

**I. Introduction: Connecting the Music and the Dance**

**II. Learning How to Apply Scripture from Hosea**

Hosea 1 (ESV)

1 The word of the Lord that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

2 When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord.” 3 So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4 And the Lord said to him, “Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.”

6 She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the Lord said to him, “Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. 7 But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.”

8 When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. 9 And the Lord said, “Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.” 11 And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

A. Overview of Hosea 1

1. Hosea’s marriage to Gomer: exposing spiritual unfaithfulness (1:2-3)

2. Hosea’s children: pronouncing divine judgment (1:4-9)

3. Future blessing (1:10-2:1)

B. Structure of Hosea 1

* 1. **Hosea’s marriage**: exposing the spiritual unfaithfulness of Israel (1:2-3) – SIN
  2. **Hosea’s children**: pronouncing divine judgment upon Israel (1:4-9) – JUDGMENT
  3. **Future blessing**: promising blessing upon a future generation (1:10-2:1) - SALVATION

C. What does Hosea 1 teach us about how the Word of God should function in our lives?

1. God’s Word is designed to expose our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. God’s Word is designed to point our hearts to hope in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that only God can provide

**III. Scripture Exposes our Fallen Condition**

A. Most of us approach Scripture merely as book of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ telling us how to live.

B. An Important Question

C. Sin as idolatry

IV. Scripture Points us to Find True Life in Christ

A. We discover that God’s judgment ultimately serves a ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ purpose.

The reason it is important that we *read* the Scriptures redemptively is so that we will *apply* the Scriptures redemptively.

B. A Second Question:

C. The Scriptures point us to Christ in a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of ways.

* 1. The **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** anticipates Christ by exposing our hearts and persuading us of our need for a savior.
  2. The **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** anticipate him by kindling a longing a numerous levels that only Jesus can ultimately fulfill
  3. The **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** compels us to look to him for meaning and for the ability to live wisely.
  4. The **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** and **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** often speak with the voice of Christ, anticipating his own anguish and exaltation.
  5. OT **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** look forward to a prophet greater than Moses, a priest greater than Aaron and a king greater than David. Just read the book of Hebrews.

D. Our cultural blinders keep us from hearing the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the music of the gospel

E. Back to Hosea

###### Hosea 14:1-8 (ESV) 1 Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God,

###### for you have stumbled because of your iniquity.

###### 2 Take with you words and return to the Lord; say to him,

###### “Take away all iniquity; accept what is good, and we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips. 3 Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride on horses; and we will say no more, ‘Our God,’ to the work of our hands. In you the orphan finds mercy.”

###### 4 I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them.

###### 5 I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily; he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon; 6 his shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive, and his fragrance like Lebanon. 7 They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow; they shall flourish like the grain; they shall blossom like the vine; their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

###### 8 O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress; from me comes your fruit.

V. Applying the Gospel to our Lives

A. Scripture has a redemptive purpose. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture does two things—it exposes our brokenness and it points our hearts to find true life in Christ

B. Connection to the “Growth Model”

C. The gospel as the A-Z

“*The gospel is not just the ‘A-B-C’ but the ‘A-Z’ of the Christian life. The gospel is not just the way to enter the kingdom, but it is the way to address every problem and is the way to grow at every step…It tells us that we are more wicked than we ever dared believe, but more loved and accepted than you ever dared hope—at the same time. In fact, if the gospel is true, the more you see your sin, the more certain you are that you were saved by sheer grace and more precious and electrifying that grace is to you…”* Tim Keller*,* *Fellowship Group Handbook,* Redeemer Presbyterian Church

D. The gospel and the Christian life

Your greatest need = the gospel Your greatest need = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

Birth Faith in Christ Death

**VI. For Further Study**

Daniel M. Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipbsurg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 2001).

**Understanding the   
Fallen-Condition Focus of Scripture**

Why is it that sometimes we read the Bible and feel like it was just a bunch of words on a page and then we feel guilty or unspiritual?

But other times we come to our Creator and Redeemer through his word and really encounter him and feel transformed?

Let me suggest that the way we approach Scripture may have something to do with it.

God inspired His word to meet the needs of *fallen* people in a *fallen* world. This is what Bryan Chapell calls the *fallen condition focus* (FCF) of Scripture. Chapell defines the FCF as “the mutual human condition that contemporary believers share with those to or for whom the text was written that requires the grace of the passage.”[[8]](#footnote-7)

Sometimes the FCF of a passage is obvious. It might command us not to steal or to lust after what we don’t have or, even closer to the problem, not to worship material possessions. But the FCF is not limited to our choices. It *also* addresses the fact that we live in a dark and broken world. Our hearts are torn when a family member dies. Being part of this world means we are subject to disappointments, disease, tsunamis and tornados. Scripture addresses both who we *are* and the *world* in which we live.

But we often overlook the FCF of Scripture and fail to notice the deeper issues addressed by God. We miss God’s intent to lead his people to their Savior as he exposes their need for him. In small ways, we tend to forget that God gave us His word *to redeem us.* And the passage we’re reading degenerates into a history lesson or a list of rules.

Imagine you’re deathly ill and go to see your doctor. However, while at the appointment, you have a lengthy conversation *only* about whether you should ask for ‘paper’ or ‘plastic’ at the check out line. Even though you leave more confident about your choice to protect the environment, you’ve still not dealt with your health condition. So it is with us when we fail to keep the FCF in mind. We miss what God is telling us about ourselves and our need for him.

Understanding the FCF not only helps us study scripture well, it also draws us closer to God. By coming face to face with *fallenness*, we begin to realize the glory of our *redemption* through Christ. God, through the gospel, not only calls us to repent but also to *believe*. He requires our hearts, not just our behavior. He fashioned our hearts for himself. Thus it is only in Jesus Christ that our desires are ultimately satisfied, our fears ultimately conquered, and our hopes ultimately met. The FCF prepares and points us to the redemptive solution (RS)—that is, the grace of Christ which we need as fallen people.

**Examples**

Sometimes the FCF is not real obvious and this is where the larger context of the passage or chapter really helps.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

**13** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. **14** For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. **15** For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord,*﻿* that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.

* FCF: When they lost their loved ones, believers in Thessalonica, like all of us, had a tendency to grieve as those without hope (v. 13).
* RS: The assurance that our Savior will return and that we will be joined to the ones we love!

**Philippians 3:2-11**

**2** Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. **3** For we are the real circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God*﻿* and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— **4** though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law*﻿* blameless. **7** But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— **10** that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

* FCF: Paul warned the Philippians not to imitate the Judaizers who, like us, tended to place confidence in fleshly achievements. Paul was quite concerned about this as v.2 demonstrates.
* RS: Christ suffered and was glorified. The sufferings Christians experience provide proof of the genuineness of their faith—they bear his name (v.16)!

**Tougher Examples:** *Sometimes the FCF is less obvious and we must look to the larger context of the passage or chapter to understand the need the author was addressing.*

**1 Corinthians 1:26-30**

**26** For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards,*﻿* not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **27** But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; **28** God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, **29** so that no human being*﻿* might boast in the presence of God. **30** He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. **31** Therefore, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

* FCF: The Corinthians’ pride expressed in divisions and partisanship (See 1st Corinthians 1).
* RS: Paul addressed the Corinthian’s pride by reminding them who they were when God saved them. In essence, he pointed to their nothingness and also to God’s wisdom and power--Jesus. Instead of boasting in their own wisdom, he commanded them to “boast in the Lord” (v.31)!

**1 Corinthians 5:1–3**

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father’s wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. 3 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.

* FCF: The Corinthians did not address an egregious sin committed by a member of their congregation. Instead of confronting sin, they tolerated it.
* RS: A few verses later, Paul wrote “Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).” Paul rooted the ethics of the Christian life in a celebration of the sacrifice of Christ, which empowers us to confront sin with sincerity and truth.

**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

* FCF: Habitual violations of love that rend the fabric of Christian community. (The Corinthian community was on the verge of collapsing. Paul’s descriptions of what love is *not* serve to summarize what he has said elsewhere in the letter about what is wrong with their community.)
* RS: The redemptive solution is never “Try harder!” As we consider all that Paul says about the redemptive work of Christ elsewhere in the letter, we realize that love is not the result of self-effort. The agape love that Paul describes in this passage is the visible fruit of a life that has been (and is being!) redeemed by grace.

**Workshop #7**

#### Theological Analysis

## *Luke 7:36-50*

**Luke 7:36-50 (ESV)**

36 One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house and took his place at the table. 37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.” 40 And Jesus answering said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he answered, “Say it, Teacher.” 41 “A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” 43 Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.” 44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” 48 And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” 49 Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?” 50 And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

**Step 1:** State the author’s big idea (ABI)

*While dining with a Pharisee named Simon, Jesus pronounces the forgiveness of a sinful woman who demonstrates her faith by her extravagant love for him while exposing the poverty of Simon’s love for him (which reflects the fact that he has not experienced forgiveness).*

**Step 2:** Discern the theological discontinuity

1. Cultural changes:
2. Personal differences:
3. Redemptive developments:

**Step 3:** Affirm the theological continuity of the passage:

1. Triune God (character, conduct, concerns)
2. People (created, fallen, redeemed)
3. Redemption (general redemptive themes, specific redemptive solutions)

**Step 4:** Develop a theological big idea by restating the author’s big idea that is . . .

* Faithful to the passage
* God-centered (rather than man-centered, moralistic, etc.)
* Relates the big idea to the redemptive themes in Scripture
* True for this chapter in God's story
* For general application\*\*

\*\*This statement *will not* be bound to the time, people and events of the passage.

It *will* have broader application and fuller theological development.

1. What elements should be included in the TBI?
2. Is there a verse that summarizes the TBI?
3. State the TBI

#### 

8- Interpreting Old Testament Poetry

**Lecture Eight Objectives:**

By the end of the session, you should…

1. Understand the nature of biblical poetry and wisdom literature.

2. Learn some of the distinctives of interpreting biblical poetry and wisdom literature.

1. **Understanding Old Testament Poetry** 
   1. **Where is poetry found in the Old Testament?**
      1. Psalms
      2. Wisdom literature
      3. Prophets
      4. Scattered poems
   2. **Why is poetry found in the Old Testament?**
      1. God loves to communicate in poetry
      2. God loves to move us by poetry
2. **Characterizing Old Testament Poetry**
   1. **Parallelism**
      1. An older understanding
      2. A newer approach
   2. **Imagery**
      1. Images are pictures of concrete actions or things
      2. Images work by creating associations
3. **Interpreting Old Testament Poetry – An Example from Psalm 8**
   1. **Survey the big picture**
      1. Historical context
      2. Literary context
   2. **Explore the Passage**
      1. See the structure
      2. Mine the meaning
4. **Applying Old Testament Poetry**
   1. **What does the passage teach you to believe?**
      1. About the triune God
      2. About people
      3. About redemption
   2. **What does the passage teach you to do?**
      1. In your love for God
      2. In your love for neighbor

**Workshop #8**

**Application and Response**

**Directions:** You might find it helpful to pray through the passage and ask God to show you how he wants you to respond to him through this passage.

1. What contemporary situations/issues does your passage address? What changes (in character, attitude, belief, or action) does this passage call for (explicitly or implicitly) in our lives?
2. James tells us that Scripture is designed to function like a mirror (James 1:23). Which of the characters in the story do you most identify with? How has this passage functioned like a mirror in your life reflecting back your own brokenness? Can you think of a specific example of how have you experienced the fallen conditions this passage addresses?
3. What false beliefs (about God, yourself, other people, etc.) does this passage expose?
4. How does this passage point you to Christ and his redemptive work? What is the “good news” for you in this passage?
5. If you were to experience the “good news” (redemptive solution) in this passage, what do you think might look different in your life? Can you think of a time you were living out of a rich experience of the good news?
6. How do you believe God wants you to respond to him through this passage?

9 - Interpreting the Prophets

Guest Lecture: Dr. Richard Pratt (Third Millennium Ministries)

**Workshop #9**

**Interpreting the Prophets**

#### Isaiah 43:1-7

**Isaiah 43:1-7 (ESV)**

1 But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. 3 For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. 4 Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. 5 Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. 6 I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, 7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

**I. Survey the Big Picture (Context)**

**A. Historical** Context (What historical or cultural information is necessary to understand this passage?)

Isaiah 1:1 says this was a vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem during the reign of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz, Hezekiah. Judah is in rebellion but not yet exiled and Isaiah is a prophet to Israel in this state.

**B. Literary** Context (Where does this passage fit into Isaiah? What precedes and follows?)

*Where does Isaiah 43 fit into Isaiah?*

Everyone sees the book dividing at chapter 40. In chapters 1-39 Israel struggles with trusting other nations, and themselves, or trusting God. This section climaxes with Hezekiah’s inability to declare God’s glory to the Babylonians (39:1-8). This sort of failure brings about the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

Chapters 40-66 explore the significance of this new situation (captivity) for the theology Isaiah had propounded. Is God trustworthy? Would he still be the God of history, even though Babylon triumphed? Was Israel so sinful that it could no longer have a place in God’s great plan?

So, chapters 40-55 answer the questions posed by Israel’s failure and the exile: *Can God restore? Does he want to restore?* Answer: God not only has the ability to restore but, far from giving up on his people because of their sins, he will use their lives as incontrovertible evidence of his sole deity. “Do not be afraid,” he says, but trust him to restore a people from exile and demonstrate to the world that he is the only Savior. He has *not* abandoned them.

*When you look at Isaiah 43:1-7, what is one literary clue that immediately jumps out?*

One must immediately note the connector in 43:1 -- “But now . . .” In order to understand Isaiah 43:1-7, you must understand what went before . . . what is different now in Isaiah 43:1-7? From this section note: The state of Israel – they have failed to “hear” or “see”; they are deaf and blind (18-20), a people plundered and looted with no rescuer (22), they are disobedient (24), sinning against the Lord (23) and even though they are being smashed by war and flames, they are supposed to be the “messenger” – they were given God’s law -- but they haven’t gotten the message – they have not taken it to heart (25)

**C. Redemptive Context** (Where does this passage fit into redemptive history?)

All the writing prophets deal with the span of history from the accelerating decline of the divided kingdom to the end of the OT. They 1.address the covenant breaking of the people in stinging indictments; 2. warn of the consequences of this folly; 3. remind people of the covenant faithfulness of God. (Graeme Goldsworthy)

Once the decline of the nation occurs (post Solomon), a new perspective begins to emerge. The prophets, in part, continue to point to Israel’s failure to keep the covenant and their impending judgment. But there is also the recognition that Israel is incapable of true repentance and that God must do a new work of salvation.

So Isaiah is pointing out Israel’s failures but also pointing to the day when God will save Israel, bringing people “from the east and west,” his “sons and daughters from afar” who he has created for his glory.

**II. Explore the Passage (Content Analysis)**

**A. Isolate the literary unit – Isaiah 43:1-7**

**B. Identify the structure**

*Make observations*

*Do you see any structure in this section of text, Isaiah 43:1-7?*

There is a chiasm here. The hint is in the bookend verbs, “created” and “formed” found in verses 43:1 and 43:7:

A The Lord created and formed Israel (1a)

B. He will be with them in trials and rescue them (1b-2)

C. For Israel is precious and loved by God (3-4)

B’. God will rescue and bring back his people – every one of them (5-7a)

A’. The Lord made and formed his people – for his glory (7b)

**C. Observe the text in light of the structure**

1. What can we learn from the chiastic structure?
2. What are some other expressions or terms that denote the Lord’s deep concern/intimacy for his people?
3. How is this section (43:1-7) tied to the previous one?

D. Summarize the Author’s Big Idea (ABI)

**III. Theological Analysis**

**A. What discontinuities exist in the passage between the passage and today?**

1. Cultural:

2. Personal:

3. Redemptive history:

**B. What continuities exist in the passage between the passage and today?**

1. Triune God (character, conduct, concerns)

2. People (created, fallen, redeemed)

3. Redemption (general redemptive themes, specific redemptive solutions)

C. State the Theological Big Idea

* faithful to the passage.
* God-centered
* relates big idea to larger story of Scripture
* true for this present chapter in God’s story
* for general application

**IV. Application**

A. Respond to these from the text.

1. What if someone said that Isaiah 43: 2 assures me that I will never die in a flood. Is this a reasonable application of this verse? Why or why not?
2. You hear a speaker exhort the audience to think more highly of themselves, not to trust Satan’s lies but to remember who they are. The speaker turns to this passage and boasts: “Look at Isaiah 43: 4 -- God is in love with you! You are precious in his sight and He is wild about you. He will give anything for you! You are his special people!” Is this a valid use of this passage?
3. What if someone used this passage this way: “Even though your cancer is great, you can have great comfort – indeed no fear. For the Lord has redeemed you. You are His. And when you pass through great trials He will be with you, for you are precious to him and he loves you.” Do you think this is a legitimate application of this verse? Why or why not?
4. What if someone told you “This passage really lifts me up when I’m down. It blows my mind that I am precious to him. Can you believe it? He is always with me and he loves me, despite the fact that I am so messed up at times. Who cares about that virus that crashed my computer.”

.

Let’s check out of hermeneutics class for a minute and talk about your heart. How do you FEEL about the fact that God made you and formed you . . . you are his? How do you feel about the fact that he will trade other things for you because you are precious to him? How do you feel about being called by HIS name and having his presence always with you for HIS glory?

**How do you feel about this God?**

*Class Evaluation – Biblical Interpretation*

Circle your coach’s name

Adam Dixon

Cole McLaughlin

Dirke Johnson

John Karraker

John Mansfield

Jonathan Pennington

Keith Johnson

Doug Holm

What feedback would you offer your coach? (things you liked, things to improve, etc.)

As a result of this course, I feel more confident that I can understand God’s Word.

0 1 2 3 4 5 (0 = not at all; 5 = definitely)

This class introduced me to tools that will help me better understand and apply Scripture.

0 1 2 3 4 5 (0 = not at all; 5 = definitely)

As a result of this course, I have a better understanding of the story-line of the Bible.

0 1 2 3 4 5 (0 = not at all; 5 = definitely)

This course gave me a greater understanding OT narrative, gospel, parables, poetry and prophets.

0 1 2 3 4 5 (0 = not at all; 5 = definitely)

As a result of this class, I feel better equipped to discover the fallen condition and redemptive solution in a passage.

0 1 2 3 4 5 (0 = not at all; 5 = definitely)

As a result of this course, I am more aware of my brokenness and rebellion.

0 1 2 3 4 5 (0 = not at all; 5 = definitely)

This class pointed my heart to Christ and the good news of the gospel.

0 1 2 3 4 5 (0 = not at all; 5 = definitely)

As a result of this class, I feel better equipped for future ministry.

0 1 2 3 4 5 (0 = not at all; 5 = definitely)

If you were telling friends about what you *liked* about the class, what would you tell them?

If you could change one thing about this class (reading, assignments, lectures, workshops), what would it be?

In what specific ways have you benefited from the class?

Any other comments or suggestions?

1. This chart is adapted from Oletta Wald, *The Joy of Discovery in Bible Study*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975), 18-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ryken, Leland, *How to Read the Bible as Literature* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984], p. 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Jermias, Jeachim, *Rediscovering the Parables* [New York: Scribner, 1966], p. 181 as cited by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stewart in *How to Read the Bible for All it’s Worth* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003], p. 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Blomberg, C. *Interpreting the parables* (46) [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 1990] p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
6. Blomberg, p. 43. The author cites a Ph.D. dissertation by Hans-Josef Klauck. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. J.I. Packer says the following about this doctrine: “Illumination is not a giving of new revelation, but a work within us that enables us to grasp and to love the revelation that is there before us in the biblical text as heard and read, and as explained by teachers and writers. Sin in our mental and moral system clouds our minds and wills so that we miss and resist the force of Scripture. God seems to us remote to the point of unreality, and in the face of God’s truth we are dull and apathetic. The Spirit, however, opens and unveils our minds and attunes our hearts so that we understand (Eph. 1:17-18; 3:18-19; 2 Cor. 3:14-16; 4:6). As by inspiration he provided Scripture truth for us, so now by illumination he interprets it to us. Illumination is thus the applying of God’s reveled truth to our hearts, so that we grasp as reality for ourselves what the sacred text sets forth.” J.I. Packer. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. **Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), p.50.** [↑](#footnote-ref-7)