

Grasping God's Word

Part 2: Weeks 7–12



Grasping God's Word

Week 7: Letters (Epistles)

I. INTRO

A. BASIC INFO ABOUT BIBLICAL LETTERS

1. Genre: **Epistle**
2. Author: (Paul/John/Peter/etc.)
3. Audience: Usually a Christian community/person
4. Specific Christian Communities

I. INTRO

B. DISTINCTION BETWEEN PAULINE AND CATHOLIC EPISTLES

1. Paul
 - a. Romans
 - b. 1 Corinthians
 - c. 2 Corinthians
 - d. Galatians
 - e. Ephesians
 - f. Philippians
 - g. Colossians
 - h. 1st Thessalonians
 - i. 2nd Thessalonians
 - j. 1st Timothy
 - k. 2nd Timothy
 - l. Titus
 - m. Philemon

I. INTRO

B. DISTINCTION BETWEEN PAULINE AND CATHOLIC EPISTLES

2. catholic (universal)
 - a. Hebrews
 - b. James
 - c. Peter's epistles
 - d. Jude
 - e. John's epistles

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF NT LETTERS

A. AUTHORITATIVE SUBSTITUTES FOR PERSONAL PRESENCE

1. A substitute
 - a. A personal document
2. Authority in the name
 - a. The authors write as apostles

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF NT LETTERS

B. OTHER PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE LETTER

1. Co-writers
 - a. 2 Cor 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia:
2. Scribes
 - a. Rom 16:22 I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.
3. Carrier (expositors)
 - a. Rom 16:1-2 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, 2 that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.
4. Readers
 - a. Sometimes the carrier
 - b. Sometimes a professional reader

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF NT LETTERS

C. SITUATIONAL

1. NT Letters are situational/occasional
 - a. Address a specific situation
 - b. Correct a doctrinal issue/confront behavior

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF NT LETTERS

B. SITUATIONAL

2. Not exhaustive dictionaries of Christian doctrine
 - a. Letters deal with theology, but aren't written to expound it
 - b. Don't conclude too much from one letter
 - i. Occasional letters = Reconstruct the situation
 - ii. One end of the phone conversation
 - iii. Study the original situation
 - iv. it's not a systematic theology text

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF NT LETTERS

B. SITUATIONAL

2. Not exhaustive dictionaries of Christian doctrine
 - c. Paul moves the paradigm to create emphasis/prove a point

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF NT LETTERS

B. SITUATIONAL

2. Not exhaustive dictionaries of Christian doctrine
 - i. Galatians = law is bad (3:10-13) For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." 11Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." 12But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." 13Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF NT LETTERS

B. SITUATIONAL

2. Not exhaustive dictionaries of Christian doctrine
 - ii. Romans = law is good (7:7-12) What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law, sin lies dead. 9I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. 10The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

III. THE FORM OF THE NT LETTERS

A. MODERN LETTER STRUCTURE

1. Letter Opening
2. Body
3. Letter Closing

III. THE FORM OF THE NT LETTERS

B. ANCIENT LETTER STRUCTURE

1. **Letter Opening**
 - a. Standard: X to Y, greetings
 - b. Thanksgiving period
2. **Body**
 - a. The purpose of the letter
3. **Letter Closing**
 - a. Greetings
 - b. Blessing/doxology

III. THE FORM OF THE NT LETTERS

C. MAKING A POINT

1. Normal Structure to make your point clearly
2. Changing Structure
 - a. Skip/extend a greeting
 - b. Skip/extend a thanksgiving
3. Expanding Structure
 - a. Add extra words/titles
 - i. Perception [shows how a recipient wants to be perceived]

III. THE FORM OF THE NT LETTERS

D. PAULINE LETTER OPENINGS

1. Greetings:
 - a. "grace and peace"
 - i. Grace (charis): goodwill toward men expressed in the saving work of Christ
 - ii. Peace (shalom/irene): is the state of life - peace with God and peace with one another (Eph 2:14-18) [Peace in secular Greek indicated the antithesis to war]

HOMEWORK

Week 7: Letters

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

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

JIGW Reading: Chapter 9

Bible Reading: Romans

Phil 1:1-11 To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Col 1:1-14 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit....

Gal 1:1-5 Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2 and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

IV. HOW TO INTERPRET NT LETTERS

A. WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN TO THE BIBLICAL AUDIENCE?

1. Read in one sitting
 - a. Don't be distracted by chapters/verses
 - b. Look at the big picture
2. Remember they are situational letters
 - a. Reconstruct the situation [one end of the phone conversation]
 - b. Historical-Cultural issues become more complex
 - i. Eating food offered to idols (1 Cor 8:4)

IV. HOW TO INTERPRET NT LETTERS

B. IS THE COMMAND/PRINCIPLE PRESCRIPTIVE OR DESCRIPTIVE?

1. If it's Prescriptive
 - a. Do it in the closest way possible (paying attention to any cultural differences)
2. If it's Descriptive
 - a. How is it consistent with the rest of Scripture?
 - b. Find the best way to adapt the principle to your situation
3. If it's unclear
 - a. Seek out the best possible interpretation (survey various scholars)
 - b. Pray and be open to truth
 - c. Be charitable to others who may come to a different conclusion



Grasping God's Word

Week 8: Gospels

I. WHAT ARE THE GOSPELS?

A. EUANGELION

1. Political/Military background
 - a. Mark 1:1
 - i. Caesar Augustus

I. WHAT ARE THE GOSPELS?

A. EUANGELION

2. OT background

- a. Gen 3:15; Isa 40—55
- b. Ps 67:12; Is 60:6

I. WHAT ARE THE GOSPELS?

A. EUANGELION

3. Kingdom of God

- a. The Gospels present the establishment of the Kingdom of God
- b. Mt. 12:28; 19:24; Mk. 1:15; 10:14-25; Lk. 4:43; 8:1-10; Jn. 3:3-5
- c. *Context* of the gospel

I. WHAT ARE THE GOSPELS?

A. EUANGELION

4. Different emphasis

- a. **Mark**: God's Kingdom has arrived, so repent, believe, and join
- b. **Matthew**: Jesus is the greater Moses who fulfills the OT story; the Kingdom is established through his life/death
- c. **Luke**: God's royal servant (Isaiah) who brings God's light to the nations; the Kingdom is the fulfillment of the law/prophets
- d. **John**: Jesus is Yahweh who has stepped into his own creation; One becomes a member of the Kingdom by believing

I. WHAT ARE THE GOSPELS?

B. PARALLELS IN THE GOSPELS

1. Synoptic Gospels

- a. "With the same eyes/viewpoint" (synopsis)
- b. The similar gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke
 - i. John
- c. Harmony of the Gospels

HOMEWORK

Week 8: Gospels

Assignment: Watch videos on www.TheologyClass.org/GGW20

Read the following accounts about the betrayal of Jesus

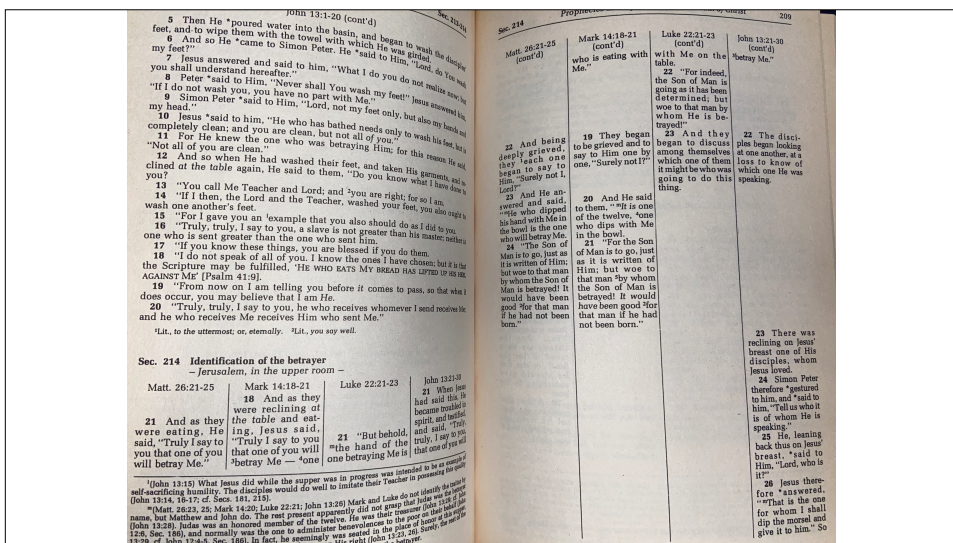
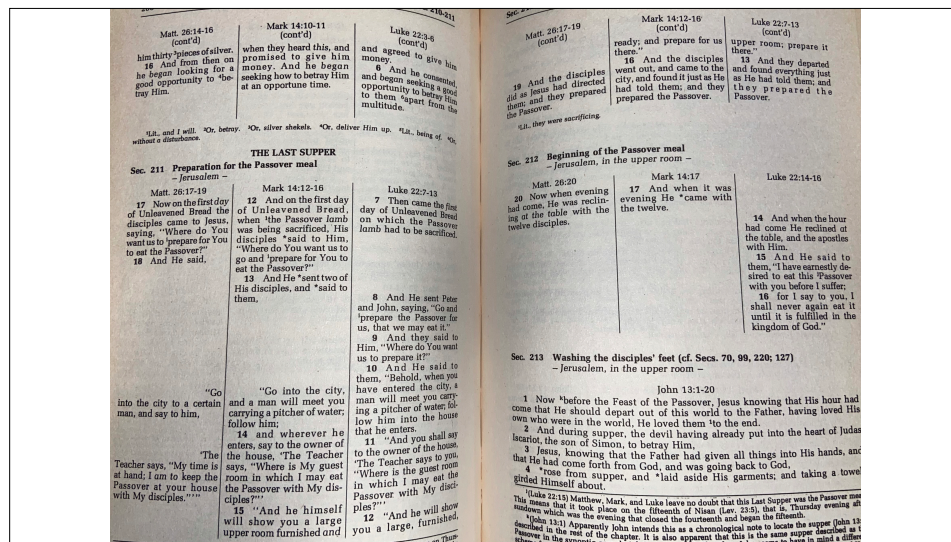
§ Matt. 26:17-25 § Mark 14:17-21 § Luke 22:1-23 § John 13:21-30

What info do the different accounts provide to help tell the story?

Is any of the accounts drastically different?

JIGW Reading: Chapter 10

Bible Reading: Mark



I. WHAT ARE THE GOSPELS?

B. PARALLELS IN THE GOSPELS

2. Authors arrange the stories to best communicate to their audience

a. paraphrase, summarize, expand, explain/assume Jewish terms

b. The goal = tell the Jesus story in a faithful, relevant, persuasive way

i. Kingdom of God/Heaven

ii. Genealogy in Matthew 1

I. WHAT ARE THE GOSPELS?

C. THE GOSPELS ARE “BIOGRAPHIES”

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

II. HOW SHOULD WE READ THE GOSPELS?

A. TREES/FORREST

1. What does this small story tell us about Jesus?
2. The flow:
 - a. Each pericope
 - b. What is the author trying to communicate to his readers by the way he connects these stories together?

III. SPECIAL LITERARY FORMS IN THE GOSPELS

A. EXAGGERATION

1. Exaggeration/hyperbole
 - a. Occurs when a truth is overstated for the sake of effect
 - b. This makes a literal fulfillment impossible/ridiculous
 - i. “To interpret exaggeration literally is to miss the point”
 - c. Matt 5:29-30 *If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.*

III. SPECIAL LITERARY FORMS IN THE GOSPELS

B. COMPARISONS

1. Metaphors: comparison is implicit
 - a. John 15:5 “I am the vine, you are the branches”
2. Simile: comparison is explicit
 - a. Lk 22:44: “And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

III. SPECIAL LITERARY FORMS IN THE GOSPELS

C. PARABLES

1. What is a parable?
 - a. Something cast beside something else (an illustration for comparison)
2. The Kingdom of God
 - a. The KOG stands at the center of the story
 - b. Connecting Jesus to the OT anticipation of God's Kingdom

III. SPECIAL LITERARY FORMS IN THE GOSPELS

C. PARABLES

3. Parables are best understood in light of these features:
 - a. 1st century Palestine
 - i. Including shame/honor, Rome, etc.
 - b. Parables have a surprise element
 - i. Prodigal son...
 - ii. Matt 20:1-16 it is surprising that all are paid equal
 - iii. Luke 18:9-14 Parable of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee; for 1st c Jews the Pharisees were admired as godly (not as hypocrites); and tax collectors were dishonest and traitors; thus, the outcome of the parable was shocking

III. SPECIAL LITERARY FORMS IN THE GOSPELS

C. PARABLES

4. The details
 - a. Not an allegory
 - i. Other details are to enhance the story
 - b. Look for the main point of the parable

IV. GOSPEL TAKEAWAYS

A. ASK YOURSELF

1. How the Kingdom of God fits within each chapter?
2. If you're identifying with Jesus/disciples, or the Religious Leaders in each story?



Grasping God's Word

Week 9: Acts

I. WHAT KIND OF BOOK IS ACTS?

A. A STORY

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

I. WHAT KIND OF BOOK IS ACTS?

B. ACTS IS THEOLOGICAL HISTORY

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

II. PURPOSE/THEMES OF ACTS

A. DISCIPLESHIP

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

II. PURPOSE/THEMES OF ACTS

B. THE RESURRECTION

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

II. PURPOSE/THEMES OF ACTS

C. THE CHURCH

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

II. PURPOSE/THEMES OF ACTS

D. GENTILES

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



Grasping
God's
Word

Week 9: the OT

III. NARRATIVES

A. SPEEDING UP/SLOWING DOWN

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

IV. OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

A. TIMEFRAME

1. The writings of the Bible span a time of over 2000 years
 - a. The writings themselves: 1400's BCE – 95 CE
 - b. The stories themselves: 2100's BCE – 95 CE

IV. OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

B. THE BOOK

1. "Old Testament"
 - a. Hebrew Scriptures/Jewish Bible
2. Genre:
 - a. Law, Narrative, Poetry, Prophecy, Apocalyptic, Wisdom, etc.

IV. OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

C. CATEGORIES/IDENTIFICATION

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

IV. OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

D. TORAH (PENTATEUCH) (LAW)

- a. Genesis
- b. Exodus
- c. Leviticus
- d. Numbers
- e. Deuteronomy

IV. OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

E. NEVI'IM (PROPHETS)

1. Narrative Books: Entry into the Promise Land to the Babylonian Exile)
 - a. Joshua
 - b. Judges
 - c. Samuel (I & II)
 - d. Kings (I & II)
2. Oracular Books
 - a. Isaiah
 - b. Jeremiah
 - c. Ezekiel

IV. OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

E. NEVI'IM (PROPHETS)

3. the Book of the Twelve
 - a. Hosea
 - b. Joel
 - c. Amos
 - d. Obadiah
 - e. Jonah
 - f. Micah
 - g. Nahum
 - h. Habakkuk
 - i. Zephaniah
 - j. Haggai
 - k. Zechariah
 - i. Malachi

IV. OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

F. KETUVIM (WRITINGS)

1. Lyrical/Wisdom Books
 - a. Psalms
 - b. Job
 - c. Proverbs
 - d. Ruth
 - e. Song of Songs
 - f. Ecclesiastes
 - g. Lamentations
2. Narrative books: period of exile to the return
 - a. Esther
 - b. Daniel
 - c. Ezra-Nehemiah
 - d. Chronicles (I & II)

V. OTHER BOOKS

A. SEPTUAGINT

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

V. OTHER BOOKS

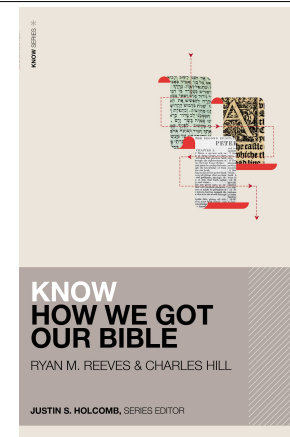
B. APOCRYPHA

1. Collection of important books, telling the history of the Jewish people between the 3rd cent BCE and 1st cent CE.
 - a. Considered “deuterocanonical” by RCC & Greek Churches
 - b. e.g., 1 & 2 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon
2. Produced in Palestine, Alexandria (Egypt), Antioch (Syria), in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic
 - a. Purpose:
 - i. Encourage the Jewish people to remain faithful to Torah
 - ii. To persevere through times of persecution

V. OTHER BOOKS

C. DEAD SEA SCROLLS

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



Grasping God's Word

Week 10: Law



HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

I. WHAT IS THE TORAH?

A. Torah

1. Law/instruction

B. Moses' writings

1. Pentateuch (the 5 books)
2. Gen—Deut

C. Mosaic Law (10 Commandments)

1. Ex 20

II. CREATION & THE ANE

A. HOW TO APPROACH THE OT?

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

II. CREATION & THE ANE

B. GENESIS

1. Moses instructing the Hebrews
 - a. Israel during the Exodus
 - b. 400+ years in polytheistic captivity
- i. Sun god (Ra)
- ii. Moon god (Iah)
- iii. Earth god (Geb)
- iv. Sky/Sun (etc) (Hathor)
- v. The formless, watery disorder from which the world emerged at creation (Nu)
- vi. A creator deity (Ptah)
- vii. Star gods (Sopdet)
- viii. Mediterranean sea/Nile Delta (Wad-jer)
- ix. (Multiple animal gods)

II. CREATION & THE ANE

B. GENESIS

2. Correcting theology
 - a. 1:6 The formless, watery disorder from which the world emerged at creation (Nu)
 - b. 1:20 Animal/Bird gods
 - c. 1:16 Sun god (Ra); Moon god (Iah)
 - d. Moses is teaching theology

II. CREATION & THE ANE

C. HOW TO INTERPRET GEN 1 & 2?

1. Original audience
2. How was God instructing them?
3. Remember, it was written to/for the Hebrews; we get to benefit

III. LAW

A. UNDERSTANDING LAW

1. Our difficulty...

III. LAW

B. HOW NOT TO READ/UNDERSTAND THE LAW

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

III. LAW

B. HOW NOT TO READ/UNDERSTAND THE LAW

2. Problems with this approach (tripartite)
 - a. Jews (ancient or modern) don't use this categorization
 - b. The Bible always speaks of the Law in a singularity (not plural)
 - c. To break a ceremonial law is to break a moral law

III. LAW

C. HOW WE SHOULD READ THE LAW

1. The 10 Commandments = the covenant/law Yahweh made with Israel

Ex 24:12 The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction."

Deut 4:13 And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone.

2. Everything else is "Case Law"

III. LAW

D. DOES THE LAW APPLY TODAY?

1. Yes, the 10 Commands are all relevant today!

III. LAW

D. DOES THE LAW APPLY TODAY?

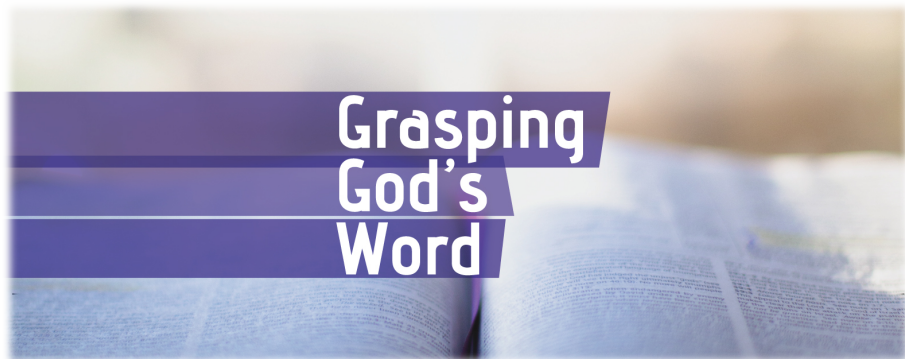
2. The Law is not the covenant-law for the NT people of God (we are not UNDER the Law)

- a. It applies as *prophecy* and *wisdom*
- b. It shows what it looks like to love God and others
- c. Love is the center of the Torah
 - i. **Lev 19:17-18** “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.
 - ii. **Deut 6:5** You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might

III. LAW

3. Jesus fulfilled the Law

- a. Therefore, we can too!
- b. **Matt 5:17-19** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven
 - i. Jer 31:31-34
 - ii. God has written His Law on our hearts
 - iii. Because Jesus has fulfilled the Law, we too can follow Him and fulfill the Law, by loving God and neighbor



Week 10: Wisdom

IV. WISDOM LITERATURE

A. THE GENRE

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

V. PROVERBS

A. PRACTICAL WISDOM

1. Short, pithy statements that teach
 - a. Usually have a parallelistic structure
2. Not taken as unbending rules
 - a. 26:4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself
 - b. 26:5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

V. PROVERBS

A. PRACTICAL WISDOM

3. Not legal guarantees from God (blessings as the result of righteousness)
 - a. Cf. Job
 - b. Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it
4. Language
 - a. Uses exaggeration/symbolism

V. PROVERBS

B. THE COLLECTION

1. Chs 1—9 need to be read as a collection
 - a. The theology is found in light of the entire story

V. PROVERBS

B. THE COLLECTION

1. Chs 1—9 need to be read as a collection
 - b. Folly vs. Wisdom
 - i. 1:2-7 To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, 3 to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; 4 to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth— 5 Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, 6 to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. 7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.
 - c. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge
 - i. Fear: reverence
 - ii. Comes from the root “yada”

V. PROVERBS

B. THE COLLECTION

2. Chs 10—29 are traditional proverbs
 - a. Two short lines of poetry expressing one general truth of wisdom
 - b. No specific order to these
 - c. Understanding historical-cultural context is important

WISDOM BOOKS

WATCH THE YOUTUBE VIDEOS FROM THE BIBLEPROJECT (FOUND ON THEOLOGYCLASS.ORG/GGW23)

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



Grasping God's Word

Week 11: Prophets

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing...10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

I. INTRO

A. THE CONTEXT OF JOHN 15:1-10

1. The Vine

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

I. INTRO

A. THE CONTEXT OF JOHN 15:1-10

2. Israel is the Vine/Vineyard

- a. Her job was to bring forth fruit
- b. Jesus the Messiah FULFILLS Israel's destiny as the true Vine of God

I. INTRO

A. THE CONTEXT OF JOHN 15:1-10

2. Israel is the Vine/Vineyard

- c. Faith in Jesus replaces keeping the Law as the decisive characteristic for membership among God's people

3. The NT is made up of OT Imagery

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

II. THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPHET

A. WHAT IS A PROPHET?

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

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

II. THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPHET

B. THE COVENANT DEFINES THE TERMS OF ISRAEL'S LIVING IN THE LAND

1. If Israel obeys the Torah they stay (blessed), if they disobey they leave (cursed)
2. Deut 27—32
 - a. 27:1-2 If/then (conditions to stay in the land)
 - b. Curses for disobedience 27:15-26; 28:15-68; Cursed be the man who...
 - c. Blessings for obedience 28:1-14
3. Israel did not stay faithful (broke Torah), was sent into Exile (cast out of the Land)
 - a. Northern Kingdom: 2 Kings 17:7-23 (720 BCE)
 - b. Southern Kingdom: Jeremiah 29:1-14 (597 BCE—539 BCE)
 - c. Understand Israel's history/context at the time of the prophets to understand their purpose

II. THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPHET

“The primary meaning of any text (from the Prophets), including apocalyptic texts must have been something the original readers would have been capable of understanding.” —Gordon Fee

III. COVENANT VIOLATIONS

A. IDOLATRY

1. Syncretism
 - a. Blending religions/worship

III. COVENANT VIOLATIONS

B. INJUSTICE

1. God is concerned with the weak, and how they are treated
 - a. Deuteronomy (Torah) demands Fair Treatment (Dt. 24:14)
 - b. Justice in court (Dt. 19:15-21)
 - c. Special care for the Orphans/Widows/Foreigners (Dt. 24:17-22)
2. Violation voids their Sacrifices to Yahweh (Jer 5:28-29)

III. COVENANT VIOLATIONS

C. RELIGIOUS RITUALISM INSTEAD OF AUTHENTIC DEVOTION

1. Rituals are good
 - a. Self-discipline & symbolism to worship
2. Don't make the ritual more important than the relationship
 - a. Legalism/bad religion
 - b. Hosea 6:6 "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."

IV. PREDICTIONS

A. HOPE FOR A GLORIOUS, FUTURE RESTORATION OF GOD'S KINGDOM

1. The Prophets proclaim, there will be a future:
 - a. Future exodus (Is 40:3)
 - b. New covenant (Jer 31:31-33)
 - c. New presence of the Spirit of Yahweh (Joel 2:28-29)
2. All the prophecies of Christ fall into this category
 - a. Obvious fulfillment
 - i. Virgin Birth; Messiah; Davidic King
 - b. Other fulfillment (Life, Death, & Resurrection)

IV. PREDICTIONS

B. FUTURE: NEAR AND FAR

1. What was future to the prophets/people, what is future to us now?
 - a. near view—far view problem

IV. PREDICTIONS

B. FUTURE: NEAR AND FAR

i. Joel 2:28-29 "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. 29 Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

ii. Acts 2:14-18 "...But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

IV. PREDICTIONS

B. FUTURE: NEAR AND FAR

2. Difficult, have humility and charity!
 - a. The goal of studying “prophecy”
 - i. Not to “unlock hidden meaning”

V. INTERPRETATION & APPLICATION

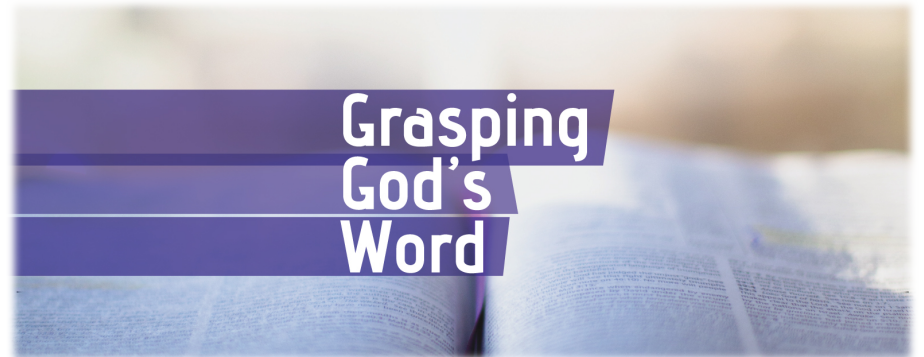
A. ALWAYS UNDERSTAND THE ORIGINAL HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT FIRST!

1. You also need to understand the theological context (story)
 - a. We’re not in the Old Covenant
 - b. We’re not a theocracy

V. INTERPRETATION & APPLICATION

B. HOW TO HEED THE PROPHETS' COMMAND?

1. Repent and return to Torah!
 - a. **Lev 19:17-18** You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. 18You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.
 - b. **Mt 22:34-40** But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” 37And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38This is the great and first commandment. 39And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.



Week 11: Poetry

“The poetry of the OT actually focuses on our emotional response to God as well as on our emotional response to those who are hostile to God and his people...they (art) appeal primarily to our emotions. They do not build complex grammatical arguments, but rather use images (like paintings) to convey their meanings. They paint colorful pictures with words to convey messages loaded with emotional impact.”

VI. POETRY

A. WIDE USAGE IN THE OT

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

VI. POETRY

B. POETRY & THEOLOGY

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

VI. POETRY

C. PSALM(S)

1. Plural: Psalms
2. Singular: Psalm

VI. POETRY

D. THEMES IN THE PSALMS

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

VII. THE ARTISTRY OF HEBREW POETRY

A. TERSENESS

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

VII. THE ARTISTRY OF HEBREW POETRY

B. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

1. Figures of speech are more effective, persuasive, impactful
 - a. Nursery stories as teaching lessons (not dictating from a behavior manual)
2. There is no end to the amount of figures of speech in Hebrew poetry
 - a. As a non-native reader, we need to work hard to recognize what is a FOS

VII. THE ARTISTRY OF HEBREW POETRY

B. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

3. Analogy: using two different things to make a point
 - a. Simile: like/as
 - i. 102:6 I am like a desert owl of the wilderness,
like an owl of the waste places;

VII. THE ARTISTRY OF HEBREW POETRY

B. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

- 3. Analogy: using two different things to make a point
 - b. Metaphor: an analogy between items without the use of like/as
 - i. 18:2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

VII. THE ARTISTRY OF HEBREW POETRY

B. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

- 3. Analogy: using two different things to make a point
 - c. Hyperbole: Conscious exaggeration for effect
 - i. 119:136 My eyes shed streams of tears,
because people do not keep your law.

VII. THE ARTISTRY OF HEBREW POETRY

B. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

- 3. Analogy: using two different things to make a point
 - d. Attributing attributes to different entities
 - i. Personification: attributing human features/characteristics to nonhuman entities
 - ii. 77:16 When the waters saw you, O God,
when the waters saw you, they were afraid;
indeed, the deep trembled.

VII. THE ARTISTRY OF HEBREW POETRY

B. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

- 3. Analogy: using two different things to make a point
 - d. Attributing attributes to different entities
 - iii. Anthropomorphism: representation of God with human features/characteristics
 - iv. 139:16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.

VII. THE ARTISTRY OF HEBREW POETRY

C. STRUCTURE

1. Parallelism

- a. The text is structured around lines of verse
 - i. Thoughts are usually expressed in 2 lines
- b. Synonymous parallelism
 - i. Both lines are similar
 - ii. Ps 69:7 For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach,
that dishonor has covered my face.

VII. THE ARTISTRY OF HEBREW POETRY

C. STRUCTURE

1. Parallelism

- c. Contrastive (antithetical)
 - i. The 2nd line contrasts/is opposite of the 1st
 - ii. Prov 15:20 A wise son makes a glad father,
but a foolish man despises his mother.

VII. THE ARTISTRY OF HEBREW POETRY

C. STRUCTURE

1. Parallelism

- d. Chiasm is said in opposite order
 - i. Gen 1:27
So God created man in his own image,

in the image of God he created him;

VII. THE ARTISTRY OF HEBREW POETRY

D. PROBLEM PSALMS

1. Imprecatory Psalms

- a. Psalms that are vigorous towards one's enemy
 - b. 5, 10, 17, 35, 58, 59, 69, 70, 79, 83, 109, 129, 137, 140
2. 137:9

VIII. JESUS AND THE PSALMS

A. READ THE PSALMS CHRISTOLOGICALLY

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

VIII. JESUS AND THE PSALMS

B. INTERPRETING THE PSALMS IN LIGHT OF JESUS (CHRISTOLOGICALLY)

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



Grasping
God's
Word

Week 12: Apocalypse



I. INTRO

Perspectives.....



I. INTRO

A. OVERVIEW

~Revelations~



I. INTRO

B. HISTORY OF APOCALYPSE

1. Not invented by John
 - a. In the OT
 - i. Dan 7—12; Ezek 40—48; Zech 1—6
 - b. In the NT (apocalyptic)
 - i. Mark 13 (cf. Luke 21; Matt 24—25)
 - (a) the “Little Apocalypse”
 - ii. 1 Thes 4:13—5:11; 2 Thes 2:1-2; 2 Pet 3:1-13

I. INTRO

B. HISTORY OF APOCALYPSE

1. Not invented by John
 - c. Non-canonical

And I saw one of those four who had come out first, how he took hold of that first star which had fallen from heaven, and bound it by its hands and its feet, and threw it into the abyss; and that abyss was narrow, and deep, and horrible and dark. 2 And one of them drew his sword and gave (it) to those elephants and camels and donkeys, and they began to strike on each other, and the whole earth shook because of them.

1 Enoch 88:1-2 (c. 300-100 BCE)
2. John is using a familiar Jewish literary tradition

I. INTRO

C. INTERPRETIVE PRESUPPOSITIONS

1. Futurist
 - a. It's a literal description of future events
 - i. Modern popular view
 - b. Events happen in the last 3.5 or 7 years before the return of Christ

I. INTRO

C. INTERPRETIVE PRESUPPOSITIONS

2. Idealist/Eclectic/Symbolic
 - a. These things happen from the resurrection of Jesus till the 2nd coming
 - i. They are always happening
 - ii. It's not chronological
 - iii. Revelation is more symbolic
 - b. Focuses on the theme/message, not using as a key/map to the future

II. INTERPRETIVE KEYS

A. JESUS

1. 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ

Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

- a. of = about/from

II. INTERPRETIVE KEYS

B. OT BACKGROUND/INFLUENCE

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

II. INTERPRETIVE KEYS

C. JOHN'S ORIGINAL AUDIENCE WAS EXPECTED TO OBEY

1. 1:3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

2. 22:7 And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

III. THE LITERARY GENRE(S) OF REVELATION

A. LETTER AND PROPHECY

1. Epistle (1:4-5; 22:21)

- a. Single letter to be circulated
- b. Epistolary structure of Revelation
 - i. Begins as a letter
 - ii. Ends with "Amen"
 - iii. Contains 7 letters (don't follow epistolary structure)

III. THE LITERARY GENRE(S) OF REVELATION

A. LETTER AND PROPHECY

2. Prophecy (1:3)

- a. Role of the prophet
 - i. Speak to their contemporaries
 - ii. Covenant enforcers
- b. The 7 epistles are largely prophetic

III. THE LITERARY GENRE(S) OF REVELATION

B. APOCALYPSE

1. 1:1 "The revelation of Jesus Christ"

- a. Revelation
 - i. Apocalypse = to reveal/unveil
 - ii. Unfamiliar modern way of telling stories

III. THE LITERARY GENRE(S) OF REVELATION

B. APOCALYPSE

2. Characteristics of Apocalypse
 - a. Encouragement to God's people during times of distress
 - b. Presented as divine revelation
 - i. Mediated from an "otherworldly" creature
 - ii. Angel/heavenly intermediary to a well-known figure
 - c. God will intervene in human history, overthrow evil empires, establish his kingdom
 - d. Use of images

III. THE LITERARY GENRE(S) OF REVELATION

C. LITERAL OR SYMBOLIC?

1. Rev 1:1 ... He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...
 - a. *semaino*
 - b. made it known (ESV, NIV, NRSV), communicated it (NASB), signified it (KJV, HCSB)
 - i. signify: communicate by symbols
 - ii. noun form is used in John to indicate Jesus' miracles
 - c. Dan 2:28 "A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this."
 - i. John used the same word (that described the symbolic nature of the Babylonian king's dream)
 - ii. This indicates that the entire book is expected to be understood symbolically

III. THE LITERARY GENRE(S) OF REVELATION

C. LITERAL OR SYMBOLIC?

1. Rev 1:1 ... He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...
 - d. Order of interpretation?
 - i. Symbolic then literal

III. THE LITERARY GENRE(S) OF REVELATION

D. APOCALYPSE & CHRONOLOGY

1. What's the timeline?
 - a. Presents future in the current
 - b. Chronology: major hermeneutic issue
2. E.g., Satan falls from heaven in the future tribulation? (12:8-9)
 - a. Luke 10:17-20

III. THE LITERARY GENRE(S) OF REVELATION

D. APOCALYPSE & CHRONOLOGY

Revelation 12:8-9

“but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

III. THE LITERARY GENRE(S) OF REVELATION

D. APOCALYPSE & CHRONOLOGY

Luke 10:17-20

(the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go...Whenever you enter a town and they receive you...9 Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you...’)17 The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” 18 And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. 20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

III. THE LITERARY GENRE(S) OF REVELATION

D. APOCALYPSE & CHRONOLOGY

2. E.g., Satan falls from heaven in the future tribulation? (12:8-9)

- a. Luke 10:17-20
- b. If Jesus is speaking of the same event, Revelation is not (entirely) future, and the book shouldn't be read sequentially
- c. Jewish writings aren't concerned with chronology (e.g., the Gospel accounts)

IV. THEMES OF REVELATION

A. WORSHIP

1. What is true worship?

- a. Ch 4—5 The One who sits on the throne, and the Lamb
- b. In the New Jerusalem 22:1-5

2. Warning against false worship

- a. False worship is tied to the *nations
- b. Rome in the ancient world

IV. THEMES OF REVELATION

B. OVERCOME (CONQUER/VICTORIOUS) = NIKAO

1. to win in the face of obstacles, be victor, conquer, overcome, prevail

a. As in battle

IV. THEMES OF REVELATION

B. OVERCOME (CONQUER/VICTORIOUS) = NIKAO

2. Jesus became King by overcoming

a. 5:5 And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

b. 12:11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

c. 17:14 They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.

IV. THEMES OF REVELATION

B. OVERCOME (CONQUER/VICTORIOUS) = NIKAO

3. The People of God imitate the King

a. 3:21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

b. 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:26-27; 3:5; 3:12; 21:7

IV. THEMES OF REVELATION

C. OT SYMBOLISM

1. Rev 10:8-11 (John is told to eat scroll)

a. Ezek 2:8-3:5

b. John is being commissioned to be a prophet, like Ezekiel

IV. THEMES OF REVELATION

C. OT SYMBOLISM

2. Seven-bowls of wrath (Exodus plague imagery)

a. Painful sores 16:2

i. Ex 9:9-11 It [handfuls of soot] shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.” 10So they took soot from the kiln and stood before Pharaoh. And Moses threw it in the air, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast. 11And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils came upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians

IV. THEMES OF REVELATION

C. OT SYMBOLISM

2. Seven-bowls of wrath (Exodus plague imagery)

b. Sea like blood 16:3

i. Ex 7:17-18 By this you shall know that I am the Lord: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. 18The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.

IV. THEMES OF REVELATION

C. OT SYMBOLISM

2. Seven-bowls of wrath (Exodus plague imagery)

c. Sun scorched people with fire 16:8

i. Ex 9:22-24

d. Darkness 16:10

i. Ex 10:21-22

e. Water dried up/3-unclean spirits, like frogs 16:12,13

i. Ex 14:21-22

ii. Ex 8:2-3

IV. THEMES OF REVELATION

C. OT SYMBOLISM

2. Seven-bowls of wrath (Exodus plague imagery)

f. Great hailstones 16:21

i. Ex 9:22

g. (also)

i. Judgment scene of Daniel 7 and Rev 20

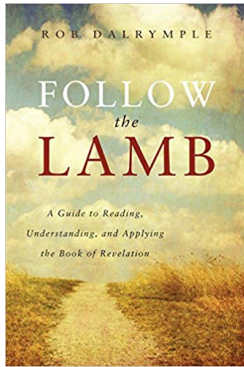
ii. Marking/sealing of Ezek 9 with Rev 7

iii. Doom of Babylon in Jer 50, 51 with Rev 17, 18

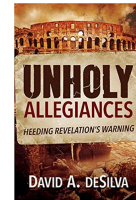
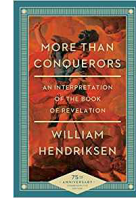
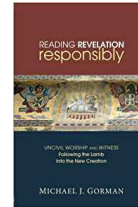
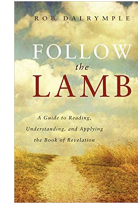
iv. Temple imagery and language throughout the Pentateuch

IV. THEMES OF REVELATION

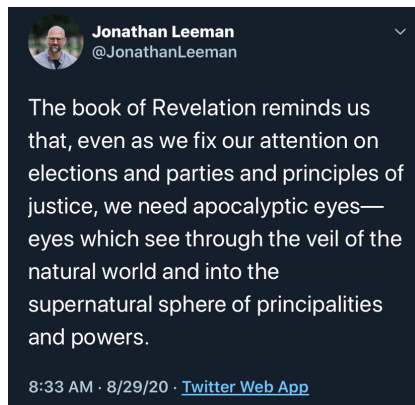
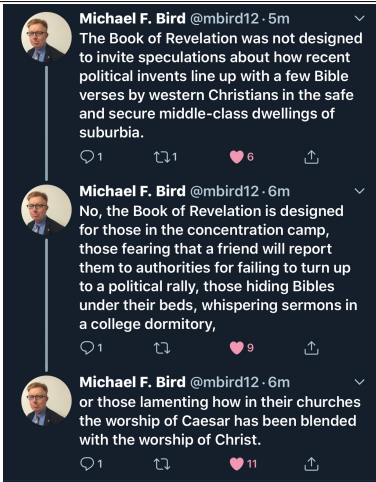
D. Numbers



RESOURCES



V. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?



V. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

A. CONCLUSION

1. John's reading the OT in light of Jesus, and telling the people of God what it means (and how to live it)
2. It's about Jesus, in light of his fulfillment of the OT, and it would have made sense to its first-century readers

V. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

B. JESUS IS LORD

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