



## **Summer 2023**

**When:** June 4 — July 30, 2023

**Time:** 10:30 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.

**Room:** 130

**Class Webpage:** [www.TheologyClass.org/GGWW23](http://www.TheologyClass.org/GGWW23)

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# Grasping God's Word Workshop—Week 1

## I. The Big Picture of Biblical Interpretation

### A. Process of interpretation

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

### B. The Three Horizons of studying the Bible

1. The *Textual* Context (Grammatical—Historical—Christ-Centered)
  - a. Grammatical
    - i. What do the words mean?
    - ii. This includes literary context (genres)
  - b. Historical
    - i. What is the historical context?
    - ii. What are the cultural/historical/etc. details that shed light on understanding?
2. The *Epochal* Context
  - a. Locating the story within God's unfolding plan
  - b. Christocentric: Where is Jesus in the text?
3. *Redemptive History*
  - a. Creation
  - b. Fall
  - c. Redemption
  - d. Restoration/Re-creation

### C. Key steps to interpretation

1. **Exegesis**
  - a. To pull out/discover the original meaning of the text
  - b. "What is the text?"
  - c. Original Context & History
  - d. Original Word meaning
2. **Eisegesis**
  - a. Reading a meaning INTO the text
  - b. Avoid this, be aware of why/how this happens

## II. Using Tools (Historical-Cultural Context)

### A. Bible Dictionaries

1. Have general articles about the Bible

### B. Old Testament and New Testament Introductions and Surveys

1. Supply detailed background information on each book of the Bible

### C. Commentaries

1. Up-to-date, detailed information about the historical-cultural context of the book that contains your passage
  - a. Know the background of the scholar you're reading
2. Historical-Cultural
  - a. Dealing with geography, politics, religion, economics, family life, social customs

## III. Observing the Big Picture

### A. *Inclusio*

1. (aka bracketing) creating a frame by placing similar material at the beginning and end of a section
  - a. Purpose: structural to alert the reader to a particularly important theme or to show how the material within the *inclusio* relates to itself.
2. Class example: Matthew 5:1-16

### B. Observations and *Inclusios* in Revelation

1. Observations
  - a. Rev 1:1
  - b. Rev 22:6
2. *Inclusio* 1
  - a. 1:3
  - b. 22:10
3. *Inclusio* 2
  - a. 1:3
  - b. 22:7

### C. Using tools (Bible Dictionary)

1. Blessings and Curses:

# Week 1 Passages

## Matthew 5

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Observations and Inclusions in Revelation

## **Observations**

**Rev 1:1** The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John

**Rev 22:6** And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

## **Inclusio 1**

**Rev 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.

**Rev 22:10** And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

## **Inclusio 2**

**Rev 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.

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

# Grasping God's Word Workshop—Week 6

## I. Sandwiching

- A. Breaking up a story by inserting a second, seemingly unrelated, story into the middle of it
  - 1. The author begins *Story A*, introduces *Story B*, then returns to and completes *Story A* ( $A^1-B-A^2$ )
- B. The purpose of the sandwich
  - 1. The B section (middle) is often the emphasis
    - a. The B section (middle story) nearly always provides the key to the theological purpose of the sandwich
  - 2. Popular sandwich motifs usually narrate *ideals* or *create a contrast* between the ways of God and the ways of humanity
    - a. The meaning of faith
    - b. Discipleship
    - c. Bearing witness
    - d. The Dangers of Apostasy
- C. Nine sandwiches of the Gospel of Mark
  - 1. 3:20-35
  - 2. 4:1-20
  - 3. 5:21-43
  - 4. 6:7-30
  - 5. 11:12-21
  - 6. 14:1-11
  - 7. 14:17-31
  - 8. 14:53-72
  - 9. 15:40-16:8

## II. Mark 5:21-43

### Study Questions

1. Identify the section verse divisions: **A**<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ **B** \_\_\_\_\_ **A**<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is happening in **A**<sup>1</sup> and **A**<sup>2</sup> that are similar?

3. What happens in **B** that interrupts us from the **A** sections?

4. What is the attribute/event/ethic/etc that forms the center of the sandwich?

5. Based on the sandwich, what's the key to the passage's interpretation?

### III. Mark 6:7-30

#### Study Questions

1. Identify the section verse divisions: **A**<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ **B** \_\_\_\_\_ **A**<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is happening in **A**<sup>1</sup> and **A**<sup>2</sup> that are similar?

3. What happens in **B** that interrupts us from the **A** sections?

4. What is the attribute/event/ethic/etc that forms the center of the sandwich?

5. Based on the sandwich, what's the key to the passage's interpretation?



#### IV. Mark 11:12-21

##### Study Questions

1. Identify the section verse divisions: **A**<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ **B** \_\_\_\_\_ **A**<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is happening in **A**<sup>1</sup> and **A**<sup>2</sup> that are similar?

3. What happens in **B** that interrupts us from the **A** sections?

4. What is the attribute/event/ethic/etc that forms the center of the sandwich?

5. Based on the sandwich, what's the key to the passage's interpretation?

# Grasping God's Word Workshop—Week 7

## Approaching Difficult Passages

### I. Our Posture Towards Difficult/Disputed Passages

- A. Determine if the passage can have different interpretations
  - 1. Is it a matter of orthodoxy?
  - 2. There's room for perspective/nuance
    - a. Learn if the passage has faithful Christians who hold to various interpretations
    - b. Evaluate your position and why you hold to it
- B. Exploring the different options
  - 1. Start with your tradition
  - 2. Explore the viable options that exist
    - a. What are the presuppositions behind the other conclusions?
    - b. Do the alternate perspectives use *sound* reasoning?
    - c. Articulate the other positions as best you can
    - d. Compare/contrast against your position
- C. Love, Charity, and Honesty
  - 1. Be loving
    - a. We love God because He first loved us
    - b. So we should engage His Word from a place of receiving love
    - c. His disciples are known by the love we have for one another
  - 2. Show charity when engaging other views
    - a. Don't strawman
    - b. Try to understand the best aspects of the other position
  - 3. Be intellectually honest with your position
    - a. Seek truth, not self-affirmation
    - b. Don't take the mindset of the apologist
    - c. Be humble enough to change your perspective to what is most faithful to Scripture
- D. Learn in community
  - 1. Avoid being a one-man-wolf pack

## II. 1 Timothy 3:8-12

### III. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16



# Grasping God's Word Workshop—Week 8

## Symbolism

### I. Understanding Symbolism

- A. What is symbolism and who defines what it means?
  - 1. Author's intent
    - a. Disposable Heroes
- B. Symbolism definition
  - 1. A *symbol* is an image that stands for something in addition to its literal meaning. It is more laden with meaning than simply the connotations of the straight image. In the overwhelming majority of cases, symbolism emerges as a shared language in a culture. In other words, it will be extremely rare that a biblical writer will create a symbol for a single occasion. (IVP Dictionary of Biblical Imagery)
  - 2. Symbolism is a literary device wherein words, people, markings, locations, or abstract ideas represent something beyond their literal meaning
- C. Why use symbolism in literature?
  - 1. Symbols allow for creativity (add visual elements to complex themes)
    - a. They describe a concept with a word picture instead of using words themselves
  - 2. Symbols help you show without telling
  - 3. Symbolism allows writers to express complex ideas while giving the reader a visual, sensory experience
    - a. Easy to understand (tangible, physical) experiences
- D. Terminology regarding symbolism
  - 1. Literal
    - a. Adherence to the exact letter or the literal sense (strict meaning)
    - b. Not figurative or metaphorical
  - 2. Allegorical
    - a. A story/picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning while using symbols
    - b. Galatians 4:21-26
  - 3. Spiritual
    - a. Usually a pejorative term to describe interpretative methods that are not “literal”

## II. Examples of Symbolism

### A. Figures of speech

1. Psalm 1

### B. Symbols embedded in a literal image: *Water*

1. Exodus 17:6
2. John 4:14

### C. Metaphor

1. Functions like symbolism

- a. A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable

2. 1 Cor 3:6

### D. Symbols rooted in cultural understanding

1. Horns: a symbol of might
2. Biblical examples
  - a. Deut 33:17
  - b. Rev 13:1
  - c. Dan 7

### E. The author reveals the symbols

1. Rev 1:9-16, 20
2. Rev 5:8

### F. The author doesn't reveal the symbols

1. 1 John 2
2. Gospel of John: Miracles as Signs
  - a. 2:1-11

## Grasping God's Word: Appendix—Resources

### Online Tools

- TheologyClass.org
- BiblicalTraining.org
- BiblicalELearning.org
- BibleStudyTools.com
- JustVerses.com

### Bible Software

- Accordance
- Logos

### Commentaries

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

### Dictionaries

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

### Misc. tools

- *“Intro to the New Testament: A Short Guide”* by Carson & Moo (Zondervan, 2010)
- *“Intro to the Old Testament: A Short Guide”* by Tremper Longman (Zondervan, 2012)
- *“The IVP Bible Background Commentary on the OT and the NT”* by Craig Keener (IVP Press, 2000)
- *“The ESV Study Bible”* (Crossway, 2008)
- *“The Essential Bible Companion”* (Zondervan, 2006)

### Christocentric Interpretation

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

### Biblical Theology

- *“Christ from Beginning to End: How the Full Story of Scripture Reveals the Full Glory of Christ”* by Trent Hunter & Stephen Wellum (Zondervan, 2018)
- *“Far as the Curse is Found”* by Michael Williams (P&R Publishing, 2005)
- *“The King in His Beauty”* by Thomas Schreiner (Baker, 2013)
- *“God Dwells Among Us”* by G.K. Beale (IVP Books, 2014)
- *“Understanding the New Testament and the End Times”* 2nd edition by Rob Dalrymple (Wipf, 2018)



## **Biblical Interpretation**

- *“How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth”* by Fee, Stuart, 4th edition (Zondervan, 2014)
- *“40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible”* by Robert Plummer (Kregel, 2010)
- *“Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible”* by E. Randolph Richards & Brandon J. O’Brien (IVP Books, 2012)
- *“Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels”* by Kenneth E. Baily (IVP Academic, 2008)
- *“How (Not) to Read the Bible: Making Sense of the Anti-women, Anti-science, Pro-violence, Pro-slavery and Other Crazy-Sounding Parts of Scripture”* by Dan Kimball (Zondervan, 2020)

## **Reading Revelation**

- *“Follow the Lamb”* by Rob Dalrymple (Weaver Books, 2018)
- *“Reading Revelation Responsibly”* by Michael Gorman (Cascade Books, 2011)
- *“The Theology of the Book of Revelation”* by Richard Bauckham (Cambridge University Press, 2012)
- *“More Than Conquerors”* by William Hendriksen (Baker Books, 2007)
- *“Unholy Allegiances: Heeding Revelation's Warning”* by David DaSilva (Henrickson Publishing, 2013)
- *“The Returning King: A Guide to the book of Revelation”* by Vern Poythress (P&R, 2000)