

Rightly Understanding the Meaning of Scripture

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A FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND

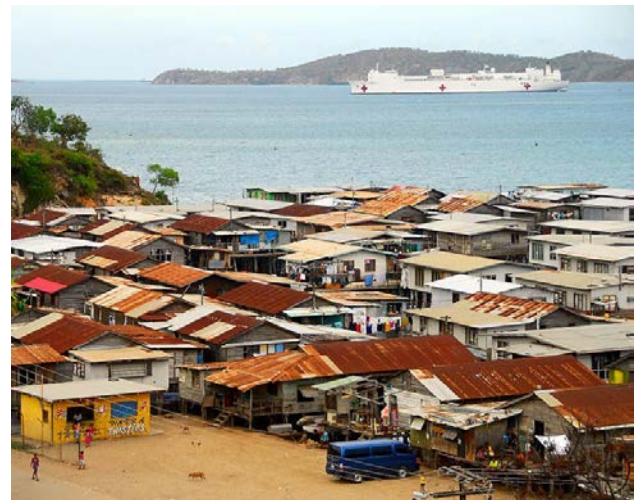
1. We don't spend enough time actually reading Scripture
2. Some parts are genuinely hard to understand

THE STUGGLE TO UNDERSTAND

- The time gap
- The culture gap
- The language gap

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
וְאַהֲבַת אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכָל | לִבְּךָ, וּבְכָל גַּפְּשֶׁךָ,
וּבְכָל מְאֹדֶךָ: וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר
אֲנֹכִי מֵצֵוְךָ הַיּוֹם, עַל | לִבְּךָ: וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבִנְיָד וְדִבְרַת
בָּם, בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ, וּבְלִכְתְּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ, וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ, וּבְקוּמְךָ:
וְקִשְׁרָתָם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ, וְהָיוּ לְמִטְפַּת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:
וְכִתְבָתָם עַל מְזוֹזֹת בֵּיתְךָ, וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

THE STRUGGLE TO UNDERSTAND



A FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND

1. We don't spend enough time actually reading Scripture
2. Some parts are genuinely hard to understand
3. We don't know how to properly understand

STEP 1

PREPARE YOUR HEART

- Submit your life and personal agendas to God
- Humility
- Confession
- Prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance

“When we come to the Bible, reason must acknowledge an authority superior to itself, and heart and intellect must bow to the great I AM. We shall advance in true spiritual knowledge only as we realize our own littleness and our entire dependence upon God; but all who come to the Bible with a teachable and prayerful spirit, to study its utterances as the word of God, will receive divine enlightenment.”

Ellen White 5T 704

STEP 2

IDENTIFY YOUR PREUNDERSTANDINGS

We all read the texts through a variety of lenses

We subconsciously bring ideas and understandings to the text based on:

Culture

Experience

Socioeconomic background

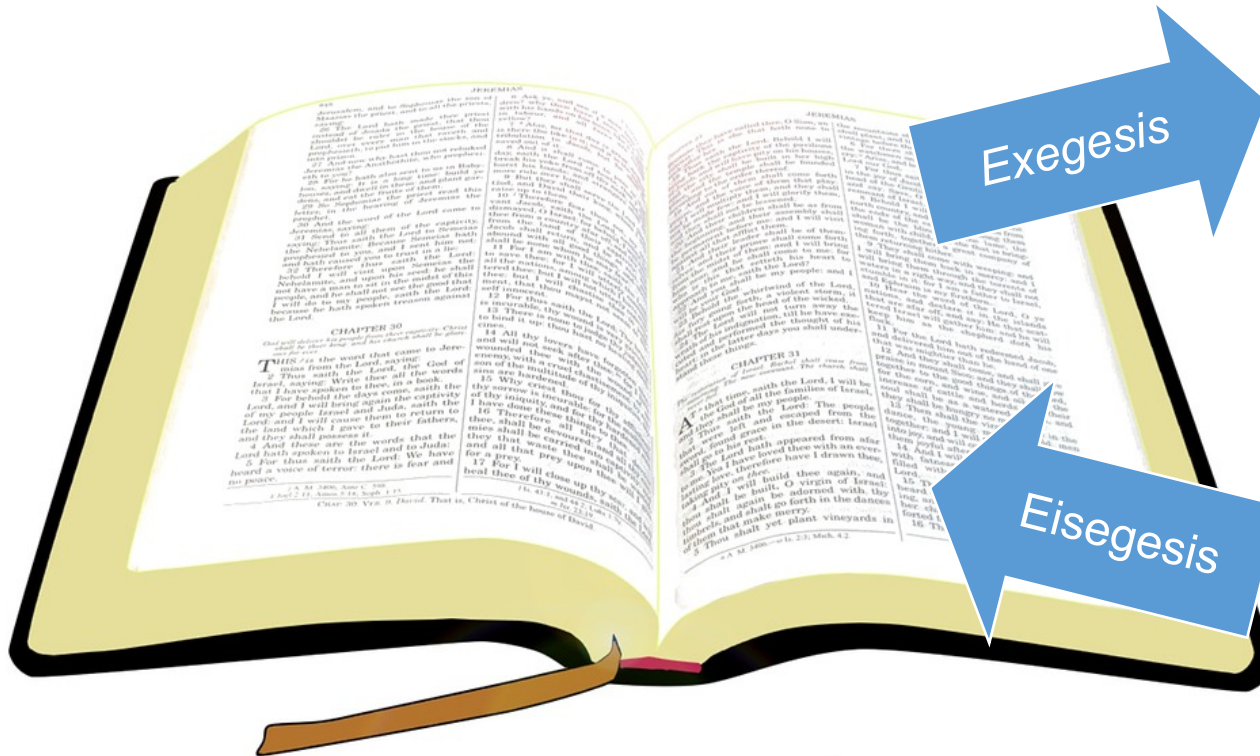
Family background and values

Previous exposure to the text

IMPACT OF PREUNDERSTANDINGS

1. We fill any gaps and ambiguities in the texts with explanations and background from our cultures.
2. They limit the possible understandings of the text that we are able to see.

EXEGESIS vs EISEGESIS



STEP 3

DISCOVER WHAT THE TEXT MEANT ORIGINALLY

Read and Reread

Observe key words, structure and grammar

Identify the Genre

Read in Context,

- Literary Context

- Historical Context

- Biblical Context

IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

PITCH

I could mean this:



But I might mean:

- A baseball pitch from the pitcher
- The musical pitch
- A sales pitch
- The pitch of a roof
- A type of resin
- The number of spaces per inch from a typewriter
- An adjective describing how dark it is

Language

Theatre



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STEP 4

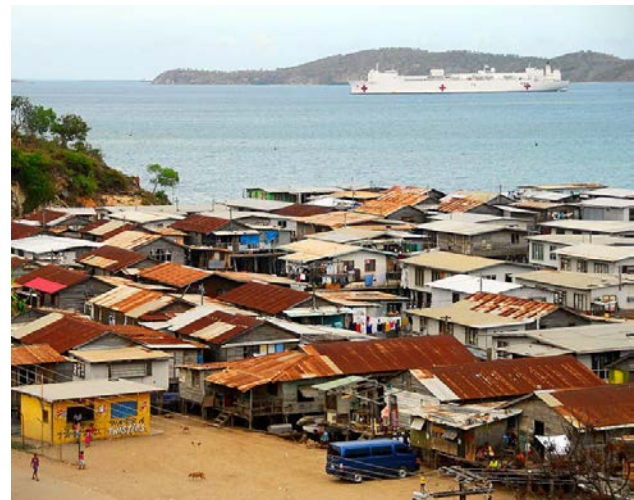
HOW DOES THIS FIT WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE

Scripture interprets Scripture

Our conclusions must be in harmony with the rest of
Scripture

STEP 5

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCE AND CONTEXT AND OURSELVES



JOSHUA 1:1-9 (NIV)

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ² "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ⁵ No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

⁷ “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

STEP 6

SUMMARIZE WHAT THE PASSAGE MIGHT MEAN TODAY

Use the similarities that you identified to write what the passage means today.

Joshua 1

“To be effective in serving God and successful in the task to which he has called us we should draw strength and courage from his presence. We must also be obedient to his word.” (Scott and Duvall, *Grasping God’s Word*, 48)

STEP 7

PERSONAL APPLICATION

