

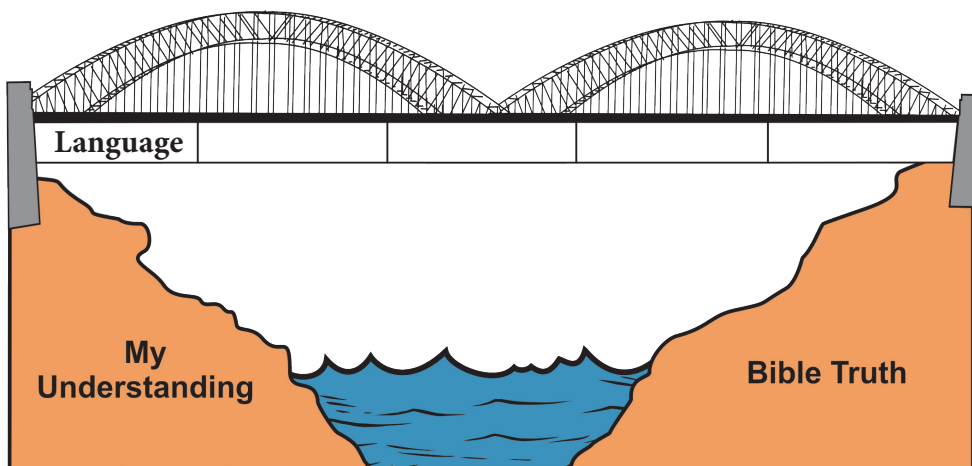
Interpretation in Bible Study, Part 2

Application in Bible Study

Lesson #4, May 20, 2018

I. PROBLEMS TO OVERCOME IN INTERPRETATION

Why do we need to interpret Scripture? Why can't we just open it, read it, and do what we are supposed to do? Why do we struggle sometimes with understanding the text? The answer to these questions is that we live in a different time and culture from the biblical writings. Time, culture, and distance have created gaps between the biblical writers and us which limits our understanding. We need to understand what these gaps are and effectively bridge them; they are not uncrossable.



A. The _____ Gap

1. Why it Exists

The King James Version was written in modern English for people living in England in AD 1611. The Bible was *not* originally written in English but rather is translated into English from the original (or host) languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

2. Examples of this gap

- a. *1 Corinthians 4:1 "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."*

- (1) Minister is not a high position like a Prime Minister.
- (2) 3rd level _____ slave—the bottom rower, under-rower

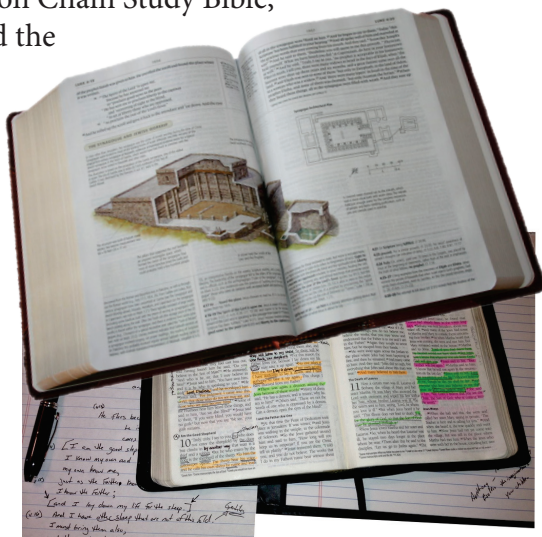
- b. *Philemon 1:7 "For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother."*

- (1) *Bowels* does not mean intestines.
- (2) To the Greeks *bowels* were considered the seat of the emotions. It would be synonymous with us referring to our *heart*.

3. Solution to the gap

Learning Hebrew and Greek is not the practical solution for many of us. We are blessed to have spiritual men and women skilled in linguistics who have devoted their lives to the study of the Scripture in its original languages, and we can reap the rewards of their diligence. Build your library with sound Bible study tools.

- a. A Study Bible—Defender's Study Bible, Ryrie Study Bible, Thompson Chain Study Bible, etc. I have used the Ryrie for many years and just having it rebound when the cover wears out. The notes are non-technical and helpful.



You will find notes that say things like, “The better manuscripts do not contain this phrase....” That is an opinion statement and not necessarily a statement of fact. Dr. Charles Ryrie was certainly entitled to his opinion as they are his notes.

- b. *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, by Spiros Zodhiates.
- c. *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*

B. The Culture Gap

1. Why is culture important?

The more insight you gain on the ancient cultures of the Bible the more insight you’ll have into what the text meant to the people of those cultures.

How does a jeweler display a diamond ring you are considering buying? Does he/she not display the ring on a backdrop of black velvet and under a light source? He wants the diamond to sparkle, and the backdrop helps. Culture is the _____ against which you see the text of the Bible.



2. Examples of biblical culture

- a. The bridegroom coming at midnight
- b. Eating meat offered to idols.

3. Solution to the gap

- a. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, by Alfred Edersheim

- b. *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Lands*, by Ralph Gower
- c. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, by G. W. Bromiley
- d. *Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Merrill Tenney

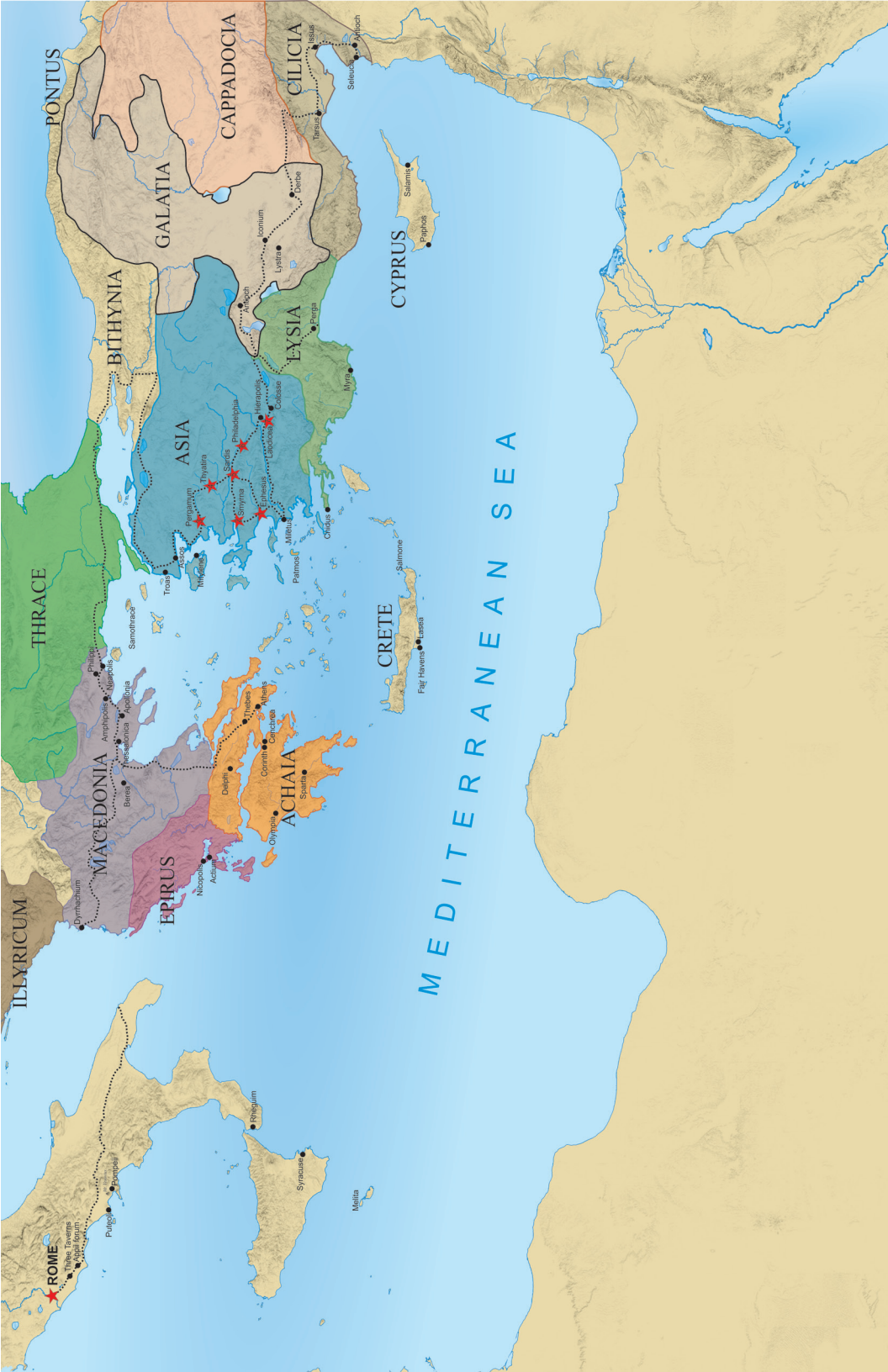
C. The History Gap

- 1. The history gap is related to the cultural gap since all culture exists in history. What is taking place in the world at this time? What were some of the social and political influences on the writer and on those to whom he was writing?
- 2. Example of historical information
 - a. Pontius Pilate's fear of the Jews and why he had an innocent man crucified
 - b. Queen Esther's husband, Xerxes
- 3. Solution to the Gap—Numerous history books and _____ content. See Culture Gap solutions.

D. The Geography Gap

Knowing the geography of the Bible better enables the student to _____ the events and movements of people of the Bible.

- 1. Value of a picture—"A picture is worth a _____ words."
- 2. Learn the Bible geographically by locating each biblical site on a map as you read the Bible—cities, rivers, mountains, bodies of water, nations, etc.
- 3. Solutions to the Gap
 - a. *Bakers Bible Atlas*, by Charles Pfeiffer
 - b. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
 - c. *Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*



E. The Literary Gap (Context Gap)

You must understand a text within its _____.

Understand the text from the bird's-eye view. Knowing the layout of a biblical book is important in understanding the argument of the book.

1. Discovering the context

Do these three things:

- a. Synopsis (see the whole). Observe the *big picture* of the book from a distance.
- b. Synthesis (see the parts). Observe the content of each part of the book. What does the author say in this paragraph? How does this content fit with the rest of the book?
- c. Synopsis (reassemble the *big picture*). Fit the text into the context. "A text without a context is a pretext."

2. Compare Scripture with _____.

3. Consult other Bible scholars.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "He who doesn't use another's mind has no mind of his own."

4. Solution to the Gap

- a. Observe, observe, observe
- b. Read, re-read, re-read
- c. Buy good commentaries and resource material.

To interpret the Bible means closing these gaps. As you interpret the meaning of Scripture by using the various sources, you will close the language, culture, history, geography, and literary gaps. You do not have to accomplish this all at once. Build your understanding over time—a little here and a little there. Over the course of your spiritual life you will add to your *spiritual reservoir* of Bible understanding.

II. APPLICATION IN BIBLE STUDY

The Application Step asks the question: “How does it _____?”

Why should I know these facts? How can I use this information?

What am I going to do with what I just learned?

- A. Receive the message by being open to God as he speaks through His Word. Pray, “open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” It is eagerly anticipating God’s direction, counsel, and personal communication to you.
- B. _____ on your life. This is putting the Bible truths and principles into a personal context.
 - 1. It is going beyond the historical and cultural context, the meaning of the words and text, and the theology of the passage.
 - 2. It is taking it personally and looking for application areas in your life.
 - 3. Here is a “reflective tool” to use, it is the acrostic SPECTACLES. Ask yourself:

Did God reveal to me any...

S = Sins to confess?

P = Promise to claim?

E = Example to follow?

C = Command to obey?

T = Truth to rejoice in?

A = A verse to memorize?

C = Challenge to face?

L = Lesson to learn about God?

E = Error to avoid?

S = Supplication to utter?

- C. If necessary, lay out a plan for _____. What should

you do right away? And what next? This is the action step.

1. "I don't seem to get anything out of the Bible." The problem is not that the Bible is not relevant. One has to cultivate the habit of applying the Bible.
2. Knowledge increases _____.
Luke 12:48 says, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
3. If we know the meaning of Scripture, we should respond to it. Knowledge without Experience = spiritual deadness. The Pharisees were a classic example of this. They knew the Scriptures, but they did not respond to them in a righteous way.
4. Experience without Knowledge = _____. We need more than emotions or feelings. We need truth that comes from reading the Bible.

CLOSE:

D. L. Moody said, "The Scriptures were not given for our information, but for our transformation." Is the Bible transforming your life? What significant difference is the Bible making in your daily life? Approach your Bible reading with a new zeal. Be purposeful in your reading. The results are worth your effort.