

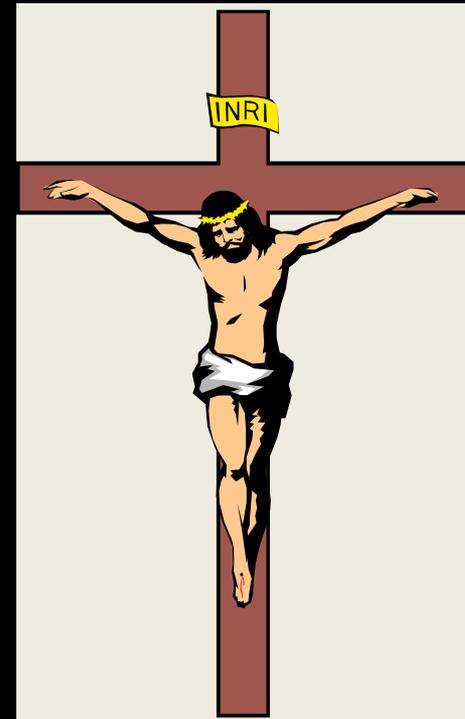
# Great appreciation for Mennonite Brethren heritage



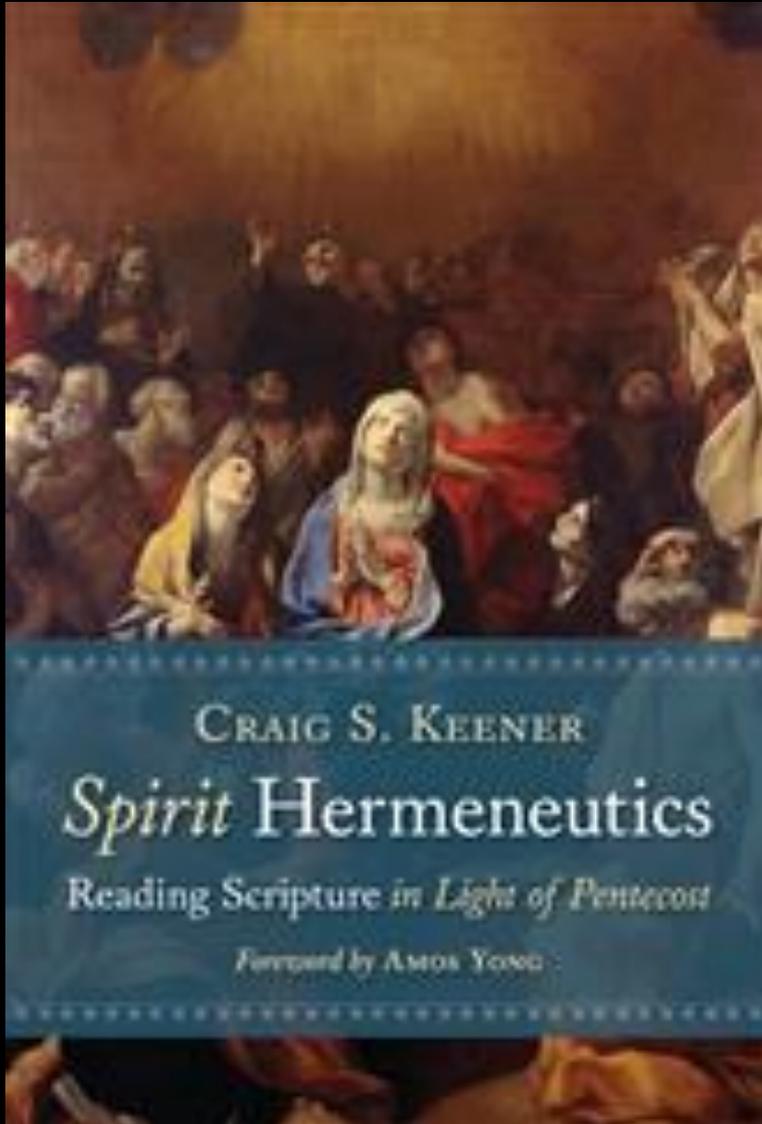
**Ron Sider was my closest colleague at Palmer**

# Anabaptist heritage of taking seriously Jesus's teaching

- Recognizing some hyperbole (except perhaps for Hutterites)
- But setting a living example for the rest of Christ's body on service for the poor
- Peace witness, etc.



# Spirit Hermeneutics



- My usual introductory hermeneutics course is about 40 hours
- Most of you are past the introductory level anyway
- So I will try to focus on the key points some of you have asked me to treat

# Especially the following:

- Why it's important to try to hear the original inspired communication before we recontextualize it
- Some concrete models (my views only, but to provide concrete illustrations)
  - E.g., Paul regarding women in ministry
  - Slavery (if there is time)
  - Paul regarding same-sex sexual relations
- How NT writers understood OT (examples esp. from Matthew)
- If there's time: Spirit hermeneutics

Dangers of neglecting the  
ancient/human dimension of  
Scripture

“whatever Scripture means to me”

Since no one will notice anyway,  
Pastor Cain takes advantage of rising  
biblical illiteracy by not spending  
much time on sermon preparation.



Matthew 29:4 and Romans 17:3 warn,  
*Thou shalt contribute to the building  
project ...*

No, the syllabus said "Due Date," NOT "DO Date"



I guess that means I can't date anymore ... ☹️

I have caught you now, Mr. Groggins!  
Looking at notes on your feet during the exam!



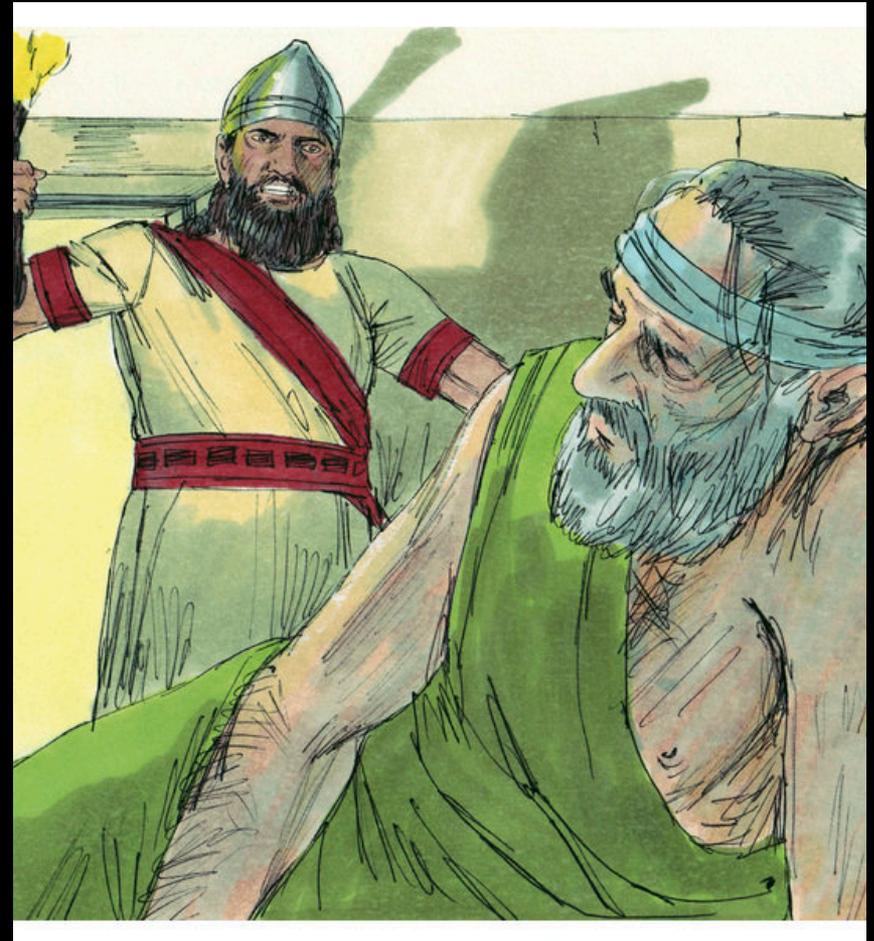
But Professor D'Arnot, you SAID we could use FOOTnotes!

# Hermeneutical agnosticism or nihilism is unhelpful

- Scripture can function as a canon—a measuring stick—only if we can *understand* it at least enough for it to guide our lives
- It also provides a shared foundation for discussing Christian ethics and faith only if believers across cultures and denominations can access its meaning sufficiently
- Some life-and-death misinterpretations (e.g., slavery or the Reich Church)

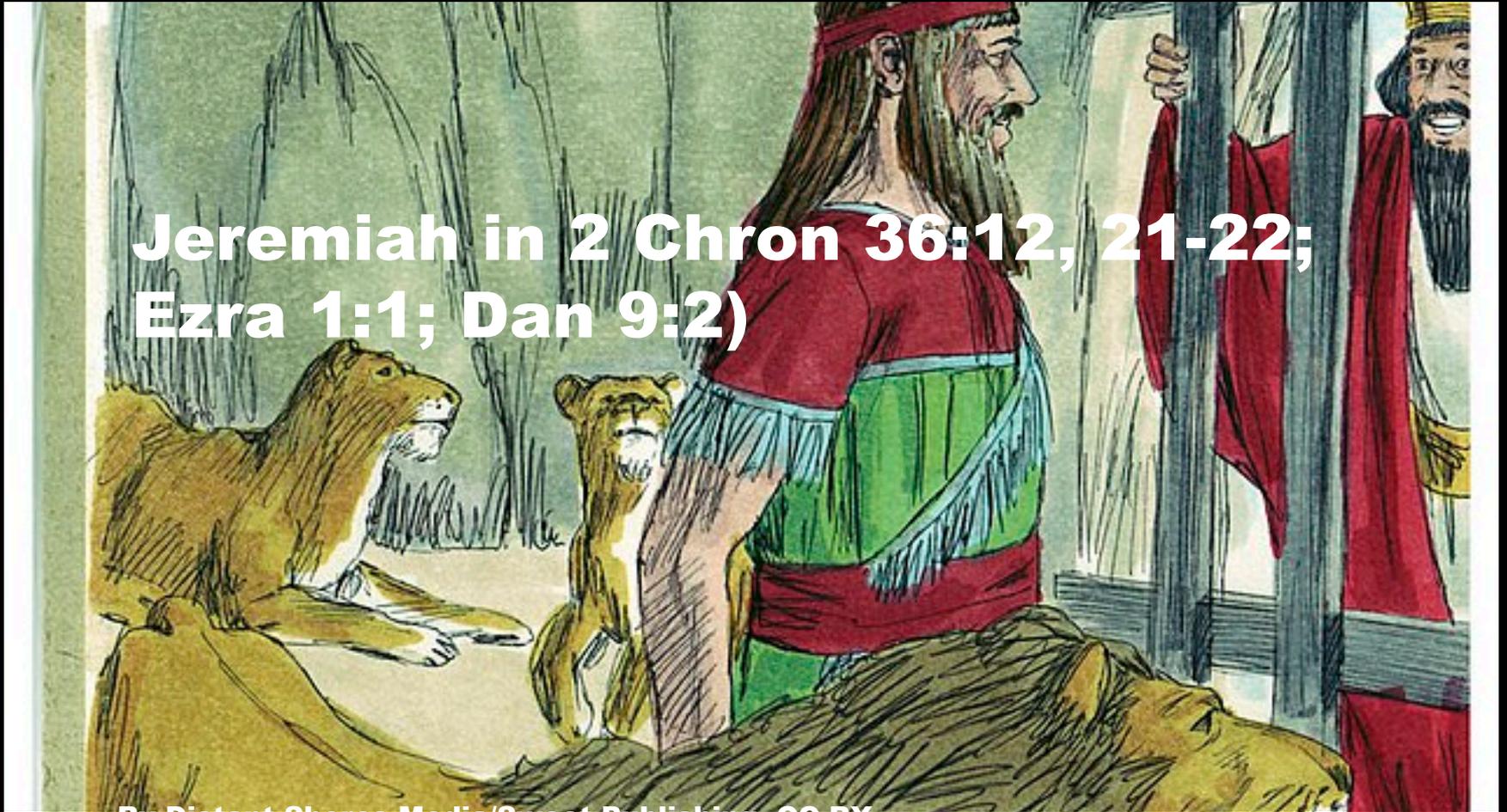
# Did ALL prophets understand Torah and Spirit EQUALLY rightly?

- Most prophets were prophesying peace when there was no peace (Jer 5:13, 31; 6:13; 14:13-15)  
Jeremiah had to call the community of his day back to God's message (Jer 6:19; 9:13; 16:11; 26:4; 32:23; 44:10, 23)



# Long-range testing

**Jeremiah in 2 Chron 36:12, 21-22;  
Ezra 1:1; Dan 9:2)**



By Distant Shores Media/Sweet Publishing, CC BY-SA 3.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=18884244>

# Personal hearing versus shared canon

- Our hearing remains subject to evaluation (1 Cor 14:29)
- “**Canon**” of Scripture already tested
- Scripture stands above and evaluates all other revelatory claims
- And certainly our culturally-informed moral intuitions



## 2 Timothy 3:16—4:3

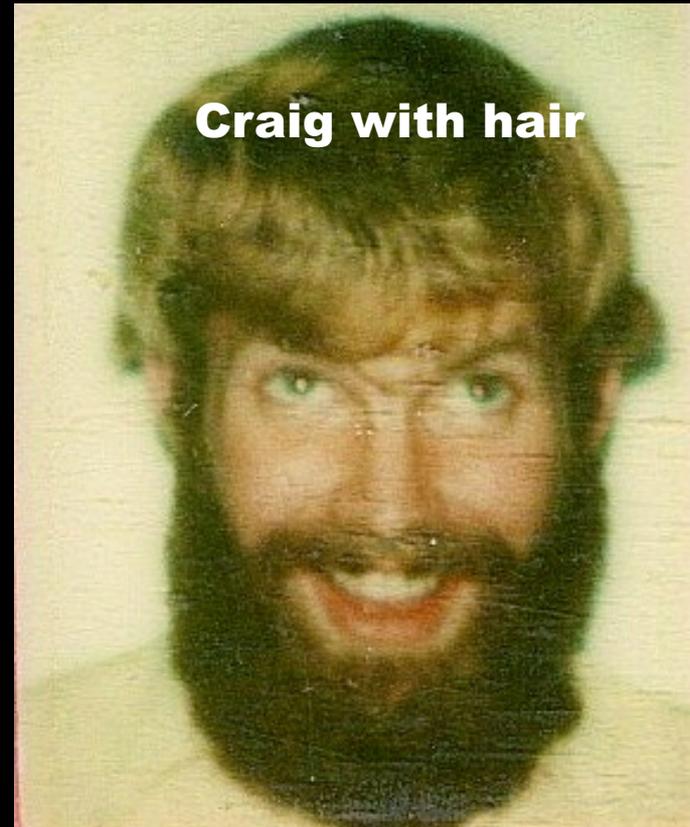
- All scripture is **inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness**, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. ... proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires,

# Ancient and modern contexts

- Translating ancient



- For modern



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<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4429585>

# Scripture: for then and for today



**Unless “today” is random, it ought to connect with the “then”**

# Respect for cultural setting of communications

- Respectful to LISTEN
- Important to hear messages in light of the cultural assumptions that inform them



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Courtesy: try to understand what someone is trying to communicate



# My wife with me



# Relevance theory

- Communications
- Assumptions that author/speaker shares with original hearer
- Not stated explicitly
- E.g., “9/11” or “Coffee, please”
- GAPS for secondary communication

# Shared cannon

- Original text
- With some gaps unstated because assumed
- Basis for recontextualizing

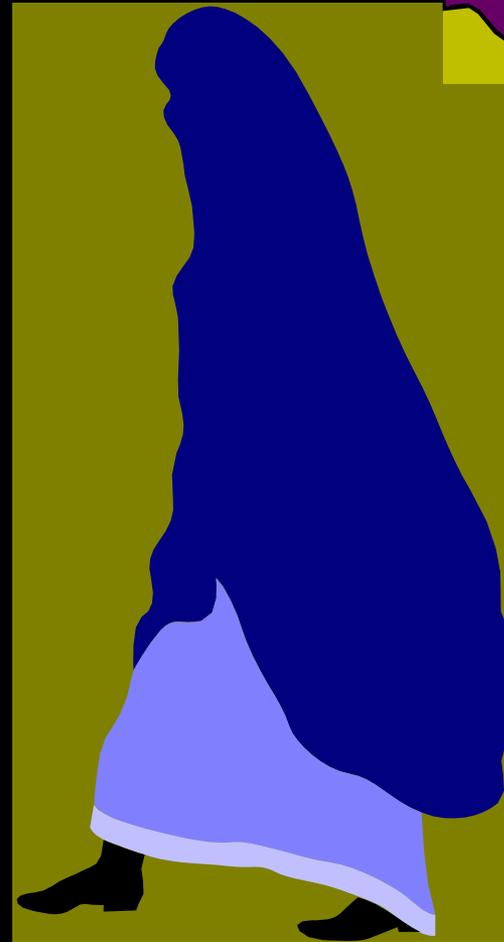


# Customs, assumptions left unexplained

- E.g., head coverings
- Holy kisses



**By Stefano Bolognini (his own work), via Wikimedia Commons**

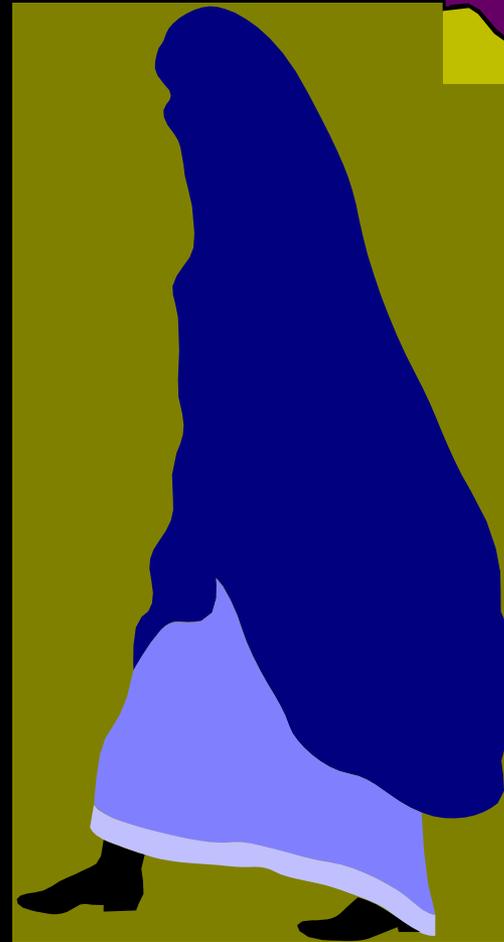


# Familial greetings, sexual modesty

- E.g., head coverings
- Holy kisses



**By Stefano Bolognini (his own work), via Wikimedia Commons**



What did baptism of outsiders  
communicate in a first-century  
Jewish setting?



Some passages that restricted women's ministry may reflect a particular social setting



# Corinth



# Set aside money for Jerusalem each week



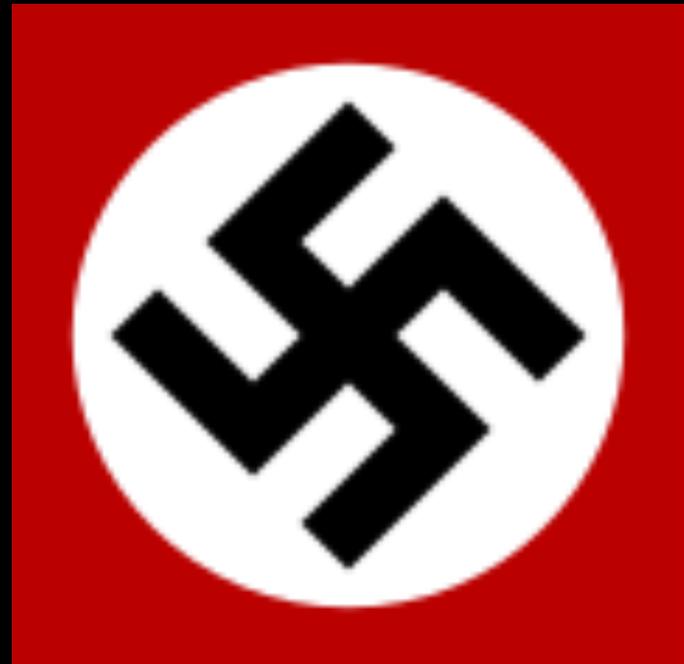
- ... On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem.

How many of you have ever visited Troas to retrieve Paul's cloak (2 Tim 4:13)?

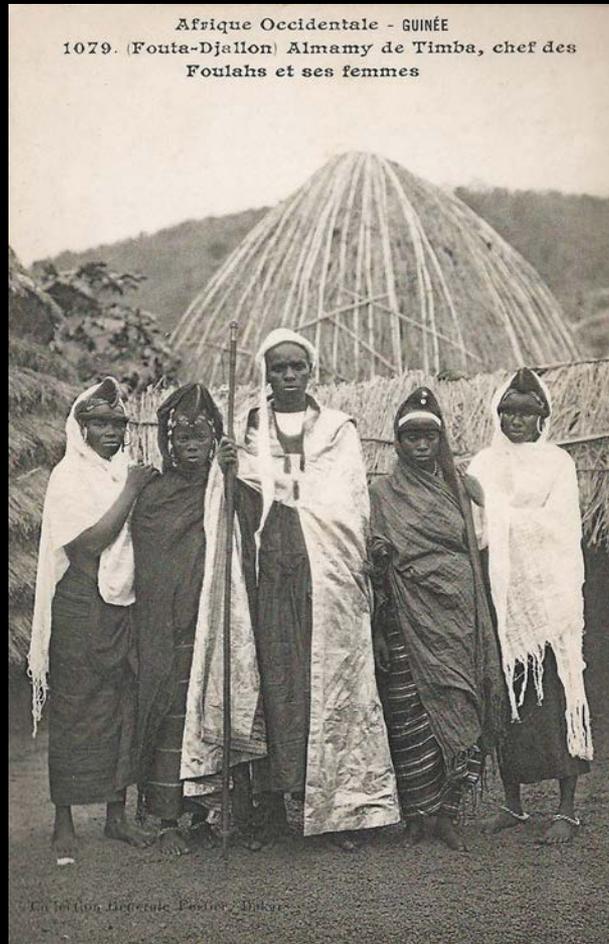


# Life-and-death misinterpretations

- Such as slavery
- The Aryan, Reich Church



# Misappropriations from one culture to another

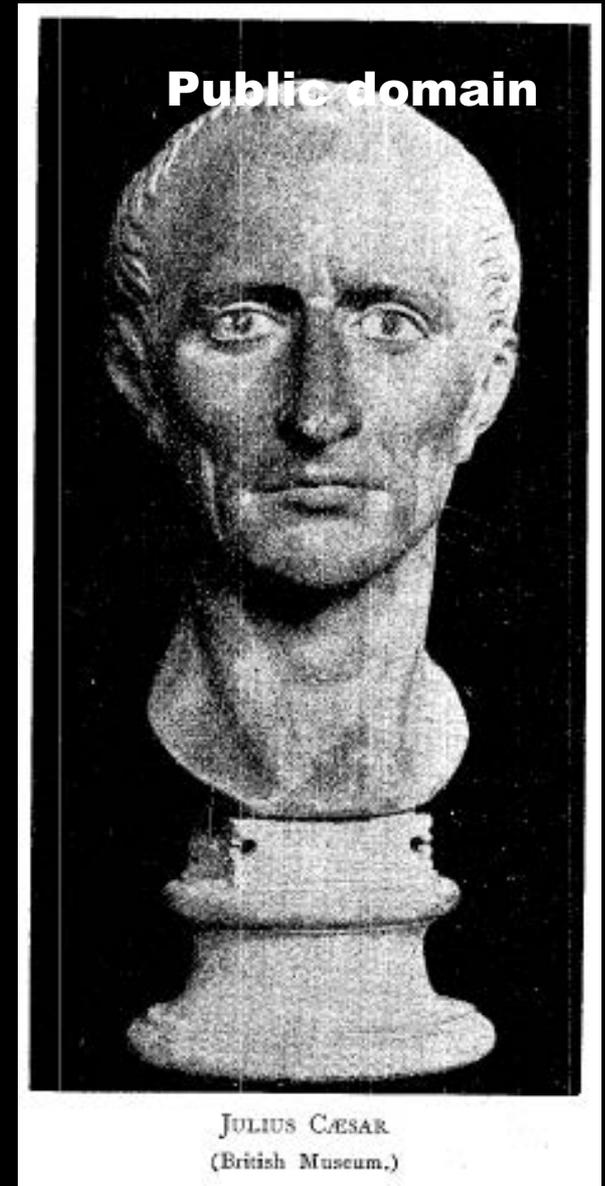


# Other culturally inadequate readings

Some samples

# Reading in Light of the Ancient Contexts

- Translating Caesar's *Gallic War*
- “Render to Caesar what is Caesar's ...”



# Born again = reincarnation??



# Miracles and exorcisms

## MIRACLES

THE CREDIBILITY OF  
THE NEW TESTAMENT ACCOUNTS



CRAIG S. KEENER



# Prosperity preachers



**Seminary  
student  
after  
paying  
tuition**

# “Prophecy teachers”



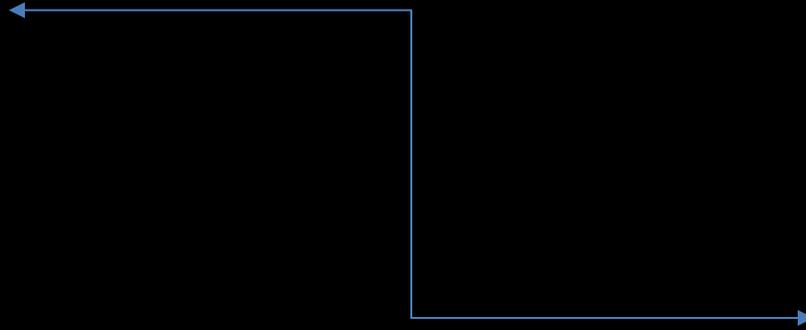
Yeah, Mom, I am  
learning so much in  
my Revelation class  
in seminary



Make sure that it is the original  
message that we are  
recontextualizing

Otherwise we are simply creating a  
new message while claiming the  
authoritative mantle of the old one

# Connect the two horizons



- Ancient



- Modern



“we know in part and we  
prophecy in part” (1 Cor 13:9)

Epistemic and hermeneutical  
humility

# Rom 14: some matters are peripheral

- The saving gospel and basic ethical demands are central
  - E.g., one God, creator; Jesus died, rose, is exalted Lord
  - Ethics: e.g., love one another; sexual ethics (vice lists)
- As we move further from the center, there is less need for certainty and consensus
- Acts 15:20, 29: compromise solution (temporary workaround to maintain fellowship)
  - OK to eat with “righteous gentiles”
- Yet Paul argues for more from the gospel: *all* believers in Jesus are *children of Abraham*

Trying to understand the original  
meaning does  $\neq$  ignoring modern  
contexts

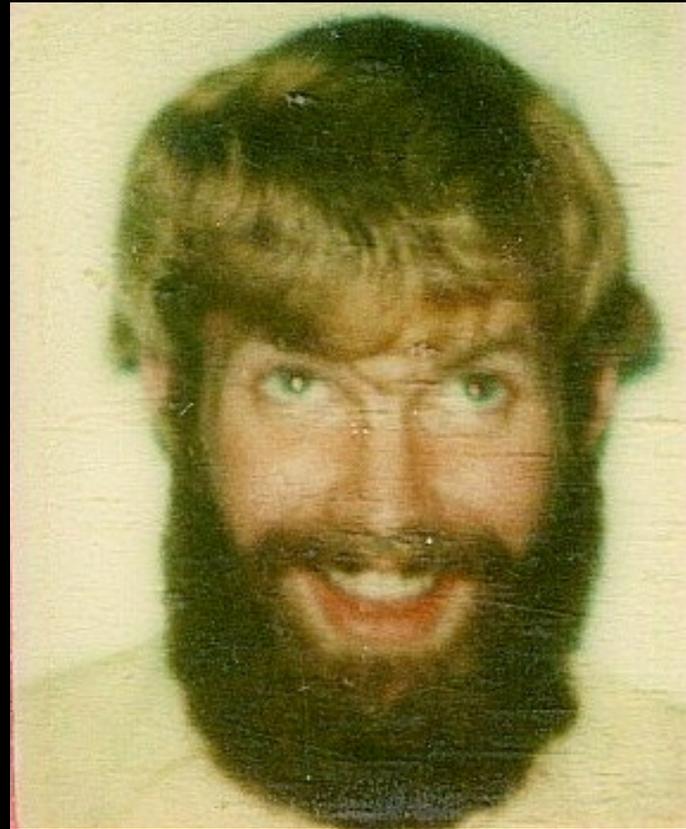
Some of them, in fact, may help get  
us past our own cultural blind spots

# Global Interpretive Community



**Helpful to get a range of views on the table;  
but not all equally consistent with message  
for which the text is designed**

# Shepherds vs. biblical scholars



# Médine and Craig (when Craig still had hair ...)



# Central Asian Jewish dowry discussions (1860s)



# Helpful reading experiments: History of interpretation/reception history

Church Finance 101

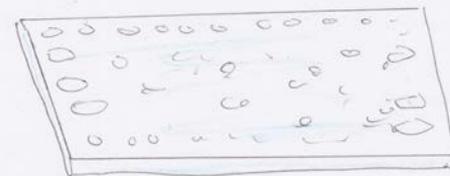
Father Tetzl, we hear that you're *superb* at fundraising!



Yes, I can even get you a discount off your time in purgatory!

SINtax

A SAD DAY IN REFORMATION HISTORY: Huldrych Zwingli discovers that, because of mere disagreement over the Lord's Supper, Martin Luther has unfriended him on Facebook. ☹️



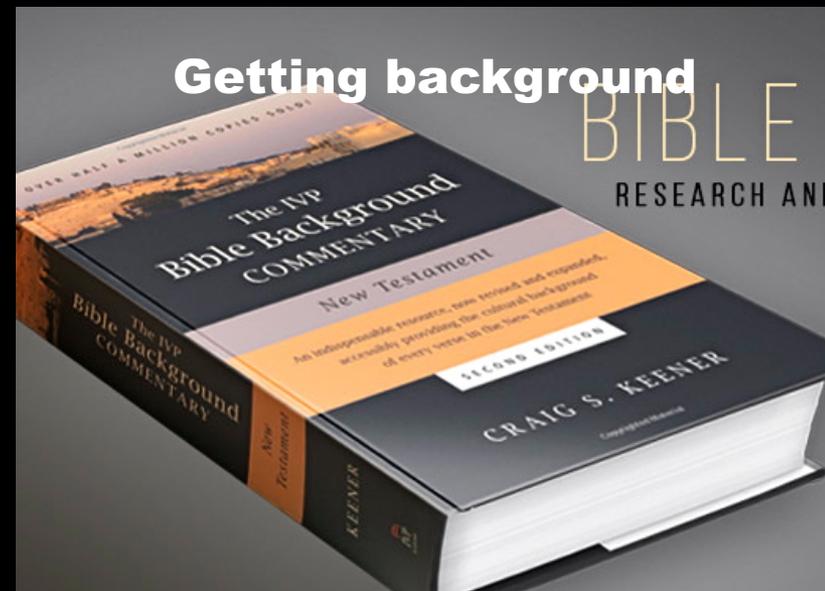
# Different approaches for different objectives



**Text as weapon  
objective**

- The Bible is **textual**, so literary principles necessary (my *usual* teaching emphasis)
  - Immediate context
  - Context of the rest of the book
  - Context of the author's style
  - Context of earlier Scripture
  - Cultural-historical context
  - Genres

# Bible as **TEXT** requires textual approach



# Scripture as TEXT

- Gospels as ancient biographies
- NT letters as ancient letters
  - “Paul ... to the church at ...”
- Revelation as apocalypse/prophecy
- Psalms as ancient worship songs



# Secondary communication

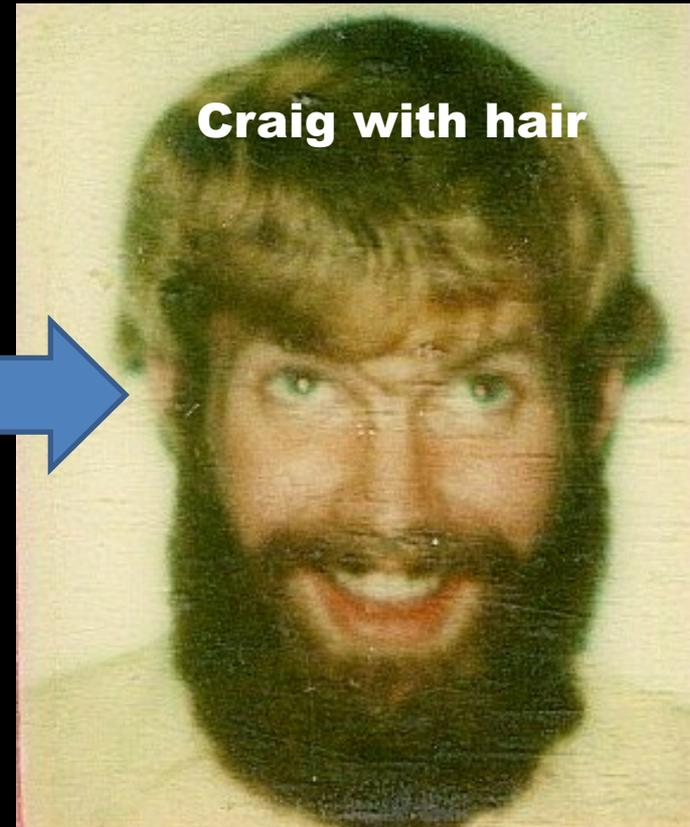
Listening to somebody ELSE's  
conversation

# Ancient and modern contexts

- Translating ancient

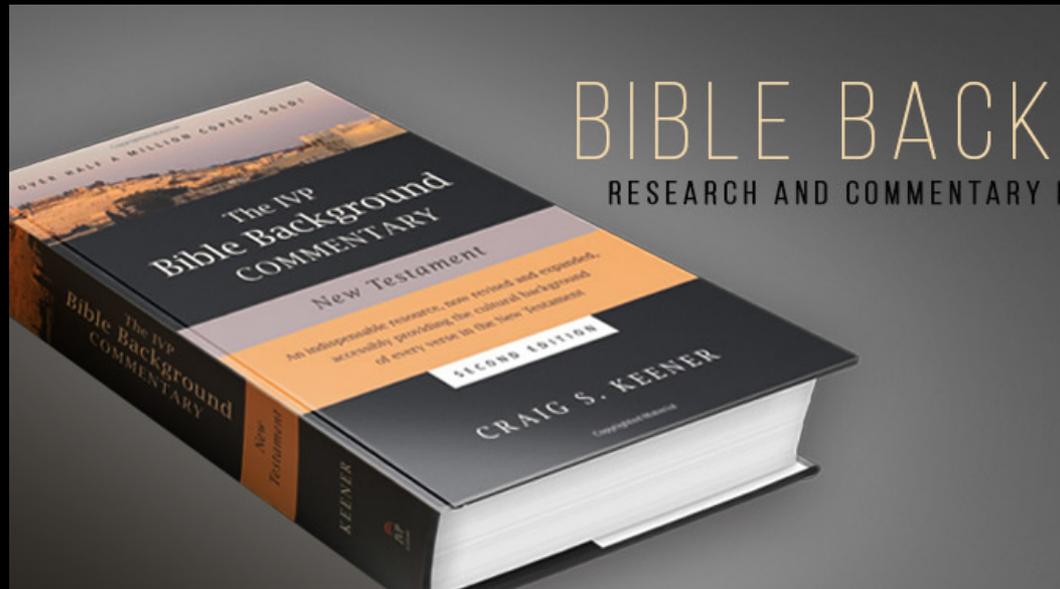


- For modern

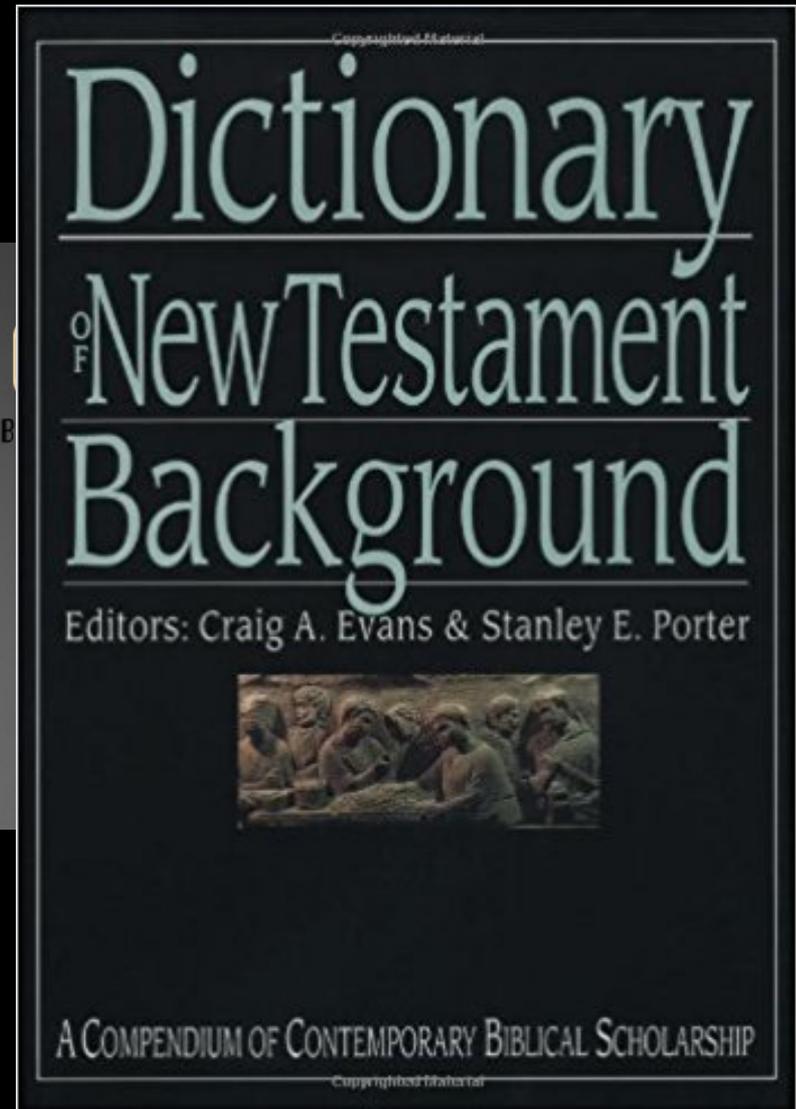


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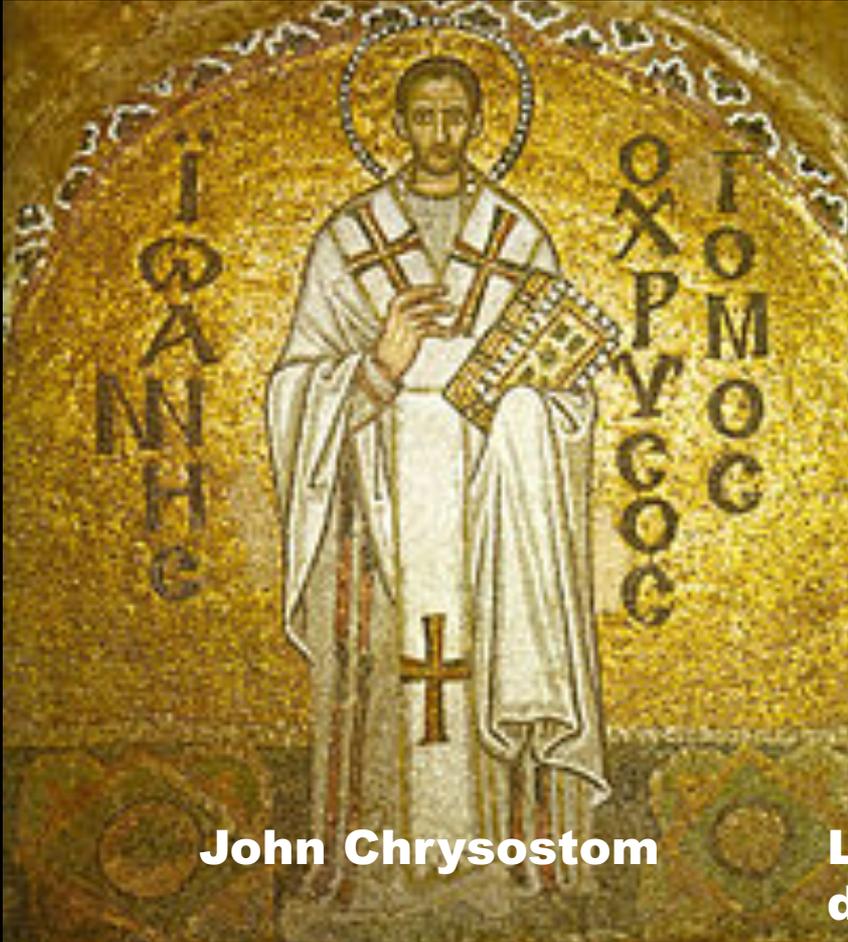
# Studying the ancient meaning



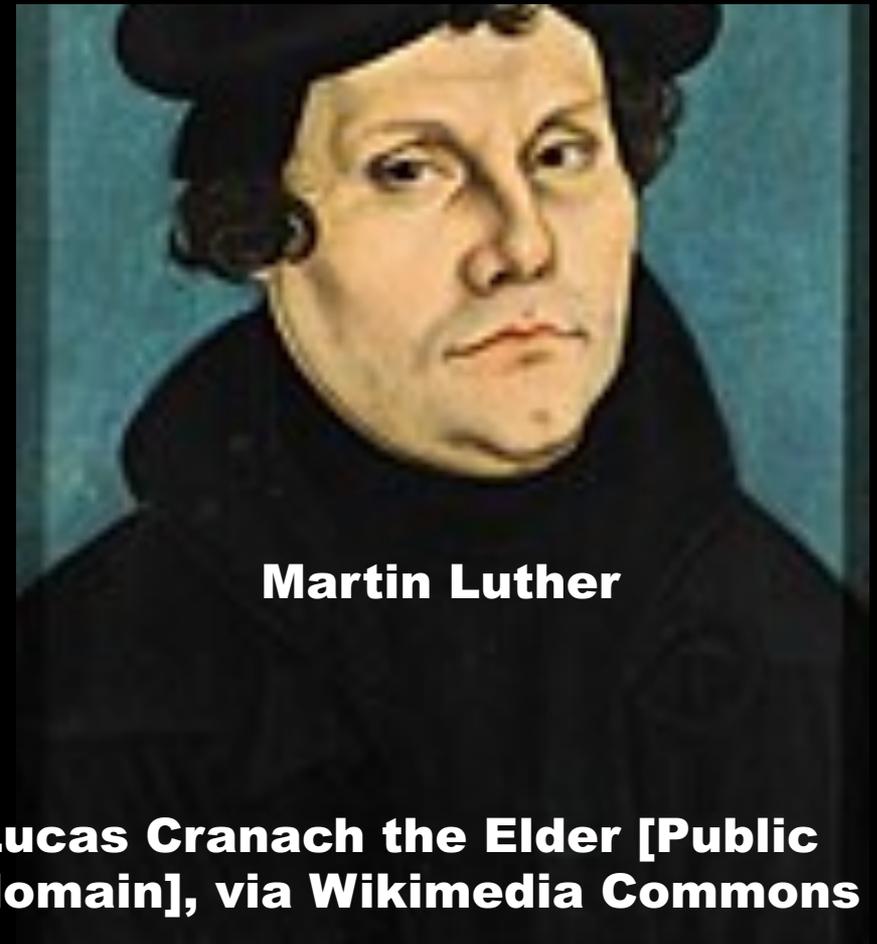
BIBLE BACKGROUND  
RESEARCH AND COMMENTARY BY



# “Modernist” approach?



**John Chrysostom**



**Martin Luther**

**Lucas Cranach the Elder [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons**

Scripture comes to us in Hebrew,  
Aramaic and Greek

- Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λογος

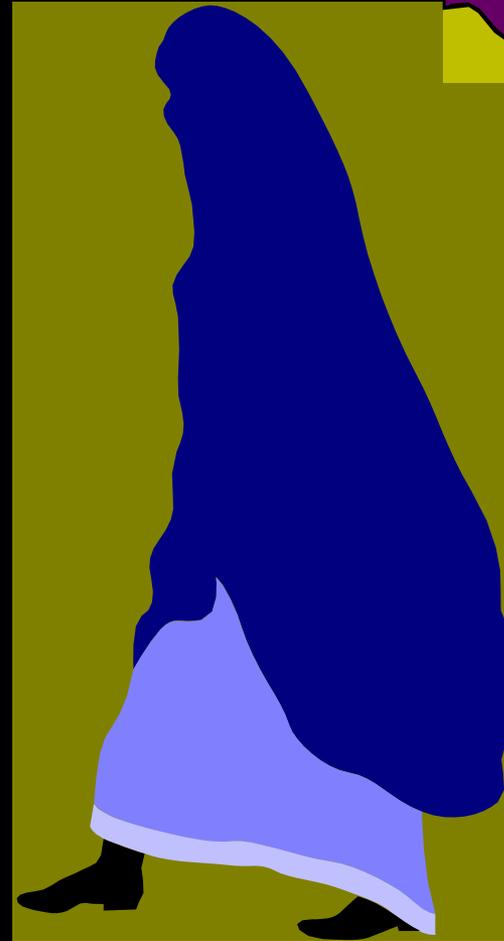
- ברשית ברא אלוהים

# Understanding background reduces culture shock

- E.g., head coverings
- Holy kisses



**By Stefano Bolognini (his own work), via Wikimedia Commons**



# particular ethnicity in a particular time and place



**Todd Bolen photo**

# Examining what the text was DESIGNED to do

- Use texts in ways analogous to their design
- Like using a hammer for the purpose for which it was designed
- Some uses are closer to the evident *design* of texts



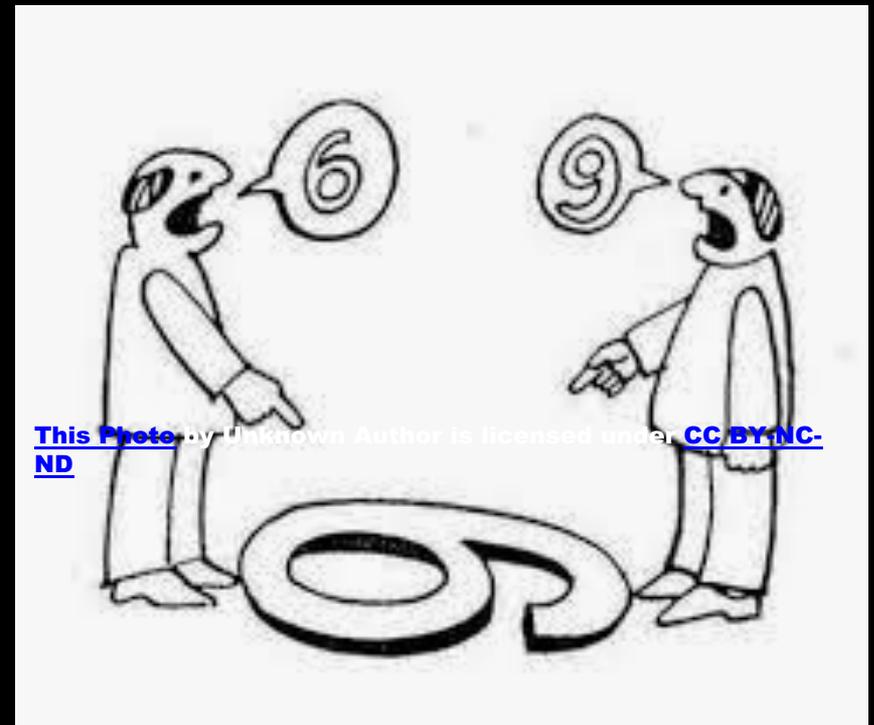
# Trajectories

- Translating from one culture to another: how would writer address new situation?



# Guarding against abuses

- Supposed trajectory should never violate the *message* of Scripture elsewhere
- Look for what is *consistent* in Scripture
- (not just what *seems* good in our own eyes)



# Are Women Allowed to Be Ministers?

(Also to pay seminary tuition, write papers, do homework)

Paul's teachings on women's ministries

Some argue that the historic view of the Church forbids women's ordination.

**BUT: The church's "historic" view isn't always right**

- E.g., often on justification by faith before Luther
- Much of church history adopted pagan anti-Semitism
- **Which part of the church?**
  - Waldensians, a pre-Luther group that advocated justification by faith and returning to Scripture, welcomed both genders to minister
- **The historic *reason* given for rejecting women's ministry:**
  - Women were considered ontologically inferior to men
  - Some (thankfully not most) Medieval theologians even questioned whether women had souls.

Part of the problem is that different texts in the Bible seem to point in different directions.

- **Some who oppose women's ministry see it as part of a larger agenda to reject Scripture and conform the church to the world**
- **But some e.g., Wesleyan, Holiness and Pentecostal groups began affirming women's ministries in the 1800s—*based* on Scripture.**
- **Bible-believing Christians on either side of the issue often read only certain texts while ignoring others**

# Where does the biblical evidence point?

## For women's ministry:

- **Women prophets**
  - Miriam
  - Huldah
  - Deborah
  - Isaiah's wife
  - Anna
  - Philip's daughters
  - Acts 2; 1 Cor 11
- **A woman judge (Deborah)**
- **A woman apostle (Junia)**
- **Women as Paul's fellow-workers and "ministers"**

## Against women's ministry:

- (1) **1 Cor 14:34-35: women keep silent**
- (2) **1 Tim 2:11-12: women keep silent**
- If the issue is decided simply by percentage of texts, it is those who oppose women's ministry who deny the Bible.

# Can we account for the different views within Paul's own writings?

## Possible ways to relate the two sides:

**(1) Paul and the Bible contradict themselves**

(not a very evangelical option)

Hopefully we can agree that the other approaches can be held by genuine Bible-believers:

**(2) Paul was against women's ministry in general, but allowed exceptions (in which case exceptions should be allowed today as well)**

**(3) Paul was for women's ministry in general but limited it for exceptional situations (cultural setting)**

# One **other** approach often taken today:

Paul allowed some kinds of ministry but forbade others

- Most advocates of this approach allow women to:
  - preach and teach
  - counsel
  - everything except be senior pastor
- **The problem is: 1 Tim 2**
  - Doesn't say she can't be senior pastor
  - It says she has to be *quiet* in church and not teach
  - Besides: she can be an *apostle or prophet but not pastor?!!*
  - *Or have authority over all Israel?*



# The Bible has many prophetesses, some very prominent

- **Miriam:**

- prophetess, led Israel in worship (Ex 15)
- all Israel waited for her, and mourned when she died

- **Huldah:**

- most prominent prophetic figure in this part of Josiah's reign
- Josiah sent to her exactly as Hezekiah sent to Isaiah a century earlier (2 K 22-23)

- **Deborah**

- one of few judges on whom we have no “dirt”
- **50% of the prophet-judges (her and Samuel)**
- prophetic judges closest OT equivalent to NT apostles (Moses; Samuel & Deborah; probably prophet-leaders like David; Elijah & Elisha)

## Did Deborah not communicate God's Word with authority?

- **Luke-Acts** tends to pair both genders
  - Simeon and **Anna** as prophetic figures (Lk 2)
  - Agabus and **Philip's 4 daughters** (Ac 21)
  - Your sons and **daughters** will prophesy (Ac 2/Joel)
- **Others:**
  - Isaiah's wife (Isa 8)
  - others heard from God (e.g., Rebekah)
- **Paul** himself acknowledges that **women may and do pray and prophesy in church** (1 Cor 11:4-5)

## OBJECTIONS:

- Men outnumbered women in prophecy
  - But given the culture, what is surprising is that we have *so many* women
  - Also, *never a quota* that excluded women
- Teaching is higher in rank than prophecy
  - That's not what Paul says (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11)
  - So you would let women speak God's message as long as they *don't* use Scripture?!!
  - Prophets often did “teach” and draw on earlier Scripture

Given all the prophetesses, can we possibly exclude women from proclaiming God's message?

*Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was--Rom 16:7*

- **“Junia” is clearly a woman**
  - Against some translations, “Junia” was always a woman’s name in ancient texts
  - The proposed contraction of the male “Junianus” is special pleading: the contraction *nowhere* occurs and with a Latin name is *impossible*
- **The most natural way to take it is that she is an “apostle” alongside Andronicus**
  - Paul nowhere appeals to the *opinion* of “the apostles” as a group
  - Greek speakers such as John Chrysostom recognized her as called an apostle here
- **We cannot arbitrarily reduce the significance of “apostle”**
  - Paul normally means the broader sense; in the only exceptions, he *explicitly* limits it
  - Unlike Luke, Paul doesn’t limit the use of the phrase to the 12: includes himself, Timothy, Silas, James: lower than elders/pastors???
  - The only reason for changing its meaning here is the assumption that a woman cannot be an apostle—assuming what one is trying to prove!

# Can women be apostles and prophets, but not pastor-teachers?

## Paul usually lists them higher:

- Christ “gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers” (Eph 4:11)
- If one’s gift is prophecy...serving...teaching... (Rom 12:6-7)

## Especially when he ranks them:

- “And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing” (1 Cor 12:28)

## Some object: Then why do we have no women *named* as pastors?

- My response: How many *men* are *named* as pastors?
- Those you might guess are not called “pastors,” but terms that elsewhere are at least once applied to women
- Surely men did outnumber women; but does this mean we should explain away evidence for the women who are stated?

# The two most common terms Paul uses for his fellow ministers are:

- **Diakonos (διάκονος), servant:**
  - sometimes it means “deacon” (1 Tim 3)--whatever that was back then!
  - Wherever else we can determine its meaning, Paul uses it for his **own ministry or that of his colleagues** (usually his traveling companions, naturally male)
  - But he applies it to **Phoebe** in Rom 16:1-2
  - because she bears the letter and Paul commends her, the Roman Christians could ask her to explain it
- **“Fellow worker” (συνεργός):**
  - Paul applies this to **Prisca** and Aquila (Rom 16:3-4)
  - he commends their ministry; they were house-church leaders
  - (Acts 18 says they team-taught Apollos: seminary professors with a young minister)

Romans 16 greets twice as many men as women,  
but **commends** twice as many women as men.

- 16:1: “I commend to you our sister **Phoebe**, a servant [lit., **diakonos**] of the church...”
- 16:3: “**Priscilla** and **Aquila**, my **fellow workers**...”
- 16:6: “**Mary**, who **worked very hard** for you” (usually a ministry phrase in Paul)
- 16:7: **Junia** the **apostle**
- 16:12: “**Tryphena** and **Tryphosa**, those women who **work hard** in the Lord... my dear friend **Persis**, another woman who has **worked very hard** in the Lord”

**If even in the first century, women outnumber men two to one (four to one per capita), perhaps we should draw a general principle from this text:**

- **Let us establish a quota system in which most ministerial candidates must be women.** (Just kidding)

*“I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche ... these **women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers**, whose names are in the book of life”--Phil 4:2-3*

- Notice that we find women involved in such ministries especially in Rom 16 and Phil 4
- **Rome and Philippi** were two of the most gender-progressive locations in the Empire
- Is it possible that women were **more apt to pursue ministry where it was more open for them?**
- Is it possible that more women would pursue ministry where their ministries would be more affirmed?
- Is it possible that we have more work to do for the kingdom and need as many laborers for the harvest as we can get?

But what do we do with the two texts that many take to prohibit women's ministries?

1 Cor 14:34-35:

- women should **remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.**

1 Tim 2:11-12:

A woman should **learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or (in such a way as to?) to have (usurp?) authority over a man; she must be silent.**

# Keep in mind that almost no one today actually practices them fully.

- Even those most adamantly opposed to women's ministry usually allow them to sing, in the choir and/or in their seat
- Sometimes even make announcements.
- But Paul requires silence.
- *Perhaps they sing silently.* How about pray or prophesy silently? (1 Cor 11:4f)
- One cannot simply quote these two texts, without explanation, to prohibit women from pastoring.
- They might prohibit a whole lot more than that!
- Do they contradict what Paul says elsewhere?
- Or is it more likely that Paul would hold a consistent view and we are misunderstanding one group of texts?



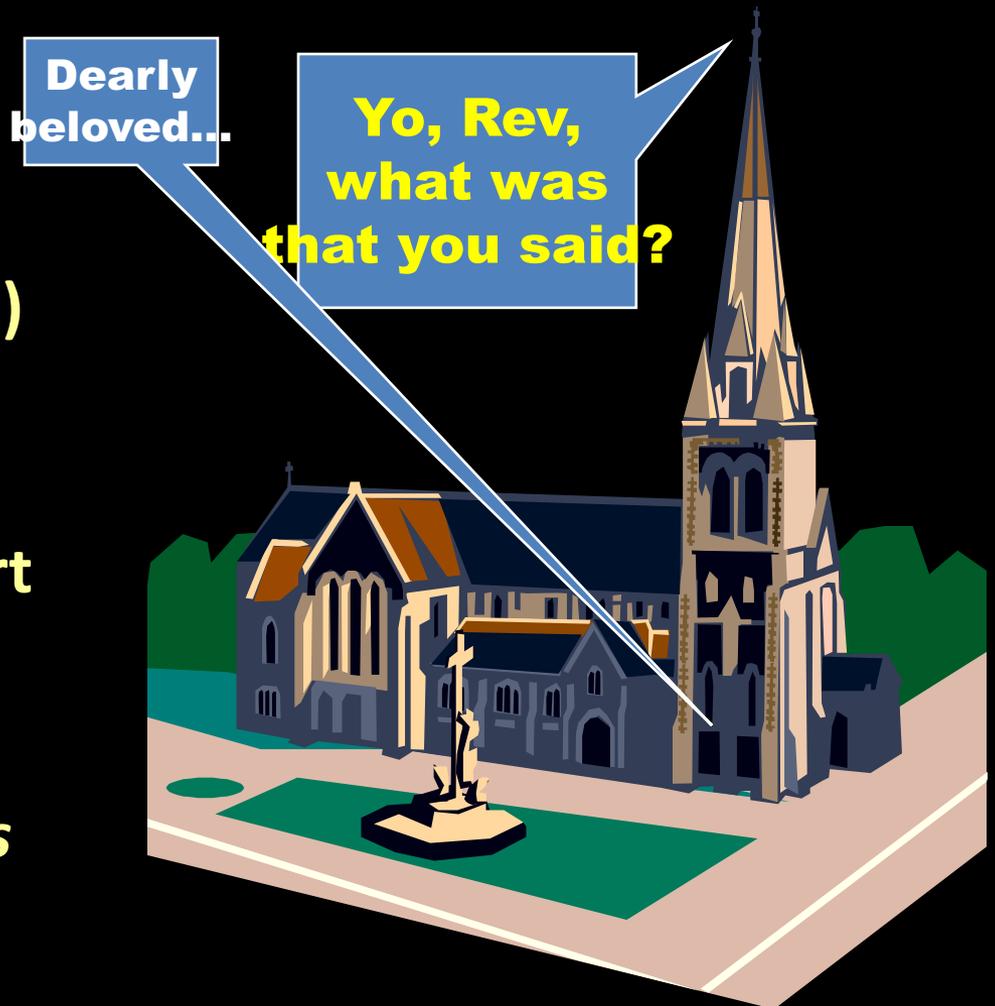
# There are various approaches, e.g., on 1 Cor 14

- One approach is to say Paul couldn't have written both kinds of texts
- Therefore, these “less progressive” texts were added by later redactors
- There is *some* evidence for this in 1 Cor 14 (with Gordon Fee)
- the context would support it, but the textual evidence remains weak



Others say that 1 Cor 14 addressed women yelling questions from the church balcony

- This was based on the view that ancient synagogues (like Medieval orthodox ones) had women's balconies
- but the archaeological evidence doesn't support this
- besides, by this period the church met in *homes*

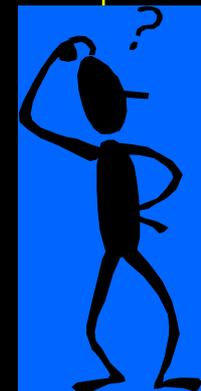


# Other views:

- Some say Paul was prohibiting them from praying publicly in tongues or prophesying
  - But earlier in the same letter (whole-book context) he allowed women to pray and prophesying! (11:4-5)
- Or women **can't "judge" prophecy**
  - But that's just a spiritual gift, and **all who prophesy are invited to judge** (12:10; 14:29)
- Some say it means women can't teach the Bible from the pulpit
  - but this may be the *least* defensible position
  - teaching is not part of the context, and the Corinthians couldn't "flip over" to 1 Tim 2—which hadn't been written yet

# But let's look at the text.

- Paul **cannot** be mandating **all** kinds of **silence** (e.g., no singing)
- because he earlier allows women to **pray and prophecy**—which couldn't be done silently
- but this is a letter to Corinth: Paul and the Corinthians know what issue he is addressing, but how can **we** tell?
- He gives us a clue:
- ... They are **not allowed to speak**... If they ***want to inquire about something, they should ask*** their own husbands at home; for it is **disgraceful for a woman to speak** in the church
- Notice the one kind of speech Paul specifically addresses:
  - asking questions
  - How was this relevant in church?



# It was customary for people to interrupt public lectures with questions.

- This was true in Greek and Roman lectures (Plutarch, Aulus Gellius)
- Jewish rabbis' lectures
- Presumably likewise in church discussions (house churches generally couldn't hold more than 50 people)



**But the one kind of questions that was considered rude was unlearned questions.**

- **It would be like you asking a question that showed you slept through the last ten slides**
- **this would cause you utter humiliation and embarrassment.**
- **So maybe they were interrupting with unlearned questions.**



# But why was it the women who were asking unlearned questions?

- Do women have lower IQ's than men? Is this a *genetic* problem?
  - The LACK OF Y CHROMOSOME IMPAIRS SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT
- Or were women less educated than men?
- Even in upper-class homes, women rarely were educated beyond 14 years of age.



There were some very educated women, but they were exceptions



- A few educated women
  - even a handful of women philosophers
  - But they were a small minority
  - we know of none in *rhetoric*, the other advanced discipline
  - Barely *any* TEACHERS of men
- Women could attend synagogue but not *study* Torah in depth
  - Rabbis refused to train women in Torah
  - Beruriah & Num 5 were exceptions
  - Boys were taught to recite Torah, girls were not

# So Paul gives short- and long-range solutions.



## **SHORT-RANGE SOLUTION:**

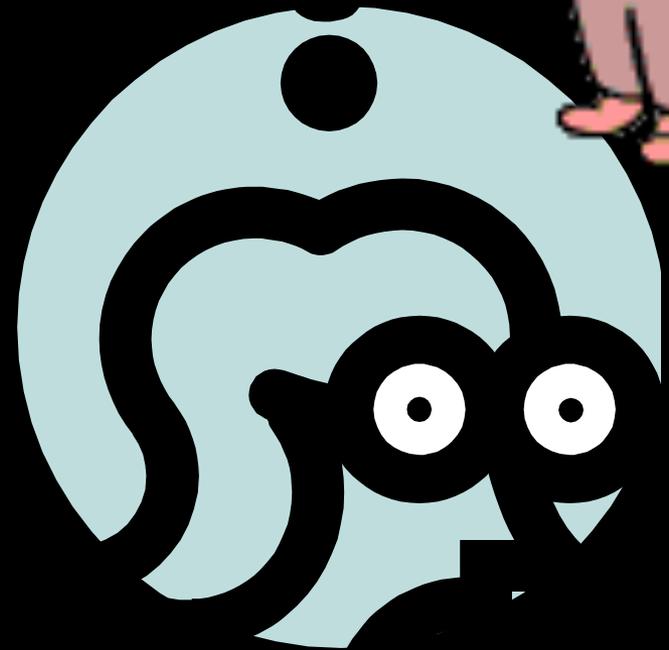
- Stop asking disruptive questions in church, because you are unlearned.

## **LONG-RANGE SOLUTION**

- Get some private tutoring to catch you up, so your questions won't be unlearned any more.
- “If they want to inquire about something, they should *ask their own husbands at home*” --14:35
- The vast majority of women over 18 were married
- Paul wants their husbands to give them private tutoring

This may not sound very progressive in our culture, but it certainly was in Paul's culture

- Greek men averaged perhaps 12 years older than their wives and viewed them as children
- Plutarch is progressive by ancient standards: Take an interest in your wife's learning, even though most men think wives can't learn
- But then *Plutarch* ruins it: For if left to themselves women produce only base passions and folly
- *Paul* doesn't ruin it



# The problem in Corinth is not that women are teaching

- Rather, it's that they're learning
- Or, more accurately, they're learning too *loudly*
- Perhaps we should keep unlearned women from asking unlearned questions in our churches today
- **But following Paul's principle, we should keep *all* unlearned people from asking unlearned questions today**
- Does this happen often during *your* sermons?



Dearly beloved

Ah, Rev, would you repeat that?  
And is Isaiah in the Old or New Testament?

It's in the New Testament, you idiot!

## The other possibility is that Paul is dealing with the congregation's respectability in society.

- Women normally didn't speak in public.
- Paul says it is “**shameful**” for a woman to speak in public (14:35)
- The Greek term he uses could be used of *culturally* shameful behavior
- He may be concerned about the **witness to unbelieving Corinthians**, as in 14:23-24
- The application **today** would be different, however:
  - in our society, restraining women would be a far worse witness than women speaking
  - so even keeping to Paul's intention, the application today should not be to silence women

The other text is 1 Timothy 2:11-12 (in context 2:8-15)

Did you know this is **the *only* text** in the Bible that **prohibits women from teaching?**

# This is the only text in the Bible that prohibits women from teaching.

- It doesn't say they can't *pastor*.
- It may say they **can't exercise authority or teach the Bible**
  - One could read, “teach in such a way as to *authenteo*”
    - some say this term means, “usurp/seize authority”
    - even men shouldn't do that!
    - Others say it means they shouldn't “have authority”
  - One or two prohibitions?
    - Teach **AND** (in such a way as to) have authority
    - Teach **OR** have authority
  - They usually had several elders/pastors per house church, so on average back then there may have been a pastor for every few families, maybe 10-20 people
- Women therefore shouldn't teach Sunday School?

# What is really interesting is that

- The only passage in the Bible that prohibits women from teaching the Bible
- happens to be in the only series of letters where we specifically know that false teachers were targeting women with their teachings
- Paul warns younger widows not to go from house to house as “gossips and ‘busybodies’ ” (1 Tim 5:13)
  - the term translated “busybodies” normally means speakers of nonsense, spreaders of false ideas or doctrines
- Paul speaks of false teachers who “worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women” (2 Tim 3:6)
- Isn't it a coincidence that the one place Paul restricts women's ministry is the one place where false teachers were targeting women
- So why start with this text and ignore all the others where Paul *affirms* women's ministry?

Almost no circles back then  
allowed women to teach.

Just a handful of women teachers in all  
antiquity, so common to speak in  
general terms about no women  
teaching or exercising authority

If the matter stopped here there would probably be little debate today.

- Everyone acknowledges the importance of cultural background
- No one wants Paul to contradict what he said earlier
- **BUT**: Paul goes on to cite two biblical reasons why women shouldn't teach:
  - (1) For Adam was formed first, then Eve
  - (2) And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.
- So, they say, Paul grounds this in his doctrine of creation.
- ***Women cannot teach the Bible because Eve, hence women, are more susceptible to deception.***

# But is this really Paul's point?

## His first argument is that Adam was created before Eve.

- That was one of Paul's arguments in 1 Cor 11:2-16 for why women should wear head coverings
- *If we take that as cultural in 1 Cor 11, why not take it as cultural here?*
- Further, does Paul mean this argument in an *ad hoc* way or to cover *all* circumstances?
- Paul often makes ad hoc arguments, even from Scripture:
  - e.g., Gal 3:16: “The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.”
  - But Paul knows very well that “seed” is a *collective* singular, as he demonstrates just a few verses later (3:29): “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed...”

**If we exegete Genesis on its own terms first, creation order simply does not require women not to teach.**

- **Man and Woman together are to exercise dominion over creation, as God's image (Gen 1:26-27)**
- **God makes for Adam "a helper suitable for him" (2:18)**
  - "helper" is a term of strength--most often used of *GOD*
  - "suitable" means "corresponding to" --not greater, like God, nor (in the context) lesser, like the animals
- **Some protest, Adam names Eve, as he does the animals**
  - But Adam specifically addresses Eve differently, serenading her as one like himself (2:23-24)
  - he repeats the naming formula used for animals (2:19-20) for Eve only *after* the Fall (3:20)

# Marital power-conflict is part of the judgment (3:16)

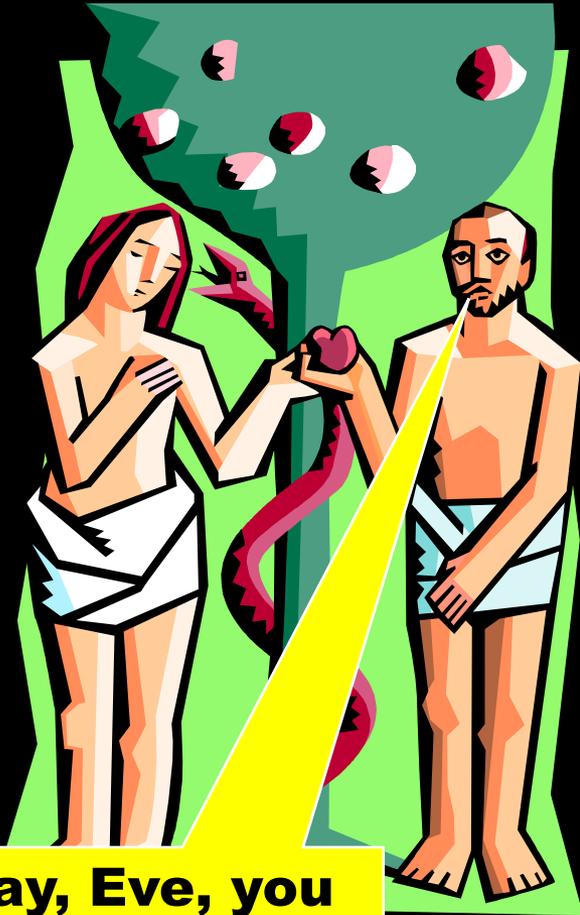
- “...Your **desire** will be for your husband, and he will **rule** over you.”
- This is the language of **power-conflict**
  - the same Hebrew words appear in only one other text--in the very context (4:7):
  - “sin is crouching at your door; it **desires** to have you, but you must **master** it”

# Should we promote effects of the Fall?



- Get men to **sweat** at work (turn off all fans, air conditioners)
- increase **pain at childbirth** (ObGyn's should stomp on pregnant women's bellies?)
- get people to **sin and die** as much as possible

# Paul's argument #2 might also be ad hoc:



**Say, Eve, you go first, eh?**

- “And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.” (1 Tim 2:14)
  - “...she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” (Gen 3:6)
  - he was right there when she did it and didn't seem to object

**Just in case it's poisoned--  
after all, God said we might die...**

# We can take this as either a local application or a universal principle:

## Universal principle:

- **Eve = Women**
- Eve was deceived
- Therefore, women are deceived
- Therefore, women shouldn't teach
- (Except for teaching other women, Tit 2:4, whom they may deceive especially thoroughly, since women are easily deceived)

- Local application
- **Eve = those who are easily deceived**
- The women in Ephesus are easily deceived
- Therefore, *these* women shouldn't teach
- (in this case, this passage wouldn't contradict all the other passages about women's ministry, making it easier to recognize the Bible's trustworthiness)

# In deciding the matter, let's ask some questions:

## **ARE WOMEN more easily deceived than men?**

- If Paul is making a universal argument, this is implicit in his claim
- It implies women's ontological inferiority to men in ascertaining truth
- If it is universal rather than local, then it is genetic rather than cultural
- **It would have to apply to *all* women or it would not exclude *all* women from teaching the Bible**
- This should be easy enough to test empirically:
  - On average women prove better on verbal skills, men on math skills: which are better for preaching?
  - Beyond the average, it is unpredictable which do better
  - But in my Biblical Interpretation classes, there are about an even number of A's for both genders

# Could Paul use the analogy with Eve in an ad hoc way?

His other clearest references to Eve are two:

- Adam was before Eve, therefore women should wear head coverings (1 Cor 11:8)
  - is this a universal or ad hoc argument?
- I don't want you Corinthians to be deceived like Eve was by the serpent (2 Cor 11:3)
  - does Paul always apply Eve as a universal analogy for women--or for *anyone who can be deceived*?
- Does Paul **ever make ad hoc arguments for local situations?**
- **Why do we insist on this *one* text being universal and not some others?**

**Let's press all texts and make them mandatory without taking into account their cultural situation.**

- **1 Tim 5:23: “Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.”**
- **Earlier in 1 Tim 5:**
  - **does your church support all eligible widows?**
  - **But don't worry, it only counts if they've washed the saints' feet**
  - **charity was their only means of support back then**



# How many of you sent an offering for the church in Jerusalem last week? (1 Cor 16:1-3)

- **REPENT, you sinners!!!!**
- Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem.



# Or what about 2 Tim 4:13?

- “When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments”
- How many of you have ever tried to obey this *direct* commandment of Scripture?



# To obey this you would have to:

- Go to Troas
- Excavate Troas
- Find the right first-century cloak
  - assuming it survived
  - assuming Timothy didn't already fetch it
  - assuming you could tell it was Paul's
- Only one person at most can fulfill this command!
- Once you've got the cloak--how do you get it to Paul?  
**He's DEAD!**
  - Did you laugh? Are you laughing that Paul *died*?
  - That's *sick*



# This is why we need to take into account letters' original situation.

- If you read the Bible *enough*, you see that Paul was addressing specific situations *a lot*
- You have to make the *right* analogies before you apply his inspired message
- I believe that the transcultural principle in 1 Tim 2 is
  - not that women shouldn't teach
  - but that easily deceived people shouldn't teach
  - in our culture that may be men or women—whoever lacks access to adequate biblical understanding
- I believe that **Paul elsewhere does affirm women's ministry, and this helps us to see that Paul himself didn't prohibit women from teaching the Bible always** (for further information, see my book, *Paul, Women & Wives* [Baker Academic])

Again, not everybody agrees ...

**But where we have to agree to disagree, let's do so in love, as brothers and sisters in Christ**

# Do we apply directly instructions to first-century churches, or apply their principles for new settings?

- E.g., slavery, honoring kings, etc.—apply *principle* rather than reinstitute slavery or monarchy
- Same with patriarchal version of marriage—calling husbands “Lord” (1 Pet 3:6)
- Context: every *human* institution (2:13)
- *Only* Paul *frames* household codes (Eph 5:21—6:9) with *mutual* submission (5:21; 6:9)
- I.e., all Christians: serve one another
- Different cultures require different forms (e.g., head coverings, calling husband “lord”)

# Was Paul Pro-slavery?

Views in the early 1800s:

- Yes: he mentions slavery
- No: his *principles* oppose it

**Slaves, obey your earthly masters  
with respect and fear, and with  
sincerity of heart, just as you would  
obey Christ.--Eph 6:5**

# In the U.S., we often think of slavery in the 1800s



## The *Slave Narratives* demonstrate

- that many former slaves in the U.S. loved Jesus but hated Paul
- because slaveholders quoted this verse to them.

But the slaveholders missed a couple interpretive issues that might be helpful in interpretation:

- Context
- Background

# Their abuse of Scripture may have been deliberate

- The earliest U.S. slaveholders in the 1600s
  - didn't want slaves to hear about Christianity
  - because they feared slaves would think themselves their holders' equals
  - Church attendance was perhaps 7%, especially low in the South (which was the least evangelized part of the U.S.)
- Their fears were justified:
  - Most **slave revolts** involved biblical imagery
    - Nat Turner (Black Baptist preacher with visions)
    - Denmark Vesey (A.M.E. conspirators)
    - Gabriel Prosser (the new Samson)
    - John Brown (a white preacher)
  - Much nonviolent resistance was also based on Scripture
    - liberation themes in the Exodus
    - even creation (Gen 1-2; Ac 17) and salvation (Great Awakening)
    - (see further Raboteau, *Slave Religion*; Wilmore, *Black Religion...*)



# Abolitionists started from biblical Christian premises

- **Anglican** Bishop William Fleetwood, 1710
- **Quakers**; some **Baptists** (1789, Virginia; Andrew Bryan)
- **Methodists**
  - 1790s: evangelical revival characterized by missions and abolitionism
  - early 1800s, repeated conference statements
  - especially African-American Methodists (A.M.E., A.M.E. Zion: Richard Allen, Jarena Lee, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass)
- Postmillennialists in Great Awakening (**Finney**, Weld, Harriet Beecher Stowe)
- LaRoy **Sunderland**'s AntiSlavery Manual
- More radically, **David Walker**'s *Appeal* (white devils!)
- Some “amalgamationists”: Lewis **Tappan**, 1838 Women's Antislavery Convention, **Philadelphia**
- But in mid-1800s, the movement split:
  - anarchists under W. L. **Garrison**
  - Christians reacted
  - (see further **Keener & Usry**, *Black Man's Religion*)

Debates between slaveholder theologians and abolitionists usually often came down to a difference in methods of Biblical Interpretation:

## Proslavery arguments

- Slavery was always practiced by all respectable cultures
  - Greeks, Romans
  - Egyptians, others
  - It's in the Bible
- It's accepted in the Constitution

It comes down to **prooftexting!**

(see further some records, Fisk U. Library)

## Antislavery case:

- Slavery was practiced in the Bible's culture
- But the Bible reduces rather than ratifies it
- The Bible's *principles* and heart militate against it
- Take into account the Bible's cultural situations

It comes down to **finding God's heart**

# What was the cultural setting of first-century slavery?

## Not ethnically based

- “Before Color Prejudice” (Snowden)
- Aristotle: enslave non-Greeks
- By Paul’s day: most slaves were Greek
- Romans would enslave *anybody*

## Various major forms of slavery

- in the mines or gladiatorial combat
- in the fields
- household slavery



# Mines or gladiatorial combat

A virtual  
death  
sentence



# Slavery in the fields



- Short life expectancy, inadequate diet, no social mobility
- But almost no different from free peasants (90% of free persons), except:
  - slaves could be beaten
  - but if peasants complained too much, landlords sometimes had hit squads to take them out
- We must not prove selective in our critiques of injustice

# Urban, household slavery

Quite different from any kind of slavery practiced in the Americas

- Perhaps we should even use different terms to describe each
- Better food, security than free peasants
- Could **earn and save money** on the side (*peculium*)
- Often **educated** (most doctors were slaves)



**Household servants  
in Pharaonic Egypt**

# Manumission (freeing slaves) was quite frequent in this period

- Household slaves were not always freed
- But it was fairly likely that any given slave would become free
- This gave them more social mobility than peasants
- Freed slaves were the “social climbers” of the day



# In fact, some people chose to become slaves to improve their social status!

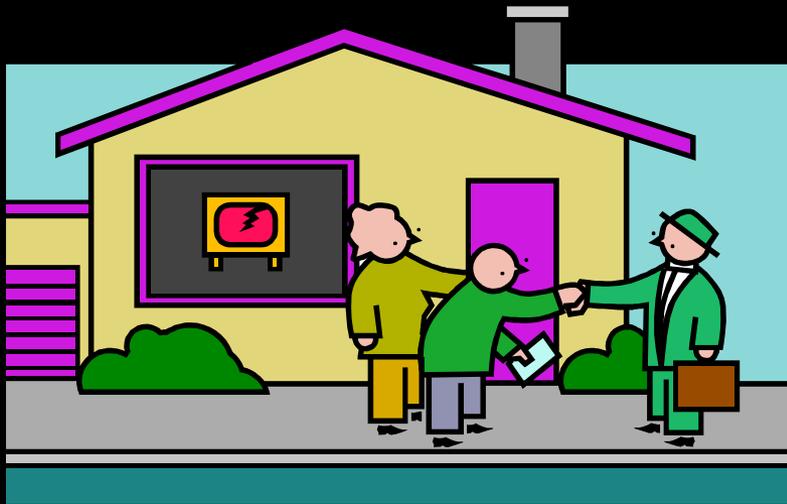
- Slaves of citizens, on becoming free, became Roman citizens--something few *officials* in the Greek East had!
- Former masters helped freedpersons get ahead
  - thus many freedpeople became rich, creating envy
- Some women *aristocrats* married into slavery to *improve* their social station



- Household slaves of Caesar could wield more power than senators
- Some cities had high-class slaves
- Some slaves were wealthy
- Does this sound like slavery in the U.S.???



# What kind of slavery was Paul addressing? In mines, fields, or homes?



- Paul addressed urban congregations, where the slaves would have been household slaves
- The model is Aristotle's household codes--which also address household slaves

But U.S. slaveholders made two mistakes when they cited Scripture.

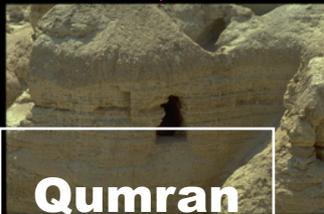
- Background: First-century household slavery was quite different from slavery in the Americas
- Context: Slaveholders quoted Eph 6:5 and ignored Eph 6:9, a few verses down:
- And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

The background, suggests where Paul probably would have stood had the issue of abolition ever come up ...

- **Almost no one was calling for slavery's abolition**
  - **Stoic** philosophers said slaves and slaveholders were equal in theory, but:
    - A Stoic emperor did nothing against slavery (unlike some Christians)
    - A Stoic leader beat his escaped slave

**Essenes** did not hold slaves--but were against all “private property,” of which slavery was viewed as a part

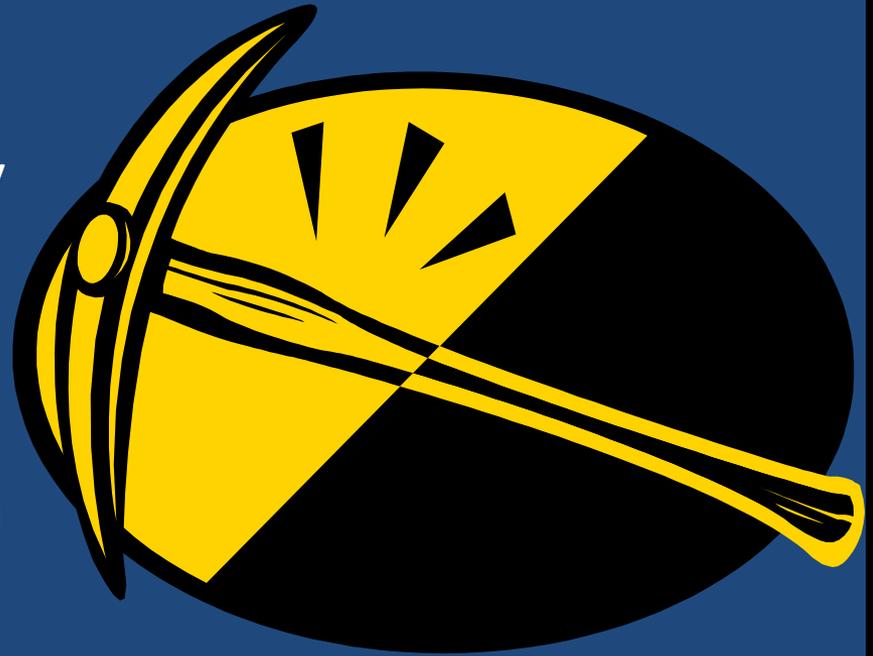
– And **virtually nobody else came close!**



**Qumran  
Cave 4**

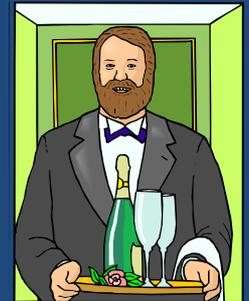
# In Aristotle's household codes

- He had argued that a slave was a “**living tool**”
- that slaves were inferior by nature to free
- that only non-Greeks were fit to be enslaved
- but he **complained** about a very small number of people
  - who said that **slavery was against nature**
  - and therefore should be **abolished!**



# Would Paul have thought that slavery was against nature?

- Hear him again: “you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him” (6:9b)
- But Stoics agreed that slaves were equals to slaveholders in theory--yet not practice
- But **Paul demands it also in practice**:
  - And masters, treat your slaves in the same way (6:9a)
  - **Lit., “do the same things to them”**
  - After calling on slaves to submit to their masters, **Paul calls on Christian masters to submit to their slaves**
  - Does that have any **long-range implications for slavery as an institution?**
  - These were **among the most radical antislavery sentiments of the first century!**



**It is therefore not surprising that abolitionist sentiments have usually risen in Christian societies.**

- To be sure, church history often testifies more to the Christian doctrine of human depravity than to the power of the new birth
- But late Roman Empire (though slavery by then no longer economically viable)
- British antislavery
  - Wesleyan revival
  - Wilberforce & the Clapham sect
  - opposition of much of Arab world (Seyyid Said, sultan of Morocco, Shaykh Jamal) (Bernard Lewis, *Race & Slavery in the Middle East*)
- U. S. abolitionist movement

Let us now read that passage in its fuller epistolary context.

Be filled with the Spirit (5:18)--expressed by:

- Praising God (5:19-20) and *submitting to each other* (5:21)
  - Wives and husbands (5:22-33)
  - Children and fathers (6:1-4)
  - Slaves and slaveholders (6:5-9)
- These are *household codes*, resembling Aristotle's.

# Aristotle instructed the male head of the household how to RULE:

- his wife
- his children
- his slaves

I'm glad I wasn't  
Aristotle's wife

In that order!

- Philosophers adopted these codes
- They also described **traditional Roman family values**
- These codes addressed the father, what Romans called the *pater familias*
  - the eldest living male ancestor
  - Technically (though no longer much enforced) held the absolute power of life and death over all in his extended household
  - thus 6:4 says **not “Parents,” but “Fathers”**

# But Romans were suspicious of foreign religions, especially Eastern cults

- Notably:
  - Cult of Dionysus (earlier)
  - Cult of Isis
  - Judaism & Christianity
- They **accused them of subverting traditional Roman family values**
- Thus these groups worked hard to persuade the Romans that they in fact upheld Roman values



# So Paul adapts Aristotle's household codes

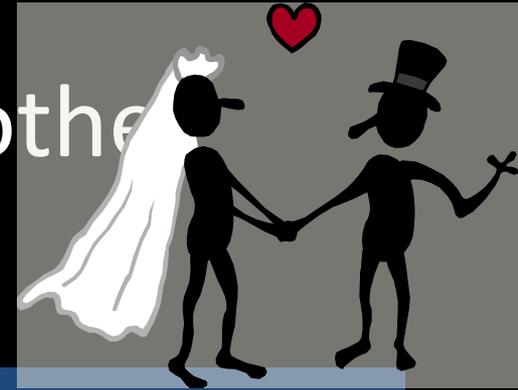
- He upholds the best in Roman traditional values
  - E.g., the wife should submit to her husband
  - This does not require him to compromise Christian values-  
-i.e., *everybody* should submit
- Part of his purpose may be a missions strategy, as later in the Pastoral Epistles:
  - 1 Tim 6:1: slaves obey so God won't be slandered
  - Tit 2:5: wives submit to husbands so no one will slander God's word
  - 2:8: young men be self-controlled, so slanderers may be ashamed
  - 2:9-10: slaves, don't give masters a hard time, so masters will be attracted to the gospel

# But at the very time Paul uses these codes, he subverts them!

- Aristotle addresses only the male head of the household
- Aristotle told the husband how to rule his wife
- Marriage contracts demanded wifely obedience

- Paul addresses first wives, children and slaves
- Paul tells the husband only how to LOVE his wife
- Paul defines submission only in his summary in 5:33: “respect”

# The grammar also makes another change clear:



- **Submit to one another** out of reverence for Christ. Wives, **[submit] to your husbands** as to the Lord (5:21-22).
- The verb “submit” actually does not occur in 5:22, but is borrowed from v. 21 (in Greek)
- Therefore it cannot mean something different than what it did in 5:21
- Paul **expects mutual submission between husbands and wives**
  - Some protest, “But he only says the wife!”
  - In this passage, he **tells only the husband to love** (5:25)!
  - But both should love (5:2), and both should submit (5:21)



How about head coverings (11:2-16)?

Are they mandatory for women in churches today?

# *Most Christians today say No.*

- However, most Christians through history said Yes.



# survey of many of my students in Nigeria

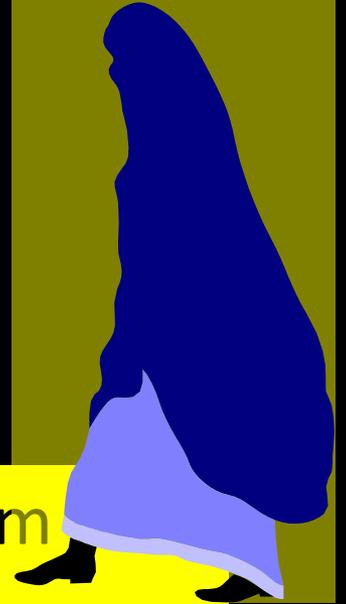


- 1 said women who didn't wear head coverings to church would go to hell
- nearly half said they were mandatory for all cultures
- most others said they are mandatory only in cultures where it is the custom, like their own

# The purposes of head coverings in Paul's day

- People covered their heads for shame, grief, fear, etc., but these were both genders
- Romans (unlike Greeks) covered their heads for worship—but again, both genders





- The one gender-linked head-covering custom (E.):
  - Women's hair was the prime object of male lust
  - unmarried girls kept uncovered to attract potential husbands
  - married women in E. Mediterranean covered their hair to prevent others from seeing their hair
    - (further to the East, the entire face might be covered)
  - To not wear the head covering was considered a deliberate attempt at seduction--attempted adultery

The distraction might be roughly equivalent to walking into church in a bathing suit today.

- Would bathing suits distract any of our church members today?
- (in some cultures, at least?)



**We *ALWAYS*  
ready for baptism**

# But there was another problem.

Upper class women  
didn't like to cover  
their heads.

- Whenever the  
Empress changed her  
hairstyle, it started a  
new wave of fashion  
throughout the  
Empire





They paid a lot of  
money for their  
hairstyles, so  
they didn't want  
to cover them  
up

- What the wealthier women meant as ostentation (not so good in itself)
- Poorer women understood as seduction, which was much worse



- The church met in the larger homes--so poorer and richer Christians met together
- This created a sort of class conflict in the church--also a bad thing
- Paul has been talking about giving up rights (including his own, ch. 9), and urges the wealthier women to do that here



**Hey, d'you know how long it took me to clean this house?**

# Then he offers arguments for first-century readers

- Don't dishonor your "head"
- Adam was created before Eve
- Because of the angels (11:10)
- Nature itself teaches you
- If all else fails: That's just the way we all do things!
- Most of these worked better for first-century readers than for us...but it was them he was seeking to persuade!

- Don't dishonor your "head"
  - the head is what's on top your neck
  - figuratively (in that culture), it's your husband
- Adam was created before Eve
  - Therefore wives should cover heads--honor husbands
  - Then he qualifies it: But men also depend on women
  - Both are mutually dependent in the Lord



I'm telling you, Eve,  
it is an apple.

Yeah,  
whatever



- Because of the angels (11:10)
- Nature itself teaches you (hair length)
  - (Stoic-type argument, 11:14)
- If all else fails: That's just the way we all do things!
  - (the only argument the Skeptics would accept, 11:16)

# What's up with "because of the angels"?



Several views:

- (1) Lusting angels from Genesis 6
  - are they still falling?
  - If so, wouldn't head coverings be even *more* important *outside* church?
  - A serious danger: women will get pregnant and bear GIANTS





- (2) Angels present for worship, offended by any breach of propriety
  - as in Dead Sea Scrolls: maimed or deformed
  - here, breach of custom or dishonor of husband

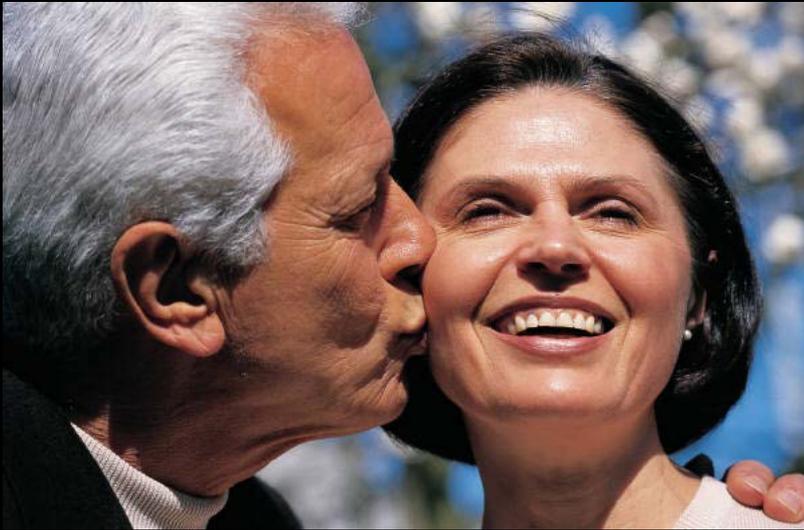
**You should behave better in church.**

- (3) Angels that we will someday judge (1 Cor 6:1-3)
  - fits whole-book context
  - in 1 Cor 6: we should exercise authority responsibly now
  - 11:10: women have the “right” or “authority” over their own head--let them exercise it responsibly
  - context of chs. 8-10: surrendering our “rights” so others don’t stumble

When my students in Nigeria were **debating each other about the need for head coverings**

- one protested, “But the **Bible COMMANDS us to wear head coverings!**”
- “Wait!” I finally intervened. “The Bible commands the holy kiss five times as often as head coverings, but **NONE of you greeted me with a holy kiss when I came in the room.**”
- They laughed.
- “Too late now,” I added hastily.





- Head coverings were part of their culture, but familial and holy kisses were not.

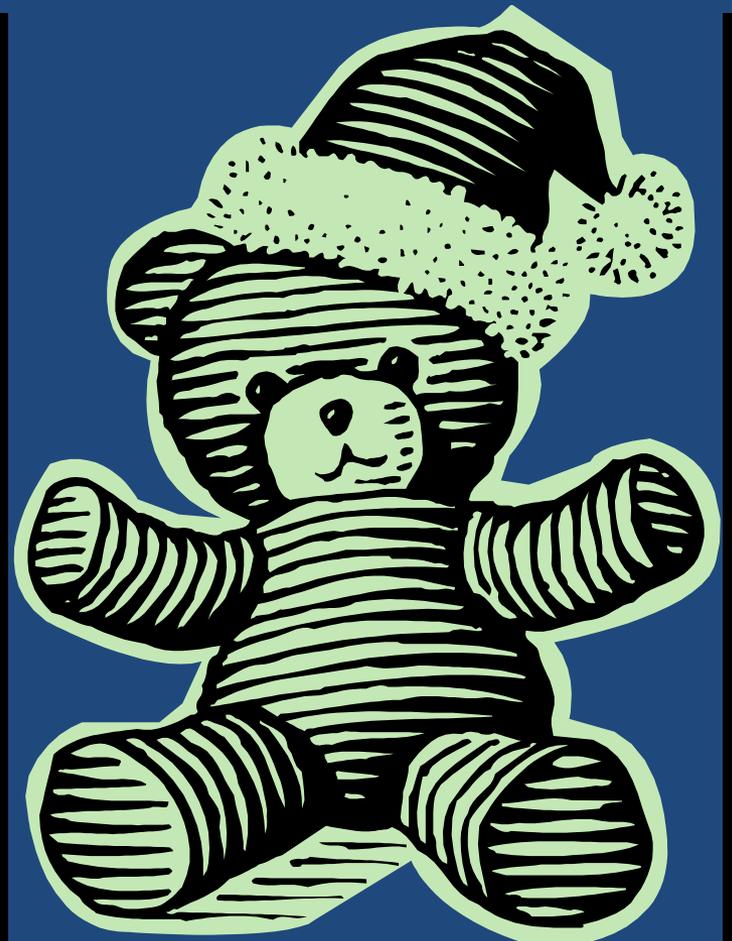


Most of the class agreed with me that Paul's principles were more important than his application.

That is, **avoiding:**

- Seduction
- Ostentation
- and class conflict

were **more important** than the specific rule **against head coverings**.



But are there any situations where these very principles may militate *against* wearing head coverings?

- **Seduction:** could they ever be used to attract crossgender attention?
- **Ostentation:** could they ever be used to show off?
- **Class conflict:** could they ever highlight the disparity of rich and poor head-covering buyers?

All of these were agreed to be true at times in their culture.

# This is not to suggest that we *prohibit* head coverings.

- It is merely to suggest that everyone should buy the same brand. (Just joking)
- It is rather to suggest that we learn from Paul's *principles*, which he applied to that culture.
- We recontextualize those principles differently in different cultures.
- There are other ways to be ostentatious or seductive than not wearing a hat to church.



# Moral issues versus cultural issues

- **Transcultural moral norms**
  - E.g., Paul's vice-lists (Rom 1:28-31; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21)
- **Not transcultural if different passages allow *different practices***
  - Women secluded in the home (1 Tim 5:14)
  - Women work outside home (Prov 31:16, 24; Gen 29:9; Song 1:6)
  - Women shouldn't teach men the Bible with authority (1 Tim 2:12)
  - Women can rule *all Israel* and speak God's message (Judg 4:4)

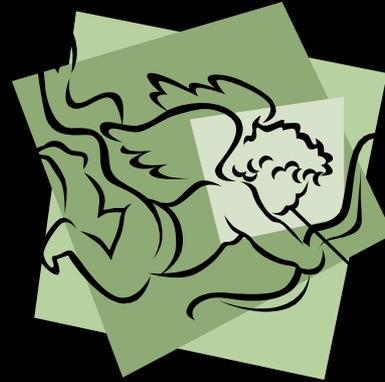
# We need to understand the cultural options *available* to the writer.

- E.g., they wrote in an era when no one was trying to abolish all slavery
- That they do not address explicitly an issue no one had raised does not mean they would have sided with slavery's supporters if someone raised the issue!



By contrast, the Bible sometimes speaks with a unanimous voice against some elements of culture.

- Greeks in Paul's day held various views regarding premarital sex and homosexual intercourse
- But the Bible condemns these practices in *every* passage that mentions them.



# Culture and Paul's view

- Paul's "against nature": like Stoics, appeal to natural order
  - Not modern genetics, but where male and female organs are designed to fit
  - Recalls "male and female" of creation
- Greeks commonly practiced male homosexual intercourse
  - Married around age 30
  - 3 ways to get intercourse

# Some use culture to limit Paul's argument here—but:

- Argument for only pederasty
  - Best argument, but: not exclusively pederastic
  - 1:26 speaks of lesbian relations
- Argument for relation to idolatry
  - Not linked in Greek world
- Argument for echo of “Enoch myth”
  - Only one sin among many
  - Paul uses different “Fall” model here

# Of course, Paul's position should not be abused:

- Paul was a pastor
  - Many converts in Corinth would've come from this background
  - But Paul speaks here of sins, not of classes of people
- Context of Paul's argument:
  - Distinctively Gentile sins (idolatry, homosexual intercourse)
  - But all sins are deadly (1:28-32); setup for Rom 2

# Church and society

## Not telling society what to hold (1 Cor 5:9-13)

- I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons—not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber. Do not even eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge?

But neither can society determine what the church must practice

# NT Use of OT (samples from entire course)

- Samples especially from Matthew
- Since Matthew is particularly frequently accused of ignoring context



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# Look at Matthew's treatment of Isaiah 7:14.

- Who is the Immanuel-son of this passage?

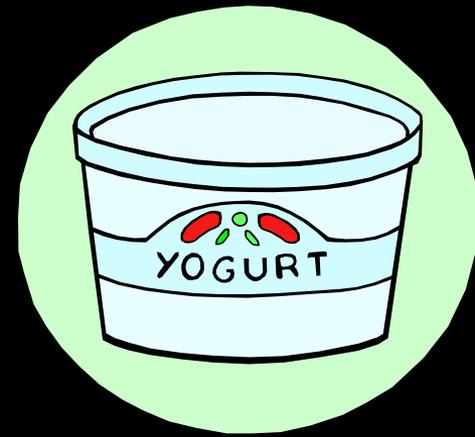


## Isaiah 7:14:

- Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a young woman will be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel.

- 7:10-16: Then the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; make it as deep as Sheol or as high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!” So Isaiah said, “Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of mortals, that you would try the patience of my God as well? Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: a young woman will be with child and bear a son...

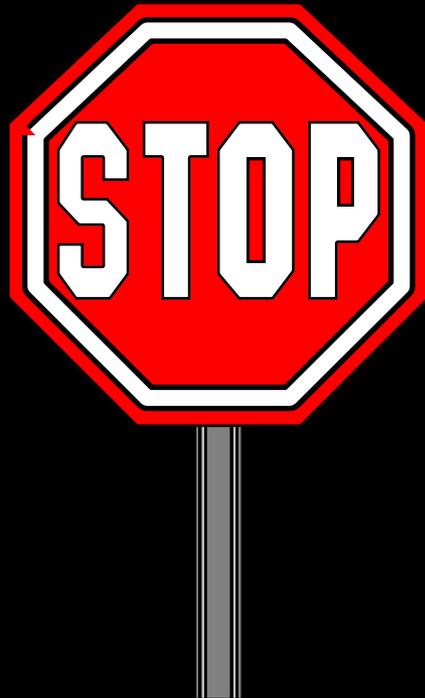
- ...and she will call his name Immanuel. He will eat yogurt and honey at the time he knows enough to refuse evil and choose good. For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be abandoned.



- Isa 8:1-4: Then the LORD said to me, “Take for yourself a large tablet and write on it in ordinary letters: Swift is the booty, speedy is the prey...” So I approached the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. Then the LORD said to me, Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz; for before the boy knows how to cry out ‘My father’ or ‘my mother,’ the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria.”

# Isaiah 8:18:

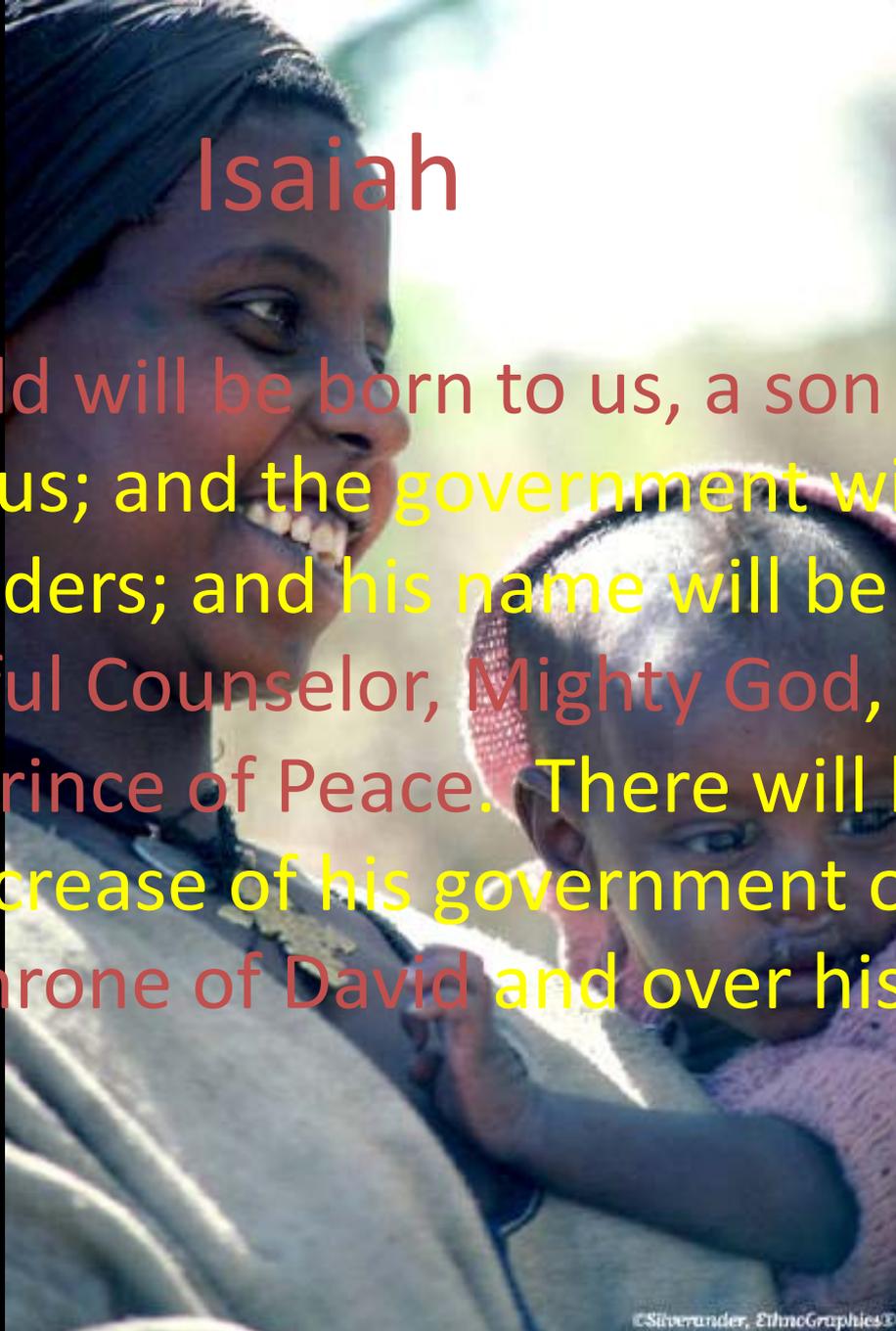
- ...I and the children God has given me are for signs and wonders to Israel...



What is  
the purpose  
of a sign?

# Isaiah

- For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on his shoulders; and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom...



# Did Matthew have this WHOLE context in mind when he wrote?

- Matthew 4:15-16 applies to Jesus Isaiah 9:1-2 (a light in Galilee of the Gentiles)
- If the same context is still fresh in Matthew's mind a few chapters later, why not also here?

# “Out of Egypt I called My Son” (Matt 2:15)

- This is from Hosea 11:1, which also says, “When Israel was young I loved him”
- This is not about the Messiah per se
- But about Israel in the time of the exodus!



# Is Matthew ignoring the context?

- But Matthew, unlike the Septuagint, correctly translates the Hebrew on his own.
- He also knows the rest of the context: Hosea 11 promises a NEW exodus, a new era of salvation.
- Matthew finds a pattern between Jesus and Israel's history.

This is not just a “guess.” Matthew consistently follows this pattern.

- Israel in the wilderness 40 years.
- Israel tempted in the wilderness
- God gives Israel commands in Deuteronomy
- Rachel weeps over Israel during exile
- Jesus in the wilderness 40 days (Matt 4).
- Jesus tempted in the wilderness
- Jesus quotes three commands from Deuteronomy
- Rachel weeps over Israel in Matt 2

In fact, the OT itself suggests such redemptive analogies.

- E.g., Is 42-44: the “Servant” is explicitly ISRAEL, God’s chosen
- 42:18: God’s servant is *blind and deaf*
- in Is 49:3 Israel is God’s servant
- in 49:5, God’s servant is one to bring Israel *BACK* to Him
- also in Is 53
- Israel fails its servant mission, so a righteous One within Israel fulfills it

# Matthew Denounces Injustice

(2:16-17)

- "Child and his mother"—5 x: the dictator was paranoid
- Matt not dispassionate: Lamentation (from Jer 31)
- in our tragedy, we rarely recognize God's larger work in history
- Jesus identifies with His people's exile, just as with their exodus

# 2:18 cites Jer 31:15

- Compares Israel's anguish in the exile
- Rachel, who cries in Jeremiah
  - was buried near Bethlehem (Gen 35:19)
  - Implicit gezerah shevah
  - Rabbis: Jacob buried Rachel there to pray for later exiles

# Context in Jer 31

- God comforts Rachel:
  - Jeremiah goes on to prophesy Israel's restoration
  - because Israel is "my dear son, the child in whom I delight" (31:20)—cf. Matt 2:15
  - and a new covenant (Jer 31:31-34; cf. Matt 26)
- Jewish teachers often implicitly suggested entire contexts or linked analogous texts

# Jesus' three quotations

- All from Deuteronomy
  - DSS: Deut, Isa, Pss
  - Commands God gave Israel in the wilderness, which they failed to obey during their testing
- The context of Deut 8:3 is God's faithful provision for His son (Deut 8:5) Israel during their testing in the wilderness (Deut 8:2)

# Matt 4:6-7

- The devil quotes Ps 91:11-12 selectively
  - the *context* (91:3-10) suggests protection from external dangers, not creating one's own danger to test God!
- Rabbis often refuted opponents' proof-texts by citing counter-texts, as Jesus does here
- “Putting God to the test” (Deut 6:16) refers to Israel's complaint in the wilderness that God was not supplying sufficiently (cf. Ex 17:2-3, 7)

You must be more righteous than the Pharisees (5:20).

## ***HOW?***

- Law: You shall not kill (5:21)
  - Jesus: You shall not **want** to kill (5:22)
- Law: You shall not commit adultery (5:27, 31)
  - Jesus: You shall not **want** to commit adultery (5:28)
  - or betray your spouse by unfaithful divorce (5:32)

# Six times Jesus goes to the HEART of the Law of Moses.

- Don't murder
- Don't commit adultery
- Don't commit adultery
- Don't swear falsely
- Eye for eye
- Love neighbor

The Law limits sin.

- Control anger
- Don't lust
- Don't divorce
- Have integrity
- Don't resist enemies
- LOVE enemies

Jesus delivers from sin.

# Matthew 5:21-48: midrashim on OT texts-You have heard..., but I say to you...

God cares who you are, not just what you do

- Don' t *want* to kill (5:21-26)
- Don' t *want* to Commit Adultery (5:27-30)
- Don' t betray spouse by unfair divorce (5:31-32)
- Have more integrity than vows (5:33-37)
- Avoid legal resistance (5:38-42)
- Actively love and help your enemies (5:43-47)
- Concl.: Be as perfect as God is (5:48)

# Finally, Jesus summarizes (5:48)

- In case we took His examples as exhaustive (e.g., adultery of the heart but not “fornication” of the heart?)...
- 5:48: Therefore be PERFECT, just like your HEAVENLY FATHER is perfect.

# HOW Jesus applies the law

- Not traditional FENCE
- Rather, “mercy more than sacrifice”  
(9:13; 12:7)
- Entire law fulfilled by:
  - Treat your neighbor as you want to be treated (7:12)
  - Love your neighbor as yourself (22:39-40)

# Don't Covet Others Sexually (5:27-30)

- Many thought normal (cf. e.g., magical spells)
- Women wore head coverings to prevent
- Hellfire!; "stumbling"=apostasy
- Moral principle: marital, premarital fidelity (cf. Antipas)
- Solutions?
- Comparing Jewish contemporaries: next slide

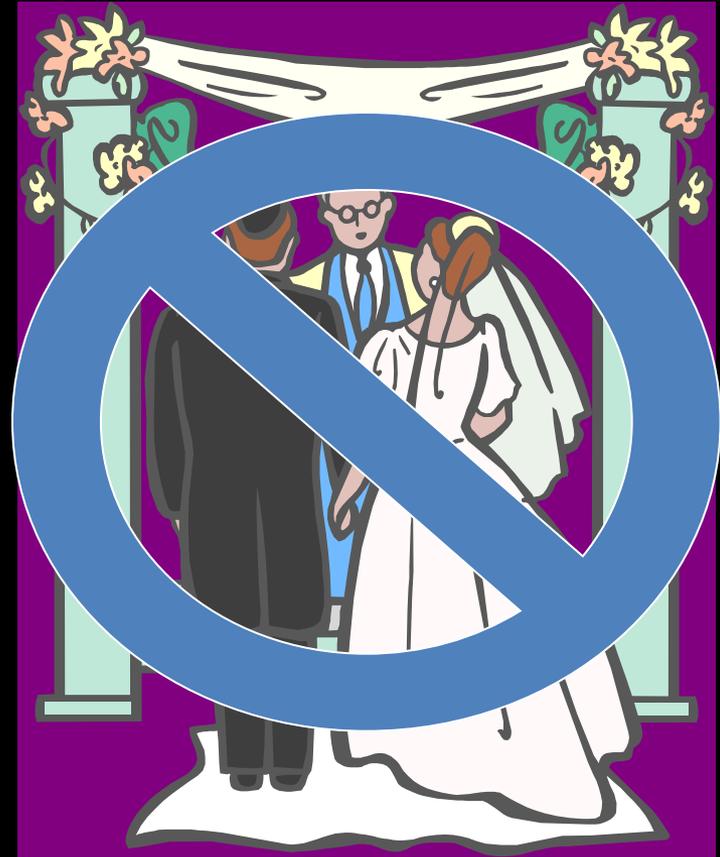
Whoever looks for the purpose of coveting another's sexuality is guilty of the act

- Compare DSS, Testaments of 12 Patriarchs
- Compare School of R. Ishmael
- Compare esp. Ex 20 in LXX

Don't Betray your Spouse by  
Divorce (5:31-32)

# Jesus warns that whoever remarries commits adultery.

- *If* this is literal, all remarriages are adulterous
- Therefore Christians should break up second, third, etc., marriages
- Imagine the pastoral implications of this doctrine!

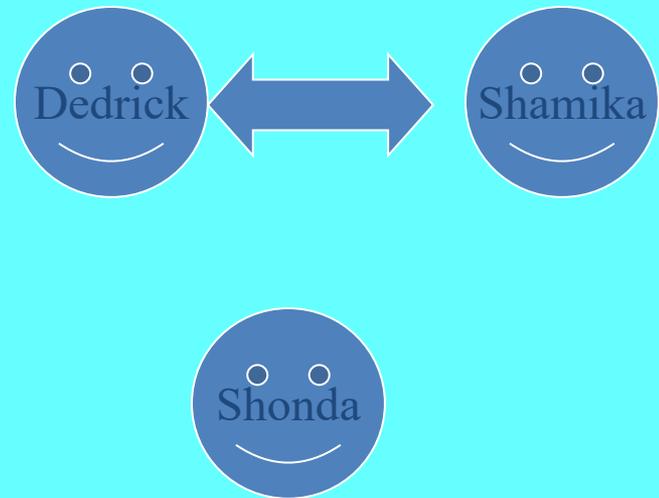


Mk 10:11: Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her

- Notice “commits adultery against her”:
  - such divorce is not a victimless crime
  - it is wrong because it wrongs an innocent party
  - in that culture, a wife could be divorced for almost any reason, and had little economic recourse once divorced
- But what does “commits adultery” mean?
  - It can only mean they remain married in God’s sight.

Mk 10:11: Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her

- What does **adultery** mean?
- If Dedrick is married to Shamika, and sleeps with Shonda, that is **literal** adultery
- If Dedrick divorces Shamika to marry Shonda, that is also “adultery” --if Dedrick remains married to Shonda in God’s sight.



# Even more troubling, if the marriage is indissoluble,

- Then even the *innocent* party remains bound to the marriage!
- Lk 16:18: Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man *who marries a divorced woman* commits adultery.

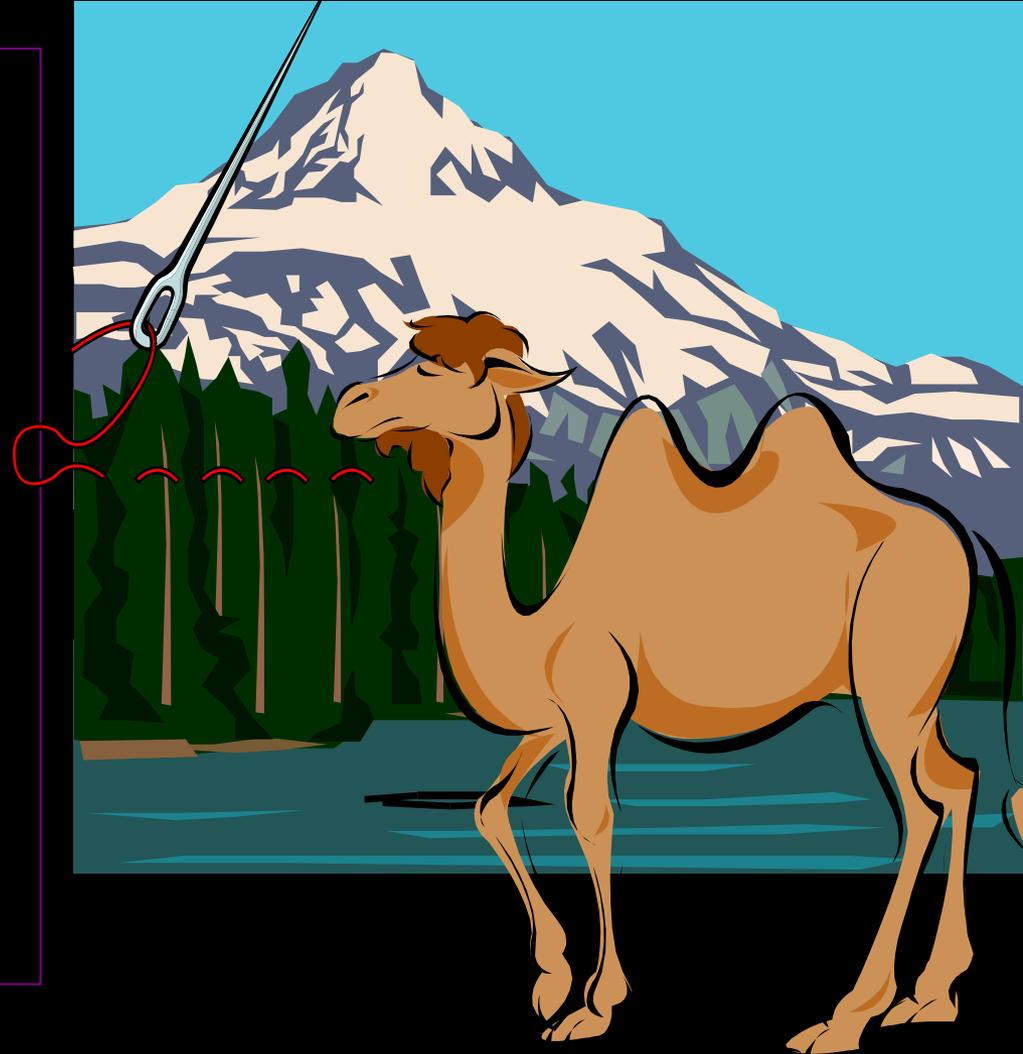


# Is this “literal,” or is it hyperbole?

- Jesus often used hyperbole
- The context of the divorce saying in Matt 5:32 is hyperbole
- Jesus’ other teachings assume the dissolubility of marriage
  - the woman at the well
  - the exception clause (Matt 5:32; 19:9)
  - Paul’s freedom to recognize an exception (1 Cor 7:15)
  - the very context in Mk 10:9

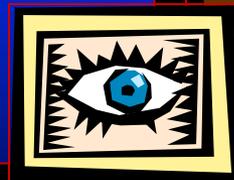
# Jesus often used hyperbole.

- Can a camel *really* fit through a needle's eye?
  - Camel juice
- Did Pharisees *really* gulp down camels whole?
  - indigestion
- How often did Jesus' followers move *literal* mountains?



# The context of the divorce saying in Matt 5:32 is hyperbole

- 5:29-30: If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away... And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away...
- Few of you seem to take this literally.



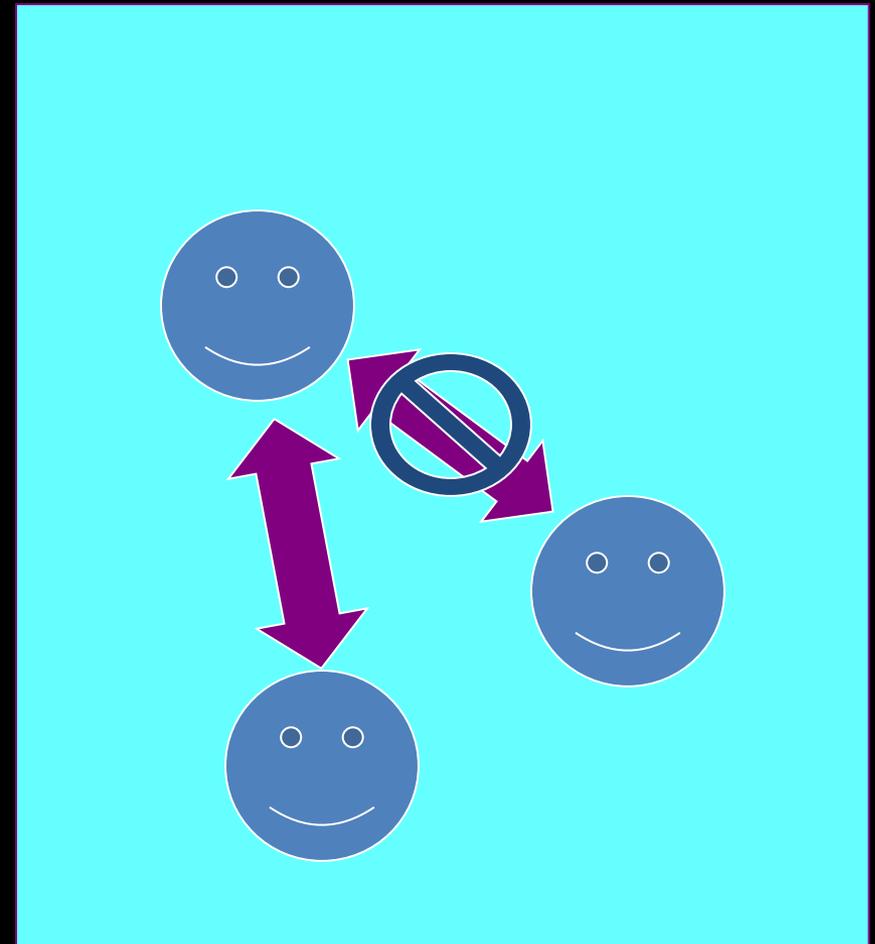
# Jesus' other teachings assume the dissolubility of marriage



- Jesus does not say to the woman at the well, “You were married once and lived with five guys since then.”
- Rather He says, “You were married five times but are just living with somebody now.”

# Likewise, the exception clause (Matt 5:32; 19:9)

- Whoever divorces his wife, ***except on grounds of unfaithfulness***
- Divorce by ancient definition = freedom to remarry
  - The question was the validity of the divorce
  - If the innocent party is validly divorced, how can even the guilty party remain married to ***them***?



# Paul recognizes another exception

- Jesus says: the believer is not free to divorce/abandon a faithful spouse
- But Paul qualifies this: if the spouse leaves, the believer is “not under bondage” (1 Cor 7:15)
  - the *exact language* in ancient divorce contracts for *freedom to remarry*
  - *Paul* takes it as a general statement of principle (like a proverb) that may be qualified
  - Four of six divorce texts in the NT explicitly make exceptions
  - What Matthew’s and Paul’s exceptions have in common: an innocent party (*adultery, abandonment; we might add, abuse*)
  - (compare also Jesus’ remark to the Samaritan woman)

Mk 10:11 speaks as if marriage is indissoluble.

But Mk 10:9 recognizes that it is in fact ***dissoluble***:

- Therefore what God has joined together, ***let*** no one separate
- The point in both cases is not that it ***cannot*** be dissolved, but that it ***should*** not be
- The rhetorical ***function*** of the language is demand: preserve marriage; not cosmic law: marriage remains intact even when the covenant is broken by the other partner

# Missing the Forest for the Trees (23:23-28)

Woe to you, teachers of the law and *Pharisees*, you hypocrites! *You give a tenth of your spices*--mint, dill and cummin--Matt 23:23

- The tithe was 1/10 of agrarian produce
- But the Pharisees harmonized different passages and came up with three tithes: hence 20% for two years and 30% on the third
- (Pharisees were mainly urban, and tithes affected mainly farmers; but Pharisees retithed any food they bought.)

But Pharisees debated whether some things were foodstuffs, therefore whether or not they needed to be tithed on.



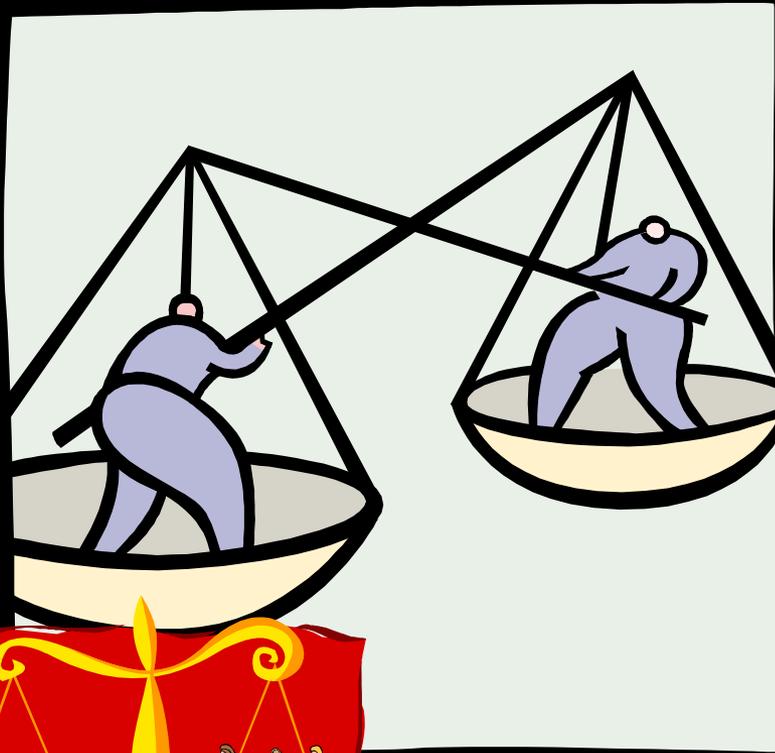
- Later rabbis said to tithe dill and cummin but not mint
- First-century Shammaites disputed even cummin
- But Jesus addresses a superscrupulous Pharisee: “You give a tenth of your spices-- mint, dill and cummin”

Though you tithe, “you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness” (Matt 23:23)

- But this idea of looking for the *heart* of God's law wasn't new:
- And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? (Deut 10:12-13)
- He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)



Both Jesus and the rabbis agreed that no matter of Torah was “light” (Matt 5:19)



- **But Jesus emphasized that some was weightier:**
- ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment... (22:36-38; cf. R. Akiba)
- **You blind fools! Which is greater: ... You blind men! Which is greater: ...? (23:17, 19)**
- **Whole-Book context: justice (5:22; 23:33); mercy (9:13); faith (8:10)**

Jesus' contemporaries did recognize that some statements in the law were "weightier" than others.

- The Rabbis said the punishment for neglecting the white threads of the prayer shawl was greater than the punishment for neglecting the blue threads

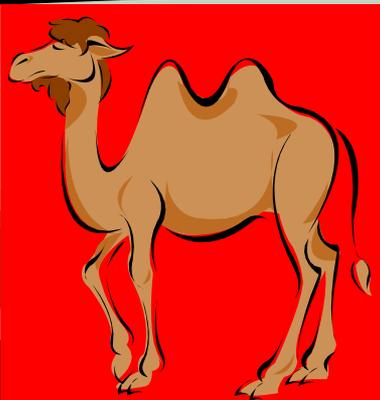


Then Jesus makes a humorous, graphic insult that would grab His audience's attention.



Blind guides?

- You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.
- I.e., they pay attention to *minutiae* (like tithing, comparatively speaking) but neglect God's *heart* in the law.



# Rom 10:5-10

- God prefaced 10 commandments with redemption
- 10:5 quotes Lev 18:5
  - Long life on the land
  - But applied to eternal life by obedience
  - Hypothetical, or opponents' proof-text
- 10:6-10: midrash on Deut 30:12-14
  - Jewish tradition: Moses ascended to heaven for Torah
  - Descent into deep: crossing the sea
  - Lit., "sea," but Paul adapts wording (common practice) to "deep," for connection with Jesus



# Rom 10:6-10

Deut 30:12-14

Paul's application in Rom 10:6-10

Do not say, "Who will ascend to heaven?" (to bring down Torah, God's gift; 30:12)

Do not say, "Who will ascend to heaven?" (to bring down Christ, God's gift; 10:6)

Do not say, "Who will descend into the deep?" (to experience redemption again, crossing the "sea"; 30:13)

Do not say, "Who will descend into the abyss?" (to experience salvation again, raising Christ from the dead; 10:7)

The Word is near you (the Torah; 30:14)

The word is near you (the message of faith we now preach, 10:8)

It is in your mouth and in your heart (30:14; as Torah was to be recited continually [Deut 6:6-7])

It is in your mouth and in your heart: confess with the mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe with the heart that God raised him (10:9-10)

# HEARING THE OTHER AUTHOR

- 2 Timothy 3:16
- *A relational* approach
- Textual, but not just *any* text

# Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11

- For whatever was written in former days was *written for our instruction*, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.
- These things happened to them *to serve as an example*, and they were written down *to instruct us*, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

# Gordon Fee, E. P. Sanders, Ron Sider



# Paul, John, and the Divine Author



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# My wife speaking to me vs. dog



# Reading with Faith

- Expectancy to hear God in Scripture
- Reading the Bible as truth
- Embracing theological worldview of Scripture

# Monastic use of lectio divina



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# Shared spiritual context

- E.g., shared prophetic experience

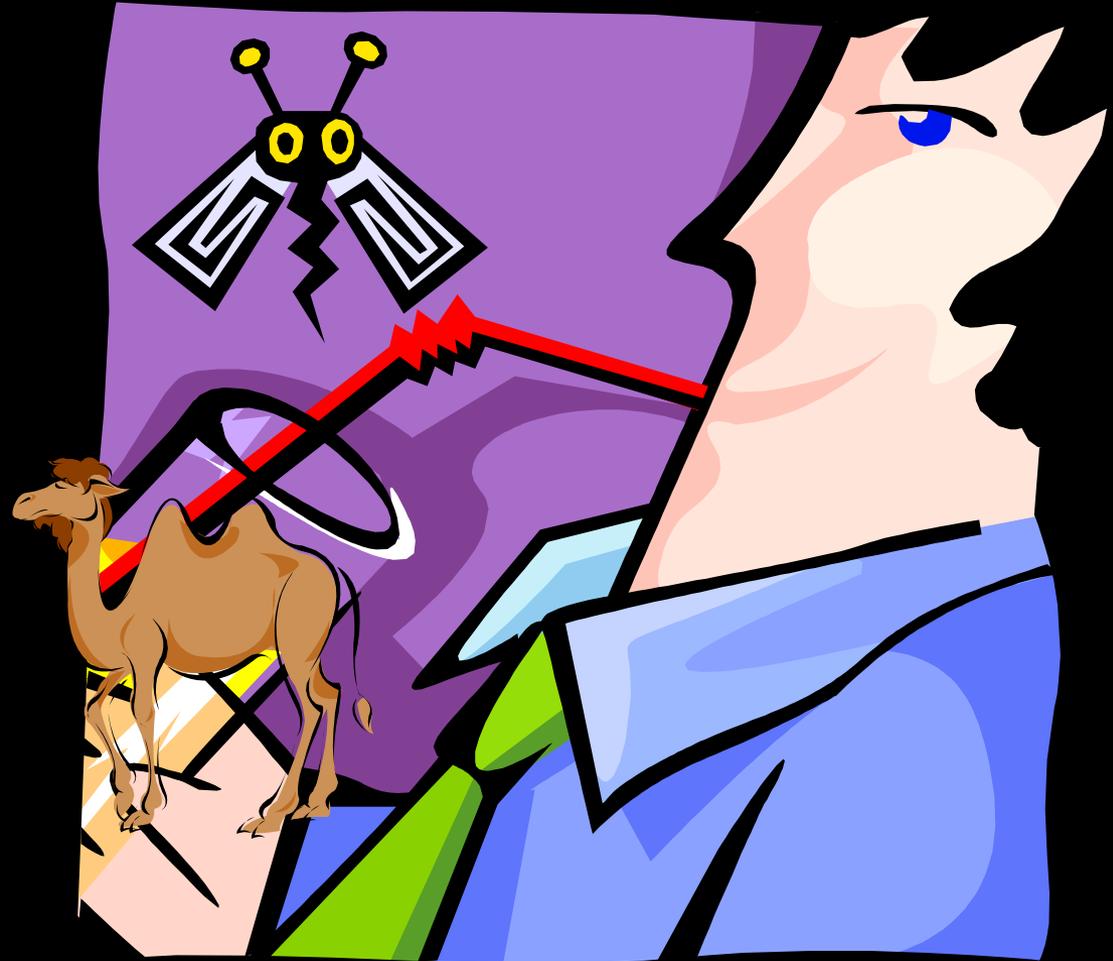


# Exciting GRAMMAR!

- I: first-person pronoun
- Saw: past tense verb for ocular sensation
- The: definite article
- Cat: *Felix domesticus*
- Run: Past tense verb for rapid locomotion
- That clarifies the sentence, surely!

# Straining out a gnat while swallowing a camel

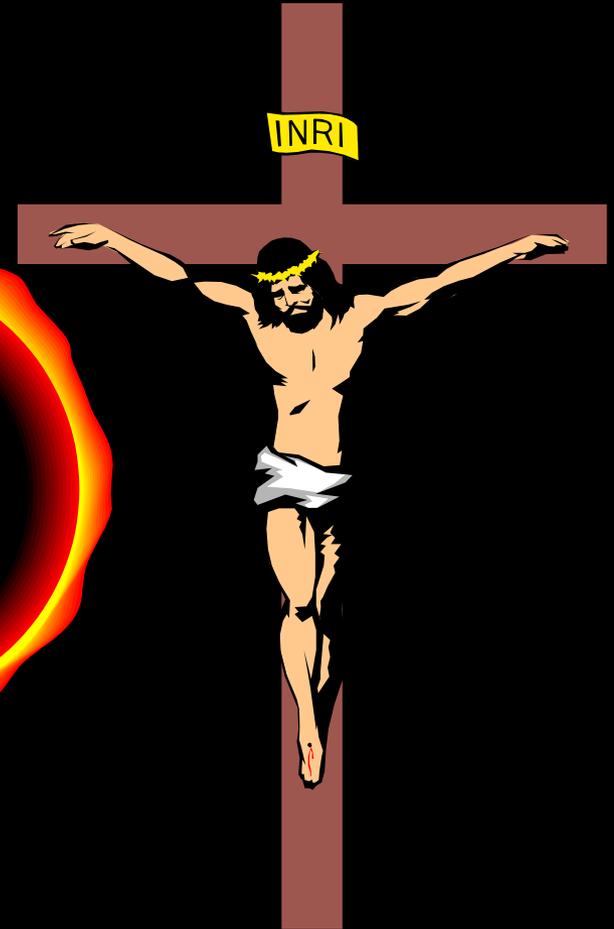
- Drinking a rich camel squeezed through the eye of a needle
- I.e., drinking camomile tea



# Letter and Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3

- New covenant glory greater
- Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:26-27; Deut 5:29; 10:16; 30:6
- Grammar alone vs. learning of God
- Reading to be transformed by Jesus

# New covenant glory greater than old covenant glory



# Letter vs. Spirit



**Attribution: Mishna: Kolel Galicia**

# *Spiritual* context for understanding

- 1Cor. 2:11 For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God.
- 1Cor. 2:12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.
- 1Cor. 2:13 And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

## b. Implications for Hermeneutics

- Grammar alone vs. *obeying* the text in faith
- Connecting the two horizons: original sense and application

# Spirit and Letter in Romans 7:5-6

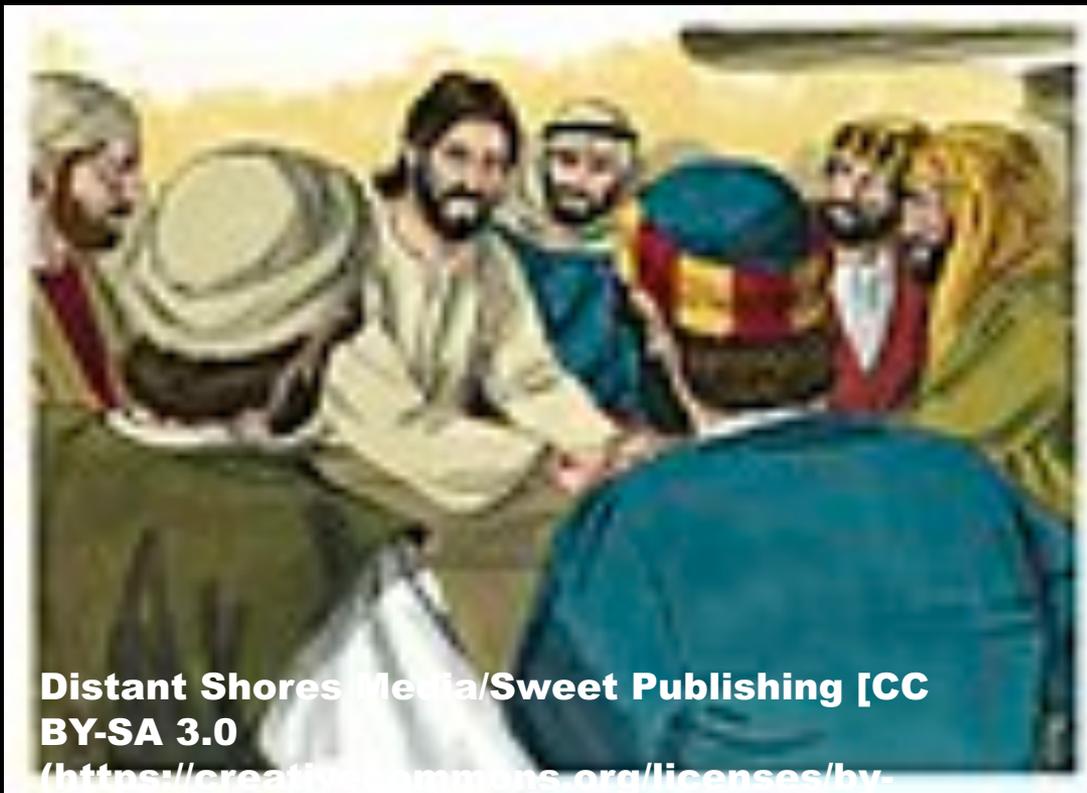
- Right and wrong ways to approach the law
  - Contrast 7:14 with 6:18, 20, 22; 8:9
    - 7:14: ... the law is from the Spirit; but I'm made of flesh, sold as a slave to sin
    - 6:18: Having been liberated from sin, you've become slaves to Righteousness
    - 6:22: Now that you've been liberated from sin and enslaved to God
    - 8:9: You're not in the sphere of mere flesh, but in the sphere of the Spirit, since God's Spirit lives within you
- Walking by the Spirit

# Prayers for understanding Scripture

- Psa. 119:18: Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.
- Psa. 119:27: Make me understand the way of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wondrous works.
- Psa. 119:34: Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.
- Psa. 119:73: Your hands have made and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn your commandments.
- Psa. 119:125: I am your servant; give me understanding, so that I may know your decrees.
- Psa. 119:144: Your decrees are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live.
- Psa. 119:169: Let my cry come before you, O Lord; give me understanding according to your word.

# Luke 24:45

- Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures (NRSV)



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# Walking, led, footsteps



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# The Word of God for the People of God

- a. End-Time Readers
- Pentecost's "last days"
- The already/not yet of the kingdom

# Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11

- For whatever was written in former days was *written for our instruction*, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.
- These things happened to them *to serve as an example*, and they were written down *to instruct us*, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

# End-time readers

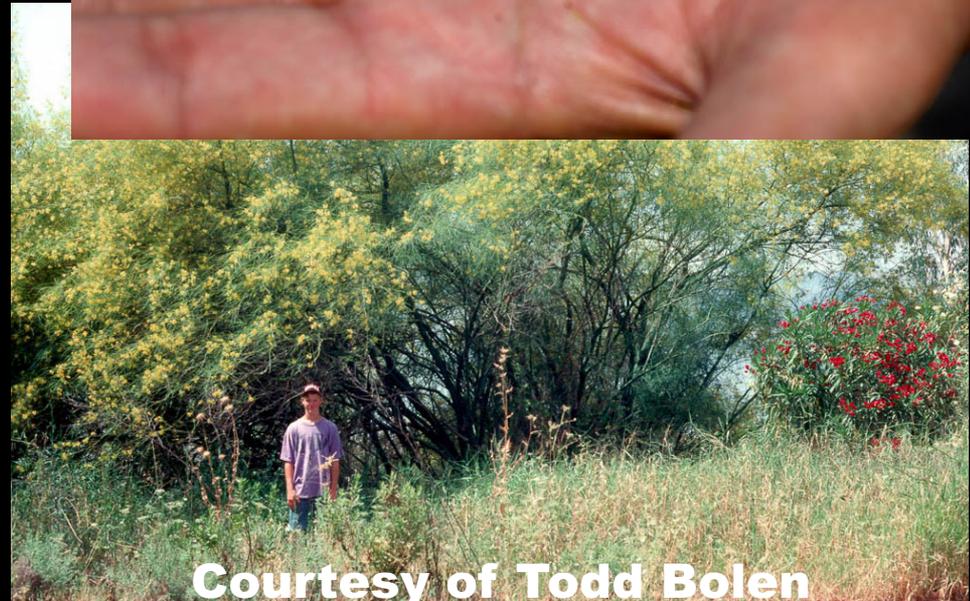
- Heb 1:2: “in *these* last days, God has spoken to us by His Son”
- Acts 2:17, on the day of Pentecost: “In the last days, says God, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh”
- tasted the powers of the coming age (Heb 6:4-5)
- “firstfruits” (*aparchê*) of the Spirit (Rom 8:23)
- down payment (*arrhabôn*) of our future inheritance (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:13-14)

# More on the last days

- hard times, mockers, and apostasy in “the last days” in 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1, and 2 Peter 3:3
- 1 John 2:18 warns, “You have heard that an antichrist is coming; even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know that it is an eschatological hour.”

# Kingdom is already/not yet

- Jesus is already the firstfruits of the promised resurrection (1 Cor 15:20, 23)
- the kingdom has come like a mustard seed yet will flourish like a great tree (Mark 4:31-32)



Courtesy of Todd Bolen

To them, but not only for them;  
also *for us*



God poured out the Spirit; does He  
pour the Spirit back up?





# Prophecies to Médine Moussounga

# Testing prophecy, teaching

- 1 Cor. 14:29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.
- 1 Th. 5:19-22: Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.
- 1 Cor. 13:9 For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part;

# Charismatic scholars include N. T. Wright, Richard Hays, Teresa Berger



N.T. Wright

# Best to have all the body parts working together



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via Wikimedia Commons**

# Prophecy, tongues, knowledge (teaching)

- Such gifts explicitly continue until we see Christ face to face and know as we are known, and therefore no longer need such partial gifts (1 Cor 13:8-12)
- “be eager to prophesy, and do not prohibit speaking in tongues; but let everything be done in the right way and in order” (14:39-40)

# Prophecy ≠ Scripture; closed canon ≠ end of prophecy

- Tens of thousands of prophecies
  - 2 or 3 x 100 house churches x 52 weeks x 65 years
- Cessationism is a postbiblical doctrine
- *First-century* apostles and prophets have ceased, but it doesn't mean that all apostles or prophets have ceased
- God's Spirit bears witness with our spirit—Rom 8:16

# Patterns in Scripture

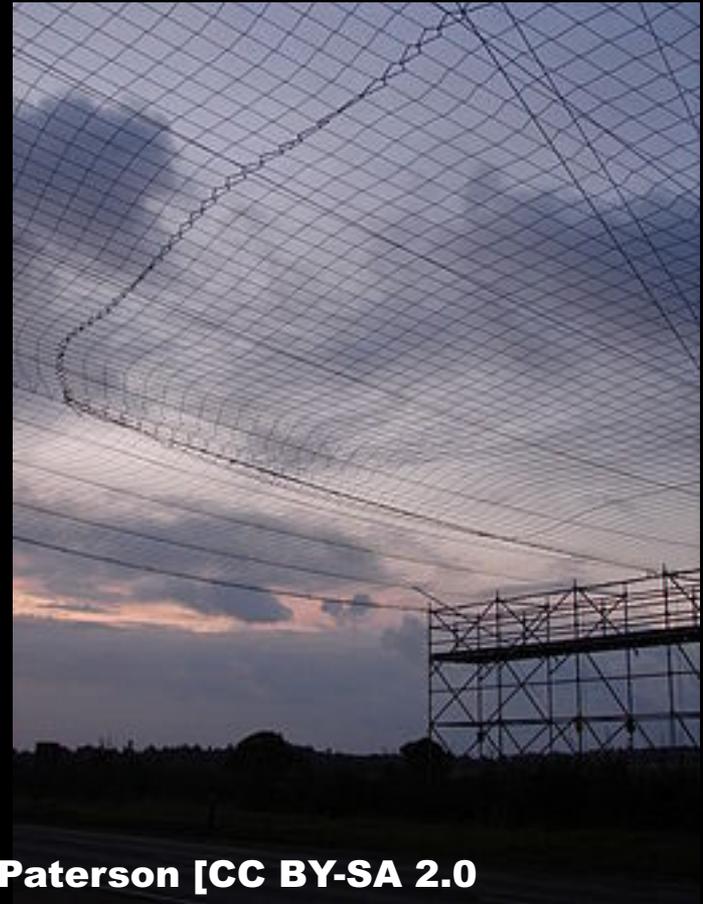
- 1 Cor. 10:11: These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come.
- *all* Scripture is profitable for teaching (2 Tim 3:16)
- Paul uses Abram's faith (Gen 15:6) as a model for believers (Rom 4:1-25)
- James uses the experiences of the prophets and Job as models for endurance (James 5:10-11)

# Reading with the Humble

- Awakenings often start among the humble
  - God is near the broken but far from the proud (Ps 138:6; Prov 3:34; Matt 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14; James 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5)
  - Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up (1 Cor 8:1)
  - “I praise you, Father,” Jesus prayed, “for you hid these matters from the wise and intellectual and revealed them to little children” (Matt 11:25//Luke 10:21)
  - Only those who welcome the kingdom like a child will enter it (Mark 10:15)

# Communities of interpretation

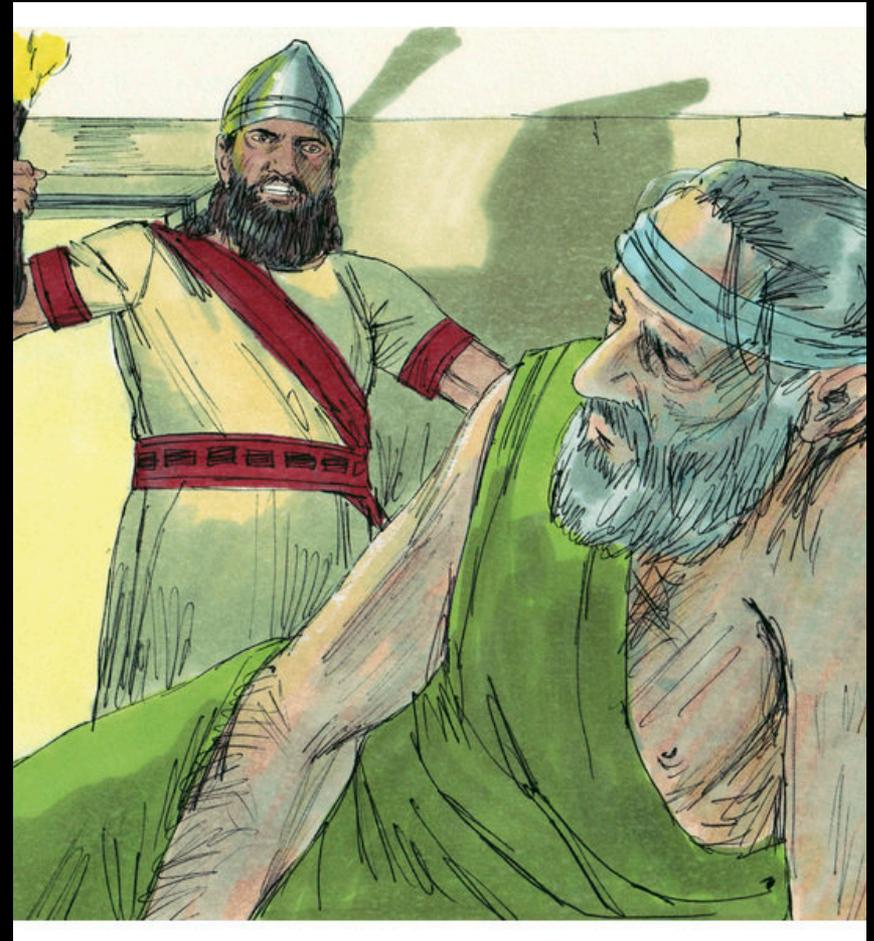
- Safety net
- 1 Cor 14:29: Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said



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# Yet Jeremiah had to stand alone

- Most prophets were prophesying peace when there was no peace (Jer 5:13, 31; 6:13; 14:13-15)  
Jeremiah had to call the community of his day back to God's message (Jer 6:19; 9:13; 16:11; 26:4; 32:23; 44:10, 23)



# Long-range testing

**Jeremiah in 2 Chron 36:12, 21-22;  
Ezra 1:1; Dan 9:2)**



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<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=18884244>

## 2 Timothy 3:16—4:3

- All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. ... proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires,