

MY PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO SCRIPTURE STUDY

- I consider the Scriptures to be the word of the One True Creator
- This means YHWH is the One true Creator
- I want to know Him as best I can
- I want to know how He wants me to live
- This means I have to study His Word
- His Word is found ONLY in the Scriptures
- Which makes the Scriptures my 'Rule Book'
- But I know that what is considered 'Scripture' is still being debated
- Which means, I have to study the Scriptures for myself
- I bring my logic training to my Scripture studies
- I know the Scriptures were written FOR me, but not TO me
- I know they were written by HEBREWS, to HEBREWS
- I know they were written mostly in Hebrew and Greek
- I know the Hebrew language is very different from Greek and English
- I know this affects the way the Hebrew thinks
- I know this makes it more of a challenge to properly translate the Hebrew into English
- I know people bring their pre-conceived ideas to their reading of the Scriptures
- I know these pre-conceived notions find their way into our English translations of the Bible
- I know that many then study these translations without question, thereby passing on the biases of the translators
- I know I do not have the time to learn Hebrew and Greek

--I know this means I have to learn to consult several different translations of the passages I study

--I know I will have to learn to use a Concordances

--I know a concordance is not a lexicon

--I know this means I have to learn how to use a Hebrew and Greek lexicon

--I also know that language is only relevant within the culture using it

--The only way to learn the different figures of speech used in the Scriptures is to learn about the people who wrote them

--This not only includes figures of speech, but also poetry, word play and parallelism

--And then I have to learn how they used symbolism in understanding and discussing their world

--I know that all of this means I have to learn as much as I can about the ancient Hebrew culture and the greater ANE culture surrounding it

--I know this means I will have to study outside of the Scriptures

--I know these outside studies are not Scripture

--In the process of doing all of this, I have learned to apply some simple techniques to help me learn and understand

--I do not focus on word studies as much as I look for concepts and themes

--Once I find a concept/theme, I follow it all the way through the Scriptures

--Then I try to figure out where and how that concept/theme fits into the greater story of YHWH's plan to redeem Mankind

--Once I think I know where and how a concept or theme fits into the bigger picture, I let that concept/theme guide me in any related word studies

--I also let it guide my understanding when I find a new concept/theme that is related to the one(s) I already think I understand

--The whole time I am going through this process, I look for apparent contradictions in my understanding

--If and when I find a contradiction, I keep working on that concept/theme until it fits into place without contradiction

--If I cannot do this, I set that concept/theme aside until it DOES fit

--Until it fits, I am content to know about it, but I refuse to try to hammer it into the bigger picture

--In this way, I have slowly built a consistent, coherent understanding of YHWH's Word: free from any contradictions

SOME BIBLICAL HISTORY

--Abraham was the first Hebrew

--Hebrew means to 'cross over'

--I have come to see this as the OT way of saying 'Born Again'

--When one crosses over from the worldly way of living to the Spiritual Way of living, one 'crosses over'

--It is a figurative way of saying you have renounced this worldly kingdom and have pledged your allegiance to YHWH's Spiritual Kingdom

--Abraham was NOTY the first Israelite

--Abraham was NOT the first Jew

--Abraham's grandson, Jacob, was re-named by the Angel of YHWH after Jacob wrestled with Him until He blessed Jacob

--The Angel of YHWH re-named Jacob, Israel

--Israel means 'wrestles with Elohim (God)'

--This means we wrestle with YHWH to understand and obey His instructions for how He wants us to live

--This includes how He wants us to worship Him

--This is a large part of the reason YHWH left us His Word: to provide a record of His TORAH

--Torah means 'instructions'

--So, Jacob was the first Israelite, but he was not the nation of Israel

--Nor was Jacob the first Jew

--Jacob had twelve sons

--Each of these sons was the father of one of the twelve tribes of Israel (*the tribe of Joseph would later split into Ephraim and Manasseh*)

--One of those sons was named, Judah

--Technically, this means Judah was the first 'Jew'

--But Scripture does not use this term, 'Jew,' until after the Kingdom of Israel is divided by civil war

--After the separation, the Southern Kingdom is called Judah and the Northern Kingdom is called Israel

--The Southern Kingdom consisted mostly of the tribe of Judah, but also half the tribe of Benjamin and half the tribe of Levi (*as well as a scattering of all the other tribes that remained faithful to the TORAH*).

--From this point, the people living in the Southern Kingdom are known as 'Jews'

--The people living in the Northern Tribe were called Israelites until they were conquered by Assyria and deported

--After the Israelites were deported, the region was renamed Samaria

--The people living there were known as Samaritans

--Most Samaritans were imported from other parts of the Middle East by the Assyrians

--This means these new people were NOT of Hebrew origins

--But some Samaritans were still Hebrews

--Not all Hebrews were deported by Assyria

--But the ones who remained still practiced their perversion of the Faith

--These are the reasons for the NT animosity toward the Samaritans

--Later, when Jerusalem is burned by Rome and the Temple is destroyed, the vast majority of the Jews left in Judeah dispersed into the nations

--This is known as the Diaspora

--These are the 'Jews' of modern times

--I am aware of the dispute over the 'Ashkenazi Jews,' but I am setting that issue aside for the time being

--The point is this: Jew refers to those from the Kingdom of Judah

--It does not refer to the Israelites

--All Jews are Hebrews

--Not all Hebrews are Jews

--This is important because the Scriptures differentiate all the way to the Book of Revelation

--Jew and The House of Judah = Southern Kingdom

--Israel and Hose of Israel (and Jospeh/Ephraim) = Northern Kingdom

--Jacob or 'ALL ISRAEL' == all Hebrews, AND THOSDE GENTILES WHO HAVE BEEN GRAFTED IN WITH THEM!!!

AN IMPORTANT OBSERVATION

--There is a repeating pattern in Scripture that most believers miss or ignore

--Jacob (*Israel*) took his family into Egypt, where they became 'a nation'

--This is better understood as 'a people'

--While in Egypt, they largely forgot about the Elohim of their forefathers (YHWH)

--When Moses leads them out of Egypt, they undergo a national mikvah, or baptism, known as the Red Sea Crossing

--This was symbolic of national repentance and a re-dedication of the Hebrew People to YHWH

--YHWH tells Moses to warn the People to be careful, and to learn how He wants them to worship Him

--Shortly after, the People convince Aaron to make an idol of a calf as a symbol of YHWH

--This almost leads to their extermination, but Moses saves them

--The people then spend forty years wandering in the desert as a result

--Even Moses is banned from entering the promised land because of his disobedience

--The lesson: doing it our way will lead to curse and Divine punishment

--After the forty years, the People undergo another mikvah and re-dedication when they cross over the Jordan

--Once in the Land, they disobey the command to eradicate the Canaanites and are cursed as a result

--Then we see a series of flawed figures go through struggles where they are blessed for their obedience and punished for their disobedience

--Finally, the People revolt over taxes and a civil war splits the nation of Israel

--Both Kingdoms have turned away, but there are periodic attempts to correct the apostasy

--None of these attempts is thorough enough, and the People do not stick to the correction

--Eventually, YHWH divorces the Northern Kingdom and disperses them into the nations

--The Southern Kingdom is also taken captive for its rebellion, but it returns after 70 years

--From that point – per prophecy – the Jews have had a faithful remnant trying to keep the Law of Moses as best they can

--During the Second temple period, the Pharisees were again teaching the traditions of Man over the TORAH of YHWH

--They placed their oral law over the written law (*This oral law would later become the Talmud*)

--It is this oral law to which Jesus refers when He says, “You have heard it said,... But I say, it is written,...

--This is what Jesus means when He says He did not come to destroy (*i.e. pervert*) the TORAH, but to fulfill it (*i.e. correct bad teachings*)

--He did this both by explaining the written TORAH and showing how to properly live it through His example

--Now, there is a clear pattern in all of this

--YHWH continually restores His People

--Tells them – clearly – what He expects of them

--And they continuously choose to do things their way

--Which forces YHWH to allow the curses and to bring down punishment and wrath upon them until He relents, shows His mercy and restores them once again

--This last time, He came down, in the form of His Son, and showed us – in person

--Now, I have a question

--Why does the Body think it is immune to this same pattern?

--Why does the Body of professed believers think it is excused from the pattern that has befallen every other epoch in the history of YHWH's People?

--Jesus warned us there would come a time when people would kill His disciples thinking they were doing YHWH's work

--Paul and the Jews did it to the Disciples of Christ

--Then the Church started to kill the Jews thinking the Jews were the enemies of YHWH

--Both thought they were doing YHWH's work

--Both were (*are*) blind to their guilt

--Both see the other side as the offender

--Both are wrong and in the cross-hairs of Christ's warning

A SERIOUS BUT SINCERE QUESTION

--The NT says to search the OT for all our answers

--Jesus said, if we will not understand and believe what Moses had to say about Him, there is nothing more He can tell us to make us understand and believe

--John told us Jesus is the Word (i.e. TORAH) made flesh

--Which means Moses was writing about Jesus/TORAH

--So, how can TORAH be done away, yet Jesus remains, when they are one-in-the-same?

--Ort is this one of those magical instances where we are NOT supposed to read the Scriptures and take them at face value???

--And where – EXACTLY – does that little game end?

--Who can tell me when and where I can willy-nilly enforce this passage literally and that one figuratively and that third one spiritually

--Shouldn't we set some sort of consistent system of guidelines to help us be consistent in our approach to Scripture study?

--So, if the OT is our guide, where – exactly – does it prophecy about the 'Church' as it exists and functions today?

--YHWH says He does not act without first telling His prophets (*who then tell the People*)

--Jesus said He came to fulfill (*i.e. correct misunderstandings*)

--Yet, search as I might, I cannot find a prophecy foretelling the 'Church' of today

--I can – however – find many warnings about the practices of the modern Church!

--I can also find a prophecy about a spiritual prince who will seek to change the moedim and the TORAH (*i.e. times and the law*)

--Has anyone changed the Sabbath, the Feasts or the TORAH lately?

--If so, what should we make of them and their practices?

--Or do we just dismiss them because 'the traditions of the Church fathers say...???'

--How well did that work out for the Pharisees when they confronted Jesus, the LIVING TORAH?

A LITTLE HEBREW

--The Hebrew meaning/understanding of:

--Grace (*favor*)

--Faith (*active trust*)

--TORAH (*instruction*)

--Sin (*missing the mark*)

--Repent (*return to the way, the teachings*)

A FEW CONCEPTS

--Tree of knowledge of good and evil (*The Law – Those outside the Family/Kingdom*)

--The Tree of Life (*Grace/Favor – Those inside the Family/Kingdom*)

--The vine (*Messiah*)

--Grafted in (*Gentiles adopted into the family by the blood of Messiah*)

--Inheritance (*eternal life as a member of the Family/Kingdom*)

APPLIED CONCEPT TRACING

Genesis 49:22

*²² “Joseph is a fruitful branch,
A fruitful branch by a spring;
Its branches hang over a wall.*

Isaiah 5:7

*⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of armies is the house of Israel,
And the people of Judah are His delightful plant.
So He waited for justice, but behold, there was bloodshed;
For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.*

Matthew 21:33-46

Parable of the Landowner

*³³ “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A FENCE AROUND IT, AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and he leased it to vine-growers and went on a journey. ³⁴ And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his fruit. ³⁵ And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again, he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they did the same things to them. ³⁷ But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸ But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let’s kill him and take possession of his inheritance!’ ³⁹ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰ Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?” ⁴¹ They *said to Him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the fruit in the proper seasons.”*

*⁴² Jesus *said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures,*

***'A STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,
THIS HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE;
THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD,
AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?***

⁴³ Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit. ⁴⁴ And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and on whomever it falls, it will crush him."

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ And although they sought to arrest Him, they feared the crowds, since they considered Him to be a prophet.

A FEW PROPHECIES

Isaiah 2:1-4 (Micah 4)

God's Universal Reign

2 The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Now it will come about that

In the last days

The mountain of the house of the LORD

Will be established as the chief of the mountains,

And will be raised above the hills;

And all the nations will stream to it.

3 And many peoples will come and say,

"Come, let's go up to the mountain of the LORD,

To the house of the God of Jacob;

So that He may teach us about His ways,

And that we may walk in His paths."

For the law will go out from Zion

And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 And He will judge between the nations,

And will mediate for many peoples;

And they will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning knives.

Nation will not lift up a sword against nation,

And never again will they learn war.

Hosea 9:1-3

Ephraim Punished

9 Do not rejoice, Israel, with jubilation like the nations!

For you have been unfaithful, abandoning your God.

You have loved the earnings of unfaithfulness on every threshing floor.

2 Threshing floor and wine press will not feed them,

And the new wine will fail them.

³ *They will not remain in the LORD's land,
But Ephraim will return to Egypt,
And in Assyria they will eat unclean food.*

Hosea 11:8-12

⁸ *How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I surrender you, Israel?
How can I make you like Admah?
How can I treat you like Zeboiim?
My heart is turned over within Me,
All My compassions are kindled.
⁹ I will not carry out My fierce anger;
I will not destroy Ephraim again.
For I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst,
And I will not come in wrath.
¹⁰ They will walk after the LORD,
He will roar like a lion;
Indeed He will roar,
And His sons will come trembling from the west.
¹¹ They will come trembling like birds from Egypt,
And like doves from the land of Assyria;
And I will settle them in their houses, declares the LORD.*

¹² *Ephraim surrounds Me with lies
And the house of Israel with deceit;
Judah is still unruly against God,
Even against the Holy One who is faithful.*

Zechariah 8:23

²³ *The LORD of armies says this: 'In those days ten people from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'*

Isaiah 66:15-17

***15 For behold, the LORD will come in fire,
And His chariots like the whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.***

***16 For the LORD will execute judgment by fire
And by His sword on humanity,
And those put to death by the LORD will be many.***

***17 "Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go to the gardens,
Following one in the center,
Who eat pig's flesh, detestable things, and mice,
Will come to an end altogether," declares the LORD.***