

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

# EPISODE 17: MAKE IT MAKE SENSE

## APPROACHING THE TEXT

### CONTEXT

In this episode, we will discuss how the reader should approach any biblical text. There are three main components to biblical reading and interpretation. Observation. Interpretation. And application. The process starts with observing what's in the text itself.

**Observation asks the question: What do I see? (William Hendricks)**

### EXEGESIS: BIG WORD, BIG HELP

- i. What is exegesis?
  - a) A critical interpretation of a biblical text to help uncover its original, intended meaning.
  - b) Exegesis literally means "to lead out." The prefix ex- is what we see in Exodus and our words "ex." God created "ex nihilo" (out of nothing). So, exegesis is determined to lead out the intended meaning of the text.
  - c) The focus of exegesis is the biblical text itself.
- ii. Good exegesis asks the right investigative questions.
  - a) The Four W's and the How: Who? What? When? Where? How?
  - b) Example: The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8)
    - 1) *After six days?* What happened before this? (literary context) Matthew 16:28
    - 2) *"...Peter, James, and John"* Why these three? (theological context) Inner circle?
    - 3) *"...a high mountain"* Where is this mountain? (historical context)
    - 4) *"...transfigured"* What does this mean? (theological context)

### THREE COMPONENTS OF BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

- 5) *Historical context-* German phrase: *sitz em leben* "setting in life. What's happening when the text is written?
  - (1) *The Three A's of Historical Context*
    - (a) *Author:* Who wrote the text you are reading? What do you know about this person?
    - (b) *Audience:* Who is the author writing the text for/to?
    - (c) *Atmosphere:* What kind of setting or issue is the author addressing?
    - (d) Example: The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8)
      - (i) *Author:* Matthew, the tax collector, who is a Jewish.

- (ii) *Audience*: Christian community with Jewish roots and heritage. (see Matthew's emphasis on Jesus' genealogy back to Abraham (vs. Luke to Adam) early in Gospel and other Jewish elements to Matthew) Transfiguration has significant meaning. Connects law and prophets to Jesus.
  - (iii) *Atmosphere*: Matthew is writing to show that Christ is King and Messiah of Israel in the time where they are still looking for one. Jesus' meeting with prominent Old Testament figures and God speaking from heaven affirms his place as Messiah.
- 6) *Literary context*- The grammar of the text. What happens before and after the text? How does the text fit into book as a whole? How does text fit in genre?
- (1) To properly look at the literary context, you read from the inside out.
    - (a) How do surrounding verses help? How do surrounding chapters help? How does book help as a whole? Where else is this covered in Bible?
    - (b) Example: The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8)
      - (i) Matthew 16:28 helps provide context for the importance of this text placed here.
      - (ii) Surrounding chapters involve Jesus telling them of his impending fate.
      - (iii) Similar incidents occur in Bible. (Exodus 24:16)
      - (iv) *Parallel passage (synoptics)*: Luke gives us some important context re: the conversation. What they were discussing with Jesus.
- 7) *Theological context*- What's happening among God's people? What does this text say about God?
- (1) After six days...six days considered number of days necessary to prepare for holy event. Six days of creation, then Sabbath (Jesus as "rest" here).
  - (2) For Matthew, Jesus is the new Abraham and new Moses. And esteemed higher than both, as God's Son.
  - (3) For Matthew, this meeting is significant since the Old Testament is summed up with law and prophets.
  - (4) God speaks from heaven here. The only other time is about His son at baptism.

#### Resources: HOW SWAY?

- a) Get you a good study Bible.
- b) Use a Bible Dictionary to look up people, places, and things. Free version online: Easton Bible Dictionary.

#### Takeaway

- iii. Context is key when reading and interpreting Scripture. When reading Scripture, keep in mind the real estate mantra, "Location, Location, Location."