



Read Your Bible – You'll Be A Better Christian

Hebrews 4:12



How have you seen or
experienced the Bible being used
in dangerous ways?



How and why is the Bible used in dangerous and destructive ways?



1. The Gospel vs. The Bible



The original apostles did not preach
Bible, they proclaimed Gospel



Gospel

God's gracious and enabling invitation for humanity, through Jesus Christ, to participate in God's redemptive transformation of our fallen reality into God's vision of the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God evidenced in reconciled relationships



Christianity begins by accepting Jesus not
by believing the Bible

A Christian by definition is not someone
who carries a Bible in their hand but Jesus
in their heart



2. The Bible must be and always
is interpreted



Matthew 5:21-48

- All scripture is *interpreted*
- You can only see from where you stand
- There is more than one way to interpret any passage



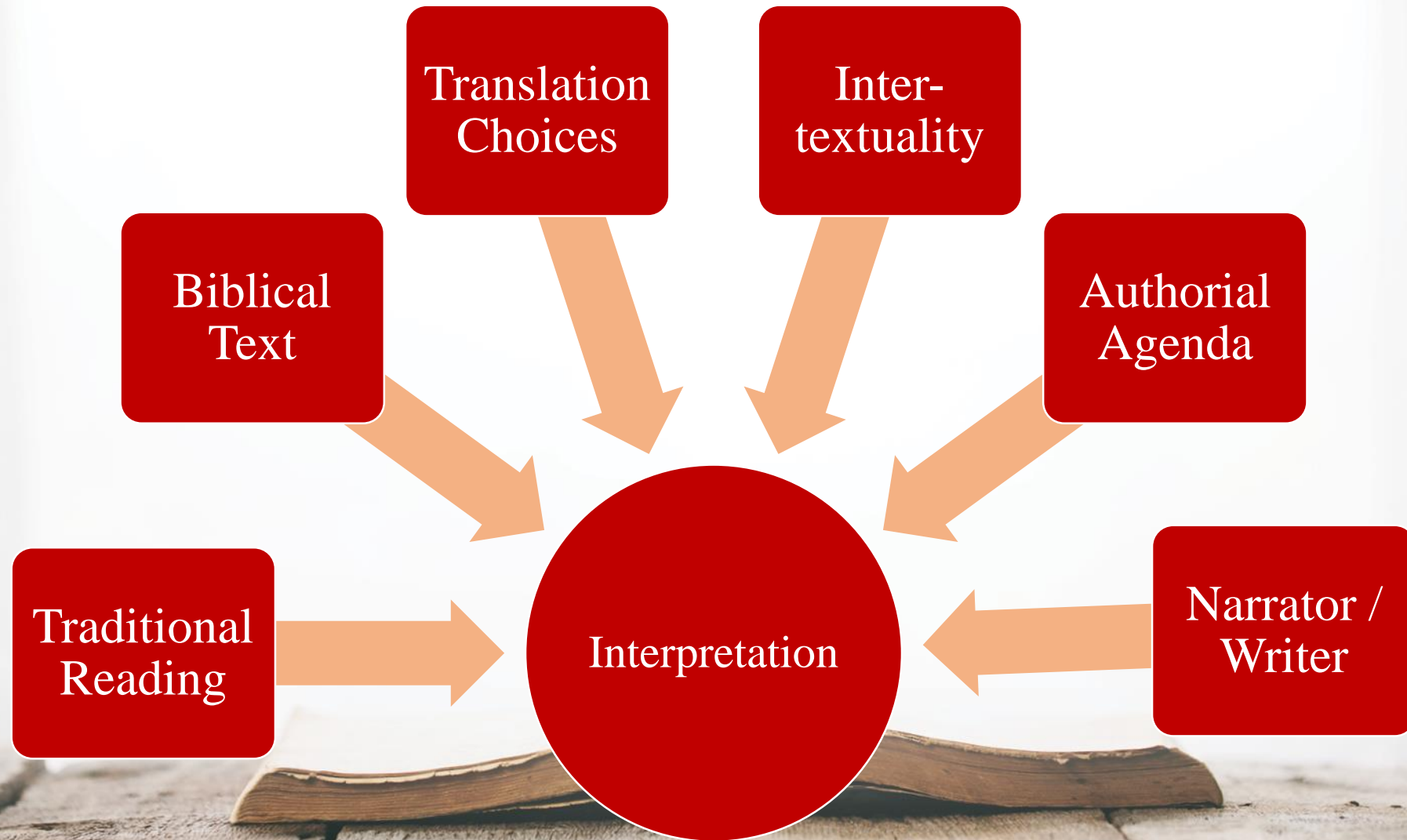
Matthew 5:21-48

- Communal reading/interpretation is critical
- Biblical passages are always richer and deeper than they appear
- Some interpretations are more informed than others
- Traditional interpretations may read something into a passage that is not actually there (43),

Prodigal Son Luke 15



What Impacts Interpretations



Biblical Text

- ✓ Read the passage focusing on what is actually there
- ✓ What did you assume the passage said that it actually does not say?
- ✓ Read it aloud / have it read aloud
- ✓ What details did you focus on that were new to you?
- ✓ What themes/issues would you want to further explore?



Translation Choices

- The Bible was not written in English: Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek
- Dynamics of translation
- Translations are choices made for you
- Translation impacts interpretation
- Original language/tools
- Multiple translations



Inter-Textuality

- ✓ How do other biblical passages inform this passage?
- ✓ What themes / persons / theologies from other passages influence our interpretation?
- ✓ IT: Author / Book / Testament / Bible



Every believer must develop a way of discerning
the relevant truths, or lack thereof, in an
interpretation

I John 4:1-3

Something may be biblical that is not gospel



3. There are undeniable human sources at work in the writing and editing and canonizing of scripture



How much does historical context and culture factor into the interpretation, use, and writing of scripture?



Context, Culture, and the Word

Numbers 27, 36:10

Moses and Creation

Paul and Slavery

Paul and Women



Authorial Agenda

- Scripture is post-contemporaneous, their re-telling was for a reason e.g. **Chronicles**
- Authors have intended audiences and implied agendas \neq historical facticity
- The Bible contains: historical and realistic fiction, mythology, and propaganda
- How do you relate truth and accuracy?



Narrator / Writer

- There is a narrator who controls what you read
- It is our inclination to always side with the narrator
- Is the narrator = God?
- What has the narrator left out? Who doesn't get to speak? Whose side is left out?
- Reading from the shadows



Does the narrator's portrayal of God align with your experience of God?

Joshua 1-12



Do you believe that the author/narrator
always gets God right?



Is it possible to disagree with a biblical interpretation/portrayal/author and still be Christian?



4. Source of Divine Revelation



How do we know what we believe about God?



How do we know what we believe about God?

- ✓ Scripture
- ✓ Inspiration
- ✓ Intellect/Reason = Theology
- ✓ Tradition
- ✓ Experience



Sources of Divine Revelation

- Scripture is not the only source
- Have to weight them in your life



Sources of Divine Revelation

- Experience – 30%
- Scripture – 30%
- Inspiration – 15%
- Intellect – 15%
- Tradition – 10%



Does your experience of God in the world shape how you interpret scripture or does your interpretation of scripture determine how you experience God in the world?



Sources of Divine Revelation

- Scripture is not the only source
- Have to weight them in your life
- What do you do if they are in conflict



5. History of Canonization



6. Rethinking the inerrancy, infallibility, and sufficiency of scripture

