

# Principles of Holy Scripture Study

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WELCOME

## Ancient wisdom . . .

- Thus says YHVH, "Stand on the highways, and see, and ask for **the old paths**, where the good WAY is, and walk upon it, and you shall find rest for your souls."
  - Jeremiah 6:16

## Principles of Holy Scripture Study

- Preliminary Introduction
1. The Aramaic Language
2. Idioms and Figures of Speech
3. Revelation, Mysticism, and Supernatural Occurrences
4. Near Eastern Culture, Customs and Manners
5. The Near Eastern Psychology
6. Symbolism and Imagery in the Holy Scripture
7. Near Eastern Amplification in the Holy Scripture
8. The Manuscript Order of the Holy Scripture
9. A Semitic/Hebraic Perspective of the Holy Scripture
10. Personal Relationships in the Holy Scripture

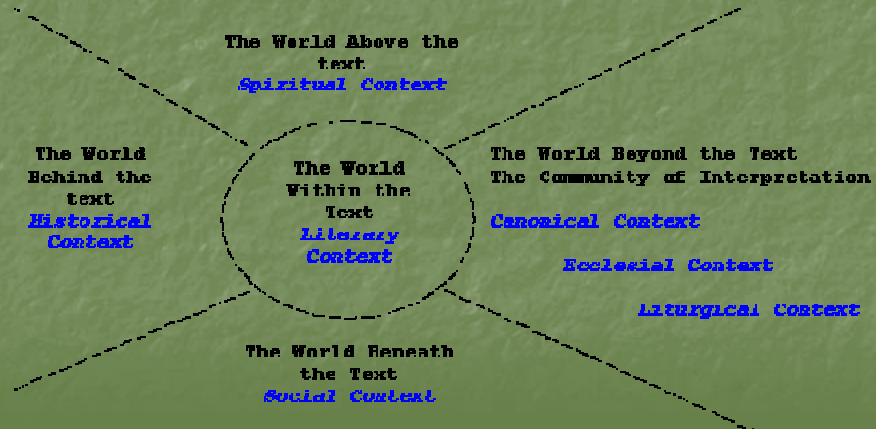
## Basic Guidelines

- Don't accept or believe any new ideas that I present without first checking them out yourself
- Study . . . Read . . . Do research
- Challenge your beliefs.
- Debate – Disagree but don't be disagreeable
- TRUTH – Remember that the truth will stand on its own merit
- Anything that has to be reinforced is inherently weak

# Principles of Holy Scripture Study

CHART by Dr. John Gresham

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# Principles of Holy Scripture Study

- Principles of Interpretation:
  - The Holy Scriptures contain God's infallible and inerrantly inspired words
    - Given by the Holy Spirit
    - Selected, compiled, and translated by man
    - Validated by the Lord Jesus Christ
  - Language, culture and customs
  - Historical background and archeological evidence
  - Actual historical situation and events (life setting)
  - Genre, purpose and plan of each book
  - Context of each verse and section
  - Parallel and related passages
  - Literally or Seriously?

## 1. The Aramaic Language

- Hebrew and Aramaic are the basis for understanding the language of Holy Scripture because they were the primary languages used by the priests, prophets, and patriarchs as well as by Jesus Christ and His apostles and disciples
- Aramaic was the lingua franca – major/common language - of the Near East from approximately 800 BC to 700 AD
- Uniquely powerful and Intrinsic language
- Nuances of meaning lost in Greek, Latin, English, and other languages
- Greek language introduces Greek religious and philosophical meanings foreign to the original text, e.g. Sheol cp. Hades

### Aramaic . . .

Language used by Abraham and the Patriarchs  
Lingua Franca of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Empires

Language of Christ and His Disciples

Lingua Franca of the Near East until the rise of Islam in the 7th Century CE when it evolved into the dominant Arabic language

Aramaic continued to be used by Christians in the Near East and throughout the world

## The Christians of the East . . .

Christians in Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and India were discipled by Mar Toma (Saint Thomas) and have used the Aramaic (Syriac) Scriptures and Liturgy since 2nd Century AD

These Near Eastern Christians sent missionaries as far East as China and Japan  
The Peshitta ("straight", "simple", "pure") text has remained intact for at least 1600 years

## The Aramaic Language

- Cognate language to Hebrew
  - Also related to Akkadian and Arabic
- Historical stages:
  - Old Aramaic (950-600 BC)
  - Imperial or Official Aramaic (600-200 BC)
  - Middle Aramaic (200 BC – 200 AD)
  - Late Aramaic (200 AD – 700 AD)
  - Modern Aramaic (700 AD – today)

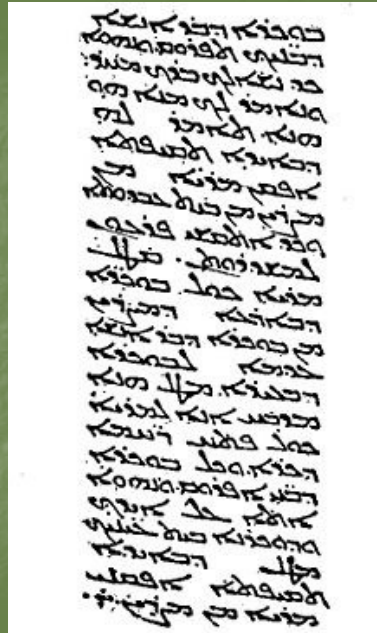
## The Aramaic Language

- Modern Witnesses in favor of an Aramaic (or Hebrew) New Testament:
  - Charles F. Burney - The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel
  - William Cureton – Remains of a Very Ancient Recension of the Four Gospels in Syriac
  - George Lamsa – New Testament Origin and many other books including his translation of the Peshitta
  - Hugh Schonfield – An Old Hebrew Text of St. Matthew's Gospel
  - R. B. Y. Scott – The Original Language of the Apocalypse
  - C. C. Torrey – Our Translated Gospels; Documents of the Primitive Church
  - Frank Zimmerman – The Aramaic Origin of the Four Gospels

## The Aramaic Language

- Ancient Witnesses in favor of an Aramaic (or Hebrew) New Testament – The “Church Fathers”:
  - Papias ( 150-170 AD)
  - Clement of Alexandria (150-212 AD)
  - Ireneus (170 AD)
  - Origen (210 AD)
  - Eusebius (315 AD)
  - Pantaenus
  - Epiphanius (370 AD)
  - Jerome (382 AD)
  - Isho'Dad (850 AD)

- Peshitta
  - Exodus 13:14-16



ܠܒܝܝܗܘܢ ܠܝܬܝܒܝܢ ܕܝܗܝܘܢ ܕܝܝܫܘܢ ܕܝܫܘܢܐ .

- The sixth beatitude (Matthew 5:8) from an East Syriac Peshitta.
- Pronounced *Ṭûḅayhôn l'aylên daḡkên b-lebbhôn: d-hennôn neḥzôn l'alâhâ.*
- Translation: 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'

## Aramaic Language

- Importance as a “bridge”
  - Old Testament and New Testament
  - Abrahamic religions
- Importance of identifying words that resemble one another
- KHIMTHA (venom) is incorrectly translated “wine” in the King James Version (Deut. 32:33)
- See “Words Resembling One Another” section of The Holy Bible Translated from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts by George M. Lamsa

## Aramaic Language

- Examples of Mistranslation:
  - Lord’s Prayer - Matthew 6:13 – “talan” = “do not let us enter into temptation” (cp. Matthew 26:41)
  - Forsaken on the Cross? Mt. 27:46 - Not the same as Ps. 22
  - Camel or Rope? – Matthew 19:24 - “gamla” - review language and context
  - Eunuch or Believer? - Acts 8:27 – “m’kaymna” = “faithful one”
  - Luke 19:13 – talent (“kakra”) or province (“karkha”)
  - Lucifer? Isa. 14:12 – review context and language “yalal” (see Strong’s #1966 and 1984 and compare with 3213)



## From an ancient commentary – Isodad of Merv – Bishop of Hadatha 850 AD

*This of Eloj, Eloj, lemana shabachtani, not that He was forsaken of the Godhead not even in suffering; and death, which entered because of transgression of the commandment, as it is written ; but when He was weary and was strengthened by an angel, etc., the Godhead was with Him.*

## 2. Idioms and Figures of Speech

- There are over 1,000 idioms used in the Holy Scripture
- They lead to confusion and mistranslation when not recognized and translated literally
- Peculiar expressions with special meanings
- English examples:
  - "Its raining cats and dogs"
  - "He is in a pickle" (or ". . . a jam")
  - "He blew his stack"
- Semitic examples:
  - "Good eye" meaning "generous" and "bad eye" meaning stingy (Mt. 6:22-23; 20:15; Lk. 11:34)
  - "Bind" meaning "prohibit" and "loose" meaning "permit" (Mt. 16:19; 18:18)

## Idioms

- More Semitic examples
  - Use of the word "Heaven" as a euphemism for "God" (Mt. 5:3; 21:25; Lk. 15:18; Jn 3:27)
  - Idiomatic usage of the word "face" (Lk. 9:51-53)
  - "Son of Man" – an idiom meaning "a human being" as well as a Messianic title (Dan. 7:13 and Mt. 12:8)
  - Job 2:9 – "barak" means to "bless" but is used euphemistically to mean "curse" by Job's wife

## Idioms

- Aramaic Examples from George Lamsa (Idioms in the Bible Explained):
  - "Garden" (Gen. 2:8) – metaphorically – a wife, a family
  - "Rock" (Ps. 18:2) – protection and defense
  - "Face of a man . . . Lion . . . Ox . . . Eagle" (Ezk. 1:10) – intellect, dominion, strength, omnipresence
  - "Let thy fountain be blessed" (Prov. 5:18 – virility

### 3. Revelation, Mysticism, and Supernatural Occurrences

- Mysticism – mystery, secret; “A spiritual discipline aiming at direct union or communion with reality or God through deep meditation or contemplation” (American Heritage Dictionary)
- Forms
  - Mundane Mysticism
  - Inner Spiritual Mysticism
  - Dreams and Visions
    - HELMA (from HLM) – to heal, make well or whole, to integrate

### Revelation, Mysticism, and Supernatural Occurrences

- Estimates of mysticism in the Holy Scripture range between 40-60% of the Bible
  - Mysticism is overly embraced by occultists but ignored by fundamentalists
- Example of mysticism in the Holy Scripture:
- Abraham’s dream leading to the offering of Isaac (Genesis 22)
- The transfiguration (Lk. 9:28-36 & Matt. 17:9) was a “spiritual event”, i.e. a mystical experience
- See Treasures From the Language of Jesus and Let There Be Light – The Seven Keys by Rocco A. Errico

## 4. Near Eastern Culture, Customs and Manners

- Understanding of culture is absolutely necessary to understand the text of Holy Scripture
- Holy Scripture was given 2,000 – 3,000 years ago in another land, with a different language, within a totally different culture
- Knowledge can be gained from studying the Near Eastern people whose culture has undergone slower change than in the Western world

## Near Eastern Culture, Customs and Manners

- Example of Near Eastern Culture:
- The Aramaic word, MAKHIRTA (“espoused”) is derived from MAKHAR (“to purchase”, “to acquire for a price” and is an essential part of Near Eastern marriage customs (Matt. 1:18)
- See Gospel Light by George M. Lamsa

## Near Eastern Culture, Customs and Manners

- Bread
- Swaddling clothes
- Status – Lk. 14:10-11
- Greeting others – Lk. 10:1-4
- Weddings – Mt. 25:1-13
- Head coverings – Gen. 24:65; 1 Cor. 11:4-5; Esther 7:8
- Hair length – Lev. 19:27; 1 Cor. 11:14-16

## 5. The Near Eastern Psychology

- “The customs and manners of a people are usually based on the traditional thinking and consciousness of that particular nation. Therefore, understanding the psychological makeup of the Near Eastern people, especially those of biblical lands, is very important in the study of the Bible.”  
- Rocco Errico, Let There Be Light

## The Near Eastern Psychology

- Near Eastern psychology is important in order to draw the correct conclusions
- Otherwise Westerners often draw invalid conclusions because we look at passages through our own eyes rather than the eyes of the Near East and with consideration to the Near Eastern culture and psychology

## The Near Eastern Psychology

- Characteristics of Near Eastern culture and psychology:
  - God is involved in and central to everything
  - Friendships and relationships highly valued
  - Not much attention or value given to time or perfect accuracy in attention to details
  - Male oriented
  - Honor
  - Used to hard times
  - Truth and justice are purchased at great price

## The Near Eastern Psychology

- An example of Near Eastern psychology is Jesus' instruction to His disciples that they "judge not, that ye may be not judged." This phrase is practical advice meaning to avoid criticism which often results in quarrels (Matt. 7:1, 2)
  - See Gospel Light by George M. Lamsa
- In the Gospels, the Sermon on the Mount is full of Near Eastern psychology

## 6. Symbolism and Imagery in the Holy Scripture

- Symbolism and Imagery:
  - Parables (PELATHA = proverbs, allegories, illustrations) used to portray and illustrate events and teachings
  - Metaphors – beware of taking them literally and thus produce unwarranted doctrines
  - Poetical Philosophy – book of Job
  - "It is not easy to describe ideas such as depression, famine, suffering, joy, or sadness. But they can be revealed in symbols, in dreams, and in visions."
    - Lamsa, Old Testament Light

## Symbolism and Imagery in the Holy Scripture

- "Serpent" can also mean "deception" or "lie" or "an agent of evil forces" as in Genesis 3:14-15 or Mark 16
- An example of symbolism and imagery is the use of the word "keys" in Matt. 16:19
- "In Aramaic speech, Keys are symbolical of power and trust."
  - Gospel Light by George M. Lamsa

## Symbolism and Imagery

- The book of Revelation cannot be understood without first understanding:
  - Temple symbolism
  - Astronomical signs
  - The purpose of apocalyptic literature
  - The urgency of John's environment in the first century AD
    - Context
    - Historical setting
    - Culture and language



## 7. Near Eastern Amplification in the Holy Scripture

- “Forgiving up to seventy times seven, seven times” (Aramaic text of Matt. 18:22) is an example of Near Eastern amplification meaning “a limitless number of times”
  - See Treasures From the Language of Jesus by Rocco A. Errico

## 8. The Manuscript Order of the Holy Scripture

- TANAK
- BRIT CHADASHA
- Galatians 2:9 “. . . Pillars . . .”
  - Priority of James – foundation for other Epistles
- Witnesses:
  - Frederick H. Schrivener – Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament
  - Bullinger – Companion Bible, Appendix 95
  - M’Clintock and Strong – Cyclopaedia Of Biblical, Theological, And Ecclesiastical Literature
  - Ernest Martin – Restoring the Original Bible

## Manuscript Order and Its Importance

- Priority of authority (foundations)
  - Torah – instruction, “law”
  - Navim – prophecy, revelation
  - Ketuvim – writings, poetry and wisdom
- Priority of authority and order of learning
  - Gospels – Master’s life, teaching, authority
  - Acts – Early disciples empowerment
  - Pillars – James, Peter, John
  - Letters – Expanded and practical guidance
  - Apocalyptic – Be prepared for coming events

## 9. A Semitic/Hebraic Perspective of the Holy Scripture

- PARDES – the Garden
  - *Peshat* = Literal meaning; the contextual, philological level
  - *Remez* = Allegorical meaning; cross-reference to other texts; rational or philosophical level
  - *Derash* = Moral or homiletic meaning; aggadic level; midrashic [= interpretation via derash] level
  - *Sod* = Mystical or anagogic meaning

## Hebraic Perspective – an Example of PARDES in the “New Testament”

- *Peshat* = Literal meaning; the contextual, philological level - Gospel of MARK
- *Remez* = Allegorical meaning; cross-reference to other texts; implied meaning; rational or philosophical level -Gospel of LUKE
- *Derash* = Moral or homiletic meaning; aggadic level; allegorical; midrashic [= interpretation via derash] level - Gospel of MATTHEW
- *Sod* = Mystical or anagogic (hidden)meaning - Gospel of JOHN

## Hebrew Language

- Intrinsic Nature
- Examples
  - ABBA
  - MOSHE – HASHEM – SHEMA
  - EMET

## The Intrinsic Nature of Hebrew and Aramaic . . .

Learning A, B, C 's

Every letter has a meaning and a numeric value

Alep ( A )= God (1)

Beth ( B )= Home and Family (2)

Gamal ( G )= Transportation (3)

Example A+B = Father/parent (1+2=3)

= ABBA

## Hebrew's Intrinsic Nature . . .

יהוה

יהוה

יהוה



**YHWH** - This is a Most Sacred Name –

. . . Handle it with the utmost respect

Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:7

Another Example – Intrinsic Meaning –  
*God in Marriage Covenant*

*Man*  
*Woman*  
*God*  
*Fire*

- The Hebrew word for letter actually means  
pulse vibration – Rabbi Yehuda Berg

Intrinsic Nature of Hebrew Language . . .

Moshe (Moses)  
HaShem (the Name)  
Shema (Hear . . . )  
Healing (one of the 72  
Names of God)\*

\*The power of this name brings the energy of healing at  
the deepest and most profound level of your being.  
- Rabbi Yehuda Berg – The 72 Names of God –  
*Technology for the Soul!*

## 72 Names of God - Exodus 14:19-21

וְהָיָה	אֵלֶיךָ	לֵלֵךְ	מִצֵּד	עֲלֶיךָ	סִי	יְלִי	וְהָיָה
הַיָּם	הָרִי	מִבְּרָה	יְלִי	הַחֹדֶשׁ	לֵאנֹכִי	אֵלֶיךָ	תִּי
וְהָיָה	מִגִּלְגָּל	יְיִי	נִלְכָּךְ	פְּגֹלֶל	לְזֹרֵךְ	כִּלְיִי	לֵאנֹכִי
לְמִי	לִכְבֹּד	אֲדֹמִי	דִּי	שֹׁמֵר	יִרְמֵךְ	תִּשְׁמָר	נִשְׁמָר
יְיִי	רְחֹמֵי	וְהָיָה	אֵלֶיךָ	כִּנּוּרִי	קִדְמִי	לְהִתְקַדֵּם	יְהוָה
סִי	עֲשֵׂה	עֲשֵׂה	מִגִּלְגָּל	יְלִי	נִלְכָּךְ	כִּלְיִי	וְהָיָה
כִּי	מִכֹּבֶד	נִשְׁמָר	נִלְכָּךְ	עֲשֵׂה	הַחֹדֶשׁ	דִּי	וְהָיָה
מִי	שֶׁנֶּהְיֶה	יְהוָה	וְהָיָה	מִצֵּד	וְהָיָה	יְלִי	נִשְׁמָר
בְּיָמֶיךָ	וְהָיָה	יְהוָה	דִּבְרֵי	חֹבֵב	אֵלֶיךָ	נִשְׁמָר	וְהָיָה

## Hebrew- Greek Mindset Differences

### View of Religion

#### Greek

Goal – Know Thyself  
 Philosophy/Logic  
 Spectator in meetings  
 Leadership: Clergy/Laity  
 Bible: information to be taught  
 Church as organization  
 Denominational distinctive  
 Conformity to rules

#### Hebrew

Know God  
 Revelation  
 Participant in meetings  
 Every member ministers  
 Reality to be lived  
 Assembly as family  
 Unity in diversity  
 Personal relationship

## Hebrew- Greek Mindset Differences

### View of Education

#### Greek

Knowledge is highest good  
Focus on intellect  
Learn from sermons/curriculum  
Program orientation  
Pride in knowing more  
What you know  
Hired professionals teach children

#### Hebrew

God is the highest good  
Focus on whole person  
Learn from mentor  
Process orientation  
Humility in serving all  
How you serve  
Parents teach children

## Hebrew- Greek Mindset Differences

### View of Social Matters

#### Greek

Idealism of youth  
Intellect over relationships  
Hierarchical relationships  
Life is compartmentalized  
Work to live

#### Hebrew

Wisdom, respect for age  
Relationships over intellect  
One-another relationships  
Life is a unity  
Live to work

source: Introduction to Restored Christianity by  
Dr. Lynn and Linda Reddick

## 10. Personal Relationships in the Holy Scripture

- In the Near East everything begins with God
- SON – “builder of the family name”
- Firstborn
- Intimate relationship
- Kinship – “don’t salute on the way . . . ”
- Tribal
- Covenants
- Marriage Covenant
- Israel – Gentiles - Pagans

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT – Even in the Greek New Testament the thoughts and idioms are Semitic.**

**DEBATE - “Disagree without being disagreeable”**

**“The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function”**

**- F. Scott Fitzgerald**



## Resources:

Holy Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text –translated by Dr. George Lamsa

Dr. Rocco Errico – Let There Be Light – The Seven Keys

Dr. George Lamsa - Idioms in the Bible Explained and A Key to the Original Gospels ; New Testament Origin ; many other books

Dr. Ernest Martin – The Original Bible Restored

Dr. Marvin Wilson - Our Father Abraham – Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith

Dr. Irving Zeitlin – Jesus and the Judaism of His Time

Miltha Ministries -- Noohra Foundation -- The Original Bible Project