

“We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.”

-EFCA Doctrinal Statement Article 2

The meaning of words relates to their “**audience**,” “**occasion**” or “**reason**,” and the author’s “**purpose**.”
The Bible is the same.

- God inspired Scripture by using human authors with diverse languages, personalities, gifts, education, and backgrounds.
- They wrote in different times and situations.
- They wrote for different reasons.
- They wrote in a variety of ways—narrative, poetry, letter, and other styles. Its diversity should affect how we study it, understand it, preach it, and teach it.

To understand Scripture, we must ask the right questions—questions like these:

- ***Why did the author write his book (poem, letter, etc.) as he did?***
- ***Why did the author start it and end it the way he did?***
- ***What did the author write first, then second, then third, etc.?***
- ***Why did the author include this story, person, phrase, or word?***
- ***Why did the author quote from Genesis? Psalms? the prophets?***
- ***What was the author trying to do for his “audience” (readers or listeners)?***

¹ Probably demonic rulers and authorities ² Or in it (that is, the cross) ³ Or about the things he has seen ⁴ Son
⁵ Greek therefore your members that are on the earth ⁶ Some manuscripts add upon the sons of disobedience
supplied in verse 10

The theme that runs through these questions is:

QUESTION 1: What is the author's point? (That is: What did the author mean in this passage within this book?)

... the Lord, so walk in him, I received
the faith, just as you were taught
... by philosophy and empty deceit,
... to the elemental spirits² of the
... in him the whole fullness of deity
... in him, who is the head of all rule

¹ Probably demonic rulers and authorities ² Or in it (that is, the cross) ³ Or about the things he has seen ⁴ Son
⁵ Greek therefore your members that are on the earth ⁶ Some manuscripts add upon the sons of disobedience
supplied in verse 10

ENGAGE THE PASSAGE

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Eph. 1:3–10 / ESV)

The point of focus:

God clearly had a plan to do amazing things
in and through Jesus Christ, and he
established this plan before creation!

...the Lord, so walk in him, receiving
the faith, just as you were taught,
... by philosophy and empty deceit,
... to the elemental spirits² of the
... in him the whole fullness of deity
... in him, who is the head of all rule

¹ Probably demonic rulers and authorities ² Or in it (that is, the cross) ³ Or about the things he has seen ⁴ Son
⁵ Greek therefore your members that are on the earth ⁶ Some manuscripts add upon the sons of disobedience
supplied in verse 10

25 He [Jesus] said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself... 44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things."

(Luke 24:25–27, 44–48 / ESV)

Regardless of which book or passage we turn to, as we OBSERVE THE TEXT there are now two INTERPRETIVE questions that we must ask (and in this order):

- QUESTION 1: ***What is the author's point?*** (That is, What did the author mean in this passage within this book?)

- QUESTION 2: ***How does it fit in the Bible?*** (That is, How does this passage [within this book] illuminate God's plan to reconcile us to himself under Christ?)

¹ Probably demonic rulers and authorities ² Or in it (that is, the cross) ³ Or about the things he has seen ⁴ Son
⁵ Greek therefore your members that are on the earth ⁶ Some manuscripts add upon the sons of disobedience
supplied in verse 10