

Notes: December 21, 2019

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tovv
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Jeri - Drash
8. Praise and Worship Songs
9. Message
10. Aaronic Blessing
11. Kiddush
12. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: Are You A Textualist or An Originalist?

Before you can answer this question, keeping in mind there may even be a third option, you first must know what these terms mean. How can you know which term best identifies you if you don't know what they mean?

These two terms are related to how one understands the Constitution of the United States.

When exercising its power to review the constitutionality of governmental action, the Supreme Court has relied on certain “methods” or “modes” of interpretation—that is, ways of figuring out a particular meaning of a provision within the Constitution.

I believe we can look at these methods used for understanding the Constitution and learn from them in how we view Scripture.

There are two primary methods I want to look at...

Textualism. Textualism is a mode of interpretation that focuses on the plain meaning of the text of a legal document. Textualism usually emphasizes how the terms in the Constitution would be understood by people at the time they were ratified, as well as the context in which those terms appear. Textualists usually believe there is an objective meaning of the text, and they do not typically inquire into questions regarding the intent of the drafters, adopters, or ratifiers of the Constitution and its amendments when deriving meaning from the text.

IN other words, what it says is what it means. We actually have a tool used in understanding Scripture. It is called P'shat.

- (1) *P'shat* ("simple")-the plain, literal sense of the text, more or less what modern scholars mean by "grammatical-historical exegesis," which looks to the grammar of the language and the historical setting as background for deciding what a passage means. Modern scholars often consider grammatical-historical exegesis the only valid way to deal with a text; pastors who use other approaches in their sermons usually feel defensive about it before academics. But the rabbis had three other modes of interpreting Scripture, and their validity should not be excluded in advance but related to the validity of their implied presuppositions.

And yet, to only have one mode of how we are to understand Scripture is rather limiting. The words that are written are sufficient for our understanding. No further insight is required. Ultimately, this tactic paints us into a corner. With only one tool you are greatly limited...try pounding a nail with a screwdriver.

We have other tools at our disposal, used by the Rabbi's for centuries...in other words, Jewish tools for understanding the Hebrew scriptures.

- (2) *Remez* ("hint")-wherein a word, phrase or other element in the text hints at a truth not conveyed by the *p'shat*. The implied presupposition is that God can hint at things of which the Bible writers themselves were unaware.
- (3) *Drash* or *midrash* ("search")-an allegorical or homiletical application of a text. This is a species of eisegesis-reading one's own thoughts into the text-as opposed to exegesis, which is extracting from the text what it actually says. The implied presupposition is that the words of Scripture can legitimately become grist for the mill of human intellect, which God can guide to truths not directly related to the text at all.
- (4) *Sod* ("secret")-a mystical or hidden meaning arrived at by operating on the numerical values of the Hebrew letters, noting unusual spellings,

transposing letters, and the like. For example, two words, the numerical equivalents of whose letters add up to the same amount, are good candidates for revealing a secret through what Arthur Koestler in his book on the inventive mind called "bisociation of ideas." The implied presupposition is that God invests meaning in the minutest details of Scripture, even the individual letters.

Original Meaning. Whereas textualist approaches to constitutional interpretation focus solely on the text of the document, originalist approaches consider the meaning of the Constitution as understood by at least some segment of the populace at the time of the Founding. Originalists generally agree that the Constitution's text had an "objectively identifiable" or public meaning at the time of the Founding that has not changed over time, and the task of judges and Justices (and other responsible interpreters) is to construct this original meaning.

Other aspects include...

Judicial Precedent. The most commonly cited source of constitutional meaning is the Supreme Court's prior decisions on questions of constitutional law. For most, if not all Justices, judicial precedent provides possible principles, rules, or standards to govern judicial decisions in future cases with arguably similar facts.

Pragmatism. Pragmatist approaches often involve the Court weighing or balancing the probable practical consequences of one interpretation of the Constitution against other interpretations. One flavor of pragmatism weighs the future costs and benefits of an interpretation to society or the political branches, selecting the interpretation that may lead to the perceived best outcome. Under another type of pragmatist approach, a court might consider the extent to which the judiciary could play a constructive role in deciding a question of constitutional law.

Moral Reasoning. This approach argues that certain moral concepts or ideals underlie some terms in the text of the Constitution (e.g., "equal protection" or "due process of law"), and that these concepts should inform judges' interpretations of the Constitution.

Reference Jeri's drash...

National Identity (or "Ethos"). Judicial reasoning occasionally relies on the concept of a "national ethos," which draws upon the distinct character and values of the American

national identity and the nation's institutions in order to elaborate on the Constitution's meaning.

Structuralism. Another mode of constitutional interpretation draws inferences from the design of the Constitution: the relationships among the three branches of the federal government (commonly called separation of powers); the relationship between the federal and state governments (known as federalism); and the relationship between the government and the people.

Historical Practices. Prior decisions of the political branches, particularly their long-established, historical practices, are an important source of constitutional meaning. Courts have viewed historical practices as a source of the Constitution's meaning in cases involving questions about the separation of powers, federalism, and individual rights, particularly when the text provides no clear answer.

Then you have a matter that occurs as a result of something to which no specific mitzvah is applicable and therefore must be addressed for which occurs here...

Num 27:1 Then the daughters of Tz'lof'chad the son of Hefer, the son of Gil`ad, the son of Machir, the son of M'nasheh, of the families of M'nasheh, the son of Yosef, approached. These were the names of his daughters: Machlah, No`ah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirtzah.

Num 27:2 They stood in front of Moshe, El`azar the cohen, the leaders and the whole community at the entrance to the tent of meeting and said,

Num 27:3 "Our father died in the desert. He wasn't part of the group who assembled themselves to rebel against Adonai in Korach's group, but he died in his own sin, and he had no sons.

Num 27:6 Adonai answered Moshe,

Num 27:7 "The daughters of Tz'lof'chad are right in what they say. You must give them property to be inherited along with that of their father's brothers; have what their father would have inherited pass to them.

Num 27:8 Moreover, say to the people of Isra'el, 'If a man dies and does not have a son, you are to have his inheritance pass to his daughter.

Num 27:9 If he doesn't have a daughter, give his inheritance to his brothers.

Num 27:10 If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father's brothers.

Num 27:11 If his father doesn't have brothers, give his inheritance to the closest relative in his family, and he will possess it. This will be the standard for judgment to be used by the people of Isra'el, as Adonai ordered Moshe.' "

Examples of Textualism...that is taking what the Scripture literally says...

Num 23:19 "God is not a human...

who lies or a mortal who changes his mind. When he says something, he will do it; when he makes a promise, he will fulfill it.

Isa 9:10 (9:9) "The bricks have fallen, but we will rebuild with cut stone; the sycamore-fig trees have been chopped down, but we will replace them with cedars."

On at least two occasions, this verse was recited by political leaders

Sept. 12, 2001, then Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle recited this verse from the floor of the Senate in response to our nation being attacked the day prior.

On the third anniversary of the attack, Sept. 11, 2004, another powerful U.S. senator running for vice president that year and who would famously run for the presidency four years later, gave a speech to the Congressional Black Caucus. This time, John Edwards' entire speech was built on a foundation of Isaiah 9:10.

Unfortunately what was ignored was the context of this verse...both before and after. So, in other words this one verse that has garnered so much attention is actually a verse that would be considered to be mid paragraph.

Isa 9:8 (9:7) Adonai sent a word to Ya`akov, and it has fallen on Isra'el.

Isa 9:9 (9:8) All the people know it, Efrayim and the inhabitants of Shomron. But they say in pride, in the arrogance of their hearts,

Isa 9:10 (9:9) "The bricks have fallen, but we will rebuild with cut stone; the sycamore-fig trees have been chopped down, but we will replace them with cedars."

Isa 9:11 (9:10) So Adonai has raised up Retzin's foes against him and spurred on

his enemies —

Isa 9:12 (9:11) Aram from the east, P'lishtim from the west; and they devour Isra'el with an open mouth. Even after all this, his anger remains, his upraised hand still threatens.

Isa 9:13 (9:12) Yet the people do not turn to the one striking them, they don't seek Adonai-Tzva'ot.

Isa 9:14 (9:13) Therefore Adonai will cut off Isra'el's head and tail, [*tall*] palm frond and [*lowly*] reed in a single day.

Isa 9:15 (9:14) The old and the honored are the head, while prophets teaching lies are the tail.

Isa 9:16 (9:15) For those leading this people lead them astray, and those led by them are destroyed.

Isa 9:17 (9:16) Therefore Adonai takes no joy in their young men and has no compassion on their orphans and widows; for everyone is ungodly and does evil, every mouth speaks foolishly. Even after all this, his anger remains, his upraised hand still threatens.

Isa 9:18 (9:17) For wickedness burns like fire, it devours briars and thorns; it sets the forest underbrush ablaze, with clouds of smoke whirling upward.

Isa 9:19 (9:18) The anger of Adonai-Tzva'ot is burning up the land; the people, too, are fuel for the fire — no one spares even his brother.

Then you have an example where based on the words written a perspective is developed, while ignoring events that transpire afterwards, thus invalidating the very perspective, yet continuing to promote this perspective that is no longer valid.

The equivalent in law is to continue trying a legal case even when you receive exculpatory evidence that exonerates the defendant. Case in point...

Act 18:1 After this, Sha'ul left Athens and went to Corinth,

Act 18:2 where he met a Jewish man named Aquila, originally from Pontus but having recently come with his wife Priscilla from Italy, because Claudius had issued a decree expelling all the Jews from Rome. Sha'ul went to see them;

Act 18:3 and because he had the same trade as they, making tents, he stayed on with them; and they worked together.

Act 18:4 Sha'ul also began carrying on discussions every Shabbat in the synagogue, where he tried to convince both Jews and Greeks.

Act 18:5 But after Sila and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Sha'ul felt pressed by the urgency of the message and testified in depth to the Jews that Yeshua is the Messiah.

Act 18:6 However when they set themselves against him and began hurling insults, he shook out his clothes and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! For my part, I am clean; from now on, I will go to the Goyim!"

Act 18:7 So he left them and went into the home of a "God-fearer" named Titius Justus, whose house was right next door to the synagogue.

These verses are used to convey the perspective that Sha'ul has rejected his Jewish brethren and will no longer evangelise to them. In doing so, because he was chosen by Adonai to be an emissary to the Goy, Gentiles,

Rom 11:13 However, to those of you who are Gentiles I say this: since I myself am an emissary sent to the Gentiles, I make known the importance of my work

He will no longer witness to the Jewish people. This perspective regarding Sha'ul ignores what happens after he leaves Corinth...next stop Ephesus...

Act 19:1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Sha'ul completed his travels through the inland country and arrived at Ephesus, where he found a few talmidim.

Act 19:8 Sha'ul went into the synagogue; and for three months he spoke out boldly, engaging in dialogue and trying to persuade people about the Kingdom of God.

Act 19:9 But some began hardening themselves and refusing to listen; and when these started defaming the Way before the whole synagogue, Sha'ul withdrew, took the talmidim with him, and commenced holding daily dialogues in Tyrannus's yeshivah.

And yet this perspective still exists in many church doctrines...that is the rejection of the Jewish people by God.

A third option - Contextualist...

A contextualist takes the Scripture as written, but does not solely rely on the P'shat. Other aspects used to gain further insight and understanding of what is written are:

- Cultural context

Yeshua's sermon on the mount is full of allusions (expression designed to call something to mind without mentioning it explicitly; an indirect or passing reference.) of Torah and how it is to be applied by those who live by it. The “B-attitudes” are a perfect example.

Mat 5:1 Seeing the crowds, Yeshua walked up the hill. After he sat down, his talmidim came to him,

Mat 5:2 and he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

Mat 5:3 "How blessed are the poor in spirit! for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Mat 5:4 "How blessed are those who mourn! for they will be comforted.

Mat 5:5 "How blessed are the meek! for they will inherit the Land!

Mat 5:6 "How blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness! for they will be filled.

Mat 5:7 "How blessed are those who show mercy! for they will be shown mercy.

Mat 5:8 "How blessed are the pure in heart! for they will see God.

Mat 5:9 "How blessed are those who make peace! for they will be called sons of God.

Mat 5:10 "How blessed are those who are persecuted because they pursue righteousness! for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Mat 5:11 "How blessed you are when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of vicious lies about you because you follow me!

Mat 5:12 Rejoice, be glad, because your reward in heaven is great — they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way.

They verses convey the essence of what Torah is and how it is to be applied.

Case in point...contextual understanding, verse 5...

Mat 5:5 "How blessed are the meek! for they will inherit the Land!

In most translations, the Greek word *ghay* is translated as earth when in actuality- Contracted from a primary word; *soil*; by extension a *region*, or the solid part or the whole of the *terrene* globe (including the occupants in each application): - country, earth (-ly), ground, land, world.

...is translated as earth. Yet, when we consider the context for whom Yeshua is speaking to, the Jewish people, they were never given the entire earth as their inheritance, but the land promised to them. Here you have in essence the

Jewish context minimised and a globalist / universalist context for this verse employed.

Let's unpack this one verse further...

1. Yeshua would not have spoken to His audience in Greek, but Hebrew or Aramaic for which He likely would have said “ha eretz”...the land
2. From a Jewish perspective, the understanding of inheriting the land was well understood in that the land of Israel was to be an inheritance passed down from generation to generation.

Num 34:1 Adonai told Moshe

Num 34:2 to give this order to the people of Isra'el: "When you enter the land of Kena`an, it will become your land to pass on as an inheritance, the land of Kena`an as defined by these borders.

3. ghay can also be translated as land, but the word chosen was earth.

And then speaking to a Jewish audience, Yeshua conveys the following...

Mat 5:17 "Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete.

Mat 5:18 Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud (י) or a stroke will pass from the Torah — not until everything that must happen has happened.

Mat 5:19 So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mat 5:20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

- Historical context

These past verses also convey a historical context. Looking again at the land aspect of

verse 5, there is an historical context associated also.

So I am going to give you a hybrid...

A Contextual Originalist.

This is how I would identify myself when it comes to how I study Scripture. The words of those who scribed them, inspired by Adonai are of utmost importance. Equally so, the context, both cultural and historical because they form the narrative. Without these elements you will experience errant views, (straying from the proper course or standards) and outright erroneous views that are just plain wrong. The more you do as is accredited to the Bereans...

Act 17:10 But as soon as night fell, the brothers sent Sha'ul and Sila off to Berea. As soon as they arrived, they went to the synagogue.

Act 17:11 Now the people here were of nobler character than the ones in Thessalonica; they eagerly welcomed the message, checking the Tanakh every day to see if the things Sha'ul was saying were true.

Act 17:12 Many of them came to trust, as did a number of prominent Greek women and not a few Greek men.