

**WE DECLARE ALL THEY INTENDED:  
A PREAMBLE TO THE MASTER’S SEMINARY  
STATEMENT ON HERMENEUTICS**

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*Since its founding, The Master’s Seminary has focused on training pastors to exposit the Scriptures accurately. If the primary focus of The Master’s Seminary is biblical exposition, then the heart of the seminary must be hermeneutics. A proper hermeneutic is the foundation of biblical exposition; therefore, the literal-grammatical-historical hermeneutic has been at the center of the institution’s history. Hermeneutics drives the entire process of exposition as it establishes the principles of biblical interpretation. This article provides an introduction to The Master’s Seminary Statement on Hermeneutics included in this issue of The Master’s Seminary Journal, and explains the fundamental importance of practicing a proper hermeneutic to interpret Scripture accurately.*

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Introduction

This year has been a weighty one in divine providence. It marks the fortieth anniversary of The Master’s Seminary, a major milestone of the Lord’s faithfulness. What began as a humble school of ninety-five men is now a school of nearly nine hundred students with seven distance locations, training in local churches through alumni mentors, programs in Spanish, and theological content that reaches the entire world. Thousands of our alumni have gone out to serve in churches, seminaries, and training centers across the globe. No one could have ever imagined the way the Lord would use this institution to proclaim the truth and shepherd God’s flock. Nevertheless, in all this expansion, the seminary’s focus has been singular. We have no other purpose than to raise up men to expound the Word of God and lead His people, training men as if lives depend on it.

In addition to the fortieth year of the seminary, this year is also the year before the centennial of The Master's University, of which the seminary is a part. In the first year of the university, its president rallied against those who "deny the authority of God's Word, exalt reason and science above Revelation, deify the intellectual and dethrone the spiritual, making shipwreck of the faith and career of students and Pastors alike."<sup>1</sup> Nearly one hundred years later, the university remains steadfast to the cause of championing the authority and sufficiency of Scripture. From a forty-year anniversary to the eve of a centennial, this year is a major landmark of God's faithfulness in many ways.

And in this very year, the Lord also saw fit to call our founder, president, and chancellor, Dr. John MacArthur, home. Pastor John most certainly fought the good fight and finished the race (2 Tim 4:7), and the world cannot suppress the impact the Lord had through this man. Tributes have flowed from close friends and family to major news outlets like Fox News and even *The New York Times*. Christian leaders representing seminaries, humanitarian aid organizations, denominations, and universities have expressed their condolences. Government officials have written, business owners have communicated their respect, and those influential in the media have gone online to convey their recognition. Social media itself was dominated by hundreds of thousands of individuals expressing their appreciation and by millions of people watching and reminiscing about Pastor John's teaching. All of this occurred within the greater context of millions of people voicing their gratefulness for this faithful servant of Christ. The outpouring of such appreciation literally extends around the world. Even the government of Israel sent a letter in honor and gratitude to Dr. John MacArthur, a reflection of the undeniable and staggering impact of what the Lord has done through one expositor.

Indeed, what drove Dr. MacArthur's global ministry was not clever marketing, polished PR, or shrewd business tactics. It was not some kind of pragmatic leadership, demanding personality, or personal promotion. It was not chasing trends or fads. Rather, Pastor John had one mission: unleash God's truth one verse at a time. He was consumed with the careful study of God's Word, precision in theological belief and conviction, clarity in teaching and the pulpit, and conscientiousness to subject all things to the authority of Scripture. All of that has ensued due to what Dr. MacArthur maintained: the preacher is to take care of the depth of ministry and let God take care of its breadth. The Word of God is not bound (cf. 2 Tim 2:9), and the outcome of Pastor John's life demonstrates that.

Dr. MacArthur once said, "When the most faithful man dies, he leaves behind not just an institution but a movement." While Pastor John spoke of men like Calvin and Spurgeon, these words are equally applicable to himself. Upon reflection, one could say that Dr. MacArthur left behind a movement of exposition. From the millions of people who listen to Grace to You every month to thousands of expository preachers from The Master's Seminary, tens of thousands of graduates from The Master's University, and numerous global training centers through The Master's Academy International, there are saints around the world who are united by a love for faithful preaching. And to help drive this movement, Dr. MacArthur established an institution, The Master's Seminary, to train men to expound God's Word at the highest level. While

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.masters.edu/master\\_tmu\\_news/from-one-president-to-another/](https://www.masters.edu/master_tmu_news/from-one-president-to-another/).

Dr. MacArthur had said that exceptionally faithful men leave behind a movement and not just an institution, in God's providence, he left behind both.

On this fortieth anniversary of the seminary, the ninety-ninth year of the university, and the homegoing of its president and chancellor, this institution enters into a new season. The major question for this time is whether we will remain unwavering to what has been entrusted to us to hold it fast for the next generation. It is a crucial question. History has not been kind to Christian educational institutions, bearing the tales of their drift and downfall rather than recounting their stalwart faithfulness.<sup>2</sup> Such a reality becomes especially acute when an institution exists beyond one hundred years.

For any seminary that cares about biblical exposition, the answer to the question of drift is the matter of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics drives the entire process of exposition as it establishes the principles of biblical interpretation. If the primary focus of The Master's Seminary is biblical exposition, then the heart of the seminary must be hermeneutics.

The centrality of hermeneutics has been demonstrated through the institution's history. Whether it be its expression in the doctrinal statement of the school<sup>3</sup> or tackling eschatology,<sup>4</sup> exegetical issues,<sup>5</sup> bible translation,<sup>6</sup> biblical covenants,<sup>7</sup> higher criticism,<sup>8</sup> ethics,<sup>9</sup> cessationism,<sup>10</sup> open theism,<sup>11</sup> new Pauline perspective,<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

<sup>3</sup> "We teach the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of Scripture, which affirms that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently and consistently applies this interpretive method with the aid of the illumination of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12–15; 1 Corinthians 2:7–15; 1 John 2:20)." See <https://tms.edu/doctrinal-statement/>.

<sup>4</sup> Brad Klassen, "Premillennialism and Hermeneutics," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 29, no. 2 (2018): 127–55.

<sup>5</sup> Irvin Busenitz, "The Sin unto Death," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 1, no. 1 (1990): 17–31; Robert L. Thomas, "Literary Genre and Hermeneutics of the Apocalypse," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 2, no. 1 (1991): 79–97; William Barrick, "Exegetical Fallacies: Common Interpretive Mistakes Every Student Must Avoid," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 19, no. 1 (2008): 15–27; Irvin Busenitz, "Lifting the Veil: Original Languages and the Pastor-Theologian," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 34, no. 1 (2023): 79–90.

<sup>6</sup> Abner Chou, "'Unless Someone Guides Me?': Some Theological Underpinnings of Translation and the Need for an Expositor," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 35, no. 1 (2024): 5–26; Robert L. Thomas, "Dynamic Equivalence: A Method of Translation or a System of Hermeneutics?," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 1, no. 2 (1990): 149–75.

<sup>7</sup> Irvin Busenitz, "Introduction to the Biblical Covenants; the Noachic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 10, no. 2 (1999): 173–89.

<sup>8</sup> Robert L. Thomas, "The Hermeneutical Landscape," in *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, ed. Robert L. Thomas (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 13–40.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Felix, "The Hermeneutics of Evangelical Feminism," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 5, no. 2 (1994): 159–84; Larry Dean Pettegrew, "Theological Basis of Ethics," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 11, no. 2 (2000): 139–53.

<sup>10</sup> Robert L. Thomas, "The Hermeneutics of Noncessationism," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 29, no. 1 (2018): 45–67.

<sup>11</sup> Robert L. Thomas, "The Hermeneutics of 'Open Theism,'" *The Master's Seminary Journal* 12, no. 2 (2001): 179–202.

<sup>12</sup> Robert L. Thomas, "Hermeneutics of the New Perspective on Paul," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 29, no. 1 (2018): 21–43.

new covenant theology,<sup>13</sup> progressive covenantalism,<sup>14</sup> and the Christocentric hermeneutic,<sup>15</sup> scholarship at the seminary has constantly brought topics back to the matter of hermeneutics. From a curricular standpoint, hermeneutics is one of the first classes a TMS student takes, and advanced hermeneutics concludes the curriculum, a capstone of integrating all that one has learned for scriptural exposition. Hermeneutics has allowed the seminary to discern through “every wind of doctrine” (cf. Eph 4:14) even as it has anchored the seminary to its doctrine and purpose.

In light of the current season and the centrality of hermeneutics, the faculty of The Master’s Seminary came together to codify the institution’s hermeneutical convictions. Such a codification expresses the sum of our curriculum and the focus of our institution. For if hermeneutics is at the heart of this institution, then its articulation expresses the whole of our seminary. The conclusion of this article contains the faculty’s unified statement on hermeneutics, articulating department by department the very methodology that frames our entire approach to exposition. The statement declares who we are, where we have stood, and where we are resolved to still stand. Following the statement on hermeneutics is a signature page with the names and signatures of the TMS faculty members affirming the articles declared in the statement.

#### Those Who Read and Wrote: The Long Line of Expositors

Though the following affirmations and denials are certainly held by our founder and faculty throughout these years, we contend that these hermeneutical principles are not our own but that they are dictated to us by Scripture. From the very moment Scripture was written down, Moses himself commissioned the nature of exposition. Deuteronomy 31:12 records this exhortation:

הַקְהֵל אֶת-הָעָם הָאֲנֹשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׂיִם וְהַטְּףָה וְהַגֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ וְלְמַעַן יִלְמְדוּ וְיִרְאוּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְשָׁמְרוּ לְעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת

Assemble the people, the men and the women and little ones and the sojourner who is within your gates, so that they may hear and so that they may learn and fear Yahweh your God and be careful to do all the words of this law.

In giving this command, Moses first established the centrality of Scripture among the nation of Israel. Moses required that everyone, regardless of biological sex, age, or social status (הַקְהֵל אֶת-הָעָם הָאֲנֹשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׂיִם וְהַטְּףָה וְהַגֵּר), assemble and listen to God’s Word (הַקְהֵל אֶת-הָעָם). God’s Word should grab the attention of all of God’s people.

Having established the priority of God’s Word, Moses also established the nature of its exposition. As opposed to using the text to pontificate one’s opinions, logic, or preferences, Moses declared that true exposition is about having God’s people “hear”

<sup>13</sup> William Barrick, “New Covenant Theology and the Old Testament Covenants,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 18, no. 2 (2007): 165–80.

<sup>14</sup> Michael J. Vlach, “Have They Found a Better Way?: An Analysis of Gentry and Wellum’s Kingdom through Covenant,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 24, no. 1 (2013): 5–24.

<sup>15</sup> Abner Chou, “A Hermeneutical Evaluation of the Christocentric Hermeneutic,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 27, no. 2 (2016): 113–39.

the law (לִמְעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ). The goal of exposition is not to talk over the text but for people to encounter what God said through the words of the text. That the verb “hear” is used often with God’s Word (cf. Deut 6:4–5; Prov 1:8; Isa 1:10; Jer 2:4; Ezek 13:2; Gal 3:2; Heb 2:1) demonstrates that this is the fundamental task of biblical interpretation.

Deuteronomy 31 reveals that such interpretation leads to certain key applications of Scripture. First, God’s people are to “learn” the truths of divine revelation (וּלְמַדּוּ). Exposition is not about entertainment or scintillation (cf. 2 Tim 4:3) but about teaching, informing, and discipling (cf. 4:2). Second, Moses declared that the exposition of God’s Word is inherently theocentric, as internalizing divine truth leads one to “fear Yahweh your God” (וַיִּירָאוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם). Finally, Moses proclaimed that hearing the law should make one “be careful to do all the words of this law” (וּשְׁמָרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת). That Moses stressed *doing* the law (לַעֲשׂוֹת) emphasizes that exposition must include both teaching and exhortation. That Moses stressed *carefulness* in doing the law (וּשְׁמָרוּ) expresses the urgency of exposition. That Moses stressed that God’s Word is the *law* (הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת) implies the unbending authority of Scripture. That Moses stressed *every word* of the law (אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי) reflects the exacting detail in true biblical exposition.

At the moment the law was given, Moses commanded that people engage the very text of God’s Word, learn it, fear God, and be careful to heed and obey every detail of Scripture. Biblical exposition is as old as the Bible itself.

This standard was upheld by the Old Testament prophets. Throughout Israel’s time in the land, they proclaimed the law (Isa 1:1–2; Jer 11:3; Ezek 16:1–59; Amos 4:6–13; Mic 3:1–12), brought people back to the commands of God’s Word (cf. Isa 1:10; 8:20; Jer 9:13), lauded the authority of Scripture (cf. Pss 1, 19, 119), affirmed every word of it (cf. Josh 1:8; 23:14), and trembled before the Scripture (cf. Isa 66:2). In Israel’s exile, Daniel maintained this standard, paying close attention to the very details of Scripture. Daniel even focused upon a single number in the book of Jeremiah (cf. 25:11) and pieced Scripture together to gain understanding about it (Dan 9:2).<sup>16</sup>

This standard of exposition continued into the post-exilic ministry of Ezra, who studied God’s Word, lived it, and then taught it (Ezra 7:10). The Levites in Nehemiah’s day also “read from the book, from the law of God, explaining and giving insight, and they provided understanding of the reading” (Neh 8:8).<sup>17</sup> They maintained the original charge given by Moses. From the beginning of the Old Testament to the end, there have been a long line of expositors.

That line of expositors continued into the New Testament as the Lord Himself called all to heed what had been written (Matt 12:3; Mark 12:10, 26). In stark contrast to those in His day (Matt 4:5–7; 15:1–9), Christ rightly divided the Word of Truth.

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<sup>16</sup> Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 241. Miller astutely comments, “As Daniel studied Jeremiah’s prophecy, he came to realize that the seventy-year captivity period was now drawing to a close. This passage illustrates that Daniel believed in the reality of predictive prophecy. Jeremiah had foretold the end of the exilic period seventy years in advance, and Daniel fully expected this prophecy to be fulfilled. Neither did Daniel “symbolize” these seventy years but took the prophecy literally. This is the safest procedure for believers today as they study prophecies of future events.”

<sup>17</sup> Chou, “Unless Someone Guides Me?,” 24.

He paid attention to the details of Scripture, quoting individual phrases in context (21:16, 23, 42; 22:37, 39),<sup>18</sup> highlighting individual words of a verse (22:45), and appealing even to a tense of a clause (22:31–32). Our Lord demonstrated that every jot and tittle of Scripture is authoritative (cf. 5:18). He equally commanded the breadth of Scripture, explaining how the flow of the Old Testament led to Him (Luke 24:27; John 5:46). The Lord Jesus is the ultimate expositor of Scripture.

Just as the Lord told His own that the Spirit would bring to remembrance all that He had told them (John 14:26), so the apostles upheld this biblical hermeneutic. They viewed Scripture as the final authority, analyzed its grammatical details (1 Cor 8:6; 2 Cor 4:13; 1 Pet 2:6–11; Heb 1:5–13), recognized its historicity (Heb 11:1–40; 2 Pet 3:5–6), and understood its historical setting (Gal 3:6–22). The apostles knew that there was a right way and a wrong way to handle God’s Word. They warned against twisting Scripture to one’s own destruction (2 Pet 3:16) and demanded that God’s people rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Tim 2:15). The apostles had clarity about what true interpretation looked like. They had observed this pattern from all those before them and entrusted it to those who followed after them (cf. 2 Tim 1:3; 2:2; 3:10, 14–15). So continues a long line of expositors.

#### As They Read and Wrote: Standing in the Long Line of Expositors

The Master’s Seminary endeavors to stand in that long line. We do not have our own hermeneutical method. We do not desire to foist our own grid upon the text. Rather, we endeavor to surrender to the approach of Scripture itself. We want to be in continuity with the original line of expositors who have gone before us.

What does it take to stand with those who have gone before us? Here is how we would answer:

*We read the Bible with the presuppositions of the biblical writers.* We believe the Bible to be divine revelation (cf. Deut 29:29; Rom 3:2; Rev 1:1), inspired (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20–21), inerrant (John 17:17; Rev 19:2), clear (Deut 30:11–14; Rom 10:5–8), authoritative (2 Pet 1:19), and sufficient (2 Pet 1:3–5), just as the biblical writers did.<sup>19</sup> We also have the same Bible as those who have gone before us, affirming the very canon of the law, the prophets, and the writings (Luke 24:44) as well as the New Testament Scriptures (2 Tim 1:13; 2 Pet 3:15; Jude 3).<sup>20</sup> Like those

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<sup>18</sup> See E. Earle Ellis, “How Jesus Interpreted His Bible,” *Criswell Theological Review* 3, no. 2 (1989): 341–51.

<sup>19</sup> Abner Chou, “Is Inerrancy Inert? Closing the Hermeneutical ‘Loophole’: Inerrancy and Intertextuality,” in *The Inerrant Word: Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspectives*, ed. John MacArthur (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 243.

<sup>20</sup> See Michael J. Kruger, *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 187–89. The Old Testament itself affirmed the law immediately (Josh 1:8) as well as the prophets (cf. Jer 26:18). The Old Testament interconnected and recognized its own canon immediately. Likewise, the New Testament also affirmed the Old Testament canon (Matt 5:17; 11:13; Luke 24:44). The biblical writers assumed a well-known canon for the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus set up for the New Testament as He recounted that the Spirit would make known His words to His own (John 14:26). This too was immediately recognized as a canonical corpus such that Paul would talk about “sound words” (2 Tim 1:13) and Jude labeled it “the faith” (Jude 3). See discussion in Robert W. Wall, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, Two Horizons New Testament Commentary

who have gone before us, we are all anchored to the same book and approach it with fear and trembling as the Lord demands (Isa 66:2).

*We read the Bible the way the biblical writers demand.* Just as the prophets and apostles appealed to the nature of Scripture to define meaning and interpretation (2 Tim 2:14–15; 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20–21), so we follow their logic.<sup>21</sup> As the biblical writers revealed the confluent dual authorship of Scripture (Deut 18:18; 2 Pet 1:20–21), so we affirm the same and declare that the true meaning of Scripture is that of authorial intent. As the biblical writers grounded their own writings in earlier revelation (cf. Acts 15:15; Rom 2:24; 8:36; 1 Cor 15:3–4),<sup>22</sup> so we affirm that the meaning of Scripture is singular, fixed, and authoritative.<sup>23</sup> There is no fuller meaning than what

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(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 231. Wall observed that Paul's statement is reminiscent of Moses establishing the Pentateuch. He concludes, "Certainly such an activity of canon-building agrees with the portrait of Paul found in the Pastoral Epistles and with the Pastorals' imperative to preserve and transmit the memory and message of Paul to others" (231).

<sup>21</sup> In 2 Peter 1, the Apostle Peter links interpretation (*ἐπιλύσεως*) with inspiration (2 Pet 1:21). While some have argued that the idea of "interpretation" is exegesis proper (see Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003], 323), the usage of the term in the Greek translation of Genesis 40:8, suggests not an interpretative act after the revelation was written down but interpretation even in the act of giving revelation. The human author did not insert his own non-inspired perspective into written revelation. This is an argument from the greater to the lesser. Since the human author did not insert his personal interpretation or opinion into the text in composition, that proves without a doubt that there is no place for personal interpretation or opinion anywhere in the text, particularly after revelation has been written down. This sets up for why false teachers objectively twist the Scripture to their own destruction (2 Pet 3:16). The nature of inspiration and its superintendence guarantee the nature of interpretation. Likewise, in 2 Timothy 3:16, the nature of inspiration is directly tied to the Scripture's profitability "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (*πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμόν, πρὸς ἐπανάρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ*). This leads Paul to exhort Timothy to "preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and teaching" (*κήρυξον τὸν λόγον, ἐπίστηθι εὐκαίρως ἀκαίρως, ἔλεγξον, ἐπιτίμησον, παρακάλεσον, ἐν πάσῃ μακροθυμίᾳ καὶ διδαχῇ*, 2 Tim 4:2). The repetition of terms like *διδαχή* (teaching) as well as *ἐλέγχω* (rebuke) tie the very nature of Scripture with the activity of preaching. In apostolic logic, exposition, hermeneutics, and preaching are all tied to the nature of Scripture.

<sup>22</sup> See Abner Chou, *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning Interpretation from the Prophets and Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018), 123–25. Introductory formulae argue that the apostles did not change the meaning of the Scripture but rather appealed to the meaning of Scripture as authoritative and affirmed their conformity to previous revelation.

<sup>23</sup> Some have raised certain counter examples to argue against the notion of singular meaning (cf. Hos 11:1; Luke 24:27). Other works have discussed these issues at length. See G. K. Beale, "Questions of Authorial Intent, Epistemology, and Presuppositions and Their Bearing on the Study of The Old Testament in the New: A Rejoinder to Steve Moyise," *Irish Biblical Studies* 21 (1999): 152–80; G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007); Chou, *Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers*, 121–55. However, the examples of Hosea 11:1 and Luke 24:27 can illustrate that these allegations are more than answerable. Concerning Hosea 11:1, some assert that Matthew misused Hosea 11:1 stating that the Lord's trek to Egypt (or from Egypt) was not in Hosea's original purview. Some scholars insist that Hosea's words strictly referred to the historical Exodus from Egypt. It is true that Hosea's original words do refer to the historical Exodus. But that does not deal with the question of Hosea's contextual intent in appealing to the historical Exodus. For that matter, if all Matthew wanted to do was make a parallel between the Exodus and Jesus' life, he could have used Exodus 4:22 which is the source text of Hosea 11:1. By contrast, Hosea 11:1 discusses the historical Exodus in the context of a future deliverance of God's people. In sum, because God did not give His people up the first time (Hos 11:1), that demands that He will never give them up and that a second Exodus will take place (11:11). With the birth of Jesus (Matt 2:13–15) so paralleling the birth of Moses (Exod 1:15–16), Matthew demonstrates that God is setting in motion that very eschatological deliverance.

the author intended even while there are various implications and applications (significance) that stem from what he wrote.<sup>24</sup> We affirm that as the biblical writers declared that men, under inspiration, spoke from God (2 Pet 1:20–21),<sup>25</sup> so the meaning of Scripture is conveyed by normal patterns of human language. We also affirm that as the biblical writers established that all Scripture is inspired (2 Tim 3:16), down to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18), so every detail and word of Scripture is significant. As the biblical writers claimed that Scripture was written at various times (Heb 1:1), so we affirm that Scripture should be understood in light of the facts of history (cf. Mark 7:3–4).

Such observations demonstrate that a literal-grammatical-historical hermeneutic is not a formulation of human rationalism or modern invention. Rather, this hermeneutic corresponds to the very nature of the inspired and inerrant Word, which is the very way the biblical writers thought about their own hermeneutic (cf. 2 Pet 1:20–21). That said, the biblical writers also affirmed that such a hermeneutic could never be applied apart from the Holy Spirit. As the prophets and apostles declared that no one can truly grasp the Scripture apart from the Spirit’s regenerating work

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Matthew is using Hosea in context; in fact, that is why Matthew cited Hosea (as opposed to Exodus) to begin with. This becomes particularly clear when one observes that Hosea is the first prophet chronologically to make use of the second-Exodus motif and does so pervasively. He not only uses phrases distinctively referring to the Exodus (see מִן־הַיָּם־הַיָּבֵשׁ Hos 1:11 [Heb 2:2] and note that the combination of עֵלָה (with a human subject) and מִן־הַיָּם־הַיָּבֵשׁ exclusively refers to the Exodus, see Gen 50:24; Exod 1:10; 3:8). He also refers to Egypt extensively, thirteen times, far more than any other minor prophet. See G. K. Beale, “The Use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15: One More Time,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 55 (2012): 697–715.

Likewise, while some scholars appeal to Luke 24:27 to contend that Jesus reinterpreted the Scripture around Himself, the opposite is in fact true. Technically the verse simply states that Jesus brought forth the passages about Himself from all the Old Testament. Nothing from this implies that the Lord reinterpreted the text. In fact, the Lord declared, “O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!” (Luke 24:25). In this quote, Christ demonstrated that the disciples’ problem was not a deficiency in the meaning of the Old Testament (which Jesus needed to fill out). Actually, the Lord’s rebuke indicates that the disciples should have understood this, which certain people at the time did discern (cf. Luke 2:28–38). The Lord contended that the issue was not with a deficiency of Old Testament meaning but rather in the heart of the readers. They were the “foolish ones and slow of heart to believe.” Even more, the Lord maintained that the meaning of the Old Testament was “all that the prophets have spoken.” Authorial intent, even the original intent of the inspired human author, is the meaning of the text.

<sup>24</sup> See Chou, *Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers*, 30–34. What is outlined here is what hermeneuticians may call the distinction between meaning and significance. See E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 8. Scripture itself recognizes this distinction in several ways. For one, from a legal perspective, the Bible has terminology which discusses the commandments or particular judgments of the law (specific meaning) versus the principles that frame a wide range of implications (significance). That James spoke of being not only a hearer of the law but also a doer also supports the notion of meaning and significance (Jas 1:23). The knowledge of Scripture as opposed to the wisdom it exudes to apply to every situation of life (cf. Prov 2:9) is also an apt way to frame the existence of meaning and significance. The Lord Jesus Himself discussed this when He spoke of what the law dictated with its true and full ramifications upon life (Matt 5:21–48).

<sup>25</sup> Schreiner puts it well, “We have strong biblical support here for what B. B. Warfield called *concursum*. Both human beings and God were fully involved in the process of inspiration. The personality and gifts of the human authors were not squelched or suppressed. We can detect their different literary styles even today. And yet the words they spoke do not cancel out the truth that they spoke the word of God. *Concursum* means that both God and human beings contributed to the prophetic word.” See Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 324.

(Jer 31:31; Ezek 36:26; Eph 1:17–18), so we affirm that every true expositor relies upon the illuminating work of the Spirit.<sup>26</sup>

*We read the Bible the way the biblical writers read and wrote.* The biblical writers not only authored Scripture under inspiration of the Spirit but were also readers of Scripture. They studied God's Word (Ps 111:2; Dan 9:2; Ezra 7:10) and meditated upon it day and night (Pss 1:2; 16:7; 63:6). They knew their Bible.<sup>27</sup> In so doing, the biblical writers demonstrated the very hermeneutic they demanded, and we follow in their footsteps. We engage in exegesis in the original languages because those are the languages used by the biblical writers. We believe translations are valid because the biblical writers themselves recognized their legitimacy, translating Scripture and using translations in their writings (Matt 1:23; Luke 3:3–5; Gal 4:27; Heb 1:5–13).<sup>28</sup> We understand Scripture in light of its historical background because the biblical writers themselves explained Scripture in light of the facts of history (1 Sam 9:9; Mark 7:3–4).<sup>29</sup> We also analyze Scripture in light of its literary context, both innertextual and inter-textual, because the biblical writers did the same (cf. Gal 3–4; Heb 3–4).<sup>30</sup> We are cognizant of the genres of the text because the biblical writers understood genres and figures of speech, such as parables (Matt 13:3), narratives (13:53), rhetorical statements (Gal 5:12), commands (Matt 12:5), and declarations (Gal 5:16). We examine the grammar of Scripture and the individual words of Scripture because the biblical writers studied the Scripture to such depth, emphasizing the ramifications of syntax (Matt 22:32; Gal 3:16) and individual terms (Rom 4:2–3; 4:6–7; Heb 3–4).<sup>31</sup> Every step of the exegetical process, from historical

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<sup>26</sup> Robert L. Thomas, "The Origin of Preunderstanding from Explanation to Obfuscation," in *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, ed. Robert L. Thomas (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 52–53; Chou, *Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers*, 29.

<sup>27</sup> For a list of examples of the biblical writers' awareness of antecedent revelation see discussion in Chou, *Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers*, 50–54.

<sup>28</sup> See further discussion in Chou, "Unless Someone Guides Me?," 5–15; William A. Ross and Gregory R. Lanier, eds., *The Authority of the Septuagint: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Approaches* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2025), 3–5.

<sup>29</sup> See William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 245. "Aware that most of his readers will not understand the technical nature of the scribal charge nor its background in Jewish practice, Mark provides a simple definition of defilement and a thumbnail sketch of Pharisaic practice."

<sup>30</sup> See discussion in William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8* (Dallas: Word, 1998), 89–104. Lane rightly synthesizes that the author of Hebrews stitched Psalm 95 with Numbers 12 as well as an entire biblical theology of rest starting from the original Sabbath. "The continuation of the interpretation of Ps 95:7b–11 in 4:1–11 permits the writer to develop a theology of rest. The notion of rest within the Scriptures is one of expanding horizons. For Israel at Kadesh, and in the Hexateuch generally, the promise of rest connoted entrance into Canaan. But the review of Israel's failure to enter God's rest in Ps 95, long after the conquest and settlement of the land under Joshua, indicated that those events did not exhaust the divine intention. They represented only a type of the rest promised to the people of God."

<sup>31</sup> See above note about the discussion on a singular term like "rest." Note also Paul's argumentation in Romans 4. In Romans 4:2–3, Paul discussed the issue of justification (ἐδικαιώθη) and then quoted from Genesis 15:6 to prove his point as the passage contains the same root with the term "righteousness" (ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην). Likewise, in Romans 4:6, Paul spoke about "blessedness" (τὸν μακαρισμὸν) of one forgiven and then quoted from Psalm 32:1 which has the same term (Μακάριοι ὧν ἀφέθησαν αἱ ἀνομίαι). Paul did this elsewhere. He summarized Psalm 68:18, which discussed Christ's ascension on high (Ἀναβάς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν), and then discussed that ascension demands an incarnation (τὸ δὲ Ἀνέβη τί ἐστίν; Eph 4:9–10). Peter abided by the same pattern in

backgrounds to word studies, is grounded in the way the biblical writers themselves were excellent exegetes.

*We read the Bible the way the biblical writers connected it together.* We affirm that the biblical writers were not only excellent exegetes but also the original biblical theologians, weaving Scripture together by quotations, citations, and allusions.<sup>32</sup> In connecting Scripture together, the biblical writers maintained and incorporated the import of earlier revelation into their writings and set up for implications to be developed by later revelation.<sup>33</sup> As a result, the New Testament does not reinterpret the Old Testament but builds upon it (as the apostles themselves claim),<sup>34</sup> and biblical

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expounding the prophecy of Christ as the rejected stone (1 Pet 2:6–9). This also serves as a demonstration that Peter knew the way individual terms connected texts together in Scripture.

<sup>32</sup> See above examples (e.g., nn. 30–31). See further discussion in Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 113; Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 55; Chou, *Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers*, 70–91. See also Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, reprint edition (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017).

<sup>33</sup> Several arguments support this assertion. First, the biblical writers viewed Scripture as God’s Word, which should not be tampered with (cf. Deut 4:2; Prov 30:5–6; Rev 22:18–19). Second, the apostles asserted the prophets knew what they were speaking about. Peter claimed that David foresaw Christ (Acts 2:30) and that the prophets knew the sufferings of Christ and the glories that followed (1 Pet 1:11). Paul likewise asserted that whatever was written in the Old Testament was written for the instruction of those to come (Rom 15:4) and that the Old Testament anticipated the gospel and Christ (Gal 3:8). Third, the biblical writers claimed to uphold the authorial intent of prior revelation, as indicated by their introductory formulae (see fn. 22). Fourth, the biblical writers also cite the Scripture without explanation, assuming that the original idea is the default idea without any modification (cf. Matt 12:3–7; 1 Cor 2:16; 1 Pet 2:6–8). Fifth, without debate, the biblical writers overwhelmingly used Scripture contextually. Cf. Ellis, “How Jesus Interpreted His Bible,” 350. Sixth, the limited counter-examples to this can be answered and illustrate the rule both in that the supposed exceptions are limited and in that the answers to these exceptions show a very intimate understanding of prior context (cf. fn. 23). Finally, unlike the contemporaries of the time, the prophets and apostles had a remarkably consistent hermeneutical approach where they interpreted (and even often applied) the same text the same way. Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament,” *New Testament Studies* 7 (1961): 21.

<sup>34</sup> See previous note. Further common counterexamples to this include the Rock in the wilderness (cf. 1 Cor 10:4), the use of the potter concerning Judas (cf. Matt 27:6–10), as well as the use of Amos in the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:15–17). Concerning the Rock, it is of note that throughout the Old Testament the term “Rock” is a title for God, specifically the angel of Yahweh, which was bestowed to Him in conjunction with His provision of water through a rock (cf. Exod 14:19; 23:20–23; Deut 32:4; Isa 28:16; Zech 3:9). Given this association, it is more than reasonable for Paul to assert that the “Rock” followed and provided for Israel in the wilderness and that Rock is Christ. Concerning Matthew’s use of the potter and Zechariah, Matthew appealed to Zechariah’s own use of Jeremiah to show that the potter was a symbol of God’s sovereign judgment of exile. Zechariah, using prophetic drama, himself appealed to this to demonstrate that while Israel had come out of certain trappings of exile, continued exile awaited them because of their rejection of Messiah. Matthew appealed to the fulfillment of that very idea when Judas betrayed the Lord. Concerning the use of Amos in the Jerusalem council, it is of note that Peter did not merely say “prophet” (singular) but “prophets” (plural), as well as that these passages agree (as opposed to were fulfilled) with what the apostle declared (τούτῳ συμφωνοῦσιν οἱ λόγοι τῶν προφητῶν καθὼς γέγραπται, Acts 15:15). To any who argue that Peter mistranslated the text, Peter’s own claim was that he aggregated multiple passages together. The aggregation of texts points out God’s eschatological agenda to include Gentiles. To any who argue that Peter misunderstood or misapplied the text, Peter only claimed that these texts agreed with what he said (as opposed to arguing for a fulfillment). There is no question that God intends to incorporate and show kindness upon the Gentiles, so what the Jerusalem Council proposed was not out of line with God’s character or purpose. See W. Edward Glenny, “The

prophecy is not reimagined but further detailed by later revelation.<sup>35</sup> Such consistent connectivity of Scripture formulates themes that reveal God's truth progressively, unveil His glorious plan, and serve as a basis for all theology.<sup>36</sup> As the biblical writers intended their writings to connect with other passages, so we also read Scripture as a unified whole. We do not read their writings in isolation nor do we fabricate our own connections.<sup>37</sup> Rather, we follow the connections the prophets and apostles formulated, grasping the richness of context they established for their writings and tracing the ramifications of what was revealed.

*We read from the Bible the theology the biblical writers instilled.* Some believe that while certain parts of Scripture are theological, other parts (like narratives, parables, or laws and proverbs) lack theological content. But that is not the way the biblical writers thought of Scripture. They declared that all Scripture is profitable (2 Tim 3:16) and instructive for every generation (Pss 22:30; 102:18; Rom 15:4). They understood that narratives are not neutral (2 Kgs 17:7–21), parables have theological points (Matt 13:10–23), and laws and proverbs are theology enacted (Deut 4:6–8).<sup>38</sup>

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Septuagint and Apostolic Hermeneutics: Amos 9 in Acts 15,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 22, no. 1 (2012): 1–25. What the New Testament asserted about the Old was in perfect complement to what the Old had established.

<sup>35</sup> In Acts, the Lord did not modify the prophecies and promises made to Israel but only said that the disciples were not to know the timing (Acts 1:6–7). Likewise, Christ had already affirmed many of the eschatological tribulational prophecies to the nation in His Olivette Discourse (see Matt 24–25). Paul affirmed details, including that the antichrist would sit in the temple per Daniel's own prophecy (2 Thess 2:4; cf. Dan 9:27; Matt 24:15). The book of Revelation also affirms eschatological prophecies of Joel (cf. Rev 8:8–13), Isaiah (Rev 6:15–16), Daniel (Rev 13–14), as well as Ezekiel and Zechariah (Rev 19–20). These prophecies are affirmed as distinctive events and are depicted as happening in the future as Revelation declares ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα (Rev 1:19; and see explicit demarcation in Rev 4:1 δείξω σοι ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα). Cf. Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 54.

<sup>36</sup> Waltke, *Old Testament Theology*, 113; House, *Old Testament Theology*, 55; James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 46.

<sup>37</sup> On the one hand, a danger in exegesis is having atomistic exegesis and to deal with every text as if it were an island. See D. A. Carson, “Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, But,” in *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives*, ed. R. Michael Allen (London: T & T Clark, 2011), 189–202; Chou, *Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers*, 35, 129. Severing a text from its layers of context would be a mistake as the biblical writers themselves incorporated previous revelation into their own writings. This has given rise to modernistic and higher critical interpretation. On the other hand, an equal danger is license to fabricating any kind of connection possible. This can be seen in typology, where there is the classic question of whether one can see types beyond what the Bible stipulates. Even the question is deceiving. Does the question concern going beyond what the Bible explicitly labels as a type or going beyond what the Bible establishes as a type? Concerning the former, a typological relationship can exist without using the word “type.” Concerning the latter, to argue that one can make types beyond what the Bible writer intended is fabricating connections not found in Scripture and makes the reader a new author. See Richard Joseph Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology in the New Testament*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); James M. Hamilton, *Typology-Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 18–19; Aubrey Sequeira and Samuel C. Emadi, “Biblical-Theological Exegesis and the Nature of Typology,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* (2017): 11–34; Hamilton, *Typology-Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns*, 18–19. The biblical writers themselves establish typological relationships as they inter-textually link passages together. Typology, like all connections in Scripture, is a function of their intent.

<sup>38</sup> See John H. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1995), 94–97; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 111–42.

The biblical writers viewed all of Scripture as theological, and we uphold their perspective. Just as the biblical writers expressed theology propositionally (cf. John 1:1–5; Eph 2:1–10; Col 1:15–20), so we define doctrine based upon those declarations. Just as the biblical writers point out that certain texts presume the truths of earlier revelation (cf. 1 Cor 8:5–6), so we also recognize that texts can reflect systematic theology.<sup>39</sup> Just as the biblical writers discerned that certain passages have theological consequences (Gen 22:12; cf. Rom 8:32), so we too recognize that texts can entail certain theological truths.<sup>40</sup> And just as the biblical writers did theology as they used and revealed Scripture (e.g., Rom 3:10–18; 4:3; 11:26; cf. Gen 15:6; Ps 14:1–3; Isa 59:20),<sup>41</sup> so our theology also comes from closely reading the Scripture they wrote. The biblical authors, who under inspiration imparted theology into the text, showed how to discern theology from the text. So we follow that precise method of seeing how exegesis drives theology.

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<sup>39</sup> In the specific example of 1 Corinthians 8:5–6, Paul assumed the reality of the *Shema* both intertextually (as the passage evokes Deut 6:4) and conceptually. See Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1987), 373. Numerous other examples of such assumption exist. John 1:29 and the statement that Jesus is the Lamb of God, assumes a theology framework of understanding the sacrificial system and penal substitutionary atonement. An ethical theology from the law is assumed when assessing the actions of characters in biblical narrative. See Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 11, 166–70. In that way, biblical inter-textuality reminds and reflects that scriptural passages are often assuming previous revelation and its respective theology for a variety of purposes. Such presuppositions are inherent and necessary for the logic and point of the passage to work. Systematics in that way articulates timeless and universal truths either conveyed in the propositions of Scripture or carried forward by the presuppositions of texts as well. The theological consequence of certain texts is expressed by the connections or inter-textuality of Scripture and is found in the study of biblical theology (see above). Together, biblical and systematic theology (tracing the connections, propositions, and presuppositions of the biblical writers) demonstrate the theological intent of every text and aid to distill those theological assertions.

<sup>40</sup> See above discussion about the way the biblical writers did biblical theology. As passage compounds upon passage, these chains of texts outline the ramifications of earlier revelation upon the entire canon. Within this progression of biblical theology, the categories of systematic theology are also in operation and disclosure. See Chou, *Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers*, 71–73; Rikk E. Watts, “How Do You Read? God’s Faithful Character as the Primary Lens for the New Testament’s Use of Israel’s Scriptures,” in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Daniel Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013), 199–222.

<sup>41</sup> Chou, *Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers*, 71–72. True theology can only come from divine revelation as true wisdom alone comes from God (Job 28:12–28). General revelation, by definition, reveals only certain ideas about God; namely, His eternal power and divinity (ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης; Rom 1:20; cf. Ps 19:1). Such theological information is only sufficient to condemn and leave man without excuse but not to save or to have a relationship with this God (Rom 1:20). Such theology is not distinctively Christian theology then. Thus, to have legitimate and definite theology, one must have special revelation (cf. Ps 19:7–14). See John MacArthur, “The Sufficiency of Scripture,” in *The Inerrant Word: Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspectives*, ed. John MacArthur (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 27. Out of all special revelation, Scripture stands as its most definitive peak. After all, the Lord Jesus performed many acts, but only certain ones are recorded in Scripture (John 21:25), of which every word is inspired and profitable for every generation (2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:20–21). Scripture serves as the foundation of the church as it is the very work of the prophets and apostles (cf. Eph 2:20). See A. T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 153. Valid theology for the church then is designed by God to come from Scripture alone, and the biblical writers themselves reinforce this by their very model of using Scripture to derive theology. Confessions, like any commentary or teacher, serve as helpful articulations and full expressions of what is densely present in Scripture, but they are neither an interpretative framework nor a peer of God’s Word.

*We read the Bible the way the biblical writers exhorted and counseled.* In writing Scripture, the prophets and apostles intended not only to inform the saints but also to sanctify them (Ps 19:7–14; John 17:17) and equip them for ministry (Eph 4:11–12). Just as the biblical writers defined the nature and practice of ministry in their inspired writings (1 Cor 14:26–33; 1 Tim 3:14–15; Titus 2:1–10), so we too uphold Scripture as the standard for true ministry. Just as the biblical writers counseled and disciplined the saints from Scripture alone (Isa 8:19–20; John 17:17; 1 Cor 2:13; Col 3:16; 2 Pet 1:3),<sup>42</sup> so also we maintain that only Scripture is sufficient for life and godliness. Just as the biblical writers addressed particular areas of life such as science (Gen 1; Ps 104), politics (Rom 13:1–7; 1 Pet 2:13–17), work (Eph 6:5–9; Col 3:22–25), jurisprudence (Deut 19:15–21; Prov 18:13–17), or economics (Deut 24:6–13; 2 Thess 3:10), so also we define those areas in our lives. And just as the biblical writers understood that Scripture is divine truth and wisdom (Pss 19:7; 119:98; Prov 8:12–36; 1 Cor 2:14–16), so we also seek to have all Scripture shape every part of our existence to please Christ (cf. Col 1:10; 2 Cor 10:3–5).<sup>43</sup> The biblical writers understood that God's people were not just to be hearers but also doers of the Word (Jas 1:22), and we handle the Word unto that very purpose.

*We preach the Bible with all that the biblical writers intended.* We have observed that as the biblical authors wrote, so they read, and as the biblical authors read, so they preached, and as they preached, so they summoned us to imitate them as they imitated Christ. What then does it mean to be an expositor of Scripture? What is demanded is nothing short of possessing the biblical writers' presuppositions,

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<sup>42</sup> John 17 itself establishes that sanctification is achieved through God's Word. Such an axiom is lived out by the biblical writers. Isaiah himself testified that the law and testimony were the resources God's people needed for counsel. Likewise, Paul affirmed that the wisdom of man cannot discern the things of God. Only the Word of Christ dwelling within the believer can affect true transformation and change (cf. Col 3:16). Scriptural writers both eliminate sources other than Scripture for the believer's sanctification and enforce the Word as the mechanism by which one is transformed. For this reason, Peter declared that God had given everything for life and godliness (τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν, and not just faith and practice, cf. 2 Pet 1:3) through the full knowledge of God (διὰ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ καλέσαντος ἡμᾶς ἰδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἄρετῃ). The articular noun ἐπιγνώσις refers not to the subjective activity of knowing God but rather to the objective content about God, which is found in divine revelation. Cf. Eph 4:13, and see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 255.

<sup>43</sup> Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 680–81. That Scripture shapes the entire life, even the life and operation of an entire nation, is seen in Deut 4:6: "You shall keep and do *them*, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" Proverbs 2:9 also declares that divine wisdom allows one to "understand righteousness and justice and equity—every good track." The language of Scripture being a light to one's path (Ps 119:105) demonstrates that the Bible is not merely for spiritual aspects of life but its entirety. That is illustrated in the days of Solomon where the king not only spoke about what are considered purely theological matters but "he spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish" (1 Kgs 4:33). As God created the world, so divine wisdom contains the world. See Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 147–50. That reflects Scripture's eternal nature and that by it one grows in respect to salvation (1 Pet 1:22–2:3). That is also why Scripture is more sure than even supernatural signs (Luke 16:29–31). Scripture is not merely information but the means of God's grace (Acts 20:32) which is able to free the soul (John 8:32), cut through the soul (Heb 4:12), and to aid one to persevere to the end (Acts 20:32b; 2 Pet 1:19b). Given its power, the intent of Scripture then is to shape and secure not just an aspect of one's life but all of it.

approaching the text the way they demanded, reading the way they read, connecting Scripture the way they connected it, distilling the theology that they instilled in their writing, and applying the Word according to their intent. Only then have we truly taken on the mantle of ministry left by those who have gone before us (Deut 31:9–13; Ezra 7:10; Neh 8:8; 2 Tim 2:2; 4:2). Only then have we become expositors, rightly handling the Word of Truth in all that the biblical writers intended, demanded, and modeled. So we wholeheartedly confess:

**WE AFFIRM** that expositional preaching is demanded by the nature of Scripture and is the culmination of the exegetical process, conveying God’s intended message in its inspired and inerrant details, historical and literary context, theological depth and consistency, and intrinsic implications and applications.<sup>44</sup> We further affirm that the only type of preaching which sufficiently conveys the divine revelation and its proper application to life is that which faithfully expounds the text of Scripture as the Word of God.<sup>45</sup>

That is what the expositors of old have stood for, and that is where The Master’s Seminary has stood, stands at present, and is committed to stand for the sake of Christ and His church in days to come. And that is what the following statement articulates as our accountability.

We are in a season when the need for the exposition of God’s Word is greater than ever, and we invite those who desire to join the ranks of the expositors of old to join with us. May it be that we preach the Word in season and out of season so that the people of God would be fed, so that the church would continue to be the pillar and grounds of the truth, and so that the God of the Word would be exalted as we unleash His truth one verse at a time.

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<sup>44</sup> Neh 8:5–8; Acts 5:20; 20:27; 2 Tim 2:15; 4:1–2.

<sup>45</sup> Taken from “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics,” Article XXV.