7 ideas for enriching Bible understanding

The Bible is a rich library to be savored over a lifetime.

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Place yourself in the shoes of those who read those documents for the first time

“The aim of good Biblical interpretation is simple: to get at the plain meaning of the text.”
-- Gordon Fee

How do we do that?

A Bible passage will not mean what it never meant.
As we approach the Bible we must deal with . . .

1. The historical gap between Bible times and today.

We do not live in 800 B.C.

We don’t even live in 33 A.D.
As we approach the Bible we must realize deal with . . .

1. The historical gap

2. Social and cultural gaps

We are not Jews, nor do we live in agrarian Mediterranean society
As we approach the Bible text, we must deal with . . .

1. The historical gap
2. Social and cultural gaps
3. Language differences

We aren’t reading the Bible in the original languages in which Moses or Paul or others wrote.
As we approach the Bible text, we must deal with . . .

1. A historical gap
2. Social and cultural gaps
3. Language differences
4. Hand copied manuscripts

None of the original manuscripts written by Paul or Moses or Isaiah have been found.
Qumran Wadi with series of caves

Below: Cave 4 contained 15,000 fragments from 580 documents
As we approach the Bible text, we must deal with . . .

1. A historical gap
2. Social and cultural gaps
3. Language differences
4. Copied manuscripts

5. Incremental (or unfolding) divine revelation

We have the entire Bible; Joshua, for example, only had the material in the first five books.
As we approach the Bible text, we must deal with . . .

1. The historical gap
2. Social and cultural gaps
3. Language differences
4. Copied manuscripts
5. Incremental revelation and growth of human understanding

6. A variety of literary genre (types)
Bible literary types (genre)

- History
- Laws
- Biography
- Riddles
- Drama
- Poetry
- Letters
- Parables
- Wisdom
- Apocalypses
- Sermons
As we approach the Bible text, we must deal with . . .

1. The historical gap
2. Social and cultural gaps
3. Language differences
4. Copied manuscripts
5. Incremental revelation and growth of human understanding
6. A variety of literary genre or types

7. Its divine inspiration

The Bible is at the same time both human and divine.
Interpretation of the Bible is shaped by the tension between:

1. Eternal relevance ("God’s Word never changes!")
2. Historical particularity (anchored in time)
7 ideas for enriching Bible understanding
(End)

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