

**"AFRICAN ELEPHANT"****Date:** September 22, 2019**Speaker:** Danny Clinton**Bible History/Facts...**

- The Bible was written in three languages. Those languages are Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
- The Bible is about 611,000 words long.
- The Bible was written by more than 40 traditional authors.
- The Bible was written on three continents. Most was written in what is modern-day Israel (Asia). But some passages of Jeremiah were written in Egypt (Africa) and several New Testament epistles were written from cities in Europe.
- The Bible was written by people from diverse occupational backgrounds. Parts of the Bible were written by kings. Other parts of the Bible are written by farmers, fishermen, homeless prophets, vocational musicians, a tentmaker, a doctor, a professional scribe, and such...

**"If we have to speak to a single purpose of the Bible, it would be to reveal God to us."**

*(Vs) 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 3:15b-17 – "... you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."*

**All this to say the Bible is a vast place filled with incredibly powerful tools.**

- **Lenses...** Whenever we look at scripture from one limited world view or lens, we often miss what's happening within the words on the page.
- Insane things have been proclaimed in the name of the Bible.
- A multitude of genocides were perpetuated against indigenous people all throughout the world with Scripture as their driving force.
- Much of the expansion of human slavery was fueled by passages in the Bible. Still today, Scripture is used for the advancement of toxic Patriarchy.

**Question: So, how are we supposed to approach the Bible responsibly?**

- “Scripture & Spirit”
- We are supposed to sit with each other and, through the Holy Spirit, get into and investigate what these Scriptures actually mean.
- We are told that Scripture is alive through the Holy Spirit.

*(Vs) Heb. 4:12 ESV – “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*

**This Bible isn't to be just read but explored.**

- And this is how we are supposed to approach even well-known passages...

**Prodigal Son**

- Three Main Characters: Father, Older Brother, and Younger Brother
- The Conversation around this passage might change depending on who you most identify with or even what you're facing in your life.

**So, this is how one might discuss this passage...**

- As I'm up here sharing about the Bible, sitting center, I have The Father – My God who I hope to please...
- Then at one hand, I have these young and fed up Christians and Seekers...
- And on this hand, I have a very stable group of Believers that have “stayed home and helped to build this place...”
- So, my conversation would be all around the feast the Father throws at the end of the story.
- The Invitation the father gave to the one who didn't think he was welcome, and the older responsible brother's response to that.

**This is why Jewish tradition has always understood that Scripture is to be engaged in community...**

**“Scripture for Jewish people is supposed to be a conversation starter not a conversation ender.”**

- Jewish tradition dictates that only through this communal exploration can a true understanding of any scripture's meaning be grasped.
- This is important because The Bible is both Prescriptive and Descriptive.
- Sometimes one or both!

**Prescriptive Def.** : Relating to the enforcement of a rule or method.

**Descriptive Def.** : Serving or seeking to describe.

- Sometimes it's very clear. Prescriptive Verses...

(Vs) Matt. 22:37 – And He (Jesus) said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

(Vs) Matt 5:43,44 – "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..."

### Other times perhaps not so clear...

(Vs) Psalm 137:9 NLT – "Happy is the one who takes your babies and smashes them against the rocks!"

(Vs) Deut. 23:1 ESV – "No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male organ is cut off shall enter the assembly of the Lord."

(Vs) Deut. 25:11-12 NASB – "If two men, a man and his countryman, are struggling together, and the wife of one comes near to deliver her husband from the hand of the one who is striking him, and puts out her hand and seizes his genitals, then you shall cut off her hand; you shall not show pity."

- To take these descriptive verses as prescriptive is to miss their meaning, and yet history shows we've done this time and time again...

(Vs) 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 – "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church."

- Paul was clearly dealing with a local (Descriptive) cultural issue and never intended for us to turn this into a (Prescriptive) doctrine...
- He was describing a solution to a specific situation...
- If we miss the higher concept of honor in their story, we end up just demanding that women sit to the right of their husbands and never drive...
- You may say, "Nope, if the Bible says it, I do it!" – Do You?

(Vs) Matt. 26:26-29 – Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

- According to a prescriptive only view of this verse, anyone not taking wine with their communion is not participating in the sacraments of Christ.
- This is why it's critical to explore Scripture through the Holy Spirit, and with one another.

### You can find anything and everything inside this beautiful book...

- This means if you want to find a Sword to cut someone's head off, you can find it here.
- If you want to find a rare salve to heal someone's wounds, you can find it here.

### This Week's Untethered Challenge... “Scripture and Spirit”

- **Spirit:** Can you trust that the Bible occupies a space bigger than your personal understanding and vision?

**“This would be a similar trust given to the Puzzle Maker who made sure that every piece of the puzzle exists, so the picture can eventually be made clear.”**

- **Scripture:** Can you explore the Bible with enough humility to consider you may have read some of it wrong?
- I know these kinds of spaces are scary to jump into... I Really Do!
- But, if this is where Jesus is guiding... “Be afraid and do it anyways!”

**Isn't Jesus worthy of that?**