

REFLECTION QUESTIONS TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR
"40 QUESTIONS ABOUT INTERPRETING THE BIBLE"

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This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the book *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* by Robert L. Plummer (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010). The focus is to offer teachers of this material suggested responses for the reference questions which conclude each section and to provide guidance to further develop discussion. If you are new to teaching a course such as this, do not feel as though you have to have an answer to every difficult question that may be asked. Guidance will be given throughout the following pages and various helpful resources will be noted. As teacher, you have the responsibility and privilege of teaching information that can lead others to a deeper, more significant understanding of the Bible. The information provided below is intended to help you in this important and exciting responsibility.

Question 1: What is the Bible?

1. What is one new thing that you learned about the Bible? (Or, possibly note a previously known fact that struck you afresh.)

Virtually any answer to this question is valid. If someone notes a fact that is not from the book, a follow-up question can be asked, "I don't remember that. Now, where did you see that in the chapter?" Don't be afraid to wait for people to answer. Quiet students can be encouraged to flip back through the textbook to jar their memories.

2. One purpose of the Bible is to bring persons into a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Has that purpose been accomplished in your life? How do you know?

The Bible tells us that we are all sinners, sin separates us from God, and we are brought into a saving relationship with God only by turning from our sins and placing our faith in Jesus Christ who died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. Affirmative answers that are based on anything other than faith in Christ may reflect a misunderstanding of the gospel message. If you hear a response such as this, or if someone responds that they do not have a saving relationship with God through Christ, take time to share the gospel message. You can say, "Before moving on, let me take a few minutes to share what the Bible says about how we have this saving relationship with God through Christ." (For evangelism resources go to www.billygraham.org/sharethegospel.) When finished, let the class know you will be available after class if anyone has questions or would like to talk more. Also, you can recommend the 2-hour "Jesus" film, which is a well respected evangelistic tool available in over 1,000 languages. It can be watched for free at <http://www.jesusfilm.org/film-and-media/watch-the-film>

3. How would you rank your knowledge of the Bible on a scale of 1 to 10? How did you learn about the Bible? (Or, why do you not know much about the Bible?)

Some may be self conscious about their lack of Bible knowledge. After giving time for responses, let everyone know that no one will ever be put on the spot for answers. You can take this time to

emphasize that this study is a chance for all to become better students of the Bible, regardless of their level of Bible knowledge.

4. Have you read the entire Bible? If not, consider committing to do so over the next year. *If someone responds that they have read the entire Bible, ask them if they followed a set reading plan and if they would share how their reading experience has benefited them. Also, you can encourage the class to use the devotional books by D.A. Carson noted under “For Further Study” at the bottom of page 22 in your book.*

5. Do you have a general question about the Bible that this section failed to answer? What is it?

If you are unsure of an answer to a question that is asked, write it down and let the person know you will find the answer for them. A helpful resource for follow-up questions is www.bible.org.

Question 2: How is the Bible Organized?

1. When you have spoken of the Old Testament and New Testament, have you thought of the term *testament* as meaning “covenant”? How does viewing the Bible as based on covenants between God and humanity affect your reading?

The concept of “covenant” may be new for some in your group. After giving time for responses, encourage others to interact with what has been said. You can conclude by saying, “The old covenant, which is related to the giving of laws to Moses at Mount Sinai, reflects how God deals with his chosen people, the Israelites. This fact helps us understand the context of the books of the Old Testament. Likewise, keeping in mind that Jesus’ death and resurrection instituted the promised “new” covenant between God and humanity brings added understanding to our reading of the New Testament books.

2. Prior to reading the material above, where did you think the chapter and verse divisions in the Bible originated?

Obviously you may get a variety of answers here. After you have given time for responses, you can follow-up by explaining to the class that, as they progress through the study, they will not only be learning new information about the Bible, but they also may be replacing faulty information they have learned in the past.

3. What is one new fact that you learned about the Bible in the section above?

Give people time to think about the question and encourage them to flip back through the text if needed. As noted earlier, if a fact is noted that is not from the chapter, you can respond by saying, “You know, I don’t remember that. Where was that at in the chapter?”

4. Has this section raised any new questions for you?

Questions are a good sign that people are engaged in the study. You may want to affirm questions by saying something like, “Very good question. Thanks for bringing that out.” If the person is not clear in asking their question, you can state the question back to them as you understood it. Say, “So, you’re wondering (state the question). Is that right?” If your understanding is not what they meant, this will lead them to elaborate more. And just to repeat again, it is ok not to have all the answers. We are all lifelong students of the Bible. Just make a note of the question and let them know you will try to get the answer for them.

5. Can you recite the Old Testament and New Testament books in order? If not, make it your goal to learn them over the next week.

You can point out that most Bibles have a table of contents in the front where all the books of the Bible are listed in order. You could also offer a handout with a list of the books of the Bible. Also, be mindful that some people who are new to studying the Bible may not be familiar with the pronunciation of some of the books. If time allows you can read through the list and pronounce each book aloud. (For a helpful song for learning the books of the Bible, go to YouTube.com and search for “Pastor Andy White, the Books of the Bible Song.”)

Question 3: Who Wrote the Bible—Humans or God?

1. How can a letter from a dead man to dead people (Paul’s letter to the Galatians, for example) be of significance to modern people?

This may be a challenging question for those unfamiliar with the Bible. After giving an opportunity for responses, you can say, “It is true that a letter from Paul is written by a man and written to a specific group of believers in a specific situation. Yet, as noted on page 32 under the Verbal Plenary theory, God superintended the writing process so that every word written in Scripture is the word he intended. Paul was an inspired teacher that God raised up to instruct his people. The instructions Paul gave Christians two thousand years ago are equally valid for believers today, though our situations may be somewhat different.”

2. Besides the Bible verses cited above, can you list other verses that point to the dual authorship of Scripture?

Some others that can be noted are: Ps. 119:11, 89, 105, 140; Romans 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19-21. Many examples could be given.

3. Is anything lost in ignoring or denying the human element in the writing of the Bible? Is it too simplistic to just say, “God wrote it”?

It was God's purpose to work through the individual authors. Their thoughts, emotions, experiences, and overall personalities contributed to the inspired writing which was superintended by God. This dual nature of Scripture (authored both by man and God) must be appreciated and held in tension. Also, we do not want to minimize the fact that God desired to use these individuals in such a mighty way. Christians today obviously will not be writing Scripture; the canon of Scripture is closed. Yet, God continues to work through believers to reveal himself and his kingdom in the present time.

4. If one affirms the dual authorship of Scripture, what controls are left to prevent the finding of hidden “divine meanings” everywhere?

Various answers are possible here. The broad answer is that applying proper interpretive principles help prevent us from going beyond the intended meaning of Scripture. You can note that this question highlights one of the reasons learning skills for biblical interpretation is so important.

5. In what ways are Jesus’ human and divine natures similar to and different from the divine-human authorship of Scripture?

Both are mysteries which cannot fully be understood or explained. The comparison is different in that both human and divine natures are present in the person of Christ. Yet, we must be careful to note that when we speak of a divine-human dimension of the Bible, we are talking about its authorship and not its nature. Other comparisons and differences are possible. If needed, encourage the class to flip back to the quote by T.C. Hammond on page 35.

Question 4: Does the Bible Contain Error?

1. Has anyone ever presented you with an alleged error in the Bible as an argument as to why it is not true? What was your response?

*You can follow-up responses by asking, “How would you respond now based on what you’ve read in this section? Don’t feel that you need to provide an answer to every difficulty that is raised. If students do look to you for an answer, you may find help at www.bible.org or in *The Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, by Gleason Archer.*

2. What is the most puzzling text in the Bible to you?

You can follow-up by asking what it is about the text that makes it puzzling. Do any of the qualifications of inerrancy (listed on pages 41-44) apply to this specific text? Also, you can note that Question 13 deals with books and tools that help us in interpreting the Bible. In that section Dr. Plummer will address commentaries. These are books written by scholars that explain the biblical text, usually on a verse by verse basis. These works, and other tools, can be very helpful in addressing these puzzling texts.

3. Why do people disagree on their assessment of the Bible's truthfulness—some seeing it as the inerrant Word of God and others viewing it as an unreliable collection of contradictory documents?

According to Scripture, ultimately, it is the work of God's Holy Spirit that enables one to see and appreciate the true nature of God's Word. Spiritual death and blindness underlies unbelief.

4. If a neighbor were to tell you that he didn't believe the Bible because it is "full of errors," how would you respond?

Listen to the responses carefully and note if they are drawing on things learned from this section. Note that we always want to respond with the truth of Scripture and in a way that reflects the character of Christ. A suggested response can be the following: "You know, I've heard that said before, but actually a close study of the facts actually shows otherwise. Often what others characterize as 'errors' is actually just a misunderstanding of the purpose or method of the biblical writer." Hopefully a statement like this will lead to further conversation so that other points brought out by Dr. Plummer in this section can be mentioned. Also, a discussion such as this about the Bible can naturally lead to an opportunity to share the message of Christ with a neighbor.

5. Have you ever met an "ungodly inerrantist" (someone with a verbal affirmation of the Bible's truthfulness but otherwise ungodly behavior)? What does the Bible say about this situation?

Various answers are possible. If time allows look up Scripture references to support answers given. Possible references are James 1:22f, 1 John 2:4, James 2:14-26, Matthew 7:15-27, John 5:39. Note that simply affirming God's truth does not make one a Christian – failing to follow what one claims to believe proves that one is a false professor.

Question 5: Were the Ancient Manuscripts of the Bible Transmitted Accurately?

1. Before reading this question, had you ever considered the transmission of the ancient copies of our Old and New Testaments? If so, what prompted your interest?

The topic of the ancient manuscripts of the Bible may be new for some. Give time for responses and encourage discussion about why followers of Christ should be interested in the transmission of the text of the Bible.

2. When reading the Bible, do you look at the footnotes that deal with text variants? Why or why not?

You can follow-up by saying, "Remember that this section tells us that the Old Testament and the New Testament have been recorded and reconstructed with amazing accuracy. There is no debated text that affects Christian doctrine. Yet, noting these footnotes in our Bible will tell us when there is a textual issue. If you want to study a specific verse that does have a textual variant, you may want to read a commentary or other reference work that will go into more detail. These works will be discussed later in the study."

3. What is something new that you learned about the transmission of biblical manuscripts?

If something is stated that is not correct, simply say, "Let's take a look at that in the book together to be sure we understand this right. It is a difficult topic." Then review Dr. Plummer's presentation on that particular point.

4. Have you ever read a book by Bart Ehrman (*Misquoting Jesus*) or Dan Brown (*The DaVinci Code*), or have you encountered other persons influenced by their works?

You can follow-up by asking, "Why do you think such books have enjoyed so much popularity even though, as Dr. Plummer notes, such extreme skepticism toward the Bible will not hold up under objective evaluation?"

5. Do you have any remaining questions about textual variants or text criticism?

If questions remain that go beyond the information covered in this section, point out the helpful list of books under "For Further Study" on page 55.

Question 6: Who Determined What Books Would Be Included in the Bible?

1. Prior to the reading above, had you ever investigated the canon? What prompted your interest in turning to this question?

You can follow-up by asking how the survey of the canon in this section has changed their understanding.

2. Explain the difference between “an authorized collection of writings” and “a collection of authoritative writings.” Is this really an important distinction?

The former implies the Church granted authority to certain books which became our Bible. The latter (the right way to characterize the canon of Scripture) implies that the Church recognized the authoritative nature of the books which became our Bible.

3. If a Roman Catholic neighbor were to ask you, “Why do you Protestants cut some books out of the Bible?” how would you reply?

Obviously we want to be gracious in our response and answer in such a way that the door is open for future conversations. One could reply, “There are certain books in the Old Testament that the Roman Catholic Church actually didn’t recognize as Scripture until the 1500s. As Protestants, based on a variety of evidence, we don’t believe these books were ever meant to be included in the Bible.”

4. Is it possible to be a Christian and yet have a wrong understanding of the canon (as say, an Ethiopian Orthodox person would)? Explain.

Allow time for responses and discussion and clarify as needed. The answer is “yes,” a person can be a Christian. If a person has a clear understanding of the gospel message, that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, has died to pay the debt for their sins, and they place their trust in him, that person will be saved. Having a proper understanding of the canon is very important. We want to recognize as authoritative only those books which God intended. Yet, while it is important that we continue to grow in our faith and strive for a proper understanding of the Bible (including the canon), our salvation ultimately depends solely on placing our trust in Christ and his atoning sacrifice.

5. Does the survey of the canon above leave any questions unanswered for you?

As noted earlier, if you are unsure of how to answer a question, just make a note of it and let the class know you will try to get that information. Also, you can highlight the books listed under “For Further Study” on pages 66-67 as helpful resources.

Question 7: Which Is the Best English Bible Translation?

1. Which version(s) of the Bible do you own? (Look in the first few pages of your Bible(s) to see.) Why do you use this Bible (or these Bibles)?

You can follow-up by asking if this section has changed the way they view the version which they use.

2. If your church has “pew Bibles,” what translation is it? Have you ever prejudged a person because of the Bible translation he or she preferred?

As Dr. Plummer notes on page 70, all translations have their strengths and weaknesses. We should be careful not to prejudge anyone based on what translation they prefer.

3. Do you prefer reading a more formally equivalent translation (word-for-word) or functionally equivalent translation (thought-for-thought)? Why?

After giving time for responses, you can emphasize that while we may prefer a certain translation, referencing different translations is helpful in gaining a fuller, deeper understanding of Scripture. Also, you may need to clarify the nature and benefits of each type of translation if a response reflects a misunderstanding of the information.

4. If you were to obtain additional Bible translations to supplement your study, which ones would you get?

Look at Figure 8 on page 72 “Translation Approaches of Major Bible Versions”. As various translations are mentioned you can note where they are located on the scale from “Dynamic Equivalence” to “Formal Equivalence”.

5. What translation of the Bible would you use for (a) careful, verse-by-verse study, (b) a gift to an international student, (c) reading through the Bible in one year with a group of college students?

For (a) a formally equivalent or “word-for-word” translation is best (NRSV, RSV, ESV, KJV, NKJV, NASB). For (b) a more functionally equivalent translation is probably better because the translators place more emphasis on the clarity of the English than on a “word-for-word” translation (NLT is an example of a functionally equivalent translation). For (c) a functional equivalent translation such as the NLT or one that is a balance between functional and formal equivalence such as the NIV would be the best choice.

Question 8: Why Is Biblical Interpretation Important?

1. When reading the Bible, are you conscious of the danger of misinterpreting it, that is, of misunderstanding it and distorting its meaning in explaining it to others?

After giving time for responses, you can simply affirm the need to be aware of the danger of distorting the intended meaning of Scripture. Someone may respond that all they need to interpret the Bible is the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If so, affirm that the Holy Spirit does help

believers understand and rightly apply Scripture (Dr. Plummer addresses this on pages 143-150), then add, “Yet, this does not excuse us from the labor of reading, studying, and learning. We always need to be conscious of the danger of distorting the intended meaning of Scripture.”

2. How is interpreting the Bible different from interpreting any other piece of literature? *As noted earlier, in addition to the Bible being written by human authors, it also has God as its ultimate author.*

3. Consider other Christians whose interpretations of the Bible you have either read or heard. Whom do you consider the most reliable? Why? *Many answers are possible. After giving time for responses you can add that while there are many reliable teachers, pastors, and scholars to learn from, we have to be discerning. The following questions should be asked: What is their background?; Where did they get their Bible training?; Do they have a particular theological or interpretive bias?; What do other mature Christians, pastors, teachers, or scholars think of this person’s interpretations? Ultimately, becoming a more faithful biblical interpreter ourselves is the best way to be discerning of the teaching of others.*

4. What would make you a more faithful biblical interpreter? *There are many viable answers. Possible answers related to this section include being aware of the following: the danger of distorting Scripture; the importance of understanding the author’s original meaning of the text; one’s own theological or interpretive biases and that of others. Also, you can note that this specific question will be addressed in detail in later sections (Questions 10-13).*

5. Are you aware of any theological or interpretive biases you have in approaching the Scriptures? Can you defend having such biases from the Bible itself? *You can note that approaching Scripture with a particular theological perspective is not inherently a bad thing. We all approach the Bible with certain opinions or perspectives. The point is that we want our approach to be firmly supported by the Bible itself.*

Question 9: How Has the Bible Been Interpreted Throughout Church History?

1. When reading the New Testament, do you pay attention to the citation of Old Testament texts? Do you ever look up the Old Testament texts cited? *After giving time for discussion on the above questions you can add that the New Testament authors directly cite, and sometimes just allude to, Old Testament texts. It is important as a student of the Bible to appreciate how influential the Old Testament was on New Testament*

writers. Also, taking the time to look up Old Testament texts that are cited in the New Testament can contribute to a deeper understanding of the author's intended message.

2. Have you ever heard an allegorical sermon or read an allegorical interpretation in a devotional book? At the time, did you recognize the interpretive method as allegorical? What did you think?

You can follow-up by asking, "What do you think now based on the information in this section?" After time for responses you can summarize by saying, "Finding a symbolic meaning in the text can seem creative and provide an interesting sermon or story. Yet, if allegory is not intended by the biblical author then the interpretation misrepresents his intended meaning."

3. It has been said, "We can see so far only because we stand on the shoulders of giants."¹ How would this saying apply to biblical interpretation?

Answers may vary, but the basic application of the quote is to affirm that we have learned from both the missteps and the successes of past interpretive efforts. After giving time for responses you can summarize by saying, "Our understanding of the Bible today owes much to the efforts of the biblical interpreters of the past. By acknowledging their mistakes we can avoid making those mistakes today in our own interpretations, and by building on their insights and achievements we can interpret more clearly the biblical authors' intended meaning."

4. Have you noticed any of the interpretive trends mentioned above in books that you own? If no one answers, you can encourage responses by saying, "Have you noticed in any of your reading an allegorical interpretation or maybe an interpretive approach that is skeptical of miracles and questions the historical reliability of the Bible?"

5. Of what value are the allegorical expositions of the church fathers?

While the hermeneutical misapplication of allegory gives a meaning to the text that the original author did not intend, the allegorical expositions of the church fathers give us insight into their understanding of Scripture and to some degree their theology. Also, their efforts underscore

¹ John of Salisbury, in *Metalogicon* (A.D. 1159), attributes Bernard of Chartres as originator of the oft-repeated expression. The quotation reads, "Bernard of Chartres used to say that we are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants, so that we can see more than they, and things at a greater distance, not by virtue of any sharpness of sight on our part, or any physical distinction, but because we are carried high and raised up by their giant size" (www.wikipedia.org, "Standing on the shoulders of giants," accessed December 4, 2008).

their desire to understand Scripture and apply it to their current world. Yet, their missteps should also be a sobering reminder for the need for proper interpretive skills.

Question 10: What are some general principles for interpreting the Bible? (Part 1)

1. What role do prayer and meditation currently play in your study of the Bible?

If others are hesitant to share, you can encourage responses by noting the role prayer and meditation plays in your own Bible study. Even if it is currently not part of your study of the Bible, you can share how this section has underscored for you the importance of these actions. Ask others if this section has changed their understanding of studying the Bible.

2. What steps can you take to make prayer and meditation a regular part of your Bible reading?

If no one answers right away, be comfortable with the silence. Allow the group to struggle with this question and come up with some specific steps. If a dry erase board or chalk board is available you can list the steps as they are noted.

3. Do you approach all portions of the Bible as pointing to Jesus? Which parts seem the most difficult to view in this way? Why?

You can follow responses by saying, "As Dr. Plummer notes on page 97, not every text will point to Jesus in the same way. The Old Testament points us to the coming of Christ. In the New Testament we see the fulfillment in Christ of the realities of the Old Testament.

4. What does it mean to "let Scripture interpret Scripture"?

A correct answer may be worded or conveyed in a variety of ways. You can summarize after giving time for responses by saying, "In one aspect, "Scripture interpreting Scripture" means passages of Scripture that are less clear can be interpreted by passages that are clearer in meaning. In another aspect, "Scripture interpreting Scripture" means that we should allow the full context of Scripture to speak to a subject and not only a specific, isolated text. In other words, we must consider all the various texts that touch on a certain subject and not just one.

5. Is it possible to believe and understand the Bible without obeying it? Can you back up your answer with Scripture?

The Bible affirms that obedience to God's word is a natural byproduct of faith. 1 John 2:4 states, "Whoever says, 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him" Other texts which can be referenced include James 1:22ff, James 2:14-26, Matthew 7:15-27, and Romans 2:13.

Question 11: What Are Some General Principles for Interpreting the Bible? (Part 2)

1. When you read the Bible, do you, either consciously or unconsciously, take into account the genre of the book you are reading?

You can follow-up by asking what interpretive problems arise when the genre of the book is not taken into account.

2. With whom are you reading and discussing the Bible? How have you benefited from studying the Bible with others? If you are not studying the Bible in community, do you know of an existing small-group Bible study that you can join?

Encourage those who are not studying the Bible in community to think of an individual or group who they can contact in the coming week in order to get involved.

3. Can you think of an instance where additional historical or cultural background information aided you in understanding a biblical text?

Be sure to give sufficient time for people to respond. If no one does, you can share an example of your own.

4. Have you ever changed your view on what a text of the Bible means by studying the context more carefully? “A text without a context is a pretext.” Can you think of an example or illustration of this maxim?

Sometimes class discussions can quickly move off topic into other areas. Be sure to keep the focus on the importance of paying attention to the context of a verse or passage. You can summarize by saying, “As Dr. Plummer notes on page 104, ‘Any portion of Scripture must be read within the context of the sentence, paragraph, larger discourse unit, and entire book.’” If there is no response to the question, ask the group if any of them has a favorite Bible verse. Then ask if they know the context of that verse. You can add, “By understanding the context in which the author wrote your favorite verse it becomes even more meaningful.”

5. What next step can you take on the journey to becoming a more faithful interpreter?

There are many valid answers to this question. Based on this particular section, several things can be mentioned such as taking note of the biblical genre, being aware of historical or cultural background issues, paying attention to the context of the verse or passage, and reading the Bible with other believers.

Question 12: How Can I Improve as an Interpreter of the Bible?

1. Is reading the Bible your daily practice? If not, why not start today?

You can remind the class of D.A. Carson's book "For the Love of God" (see page 110) which includes Robert Murray M'Cheyne's reading plan. The main thing is to encourage the class not to wait until January 1st to begin reading the Bible on a daily basis. If a one-year reading plan is preferred, pick up the plan wherever you are at in the year and begin reading.

2. Is the Bible taught faithfully at your church? Are you and your family being edified and challenged by Scripture there?

If someone answers "no" to these questions, you can respond by asking, "What does Dr. Plummer say is the danger of remaining in a situation like that and what response does he recommend?" (See page 110)

3. If you currently teach/preach the Bible, do you have a method for receiving feedback on your teaching?

Take time to emphasize that teaching and preaching God's word involves great responsibility. Teachers of the Bible are obligated to be consistently striving to become more faithful interpreters; seeking feedback is part of this ongoing effort.

4. Do you own a study Bible? If so, who is the publisher? What is the stated aim of your study Bible notes?

As Dr. Plummer notes, the study notes in a study Bible will reflect the doctrinal biases of the contributors. You can emphasize that it is important to be aware of the stated aim of the study Bible notes. Some in your group, particularly those who are new to Bible study, may be unsure how to go about choosing a study Bible. You can note the two mentioned in this section (the NIV and ESV Study Bibles) and simply affirm that they are both very helpful and well respected.

5. What relationships do you have that allow you to share what you are learning from the Bible?

Give time for responses. You can close by challenging everyone in the class to think of at least one possible relationship in the coming week that will allow them to share what they are learning about the Bible.

Question 13: What Are Some Helpful Books or Tools for Interpreting the Bible?

1. What tools, besides a Bible, do you currently use in your study of Scripture?

You can encourage those who respond to share how the tools mentioned help them in their study of Scripture. Some may respond that they have never used any other resources to study the Bible. If so, you can ask, “Has this section changed the way you think about Bible study? If so, in what way?”

2. Do you own any useful Bible study tools that you are failing to use? Why?

Various answers are possible here. You can follow-up by noting that as we take advantage of these various Bible study tools the more we realize how important they are. By using them on a consistent basis they naturally become part of our Bible study habits.

3. Of the resources discussed above, what are the top ones on your “wish list” of future acquisitions?

As resources are mentioned, you can look back over the section and restate how that particular resource is a helpful book or tool for interpreting the Bible.

4. Have you ever engaged in any of the “word study fallacies” discussed above? Do you feel that you sufficiently understand the fallacies to avoid them in the future?

If some in the class are struggling to understand the word study fallacies, you can review the section on pages 119-120. To summarize you can say, “Though word studies can be beneficial, there is the danger of trying to read too much into a single word. We should strive to understand what the writer intended for that word to mean in the context in which it was written.”

5. If someone were to ask you, “What book can you recommend to help me understand Ecclesiastes?” where would you go for trustworthy advice on relevant resources?

The best resource would be a respected and accessible commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes. One could ask a pastor or church leader for guidance on which one to recommend, but as noted in this section, a good resource is Tremper Longman’s “Old Testament Commentary Survey”. This valuable reference will help guide an individual on choosing the appropriate individual commentary.

Question 14: Who Determines the Meaning of a Text?

1. Can you recall hearing someone who interpreted the Bible according to a reader-response approach?

You can follow-up by noting that this type of interpretation is unfortunately a prominent approach, so it is important that we are able to recognize it.

2. In your opinion, why is the reader-response approach to literature so popular at the current time?

There is, of course, a variety of possible responses and not necessarily only one correct opinion. As a summary statement, you can say, "One reason for its popularity is that the reader-response approach allows a meaning of the text to be created that fits whatever agenda or ideology the reader may have."

3. Do you see any positive qualities to the reader-response or text-determined approaches to meaning?

Possible responses may reflect some of the aspects of these approaches that make them appealing to those who use them. Yet, ultimately it is important to affirm that both of these approaches disregard the author's intended meaning and so both should be rejected.

4. Can the divine inspiration of Scripture (and thus the dual authorship of Scripture) genuinely be subsumed under the author-oriented approach to meaning?

There are many aspects to this question. (Some of the discussion may draw on information discussed under Question 3. If needed, review the information under the heading "The Dual Authorship of Scripture" on pages 32-36.) Ultimately, affirming that the author of the text determines its meaning does not conflict with the understanding that every word of Scripture is divinely inspired.

5. Of the four objections to the author as determiner of meaning presented above, which seems to have the most validity to you? Why?

Any of the four objections is valid. In discussing the validity of a certain objection you can reiterate Dr. Plummer's response to the objection and ask, "In what ways is this response helpful in addressing this objection?" You can conclude the discussion by noting Dr. Plummer's view on page 130: "At times, it may be difficult to determine the author's meaning, but that is the goal that all valid interpretation seeks."

Question 15: Can a Text Have More Than One Meaning?

1. Is the distinction between “meaning” and “implications” clear to you? Explain the difference in your own words.

Responses may include a rewording of the statements on page 135 or someone may explain the terms through an illustration. Either way is appropriate. Just encourage the class to express the terms in their own way so that they have a clear understanding of these important concepts.

2. With reference to Ephesians 5:18, discuss meaning, implications, significance, and subject matter.

Read the text aloud and then, step by step, encourage the class to address each term. The meaning: Paul is exhorting the Ephesians that it is wrong to get drunk with wine. Instead they should be filled with the Spirit. This exhortation is given in the context of Paul exhorting the Ephesians to be imitators of God as beloved children (5:1). The Implications: Although Paul specifically notes “wine”, the implied principle of Paul's exhortation is to not abuse any substance that alters or impairs our faculties. In our current time and culture this includes wine, beer, liquor, and of course illegal drugs. In a broader sense, this exhortation alludes to those things in our surrounding culture that distract us from walking as children of God. The Significance: Will the reader obey or disobey? Finally, the Subject Matter: “Wine” would fall into the category of the “stuff” in the verse. It should be noted that “wine” in and of itself does not convey the meaning or intent of this verse.

3. It is not uncommon to hear someone speak of “applying” a biblical text to his or her life (or the “application” of a text). Using the interpretive vocabulary introduced above, explain what people mean by “application.”

Based on the interpretive vocabulary in this section, people are referring to “Significance”. This term refers to how one applies or responds to the willed meaning of the author. The reader can either obey or disobey.

4. Which of the four approaches to Isaiah 7:14 seems the most convincing to you?

*As Dr. Plummer notes, understanding Matthew's appropriation of the Old Testament citation is best understood as typological. Yet, approaches 2, 3, and 4 are valid responses (approach 1 is contrary to the position that Matthew was divinely inspired). You can follow-up by asking why a certain approach seems more convincing than the others. If there seems to be confusion concerning *sensus plenior* (approach 2), implications (approach 3), or typology (approach 4), review pages 137-138.*

5. Consider Matthew 2:15. Look up the text that Matthew quotes (Hos. 11:1), noting the original context. Of the four approaches to difficult texts surveyed above, which one best fits Matthew's use of Hosea? See question 24 ("How Do We Interpret Prophecy? [Part 2—Typology]") for more discussion of this text.

After looking up Hosea 11:1, reading it aloud, and establishing the original context, give time for responses to the question. To properly understand the approach which best fits Matthew's use of the Hosea citation, it should be noted that Jesus (the unique "Son of God") is being compared to the nation of Israel (referred to as God's "son"). Just as God delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery, he also brought his true Son Jesus Christ out of Egypt. With this understanding, typology seems the most appropriate way to characterize Matthew's use of the Old Testament here.

Question 16: What Is the Role of the Holy Spirit in Determining Meaning?

1. Have you ever heard someone appeal to the Holy Spirit to support a meaning of Scripture that seemed to you an illegitimate interpretation? How did you handle the situation?

As a follow-up question you can ask, "Based on what you've learned in this section, would your response be different now? If so, in what way?"

2. Of the two views about the Spirit's role in biblical interpretation presented above (traditional illumination view versus the Spirit only aids in volition), which do you think is correct? Why? (Or, is there some other view of the Spirit's work you espouse?)

This section argues that the Holy Spirit does aid in our understanding of Scripture and several biblical texts were noted in support of illumination. If someone responds that the Holy Spirit does not aid in cognition, but only affects the will, or if another view is held, ask what biblical texts they would reference to support their argument.

3. If the view on illumination presented above is correct, how should that affect the way you personally study the Bible?

Answers may vary, but in general, the view presented in this section certainly underscores our need to appreciate our sinfulness, to approach Scripture in reverence, and to pray for clarity as we read and study God's word.

4. If the view on illumination presented above is correct, how should that affect the way you talk about the Bible with others?

Again, various answers are possible. The understanding that we read and interpret the Bible with imperfect and sinful minds and that the Holy Spirit aids us in our understanding should

bring both humility and enthusiasm to the way we talk about the Bible with others. Also, if we believe that the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit has allowed us to understand aspects of Scripture, then we also should feel a certain obligation to share these insights with others.

5. Pray this prayer ...

Challenge the class to pray the prayer noted prior to their daily Bible reading in the coming week.

Question 17: What Is the Overarching Message of the Bible?

1. What is the overarching message of the Bible?

The overarching message is that through Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, God will restore his creation. The “big picture” of the Bible can be summarized in various ways. This “narrative” or “story” should include the following: creation (with man and woman in perfect communion with God), the fall of man (Adam and Eve sin), God’s promise of restoration through the Messiah, the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and finally the promise of his future return. Dr. Plummer underscores the Christocentric (a focus on Christ) foundation of Scripture when he writes on page 152, “The story line of the Bible reveals the need for Jesus, the promise of Jesus, the anticipation of Jesus, the incarnation/arrival of Jesus, the teachings of Jesus, the crucifixion of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, the ascension of Jesus, and the promised return of Jesus.”

2. While reading through the above sections, did you recognize a theological system or framework that has been presented to you in the past?

You can follow-up by asking, “Were you aware at that time that of the different organizing categories? How does being aware of these organizing categories help us to be better interpreters of the Bible?”

3. Did any of the organizing structures presented above help you see more clearly the “big picture” of the Bible?

You can encourage responses by stating or writing on the board the various categories presented in this section. They are “Promise-Fulfillment”, “Kingdom Motif”, “Old Covenant-New Covenant”, “Law-Gospel”, “Salvation History”, and “Dispensationalism”. You can follow-up the question by asking, “What was it about that particular organizing structure that you found helpful?”

4. Which of the interpretive grids seems most faithful to the explicit language of Scripture?

Part of the challenge of interpreting the Bible is appreciating that concepts such as kingdom, covenant, or promise and fulfillment can be present even when the specific language is not in the text. After giving time for responses and discussion to the first question, you can ask, “Can the idea or concept of covenant, promise-fulfillment, kingdom, etc., be present in the passage even if the specific words are not present in the text?”

5. Read aloud this hymn by Isaac Watts (“The Law Commands and Makes Us Know”). Ask yourself, “Have I personally experienced the freedom of the gospel spoken of here?”

If no one responds and if there is no discussion, the open ended question itself may be a powerful way to end the discussion for this section.

Question 18: Is the Bible Really All About Jesus?

1. Do you have a Christ-centered approach to reading Scripture? That is, when you read the Bible, do you expect every text to cause you to savor more deeply the saving work of Christ on the cross?

While it is important to appreciate the original context of Scripture as we read and study, having a Christ-centered approach to Scripture allows us to appreciate the ultimate focus of the Bible.

2. If you are a preacher, have your messages tended to be more moralistic (“Do this!” “Don’t do that!”) or more Christocentric (“Christ did it all!”).

You can broaden the question by asking, “As students of the Bible, we can ask ourselves a similar question. “Am I understanding this passage in a moralistic sense, or am I reading this in light of the gospel message which empowers me to live out God's word in my life?”

3. What steps can one take to avoid a moralistic reading of the Scriptures?

Various responses are possible. After giving time for responses and discussion, you can conclude by stating, “As this section notes, ‘every passage of the Bible is a two-sided coin, one side showing us our need (law) and the other showing us the provision of God in Christ (gospel).’ As we read the Bible we should always keep in mind the finished work of Christ and the empowerment by the Spirit for believers.”

4. How would you convince a naysayer that the person of Christ really is the central, unifying theme of Scripture?

Various responses are possible. If needed, encourage the class to flip through the section for significant points. In broad terms, it can be noted that Christ is central to the unfolding biblical story. In various persons, events, and institutions Christ and his ministry is “foreshadowed”

throughout the Old Testament. In addition, various prophecies point ultimately to Christ. In the New Testament Christ is presented as the fulfillment of the Old Testament. From the beginning of the overarching biblical story until its consummation, Christ is central. All things were created through him and for him (Col. 1:16). In him, through his sacrifice, we are reconciled to God (Col. 1:22, Rom. 5:1), and ultimately he will return (John 14:3; Matthew 24:30; 2 Peter 3:8-10).

5. Has the discussion above aided you in seeing Christ as the unifying “hub” around which the wheel of the Bible turns? If so, how?

Quiet students in your group can be encouraged to flip back through the section in order to note particular points of significance.

Question 19: Do All the Commands of the Bible Apply Today?

1. Has anyone ever accused you of “picking and choosing” your morality from the Bible? How did you respond?

You can follow-up by asking, "If faced with a similar situation in the future, does the information in this section affect the way you will respond?"

2. Do you feel confident explaining why Christians are not to obey food laws or sacrificial laws in the Old Testament? Try giving a brief explanation. Be sure to cite Scriptures to support your assertions.

As noted in this section, the laws of the Old Testament find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. As followers of Christ we are no longer bound to these laws. Yet, under the new covenant, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called to live lives which are pleasing to God. In this sense our lives certainly should reflect the "moral" aspects of the Old Testament law. The following are some Scriptures which may be cited, though others may be mentioned (if time allows look up each reference and discuss its significance): In 2 Cor. 3:14 Paul contrasts the “old covenant” (the Mosaic covenant) and the “new covenant”. In Galatians 3 Paul argues that the era of the law was only temporary and has ended now that the new era of Christ has come. In Romans 14:1-15:6 Paul notes that the strong are not limited to what foods they may eat. In Hebrews 10 the author argues that Christ’s single sacrifice has been offered for all time.

3. Read Judges 11. Is the behavior of Jephthah prescriptive or descriptive? How do you know?

Jephthah’s actions are descriptive. There is no other subsequent explicit teaching supporting his behavior.

4. In Romans 16:16, Paul writes, “Greet one another with a holy kiss.” In what way is this command applicable today? Explain.

In broad terms, an appropriate response should note that while a "holy kiss" is no longer appropriate today, the principal of warmly greeting each other still applies. If clarification is needed after giving time for responses, you can say, “Christians in Paul's day greeted each other in this way to affirm their love for one another and the fellowship that they shared in Christ. Today, 2000 years later, this behavior carries a much more intimate, romantic meaning and so is now inappropriate. Yet, the principal certainly still applies. In today's churches we can express a similar greeting in other ways, such as a warm smile, a kind greeting, or a handshake.”

5. Are there any commands in Scripture about which you have interpretive questions or doubts?

If time allows look up the Scriptures and discuss an appropriate interpretation. Ask the group to apply what they've learned in this section to address the questions or doubts that are raised. You can note the resources listed under "For Further Study" on page 173. Also, the recent addition to the “40 Questions” series entitled “40 Questions About Christians and Biblical Law” by Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010)) may also be helpful concerning this topic.

Question 20: Why Can't People Agree on What the Bible Means?

1. Have you been struggling to reach an opinion on a particular biblical text or theological issue? What is the next step you should take in dealing with this matter?

There are various viable answers such as pray, research credible commentaries, ask for guidance from a church leader, etc. Yet, on page 176 Dr. Plummer notes we should ask the following questions: On what interpretive issue are Christians disagreeing? What are the various positions? Who supports each position, and what are their arguments?

2. What is the most recent “religious expert” that you have heard quoted in the news? Could you tell if he or she was a Christian?

After giving time for responses you can add (if it has not already been brought up), “One obvious indicator that the ‘expert’ is not a Christian is the presupposition that miracles do not happen.”

3. Can you think of an interpretive issue on which you have changed your mind? What convinced you to change?

You can follow-up by noting the importance of remaining open to a more accurate interpretation when it comes to debated issues or texts. As Dr. Plummer notes in this section, we are on a “hermeneutical journey” and as we continue to submit to the authority of Scripture we must remain open to new discoveries.

4. As noted above, Wayne Grudem defines the perspicuity of Scripture accordingly: “The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God’s help and being willing to follow it.”² Based on the discussion above and your own reflections, would you add any further qualifications?

The qualification noted in this section is that certain texts in the Bible indicate that God did not intend for all things to be made clear (i.e., Romans 14:5). Also, Grudem’s words may not properly reflect the fact that some portions of Scripture are in fact challenging and hard to understand.

5. Is there some topic on which you wish the Lord had provided additional comment in Scripture?

This is a thought provoking question, so you may want to give some time for the class to think about it. You can follow-up a response by asking, “How does the Bible offer a paradigm or principle that relates to that topic?”

Question 21: How Do We Identify Literary Genre—And Why Does It Matter?

1. Make a list of the different literary genres you encounter in a normal day. What are some of the assumptions you unconsciously make about such genres?

If needed, you can encourage responses by offering some examples of literature the class might come across in a normal day. Some examples are advertisement, newspaper article, legal contract, personal letter, or textbook. Leisure time reading may include science fiction, biography, autobiography, poetry, or mystery.

² Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 108.

2. Look through a table of contents in the front of the Bible. Can you identify the literary genres that are contained in the various books?

After taking time for responses, you can remind the class that a book may be made of various subgenres.

3. Of the different literary genres included in the Bible (see chart above, if necessary), which, in your opinion, is most unfamiliar to modern readers?

You can follow-up a response by asking, "How can a lack of understanding of the characteristics of (whatever genre is mentioned) lead to misinterpreting the intended meaning of the author."

4. Have you ever heard a sermon or Bible lesson that was in error because the interpreter misunderstood the genre of a biblical passage?

You can note that being sensitive to the various genres of the Bible helps us to be better students as we study the Bible on our own and helps us to be more discerning of the teaching of others.

5. Can you think of an instance where "interpretive principles" were appealed to as an excuse for disregarding the clear teaching of Scripture?

You can add that it is important to recognize this misapplication of "interpretive principles" by others, but also to be careful not to make the same missteps ourselves.

Question 22: How Do We Interpret Historical Narratives?

1. Have you ever heard someone employ a story as an especially effective form of communication? If so, when?

To explore the topic further you can ask, "Why do you think employing story can be such an effective form of communication?"

2. Do you recall a sermon or Bible lesson in which the speaker/author illegitimately interpreted a biblical narrative?

You can follow-up responses by noting that often misinterpretation could have been avoided if the teacher or pastor had asked, "Why is the biblical author telling the story?"

3. Do you know a trusted interpreter (a more experienced, friend, for example) who would be willing to offer critical feedback on your sermons or Bible lessons?

You can emphasize that getting this solicited feedback can be very beneficial in helping us grow as interpreters of the Bible. Learning from those who are more mature in their interpretive skills can save us from making the same mistakes again and again.

4. In the next sermon you hear on a narrative passage, ask yourself these questions: Did the speaker arrive at the correct meaning of the text? If he did not interpret the text correctly, what interpretive principles discussed above aid in properly understanding the text?

Encourage the class to share their experiences in the coming weeks as you meet together. The more the class members are thinking about and applying the information they are learning, the more beneficial it will be.

5. Choose a narrative book in the Bible, photocopy it, and highlight all authorial comments or summary statements. At the end, look back over the highlighted portions. What was the author emphasizing?

Challenge the class to do this exercise in the coming week and to bring their results to the next meeting.

Question 23: How Do We Interpret Prophecy? (General Guidelines)

1. How is biblical prophecy different stylistically from the normal language you use in everyday conversation?

Stylistic characteristics mentioned in the section are its common use of poetic imagery, hyperbolic language, and Hebrew poetic meter.

2. Are there any prophecies in Scripture that have encouraged your faith in the divine origin of the Bible?

If time allows, look up one of the prophecies mentioned in class. Lead the class in noting the context, any characteristics unique to the prophecy, whether it is conditional or unconditional, and finally note the author's message to the original audience.

3. Do you feel confident detecting figurative language in prophecy? If not, what would aid you in doing so?

Various answers are possible. You can note that spending time reading various passages that include prophecy will help one to become more familiar with its unique language. Also, reading

with the aid of a study Bible or a recommended commentary will help point out various unique aspects of the text.

4. What do you believe about the gift of prophecy mentioned in the New Testament? Is it still operative today? What does it look like?

You can follow-up by asking, “How is prophecy today different from the recorded prophecies in Scripture?” If time allows, look up 1 Corinthians 14:29 and 1 John 4:1 and discuss their implications for how we should view and address prophecies today.

5. Have you ever appealed to biblical prophecy to commend or defend the trustworthiness of the Bible?

Some questions you can ask are, “What are some examples of prophetic predictions which have already been fulfilled?” “What are examples of prophetic predictions which have yet to be fulfilled?” You can close by asking, “How has the information in this section changed the way you view biblical prophecy?”

Question 24: How Do We Interpret Prophecy? (Typology)

1. When reading the New Testament, do you ever look up Old Testament verses that are quoted?

You can add that looking up these quoted or referenced Old Testament citations give us a deeper understanding of the New Testament author’s message.

2. Which is a more convincing way to understand Matthew 2:13–15, as typology or *sensus plenior*? Why?

Either answer is arguably correct. It should be noted that the distinction between the two is subtle, but significant. Sensus plenior is more of a statement about the “words” themselves of the text; in this view the words are understood by the New Testament author in their “fuller sense”. Typology is based on a particular understanding of “history”. A “type” in the Old Testament “foreshadows” or points to a later, similar occurrence which is revealed in Scripture and this later similar occurrence is more developed than the original. In this sense, typology reveals a trajectory of development through history revealing God’s work to redeem his creation. If further study on this particular issue is needed, see Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Darrell L. Bock, and Peter Enns, “Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament,” ed. Stanley Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 10-22.

3. Have you ever heard or read a typological interpretation that you considered invalid? *You can follow-up by asking, “On what did you base your view?” You can conclude by emphasizing the need for caution in finding typological correspondences that are not explicitly affirmed in the New Testament.*

4. Explain the use of Jeremiah 31:15 in Matthew 2:18. (You may need to consult a study Bible or commentary to understand the context of Jeremiah 31.)
Take time to read each passage and discuss context. After laying this foundation, give time for responses concerning Matthew’s use of this citation. To summarize, or if clarification is needed, you can conclude by stating, “Matthew’s use of Jeremiah here can be understood as a typological appropriation. In the Old Testament context the children of Israel have been taken away into exile, and all of their mothers are in a sense represented by Rachel (the wife of Jacob). In the New Testament context we see a developed understanding of this passage. The original context of the children of God being taken into exile is now placed in a more developed context as all the male Jewish children of Bethlehem are murdered by Herod.

5. Does the understanding of typology presented above challenge you to read your Bible differently? If so, how?
After giving time for responses, you can summarize by noting, “Appreciating the typological use of the Old Testament in the New Testament enriches our understanding of the connection between the Old and New Testament as well as the continuity between the events, persons, and institutions of the Bible. Also, and most importantly, understanding typology highlights the saving work of God throughout biblical history and its culmination in the work of Christ.”

Question 25: How Do We Interpret Apocalyptic Literature?

1. Challenge: If you have never read through Daniel and/or the book of Revelation, do so during the next week.
As noted in the section, reading either book with the benefit of a good study Bible or commentary is recommended.

2. Challenge: Choose one of the extrabiblical apocalypses, find it at a local library or through an Internet search, and read it. How is it similar to Daniel and the book of Revelation? How is it different?
Two ways in which nonbiblical apocalypses differed were mentioned in this section. You can ask the class if they recall these two differences. (Most, if not all, are pseudonymous and none are inerrant Scripture.)

3. Have you ever encountered the view that Daniel was not written until the second century B.C.? How would you respond to such a view? (See footnotes above for additional recommended resources.)

If needed, you can clarify by noting that a late dating of Daniel is based on the fact that prophecies in the book describe future battles and rulers in great detail. These scholars assume that the book was written by someone other than Daniel in the second century B.C. This late dating is not necessary if divine intervention is accepted.

4. Of the four major approaches to the book of Revelation (preterist, historicist, idealist, futurist), which approach seems most convincing to you? Why?

Listen to the answers carefully and be sure responses reflect an understanding of each category. If needed, review the approaches on page 215. Also, you can ask, "Is it valid to understand the book of Revelation by applying a combination of the approaches?"

5. Of the various literary genres that modern Americans read today, which is the closest to apocalyptic?

Various answers are possible. Many of the aspects of apocalyptic literature reads like science fiction.

Question 26: How Do We Interpret Exaggerated or Hyperbolic Language?

1. Have you ever heard a hyperbolic statement in Scripture wrongly taught as literal language? Relate the incident.

If an example is given that is actually not a hyperbolic statement, you can say, "That is an interesting example. Let's look at the principles for recognizing exaggeration on pages 220-225." Then, lead the class in assessing the example based on the principles.

2. Are there any hyperbolic statements in Scripture that you initially misunderstood but later came to understand rightly as exaggerated in form?

You can discuss the various responses, noting the exaggerated elements. It may be helpful to ask, "What are some of the implications or dangers of taking this example as a literal statement?"

3. Can you think of two or three examples of exaggerated language commonly used in modern English?

Give time for responses. If needed, you can share the following examples: "I haven't seen him in forever" (a long time); "the house is destroyed" (messy); "This headache is killing me" (very painful).

4. Of the two interpretive dangers of exaggerated language presented above (overly literal application vs. dismissing the teaching), of which are you most in danger?

You can follow-up by asking the class, "What are some ways we can help safeguard ourselves against each interpretive danger?" Possible answers may include: consistently use the proper tools for interpretation such as a study Bible or commentary; approach Scripture prayerfully; and study the Bible in community. Other answers are possible.

5. Choose one of Jesus' exaggerated statements, and ask several people what they think the teaching means.

Challenge the class to try this exercise and share their results with the class at the next meeting.

Question 27: How Do We Interpret Figures of Speech?

1. Can you define "figure of speech"?

There are of course many ways to describe or define "figure of speech". In broad terms, a figure of speech uses words in a nonliteral way to express an image or idea, possibly for emphasis.

2. Give an example of some figures of speech from the English language.

You may need to give the class some time to think about this. If a dry erase board or chalk board is available, list the various responses for the class to see. If needed, you can offer the following examples: "With this head cold I feel like I've been hit by a train"; "He bought the whole set, lock stock and barrel"; "He's such a clown"; "I'd better hit the books".

3. Were any of the figures of speech described above new to you? Which one(s)?

You can note here that a figure of speech becomes an "idiom" when it becomes a common, well-known expression.

4. Choose a figurative expression from the Bible discussed above. How would a literal reading of this expression result in misunderstanding?

An example is the synecdoche found in the Lord's Prayer. It reads, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). A literal reading would lead one to think the prayer is concerned only with "bread", when in fact it represents all food, and possibly all our everyday needs (see page 229). If needed, encourage the class to review pages 227-231 for more examples to discuss. You can

note that sometimes a literal reading will seem obviously wrong, while other times a more careful reading is needed.

5. Why do persons use figures of speech instead of more straightforward, easily translatable expressions?

People use figures of speech to emphasize something, for stylistic purposes, and sometimes simply out of habit. Various other answers are possible.

Question 28: How Do We Interpret Proverbs?

1. Do you have a favorite biblical proverb? If so, is it a proverb that assumes exceptions? *You can encourage the class to open their Bibles to the book of Proverbs and browse if needed.*

2. What are some modern (nonbiblical) proverbs? *Give time for responses. If needed you can offer the following examples: "Strike while the iron is hot;" "Don't change horses in mid-race;" "You cannot teach an old dog new tricks;" "A penny saved is a penny earned".*

3. Can you think of any nonbiblical proverbs that contradict the truths of Scripture? *If needed, you can offer the following as possible examples that contradict the truths of Scripture: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me"; "The end justifies the means"; "There is no such thing as a free lunch"; "When in Rome do as the Romans do".*

4. Is Proverbs 22:6 ("Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it") a promise? If not, what are some possible exceptions? *After giving time for responses, affirm that the proverb is a general promise that assumes exceptions. Various exceptions are possible.*

5. Challenge: Beginning on the first day of the month, read a chapter of Proverbs every day for the whole month. (There are thirty-one chapters in the book of Proverbs.) *You can encourage the class by noting the God-given treasure of practical wisdom within the book of Proverbs that can help us in everyday life.*

Question 29: How Do We Interpret Poetry?

1. Do you find yourself resistant to reading biblical passages as figurative? Why or why not?

As Dr. Plummer notes in this section, sometimes this resistance is based on the concern that a figurative reading reflects a denial of the truthfulness and authority of Scripture. You can emphasize that the main concern is the author's intent. The question is, "Did the author intend his words to be understood figuratively?"

2. Does your Bible clearly distinguish which texts are poetic? How?

Give time for responses, allowing the class to browse through their Bibles. This may be the first time some in the class have recognized this distinction in their Bibles.

3. Of the common poetic forms found in the Bible and discussed above, were any unfamiliar to you?

You can follow-up by asking, "Will the recognition of this poetic form help you in your Bible reading in the future?" Also, you can note the books listed under "For Further Study". Two other books which may be helpful are Robert Alter's "The Art of Biblical Poetry" (New York: Basic Books, 1985) and Adele Berlin's "The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism" (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1985). (The latter is a more advanced study more appropriate for those with some background in biblical Hebrew.)

4. How is the modern American use of poetry different from that of biblical poetry?

This section notes that two reasons why poetry may be used by a writer or speaker are to make their words more memorable and in order to express and evoke strong emotions (244). Certainly these two reasons are associated with both modern American poetry as well as biblical poetry. Yet, much of modern American poetry focuses on issues much different than biblical poetry. In this sense, biblical poetry is distinct because the elevated style is employed to convey the revelation of God.

5. How many English poems can you recite from memory? Why, in your opinion, is poetry so rarely employed in our modern American culture?

Many answers are possible. Possibilities include the fact that poetry not only takes thoughtful attention to create, it also takes thoughtful attention to understand. Unfortunately, much of our culture is growing accustomed to having things provided quickly and with minimal effort. For this reason it may be a less popular form of expression.

Question 30: How Do We Interpret the Psalms? (Classification of Psalms)

1. Prior to reading the material above, were you aware of different subgenres within the Psalter?

You can note that it is not uncommon for Christians to be unaware of the variety of subgenres in the Psalter. Learning this information is another important step in the process of growing in our interpretive skills.

2. What is the interpretive benefit of correctly classifying a psalm in the appropriate subgenre?

Being able to narrow down the intent of the author (to praise God, give thanks to God, cry out to God, etc.) gives us a guiding context to help us to properly interpret his words.

3. Which type of psalm most expresses your current life situation to God (e.g., thanksgiving, lament, praise)?

Give time for responses. You can follow-up by noting that the Psalms reveal to us God's nature and ways, but also give us words to express our own emotions and situations to God.

4. As God's people no longer live in the land of Israel under a Jewish monarch, what is the continuing significance of the royal psalms or songs of Zion?

The continued significance of the royal psalms is that they point ultimately to Christ, "the Messiah". During the period of the monarchy, "Zion" represented the Temple, the Temple Mount, as well as Jerusalem itself. The theology associated with Zion included the idea of God's protection of his city and people. Within Jewish thought there was also a transcendent aspect to Zion, so that the physical ascent up to the Temple Mount also reflected a spiritual ascent to an "ideal" or "perfect" realm. The continued significance of these "songs of Zion" highlight the peace and security we have as children of God and point us to the "heavenly" Mount Zion that awaits all believers.

5. Using the seven psalm categories discussed above, label the following psalms: 1, 13, 21, 48, 51, 95, 137.

The psalms can be labeled as follows: 1-Wisdom, 13-Lament, 21-Royal, 48-Song of Zion, 51-Penitential, 95-Praise, 137-Lament. You can note that a royal psalm such as Psalm 21 is a subset of the "celebration psalm". Also, you can reiterate that a survey of a study Bible or commentary will reflect more than the seven types of Psalms discussed in the section and you can emphasize that some psalms within the Psalter can possibly fit more than one category.

Question 31: How Do We Interpret the Psalms? (Principles of Interpretation)

1. When reading the psalms, have you interpreted them in light of the information in the superscriptions?

You can note that early English translators decided not to give a verse number to the superscriptions and English translations still follow this practice today. Also, many translations

use a different style or size of font for the superscriptions which also sets them apart from the text of the rest of the psalm. These factors unfortunately lead many to ignore the superscriptions and the valuable context they can offer for interpretation.³

2. Is it valid to read Davidic psalms as “messianic” if they are not so quoted in the New Testament?

After giving time for responses you can note that some scholars would say it is valid. Yet, as Dr. Plummer notes in this section, if the psalm is not cited by a New Testament author as messianic, typological correspondences should be made with caution.

3. Looking at the five-part book of Psalms, do you see any internal theological or thematic elements that would explain their grouping into five books?

If needed, review the various proposals noted on pages 255-256.

4. Challenge: Learn a worship song or hymn that is based directly on a biblical psalm. Sing it to the Lord in person or in corporate worship. For a number of modern worship songs based on the psalms, see “These Things I Remember” at www.sojournmusic.com.

If you are teaching this course in a small group setting, you could open the next meeting with a psalm based hymn or song. Ask if anyone in the group sings or plays an instrument that might be willing to lead the group in worship.

5. Challenge: Memorize a psalm (e.g., Ps. 19) and meditate on it throughout the day—when waiting for the bus, mowing the grass, changing the baby’s diaper, etc.

To encourage participation in this challenge you can lead a brief discussion concerning how having a psalm memorized can be helpful in our day to day life.

Question 32: How Do We Interpret Parables? (History of Interpretation)

1. If Jesus provided allegorical explanations for some details in his parables, what is wrong with taking the next step and providing such explanations for *all* details?

You can reiterate that this reasoning was part of the motivation for early Christians to interpret parables in this way. Yet, the focus must be on the authorial intent of the parable (how the author intended it to be understood). Appreciating the contextual information offered by the Gospel writers is the best approach to a proper interpretation of the parables.

³ James Hamilton offers this information in a helpful blog post encouraging pastors to preach the superscriptions of the Psalms (“Do You Preach the Superscriptions of the Psalms?,” For His Renown, entry posted May 9, 2011, <http://jimhamilton.info/2011/05/09/do-you-preach-the-superscriptions-of-the-psalms/> (accessed May 25, 2011).

2. Allegory was one of the dominant approaches to literature in the early Greco-Roman world. What would you say is the dominant approach to literature in our day?

Various answers are possible. One of the modern trends includes reader-response criticism. According to this approach, the meaning of the text is created by the individual's interaction with the text. In this sense, it is the reader's "response" to the text which is primary and not the original author's intended meaning.

3. Look again at Origen's explanation of the parable of the good Samaritan. How would your church respond to a sermon on the parable that interpreted it in this way?

Some may state that the explanations allow for a strong sermon message or help them appreciate the parable in a new light. Yet, the unfortunate result of this allegorical reading is that it misses the author's intended meaning. To put it another way, it is reading into the text a meaning that was never intended. While the reading is fanciful and interesting, it does not reflect faithful, diligent, disciplined biblical interpretation which the Bible deserves.

4. Do you recall hearing or reading an invalid allegorical interpretation of a parable? At the time you encountered it, did you find the interpretation convincing? Why or why not?

If someone offers a specific parable as an example, you can take time to read through it and discuss the best way to discover the author's intended understanding of the parable.

5. What would you say to someone who claimed, "Origen's interpretation of the Good Samaritan convinced me to trust in Christ for my salvation, so that interpretation must be correct"?

God can use things which are not necessarily normative in order to fulfill his purposes and advance his Kingdom. The person's salvation is a praiseworthy thing, but a faithful reading of the text does not support Origen's interpretation.

Question 33: How Do We Interpret Parables? (Principles of Interpretation)

1. Which do you find more convincing—the "one-point-only" approach to parables or the understanding that parables can have as many points as main characters?

You can use the question as an entry point into a discussion of the two approaches. As indicated in the section, the approaches of Craig Blomberg and Robert Stein share more common ground than may initially appear.

2. Why, in your opinion, do Christian speakers and writers so frequently stray into allegorical interpretation of the parables?

Various answers are possible. You can add that sometimes it is because of a well-intentioned effort to offer something fresh and creative from the text. Unfortunately, this may be done at the

expense of the authorial intent. Also, as noted earlier in the book, allegorical interpretation can be attractive because it highlights the interpreter's recognition or knowledge of secret or hidden meanings within the text.

3. Besides a donkey and elephant, can you think of any other widely recognized "stock imagery" in modern American culture?

You can note the following examples if needed: a bell with a crack in it (the Liberty Bell), a man with a white goatee and a red, white, and blue top hat (Uncle Sam), a man cutting down a cherry tree (Abraham Lincoln), a bald eagle.

4. Challenge: Choose one parable from Matthew 13 and apply the guidelines suggested above.

After deciding on a parable, you can lead the class in applying the guidelines suggested in this section. This exercise might be a good opportunity to discuss whether the parable teaches one main point or has several main points. Also, you can ask if there is any "stock imagery" within the parable and whether the author includes information concerning the meaning of the parable. What details are the most significant? What details should not be pressed for significant meaning?

5. Challenge: Choose a parable and ask Stein's four suggested questions (Who are the main characters? What occurs at the end? What occurs in direct discourse? Who/What gets the most space?). Did answering these questions help in determining the main point?

As with question number four, after selecting the parable, you may need to lead the class in evaluating the text step-by-step. After asking each question, you can allow time for discussion. If you have access to a library, it may be helpful to have "Interpreting the Parables" by Craig Blomberg with you in class as a reference for the discussion (See "For Further Study").

Question 34: How Do We Interpret Letters or Epistles? (Structure and Nature)

1. The letters of the New Testament are both occasional and timeless. In what ways is this both a challenge and a benefit to the modern Christian interpreter?

If needed for clarification, you can note that because of the occasional nature (addressing specific occasions) of the letters a direct application to similar occasions today is challenging. Yet, the letters' timeless authoritativeness allow them to be understood and applied as instruction for all who are followers of Christ.

2. When studying passages from New Testament letters, do you read them in light of the entire letter's historical setting? Why or why not?

After allowing time for discussion, you can note that, while the letters are timeless in nature, understanding the historical setting helps us to better understand the authorial intent.

3. When reading personal letters in the New Testament (e.g., 1, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 3 John), have you thought of these works as written first to *individuals*? Does it make a difference?

The discussion should ultimately emphasize both the importance of appreciating the author's intended message to the individual in its original context, and also the timeless authoritativeness of the letter and its application for Christians today. Yet, the former should proceed the latter so that our application is based on a proper interpretation of the text.

4. Does accepting pseudonymous authorship of biblical books undermine the Bible's authority and/or inspiration?

The best evidence indicates that pseudonymity was not an accepted practice in personal correspondence in the first century. Also, the evidence suggests that the early church would not have accepted books within the New Testament canon if aware of the book's pseudonymous nature. The issue is debated among scholars. Yet, if one holds that the letters were not written by the author affirmed within the letter itself, many scholars would argue that the Bible's authority and inspiration are compromised. D.A. Carson and Douglas Moo write in their "Introduction to the New Testament" that "we need much more evidence than we are usually offered before we can agree that any New Testament epistle is pseudonymous."⁴

5. Of the evidence presented above, what is the best argument against accepting pseudonymous authorship of New Testament letters?

Obviously, the New Testament's own words concerning pseudonymity should carry great weight (2 Thess. 2:2; 3:17). Yet, all three points noted on page 283 are significant and valid arguments against pseudonymity. Use the question as an entry point for discussion, encouraging the class to interact with the points mentioned. For more in-depth discussion concerning pseudonymity, see the resource noted in the above answer, "An Introduction to the New Testament" by D.A. Carson and Douglas Moo (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) pages 367-371.

Question 35: How Do We Interpret Letters or Epistles? (General Guidelines)

1. Do you or your church currently study, teach, and preach through entire books of the Bible? If not, what would be the benefit of switching to this method?

As noted in this section, this method contributes to an understanding of the work as a whole, which aids in understanding individual sections. Also, you can add that, in addition to offering

⁴ D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992), 371.

an appreciation of a whole book, this method also, over time, contributes to an understanding of the connection between the various books within the Bible as a whole.

2. When studying the Bible, have you ever engaged in a “word study”? What resources did you use? What did you learn?

If needed for clarification, you can note as an example Galatians 3:24. Have the class read the verse together. The ESV reads, “the law was our ‘guardian’.” How do other Bible versions translate this word ‘guardian’? Also, does a study Bible help us with this word? If not, a good commentary on the book of Galatians would give us more information. A better understanding of this word helps us understand the apostle Paul’s point about how the law functioned before Christ came.

3. When you prepare Bible studies or sermons, how do you decide what section of text to deal with (that is, where to start the study and where to end)?

Allow time for answers. If needed as part of the discussion on dividing the text, review pages 286-287. You can conclude by noting that most modern Bible translations have helpful subheadings that divide the text at appropriate points.

4. In seeking to understand the structure of an epistolary passage, have you ever tried a visual method (that is, writing it out with indentations or diagramming)?

You can note that this method helps us see more clearly the way the various parts of the text are working together. Seeing the text diagrammed in some way on paper gives us a kind of “snapshot” of the natural development of the argument, narrative, etc.

5. Challenge: Choose a favorite passage from the New Testament letters and study it afresh this next week in light of the suggested methods above.

You can encourage the class by noting that their effort will be rewarded with a deeper, clearer understanding of their chosen Bible passage.

Question 36: What Does the Bible Tell Us About the Future?

1. Did you grow up with any definite beliefs or expectations about the end of the world and Christ’s return? Where did you acquire these beliefs?

People may have strong emotional ties with beliefs acquired from their family or childhood church. Give time for discussion. You can follow-up responses by asking, “Was there anything in particular in this section that either corrected or affirmed these beliefs?”

2. In your opinion, what eschatological doctrines are absolutely essential for all Christians to believe? Why do you think this?

As believers we certainly want to affirm those things which are clearly taught in the Bible concerning the future (pages 293-295). You can follow-up the discussion by noting that, while the Bible is clear on certain things concerning the future (see pages 293-295), there are also debated issues which are not clearly defined in Scripture. You can conclude by reiterating the words at the bottom of page 295: "One of the greatest needs in the discussion of eschatology is humility."

3. Have you ever run across any odd teachings about the end times? What do the Scriptures say with regard to these issues?

As time allows, discuss these "odd" teachings and look in your Bibles for relevant Scripture. If needed, remember that many Bibles have a concordance in the back where you can look up keywords and their location throughout the Bible. This may be helpful in finding relevant passages for your discussion.

4. Of the approaches mentioned above, what is the correct way to view Revelation? Can you defend your position from the Bible?

The four views noted on page 296 (preterist, historicist, idealist, and futurist) are all viable positions. Many scholars argue that a mixture of the noted positions offers the best approach to the book of Revelation. You can affirm the importance of always grounding our positions on proper interpretation of Scripture and not emotion or popular teachings.

5. Of the approaches mentioned above, what is the correct way to view ethnic Jews in relation to God's ongoing saving purposes?

The three views noted on page 297 are each supported by various scholars. The issue is complex and is a good example of our need for humility in addressing these difficult topics.

Question 37: What Is Biblical Criticism?

1. Before reading the material above, had you heard of any of these forms of biblical criticism? Which ones?

If responses are given, take time to briefly review the form of criticism for the class. You can also add that, while many may not have heard of these forms in the past, they probably have been exposed to teaching or writing that was a product of one or more of these forms.

2. How does recognizing literary sources for biblical books affect our understanding of the authors' inspiration by the Holy Spirit?

Allow time for discussion. You can conclude by noting that recognizing literary sources for biblical books does not undermine the fact that the authors' choices of words and use of sources were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

3. Have you ever read an article or book in which a liberal scholar used one of the above methods with anti-Christian presuppositions and/or conclusions?

You can follow-up discussion by reiterating that biblical criticism is often viewed in a negative light because of its use by biblical scholars who have anti-Christian presuppositions.

4. In your opinion, is it advisable for a Christian scholar to employ any of the above methods in the study of the Scripture? If not, what alternative approaches would you recommend?

After allowing time for discussion you can conclude by noting that all of the above methods have contributed to our understanding of the Bible (with varying degrees). With wisdom and discernment Biblical scholars can continue to use these methods to deepen our understanding of God's word. Yet, caution must be used and it must be remembered that it is the presuppositions of the scholar who uses the methods that lead to an anti-Christian result or conclusion.

5. Which of the above methods seems to hold the most promise for understanding the author's meaning in a text?

Various answers are possible. As responses are given, you can take the opportunity to review that specific method and lead discussion on how the method can help clarify the author's intended meaning. You can note that among the methods listed, historical-grammatical exegesis continues to be an often used and helpful approach to Scripture. While it can be misused as with all methods, it remains a significant means of establishing, as clearly as is possible, the context of the text and the author's intended meaning.

Question 38: What Is "Speech Act Theory"?

1. Does the description of all language as being fundamentally action based seem correct to you?

If needed for clarification, you can note that the theory does serve to highlight the action-based nature of "utterances". Yet, you can develop the discussion further by asking, "Is there a danger of using this theory too simplistically, focusing on the action "performed" by a statement at the expense of other purposes of the statement?" (See the warning offered by Vern Poythress in footnote 8 at the bottom of page 307).

2. In two minutes, could you explain the basics of speech act theory to someone else? Is the theory understandable and relevant?

Various approaches to a succinct explanation are possible. If needed for clarification you can note that the approach highlights the action-based nature of language and draws a distinction between the surface level meaning of the statement (normal understanding of the vocabulary and grammar), the action that is performed by the statement (requesting, affirming, blaming,

warning, etc.), and the action that results from the statement. Also, it may be helpful to do as Dr. Plummer does in this section and include an illustration. Dr. Plummer uses the example, "It smells in the kitchen," which is understood to mean, "You need to take out the trash." Challenge the class to think of other illustrations.

3. Challenge: Choose a short passage in the Bible and discuss these dimensions: locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary (see above).

Preferably have the class decide on a passage and discuss it together. If needed, use Mark 6:5 as an example. The verses concerning Jesus read, "And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and heal them. And he marveled because of their unbelief." The locutionary act is Mark's statement of the words of Jesus, understood in their normal sense; the illocutionary act is Mark's urging the reader to believe in Jesus Christ; the perlocutionary act is the resulting response of the readers.

4. In the discussion above, speech act theory was compared with rhetorical criticism and verbal aspect theory. Can you think of any other academic approaches or theories that offer lessons to speech act advocates?

Various answers are possible. If needed, you can note text criticism as an example. This approach offers helpful information that contributes to our overall understanding of the Bible. Yet, it must be used in conjunction with other approaches. In the same sense, speech act theory does not offer a comprehensive, exhaustive approach to understanding communication, but rather contributes to our overall understanding.

5. Can you think of any more accessible terms to substitute for *locutionary*, *illocutionary*, and *perlocutionary*?

Encourage the class to brain storm for descriptive but straightforward terms. If a classroom board is available it may help those "visual" learners in your class if you list the alternative terms there. If needed, you can suggest "face value", "real point", and "action result" as example alternatives for locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary respectively. These are hardly perfect examples, but they convey the intended idea and may encourage others to offer examples.

Question 39: What Is the "Theological Interpretation of Scripture"?

1. Before reading the material above, had you ever heard of the "theological interpretation of Scripture" (TIS) movement?

If someone has heard of the movement, you can ask if their initial impression was positive, negative, or just neutral. Also, you can note that, because it is a relatively recent trend, many churchgoers have not heard of the movement.

2. What aspects of the TIS movement do you find most promising?

Various answers are possible here. You can follow-up any responses by exploring how a particular aspect can help us better interpret God's word and apply it to our lives.

3. Do any characteristics of the TIS movement concern you?

As with number two, various answers are possible. Again, you can follow-up responses by exploring why a certain characteristic of the movement could be a concern. One particular concern brought out in the section is that some within the movement are not critical enough of the ancient and medieval church interpreters. If needed, review the six characteristics noted on pages 315-318.

4. Have you noticed any characteristics of the TIS movement in recent books you have read or speakers you have heard?

You can ask, "What were the characteristics that you noticed?" "Did you find the information in the book or from the speaker helpful?"

5. A few projections for the future of the TIS movement were made above. Which of these projections seem most likely to you?

Any answer here is of course appropriate. If time allows, explore why a particular projection seems more likely than another. If needed, you can note that the issue of what is recognized as "ultimate authority" will likely be a future divisive factor. Yet, as Dr. Plummer notes, hopefully the more promising aspects of the movement will ultimately influence evangelical scholarship and teaching in the future.

Question 40: What Are Some Other Recent Trends in Biblical Interpretation?

1. Of the terms and trends outlined above, which were new to you?

You can develop the discussion by asking, "Was your initial response positive or skeptical concerning the trends which were new to you?"

2. Do you see any commonalities among the recent interpretive approaches outlined above? What might those commonalities reveal about our current cultural context?

Various observations are possible. Biblical theology, canonical criticism, the canonical process, and intertextuality overlap, to some degree, in that they approach the Bible as a unified book as opposed to its distinctive parts. Also, several of the trends seek to benefit from an analysis of

history, either the interpretation of Scripture in the past or either the observable effects of Scripture in the past. If needed, you can bring out these points and ask what they may reveal about our current cultural context. As noted, other commonalities are possible.

3. Does being aware of the missional nature of Scripture really make a difference in our understanding and application of it?

As noted by Dr. Plummer in this section, if the Bible is not read within the context of the church's call to mission, a foundational aspect of God's revelation will be missed.

4. Challenge: Choose one of the methods explained above and study a specific biblical text in light of the chosen approach.

This challenge can be done in class or you can challenge the class to do the exercise on their own and bring their work to your next meeting for discussion. If needed, you can use the example of canonical criticism. You can choose a passage and, after reading it, ask, "If we use canonical criticism here, what is our main concern?" The answer is that you will be focusing on the text in its present form and its context within the larger completed canon, rather than its sources, historical influences, etc.

5. Challenge: Read Thomas Schreiner's review essay available at the Web site cited in the footnote in this section. Do you agree with Schreiner's assessment of Webb's redemptive-movement hermeneutic?

You can encourage the class to access the essay by noting that it offers a developed summary of Webb's argument as well as an informative response. The following questions can be asked to encourage discussion: (1) Did you find Webb's eighteen criteria for determining if a practice is cultural or transcultural helpful? (2) Schreiner argues that "all of the scriptures must be rightly related to Christ. Webb does not convey that this is the central question. In fact, he scarcely speaks at all of all the scriptures being fulfilled in Christ" (55). How does Webb fail to address scripture from this perspective? (3) Webb's argument highlights "redemptive movement", but Schreiner notes that "the endpoint or goal of such movement must be determined by the entire canon" (56). Do you agree or disagree? Why is it important to consider all related texts concerning an issue?