

Following Jesus



Reading the Bible Like Jesus

Framing the Problem

How not *What*



Do deal seriously with *what* the
Bible says we have to deal
seriously with *how* we read it



Meaning has BOTH a past and a
present



Author
Reader
Text
Community



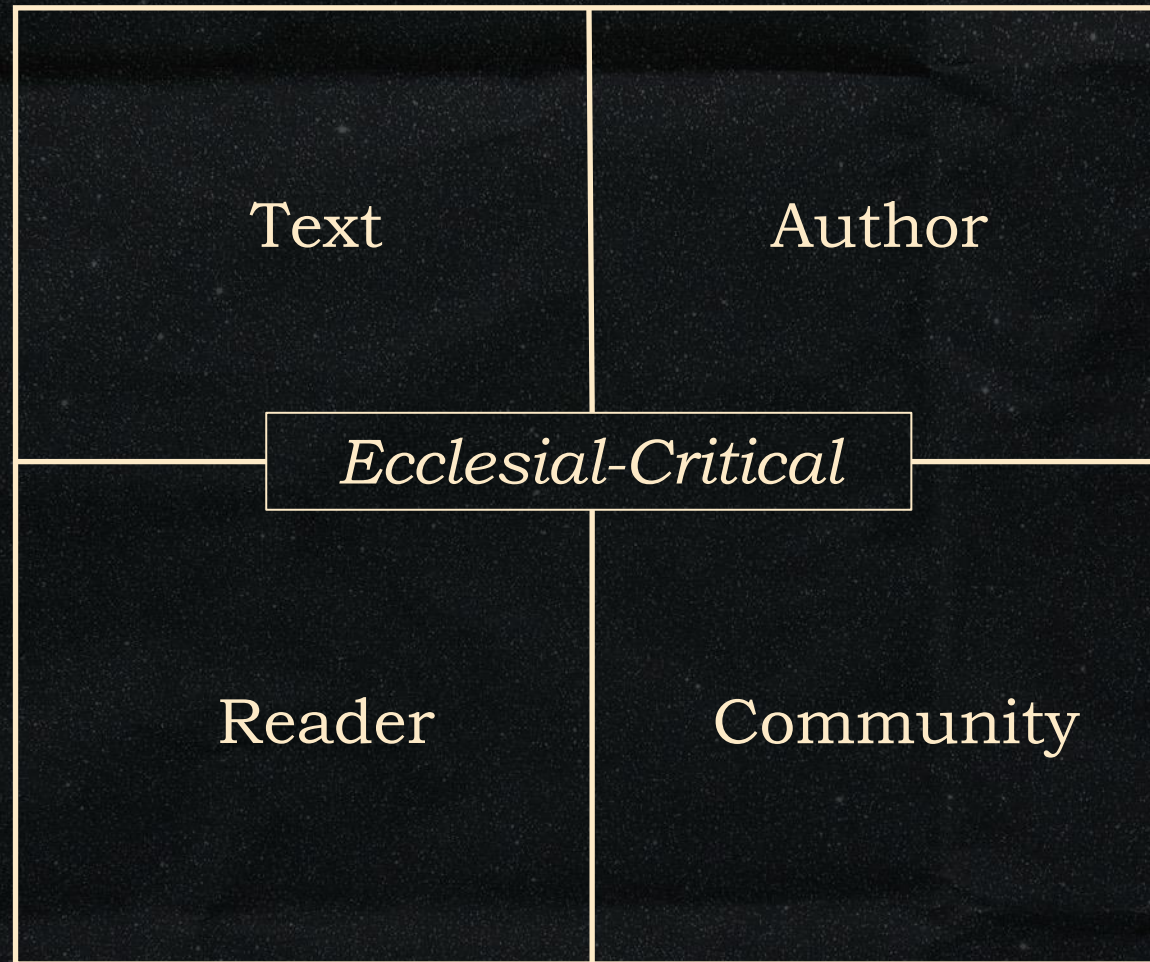
Critical

Text	Author
Reader	Community

Non-Critical



Critical



Non-Critical



Jesus employed critical insights to
serve a non-critical goal



It is the believing community that
establishes the non-critical goal that
controls our use of scripture



What does the church say is the non-critical goal of reading the Bible?



Perceiving God Rightly “Rule of Faith”



“Rule of Faith”

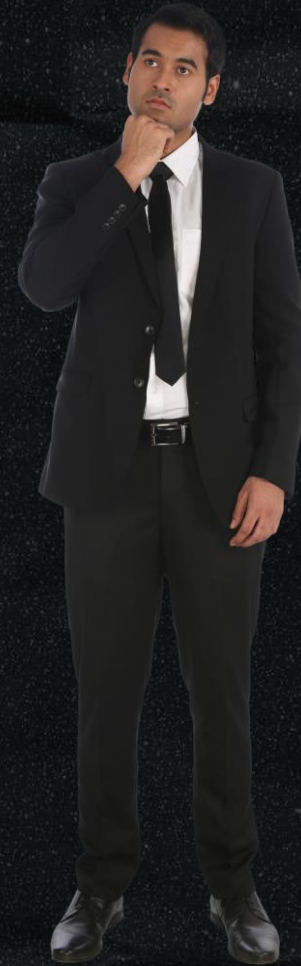


Living Rightly



Patristic exegetes believed that the primary purpose/value of scripture was how it impacted the contemporary reader





Transmit meaning through
encoded symbols

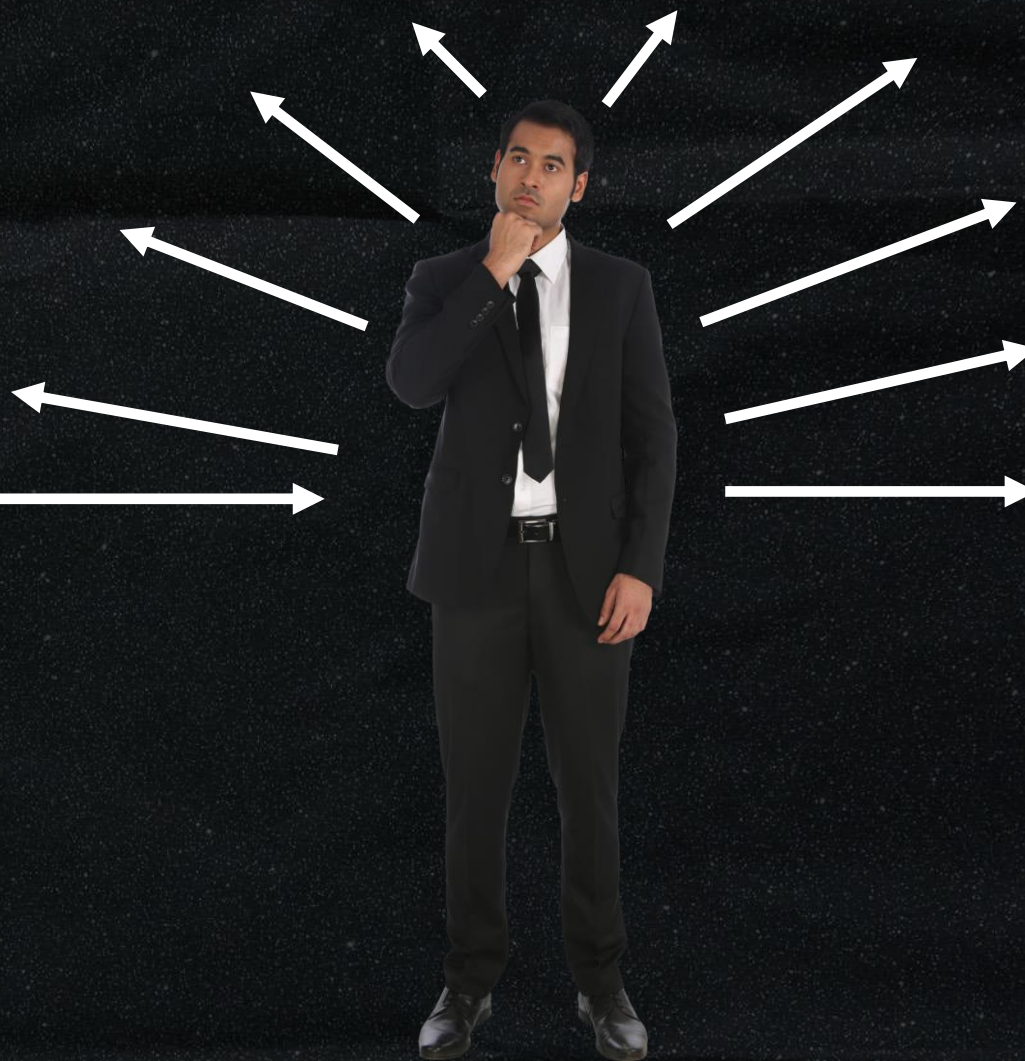
Meaning multiplies
as it impacts the
receiver







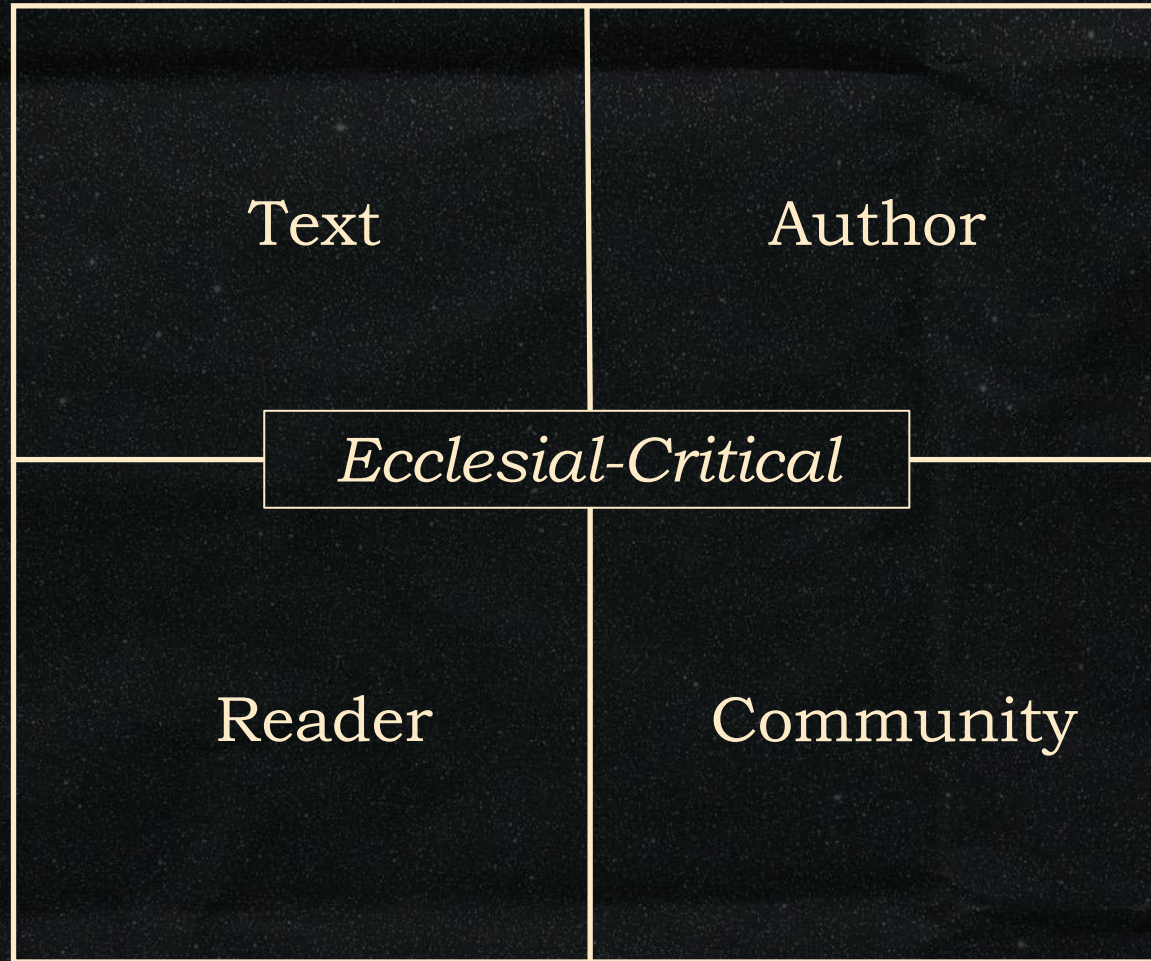
Bible



You



Critical



Non-Critical



"And in the first place we must point out that the aim of the Spirit who, by the providence of God through the Word who was 'in the beginning with God,' enlightened the servants of the truth, that is, the prophets and the apostles, was preeminently concerned with the unspeakable mysteries connected with the affairs of men--and by men I mean at the present moment souls that make use of bodies."

Origen; *On First Principles* (4.2.7)



"Who would dare to say that what is written 'by the Word of God' is of no use and makes no contribution to salvation, but is merely a narrative of what happened and was over and done a long time ago, but pertains in no way to use when it is told?"

Origen; "Homily 23 on Numbers" (248)



"Among all these things, then, those only are the true objects of enjoyment which we have spoken of as eternal and unchangeable. The rest are for use, that we may be able to arrive at the full enjoyment of the former."

Augustine; *De Doctrina Christiana* (1.22.20)



"For most theologians of this period, the ultimate purpose of biblical exegesis was spiritual in nature. Following a method pioneered by Origen, pro-Nicene theologians and others aimed to read, interpret, and teach the scriptures in a way that produced spiritual growth in Christ."

Beeley, Chris. *The Bible and Early Trinitarian Theology*. Catholic University Press. Washington DC; 2018 (11)



More specifically, spiritual growth meant the building up of the love of God and neighbor



What appears to be Jesus' interpretive goal in
Matthew 19:1-12?

The goal appears to be *love*



Christian spirituality best thought of as a
developmental journey

Love is the *telos* of that journey



Because love is the *telos* of the faith journey,
love is also the *telos* of biblical interpretation



"Whoever, then, thinks that he understands the Holy Scriptures, or any part of them, but puts such an interpretation upon them as does not tend to build up this twofold love of God and neighbor, does not yet understand them as he ought."

Augustine; *De Doctrina Christiana* (1.36.40)



"a rule such as the following will be observed, to carefully turn over in our minds and meditate upon what we read till an interpretation be found that tends to establish the reign of love"

Augustine; *De Doctrina Christiana* (3.15.23)



¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)



A wide, muddy river flows through a deep, rugged canyon. The river is a light brown color, indicating it is carrying a lot of sediment. The canyon walls are steep and rocky, with some sparse green vegetation. The river is in the center of the frame, and the canyon walls rise up on both sides. The sky is not visible.

Love of God & Neighbor

God is just like Jesus

Following Jesus



Reading the Bible Like Jesus