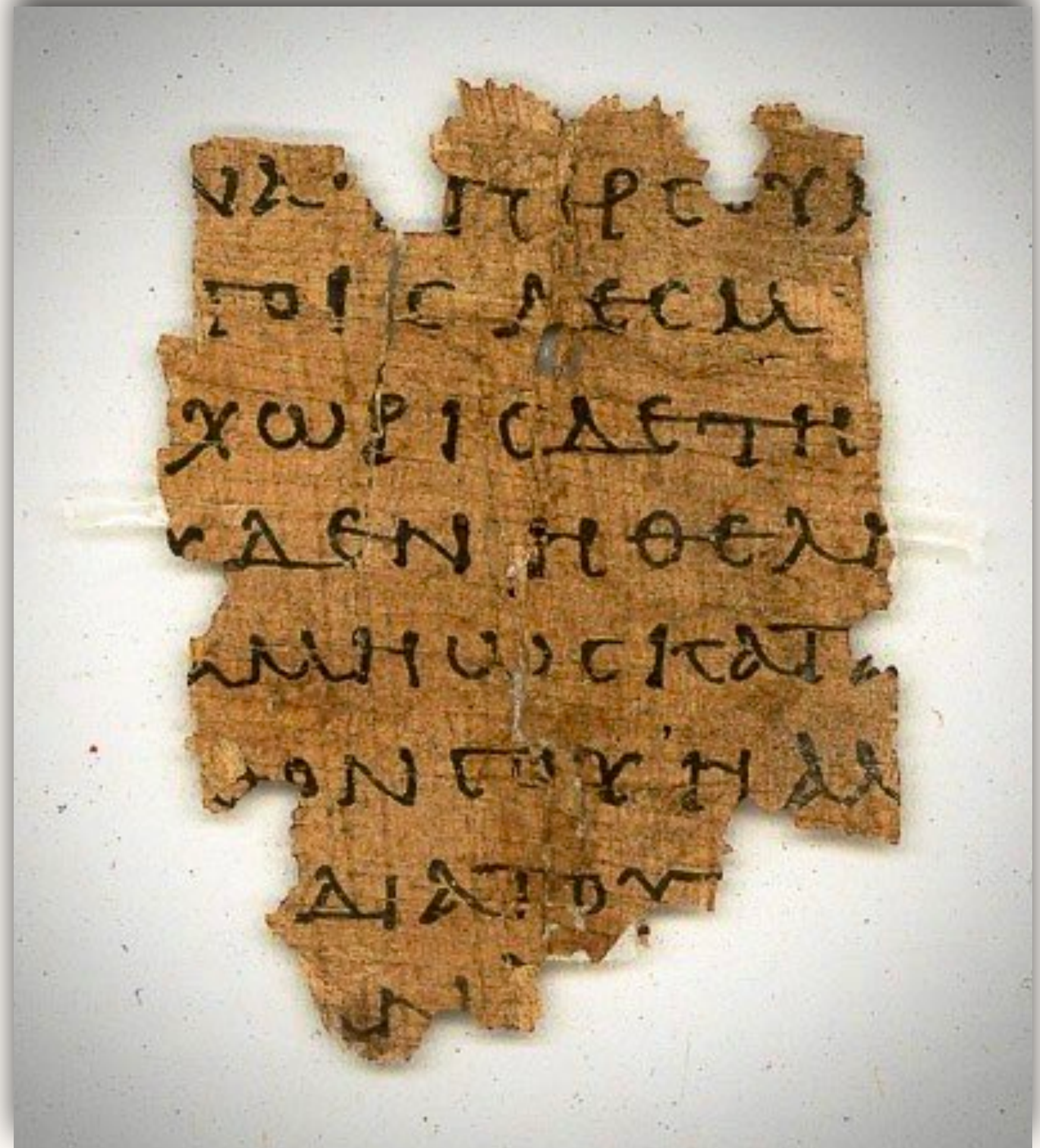


New Testament Survey & Interpretation

ESOM | September 2026 | Malcolm Cox



NT Context & Principles of Interpretation



230+

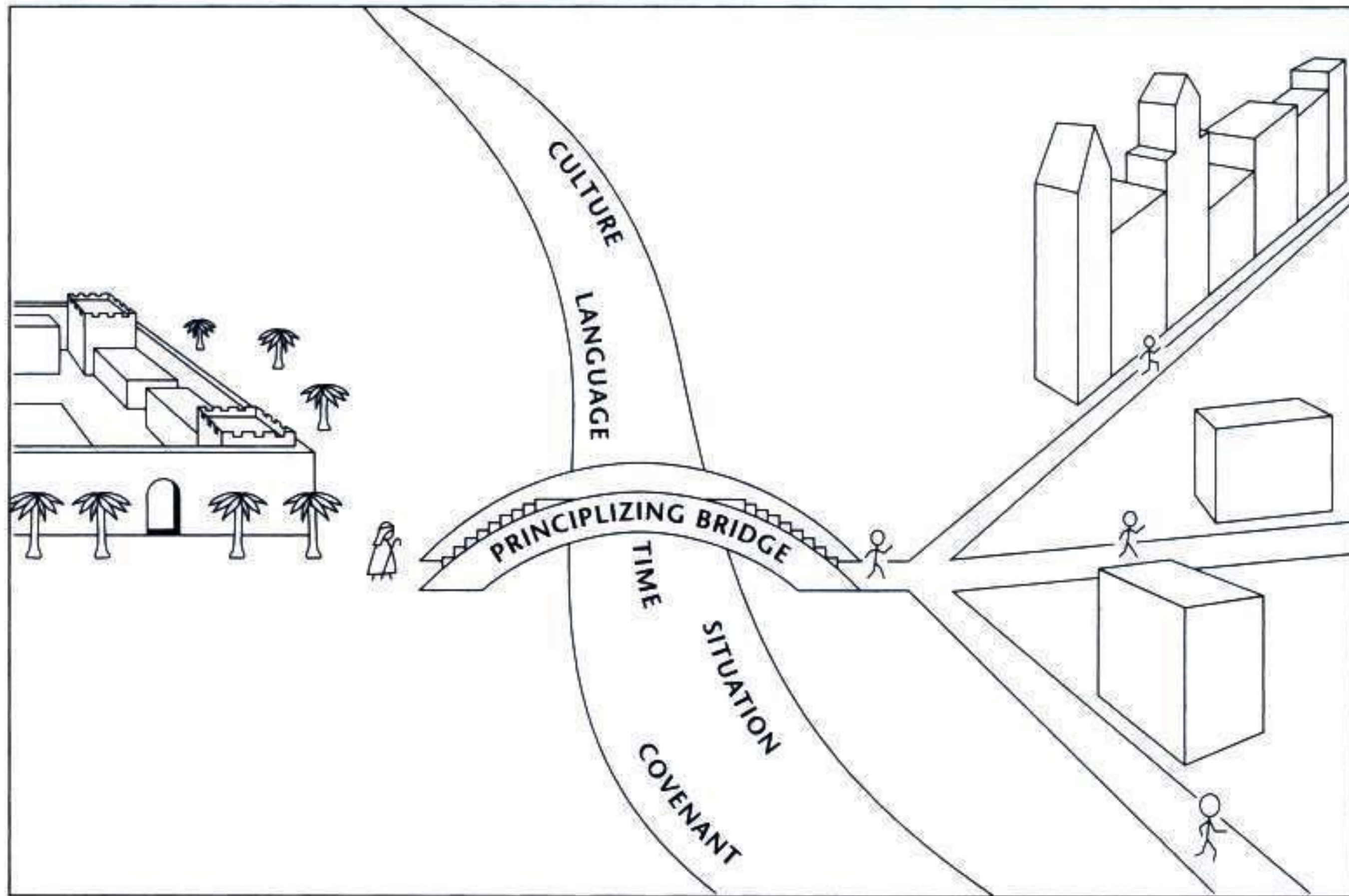
4 - VAR



I have an interpretation →

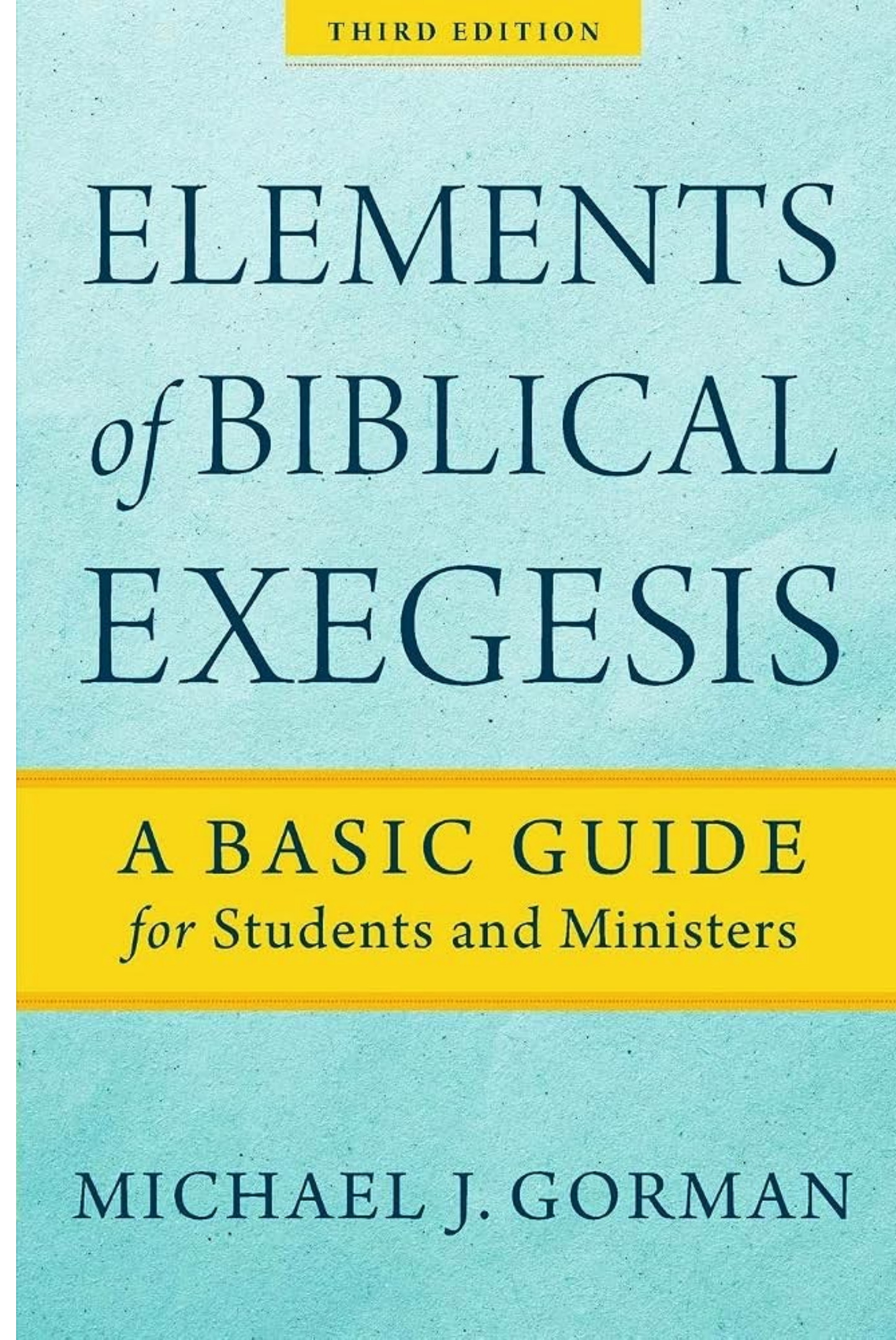
I have understood the passage →

This is what the Bible teaches.

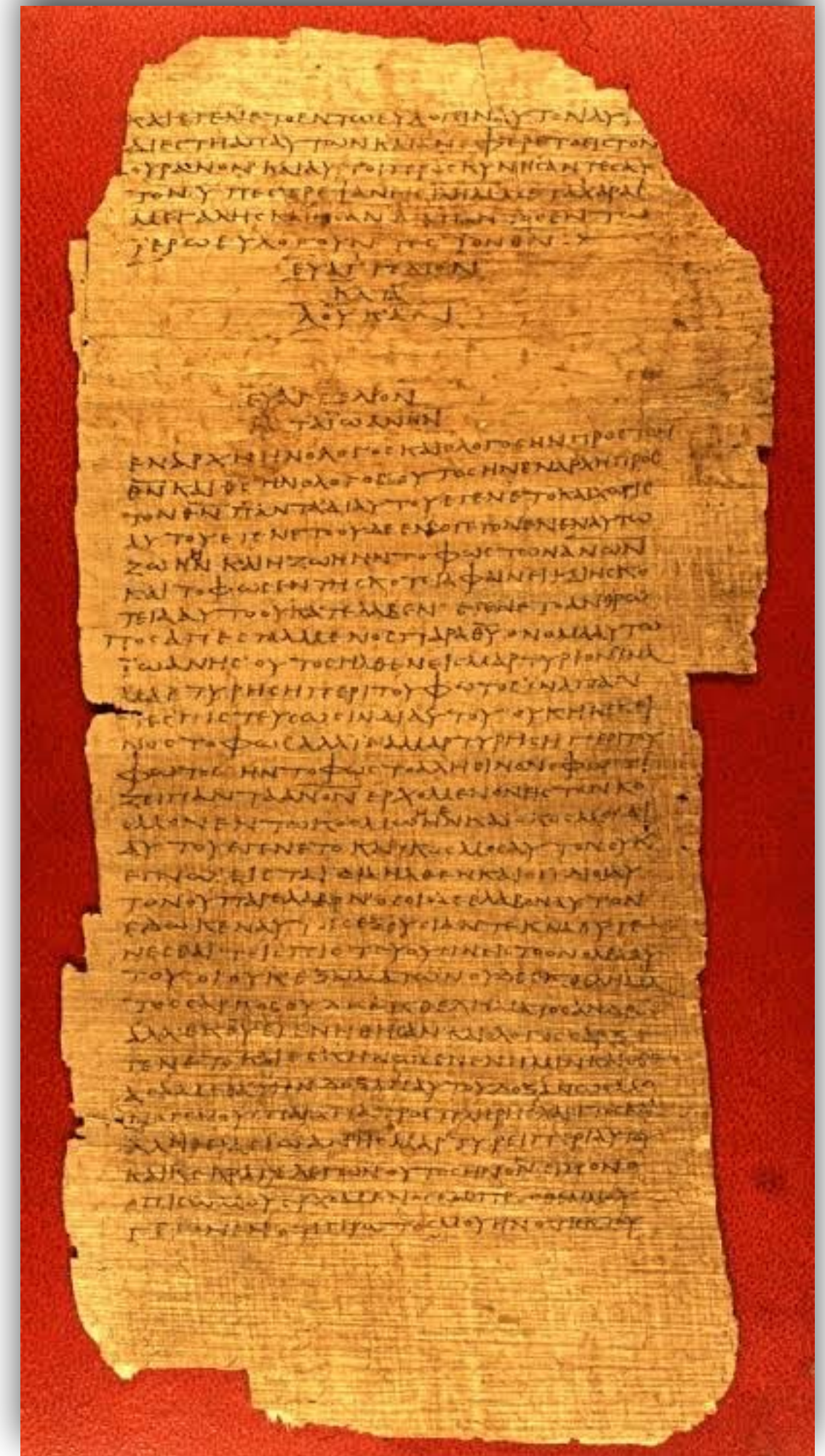


**"IN A NUTSHELL, EXEGESIS
ASKS TWO QUESTIONS:
'WHAT?' AND 'SO WHAT?'"**

Elements of Biblical Exegesis
by Michael J. Gorman, p32



- **EXEGESIS**
- **HERMENEUTICS**
- **EISEGESIS**





"What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up." (1 Corinthians 14:26 NIV11)

“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.”

Romans 16.1-2



"Wonderful things in the Bible I see.
Most of them put there by you and by
me."





“Our Father....”





6

9

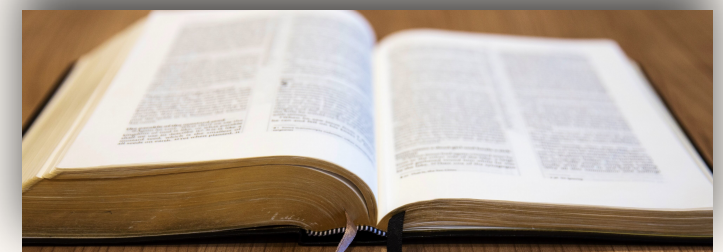
It's a 6!

No, it's a 9!



How do you know?

- How do you know that's what the text means?
- What in the text leads you there?
- What assumptions are you making?
- How certain should you be?
- Could a faithful Christian reasonably read this differently?



Observation passages: **Matthew 5.38-42; Matthew 7.1-5; Mark 2.23–28; Luke 14.25-33**

- Which words/phrases/metaphors etc. seem important, and why?
- What would have been surprising to the listeners, and why?
- How does the immediate context help us to understand what is being taught?
- What about the broader context of *all* Scripture?
- What traditional interpretations of this text have you heard, and why do you agree or disagree with them?

6 Levels of Context

- Immediate context
- Literary context
- Book context
- Historical/social context
- Canonical context
- Contemporary context

SCRIPTURE

1

COMMITMENT

5

Finding
the teacher's
discerning
voice

2

TRADITION

4

EXPERIENCE

3

REASON

Assumptions

- How have your personal experiences growing up shaped your thinking about God?
- How does your background growing up in or not in a church shape your assumptions about God, the Scriptures, the church...?
- How does your country's culture shape the way you read the Scriptures?
- How does 21stC culture shape the way you read the Scriptures?

Confidence Scale 1

- Certain — the text clearly says it
- Strongly probable — substantial evidence, but interpretation involved
- Plausible — a defensible possibility
- Uncertain — evidence doesn't allow confidence
- Speculative — moving beyond what the text can establish

Confidence Scale 2

- Pencil
- Ink
- Blood



Confidence Scale Exercise: Luke 15.11–32

- The younger son deliberately rejected his father and family by asking for his share of the inheritance.
- The younger son genuinely repented when he decided to return home.
- The father had been hoping and watching for his son's return.
- The older brother was angry because he believed his father's treatment of his brother was unfair.
- The older brother's response reveals that he, too, was alienated from his father, even though he had remained at home.
- Jesus intended the older brother to represent the Pharisees and teachers of the law.
- The story teaches that God's grace is available to people who have seriously failed, but it also challenges religious people who resent God's generosity towards them.

The 7 Questions Framework

1. What do I see?
2. What is the context?
3. What kind of text is this, and how is it built?
4. What did the author intend?
5. What does this contribute to the biblical story?
6. How confident am I?
7. How should this shape belief and behaviour?