

Dr. David Bauer, Inductive Bible Study, Session 14, Interpretation, Backgrounds, Wisdom Word Study Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Bauer, Inductive Bible Study, Session 14, Interpretation, Backgrounds, Wisdom Word Study, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Dr. David Bauer's "Inductive Bible Study" course focuses on interpreting James 1:5. Bauer meticulously examines the meaning of "wisdom", employing several interpretive methods. He utilizes historical background, both of the book of James and the historical context of the time period, textual criticism to analyze the original wording, and word studies exploring the Greek term *sophia* in its various New Testament and Septuagint uses. He synthesizes these approaches, comparing his findings with previous scholarly interpretations to reach a comprehensive understanding of the passage's meaning.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Bauer, Inductive Bible Study, Session 14 – Double click icon
to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Introduction & Languages → Introductory Series →
Inductive Bible Study).**



**Bauer_IBS_Session1
4.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Bauer, Inductive Bible Study, Session 14, Interpretation, Backgrounds, Wisdom Word Study

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture transcript by Dr. David Bauer on Inductive Bible Study:

Briefing Document: Inductive Bible Study - Lecture 14 (Dr. David Bauer)

Overview: This lecture focuses on various types of evidence used in inductive Bible study to aid in interpretation. Dr. Bauer emphasizes a thorough approach, moving from initial observations to drawing informed conclusions. The lecture also highlights the importance of avoiding biased interpretations and grounding them in evidence. He uses the example of James 1:5 to demonstrate the application of these methods.

Key Themes & Concepts:

1. **Inflections:** Dr. Bauer begins by noting how inflections of words, specifically verb tenses, can reveal crucial details about the text. He gives an example of the future tense of "I will give" in Matthew 16:19, suggesting that Peter and the disciples would receive the "keys to the kingdom" at some point in the future, rather than already possessing it.
 - **Quote:** *"If you take that inflection seriously, that suggests that whatever is involved in the keys, it's something that Peter and perhaps the disciples, other disciples will have, but don't yet have at this point in Matthew chapter 16."*
1. **Historical Background:** There are two levels to consider:
 - **Historical background of the book itself:** This includes authorship, date, audience, and occasion of writing, information often found in Bible dictionaries and introductions.
 - **Historical background pertaining to things within the book:** This includes allusions, practices, and specific terms that the original readers would understand. It is important to understand these to have the same competency of knowledge as the original audience.
 - **Examples: Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13):** The sower's method was unusual for the time. Unlike the way Jesus describes it, sowing typically involved testing the soil for quality since seeds were costly. This points to a potential emphasis on the *way* the sowing is done in the parable's message.

- **Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13):** The word “zinzania” refers to a specific weed very difficult to distinguish from wheat until harvest, also having intertwined root systems. This clarifies why the instruction was given to let them grow together to avoid damaging the wheat. Zinzania was also seen as a metaphor for evil by rabbis.

1. **Textual Criticism:**

- The Bible has been transmitted through scribal copying for most of history. Scribal copying resulted in errors, some unintentional, such as those of hearing and seeing.
- Intentional errors occurred when scribes attempted to "correct" the text according to their interpretation of the text.
- Textual criticism seeks to identify the original wording of the inspired text. It's important to be aware of this and to use reliable translations.
- Example: The long ending of Mark (Mark 16:9-20) is likely a later addition by a scribe and is not considered part of the original gospel.

1. **History of the Tradition:**

- This mainly applies to the Gospels, which have a pre-history before their final forms:
- Historical Jesus (deeds and teachings)
- Oral transmission of stories about Jesus
- Emergence of written sources
- Final Gospels created by evangelists drawing from these sources
- Understanding the "growth of tradition" can illuminate the final form of the text. This helps in understanding that there are layers of how the text has come to be.

1. **History of Interpretation:**

- Using commentaries is vital, but one should critically engage with them rather than accept them blindly. The best kind of commentary is an exegetical commentary, which interprets the text with evidence.
- **Exegetical commentaries:** Focus on interpreting the text itself.
- **Devotional commentaries:** Aim to inspire spiritual thoughts from the text.

- **Homiletic commentaries:** Provide sermon ideas.
- It's valuable to consult commentaries from various periods of church history, not just recent ones.

1. **Application to James 1:5 (Wisdom):**

- **Initial Definitions:** Bauer-Danker: Wisdom is "the capacity to understand and function accordingly."
- Thayer: Wisdom is "broad and full intelligence."
- **Inferences from definitions:** Wisdom involves knowledge, understanding, and comprehensive scope.
- **Contextual Inferences (James 1:5-8):** Wisdom is not inherent in Christians; it's a gift that must be asked for.
- It is a transcendent and divine reality.
- It is the means of responding properly to trials (as discussed in the surrounding text in verses 2-4 and 9-15).
- Wisdom involves accurate knowledge and right thinking.
- Wisdom also primarily has to do with right actions, or behavior
- **Word Usage (Sophia in the NT):** Usually involves knowledge, understanding, or insight (intellectual).
- Sometimes linked to actions and behaviors.
- Often contrasted with human wisdom, especially by Paul.
- Sometimes related to the Holy Spirit.
- Sometimes associated with eloquent speech.
- Sometimes related to the idea of being not deceived.
- **Old Testament Word Usage (Septuagint):** Used in the sense of skill and ability.
- Most frequently used for right behavior and piety.
- Understanding of reality translated into action, orientation and ordering of all life around reality.

- **Integration of Evidence:** The passage implies that wisdom is a congruence between right thinking and right action.
- It is divine and transcendent, not inherent to human life.
- It may concern responses to trials, but more generally applicable.
- It involves right thinking, right action, and their connection.
- **Interpretation of Others:** Sophie Laws' description, "wisdom is a unifying bond producing wholeness and perfection. It involves the ground or the basis of action as well as right action itself" is cited as an accurate and logical conclusion based upon the evidence cited within the passage of James 1:5-8.
- **Final Interpretation:** After weighing all evidence, Dr. Bauer leans towards the interpretation that wisdom is the ordering of life around God's reality, emphasizing the congruence of right thinking and right action.

Key Methodological Takeaways:

- **Thoroughness:** Examine the text from multiple angles, including inflections, historical background, textual criticism, history of tradition, and the history of interpretation.
- **Evidence-Based Approach:** Ground all conclusions in concrete evidence drawn from the text and its context.
- **Critical Engagement:** Don't accept commentary passively; engage in critical discussion, relating your own findings to the commentary.
- **Context is Key:** Pay close attention to the immediate and broader context of the passage.
- **Word Studies are Important, but Careful:** Examine word usage in different contexts, but don't assume that all instances are the same.
- **Logical inferences:** Base interpretive conclusions upon logical inferences from evidence provided.
- **Prioritize Most Weighty Evidence:** Recognize what evidence carries more weight, especially evidence drawn from immediate context.

Conclusion:

This lecture stresses the importance of rigorous and evidence-based interpretation using various tools and methodologies. Dr. Bauer demonstrates how a detailed investigation of the text, historical context, and scholarly commentary leads to a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the Bible. The case study of James 1:5 illustrates the practical application of these principles, leading to a robust understanding of the concept of wisdom as a divine gift involving both right thinking and right action in congruence.

This briefing document should provide a comprehensive overview of the main ideas and themes presented in Dr. Bauer's lecture on inductive Bible study.

4. Study Guide: Bauer, Inductive Bible Study, Session 14, Interpretation, Backgrounds, Wisdom Word Study

Inductive Bible Study: A Review

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to the lecture, what is one way that verb inflections can impact the interpretation of a text? Give an example from the lecture.
2. What are the two levels of historical background discussed in the lecture?
3. Explain how the historical background of sowing methods impacts the interpretation of the parable of the sower in Matthew 13.
4. What is textual criticism, and why is it important for interpreting the Bible?
5. Describe the two types of errors that can creep into biblical manuscripts during transmission.
6. What are the four levels of prehistory of the Gospels?
7. What is the difference between an exegetical commentary and a devotional commentary?
8. What is the definition of *sophia*, according to Bauer-Danker, as used in James 1:5?
9. How does the context of James 1:5-8, specifically the Christian readership, influence the interpretation of "wisdom"?
10. According to the lecture, what are the three main possible meanings of "wisdom" that emerge from the analysis of James 1:5?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Verb inflections, such as tense, can indicate the timing of an action and thus influence interpretation. In Matthew 16:19, the future tense of "I will give you the keys" suggests that the disciples did not possess the keys at that point in time.
2. The two levels are the historical background of the book itself (author, date, audience, purpose) and the historical background pertaining to things mentioned within the book (allusions, specific contexts).

3. Historical context shows that the sower's method of scattering seeds liberally was not typical and unusual for the time. This suggests that this unusual method is an important aspect for understanding the message of the parable.
4. Textual criticism is the discipline of identifying, as best as possible, the original wording of the inspired writers. It's important because it helps determine that the text being interpreted is what was actually intended by the author.
5. The two types are unintentional errors, caused by mistakes of hearing or sight during copying, and intentional errors, when scribes attempted to "correct" or change the text.
6. The four levels are the historical Jesus (deeds and teachings), the oral transmission of Jesus' traditions, the emergence of written sources, and the final Gospels compiled by the evangelists.
7. An exegetical commentary aims to interpret the text itself, providing explanations and evidence, while a devotional commentary focuses on drawing out spiritual and devotional thoughts related to the text.
8. According to Bauer-Danker, *sophia* is defined as the "capacity to understand and function accordingly."
9. The fact that James addresses a Christian audience suggests that the "wisdom" he describes is not inherent to all people, or even necessarily to all Christians. It implies that Christians can lack wisdom and need to ask for it from God.
10. The three possible meanings of "wisdom" are: 1) intellectual insight and understanding, 2) right action (behavioral), or 3) the congruence of right thinking and right action (ordering of life around God's revealed reality).

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the importance of considering historical background when interpreting biblical texts, providing examples of how both types of historical background can impact meaning.
2. Explain the process of textual criticism, including the types of errors that can occur in manuscript transmission, and discuss the significance of this discipline for biblical interpretation.
3. Analyze the four levels of the history of tradition of the Gospels, and how the consideration of the prehistory can influence the interpretation of the final texts.

4. Compare and contrast the different types of commentaries and explain the advantages and disadvantages of using each type for the purpose of biblical interpretation.
5. Using the example of the analysis of *sophia* in James 1:5 from the lecture, explain how a multi-faceted approach to interpretation, considering context, word usage, historical background, and the opinions of other scholars, leads to a more nuanced and complete understanding of the text.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Inflection:** A change in the form of a word (e.g., verb tense) to indicate grammatical function or meaning.
- **Historical Background:** The contextual information surrounding a text, including the time, culture, and circumstances of its writing and the events or allusions mentioned within.
- **Textual Criticism:** The scholarly discipline that attempts to reconstruct the original wording of a text by analyzing various manuscript copies and their variations.
- **Manuscript Tradition:** The process of hand-copying texts, often over many generations, which can lead to the introduction of errors.
- **Unintentional Error:** Mistakes introduced into a text through copying, due to oversight or mishearing.
- **Intentional Error:** Changes introduced into a text by a scribe, usually in an attempt to "correct" the text according to their own understanding.
- **History of the Tradition:** The development and transmission of a text's content through oral and written stages before the text is fixed in its final form.
- **Exegetical Commentary:** A commentary that aims to explain the text's meaning, including linguistic and historical context, using logical arguments and evidence.
- **Devotional Commentary:** A commentary that emphasizes spiritual application and personal reflection, rather than rigorous text interpretation.
- **Homiletic Commentary:** A commentary that provides ideas and outlines for sermons based on the text.
- ***Sophia*:** The Greek word for "wisdom," generally involving knowledge, understanding, and insight.

- **Septuagint:** The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.
- **Hypostatically:** Relating to something that is conceived as an independent substance.
- **Patristic Commentary:** Commentaries written by early Church fathers.
- **Totality Transfer:** An illegitimate interpretive move where a word's full meaning from one context is transferred to another where it may not apply.
- **Zinzania:** A specific type of weed that was practically indistinguishable from wheat until the approach of harvest.

5. FAQs on Bauer, Inductive Bible Study, Session 14, Interpretation, Backgrounds, Wisdom Word Study, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Inductive Bible Study and Interpretation

- **What are the two main types of historical background important for interpreting a biblical text?** There are two key levels of historical background to consider. The first involves the context of the *book itself*: when it was written, who wrote it, who was the intended audience, and the occasion for writing. This information helps to understand the author's purpose within the book. The second level is the historical background pertaining to things *mentioned within the book*. This includes allusions, customs, or situations the original reader would have been familiar with. Understanding these can bridge the gap between our knowledge and the original context, allowing us to grasp the meaning more accurately.
- **How does understanding the historical context of Jesus' parables impact their interpretation?** The historical context surrounding Jesus' parables is crucial because his stories often utilize unusual elements that would have been surprising or thought-provoking to his audience. For example, the parable of the soils depicts a sower scattering seed widely, which was actually uncommon in that historical context. Farmers were generally careful with seed because it was expensive and not readily available, so they would have tested the soil and planted only on the good soil. This surprising element helps to highlight a key point within the parable about the nature of the sower and the receptivity of the various soils. Likewise, the weeds in the parable of the weeds are the zinzania weed which was practically indistinguishable from wheat until harvest time and intertwined roots with the wheat so they couldn't be easily removed. Understanding these details that the original reader would have been familiar with can unlock a deeper understanding of the parables.

- What is textual criticism, and why is it important for biblical interpretation?** Textual criticism is a discipline dedicated to discerning the original wording of biblical texts. Because the Bible was originally transmitted through hand-copying, a variety of errors, both unintentional and intentional, crept into the manuscripts over time. Unintentional errors could be errors of sight or hearing and intentional errors were when a scribe attempted to "correct" the text or change it. Textual criticism analyzes these variations and employs a sophisticated process to determine the most likely original reading. Knowing what the inspired writer actually wrote is crucial for accurate interpretation, making textual criticism vital to the study of the Bible.
- What are some of the textual variations that can arise during the transmission of a text?** During the copying process of biblical manuscripts, errors could arise in a few ways: errors of *sight* (misreading or overlooking a word) and errors of *hearing* (when texts were dictated aloud). There are also *intentional* errors where a scribe would attempt to 'correct' a text, believing they knew better than the author, inserting a phrase or word that had a similar meaning but was not original to the text. Examples of these errors that have been corrected include the last 11 verses of Mark 16.
- What is meant by the "history of tradition" in relation to the Gospels?** The "history of tradition" refers to the pre-history of the Gospels before they took their final written form. This includes several stages: first, the actual words and deeds of Jesus; then, an oral transmission of these teachings and stories; next, the reduction of some of these to writing; and finally, the use of these written and oral sources by the Gospel writers to create the canonical texts we have today. Understanding the evolution of these traditions can provide valuable insight into the meaning of the final text.
- What is the difference between exegetical, devotional, and homiletic commentaries?** These three types of commentaries serve different purposes. *Exegetical* commentaries aim to interpret the text itself, presenting the meaning of the text and offering supporting evidence for their analysis. *Devotional* commentaries focus on drawing out spiritual insights and applying the text to personal faith, such as the work of Matthew Henry. *Homiletic* commentaries provide sermon ideas or outlines for preachers, which can be a helpful source for teaching purposes but should not be the primary resource for interpretation. For the purposes of this text, exegetical commentaries are the most helpful.

- **What does the text reveal about the meaning of "wisdom" in James 1:5?** The study reveals that "wisdom" (sophia) in James 1:5 is not just intellectual understanding but involves the comprehensive integration of thought and action. It's not an inherent trait of even Christians but a divine gift to be sought from God, and this wisdom is transcendent, aligning with God's nature. The analysis of context suggests that wisdom is the divine means to endure trials and temptations, and that it involves both right thinking (intellectual) and right acting (behavioral) as well as congruence between the two. This wisdom, then, allows a Christian to be complete and not lacking in any way.
- **How does the study in the document conclude regarding the definition of "wisdom" in James 1:5?** After considering various forms of evidence from the biblical text and other resources, the study concludes that "wisdom" in James 1:5 is best understood as a congruence and coherence of right thinking and right action, with an emphasis on the ordering of one's entire life around the reality of God's revelation. It's more than just knowledge or righteous behavior in isolation, but rather, it's the application of accurate knowledge, a revelation of God's plan in the world, translated into action which leads to a complete life.