

## **KEY STUDY VALUES**

Below are the key values behind reading the bible like a human being. The phrases are intentionally in pithy, memorable form so you can easily remember and apply them:

### **EXPERIENCING JESUS**

We study to experience the human Jesus personally, not to learn what to believe or how to behave.

### **DON'T BE HALF-BRAINED**

Your rational brain knows God, your emotional brain experiences him. You need to study with both.

### **EMOTIONS HAVEN'T CHANGED**

Human brains and emotions haven't changed in 2000 years, so applying my life experience to scripture can help me understand it.

### **NO MAGIC JESUS**

We don't make up 'Magic Jesus' explanations to avoid acknowledging his humanity. (We also don't explain away the miracles in the bible to downplay his divinity!)

### **MAKE STUFF UP!**

We can use imagination to fill in the missing details without needing to get every fact exactly right, because we aren't making doctrine. Our emotional brain insights don't replace sound doctrine, they are tested by it.

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## HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE WITH THE EMOTIONAL BRAIN

*How to Read the Bible Like a Human Being* is designed to revitalize and deepen your connection with scripture by studying it with the lesser-used side of your mind—the emotional brain. Using a different brain means that these studies have entirely different goals, use different tools and look for different things than most others. Let’s take a quick look at what makes this approach unique.

Our goal is to experience Jesus’ humanity. The emotional brain learns by *immersing itself* in a thing, so we want to visualize and experience his human life on earth. We feel the wooden mast rocking on Peter’s boat, breathe the odor of fish and sweat, hear the timbers groan as it rides the waves.

But the rational brain learns by *standing outside* a thing, at an objective distance, to remove messy emotions from your thinking and focus on the facts. If your rational side is in charge of buying a car, you research the gas mileage, cost of ownership, etc. before you ever set foot on a car lot. You want to know all *about* the car so you can make a rational decision. The experience of cruising down the boulevard in a candy-apple-red ragtop while the hot girls ooh and aah is just a distraction.

The rational mind is great tool for learning good doctrine, applying the Word to daily life, and for grasping abstract concepts like grace, forgiveness or glory. But there’s a hidden down-side: *the rational approach works by creating distance between you and the Jesus you study*. It’s the difference between looking at the ten-thousand-foot view of a map versus actually walking the countryside, or reading a textbook about hormones versus finding the love of your life. You can’t fully grasp God’s love without loving him and being loved—the experience is a crucial part of understanding it. In the same way, you can’t fully understand scripture without experiencing it with your emotional brain.

### Example: Harvesting Grain on the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28)

- To learn the rational truth in this passage, I read a commentary exploring Jesus’ view of Sabbath-keeping, or find a lesson in those verses I can apply to my daily life.
- To *experience* the passage with the emotional brain, I get some heads of wheat, rub them between my palms and eat some of the wheat berries to see what it was like.

## A DIFFERENT PROCESS

While the rational brain gets its information through words, facts and concepts, the emotional brain understands through *image, experience and metaphor*. One way to grasp Jesus or Peter or John with your emotional brain is to put yourself in their shoes and experience what they did. So pop those

**GROUND RULES**  
To keep focused on using our emotional brains, we avoid discussing **theology** or **application!**

wheat berries in your mouth—and chew, and chew, and *chew* those gummy little beads! You’ll probably come away thinking, “I’d have to be *really* hungry to scavenge a meal like this!” And then you wonder, “How often were the disciples hungry? What was their everyday life really like?” Now you are thinking with your emotional brain.

Sometimes we can replicate a first-century Israelite’s experience, but more often we recreate it through *Visualization*. That’s the first of the three key tools for emotional-brain study. Picture Jesus walking the narrow alleys of Capernaum, with ten-foot-high, black stone walls on either hand. Or imagine the smells as he wakes in Peter’s house after sleeping in his clothes in a room with twelve other guys! I you can *see* a scene, you can *feel* it, and if you feel it, you can *identify* with it.

Our second tool is experiencing the *Emotions* in the pictures we make. For example, Jairus recruits Jesus to deal with the emergency of his dying daughter (see Mark 5:22-35), but Jesus gets distracted along the way—and his daughter dies! How would he feel? How would YOU feel if you were Jairus? People in Jesus’ day had the same emotions we do, so the gateway to understanding their emotions is asking what we’d feel if we were in that situation (after correcting for cultural differences).

Doing the work to build a rich, emotion-filled picture of the story triggers connections between Jairus' experiences and our own. That's called *Identification*, our third tool. We remember times when we've gotten delayed on the way to something important, and feel the sinking dread in our gut that goes with it. When we can connect our own memories with the experience of a bible character, we truly understand, with our hearts as well as our heads. This is what learning with the emotional brain feels like—that instinctive sense that you 'get' someone. And that's what we're going for!

**Example:** in the shortest verse in the bible, where "Jesus wept" over Lazarus' death (John 11:35), a rational bible study might ask:

- *Doctrinal questions:* What quality of God do Jesus' tears reveal?
- *Behavioral questions:* How is my heart broken for those who are suffering in my city?

An emotional brain study might ask:

- *Visualization questions:* Picture Jesus' tears running down his cheeks. Where do they fall?
- *Emotion questions:* What is going on in Jesus' heart at that moment?
- *Identification questions:* When in your life did someone you loved die unexpectedly? What did that feel like? How was Jesus' experience with Lazarus like yours?

## A DIFFERENT LEARNING METHOD

These studies use an interactive *Discovery Learning* method, where group leaders ask questions to help participants come up with their own insights. Adults remember up to **ten times** as much when they discuss something versus being lectured. So, there is NO teaching in these studies! Everyone participates, everyone learns, everyone shares. Since we are using our own life experience to understand biblical characters, anyone who has life experiences (that's all of us!) has something valuable to contribute, from brand new believers to those who've studied scripture for decades.

## WRITING NARRATIVES

The cherry on the top of each study comes in week three. Each participant picks a character from the bible story, and writes a *Visual Narrative* of what happened from that person's perspective. We use a technique called *Free Writing* that bypasses all the onerous stuff you had to endure in High School English: no spell-checking, no editing or rewriting, and no grammar-nazi stuff. You just write—it's fun! Reading narratives to each other offers amazing insights into the passage and builds a surprising intimacy in the group. To produce a great narrative, you have to write out of your own experience. So each narrative tells us something about both the story in the bible and *your* life story!

Participants consistently report that writing and sharing narratives is where it all comes together for them—that the characters come alive in a way that changes how they look at scripture forever.

These studies rely heavily on using our imaginations to fill in the missing details in the oh-so-short stories we have in the gospels. We encourage making up details to bring your narratives to life! The key to making this work is that we are NOT making doctrine! That's a task for rational study—in fact, we test our emotional-brain insights against what we know of sound, rational doctrine.

**Example: The Woman with the Issue of Blood**

She was literally shaking with fear when she was found out. A good modern analogy is that she was having a panic attack. If someone in the group has had one, we can use that to fill in the missing details of how she felt and what she experienced, all while still holding the idea lightly. The goal is to feel what she felt, not create a new theology of panic attacks!

# THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

JOHN 2:13-22



SOUTH END OF THE TEMPLE PLATFORM

## PASSAGE: JOHN 2:13-22 (NASB)

<sup>13</sup>The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. <sup>15</sup>And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; <sup>16</sup>and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business."

<sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house will consume me."

<sup>18</sup>The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"

<sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

<sup>20</sup>The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

<sup>21</sup>But He was speaking of the temple of His body. <sup>22</sup>So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

## BACKGROUND INFO

### THE TEMPLE MOUNT

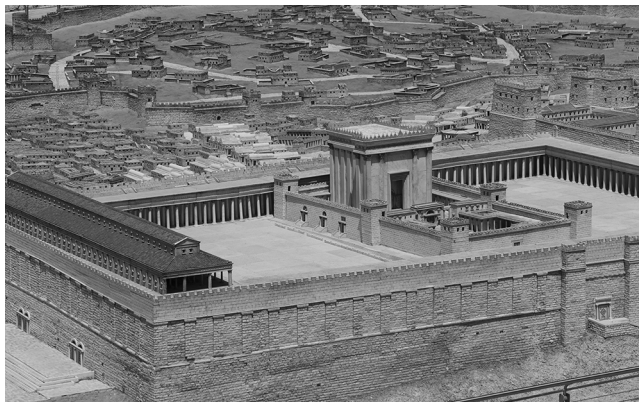
Coming from the villages of Galilee, the temple mount in Jerusalem was an awe-inspiring site—and was meant to be. Its walls rose 150 feet high in places, and the thirty-six-acre platform dominated the city, forming the largest sacred site in the Roman empire.

The main entrance was in the south, an area known today as the 'Southern Steps.' Pilgrims from Galilee and the East came on the Jericho Road, circled to the south of the Mount of Olives, and entered at the Dung Gate. Many took a ritual bath there, at the Pool of Siloam (it was required before entering the temple). Then they walked a broad street up the Tyropoean Valley to a broad plaza below the southern wall.

The entrance itself was through the Double Gate: two sixteen-foot-wide subterranean passages. Apparently, one was used for entry and the other for exiting (the mouth of the tunnel is shown on the previous page). Originally, these gates simply passed through the walls around the smaller First Temple platform. But the Hasmonians and then Herod extended the platform over 200 feet to the south, so long tunnels were created through these extensions to reach the original gates.

On the southern end of this herculean platform rose the Royal Stoa (see photo), a roofed hall 900 feet long and over 100 feet wide, with 162 columns so broad it took three men with arms outstretched to encircle them. The basilica was probably used as a market, for banking and for the courts (the Sanhedrin may have met here). This basilica was the only part of the Temple Mount that was not a consecrated part of the temple proper.

The temple itself was a huge structure clad in white marble and gold plating. It was surrounded by a 500-cubit square rectangle with a balustrade, called the *Soreg*. No gentile could enter, under pain of death. Within the *Soreg* a rectangle of outbuildings surrounded the temple itself, with chambers for wood, oil, lepers, kindling, and so forth. The main entrance faced east, leading from the Court of the Gentiles into the 230-foot-square Court of Women (although this may not have been completed



*Herod's Temple. The Double Gate is at bottom left, the Court of the Gentiles is the open space on either side of the temple; the Royal Stoa (or Herod's basilica) is the long, roofed structure on the right.*

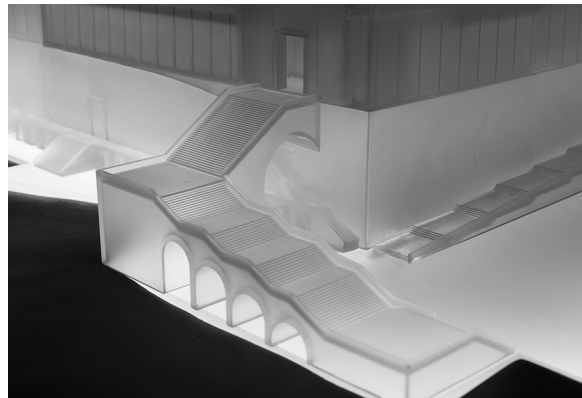
until AD 44, after Jesus' death).<sup>1</sup> Passing up a stairway and through the Nicanor Gate, men could enter the Court of the Israelites and view the sacrifices at the great altar in front of the temple porch.

## SELLING IN THE TEMPLE

Originally, the animal vendors and money-changers who set up shop at Passover were located outside the temple. But "Caiaphas's apparently recent and novel introduction of animals into the temple precincts"<sup>2</sup> had moved the marketplace onto the temple itself. Apparently, the vendors had to pay the high priest for a concession to do business there, which may explain the rationale for the move (the high priest's family got fabulously wealthy). One Passover account explains that 5,000 men at a time were let into the temple, each with an animal for the sacrifice—so think animals in the thousands for sale that day.

The possible timing of this move is fascinating. "Eppstein (1964) considered the presence of animals for sale on the temple mount... as an innovation of Caiaphas. In reaction to the Pharisaic control of the main markets located on the Mount of Olives, Caiaphas decided to open a rival market on the temple mount itself. In Eppstein's opinion, Caiaphas had his own commercial interests in mind. Jesus, finding these innovations in place, *perhaps for the first time*, then reacted on the spur of the moment."<sup>3</sup> (italics mine)

Another scholar adds, "But the assumption of Rabbinic literature and Josephus is that the market for the sale of sacrificial beasts was not located in the Temple at all but in a place called Hanuth ("market" in Aramaic) on the Mount of Olives, across the Kidron Valley (others believe it was in the Royal Stoa, on the temple platform but not a part of the temple itself.) According to the Babylonian Talmud, some forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the principal council of Jerusalem was removed from the place in the Temple called the Chamber of Hewn Stone to Hanuth. Around 30 C.E. Caiaphas both expelled the Sanhedrin and introduced the traders into the Temple, in both ways centralizing power in his own hands."<sup>4</sup>



*The Great Stair at the southwest corner of the Temple Mount.  
The sheep and oxen Jesus drove out may have down these stairs.*

How does this impact our story? Well, forty years before the destruction of the temple (the number may have been rounded off) would be AD 30, very close to the time Jesus' ministry began. He would have *personally* remembered going to the temple many times before this when the vendors (and the noise and smell and haggling they brought) were not present in the temple precincts.<sup>5</sup> This may have been the *first time* Jesus went to the temple and saw vendors in it!

If you can imagine going to church all your life and then you come in one Sunday and there is a row of flea market booths set up in the back of the sanctuary, hawking political swag, that might help you grasp Jesus' passionate response. When he says, "It is written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER'; but you are making it a ROBBERS' DEN," the 'you' in that sentence is very specific—he is speaking to the vendors, but also to the high priest Caiaphas, who made that change himself. Those words certainly made their way back to Caiaphas—giving him one more reason to get rid of Jesus a few years later.

<sup>1</sup> Rittmeyer, pg. 349.

<sup>2</sup> [https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/bbr/temple\\_evans.pdf](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/bbr/temple_evans.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0259-94222015000200038](http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0259-94222015000200038)

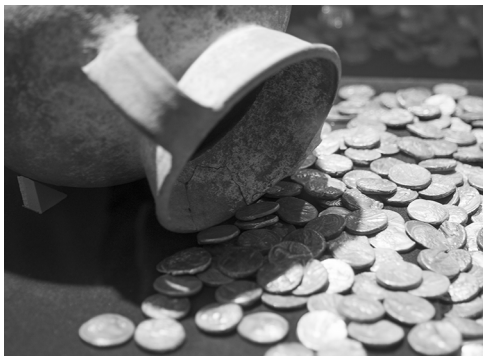
<sup>4</sup> Bruce Chilton, [http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0259-94222015000200038](http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0259-94222015000200038)

<sup>5</sup> Some scholars believe the Hanuth was the Royal Stoa, and the market Jesus cleared has simply expanded from one adjacent to the temple into the Court of the Gentiles of the temple itself.

## THE TEMPLE TAX

Every year males over twenty in Israel had to pay a half-shekel tax for the upkeep of the temple. Tyrian shekels were the only coin accepted because of their high silver content (and not because they were free of idolatrous images: they had one on the reverse). Anyone who came to pay the temple tax of half a shekel per year had to convert their money into that currency. The root word for money changers means to cut up in bits, just as coins in of the time were often actually cut in halves or quarters to make change. This was done because the value of the coin was equivalent to the amount of precious metal it contained.

The kolban (markup on changing the money) is like what you'd pay in an airport to change your dollars into euros on your vacation to Europe. It was the percentage taken by the temple when money was changed to make sure the temple got its full share, since the coin used wasn't 100% silver. The standard charge was 4.2% times two to change a shekel into a half shekel. (They treated this as two transactions—one to change another type of coin to a Tyrian shekel (see photo), and another to break the Tyrian shekel into two half-shekels). The money so gained was split between the trader and the temple.



A half a shekel equaled about two days' wages for a worker back then. If 150,000 people (a low-end estimate) came from outside Jerusalem to the temple at Passover, and half of them were men, that's an offering of 150,000 days wages—a *lot* of money. Think 400 *years* of your gross income! Four-point-two percent of this went to the money changers. So together they earned 6,000 days' wages (or fifteen years of your salary) for one days' work. That's an incredible profit margin!

The Jews who lived overseas in the diaspora also collected the temple tax and brought it to Jerusalem. Starting a month beforehand, a similar collection was taken from Jews in Israel who weren't going to the temple that year. With as many as ten million Jews living in the Roman empire, imagine the temple receiving on the order of 100 million dollars a year in today's money.

However, these numbers come from a later explanation of the system by rabbis sympathetic to the temple—so see the 8.4% Kolban as a *minimum* surcharge. There is evidence that the markups became extortionary, and that the high priestly family ran the temple finances to maximize their own income, becoming extraordinarily wealthy. Corruption ran rampant.

For instance, the Benson commentary relates that, "It is said that the priests and Levites very often sold the animals they had received for sacrifices [back] to the dealers in cattle, at a lower rate, that they [the dealers] might sell them again with profit; so that the same sacrifices were often sold to different persons, and the spoils, or gain of them, were divided between the priests and the salesmen."

There were times when the cost of purchasing a sacrifice became literally out of reach for the majority of the population. In one reform, Simeon, the grandson of Gamliel (the same Gamliel who trained the apostle Paul) vowed one day to bring the prices down. He reinterpreted the law to allow a mother to bring just one sacrifice for all her children, instead of one each time she bore a child. This change brought down the price of a pair of doves 100-fold (like, from a dollar to a penny) in one day!

Josephus tells us that "The high priest, Annas [the younger, the one who had James stoned to death]...had wicked servants, who associated with the most vilest sort of characters, and went to the threshing-floors, and took the tithes that belonged to the priests by force, and beat anyone who would not give these tithes to them. So the other high priests that followed him as well as his servants acted likewise, without anyone being able to stop them; so that some of the priests, those who were old and were being supported with those tithes, died for lack of food."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.biblehistory.net/newsletter/annas.htm>



## SECTION I: JESUS RUNS OFF THE VENDORS

### THE SCENE IN THE COURT OF THE GENTILES

**Who** all was there? \_\_\_\_\_

**When** did it happen? (Time of day/year) \_\_\_\_\_

**Where** did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_

Coming from/going to? \_\_\_\_\_

**What** happened before/after? \_\_\_\_\_

**Weather** \_\_\_\_\_

### IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM, WHAT ABOUT THE BUILDINGS CATCHES YOUR EYE?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



HEAR



SEE

**WHAT PART OF THE TEMPLE WERE THE VENDORS IN?**  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



TOUCH



SMELL

**HOW DID SEEING A MARKET IN THE TEMPLE IMPACT JESUS' HEART?**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



TASTE



## SECTION II: THE CONVERSATION AFTERWARDS

**DESCRIBE JESUS FACE AND VOICE TONE WHEN HE'S TALKING TO THE DOVE SELLERS.**

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HEAR



SEE



TOUCH

**WHERE ARE THE DISCIPLES STANDING? WHAT ARE THEY DOING?**

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SMELL



TASTE

**HOW MIGHT THE DISCIPLES BE FEELING WHEN JESUS DISRUPTS THE PASSOVER CELEBRATION?**

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## QUESTIONS FOR JESUS

1. Jesus, what were you feeling that morning as started out from the Mount of Olives toward the Temple Mount?

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2. What does it mean to you that the gentiles had a place to worship in the Jewish temple?

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3. Jesus, what was going through your mind as you sat at the foot of a column weaving a whip?

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4. How did you come up with, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up?' Where did that come from?

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