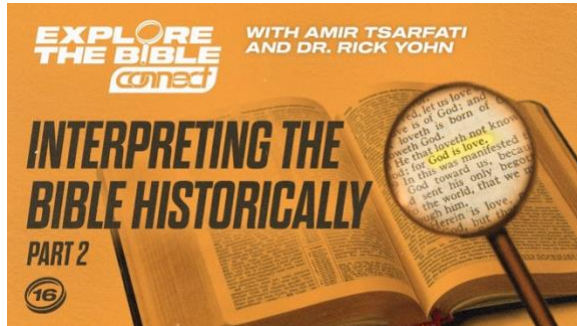




Amir Tsarfati

**Explore the Bible with Dr. Rick Yohn
Interpreting the Bible Historically Part II**

<https://youtu.be/9mSJJ-Q-QXU?si=-457kmKN-XeA3RAS>



AMIR: Hey, Shalom everyone. I'm Amir Tsarfati and together with me, Dr. Rick Yohn. And this is yet one more chapter of *Explore the Bible*. Shalom, Dr. Rick. How are you, my friend?

RICK: I'm doing fine, Amir. I'm so excited about

what we're going to be doing today.

AMIR: Yes, yes. The last time we talked, we first remembered the great time we had on the Alaskan cruise, and we shared with the viewers some of the photos that you took because you're a master photographer with a gigantic zoom and camera. Wow, unbelievable.

RICK: 500mm lens.

AMIR: Yeah, whew, it's heavier than, I don't know, than a whole suitcase, I think. [Laughter] But anyway, the last program, we started talking about the story behind the story, the interpretation that comes after the observation. So before we dive into our second part of this topic, why don't you lead us in a prayer?

RICK: I'd love to do that. Lord God, we are so thankful that You guide us not only to answer the question, "What do I see?" but You help us answer the question, "What does it mean?" And that's what interpretation is all about. And as we look at interpreting the Bible in a historical way, I pray that You would open our eyes to see and to be able to comprehend, especially the story behind the story which is found in the Old Testament. So help us to grasp not only what we read in the Gospel

of John, but what we read in the Scriptures that came before the Gospel of John. We ask in Jesus' name; Amen.

AMIR: Amen and amen. So, Dr. Rick, so last time we made it very clear that unless you study the Old Testament, you will have a hard time interpreting much of what you observe in the New Testament. And you took us through two very, very beautiful examples in the Gospel of John. We looked at Chapter 1 and we saw how the disciples, excuse me, well, I guess the followers of John the Baptist were literally asking him, that people were sent to him and they asked him, "Are you the Messiah? Are you Elijah? Are you the prophet?" And you took us through Old Testament portions that would explain why there was such an expectation to one of these three based on Scriptures that you gave us from the book of Psalms, from the book of Deuteronomy, from the book of Malachi. And so we could clearly see that it wasn't an empty question. It was a very, very loaded question, loaded with a lot of expectation that came from what they already knew in the Old Testament.

And then we continued, and you took us through the actual observation of John when he saw Jesus coming and approaching and he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." And again, you took us to the Old Testament and what it means for a lamb, for a sacrifice, for a blood that had to be shed in order for sins to be forgiven. You took us all the way to the Garden of Eden, and you walked us through the book of Deuteronomy all the way as well. And so I think that the last time where we stopped was that we almost made it to John chapter 3 to see yet another example. Which example are we talking about this time?

RICK: And this, I think, is going to be a surprise to a lot of people. I mean, the passage of Scripture, the one verse, probably the most common verse of Scripture that is memorized today is John 3:16. And very few people realized it begins with a letter or the word “for.” Now, if I came up to you and said, “For,” you’d wonder, “Why would you start a sentence with ‘for’?” Well, “for” actually explains what came before “for.” And you don’t really understand John 3:16 unless you can understand John 3:14 and John 3:15. In fact, to really understand John 3:16, you should start with John chapter 3 and verse 1 because it is an encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus, and its



night. And Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night, and he says, “Rabbi, we know that You’re a Man sent from God because no man can do all these miracles unless God is with Him.” And I’m sure Nicodemus must have thought, “Well, Jesus

would probably answer, ‘I’m glad you recognize that.’” But He didn’t answer it like that. Jesus says, “Nicodemus, you must be born again.” Nicodemus, looking around, “Born again? What’s that all about?” And so Jesus begins to explain this whole idea of being born again. And He makes a contrast between that which is physical and that which is spiritual. But Nicodemus still doesn’t get it. But remember, Nicodemus is part of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling body. And so Jesus is basically saying, “Now you are a teacher of the law, and you don’t really understand this?” So Jesus goes to the law of Moses, and He tells Nicodemus a story from the law of Moses that Nicodemus read many times. Because He’s trying to get him to move from the physical to the spiritual. And here’s the passage, Amir, why don’t you read John 3:14 and 15?

AMIR: John 3:14–15: “¹⁴ ‘And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.’”

RICK: Okay. “...as just as...” So here is a story from the Old Testament for Jesus explaining the difference between the physical and the spiritual. So where is that story found? It’s found in the book of Numbers. So Amir, why don’t you go to that passage of Scripture and read that to us?

AMIR: Yeah, I sure will.

RICK: Because that’s a special event.

AMIR: Yeah. So we are going to the book of Numbers, which is...

RICK: ...Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers...

AMIR: Yes, I have it, Numbers 21, yes?

RICK: Yep.

AMIR: Numbers 21:4–9. Okay. Numbers 21 verses 4 to 9. And I’m reading it right now. “⁴ Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. ⁵ And the people spoke against God and against Moses: ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.’ ⁶ So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. ⁷ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, ‘We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks

at it, shall live.’⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.” Wow, amazing.

RICK: So, He goes to an Old Testament story, and He says, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so shall the Son of Man be lifted up. So, what was going on in the Old Testament? Well, they were complaining. They were complaining about what they had and this manna, yuck! They didn’t want the manna anymore. And so God sends these serpents and they’re biting people and people are dying left and right. And “Oh, we’ve sinned, we’ve sinned, we’ve sinned. Ask God to take away the serpents.” We don’t know what Moses prayed, but God sure didn’t take away the serpents. The problem wasn’t the serpents. The problem was they’re complaining and their lack of faith in God. And so God tells Moses, “You get this bronze serpent, put it on a pole, and if people really believe Me and they will look at that bronze serpent, when they are bitten, and they’re going to be bitten, but when they are bitten, they will not die. But if they refuse to look up at that bronze serpent, they will die.”

Likewise, the Son of Man is going to be lifted up, and He’ll be lifted up on the cross, that whoever looks to Him and believes what I have told you, that that’s the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. If you believe that He is dying for your sins, and you receive Him, you will not die spiritually, but you will have eternal life. So to truly understand John 3:16, “For,” what Jesus is saying is, “Look, Nicodemus, here’s the illustration of the Old Testament. Here’s the example, and here is Jesus, the Son of Man who’s going to be lifted up. If you will just trust in Me, you will have eternal life. You will be born again.” What do you mean? I mean, God loved you, Nicodemus so much that He gave His one and only Son, that if you, Nicodemus, will believe in Him, you will not perish, but have eternal life. To understand John 3:16, with the meaning

behind it, you really need to understand what is written in the book of Numbers. That's the story behind the story.

AMIR: There's another phrase, "the Son of Man," that phrase can easily take us to Daniel. I mean, when we're just doing the—Daniel 7 verses 11 to 14 also speak about the Son of Man.

RICK: The Son of Man, where every knee is going to bow. If you've never read Daniel 7, go to that passage of Scripture, a beautiful description. But I think we have to get on there.

AMIR: Yeah, we do. Do you want me to read it, by the way, right now?

RICK: Yes, please read it.

AMIR: Yeah, of course, I will. Let's do **Daniel 7:11–14**. So I'm reading that in Hebrew, 11 to 14, in English, excuse me.

RICK: English, please.

AMIR: Anyway, that portion is in Aramaic in my Hebrew Bible. ¹¹ **'I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking;...'**" which by the way is the Antichrist, ¹¹ **... 'I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, they had their...'**" [Amir double checks what passages to read] ¹² **... 'As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. ¹³ I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days,...'**" which is God the Father, ¹⁴ **... 'then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.'**"

RICK: Amen.

AMIR: What a beautiful, beautiful thing to see that at the end of the tribulation, we have the millennial kingdom and at the end of the millennial kingdom, we have new heavens, new earth and new Jerusalem. And again, the Lord will reign, and no one is going to destroy that kingdom. It's the kingdom that is an everlasting kingdom, replacing every earthly system of government and world power that existed until that point. So...

RICK: ...Now, you see what happened? Can you read John 3:16, the way John 3:16 should be read? You get all of this wonderful information from the Old Testament.

AMIR: Exactly. And again, we will never be able to emphasize it, I guess, stronger than what we do always. The Old Testament is an integral part of your Bible. It's not something that read it only if you must. It's something that in order to understand the Bible, you *must* read. It's part of the Bible. It's what validates the New Testament, basically. And the writers of the Gospels and the Epistles and as well as the book of Revelation, they have hundreds of quotes from the Old Testament because that was the Scriptures in those days, as the New Testament was written. And again, it is the Word of God and the entire counsel of God, everything, not half of it, is there to teach us and to educate us. And so we went through these passages from John 3, but I think that we wanted to move forward also to another portion...

RICK: John 4.

AMIR: ...exactly in John 4. And we wanted to look into...

RICK: The woman at the well.

AMIR: ...the woman at the well in Samaria, exactly. So I'm going to—go ahead.

RICK: In our minds, when we get to John 4, it's, "Oh, it's the story of the woman at the well. I know that story, but I'll read it." And so we read John 4, and we don't really necessarily gain anything new from it. We're just reading, Jesus must go through Samaria, and He meets this

woman, and eventually she runs into the village and says, “Come and see a man who told me everything I’ve ever done. Could this be the Messiah?” And that’s usually our concept of John 4. But John 4 is just filled with stories behind the story. The story is a woman at the well. But it starts out by saying that Jesus needed to go through Samaria. Now, He was going from Jerusalem up to Galilee, from the south to the north, and it said He needed to go through Samaria. Now, Amir, you live there, you know that He didn’t have to go through Samaria. In fact, most Jews would *never* go through Samaria to go back to Galilee.

AMIR: Exactly, most Jews would go through the Jordan Valley. People need to understand that the Samaritans were not Jews. They were a mix of those that invaded into the land with the remnant of Jewish people. And they were people that only believed in the first five books of Moses. And yet they had their own set of rules for them, the holy mountain of the Lord, where the temple should be is Mount Gerizim and not the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. They go back, of course, to the, again, the five books of Moses where there was not yet a temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. And so there was a lot of tension between the Samaritans and the Jewish people. And the Jewish people preferred on the way to Jerusalem to actually use the Jordan Valley, the King’s Highway, and then cross back where Jericho is, and then make their final ascent up to Jerusalem. And so actually for a Jew to walk through Samaria was very unlikely, very unusual, and very amazing. Because, and that’s the beauty about this portion is that there was a message to be delivered. And the message could have been delivered in the best way right there in that place to that woman. And that’s the beauty of this portion of Scripture. So, you know, as again to your question, it is an unlikely route, and Jesus yet took it to deliver a message.

RICK: Yes, so there He is with the woman. And as you read that, you read that it was at a place called, it was Jacob’s Well. Now, it is actually, you’re standing on holy ground so to speak.

Because that location has so much history behind it. It has the history of Abraham. When Abraham first came into the land, remember God said, “I am going to take you to a land that I will show you.” And the book of Hebrews tells us that Abraham went not knowing where he was going. And so he comes into the land of Canaan and he enters through a place called Shechem. And he sets up an altar to the Lord there at Shechem. Well, that is basically where this village of Sychar is. And so this is where Abraham entered. Not only did Abraham enter there, but Jacob also came there and he bought this well from the son of Shechem, the father was Shechem, and he bought that well. So that became Jacob’s Well. Furthermore, Joseph, when he was ready to die, he said, “I want to be buried in my land.” And where did they bury him?

AMIR: Shechem.

RICK: Yes.

AMIR: And up until today Joseph’s Tomb is there, by the way.

RICK: Yeah, Joseph’s Tomb is there. And then we just find that—So you have Jacob, you have Joseph, you have Abraham. And even Moses is the one who told Joshua, “When you get into the land, take the tribes to this place, Shechem, and have half the tribes pronounce the curses from Mount Ebal, and the other half pronounce the blessings of the covenant, the Mosaic covenant, from Mount Gerizim.” (Joshua 8:33) So Shechem is in the valley of Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. And when the woman says, “On this mountain is where we worship,” the Samaritans had a temple up on Mount Gerizim, and that’s where they would worship. And Joshua built an altar up there. In fact, recently they believe they found the altar that Joshua had built up there. So this very location has all that historical background in it. In fact, the Samaritan woman claimed that Jacob was their father, so to speak. “Our father Jacob gave us this well.” So she had that relationship, as far as she was concerned, with Jacob. So all of that historical background is in that one location.

Even though the Samaritans were there, it was a very Jewish location historically. So when you read John 4, “The Woman at the Well,” realize that that is built upon a lot of historical information. So when you interpret the Bible historically, and you follow those references, you will be able to gain all that new information in a very familiar passage of Scripture.

AMIR: Yeah, and so in this case, we see that you need to have Old Testament knowledge and historical knowledge that is based on the Old Testament. And that will help you understand better the answer of this woman to Jesus during their encounter. You understand why she referred to Jacob. You understand why it is that she’s pointing at that mountain here. And you also understand that the message that Jesus is about to give her is a message that is far and above and beyond this group or that group. It’s a message that speaks about the nature of God that is spirit and is everywhere. And I think that, and by the way, that’s one of my favorite, favorite passages in the entire Bible. And because in my mind, when you look at this, you can clearly see, first of all, that He confers that He’s the Messiah to her. He says, “I AM who speaks to you,” but also you can clearly see that He debunks many of the modern days anti-Semitic remarks about how God forgot about the Jews when He actually said to that woman that salvation is of the Jews.

RICK: Amen.

AMIR: You know, so many people that are saying that Jesus is a Palestinian, that Jesus is Muslim, stuff like that, when He himself, to this Samaritan woman, said that our fathers said this, your father said this, but in salvation indeed is of the Jews. But then He marked the point when history is going to be changed forever. And He says, “But the hour is coming and now is.” And I love that because, Dr. Rick, whenever I go through the book of Acts and I see how Paul in the center of Athens says to all of those men of Athens who think that they are cleverer than all of us. And he said, “God overlooked all of the shenanigans that you did in the past.” But then he says, “But now

all men everywhere must repent.” (Acts 17:30) In other words, “Repent, this is it, that’s the point where it’s done, it’s different. The time has come, no more games. Everyone, whether you’re a Samaritan or Jew, whether you’re Greek, it doesn’t matter, all must repent.” And I think it’s beautiful. That’s why I think there’s a great importance that He didn’t take the regular route to go and avoid the Samaritans. And I think it was a great importance to come to the Samaritans in the heart of Samaria and to say that message, just as Paul was in the heart of the Greek world in Athens to give that message.

RICK: Amen. Amen.

AMIR: Amazing. Any more passages you want us to look into just again to see that there is a story behind the story? I think maybe John 5?

RICK: John 5.

AMIR: But I think I’m looking at the clock and I think we’re running almost out of time here. And I realized that probably we’re going to leave it to another program.

RICK: Because John 5 and John 7 are just filled with history.

AMIR: Exactly. And I do not want to cut it short. I want to give the full attention to it. So on our next program, we’re going to continue to look into the story behind the story, to look into the interpretation rather than just the observation, to try and help you study the Bible in the best way possible to glean from it what God really wants you to, based on these simple principles that you can apply on your own when you read your Bibles and/or sit together and study it as a group.

Dr. Rick, as always, it was a great honor. I want to remind everyone that our book, *Exploring Ezekiel*, which you can see right behind me, right here, yes, this one right here, is coming out in October. And we urge you to pre-order it right now in order to get it on time. And we want you to be blessed by it and share it with as many as you can. Thank you, Dr. Rick Yohn, for once

again another great time of *Exploring the Bible* together. And I'm looking forward to our next program. Thank you, everyone, for watching. Share it with as many as you can. Thank you and God bless you. And Shalom.



* Scripture is taken from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise.

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