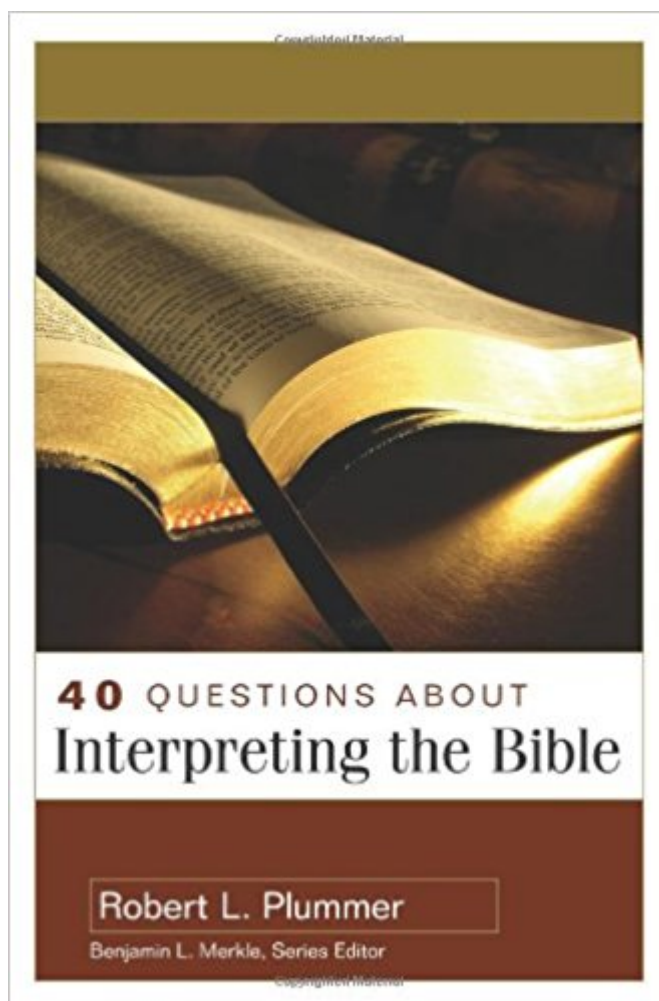


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40 Questions About Interpreting The Bible (40 Questions & Answers Series)



Synopsis

In 40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible, New Testament Professor Dr. Robert L. Plummer tackles the major questions that persons ask about reading and understanding the Bible. Questions include: Does the Bible contain error? Were the ancient manuscripts of the Bible transmitted accurately? What is the best English Bible translation? Is the Bible really all about Jesus? Do all the commands of the Bible apply today? Why can't people agree on what the Bible means? How do we interpret historical narrative? How do we interpret the Psalms? What does the Bible tell us about the future? What is the "Theological Interpretation of Scripture"? and many others

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Customer Reviews

"Robert Plummer's new book is simply excellent . . . This is the best introductory book on biblical interpretation I've yet seen. I highly recommend it."-Justin Taylor, Associate Publisher, Crossway". . . provides beginning students with all they need to know about biblical interpretation in general and the specific kinds of texts found in the Old and New Testaments in particular."Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Wheaton College --Back Cover"Read this excellent primer and read the Bible better as a result." (Darrell Bock, Research Professor of New Testament Studies Dallas Theological Seminary 2012-12-01)"Aristotle once said that those who wished to succeed must ask the right preliminary questions. Plummer asks forty of them. Even better: he answers them, providing beginning students with all they need to know about biblical interpretation in general and the specific kinds of texts found in the Old and New Testaments in particular." (Kevin J Vanhoozer, Blanchard

Professor of Theology Wheaton College 2010-12-01)"How appropriate that Plummer's 40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible is itself eminently understandable, crystal clear, and thoroughly engaging. The organization and breadth of coverage make this book both a delight to read and highly instructive....I can't imagine a more helpful introduction to the subject of biblical interpretation." (Bruce A Ware, Professor of Christian Theology The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 2010-12-01)"It is a wonderful thing to teach a person the Bible. It is even more wonderful to teach people how to study the Bible for themselves. Plummer has given us a helpful survey relative to how to understand the Bible. You will profit greatly from his insights." (Pastor Emeritus First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, FL 2010-12-01)

"Aristotle once said that those who wished to succeed must ask the right preliminary questions. Plummer asks forty of them. Even better: he answers them, providing beginning students with all they need to know about biblical interpretation in general and the specific kinds of texts found in the Old and New Testaments in particular to begin interpreting the Bible profitably."--Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Blanchard Professor of Theology, Wheaton College"Well written and carefully researched, I believe 40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible is an invaluable resource for anyone who has serious questions about the Holy Scriptures."--Daniel Akin, President, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary"How appropriate that Plummer's 40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible is itself eminently understandable, crystal clear, and thoroughly engaging. The organization and breadth of coverage makes this book both a delight to read and highly instructive. Each chapter concludes with reflection questions and suggested resources for further study. I can't imagine a more helpful introduction to the subject of biblical interpretation than Plummer has produced."--Bruce A. Ware, Professor of Christian Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary"Nuanced sufficiently for seminary courses and accessible enough for church groups, 40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible helpfully acquaints students and church leaders alike to central principles of biblical interpretation and related matters like inspiration, canon, translation, and current discussions. This warm and engaging work would make a superb textbook for university and seminary courses on biblical interpretation."--Christopher W. Morgan, Professor of Theology, California Baptist University"Read this excellent primer and read the Bible better as a result."--Darrell Bock, Research Professor of New Testament Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary"It is a wonderful thing to teach a person the Bible. It is even more wonderful to teach people how to study the Bible for themselves. Plummer has given us a helpful survey relative to how to understand the Bible. You will profit greatly from his insights."--Jerry Vines, Pastor-Emeritus, First

Baptist Church, Jacksonville, FL"40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible is a condensed discussion of a wide variety of important issues for the beginning student in the area of biblical studies. The question-answer format is a nice way to pique the students' interest and provide an answer to their questions at the same time."--Paul D. Wegner, Professor of Old Testament, Phoenix Seminary

This book is a title in the 40 Questions Series edited by Benjamin L. Merkle. The first title published was 40 Questions About Elders and Deacons written by the series editor. Due to be released in October 2010 is 40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law. Forthcoming titles include 40 Questions About Creation and Evolution, 40 Questions About Election and Atonement, 40 Questions About End Times and 40 Questions About Worship. As is Plummer and Merkle, all but of one the series authors teach at Southern Baptist seminaries. This book is a response to the difficulty Plummer had in finding the right resource to use in his course on hermeneutics. He hopes it will serve as a textbook, while also being beneficial to any interested Christians. I believe it will be more suited as a reference manual. It covers everything from the very basics ("What is the Bible?", "How is the Bible Organized?" and "What are Some General Principles for Interpreting the Bible?") to the academic ("What is Speech Act Theory?" and "What Are Some Other Recent Trends in Biblical Interpretation?"). The questions are categorized into four parts. Part One covers the text, the Canon and translation. Part Two covers questions of a more general nature concerning interpretation and meaning. Part Three covers questions concerning interpreting specific genres. Part Four deals with "Issues in Recent Discussion." The writing is clear, concise and interesting. Footnotes are at the bottom of each page and each chapter (each of the 40 questions is a chapter) has questions for reflection and a listing of books for further study. I found the further study sections very helpful. Plummer holds to the verbal plenary theory of inspiration. "While the authors of the Bible wrote as thinking, feeling human beings, God so mysteriously superintended the process that every word written was also the exact word he wanted to be written - free from all error" (p.32). While answering question four ("Does the Bible Contain Error?") he defends inerrancy, which he calls the historic view of the Christian church. He defines the doctrine of inerrancy to mean, "that the Bible is completely truthful in all things that the biblical authors assert - whether in geographic, chronological, or theological detail" (p.38). He also gives some very helpful qualifications to prevent misunderstanding about what is meant by inerrancy (p. 41-44). In partial answer to question five ("Were the Ancient Manuscripts of the Bible Transmitted Accurately?") he give an excellent explanation of textual variants. He skillfully navigates the choppy waters between "Unintentional

Errors" and "Intentional Errors." Question six deals with the canon, which he defines as "not an authorized collection of writings (in that the church conferred its authority or approval upon a list of books). Rather, the canon is a collection of authoritative writings...Canonization is the process of recognizing that inherent authority, not bestowing it from an outside source" (p.57). The heart of the book (and the section I enjoyed the most) is Part Two. The general principles of interpretation are divided into two questions (10 & 11). The first are more devotional in nature, the second more technical. These principles center on context, including allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture and the historical context of the words. Plummer advocates the author as determiner of meaning (p.130). In discussing the illumination of the Holy Spirit (question 16) he states, "the Spirit does not whisper some secret meaning inaccessible to others, but the Spirit does enable us to perceive facts and judge the plausibility of arguments with greater clarity" (p. 146). In Part Three Plummer answers why genre matters and first covers historical narrative, prophecy, apocalyptic, hyperbole and figures of speech before covering specifics like proverbs, poetry, psalms, parables and epistles. Part four deals with different areas of Biblical Criticism. One minor caveat. Plummer is no fan of traditional dispensationalists who "sometimes insist on literal interpretation of figurative language, though they have no defensible basis for doing so" (p.82). He also notes that "dispensationalists have an admitted bias toward reading the Bible, especially prophecies, as literal whenever possible. Figurative or symbolic approaches to Old Testament prophecy, especially those that concern Israel, are viewed with great suspicion" (p.158). I recommend this book to those who want to be better interpreters of God's Word.

Very informative book with many references to other publications. A little deep for the average reader, but great for the Bible student who wishes to dig deeper [or should I say, very deep]. My only complaint is that the type face is very small. Appears to be 6 point which is half of normal print of 10-12 point. Reading with a magnifying glass is not that easy. Too bad we can't give the publisher one star! Forced to buy it again as a download for my Logos Bible Study program. Guess I'm just getting too old.

I am in my second year of seminary, and this has been the most helpful book I have read so far. Dr. Plummer has written a must read book for anyone who desires to preach God's Word. This is a very easy to read book, and you will not want to put it down. I will definitely use this book throughout my years as a pastor. A must read!

I had to read this book for a class I'm taking at my college, and I was kind of worried at first. I thought it would be really dry and boring, but I found myself really enjoying this book. It challenged my thinking, and articulated how to practice good hermeneutics in a very clear way. My favorite parts were when the author's passions about Biblical interpretation came through. I've copied two examples below: "An unfaithful interpreter also can create a spiritual codependency--a situation in which people feel they must come to the pastor to understand the text because they are never able to see on their own the things he emphasizes in his teaching. These poor, starving infants who should have been fed on the pure milk of the Word (1 Peter 2:2) stare with gaunt eyes at the pulpit each week, hoping that manna will fall from heaven." "In the spiritual life, you are either a stagnant pool or a flowing fountain. If you are learning but not sharing what you are learning, you will be like an algae-covered pond." I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is wanting to learn how to be a better interpreter of the Word!

Are you looking for a book to help you understand the Bible better, but don't know where to start? Here is the book about The Book for You! Dr. Plummer has not only written an excellent book, but has helped to fill a resource gap for pastors. This book fulfills several resource gaps for me as a Pastor. Here are some of the resource gaps filled: 1. Personal Study (I always need to refresh) 2. Learning to phrase complex teaching in understandable terms. 3. An affordable understandable book to put into parishioners' hands. 4. A resource that non-specialists will read and finish with understanding. Dr. Plummer has provided a valuable resource that although readable, goes beyond the ABC 123 of other many other books on introductory Bible Study. Many of the books I have read on hermeneutics are either too technical for most laity (and many clergy apparently) to read or to long finish. These 40 Questions are short enough to read and study one question a week - and retain. One can read a chapter quickly (one question) and review it for about a week. The knowledge gained will be more than worth the effort. Who would benefit from reading this book? 1. Pastors who need to a quick refresher in basic Hermeneutics. 2. New Christians who are wanting to understand the Bible better. 3. Sunday School Teachers wanting to engage the Biblical text rather than the notes of a quarterly. 4. A gift for someone who recently made a profession of faith. 5. Church lending Library.

This is an excellent book for people of all levels of Bible knowledge. In addition, each chapter can be read as a stand alone as it singularly answers one of the 40 Questions, or as a great lead-in to the next chapter. Very well written.

Excellent work addressing relevant questions. An easy read I can recommend to those we witness to but are reluctant to hear.

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