

## Lesson 1 Introduction

Objective:

- 👉 **To introduce you to my favorite Bible study tool.**
- 👉 **To emphasize the importance of audience relevance, context and topical Bible study.**
- 👉 **To shake your confidence in bible footnotes and Bible translators.**

1. Please read Matt. 16:27. Most Christians would say that this verse is speaking of Jesus' coming, the great Judgment Day and the end of the world. But look at the context, read the next verse. He says that he will come again before all of his disciples had died. So he is indicating that a significant amount of time would pass before his coming and he says that some of his disciples would live to see his return.
2. Footnotes in most study Bibles say that this prophecy was fulfilled at the transfiguration. But this cannot be true. Jesus said that he would **“repay each person according to what he has done.”** (ESV) That certainly did not happen at the transfiguration; also the transfiguration happened just a few days after he made this prophesy... all of his disciples were still alive. Do you see that footnotes sometimes twist the meaning of a passage to promote the eschatological bias of the writer? (Chapter 1 of *Bamboozled Believers* gives a longer discussion of this passage.)
3. In Bible study, many expositors try to force their preferred meaning into a text. The fancy word for this kind of wishful thinking is “eisegesis”. Rather than eisegete, we should try to “exegete” the text; this means that we should make every effort to understand what God is saying in the passage. Several principles of good hermeneutics will guide us in our quest for truth:
  - a) Look at the context.
  - b) Ask: “What did the words recorded in Scripture mean to the people to whom they were first addressed”?
  - c) To understand the meaning of key words, sometimes we need to look at different translations.
  - d) Often other passages that deal with the same subject will illuminate a difficult text.

This topical Bible study focuses on the Bible's teaching concerning Jesus' second coming. As we dig into this subject, we will encounter other topics that we must understand. So I wish to emphasize that we will not gloss over any subject... we will follow the rabbit trails and make sure that we understand each topic that we encounter along the way. In my experience, study leaders often squelch discussion of topics that make them feel uncomfortable... I will not do that.

4. Here are some of Paul's last words to a young pastor named Timothy:
- I. I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:**
  - II. preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.**
  - III. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,**
  - IV. and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.**  
(2 Tim. 4:1-4)

Paul is telling Timothy that people would turn from the truth, and believe "myths". While I certainly believe that the futurist eschatology is a collection of myths, I don't think that Paul was referring to that modern phenomenon... there is a translation issue here that we should investigate.

5. Please go to [Blueletterbible.org](http://Blueletterbible.org). Search for 2 Tim. 4. You will see all of the verses of that chapter and beside each verse is the word "tools". Put the cursor on the word "tools" beside verse 1. You are presented with several choices; click on the word "Bibles". You will see a listing of fourteen English translations of verse 1. Please notice a small anomaly... In Young's Literal Translation (YLT) you will see that it tells the first century reader that Jesus' "is about to judge the living and the dead." None of the other versions convey this sense of imminence.
6. Is Young's Literal Translation correct in indicating that Jesus' return was imminent 2,000 years ago? Or, are all of the other translations correct to omit the words "about to"? Most of us cannot speak Greek but thanks to Blue Letter Bible, we can easily check the original.
7. One of the options when you put the cursor over the word "tools" was "interlinear". Click on that word and you will see the verse broken up word by word and you will see a column of numbers beside each word. Those numbers are the numbers that Strong's lexicon uses to reference the meanings of Greek words.
8. Click on the number 3195. You will see that its primary meaning is "to be about to do something." So it appears that Young's translation is correct and the others are all suppressing the teaching that Jesus' return was imminent. In lesson 2 and 3, I will establish the fact that the New Testament was written with the eager anticipation of Jesus' imminent return. We will return to a deeper discussion of the Greek word "mello" #3195, in a later lesson.