

Jesus' Teachings: A New Perspective

Metaphysical • Mystical • Maieutic

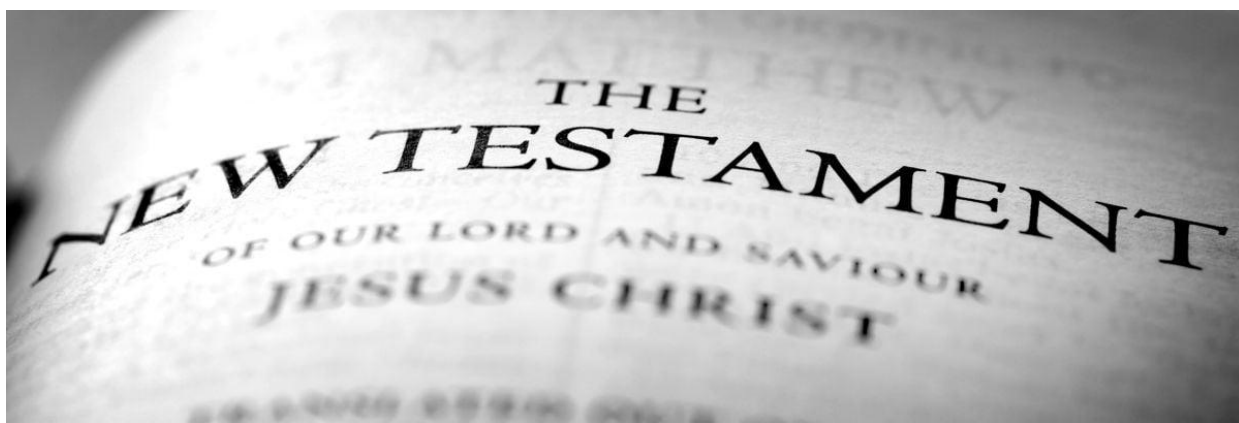
What if Jesus' teachings are more than stories from 2,000 years ago—and are actually a **map for our spiritual awakening today?** In this class, we'll explore the parables, healings, miracles, and teachings of Jesus through three lenses: **metaphysical**, uncovering the spiritual truths beneath the literal story; **mystical**, awakening to the Divine Presence and kingdom of God within; and **maieutic**, asking, *Where am I in this story, what is it revealing to me, and how can I live it?* Discover Jesus not as the great exception, but as the **great example**, pointing us toward our divine nature and a path of transformation that is as relevant today as ever.

Two opportunities beginning September 22: Tuesdays at **12:00 pm.** with **Rev. Ellen Barron**, in person and online, or Wednesdays at **6:30 p.m.** with **Rev. Teresa Curry**.

This is a 9 week class. Materials will be provided
Offered on a love offering basis

Jesus' Teachings

**A New Perspective
Metaphysical • Mystical • Maieutic**



What is the “New Testament”

- **Gospels (4 – Life of Jesus)**
- **“History” (1 – story of the early church)**
- **Letters/Epistles (21 – Paul, etc)**
- **Apocalypse (1 – Revelation to John)**

Composed 48- 150 CE

Class by Rev. Ellen Barron and Rev. Teresa Curry

Jesus' Teachings

Course Description

Explore the teachings, parables, healings, and life of Jesus as a living map for spiritual awakening and transformation. Through **metaphysical, mystical, and maieutic** interpretation, students will move beyond a solely literal understanding of Scripture to uncover spiritual principles, deepen their experience of the Divine Presence within, and discover how Jesus' teachings speak personally and collectively to life today. Jesus is explored not as the great exception, but as the **great example**, pointing us toward the realization and expression of our own divine nature.

Learning Objectives

- **Distinguish** metaphysical, mystical, and maieutic approaches to Scripture.
- **Identify** spiritual principles in Jesus' teachings, parables, and healings.
- **Interpret** selected Scriptures metaphysically and mystically.
- **Apply** the three-step maieutic process to Scripture.
- **Connect** Jesus' teachings to personal life and today's world.
- **Explain** Jesus as the "great example" of our divine potential

What You Will Need

Required Book:

- The Bible: *The New Revised Standard Version* is recommended.

Helpful Online Resources

online: <http://www.truthunity.net/>

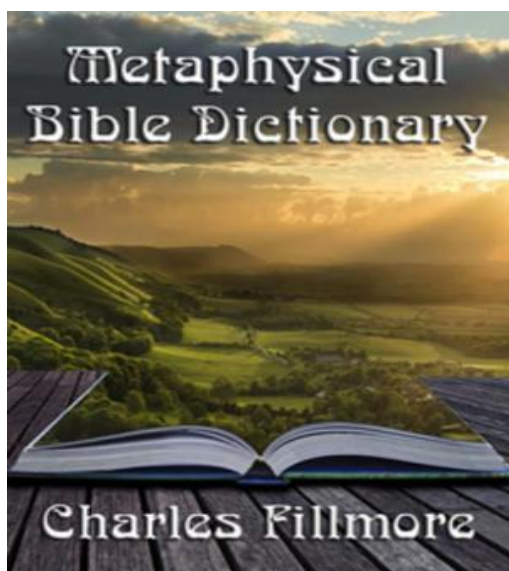
- *Your Hope of Glory*, by Elizabeth Sand Turner

<https://www.truthunity.net/books/elizabeth-sand-turner-your-hope-of-glory>

- *The Revealing Word* <https://www.truthunity.net/rw>
- *The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* <https://www.truthunity.net/mbd>

According to Charles Fillmore, the co-founder of the **Unity Movement**, the Bible is an allegorical and metaphysical record of the evolution of human consciousness rather than a purely literal or historical account.

Charles Fillmore is one of the foremost theologians, philosophers, and thinkers in the movement we call New Thought today. A true American mystic, Fillmore's writing and teaching were innovative for his day and well ahead of the times.



Fillmore saw the Bible as deeply allegorical, as very early Christian thinkers did. He sought to tie that metaphysical understanding into his own modern world through positive, practical practices.

Fillmore took that idea one step further, suggesting that different biblical writers had different levels of consciousness.

He incorporated an archetypal framework into his study of the Bible, drawing on the influence of Carl Jung to understand Jesus as having the highest level of consciousness, with other writers (and their books) having varying degrees of consciousness or significance from a metaphysical perspective in what they could tell us about our own souls.

Fillmore did the hard work—the studying, the meditation, the prayer—in order to incorporate these essential lessons of mysticism and faith *and* make them relevant to the average person.

Discussion Questions

- What changes for you when you consider that a biblical story might be both a story about people long ago AND a story about what happens within human consciousness?
- Have you ever encountered a familiar Scripture or teaching and suddenly understood it in an entirely different way? What changed?
- What possibilities open up when we stop asking only, “Did this literally happen?” and begin asking, “What spiritual truth might this reveal?”

The Four Source Theory of the Gospels

The four gospels were not written in the order that they appear in the Bible and they were not necessarily written by the name ascribed to them. Each author was writing to a specific audience and had a specific view of who Jesus was. Review the information and refer to it as we explore the stories in the different gospels. Here is one theory as to how the four gospels came about:

	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
Date	68-70 CE	85-100CE	85 – 100 CE	90 – 100CE
Source	Oral tradition	Mark, Q, Matthew	Mark, Q, Luke	Signs Gospel
Author	Probably Jewish in a Gentile world	Probably Jewish Christian	One concerned With Gentiles	School of Authors Probably Gnostic
Audience	Gentiles	Jewish Christian	Gentile	Jewish Hellenistic
Jesus Was...	Messiah	Messiah	Savior (Divine human)	Messianic Savior (God Incarnate)
Begins with	John the Baptist	Genealogy	Conception of John	In the beginning...
Ends with	Resurrection	Commission	Ascension	Commission to Peter

Glossary of Terms

Gospel = Good News; name given to proclamations made by the elite class prior to the time of Jesus; the word was subsumed around 100 A.D., by the Christians as the name for the teachings of Jesus.

Dates of Gospel Writings = A.D. 30- 60 Passion Narrative; 40 -80 Q Gospel; 50-140 Gospel of Thomas; 65-80 Gospel of Mark; 80-100 Gospel of Matthew; 80-130 Luke; 90-120 Gospel of John.

Canonical Gospels = Standard; The four Gospels of the New (Christian) Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). They are also known as the Narrative Gospels for they tend to tell a story, rather than just a listing or group of sayings in no particular order.

Synoptic Gospels = Similar; The three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) who appear to be similar in content and context.

Jesus' Teachings

Sayings Gospels = A collection of sayings, of what Jesus said. They are random, non-ordered, and do not depict the life of Jesus, necessarily, as the Narrative Gospels do.

Apocryphal = Pseudo, non-canonized; Books added to Bible, a.k.a., Pseudepigraphal

Orthodox and Gnostic Teachings = The two primary paths of teachings developed around the teachings and words of Jesus, after Jesus' death. The Orthodox path was proclaimed as the path to follow by church at the Council of Nicea, 325 A.D., after this all other teachings were declared heretical.

Gnosis = Hidden Wisdom; Gnostic one who follows the path of hidden wisdom. Gnostic teachings have at their core the idea that we all have a divine spark within and it is the wisdom taught from within that is the most valuable.

Q Source – “Q is the name used by scholars to describe a lost source on Jesus’ teachings. It can be reconstructed from the gospels of Matthew and Luke, which are based on two earlier sources: the gospel of Mark and Q. Stated differently, **Q is by definition the material that Luke and Matthew have in common but is not dependent on Mark.** (The letter may stand for German Quelle, “source”, or may have been chosen because it follows P, the old sign to identify the gospel of Mark, who is sometimes believed to have been a disciple of Peter.)”

Why Interpret Jesus’ Teachings?

Interpretive States Defined			
STATE	DEFINITION	“ROLE OF JESUS CHRIST”	EXAMPLE: Thou shall not covet.
Moral	Dualistic state of being. Right and wrong. Good and bad. Human nature is sinful.	Jesus Christ is an intercessor on our behalf.	Judgment: Don’t! It’s just bad and wrong if you do it. You are bad and wrong if you do it.
Mental	Dualistic state of being. Right and wrong. Good and bad.	Jesus Christ is an intercessor on our behalf.	Lack consciousness. Error thinking.
Mystical	Unity is achieved through love, interpreting the law as grace. That which you love, you become. We are the beloved of God.	Jesus Christ is the one who loves us as well as our beloved.	I and my neighbor are one and so we are connected. Out of love for them I would not do it.
Mastery	The State in which we perceive God as all things and interpret from that realization.	Realization of the I Am where God incarnates as Jesus Christ as each of us and as all things in our world. Knowing.	There is nothing my neighbor has that is not mine. We are all of one mind.

Discussion Questions

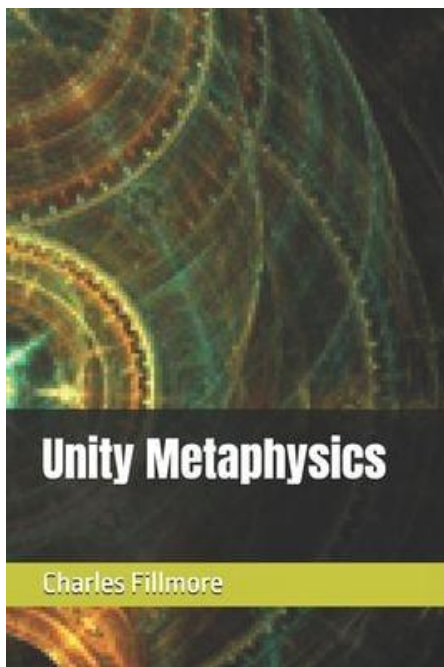
- Why might it matter that the Gospel writers were writing for different communities, at different times, and with different purposes?
- If the Gospel writers sometimes tell the same story differently, what might that invite us to consider about how spiritual truth is communicated?
- How might knowing something about the writer, audience, and historical context deepen rather than diminish our spiritual interpretation of a passage?

Unity Metaphysics: Metaphysics and the Nature of Reality

METAPHYSICS DEFINED

"... that which transcends the physical. By pure metaphysics is meant a clear understanding of the realm of ideas and their legitimate expression"

([RW/Metaphysics](#)).



Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with investigating the nature of the truly and ultimately real. In its broadest sense the study of metaphysics explores areas which are considered to be above and beyond the physical sciences.

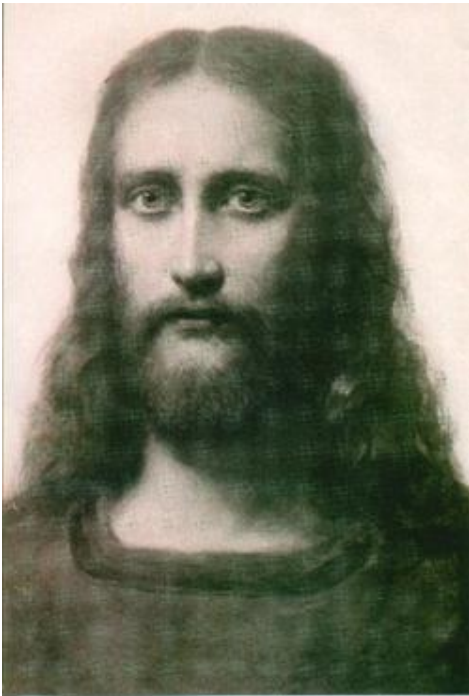
Metaphysics is generally concerned with asking the questions, "What is the nature of being?", "What is the nature of the universe?" and "How do we know what we know?"

Unity metaphysics is based on the recognition of divine ideas as the fundamental, eternal truth that underlies and transcends all physical manifestation. What we, in Unity, discern in the study of metaphysics are those realities that are true concerning the inner life of every human being, regardless of time, place, and circumstance.

Unity acknowledges that the term **Truth** represents the perfect ideas of good, which **God** has created. Truth is absolute, unlimited, unchanging and complete. We understand that Truth is universal and that every human being has the capacity to know the Truth by engaging in the activity of metaphysical thinking. We do this by looking beyond the physical realm to the realm of pure thought.

Mysticism, a Heart-Centered Spirituality

New Thought distinguishes the religion *about* Jesus from the religion *of* Jesus. New Thought believes that Jesus experienced the full range of human emotions and thinking and that he achieved a full awareness of his divine nature. ***This awareness of one's divine nature is what we know as mysticism***, and New Thought teaches that all of Jesus' works and teachings were expressions of this awareness.



New Thought teaches that ***we also can have an awareness of our divine nature, just as did Jesus***. In New Thought, Jesus is often referred to as the way-shower, ***he who shows the way***. What is this way that Jesus taught? New Thought teaches that it is fundamentally an ***opening of the heart*** accompanied by a sense of ***oneness with God*** and all creation, a sense of gratitude and joy for all things that flow into one's life and a willingness to ***manifest*** that which God wants to express through one's life.

Mysticism as described in New Thought looks beyond reason and found ***intuition*** to be the reliable pathway to know one's divine nature. So, mysticism, as practiced by New Thought, is a direct perception of the reality of God, free of any church teaching or sacrament. New Thought has a name for this direct perception of God — Truth — and that is why New Thought mystics are known as ***truth students***.

Maieutic Interpretation of Scripture

Maieutic interpretation is from the Socratic method a process of internal dialectic, a question and answer with oneself to improve our understanding and achieve new ideas and insights. Maieutic interpretation of Scripture is based on the idea that the student already knows much of what s/he needs to know and that knowledge is drawn out of the student through a questioning process.

The Three Steps:

1. What is happening in the text or story?

This is a step of observation and exploration. Let it speak to you as it is, without any intellectual study.

Instead of asking What does it mean? Try asking: ***How does it feel?***

What do I notice as I enter this story – what words, images, actions, or moments draw my attention?

What do I feel as I listen to the Story? Where do I sense tension, fear, hope, resistance, compassion, or possibility?

What seems to be coming alive for me in this story before I try to understand or interpret it?

2. How is this story my story?

This question invites the participant to immerse the self in the story, If every person, place, and event in this story represents something within me, where do I find myself in it?

What character, struggle, emotion, or experience in this story feels most familiar to something I am experiencing in my life right now?

Where do I recognize myself in this story – not only in the central character, but perhaps in the person resisting, afraid, judging, hiding, seeking, or being called to change?

If this story is happening within my own consciousness right now, what part of me is seeking to awaken, heal, be released, or transformed?

3. How is this text/story happening in the world around us?

This question serves as both a bridge to the subjective and spiritual interpretation and see a pattern that continues to appear in our life and world

Where do I see the same dynamics, struggles, fears or possibilities in this story playing out in our world today?

What do the characters or groups in this story reveal about patterns within our collective consciousness – such as fear and faith, power and vulnerability, exclusion and belonging, resistance and transformation?

If this story is speaking to our world today, what might it be inviting us as a community and as humanity to awaken to, heal, or transform.

Reflection Question

- As we begin looking at Jesus' teachings not simply as something to understand, but as something to experience personally, what does this new approach stir or awaken in you?

Who Is Jesus?

Jesus Definitions

Jesus = Jesus is the name of the historical personal identity of the man that was born in Bethlehem and lived in Nazareth. Jesus means “whose help Jehovah is; deliverance, safety; salvation; savior, deliverer, helper, prosperer; deliverance through Jehovah” (*MBD, pg. 345*). “Metaphysically, Jesus is that aspect of every person that understands the use of the Christ principle ... perfection...that part of everyone that is the energy...understanding to bring forth...the Christ Potential” (*Meta I, p. 56*).

Christ = Our Divine potential and True Identity, the God-self of each person. The “perfect-man idea existing eternally in Divine Mind, is the true, spiritual, higher self of every individual. Anointed, the Messiah. The Messiah is the promise of the visible manifestation of that I AM or Christ” (*MBD, pg. 150*).

Jesus Christ = “The form of the name that is commonly applied to the man of Galilee who demonstrated perfection” (*MBD, pg. 150*). “...the name that identifies the individual who perfectly understood his Divine Nature, who fully demonstrated his divine potential and who completely fulfilled his divine purpose on this earth (*Metaphysics I, pg. 57*).

Christ Jesus = The fulfillment of Christ consciousness; the Presence of Christ following the ascension, the ascended Jesus Christ. “Christ Jesus is the idea that is being expressed by men [people] as the result of their faith in and understanding of Truth” (*MBD, 150*). “We become Christ Jesus, or God man, when we lose our personality and be the Christ” (*Metaphysics I, pg. 58*).

Discussion Questions

- When you hear the name Jesus, what is the first word, image, feeling, or idea that comes to you?
- What were you taught about Jesus growing up, and how has your understanding of Jesus changed over the years? What are your thoughts and beliefs about Jesus?
- What does it mean to you to consider Jesus the “great example” rather than the “great exception”?

Example of Scripture Interpretation through the lens of Metaphysics, Mysticism, and Maieutic

“Three great temptations were presented to Jesus, and He met them within His own consciousness, even as we must do.

They are typical of the enticements that come to us when we realize that we have access to spiritual power. How are we going to use this power? To benefit the personal, or for the glory of God? Jesus is our great Teacher, and His experience shows us how these temptations should be met.”

Elizabeth Sand Turner

Matthew 4:1-4

Then was [Jesus](#) led up of the [Spirit](#) into the [wilderness](#) to be tempted of the [devil](#). And when he had fasted [forty days and forty nights](#), he afterward hungered. If you are the Son of [God](#), command these stones to become loaves of [bread](#)... But he answered, It is written, [Man](#) shall not live by [bread](#) alone, but by every [word](#) that proceeds from the mouth of [God](#).

Key Word	Metaphysical
Jesus	God's idea of man in expression
Spirit	A name for God the one Mind , or Intelligence , of the universe .
Wilderness	individual consciousness the multitude of undisciplined and uncultivated thoughts.
Devil	Sense consciousness All thoughts adverse to Truth
40 days & 40 nights	Completeness
God	<i>He who is</i> eternal . In " I AM THAT I AM
Bread	Universal substance .
Man	created in His image and likeness.

Metaphysical Interpretation:

Matthew 4:1–4 represents the journey of awakening from sense consciousness to an awareness of our divine nature. The temptation to turn **stones into bread symbolizes the mistaken belief that our deepest needs can be satisfied through material things and outer circumstances alone**. While our human needs are real, they cannot nourish the soul. **As we discipline our thoughts and turn within**, we discover the “bread from heaven”—the spiritual truth and wisdom of God that nourish and sustain us. **By continually feeding our consciousness with these deeper truths**, we awaken to the realization that we are created in the image and likeness of God and that Divine Presence is our true and inexhaustible Source.

Mystical Interpretation:

Matthew 4:1–4 invites us to release the restless thoughts, human desires, and sense of separation that keep us focused only on the outer world and enter the deeper awareness of God’s Presence within. In that inner stillness, we awaken to the experience of oneness: ***God is here, God is within me, and in this Divine Presence, I am whole, sustained, and already enough.***

Maieutic Interpretation:

I see myself in Jesus’ temptation: it is part of the human journey to experience needs, desires, and discomfort, yet I am invited not to let them become the sole purpose or direction of my life, but to remain present with what arises and anchored in the Divine Presence within. I see this same struggle in our world whenever fear, greed, competition, and the pursuit of “more” become our bread, causing us to forget our deeper truth of oneness with God and one another.