

### *We Begin a New Topic*

*Over the course of the centuries, Bible scholars and publishers have increasingly added "helps" (chapter divisions, verses, subheads, notes) - to the Bible in an effort to make it easier to study and understand. In the process, however, these have led to sampling Scripture rather than reading deeply The sacred writings of Israel and the church, as known to the ancients - the authors, is mostly used and diagramed but not experienced. In our hands the Bible has become removed from its literary and historical context, leading to misinterpretation and a "narrow, individualistic and escapist view of salvation." Rather than being a culture-shaping force, the Bible has become a database of quick and easy answers to life's troubling questions. The Bible does have any defect in itself, but because we have added to it, and maybe distorted, and misread it, we are not like the original hearers or proclaimers. The Sacred text needs to be saved from our dissecting additions. The Bible's transformative power may be recovered when we remove the twisting interruptions we have applied to it over the centuries. Study Bibles are like the evening news on CNN, FOX, or MSNBC - they have come to shape our thinking- more than inform us.*

*This week we will turn two of our Lord's great sermons (*The Sermon on the Mount* - in Galilee - Matthew 5-7 , and *The Sermon on Mount of Olives* - Matthew 23:22- to 25). These have been proof-text into almost distortions of what he actually taught us. We begin this week.*

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