

Getting Scripture Right

Pt 4: Let's use Hermeneutics to solve some Scriptural dilemmas



The 3 primary laws/rules of Hermeneutics:

1. **Analogy of Faith**
2. **Literal Interpretation & Genre Analysis**
3. **Grammatico-Historical Method**



“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for** the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ **Acts 2:38**”

Based on other Scriptures, “for” should be interpreted “because of”



“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” Phil 2:12

Does this passage teach we have the freedom to “invent” our own version of salvation, or that we can “work” for our salvation?



Question 1: Can we come up with our own version of salvation?



Following the 1st Law of Hermeneutics ...

- Scripture says there is only **ONE** Gospel – there is only **ONE** way to salvation



“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.” Gal 1:8-9

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12



- Scripture defines the Gospel as ...

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures” 1 Cor 15:3-4

“if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Rom 10:9



Question 2: Can we “work for” or “earn” our salvation?



It is important to notice that Paul says “work
out” - not “work for”



“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ **not a result of works**, so that no one may boast.” **Eph 2:8-9**



“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law ... ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” **Rom 3:21,24**

“Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. ⁵ But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness” **Rom 4:4-5**



“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” **Titus 3:5**

“how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” **Heb 9:14**



So then, what does Paul mean when he says, “work out your own salvation?”



1. Phil 2:12 is addressed to people who are already saved



2. Paul is not discussing Soteriology (how to be saved), but Sanctification (how to mature once we're saved)



3. Though we don't earn our salvation, it's incorrect to believe what we do has no effect on our salvation

Scripture teaches that faith without works is dead (Js 2:17)



The idea that teaching obedience is the same as earning salvation is as incorrect as the idea that parents who require their children to obey are teaching them that obedience earns them membership in the family.



4. Is a believer's sanctification dependent on them or on God?



- This is an old debate between **passive** and **active** sanctification



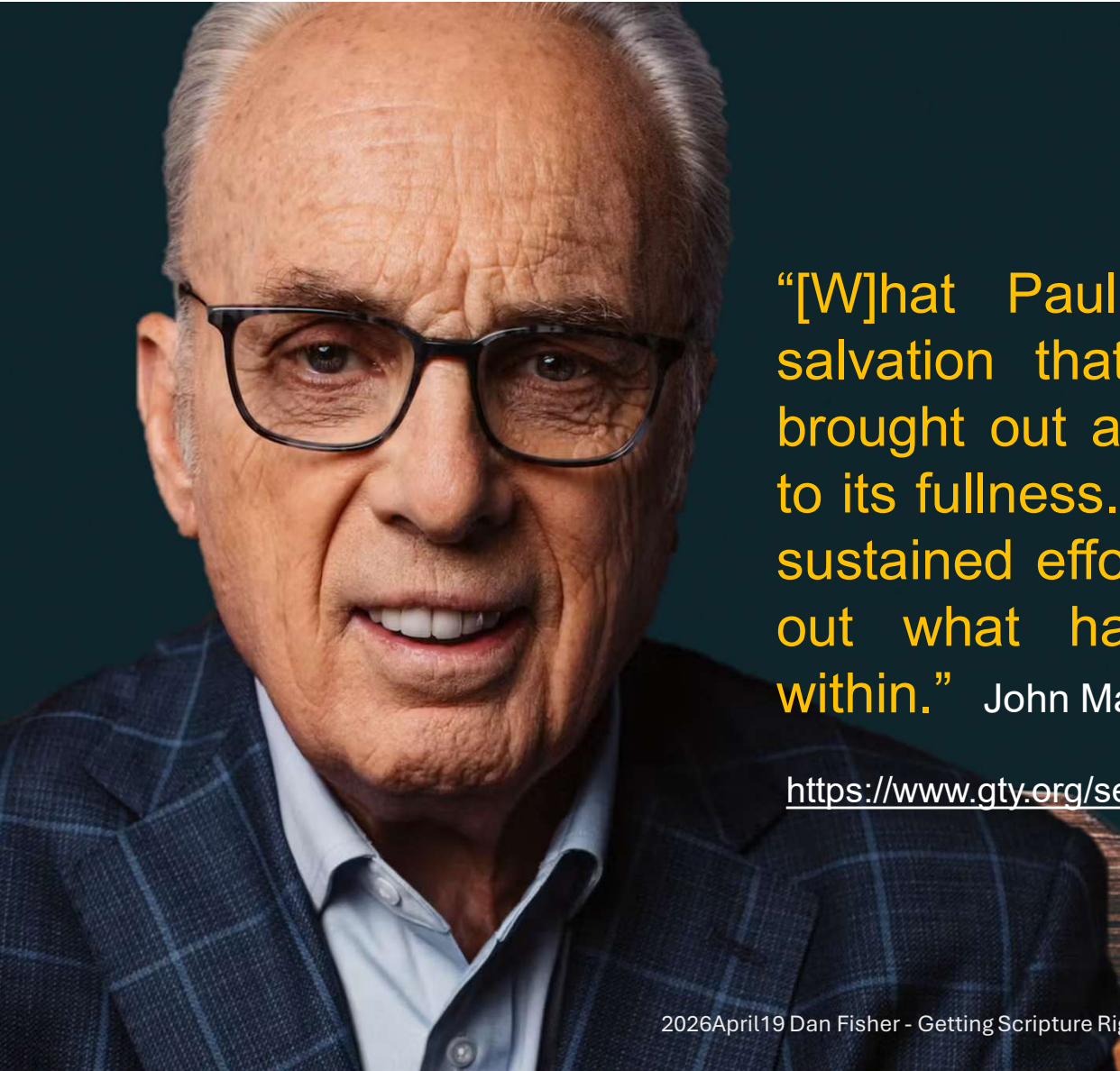
- We “work out” our salvation = “carry out”
“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” Phil 2:12
- God “works in” our salvation
“it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” Phil 2:13



“**working/carrying out**” is a present-tense imperative verb which indicates an ongoing process

It means to cultivate, bring to fruition, or manifest the salvation already given by grace. It is the process of sanctification (living out faith) rather than justification (being saved).





“[W]hat Paul is saying is this: the salvation that is in you needs to be brought out all the way to its fulfillment, to its fullness. It really is a command for sustained effort and diligence in working out what has already been planted **within.**” John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/sermons/50-19/god-at-work-in-you-part-1>

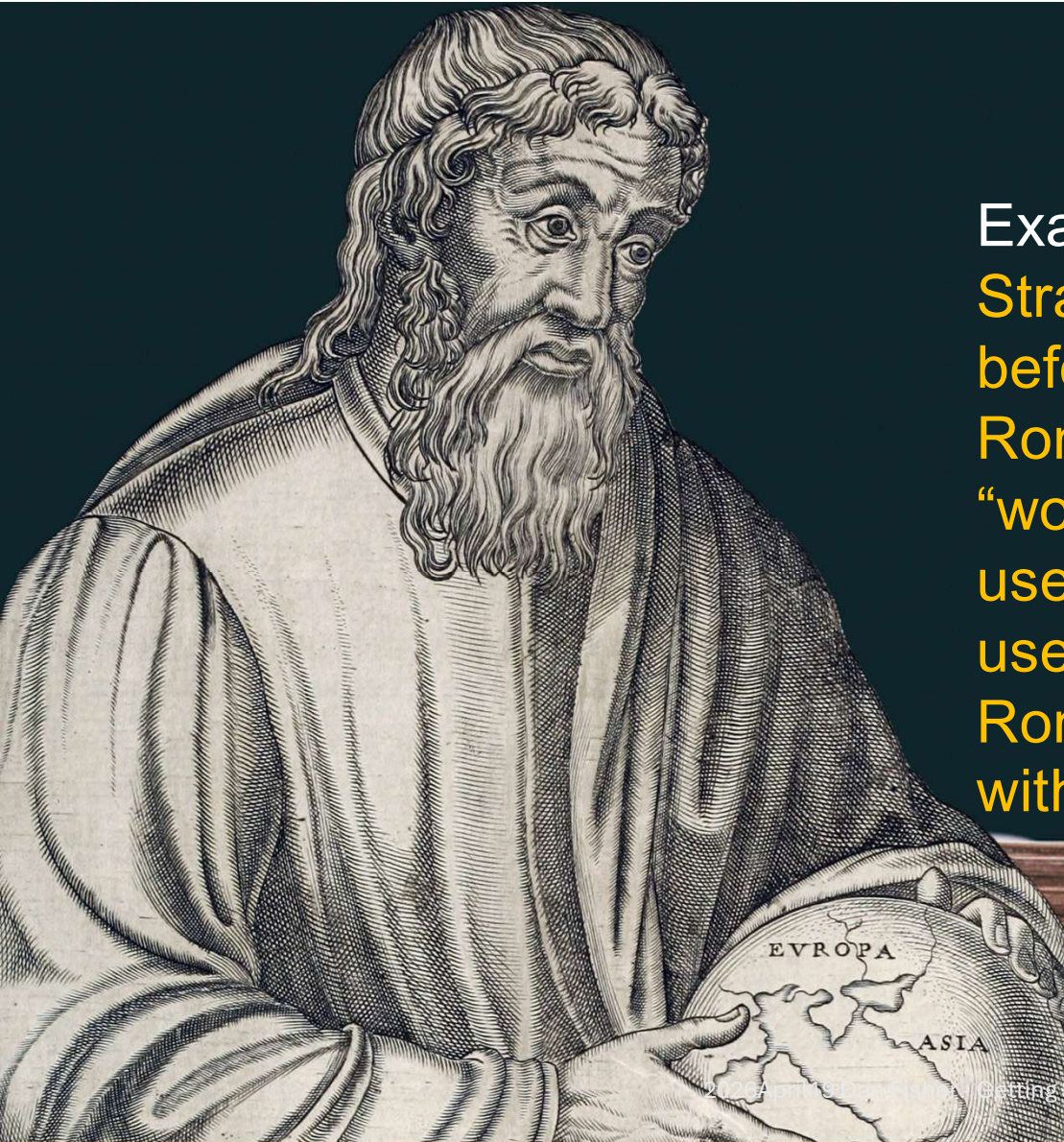
It is how saved people live out their salvation that God has graciously given them by employing themselves to things which accompany/reflect salvation

“If you love Me, keep My commandments” Jn 14:15

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” Phil 1:27

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 Jn 1:7





Example: The Roman scholar, Strabo, who lived some 60 years before Christ, described how the Romans, working mines in Spain, “worked out” those mines. He used the very same verb Paul used in Phil 2:12. Strabo said the Romans were “extracting out from within” the mines all their riches.

“work out the salvation that God has given you with a proper sense of awe and responsibility. For it is God who is at work within you, giving you the will and the power to achieve his purpose.” **J.B. Phillips New Testament**

Paul admitted that he was still being sanctified:

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” **Phil 3:12**



“Gird up the loins of your mind (preparing your minds for action, ESV)” 1 Pet 1:13
“pull in the loose ends of your life”

“I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.” Rom 6:19

“Present your body a living sacrifice ... and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed” Rom 12:1-2



“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” **1 Cor 9:24-27**

“beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness [bringing holiness to completion, ESV] in the fear of God.” **2 Cor 7:1**



Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ...

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, **13** bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” **Col 3:5,12-17**



“With fear and trembling” implies a serious, humble approach to spiritual life with a profound reverence for God knowing that we will answer for what we do in the body whether good or bad (2 Cor 5:10)