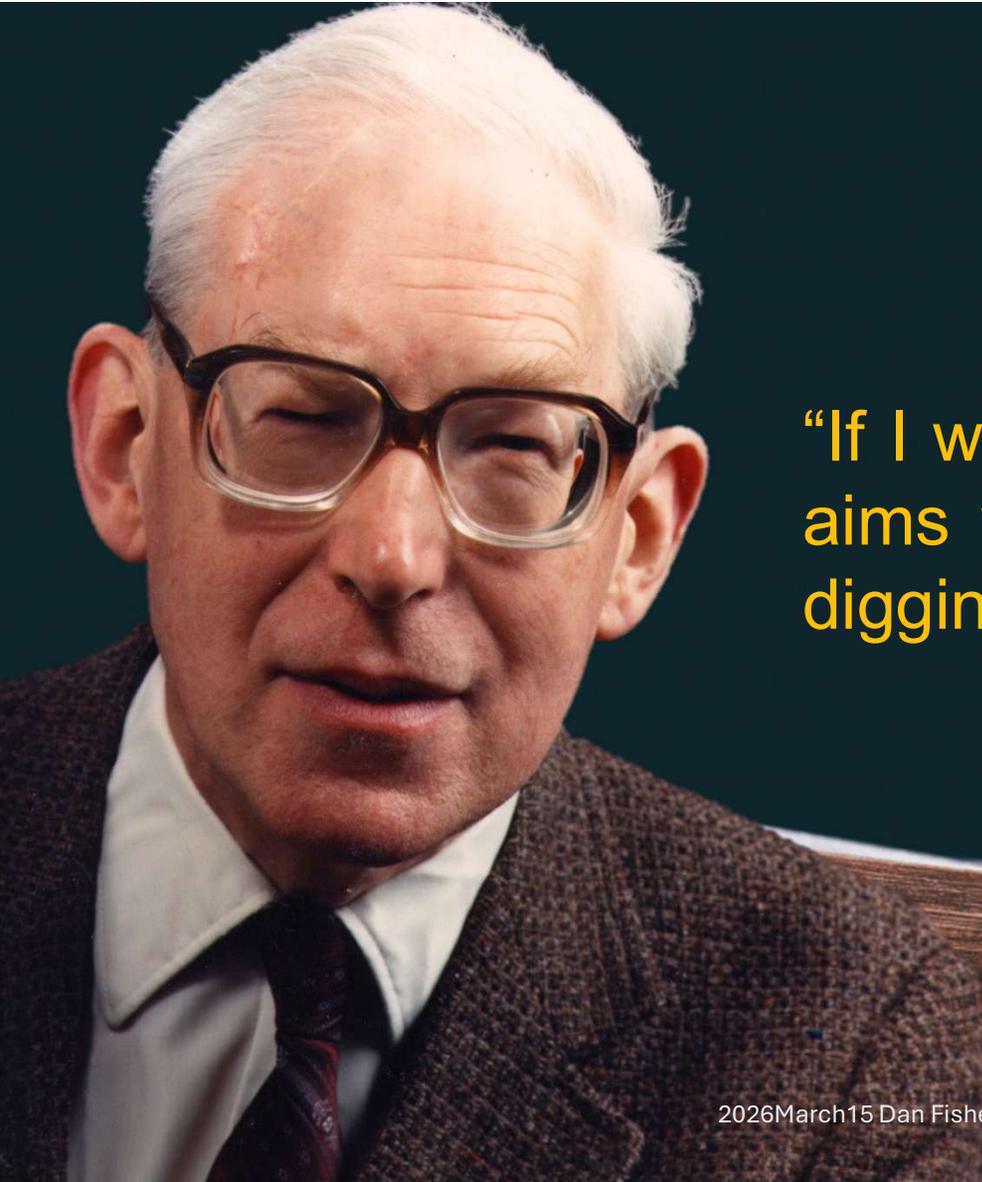


Getting Scripture Right

Pt 3: What is Hermeneutics & how does it help us properly understand Scripture?





“If I were the devil, one of my first aims would be to stop folks from digging into the Bible.” J. I. Packer

But, how do we keep from
misinterpreting/misunderstanding Scripture?

“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**

Does this passage teach baptismal regeneration?

“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 that we have the freedom to “invent” our own version of salvation?

It is easy to improperly interpret & therefore misunderstand Scripture
Scripture says we must use our minds when studying Scripture
Intellect alone will not enable us to understand Scripture
We cannot use pragmatism to understand the truth



5. To properly understand Scripture, we must understand subjectivity from subjectivism

Subjectivity: evaluating one's life by Scripture

Subjectivism: evaluating Scripture by one's life



6. A particular biblical statement may have numerous possible personal applications, but it can only have one correct meaning

7. There are two ways people approach Scripture – one is correct the other is incorrect



Exegesis: from the Greek word meaning “to guide out of” (prefix “ex” means “from” or “out of”) egesis = to lead or to draw

“to explain what Scripture says by allowing Scripture to speak”

To exegete Scripture is to get “out of” the words the meaning that is *there*, no more and no less



Eisegesis: from the Greek word meaning “to go into” (prefix “eis” means “into”) “egesis” = to lead or to draw

“to postulate on what we ‘think’ or ‘want’ Scripture to say”

Eisegesis involves reading “into” the text something that is “not there” (reading from the white part of the Bible)



8. Private views must be evaluated by the biblical text and historical evidence – not opinion; we tend to bring excess baggage to Scripture

- This requires proper interpretational techniques — Hermeneutics
- This emphasizes the importance of the role of God-gifted teachers

“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching;” **Rom 12:6-7**

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,” **Eph 4:11-12**

“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.” **Js 3:1**

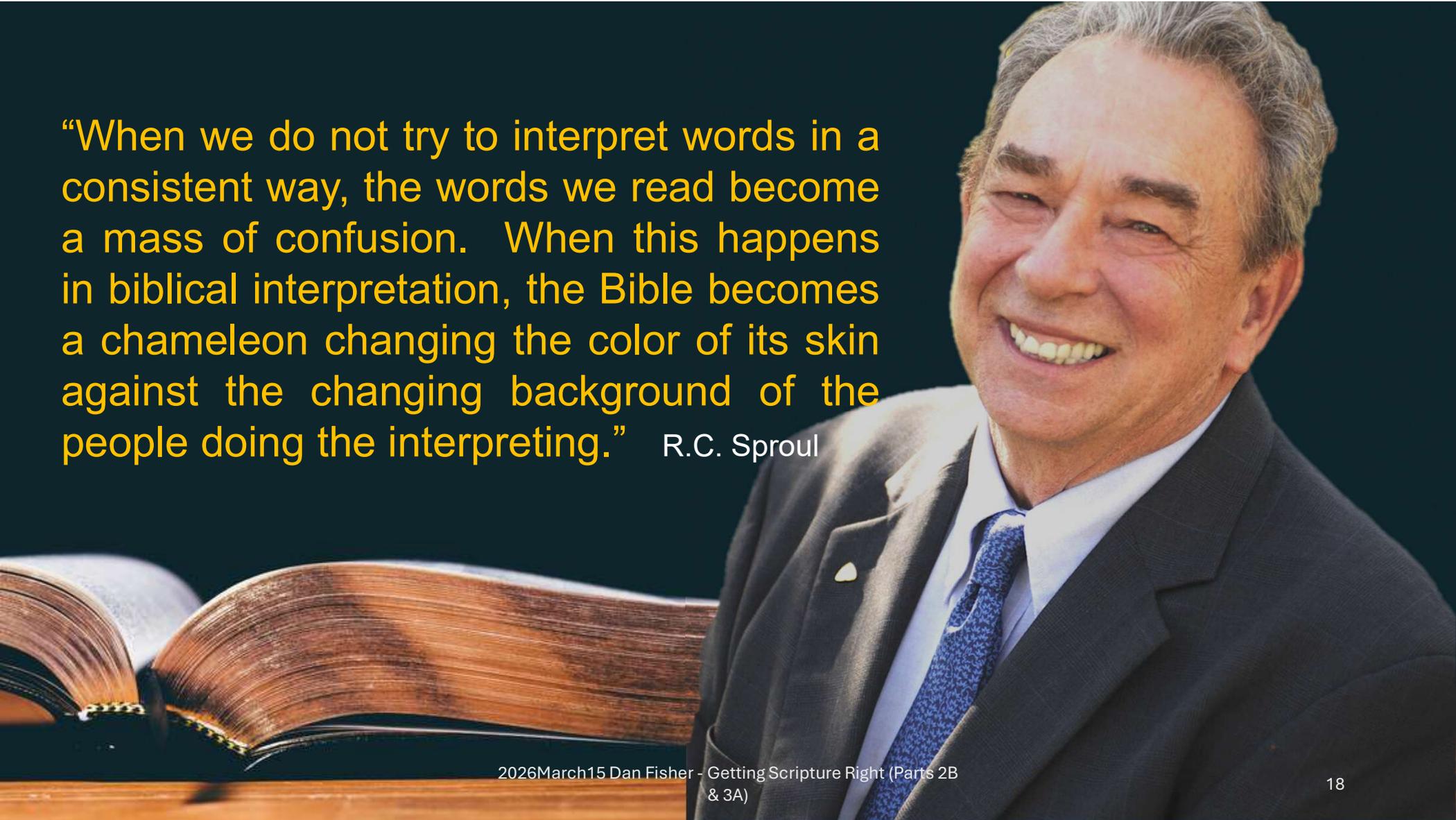


Pt 3: What is Hermeneutics & how does it help us properly understand Scripture?



The Reformers held the Bible to be the supreme authority for the church. This belief was expressed in the Latin phrase ***Sola Scriptura*** which means the Scriptures alone.

“When we do not try to interpret words in a consistent way, the words we read become a mass of confusion. When this happens in biblical interpretation, the Bible becomes a chameleon changing the color of its skin against the changing background of the people doing the interpreting.” R.C. Sproul



In Greek mythology the god Hermes was the messenger of the gods. It was his task to interpret the will of the gods. Therefore, hermeneutics is about interpreting a message so it can be understood.

Hermeneutics: the science and discipline of correctly interpreting Scripture

So, what are the laws of Hermeneutics?



1. Analogy of Faith



- The law stating that Scripture is to be used to interpret Scripture
- *Sacra Scriptura Sui Interpres* (Sacred Scripture is its own interpreter)

This rule dictates that no part of Scripture can be interpreted in such a way as to render it in conflict with what is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture.

“For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.” **Rom 3:28**

“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**

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” **Eph 2:10**

“You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.” **Js 2:24**



“Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness’ – and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.” **Js 2:21-24**

2. Literal Interpretation & Genre Analysis



This rule requires the Bible be interpreted according to its literal sense (*sensus literalis*) and according to the form of literature used.

- The word literal comes from the Latin *litera* meaning letter
- To interpret the Bible literally is to interpret it as literature
- The word *genre* means kind, sort, or species
- Genre analysis involves the study of such things as literary forms, figures of speech, and style.

However, we must be aware of the usage of things
like hyperboles and metaphors

Hyperbole comes from a word meaning “an overshooting” and is a statement exaggerated fancifully for effect

“And he said, ‘With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? ³¹ It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.’” **Mk 4:30-32**

“Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” **Mt 19:24**



A **metaphor** is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them

“I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.” **Jn 10:9**

“And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’” **Lk 22:19**



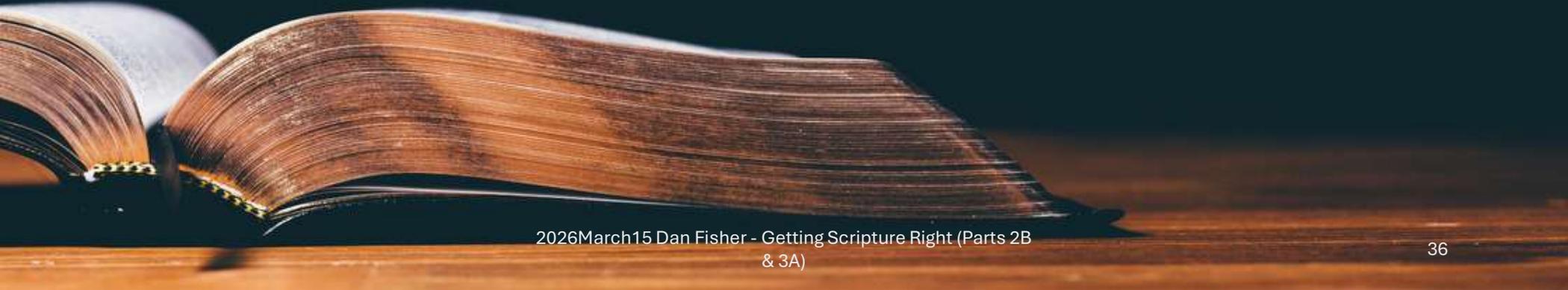
3. Grammatico-Historical Method



This rule requires focusing on grammatical constructions and historical contexts out of which the Scriptures were written



The grammatical structure determines whether words are to be taken as questions (interrogative), commands (imperative), or declarative (indicative)



interrogative:

“O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” 1 Cor 15:55



imperative:

“present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world,^[c] but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” **Rom 12:1-2**

declarative:

“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Phil 4:13



Historical analysis involves seeking a knowledge of the setting, situation, authorship, and date in which the books of the Bible were written.

We must remember that the authors of the books of the Bible were not, themselves, infallible and interjected their own personalities and writing styles into their works.

“The Bible is not written in ‘Holy Ghost Greek’.” R.C. Sproul

