

## “Introduction & Narrative” Part 2

### How to Study the Bible

Various Scriptures

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**Jeff:** Gracious heavenly Father, we thank You and praise You. We bow before You acknowledging that You are God, that there is no other. And Father, as we come before You we recognize that we’re created in Your image and that that image was severely damaged in the Fall. Father, we know that we lost knowledge, righteousness and holiness. And yet in the coming of Your Son the Lord Jesus Christ, who was a Man among men, He restored us, but didn’t simply restore us to Adam’s place but retrieved us, redeemed us, that we might have what Adam failed to gain, and even more. And so, Father, as we think about Christ, and as we dwell in the knowledge of not only His Person but His work on our behalf, we think ahead to the time when we will be with You, when we will behold You in all of Your glory, when we will look upon the Image of God. And Lord, we don’t quite know what that means in terms of not being able to see You with our eyes or to have the central experience of You. But we know that we will be able to behold You, for indeed the Beatitudes tell us so.

But in the meantime, Father, we apprehend all that You would have us to know about Your word, and we’re thankful for it. We are so indebted to You for inscripturating it—Your word—that we might have it, read it, be comforted by it, that the truth might be preserved in it. And in our day and in our age when our politicians in our country politicize everything we look to You and are thankful that You have the truth here before us. Lord, as we have this truth before us we ask that You will deepen our embrace of it, cause our love to grow for it. Father, we ask that Your hand would be upon us as You lead us by Your Spirit through it. And we ask, Lord, for Your blessing upon us as well.

Father, thank You for this study and for the men who are here. We ask that Your hand of blessing would be upon us. Lord, we pray that You will cause us as we come out of a study like this to be more like You. And Father, we pray that when You fill us with Your glory that it would not simply be for our own good, but that it would be for the good of others. And so Father, we pray that what we’re learning would edify not just us but others.

Lord, we pray not only for our own edification but that of those whom we will contact. But we also pray for our brother Bruce, for Your hand upon him, for his wellness. And Lord, as the flower fades and as the grass withers, so too does life. And as Bruce nears the end of his allotted time we pray that You’ll strengthen us for the moment of his passing. And we ask, Lord, that You’ll strengthen him—not only him but his wife and his entire family and those who love him. And Lord, as it will be a difficult time we pray that You will help us to keep hold of ourselves and to remember that You are God.

Lord, we also pray for Gregg and Karen. We’re thankful for them and for their relationship to us through Don. We ask that You’d continue to help Gregg, to make him well and heal his body. And Father, we pray that Your hand would be upon Don as he continues to minister to his family and seek their good. Lord, bless us now; we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** All right. I’m not going to have a Scripture reading today; I want to jump right into it. So I want us to have a review of what we’ve looked at thus far, because I think these terms that we’re going to be thinking about are crucial to thinking about studying the Scriptures. And so I

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left them on the top of your outline. I’m not going to take us through them like we went through them the last time. But again they’re important for us to remember because if we don’t know what we’re talking about when we use terminology, then we’re in big trouble.

Let me give you a for instance. When I was studying the 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century theology I was studying B. B. Warfield. And I was reading some of the other authors that were writing about inspiration at that time. And one of the things that I discovered was that there was no set definition for inspiration. There was no set definition for when one used that term. It could mean one thing over here in this sector and it could mean another thing over here in this sector, and so on.

And so when B. B. Warfield and A. A. Hodge wrote an article they basically said, “Here’s what we’re going to do. We’re going to propose a definition. And that definition is going to be a definition that we’re going to use henceforth. We’re not going to vary from it; we’re not going to change it up. This is what we mean by inspiration.” And it actually changed not just the generation, but it’s what is used up until this present day.

And so it’s an important thing for us to understand what words mean and how we’re using them. And so I want us to just think through the words we used the last time. And under that heading I asked what is an interpreter doing? And I started with the idea of content. And I said that content is the stuff that’s in the Book.

Now there may be a number of stuffs, as my son used to say, in the Book. For instance you may have a narrative. But in the narrative you may have parables. You’ll certainly have a didactic section. All you have to do is think about Matthew and think about the Sermon on the Mount. That certainly is a teaching section within the Gospel, the narrative, the biography of Jesus. And so you have to think about what the stuff is that I’m dealing with. What is the content that I have before me? What is it that I’m looking at when I look at this book?

Well, that’s first. The second thing is, you have to ask yourself what is the meaning of the stuff that is before me? What is the meaning of the content?

Now we looked at this the last time. And when we look at something like a Lego manual we immediately know what kind of text it is, and we know the meaning. It is for me to put this Lego set together—not another Lego set. Nor is it for me to give my wife as a Valentine’s Day love letter. It is a particular piece of literature, and it has a use.

And so we need to think about not only the stuff but the meaning of the stuff, the meaning of the text. And that meaning is really dependent upon the author. When we think about meaning what we’re thinking about is authorial intent. What did the author mean by this?

Now this is really crucial because today, when you think about what’s happening in literary criticism—and it’s been happening for a number of years now—somebody will pick up a novel and he’ll read it and he’ll say, “You know what? It doesn’t matter what the person writing it meant. What matters is the meaning I invest in it. And so what matters is what I think it means.” And that’s a reader response.

And we don’t like to hear this much. But that’s oftentimes exactly the way we read the Bible. We read the Bible with a reader response. Instead of asking what Paul meant we ask the immediate question, what does this text say to me? What does it mean to me?

And do you see the difference? When we ask about meaning we’re asking about authorial intent. But the way we use it today we’re saying, what does it mean to me? And we don’t realize it, but what we’re doing is, we’re actually taking a liberal position when it comes to reading the Scriptures. And we would raise arms about that in any other context. And yet we think that we

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spiritualize the text by asking the question what does this text mean to me? And that’s a problem, and we shouldn’t do that.

So we’ve got content—the stuff of the Book. Remember that we talked about genres—the kind of literature it is. And now we’ve got the idea of meaning. And again we’re asking, what is the author’s meaning?

Now there’s something else about that and I’ll just say it now; I’ll get to it in just a minute. And then we need to think about understanding. Understanding is a correct grasp of the author’s meaning.

So when we have understanding of the text we don’t have a better understanding of what it means to me. But we have a better understanding about what it meant to Paul—Paul’s authorial intent. So we’ve got content, we’ve got meaning—and we’re talking about authorial meaning,—and we’ve got understanding. This is where I come in. I understand Paul’s meaning of what he wrote in this didactic piece. So that’s the idea.

And then there are always implications. And implications are deduced from the text. And the Westminster Confession talks about “*good and necessary consequence.*” And good and necessary consequence is one of those concepts I think that we need to try and regain a bit, because I think that—Are you shaking your head “no” at me? (*Laughter*) So we need to gain the idea of good and necessary consequence.

What do I mean by good and necessary consequence? Well, let me put the two ideas up on the board here. When you think about good and necessary consequence, you think about good being consistent with the Scriptures. A good consequence might be something like this.

Think about the sexlessness of the angels, right? “*They neither marry nor are they given in marriage.*” Now somebody comes along and says, “Well, that means that angels are sexless.” And so when it says that we will be like the angels in heaven, we’ll be sexless.

Well now, it doesn’t say that angels will be sexless. It just says that we will be like the angels; we’ll neither be given or be taken in marriage. But that doesn’t mean sexless.

Now could it mean sexless? Well, it could mean sexless. Now is what we know about the angels consistent with other parts of Scripture? Well, it could be, and so it’s a good consequence of Scripture. In other words, we wouldn’t say that it has to go.

For instance, let me put it this way. What if you have the Trinity? And somebody says, “Well, as I read the Scriptures I notice that there are three Persons in the Godhead, and so therefore there must be three deities.” And you would say no. Because of other parts of Scripture you can’t hold that there are three deities in the Christian conception. And so that has to go; that’s not even a good consequence of Scripture, okay? So a good consequence of Scripture asks, is it consistent with other Scriptures?

Now the question becomes, is it necessary? And what necessary means is this: Is this interpretation required? Is this good consequence or interpretation of Scripture required by every Christian? In other words, is it required to be believed by every Christian?

And that’s a big deal, because let’s use our sexless angels again. Are the angels sexless? Well, we don’t know. Somebody proposes it and says that we will be like the angels who are neither given or taken in marriage. But is that required? In other words, could it be that there’s another interpretation that’s just as consistent with Scripture? But we’re not told which one the Bible actually means. And for instance I think that there could be another interpretation to the idea that angels are neither given nor taken in marriage.

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What would that be? Well, it might be that they simply don't marry; it's as simple as that. So angels have sex in the sense that they have gender, but they don't marry. It could easily be that. And so the idea is that you have a consistent view of angels and Scripture, but no one that I can require of anyone. So I have a good interpretation, but not one that's necessary.

And this is really important because sometimes when a person is teaching, you'll hear them talking about something that may be a good consequence of Scripture. And they'll begin to speak as if this is required by everyone to believe, when it really isn't something that's a necessary consequence of Scripture.

For instance I just had a conversation with a lady not too awfully long ago. She walked up to me, and you know how that is when somebody says, “I have a question for you,” but they really have something they want to tell you. And that was kind of the way it was. She asked me a question and she really wanted to tell me. And the question was, “Do you believe in cremation?”

And I said, “Well, here's the historic position of the church on that.” And the more we got talking with one another the more I realized that she had a set position on cremation, and believed as it were that to be cremated was to displease God. At which point I said, you may have a good consequence.” (I didn't say this to her.) She may have a good consequence from Scripture, but she certainly doesn't have a required one. And I simply said to her, “Well, let's give thanks to God that even if He is displeased with cremation that His grace covers that.”

And she said to me, “Well, I don't know.” (*Sighs*)

And I said, “If His grace is that small, then we're all in trouble,” right? (*Laughter*) I mean, that's the whole point, right? We're in big trouble.

Now the point that I would say to you is that she may have a good consequence. But boy, I'll tell you what! I just fail to see in the Scriptures where that's a required position of the church. You may think differently. But I know that the church throughout the ages has struggled with this very thing because there is so little evidence in the Scriptures that you could go one way or another. I'm just thankful that those lost at sea will still be retrieved if they're in the water, right? That's the idea. But anyway, that's the difference between good and necessary. And that's the idea that there are implications that are found in Scripture.

There are easy implications. It's sort of like the one I gave you the last time where you meet that person in the Christian life, and he's totally blitzed. And you say to him, “You know that this is a violation of Ephesians 5:18. ‘Don't get drunk on wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.’”

And they say, “Oh wait a minute, pastor; I've got you there! I'm not drunk on wine; I'm drunk on Jim Bean.” (*Laughter*) “And the Scriptures don't speak about being drunk on Jim Bean; they speak about being drunk on wine. So I've got you there.”

And you say, “Well, we'll talk about it when you're sober.” (*Laughter*) But the idea is clearly that the implication is not to be intoxicated by alcohol.

And then there's significance. Significance is how the reader responds to the meaning of the text. And this is where most people are when they talk about what the text means to me. And you know, here's that place where you can ask that question. What does the text mean to me?

But I wouldn't ask it like that; I would ask it like this. I would say that having understood the authorial intent, what significance does the text have for my life? That's the way I would ask it, because it's a dangerous thing to ask it the other way.

And then interpretation. And interpretation is basically how I explain, written or orally, what it is that's in this text. How is it that as a reader I express the author's meaning?

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And then what’s the goal? Obviously the goal is to find Christ in the text, and legitimately so. And that comes from Luke 24:27 and 44.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Luke 24:27, 44, NKJV. “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” “Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’”

**Jeff:** This is where Jesus on the Emmaus road looks back and says to His disciples, “How slow of heart you are to find Me in all of the Scriptures!” And so that’s the point of it all. So that takes us to our help, unless you have questions. Yes, Sig?

**Sig Tragard:** I think I know what the answer is from what I’ve heard you teach before. But what is the danger in us asking or thinking about what that Scripture means to me?

**Jeff:** Relativism. So if I ask what that text means to me, and I’m looking to invest it with a meaning that I have, then what I’m looking to do is, I’m looking to import my own meaning into it, which may be entirely different from the apostle. And we do this in any number of ways. But that’s really the danger of it—relativism—making the text say whatever I want it to say because it will suit my needs in doing so. Yes?

**Brave Man:** Just to add to that, that’s kind of one of the hard things about it. Sometimes because the text is so ancient and the language has some things that maybe we don’t understand, isn’t that a challenge sometimes to understand the true context? Maybe we just can’t help but be subjective to that.

**Jeff:** Well, that’s a great point. So one of the things that we need to keep in mind is that there are two particular issues when we think about the doctrine of Scripture. I’m talking generally about our view of Scripture. We talk about the phenomena of Scripture. And when we talk about the phenomena of Scripture what we’re talking about are external phenomenological things. We’re talking about the way we dress. We’re talking about the way we speak. We’re talking about our geography. We’re talking about everything phenomenological—everything that I can lay my hands on.

And then we’re talking about what’s often called the doctrine or the teaching of Scripture. Now this is the problem in any given debate on Scripture. Anyone who sees phenomena as the controlling category will always find that the doctrine and the teaching of Scripture changes in light of the phenomenological.

So you think it’s difficult, right? And you pointed it out. And perhaps the most difficult thing is this idea of language. So we typically think of language as being over here in this category of teaching, right? And yet language is just as phenomenological as anything else. And that’s just the fact of the matter.

So when we make this divide between phenomena and doctrine, what we want to do is that we want to emphasize the teaching. So what we’re trying to get at is authorial intent or meaning. What did the author mean? Even in the use of this language, what did he mean?

And you know, this takes some study. I would say this to you. The Christian faith is one of those faiths where we affirm that the simplest things can be apprehended by children. And that’s true. You can open your Bible as a child and you can understand the Scriptures; you can understand the way of salvation.

But there are other things that you can open up to in the Scriptures, and as an adult you are not going to understand them, at least not without some really hard study. And so it’s often been

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said that the Bible is one of those things where a child can play in the pool but an elephant can swim in it as well. That’s the idea, right.

So you raised the question about the difficulty. Let’s just talk a little more about the difficulty and how to remedy the difficulty. For instance, let’s take the Greek language. Greek is not just the language of the New Testament. The particular manifestation of Greek New Testament language is koine. It’s a common way of speaking the language.

But there are other ways of understanding the Greek language. There’s Attica Greek, and so on. And those are historically progressive languages. In other words Greek changes over time. And by the time you get to the New Testament you have this expression of the Greek language.

But not only that; words change. So for instance a word in koine Greek may have a different meaning than it did back here in Attica Greek. For instance, one of the best examples of this is the word agape. The word agape is one of those words that was not used hardly at all before Jesus and Paul. And they take it and begin to use it, right? And so we need to understand that in terms of language there are two ways of looking at language.

There is what we call a diachronic use of language, which means that I look at it from the very beginning to the very end. I’m basically looking for the etymological beginning of language and tracing it through.

And then there’s the synchronic use of language. And the synchronic use of language is how it is used in this particular time period, in this thirty- to sixty-year range, for instance. And that’s a big deal because oftentimes guys will study the Scriptures. And they’ll get out a lexicon, and they’ll find a meaning that was true back here. And when they apply it to Scripture it gives the Scriptures a slightly different kind of meaning. And so they start thinking, “I’ve discovered something,” when in fact the language has changed significantly. And for instance if they had looked in a dictionary which talks about the synchronic usage of language, they would realize that the word had changed significantly enough that it doesn’t mean that anymore; it means this.

For instance, here’s just a simple one—nice. We say, “Oh, he’s really nice,” right? And what we mean is, he’s a decent person. But if you used the word nice the way it was used in the Latin, you would mean that he was an ignorant person, because that’s what nice meant. So it has changed significantly enough.

And here is the way that some people think. I had a guy in my congregation years ago who wanted us all to get back to the etymological usage of language. So he was constantly correcting us on our use of language. So if you used relieve, or if you used any other word, he would give you the etymology of it in Latin, and he’d expect you to use it in that way now. And that’s just crazy!

But my point is that this exposes you to some of the difficulties that you’ve raised. Yes; you’re right. However, does that mean that the meaning is off limits to us? And the answer is no. But does it mean that there are passages that we’ll really have to work at to get the meaning of them? And the answer, I think, is yes. They won’t just simply appear before us; we’re going to have to dig a little bit. Yes?

**Ted Wood:** This same thing happens in English.

**Jeff:** Yes; that’s right.

**Ted:** There are about 3- or 400 words in the King James version of the Bible that are no longer used in today’s language.

**Jeff:** Yes. I always think about the person that wants to go back to using the King James Bible. It says that we’re “*a peculiar people.*” And people think, oh, that means that Christians

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are strange. That’s not it at all. The word *peculiar* is related to *pecuniary*. We’re a valuable people. But language loses its meaning over time, or it changes its meaning.

**Ted:** *Prevent* is another good one.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Ted:** Today it means to stop something. Two- or three hundred years ago it meant to come before. It’s in the Latin—*prevenere*—to come before. So when it uses the word *prevent* in the King James version they’re not meaning to stop something; they mean to come before something. All languages do that.

**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely; that’s right. And so that’s the difficulty of getting to the meaning. But it just means that we have to put the hard work in to find the meaning. Yes?

**Ted:** Thanks very much, Jeff; this is all a very hard subject.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** The question was raised about what does it mean to me? That’s a good question. But the deeper question underneath that is this is what it means to me, but what authority does it have over me? All of us ask that question: what does it mean? But does my interpretation have authority? And I would say no, it doesn’t ultimately, because ultimately there is an Authority greater than what you interpret. **Jeff:** That’s right. I’m going to get into that in just a second. Go ahead.

**Don Maurer:** This may ruffle a few feathers. (*Laughter*) But R. C. Sproul says this and I agree with him. There is only one correct interpretation of a passage. There may be thousands of applications, but only one right interpretation.

**Ted:** Bruce Bickel said the same thing.

**Don:** Yes.

**Ted:** I don’t think he’s correct.

**Don:** No?

**Ted:** It’s known to God; it may not be known to us.

**Jeff:** I didn’t hear what you said there.

**Ted:** It may be known to God. But sometimes it eludes us.

**Don:** I think that’s what he meant.

**Jeff:** Well, here’s the difficulty, right?

**Ron Baling:** Just to make sure that I understand what you’re saying, you’re saying that once you understand the Scriptures with a proper understanding, then you would use the significance. But you have to understand them first.

**Jeff:** Yes, and understanding is very, very full. And understanding is what we’re going to unpack to try to get to authorial intent or meaning. Understanding is a huge endeavor. That’s where I would put the word *exegesis*—all that goes into trying to mine out of Scripture what is there.

**Ron:** Yes, we apply it to ourselves. But as you’re saying, we need to apply ourselves to it rather than apply it to us.

**Jeff:** Yes, we need to apply it. That’s where you get the significance; that’s what you said.

**Ron:** It’s the significance to me rather than what it means to me. That’s what it means.

**Jeff:** It’s sort of like what it means to me usually disregards what Paul means. All right. So let’s move on to the next point: our help in all of this. And here we ask the question: What is the Bible? Now this seems to take a detour. But it actually goes back to something that Ted said earlier. We say that the Bible is God’s word. But again the question is: What does that mean?

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And here notice that we have to use language in order to even answer that question. But it's not necessarily the language itself that is the doctrinal aspect. The language communicates the teaching aspect. It's the teaching that matters. It's the teaching that we are looking for when we ask the question what is the Bible? We know it's a book of language. But the question is: What really is this language in this book communicating about itself?

And I would say that it is an infallible book. I think the Scriptures teach that about itself. In other words, when you think about an infallible book, you think about fallible meaning deceitful, and you put on it the prefix “in.” That means “not” or “the opposite of.” So it's not deceptive; it's not deceiving.

And the question that you have to ask at that point is why is it not a deceptive book? And the answer to that is because it is from an infallible God. God is true; He doesn't deceive. There is no shadow of turning in Him. He is light; that sort of thing.

So that's pretty quick. But that leads to the next one, and that is that it's an inerrant Book. Now if you know anything at all about Don Quixote you know that he was a knight errant, right? And when I was a kid I always used to wonder, what is a knight errant? I know what a knight is, but I don't know what a knight errant is. A knight errant is a wandering knight. An errant knight is a wandering knight. Errant means wandering. You put them *in* in front of it and it means not to wander, right? It is not wandering.

What doesn't it wander from? Well, it doesn't wander from the truth that it expresses, the truth that it is.

So you have infallible, you have inerrant. And then I would say this to you. You have an authoritative Book. And with an authoritative book, think about *authoritative*. What word is in the word authoritative? Author is in the word authoritative. So this comes from an Author. When you think about the books of the Bible you have 66 books; you have multiple authors. And yet this taps into what Ted was saying. You have a singular Author over it all.

And why do we believe this? Well, we believe it because 2 Peter 1:21 basically tells us this. Look at 2 Peter 1:21 for just a minute; we won't spend a lot of time here. But just check this out. *“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man. But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*

Now I want you to notice something. “Borne” is a really significant word; borne along. “Came from” is the idea here. Notice this; go back to verse 17. This is Jesus. *“When He received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to Him by the Majestic Glory.”*

And then jump down to verse 18. *“We ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven.”* And then look at verse 21 again. *“But men spoke from God as they were borne along”*—there's the same Greek word,-- *“as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”* So the Voice that's borne from the Majesty, the Voice that's borne from heaven, is the very Voice that bears along the authors of Scripture as they speak.

But notice this, and this is the interesting thing. Look back at verse 20. *“Knowing this first of all: that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.”* Now I have to say a couple of things to you about that. We oftentimes think about private interpretation and private meaning. But I want to break this down for you just a little bit.

First of all it says this. *“Knowing this first of all: that no prophecy of Scripture comes from.”* That's a different word than the word that we noticed these three times in the text—borne from. It is another word that means the same thing; it's a similar word, a synonym—the word *genomi*.



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And it means basically to be born or to come from. And so it says that no prophecy of Scripture is born from someone’s own interpretation. And the word there is *luo*—someone’s own loosing.

Let’s put it this way; let me read it like this. “*Knowing this first: that no prophecy of Scripture is born from someone’s own loosing.*” In other words, Scripture is not just someone letting loose their private thoughts. That’s the idea that’s here. We oftentimes think of that a little differently. I read it and the prophet has a private interpretation of what it says. But that’s not even consistent with the meaning of this. This is how in the world did the prophet come to speak in the first place?, not what did the prophet think of what he spoke? That would be the way we commonly think about private interpretation.

The question is how did he come to say it? Well, not by his own letting loose. But he came to speak it by being borne along by the Holy Spirit, okay? So that’s why we believe that this book in front of us is an infallible Book, an inerrant Book, and an authoritative Book. The Spirit inspires it.

Now that to me is basic for us as Christians. That’s kind of just run-of-the-mill standard garden variety kind of stuff that we all ought to understand and think. If we don’t think there then we’re going to have real problems because here’s where we’re going to end up. There’s another principle of interpretation; we’ll get to it. It’s called *the analogy of Scripture*.

Now the analogy of Scripture means that I use the clear parts of Scripture to interpret the less clear parts of Scripture. But I’ll tell you how else that has come to be used. There are those who talk about analogy, and they’ll talk about the subsequent analogy, and they’ll talk about the consequent analogy of Scripture.

Now what does that mean? Take Isaiah 53 for example. I’m interpreting Isaiah 53. And someone will come along and say, well, if you’re using the analogy of Scripture in order to interpret Isaiah 53 you can only use subsequent Scripture—in other words, Scripture that comes before Isaiah 53—in order to interpret Isaiah 53. Why? Because no other Scripture has been written yet. And so they’ll say that in order to due diligence to Isaiah, in order to show him dignity, we can only use Scripture that was before Isaiah 53.

Now these same guys will say that you can use post-Isaiah 53 Scripture to apply Isaiah 53, but you can’t use it to interpret it.

Now what I want to know is this. What does that do to the primary Author of the Scripture who is the Holy Spirit? If there is one true Author of Scripture, and there are various sub-authors of the Scripture, the sub-authors of Scripture have to bow the knee to the single Author of Scripture who is the Spirit, which means that when I’m interpreting Isaiah 53 I believe that you must use subsequent Scripture. But you have to use the consequent Scripture as well. In other words you have to use all of Scripture in order to interpret Isaiah 53. You can’t simply interpret Isaiah 53 by just using texts that come before Isaiah 53; you can’t do it.

**Ron:** Isn’t that what Paul did with the eunuch?

**Jeff:** You mean Acts 8 with—

**Don:** Philip.

**Ron:** Philip with the eunuch.

**Jeff:** Yes. So for instance if 1 Peter had been written, it would have been legitimate for Philip not only to say, “Let me now tell you about Isaiah 53,” but “Let me use Peter to do it,” right? But that’s the idea of that. So this is a crucial thing.

**Sig:** Don has a question.

**Jeff:** Oh, yes.

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**Sig:** You can tell him to wait till next week.

**Jeff:** No. Go ahead, Don.

**Don:** Just a comment. For example that’s how Jewish commentators do it. They ignore the New Testament, and then they would interpret Isaiah 53 as the nation of Israel or something like that, right?

**Jeff:** The New Testament?

**Don:** That’s how Jewish interpreters would do it. They would ignore the New Testament.

**Jeff:** Of course.

**Don:** And they would just interpret Isaiah 53 in light of the Old Testament.

**Jeff:** But I’m not even sure that—

**Ted:** Isaiah 53 would be understood by Jewish scholars from only the Hebrew Scriptures. They wouldn’t relate it to the New Testament any more than they would to Marx’s—

**Jeff:** Of course. But I’m just kind of wondering if they would use other—

**Don:** Oh yes; the Talmud and that kind of thing. Yes; I see what you’re saying.

**Jeff:** Yeah. They would definitely not use the New Testament. The New Testament is off limits for them, yes. Now why is this important? I’ll tell you why this is important. The point of this is that if the Spirit inspired the text of Scripture then the Spirit can illuminate the text of Scripture. We often talk about the work of illumination by the Spirit. And here we find that is crucial in our thinking. In other words, the Spirit reveals to us what it is that the author means.

But not only that; I’ll tell you what else. I want to say a couple of things and then I’m going to stop. But these two things are important. First of all, #1., when I say that the Author reveals meaning, I think He does. I think He brings a unity of understanding to a text. However I think we have to be very careful not to substitute good plain hard work with laziness, as if to say, well, the Spirit will just have to lead me into understanding what Paul meant. That’s not the right approach. The right approach is not laziness. So we have to work at interpretation, right?

So I have a tendency to think (and here’s the way I view the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit), I have a way of looking at it like this. The Spirit of God certainly accompanies me in my studies. But there are studies in which I am to engage if I am to understand the Scripture. However, when we talk about significance, when through the Spirit’s help I begin to understand what the text means, the Spirit causes me to embrace the teaching in a way that I hadn’t before; that’s the significance.

I remember that before I was a Calvinist I was an Arminian.

**Ted:** Oh!

**Jeff:** Sad story, I know. (*Laughter*) I was really hoping for that. So thank you for that. (*Laughter*) So as an Arminian I understood the Calvinistic position, but I didn’t embrace it. So I studied the Scriptures. I understood the positions. I embrace one position and not the other.

Over time, due to the continuous study of Scripture, I came to embrace Calvinism. And my own belief is that was the work of the Spirit. As I studied the Scriptures He brought me to embrace the teaching of the Scripture. He brought me to value the teaching of Scripture in a way that I didn’t value it before, in a way that I didn’t find it significant before. So I see that as the Spirit illuminating His word to me—that is, bringing the significance of it home to me so that I valued it and embraced it in an entirely different way than before.

So I think what we have to remember is that those things are critical when we think about studying the Scriptures. In other words there’s good hard study to be done. If we don’t do that study we’re going to be in trouble. And we shouldn’t depend upon the Spirit for that which He

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has not given us clear promise to help us with. He has promised in various ways to help us throughout the process and to be with us always. But some of the ways He has promised to be with us do not supplant some of the means that we are to use in order to understand the Scriptures—for instance, good study of Scripture. As Paul says, we need rightly to divide the Scriptures; we need to rightly study the Scriptures. That’s the idea.

So I’m going to finish up here. And I’m going to ask—

**Sig:** Should I stop?

**Jeff:** No, I don’t want you to stop it. And you can edit this.

**Sig:** Okay.

**Jeff:** I just want to say a word to you about what I said earlier about Sig and that. It’s not an offense against Sig. It may be an offense to Sig, and it may be. But the idea is that we’re men. And we can be men without the caricatures of the world. And if we need the caricatures of the world in order to be men, then we’re in big trouble because we’re playing right into the world’s hands. I don’t need to lose my grip on life and act like the caricature of what a man ought to be in order to be a man.

I love motorcycles; I don’t need a motorcycle to be a man. I don’t need to go out in the woods to be a man. I don’t need to do what men are supposed to do in order to be a man.

The Scriptures tell us to be men, and that’s what we need to be. And sometimes I feel like that kind of thing plays into the hands of the world. I get all upset and so I say, “I’m p.o.ed, or I’m this or I’m that. Well, I can be righteously angry and try to possess myself. And that’s what I ought to be doing.

So what I’m saying is, this may be an offense to Sig, and I didn’t mean to offend you unnecessarily. But I think we need to possess ourselves especially as men, and maybe in a way that we aren’t used to. And so anyway that’s all I want to say. Please do not clap, and let’s just pray. Father, thank You for this day. And we pray that Your hand would be upon us for good. And we pray, Lord, that as we go through these difficult days and perhaps even more that are ahead, that You will clearly defend Your word. Help us to live according to it. We ask, Lord, that You will bless us in Christ’s name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.