

“Q and A” 2nd Session

How to Study the Bible

Various Scriptures

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Jeff: Gracious God, You are God and You are God alone and You are worthy to be praised. You are sovereign, You are all-powerful. And Father, You are omnipresent; You are everywhere. You are amazing because You stand at a distance from Your creation. You are not Your creation, and yet You interact and interface with what You've made. And yet You are not what You've made. And in its fallenness You sent Your only-begotten Son into the world. And yet the amazing thing is that You remain unmixed from it, uncontaminated by it, and You redeemed it through Him and by His powerful working by the Spirit.

Father, as we come before You today we stand in amazement of Your work, and thankful for it because we are the beneficiaries of it. So Father, as we come we come praising You. And we ask, Lord, that You will help us. Help us to remember that as You are the only way of salvation You are the only safe place to stand in this world. And let us take our stand upon You and our salvation that is in You. Let us be thankful for the word that You've given, for indeed it is Your word to us, and it speaks truth. And Father, we pray that You will help us to speak to others that same truth You spoke to us, that many lives might be retrieved from darkness, won for Christ. And we pray, Father, that as they are that Your kingdom would grow and flourish. We pray, Lord, that though evil will tower at good, we pray that as they will fear and fret in the face of gospel proclamation and victory, and that the evil in this world will continue to rally and seek to oppress the good, we pray, Father, that Your victory would continue to march forward, and that Your Rider on the white horse bent on conquering would indeed conquer.

And Father, there are things that we pray for that are of concern to us. And perhaps the very first thing that comes to mind this morning is the Wardropper family and their loss, and we pray for them, especially Mom and Dad. And Lord, as they grapple through this loss we pray that they would reach and so find You. And if they know You already we pray that they would find a Rock to which to cling, a place on which to stand. And Lord, we pray that as You move them through this time of grief in their lives, we pray that You would give them comfort. Father, we pray that comfort would come in various ways. And Lord, we yet pray that You would provide it.

We pray for our brother Kevin and ask that You will continue to strengthen him in his inner man even though his body fades. And we ask, Lord, that You will hear our thanksgiving for Gregg as he recovers.

We pray for Bruce and Becky and we're thankful for them. We continue to pray for Becky as she recovers from back surgery.

Lord, we pray for our brother Sig. We are thankful for him and ask that You would continue to bless him and strengthen his body. And Lord, we ask as well that You'll hear our thanks and our praises to You for all the good that You've done in our lives, the good that we're often not mindful of and take for granted. Yet we thank You for it now. Lord, we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

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Jeff: Okay. Well, today we are going to have one more time of question and answer, and it’s kind of funny. Don is always taking the blame for the way the class is going. I’m perfectly willing to let him accept that. *(Laughter)* Don, do you want to sit up here or are you going to sit there? *(at the keyboard)*

Don Maurer: I don’t know. What do you want me to do?

Jeff: Well, it’s up to you; are you gonna—Oh, that’s right!

Don: Yeah.

Jeff: Yeah. Are you gonna do it better this time?

Don: With this new setting I might. *(Laughter)* *(An organ setting on the keyboard)*

Jeff: Okay. All right, so Don is always willing to take the blame, so I’m willing to give it to him.. But he thought it would be a good idea if we do another time of question and answer. So we’re going to do that, and then we’re going to move next week into a study of a book. So if you don’t have questions to start us off, I was going to say that Don sent me some. But Don, go ahead.

Don: Did you want to read them or did you want me to ask?

Jeff: I’d rather you ask it rather than me reading it.

Don: Okay. Let me see what song I can come up with here. *(Music; a jazzy version of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.” Laughter)* I was teaching in Sunday school last Sunday from 2 Peter.

Jeff: Okay.

Don: Of course Peter equates Paul’s writings with Scripture. And he says that people twist Paul’s writings as they do the other Scriptures to their own destruction.

Jeff: Yes.

Don: And so my question’s kind of multi-pronged, because we know it’s possible to do that. What are the dangers that we should look for as far as misinterpreting Scripture? As we saw last week in our discussion of the end times, Christians disagree on many things. And so how do we know that we have the right interpretation of a passage? How do we ensure that we attain that goal?

Jeff: Yeah. So Don is asking how we ensure that we come to the right interpretation of Scripture, especially in light of the fact that we oftentimes disagree about Scripture and what it means? And I would say, refer back to the classes that we just had. *(Laughter)* No, that’s a good question. And I think it’s one that we’re going to continue to struggle with when we think about interpreting Scripture and how we come to agreements, and that sort of thing.

I think that one of the things that we have to remember is that we have to start with the foundation that Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit. And so the Scriptures are immediately inspired by the Holy Spirit, and so are given to the apostles or prophets or whoever the human writer happens to be by the Divine. And they are given what the Divine wants them to write. And so we have this product which is man’s word but truly God’s word.

The thing we have to remember is that the same Word that is immediately inspired is also illuminated by the Spirit to the reader. And so the same Spirit who inspires His word casts illumination on it.

Now how does he do that? Well, certainly there is a supernatural sense in which that takes place. But there’s also a sense in which the Spirit gives us a principle of

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interpretation that we ought to apply. And that is, we ought to compare the less clear parts of Scripture with the more clear parts of Scripture. And so when you think about it, there’s a sense in which there’s sort of a trend or a migration. God gives His word. God illuminates His word. But in the process of illumination we are to study His word. And that means we are to study it so thoroughly that we can compare and contrast some parts of Scripture with other parts of Scripture.

And I think that it is in that part of the process—it’s in the human responsibility—that we get tripped up.. And I think the interesting thing is that the Spirit doesn’t always bring immediate illumination to His word. I mean, how many times have you spent studying Scripture, studying Scripture, studying Scripture, and maybe years later came to a position that you didn’t hold in previous years? And you feel like that was the Spirit giving that position to you to hold.

For instance I can think of the example of Calvinism. For a long, long time I was an Arminian. And I would study the Scriptures and labor in them, comparing Scripture with Scripture, and so on. And it wasn’t until my junior year in college that after studying and having conversations in certain classes that it just came on like a light bulb. I didn’t do anything different than I had been doing. But it just came on like a light bulb that hey, there’s a perspective on Scripture that I would rather suppress but that is right.

And my own view is that if you’re an Arminian you’re probably not going to have that view. But my own view is that was the Spirit leading me into further and deeper truth in His word, bringing me into conformity and unity with other believers of like mind. So it’s the human responsibility, it’s the human element that oftentimes stands in the way. Maybe it doesn’t stand in the way, but it’s part of the longevity of the process by which we are brought from one position to another. I’m not sure I can resolve the issue as to why we hold different interpretations and how to make that better. That’s really God’s business. Gary?

Gary Dunbar: Taking off from our discussion last week in Revelation, I’m not asking you to explain this but just to comment on it. What do you do when there are people—commentators, pastors, what have you—whose sincerity of faith you cannot possibly doubt?

Jeff: Yeah.

Gary: And yet with respect to the book of Revelation they have diametrically opposed positions. And you look at some of these, and if you’re trying to go from one to the other you’d have a very hard time, given the background of your faith.

Jeff: Yeah. I think part of the problem is this. And this comes down to the basic presuppositions that we hold when we look at the Scriptures. For instance, you well know by now that here is the fall of Adam, and then here is the covenant of grace. And that covenant of grace persists through five different exfoliations of the covenant. And you know that.

But let me tell you one of the presuppositions that comes along with that, and that is continuity. In other words, if you see the Scriptures as I do you see a certain continuity that persists. For instance, one of the aspects of continuity that exists helps those of us who hold to an infant baptism position to see why it is that infants are baptized in the New Testament like infants were circumcised in the Old. That continuity helps us to see that.

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However, you and I both know that there is a discontinuity that exists within the Scriptures. Let me put it like this. This discontinuity is there; it’s real. For instance, even those who see a continuity see a discontinuity.

How is that? Well, where the discontinuity is seen, I’ll take baptism for an example. In the Old covenant yes, Circumcision was given to infants but not to women. The discontinuity in the New covenant is that women are included in the covenantal sign. So there is discontinuity even in the example of continuity.

Now one of the things—and Gary, this gets back to this,—here’s a person whose faith is sincere. And yet he comes to a radically different position on some of these things—even Revelation, right? One of the things that I’ve noticed it depends on how one focuses his attention. If you focus your attention on continuity in the main, you’re probably going to be Reformed in your perspective of the Scripture. If you focus your attention on discontinuity, it’s in the discontinuity that you oftentimes see Jesus best, even from a continuous perspective. Now I focus attention on discontinuity. But if you focus on discontinuity to the extent that continuity appears somewhat eclipsed or minimal, you will come out with a different system of looking at the Scriptures.

That’s just one place where we can see that if one is on this side one comes to one position, and if one is on the other side he comes to another position. But there are other places like that as well. For instance, law and grace; this is a huge difference. For instance, if you’re a Lutheran you want to eclipse the law. Luther started off basically saying that there’s a responsible, conditional, even a reciprocal relationship between the believer and the law. And the longer he went, the more he said, no. The law is not like a covenantal structure, where now that I’m in by grace I’m obligated to obey it. No, it’s not like that at all. It’s more like a testament all the way through. That is, once Jesus dies, once the Testator dies, I get all the benefits.

“What about the law?”

“What about it?” You see that kind of mentality.

Whereas a Reformed person like Calvin or Zwingley or any of those big names is going to say that you are saved. But part of the benefit of your salvation is sanctification. And we grow up not because of the law but because of grace. But grace conforms life to the law, and so we obey the law because grace is always growing us up according to that standard.

Luther says, “Sin boldly.” Forget it. This idea that law is in some way crucial for us as believers is bunk. It’s a law/gospel distinction in a radical sort of way. So that’s another distinction, and it depends on where you put your emphasis as to where you’re going to fall.

So these are just some of the places where you see people differ. And if you put emphases here, (on law), you’ll probably go in this direction. If you put it here, (on grace), you end up in this direction, and so on. So you have to be aware of that in your thinking. It’s not always that we control our thinking in the sense that we know exactly where we’re going when we’re going down the road of thinking these thoughts—hopefully after God and not after ourselves.

But I would say this. You know, that just goes to show that a man can be better than his theology, right? A man can emphasize discontinuity and be very wrong, and yet he is

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in Christ. I think that the question is what are the essentials he affirms? That’s really the crucial thing. Yes?

Caleb Falbo: A totally different direction.

Jeff: Okay.

Caleb: I hope everything is up for error here.

Jeff: It feels like it. *(Laughter)* I know Don was trying to move us in a—

Caleb: This is a little more like some of you guys might--

Jeff: Good.

Caleb: I imagine about my own family all the time. A big part for me is my children and how to teach them the Bible.

Jeff: Yes.

Caleb: And I just wonder if there’s any recommendation that anybody has of ways that I can kind of do that. My kids are fifteen, fourteen and eleven.

Jeff: Yeah.

Caleb: So we read different passages from time to time. They attend church with me pretty regularly. We kind of do a lot of little things. But I’m kind of looking for some direction.

Jeff: Yeah. Well, one of the things that I would say to you is, don’t just read the Scriptures, but instruct them in the Scriptures. Some of these older guys will have a better idea of what to tell you than I would. But my opinion or view is this. One of the things that I tried to do with my own kids was that I always tried to read the passage ahead of time and pull out a couple of things that I wanted them to know about the passage. I didn’t overdo it because they always thought I was longwinded and they always wanted me to talk less. *(Laughter)* So I always tried to make sure that I pulled out one or two things from the passage that I wanted them to know; I didn’t overkill it; I just sort of read and instructed. Do any of you guys have a thought on that? Yes?

Don Bishop: I would say that one of the things when you’re instructing children is that you need to be instructed first.

Jeff: Yeah.

Don: And there are books on theology. For me systematic theology is what really helps me to pull it all together. There are many books. We’re going through a course for two years now with Dick Jenkins in systematic theology. The book is that thick.

Jeff: Whose book?

Don: It’s Grudham.

Jeff: Oh, Grudham; yes.

Don: But there are many other books that aren’t that detailed that you can read that help you to understand all that. When I was grappling with this I was brought up in a Baptist and dispensational background. I grappled with it for a year. I hated my professors. *(Laughter)* I thought they were trying to rewrite the Bible until that summer when I read the Bible. And I said, “Yeah, that’s what it means.”

Jeff: Yeah.

Don: As you say, you come at the Bible with a certain presupposition.

Jeff: Yes.

Don: You’re taught a certain way. Then I read and said, “Boy, I never saw that before.” That was the big thing.

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Jeff: Yep.

Don: And going back to the discontinuity about baptism, I don't know if that's a good word for that. When I was grappling with infant baptism I had a pastor that helped me to really start thinking about it. He said that the Old Testament was only meant for certain types. When we come to the New Testament, which is a better covenant, he asked whether it would be better to give it to women and to take it away from infants now.

Jeff: Right. Warfield said, “*If in the New Testament God hasn't put them out of the covenant, then let not ourselves put them out of the covenant either.*” I always thought that was good.

Don: It's knowing and understanding the covenant that makes the difference.

Jeff: Yeah, right; it's a structure for the Scriptures. Does anybody else have any advice?

Caleb: The thing I can bring off of what he says is that this study on how to study the Bible has kind of helped me.

Jeff: Yeah.

Caleb: Because a lot of times I would just sit with my kids and they would get kind of worn out. So I would read a couple passages. I didn't quite understand it either, so I couldn't really explain it very well.

Jeff: Mm-hmm.

Caleb: So with a concordance and things like that I'm starting to know what you guys are starting to say.

Jeff: Yeah. A lot of times too, you know, you can involve them. If your kids are getting to the point where they can talk, even your eleven-year-old is going to want to participate as the two older kids start to talk and to engage with you. And the great thing about it is that now that they're at that age, you can actually give them a passage and say, “Go and study this for next week. And then on Monday we'll start to talk about it. We'll talk about it for three or four days throughout the week and discuss the passage.”

So you can give them direction. “This week I want you to look up this word in the passage in your concordances.” You can kind of assign it. And if you bring it together and make it a real discussion and you get them talking, it's actually kind of a fun time to be in.

I always thought that the little kid age, the toddler and then the young kind of age, was really difficult for me. My wife would say to you that I can't talk to kids. “So now, the Trinity.” *(Laughter)* “Now think about the ontology.” *(Laughter)* I'll tell you—

Don Maurer: And don't forget the inclusions too. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Yeah, yeah. I was talking to my one son. I thought to myself that he's just a little guy. And my wife was getting ready for bed and I was sitting out by the couch with him. And I thought, I'm going to share the gospel with him. Perfect time, right? So he has his binky in his mouth. I'm talking and I'm sharing the gospel with him. And I get to the point where I say, “Now we're sinners, son.” And he pops out his binky and he goes, “I thought we were boys, Daddy!” *(Laughter)*

I said, “Good job.” *(Laughter)* Anyway, what else do you have? Anything? Yeah, Don?

Don Bishop: The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* is a great way to get children to start thinking.

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Jeff: Yeah; fantastic.

Don: It’s a great pointer.

Jeff: This is a great piece of advice. If you’re in a Presbyterian or Reformed tradition you have a catechism. Even if you’re in a Baptist tradition you have the *London Baptist Confession*. They certainly stole the *Westminster Confession*, (laughter), except for chapter 29 on the sacraments. I’m just kidding; I’m thankful they make use of it.

But one of the things that you will find is this. And you know this to be true yourselves. You will find that people will listen to maybe one sermon over and over. And the reason they’re listening to it over and over again is that they’re having trouble assimilating it. They’re having trouble taking its teaching and assimilating it. And by that I mean that what is probably at root is that they don’t have a good systematic theology so that they can say, “Oh, the minister was talking about this,” and put it in this category and be able to assimilate its teaching in that way. If you don’t have a good systematic theology—a systematic summary of what the Bible teaches,—you just kind of feel adrift. And so a good systematic theology will help you to assimilate messages.

Now there may be messages that you have to listen to a number of times. But my experience has been that oftentimes the lack of a good systematic kind of structure that undergirds a person’s thinking causes them to really struggle to assimilate teaching in his own thought process. And so it’s good to have a good confession or a catechism for the kids that you can go through. What else do you have? Yes?

Bishop Rodgers: It’s like doing a crossword puzzle, and I’ve got a piece from another puzzle. The pieces don’t fit in a non-Christian world view.

Jeff: Yes, absolutely. And that’s one of the best ways to actually help your kids, because your kids are getting a lot of information from the world, whether you know it or not.

Bishop: Yeah.

Jeff: And if you’re teaching them a Christian world view that has a systematic understanding of the Bible and the world around us, they’ll know where something doesn’t fit. But if you’re not teaching them that summary, then our world tells them that everything fits; even if it’s contradictory, it fits. So that’s a great piece of advice. Tim?

David Miller: When I was attending Salvation Baptist Church, I was giving the *Reformation Study Bible* to prisoners. And I had a chance to talk to a pastor one time. He knew about the *Reformation Study Bible*. So he asked me, and we sat down and went through TULIP. And he said, “Do you really believe that grace is irresistible, that there was no way that you could have resisted God’s grace?”

And I said, “Well, I believe it, but I’m not sure.” So that was the first one; I actually have two questions.

Jeff: Okay.

David: My second question was the place of law and grace. I’m teaching from 1 Peter in prison.

Jeff: Okay.

David: And in the Gospel of Matthew it says, “*Be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.*”

Jeff: Right.

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David: And the way I explained it was that I told him, “God commands us to be perfect. But He makes us perfect through grace. So would you add anything to that?”

Jeff: No, I think that’s a great answer. When you think about sanctification, how is it that a person is sanctified? Well, my Westminster Confession tells me that I’m sanctified through the outworking of Christ in me. And this is the great thing about it, because I don’t know what your church context is. But in my church context it’s sort of the modern-day equivalent of the passage, “Did you start with the Spirit and now end with the law?” They are people called *theonomists*, because theonomists believe that it starts with grace, but then the law sanctifies me. The law doesn’t sanctify me. I am sanctified wholly by the grace of God in me.

Now I’ve used this example just recently in my own congregation. Think about a sapling. Here’s a sapling, and that sapling is now tied onto a stick. And let’s say the sapling is the living person and the stick is the law. You tie the sapling onto the stick. The question is, does the stick make the sapling grow?

The answer is no. But does the stick give direction to the growth? And the answer is yes. So the Spirit will always bring growth in us so we conform to His law, right? But it isn’t the law that sanctifies, nor is it the law that causes us to grow; it’s the Spirit of God in us. And we will always grow according to the standard, which is the law. And therefore that law is good and holy and right, and I need to obey the law because that’s the impulse of the Spirit within me, driving me law-ward. Go ahead.

David: How do you approach the question about is grace irresistible?

Jeff: Go ahead.

Matt Kail: So one thing in terms of the rubric for Calvinism is the sovereignty of God. TULIP is the response to the Arminian position that we as individuals make response to God that we have to invest in. The side of faith is our doing that saves us, rather than everything is in Christ alone. So the reason that grace is irresistible is because God who planned these things out, as Ephesians says, has elected us from the foundation of the universe; God has then elected us beforehand. So that’s the same rubric as limited atonement. God decides who is in and who is out; that’s double predestination. God decides who’s in and who’s out. If we are able to second-guess God that puts us in the primary position, rather than speaking about the sovereignty of God. *“In Him all things cohere.”*

Jeff: Yeah. Go ahead.

Bishop: I was going to say that the gospel is resistible. I have friends that know the gospel, but they are resisting it. The gospel is resistible. But when God chooses through the Spirit to apply that to your heart, He regenerates your inclinations so that it’s no longer resistible.

Jeff: Yes. These guys are right; they both said great things. Think about Ephesians 2:4. *“God made you alive in Christ.”*

David: Yes.

Jeff: Think about it. If there were a corpse here and I had the power to resurrect, and I brought the corpse to life, and the corpse came to life and said, “Hey, I didn’t want to come to life!”, he had to come to life in order to resist, right? He had no power as a corpse to resist me. And we as dead have no power to resist; God makes us alive in Christ Jesus.

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Bishop: There’s a great text in Acts. “*And the Lord opened the heart of Lydia*” to attend the preaching of Paul.

Jeff: Yeah.

Bishop: It was the Lord that opened her heart.

Jeff: Yes, that’s a beautiful text: “The Lord opened her heart.” I love the Greek; the word is *dianoigo*. “The Lord opened her heart to believe.” That’s a beautiful word. And so her heart was closed; He opened it up to Himself. Yes, Don?

Don Bishop: Another Scripture is John 6:37: “*All that the Father gives me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out.*”

Jeff: Yeah. And then in John 10, “I’ll lose none of all that the Father has given me,” right?

Don: How can that be unless God calls and saves us?

Jeff: What else do you have? Anything? Yes, Don?

Don Rimbey: Jeff, I’m going to go to Romans 8:29.

Jeff: 8:29.

Don: Okay. It says, “*For those God foreknew He also predestined.*”

Jeff: Yes.

Don: He goes on.

Jeff: Yes.

Don: Could you talk a bit about the word *foreknew*?

Jeff: Yeah.

Don: I have a commentary which says that it’s not really the way we see “foreknew,” but it means a deep, intimate relationship.

Jeff: Yeah. So for instance, you know one of the expressions: “*Adam knew his wife. And she conceived and gave birth to a son.*” Or when you think about Judges 19—I think it’s 19—the Levite is in the home of the Gibeonite. And the men come to the door banging on the door. And they say, “*Give us the man who is in your house; we want to know him,*” right? The idea is that this knowledge is an intimate knowledge; in those cases a sexually intimate knowledge. And so when we talk about knowing our wives one of the things we talk about is that there is a level of intimacy there.

So when we look at the Scriptures, there are all different sorts of ways to cue that idea up. For instance, one of them—one of my favorites—is the doubling of the name, right? So when God doubles the name—“*Abraham, Abraham!*”—it indicates intimacy. “I know you.”

So for instance in the Sermon on the Mount in chapter 7, the people come to Jesus and say, “*Lord, Lord, did we not?*” And He says, “Whoa; wait a minute! You claim intimacy with Me, but *I never knew you.*” “So You claim to know Me”—doubling the name,—“but I don’t know you.” I just preached Luke 10:38-42.

Transcriber’s Note: Luke 10:38-42, NKJV. “*Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.’*”

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“And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.’”

Jeff: And here are Mary and Martha. And what does Jesus say to Martha? “Martha, Martha.” He speaks to her out of intimacy. “I know that you are consumed with many things. But Mary has chosen the one needful thing.” There are all sorts of ways that the Bible cues up this idea of intimacy.

And so when you get to 8:29 of Romans—the Lord foreknew and predestined,—the idea is that He fore-loved us and predestined us. The idea then is that he didn’t foreknow something about us and so said, “This would make a great candidate for My body; I’m going to choose this one.” The idea is that He fore-loved us despite us, and so predestined us. That’s the idea that’s behind that text. Does that make sense?

Don: Well, I guess my question is—

Jeff: Oh, okay; sorry.

Don: I was just going to say this. In translations why don’t they use the appropriate word instead of leaving us hanging with foreknowledge?

Jeff: Yeah. The trouble is this, and that’s a great question. So here’s the trouble. Does somebody have a Greek Bible on his phone? Matt, do you? Would you look up that word for just a second? Look up the word *foreknew*. And I’ll give it to you in just a minute.

Don Bishop: *Progonosko*.

Jeff: Hold on to that just a second. Remember when we talked about Bible translations? We said that in a Bible translation you have a dynamic equivalence. In other words, we have a translation that is dynamically equivalent to the text of Scripture in the Greek or Hebrew. In other words, you will likely get in a dynamic equivalent rendering of a passage a thought-for-thought; in other words, not word-for-word. But these are the words; what do they mean?

And over here we have a formal equivalence. In other words, we’re trying to stick with the form of the words as much as possible. So Don, what did you say it was? *Progonosko*? So we have the idea of *to know before*, to foreknow.

So in a formal equivalent rendering you’re going to get *foreknow*. If you have a dynamic equivalent version of it, does somebody have access to the J. B. Philips translation online? Don, would you do that? You can’t do that?

Don Bishop: I’ll have to Google it.

Jeff: Okay, Google it. See if you can find J. B. Philips’ translation and we’ll see what he says. He’s a major paraphrase guy, and he would definitely be a thought-for-thought sort of person. Go ahead; do you have it? You know, Don (Maurer) is really sleeping on the job; this is a primary occupation. Not you, Don. (Bishop) We haven’t heard one word from him. He just wanted to sit up front. *(Laughter)*

Don Bishop: I would think he had it memorized in every version. *(Laughter)*

Don Maurer: Well, I was going to say that different paraphrases will say different things. The New Living Translation will say, “*He whom God knew would come to Him He predestined to come.*”

Transcriber’s Note: Actually, the *Living Bible*.

Jeff: Okay. Well, that’s definitely different.

Don: Yeah, for sure.

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Jeff: Are you sure that it says that?

Don: This was about 25 years ago at a Bible study. *(Laughter)* Someone read from that. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: And it said what?

Don: Something like “He whom God knew would come to Him, (or Christ, or something), “He made sure that they did,” or something like that. It was so loose and opposite of what you were saying.

Jeff: Yeah. Were you able to get it, Don, or not? Well anyway, the idea would be—

Don Rimbey: Dave has it.

Jeff: Who?

Don: Dave Miller.

Jeff: Dave, I’ve been calling you Tim. I’m sorry. *(Laughter)*

Don: He’s being intimate, too.

Jeff: I know. *(Laughter)*

David: “*For those whom He foreknew He also predestined.*”

Jeff: Is that J. B. Philips?

David: Oh, it pre-selected the ESV. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: No worries. So anyway, you get the idea. If it were a dynamic equivalent rendering of it, it would be thought-for-thought. I just made something up, but you might get something like this. “Those whom God loved before time began He predestined”—something like that.

Don Maurer: What does *The Message* say?

Jeff: Oh, come on now! *(Laughter)* All right; anything else? Yes, Don?

Don Maurer: I’m very glad and very grateful that we can be wrong on lots and lots of things and still be saved.

Jeff: Yeah.

Don: There are obviously essentials. When 2 Peter talks about false teachers and says that they “twist the Scriptures to their own destruction,” you’re talking about issues of the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the way of salvation and other things. Those are crucial matters. If you get them wrong you’re in lots and lots of trouble.

Jeff: Yes.

Don: These other things are important. I agree with R. C. Sproul; not everyone does. He says that there is only one correct interpretation of a passage, but thousands of different applications. But we can be wrong in a lot of areas and disagree and still be saved.

Jeff: Yes. And I think Don is right. One of the things that we often talk about is that there is one correct meaning to any passage of Scripture. But the trouble is, you know as well as I do that if you just Google all the different sermons on one particular passage and listen to five of them, you will find different emphases and pastors pulling out different meanings or ideas from each passage. And it can range from a pastor who is really doing the application thing, right? “Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt.”

So let’s say you have one pastor who says, “This is about leadership principles.” And then all the way on the other side a guy gives a history lesson. Did this happen in the 15th century B.C.? Did this happen in the 12th century B.C.? And so he works through the history lesson of it.

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And then there’s the person who talks about the redemptive/historical idea of God leading His people out, which is a type of the greater exodus which will be found in Jesus Christ, right? And so right there are three different meanings that are pulled out. The question is, what is the right meaning?

And you almost kind of migrate into this thinking that, well, with Scripture it’s whatever you say, whatever he says. But no! What you do have to do is ask yourself basic questions. What does this text mean historically? What does it mean theologically? How can I apply it? Can I apply it at all?—that sort of thing. There are all kinds of that sort of thing.

And that’s why, when we say that Scripture means one thing, we have to be really careful, because we can make it very simplistic, as if to say, “Oh, it just means a.”

Well, wait a minute. You know, this is the profundity of Scripture as such; it’s more difficult than that. Even putting aside the guy who wants to apply leadership principles, and just talking about the time, the history and the geography of Exodus, versus the redemptive/historical message of the book of Exodus, what’s the meaning?

Let me give you an example of this; here’s an example. I have the time line drawn up here. Let’s take 1 Peter for just a second—1 Peter chapter 3. The flood is used by Peter as a type of baptism.

Now I want you to think about this. Let’s ask the question. When Moses wrote Genesis 6-9, did he understand that the flood he was writing about was a type of baptism?

Don Maurer: I doubt it.

Jeff: You doubt it. Okay.

Matt: No, God did.

Jeff: Okay, you’re jumping ahead. *(Laughter)* There’s the pastor among us, so jump back! So let’s stop and let’s just take what Don said. Don says, “I doubt it.”

Okay, so you have people who say, all right. So on just the grammatical historical reading of the text Moses is not going to understand that the Flood is a type of baptism, okay? He’s not going to understand that.

Now you get people who will say this. When you interpret Scripture, in order to do justice to the text you can only interpret Scripture up to the text you’re interpreting. In other words, you can’t take subsequent Scripture and use it to interpret Genesis 6-9, because that would not be dealing with this text with integrity. In other words, you wouldn’t be privileging the human author. You have to privilege the human author. And if you privilege the human author you would have to say, “Well, Moses didn’t know that the flood waters were going to be used as a type.”

Now what does that do to typology? I’ll tell you what it does: it turns typology into application.

In other words, let me put it like this. If this is what you’re willing to say then you have to say that typology is not part of exegesis. In other words, you can never get types from grammatical/historical interpretation. Therefore types are applications brought to the Old Testament.

Let me tell you how one Reformed scholar put it. Listen to this; this is crazy. This is a popular guy. Think about it. He said that the final episode of “Star Wars”—and I’m not a “Star Wars” fan; I’m just using his example--(I am a “Star Wars” fan, but not like some

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nuts like you!) (*Laughter*) I used this illustration once and the guy in the audience said to me, “Excuse me. The episode you’re talking about is not part of the canon. (*Laughter*)

Anyway, the final episode of “Star Wars” has a scroll in it that did not appear in previous episodes. And yet the scroll that appears in the final episode explains the previous episodes.

Transcriber’s Note: Don Maurer plays the original theme from “Star Wars” on the keyboard.

Brave Men: Laughter.

Jeff: All right.

Brave Man: That’s not in the hymnal. (*Laughter*)

Jeff: So here’s what happens. This guy says that Jesus is like that scroll. And what the New Testament writers do is, they look at an Old Testament book. They interpret it grammatically and historically, where you would never get Jesus from it, and they take Jesus to it. In other words, what this Reformed guy is saying is that from a grammatical/historical approach you will never get typology. Typology is an application brought to it.

Now I don’t know about you, but I’m not there. I’m where he (Matt) is. I’m not interested in privileging the human author; I’m interested in privileging the primary author who is God. And all of a sudden, when you say that I may use all of Scripture to interpret Scripture, even if I’m in Genesis 6-9, that means I can use 1 Peter, which means that in my exegesis of the text that typology is part of meaning and not application. Do you see that?

Don Maurer: Yeah.

Jeff: But see, that means that I take a theological principle with me when I interpret, that theological principle being that God is the primary Author of this text.

Now you and I say, “Oh, that’s easy. “It’s not easy. You and I just talked about this last week. There are textbooks that don’t teach that. They teach that we need to privilege the human author when we interpret any given text. If I’m interpreting Isaiah 53 I may not use Acts 13 or 1 Peter chapter 2 to interpret Isaiah 53. I may later apply those as applications to people. But I may not use them to interpret because they weren’t written yet, and I need to privilege the human author. And I say bunk! The primary Author is God.

I was at an ETS conference; it’s an academic conference. Every year it has almost three thousand evangelical scholars who come and deliver papers. I was there one year, and this guy was giving a talk on how we should take the theological principle of God’s primary authorship onto our exegetical process. And the place was filled. And he was met with derision because he was saying that God as the primary Author ought to mean something when we interpret the text. And they were saying that if God means something when we interpret the text, then human authorship means nothing.

Don Maurer: Oh boy!

Jeff: And so the clear tendency is to privilege the human author and not God as the primary Author. But once you do that, you do things. For instance I would say to you that the typology of the Flood was put there by the Holy Spirit when He inspired Moses to write. It was there, and so Peter was led to discover it by inspiration. He saw it with the Spirit. He didn’t creatively imagine Jesus in the text; he actually saw Him there because He was there.

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How else would we interpret John 8, where Abraham is said to see Jesus’ day and be glad, unless Jesus is really there in the Old Testament text? He has to be. In fact Jesus Himself says in Luke 24, “You are foolish and slow of heart not to see Me in the Old Testament text.”

Now guys that I’m talking about will say that Jesus is saying, “Can’t you re-imagine Me back into this text?” And that’s not what Jesus is saying. Jesus is saying, “I’m there; I’m there to be found and to be discovered, because I’m there.”

Don Maurer: So you’re saying then that Moses did understand—

Jeff: I’m not saying that Moses did. What I’m saying is, God did. This is where I think that what is called the *sensus plenore* has a place—the fuller meaning of Scripture. In other words, Moses wrote of that which He may not have known. But God certainly knew it when Moses wrote it.

Don: Right.

Jeff: Now guys don’t like that, because authorial intent matters. But again, think about authorial intent. Authorial intent matters if we’re going to privilege the human author. Then we have to say that everything that Moses wrote he understood. But if we’re going to privilege the divine Author, then we can say that everything that the divine Author wrote He understood. Yes?

Ron Baling: That explains when Jesus said to the disciples that “the prophets longed to know what you know.”

Jeff: Yeah.

Ron: And that sort of thing. So they obviously didn’t understand.

Jeff: Right.

Ron: And why in Acts would the apostles study the Old Testament? They were finding those things in there.

Jeff: Yeah. I mean, think about it. When Philip meets the Ethiopian eunuch he doesn’t re-imagine.

Ron: God did that; God pointed it out; God was over top of that.

Jeff: Yes, yes! He doesn’t re-imagine. He doesn’t say, “Hey, I have a great idea for you to see Jesus here.” He doesn’t do that. He sees Jesus in the text. This suffering Servant is Jesus.

All right. Let’s pray and we’ll adjourn; thank you. Father, thanks for this day. Thanks for the time You’ve given us in being given. Thank You for Your word. Lord, we thank You for it and praise You. And we delight in the fact that Your Spirit takes it up and uses it in our lives for a greater good. Lord, we ask that You’d continue to do that, for we pray that in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen. (*Applause*)

Jeff: Hey, just so you know. Because you guys had so much interest in eschatology in our last talk together, next week I think what we’ll do is, we’ll just take a tour through 2 Thessalonians. It’s got the man of lawlessness there and things pertaining to the end times. So I’ll just crassly appeal to your desires. (*Laughter*) That’s right.