

# Hermeneutics in a Nutshell

Principles	Quality Questions
I. Ask “What did it mean”? ( <i>Exegesis</i> ) before answering “what does it mean to me today”?	1. Who was the author & who were the primary recipients of the scripture? 2. What was going on at the time? 3. Why did he write what he wrote?
II. The meaning flows from larger units to the smaller (Context)	4. What is the flow of thought through the Book 5. What are the developing arguments before & after this paragraph 6. Why did the author place that paragraph, right there?
III. Make allowances for the genre	7. What is the genre of the text 8. How was that genre treated by the original audience
IV. Literally or literarily? Take it the way the author intended, recognizing figures of speech	9. Are there any figures of speech being used? 10. Where else does the Bible teach on this
V. Scripture validates scripture: real contradictions are impossible	<b>The Application</b> 1. Move through what <u>was</u> being said to what <u>is always</u> being said 2. Move from what <u>was</u> being taught what <u>is always</u> being taught ( <i>i.e. Doctrine</i> ). Sometimes easy, sometimes hard, sometimes no application



Figures of speech

Volatile definitions

Modern words that paint the wrong picture

Impossible contradictions



- Tools**
- Study Bible
  - Commentaries
  - Systematic theologies
  - Online

## Flow of thought - High Level Map of the Talk

Hermeneutics in a Nutshell

Flow of thought - High Level Map of the Talk

Introduction

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What is it?

!! Hermeneutics is a suite of Principles and specific ‘Quality Questions’ that in the process of answering them helps us differentiate between good and bad interpretations

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Principle 1: Ask “What did it mean”? (Exegesis) before answering “what does it mean to me today”?

!! If God didn’t say what our interpretation says He said, then it is NOT the word of God & therefore lacks His power.

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Principle 2: The meaning flows from larger units to the smaller

!! The context gives the meaning: word studies & verse interpretation only after a full survey of the Book

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Principle 3: Make allowances for the Genre

!! We do so with all other literature naturally

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Principle 4: Take it Literally or Literarily? Take it the way the author intended, which means recognizing figures of speech!

!! Recognize figures of speech and treat them appropriately!

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Principle 5. Apparent Contradictions are impossible. Scripture validates scripture

!! If our interpretation of one scripture contradicts another, then they both can’t be correct interpretations. Scripture validates scripture

|

Watch out! Volatile definitions

!! You can get in to trouble if you import the wrong definition in to your interpretation

|

Watch out! When the modern word paints the wrong picture

!! Being aware of the original meaning gets us closer to what the author intended us to understand

|

Watch out! Correlation doesn’t necessarily mean causation

!! If the notion is the inevitable consequence of the text then the text supports the notion. Otherwise it just correlates. Other work need to be done to see if the notion is ‘Biblical’

|

Application: When you know “What it meant”? then you can answer “what does it mean to me today”? with more chance of accuracy

!! Knowing the original meaning gets us closer to what the modern application is

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So we have our quality questions, So what?

!! The quality questions help us make accurate interpretations that lead to sound doctrine. Inaccurate interpretations lead to false doctrines, that can be dangerous.

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Example of how a nearly right message can be deadly

!! If a suspect teaching or doctrine has verses supporting it, then Hermeneutics can be used to examine the merits of the case

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So How can Hermeneutics be Applied?

!! Whenever we are taught, whenever we are teaching, whenever we are handling the Word of God, accurate interpretation should be the goal.

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A year's focus on Doctrine exposes us to teaching that may be new, we may find controversial or challenging to our existing views (hopefully!)

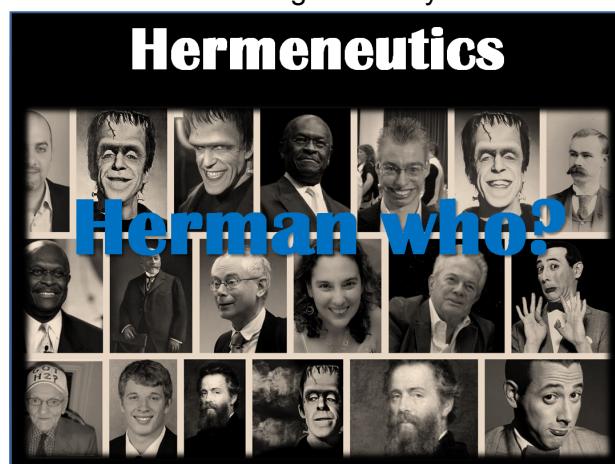
!! The exact forum for doing this is likely to be culture specific - but there is one necessary element: Hermeneutics!

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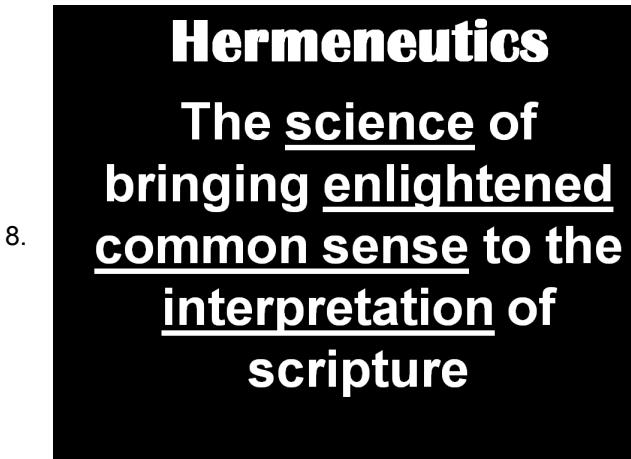
Concluding Remarks

## Introduction

1. You would agree that God should be obeyed & trusted?
  - a. I want to make a proposition to you that gives us the whos, whats, whens whys wheres & hows of how to obey and trust Him - all that we need
2. Do you want to remove the airy fairy subjectivity when it comes to applying Doctrine to your lives and instead be further along the road to spiritual maturity?
3. Have you ever wished you could eliminate your biases when reading the Bible and focus instead on God's actual Words, what He is actually saying to us through scripture?
  - a. (afterall that is the version of God's Word that has power in our lives! )
2. Would you rather experience the quality of diligence and discernment around understanding the Bible . . . and be prepared to work for it if I showed you how?
3. Would you like to experience the excitement that comes from gaining insight into the hard passages of the Bible - and the adventure that that takes you on?
4. Have you ever wished your experience of the Bible was less of a puzzle to solve and more about an Author to know?
5. Then I have something to show you - the concept of HERMENEUTICS



6. Herman who?



9. Biblical Hermeneutics is simply the science of bringing enlightened common sense to the interpretation of scripture
  - a. Just like 'Geography' is a word that describes the science of studying the landscape or 'Biology' is a word that describes the study of living things
  - b. so Hermeneutics is the science of interpreting a text

I am going to cover

- a. **What is it?**
- b. **Why does it matter** (hint, it could be a matter of life and death)
  - i. I really believe it is something that can protect us from spiritual harm and open our eyes to the reality of the riches of God's grace towards us
- c. **How can it be applied?**

## What is it?

10. Again, Biblical Hermeneutics is simply the science of bringing enlightened common sense to the interpretation of scripture

The science of bringing enlightened common sense to the interpretation of scripture

**Why isn't this achieved by just reading the Bible?**

11.  Presumes
  1. that we understand what we are reading Knowledge or ignorance
  2. that our understanding is the same as the Holy Spirit's intended communication Accuracy or distortion

**Rom 12:20 .."***If your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.  
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."*

12. "Why isn't this accomplished by just reading the Bible"? This question assumes 2 things

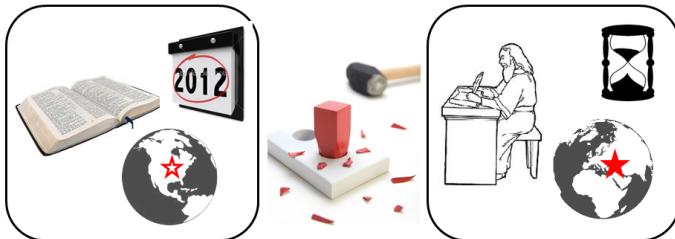
- a. that we understand what we are reading and
  - b. that our understanding is the same as the Holy Spirit's intended communication
13. Often this is presumptuous
- a. example, my understanding of "heaping burning coals on the head"

**The science of bringing enlightened common sense to the interpretation of scripture**

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**Why isn't this achieved by just reading the Bible?**

14.



**Projecting our biases & warping the message?**

Culture, 21<sup>st</sup> C, geography, politics,  
limited experiences

15. We 21st century, Western, American readers need to do a bit of checking work to make sure that we are not imposing our own BIASES & finite experiences on our reading of translations of Ancient Near East documents that talk not only about the nitty-gritty of every day life but also answers the BIG spiritual questions of life.
- a. The message is a square peg, but our bias, our 'round hole' our interpretation is now distorted from the original. by how much?

**The science of bringing enlightened common sense to the interpretation of scripture**

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**But I have the Holy Spirit to teach me;  
I shouldn't have to work!!!**

16.

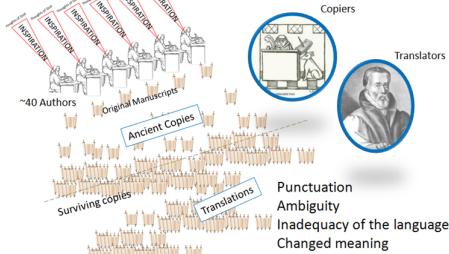


17. "But I have the Holy Spirit to teach me! 1 John 2:27. I should not have to work, it should be easy"
18. What teacher doesn't expect their pupil to do work??? It is a partnership: we do our bit, the Holy Spirit does His bit

The science of bringing enlightened common sense to the interpretation of scripture

**But I have the Holy Spirit to teach me;  
I shouldn't have to work**

a.



- b. Even if the verse is straightforward & you don't need to sweat to understand its application, somebody has sweated & struggled to represent the most accurate rendition of the oldest manuscripts (unless you use those manuscripts in your quiet times). They have struggled with punctuation, ambiguity, vocabulary, obscure idioms, whether to translate the thought or word for word, whether to use original or modern units of measure - the list goes on. The translators have done work!

The science of bringing enlightened common sense to the interpretation of scripture

**But I have the Holy Spirit to teach me;  
I shouldn't have to work**

c.



- d. Have you ever changed your mind about what a passage means . . . and thought you had the Holy Spirit helping you on both occasions?

Just reading and hoping to get the **message** that is embedded in the text is not necessarily bringing enlightened common sense to its interpretation

19. (the **message** that the author and the Holy Spirit put there)

**So What is it?**

20. So it isn't just reading and hoping to get the message. One trick to Hermeneutics is to target the meaning by asking some very specific '**Quality Questions**' about the text.
- Good questions tend to flush out Good answers

## So What is doing Hermeneutics?

1. Following some basic **principles**
  2. Applying a suite of specific
21. **'Quality Questions'** that in the process of answering them helps us differentiate between good and bad interpretations

!! Hermeneutics is a suite of Principles and specific 'Quality Questions' that in the process of answering them helps us differentiate between good and bad interpretations

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**Principle 1: Ask “What did it mean”? (Exegesis) before answering “what does it mean to me today”?**



**Mark 16:18**



**1 Cor 15:29**

22.



The reason why these are **examples of bad hermeneutics** is that they read into the text meanings that the original authors NEVER had in mind.

23. We are naturally convinced the following are all improper interpretations
- a. the Mormons' baptizing for the dead on the basis of 1 Corinthians 15: 29,
  - b. or the Jehovah's Witnesses' rejection of the deity of Christ,
  - c. or the snake handlers' use of Mark 16:18,

24. The reason why these are examples of bad hermeneutics is that they read into the text meanings that the original authors NEVER had in mind.
25. The text cannot mean what it never meant.
26. Or to put it in a positive way, the true meaning of the biblical text is what God originally intended it to mean when it was first spoken.
  - Doctrine of inspiration means that the author was fully cognizant of what he was penning & fully in control of the pen
  - So was the Holy Spirit
27.
  - Those authors gave the immediate meaning to the text
  - The immediate meaning does not change
    - i. Doctrine of inspiration means that the author was fully cognizant of what he was penning & fully in control of the pen
    - ii. So was the Holy Spirit
    - iii. The author gave the immediate meaning to the text
    - iv. The immediate meaning does not change

**1. Ask “What did it mean”? (Exegesis) before answering “what does it mean to me today”?**

28.



Attempt to answer these  
**Quality Questions**

1. Who was the author & who were the primary recipients of the scripture?
2. What was his relationship to the recipients?
3. What was going on at the time? Exile, occupation, disobedience etc
4. Why did he write what he wrote?

29. That is the starting point for interpretation
30. Attempt to answer these **Quality Questions**

- a. Who was the author & who were the primary recipients of the scripture?
- b. What was his relationship to the audience?
- c. What was going on at the time? Exile, occupation, disobedience etc
- d. Why did he write what he wrote?

- The **Holy Spirit** gave the meaning to the text when it was first penned
    - The meaning does not change
31. • God does not lie; The **Holy Spirit** cannot be brought into the process to contradict **himself**
- Therefore, the **Holy Spirit's** help for us is to
    1. help discover **His** original meaning
    2. guide us as we try to apply that meaning to our own situations
32. The Holy Spirit cannot be brought into the process to contradict himself, and the Spirit is the one who inspired the original intent.
33. Therefore, the Holy Spirit's help for us will come in our discovering that original intent and in his guiding us as we try faithfully to apply that meaning to our own situations.
- 1. Ask “What did it mean”? (Exegesis) before answering “what does it mean to me today”?**
- With the Holy Spirit's help,  
 Answer those **Quality Questions**
34. to determine **What did it mean?**  
 Protects us from interpreting the text through our biases



35. **In Summary;** determining what the biblical texts originally meant protects us from coercing the text to mean whatever our biases want it to mean.

**!! If God didn't say what our interpretation says He said, then it is NOT the word of God & therefore lacks His power.**

|

**Principle 2: The meaning flows from larger units to the smaller**

**The meaning flows from larger units to the smaller**

2 Testaments,  
66 books, written by ~40 authors.  
Each book has natural breaks, sentences and words

Attempt to answer these **Quality Questions**

36.

**What is the flow of thought through the Book?**

**What are the developing arguments before & after this paragraph?**

**Why did the author place that paragraph, right there?**



37. The Bible is made up of 2 Testaments, 66 books, written by ~40 authors.

38. Each book has natural breaks, sentences and words

39. Attempt to answer these Quality Questions

- What is the flow of thought through the Book?**
- What are the developing arguments before & after this paragraph?**
- Why did the author place that paragraph, right there?**

40. Understanding the Geography of the Rainforest begins with a fly-over, not a microscopic dissection of a single leaf

41.

42. The liability of studying 'leaves' (individual words) **first**



**The liability of studying 'leaves' (individual words) first to get the geography**

43.



Compound words  
*ekklesia*, church in Greek  
of *ek* (out) & *kaleo* (to call)- called out ones-

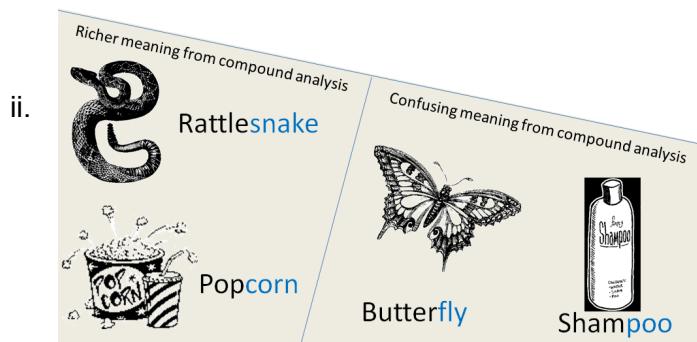
**Does this word analysis help us understand the nature of 'church'?**

a. Compound words

- ekklesia*, church in Greek, a compound of *ek* (out) & *kaleo* (to call)- called out ones- **is this a valid bit of word analysis?**

Is *ekklesia* (Greek, church) like a rattlesnake or shampoo?

You don't know unless you have data from the larger units



- iii. **True, it is valid** to get richer meaning from these English words  
Rattlesnake, backbone, popcorn
- iv. **Not Valid** to get richer meaning from these english words Butterflies, shampoo
- v. You can't forensically construct the big picture from the word but you can validate the analysis of the sinle word from the big picture

44.

**The liability of studying a branch verse (artificial divisions) in isolation to get the geography**

**Luke 4:7** "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."

**Psalm 14** "There is no God"

- 45. The liability of studying a branch 'branch' verse (artificial divisions) in isolation
  - a. Luke 4:7 "therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."
  - b. Psalm 14 "there is no God"
- 46. **What is the flow of thought through the whole testament - book - passage** (before doing the word studies)
- 47. Suggestion, the theme of the whole Bible = "Rulership"
  - a. God created - we are his creatures - He gets to make the rules
  - b. We rebelled against his rulership for which there are punishments
  - c. God is angry and Man is at war with God
  - d. Jesus made it possible for us to be reconciled with God, but only on His terms

- e. If we accept His terms, we are obliged live out the consequences of His Lordship (obedience)
  - f. The Church, as ambassadors are expendable proclaimers of the terms for reconciliation to those continuing the rebellion
  - g. Eventually every knee will bow before the King
48. Do Book Mapping
- a. Show example - here \*\*\*\*

## Principle 2

- The meaning flows from larger units  
to the smaller**
- 49.

The context gives the meaning:  
word studies & verse interpretation only after a full  
scan of the Book

!! The context gives the meaning: word studies & verse interpretation only after a full survey of the Book

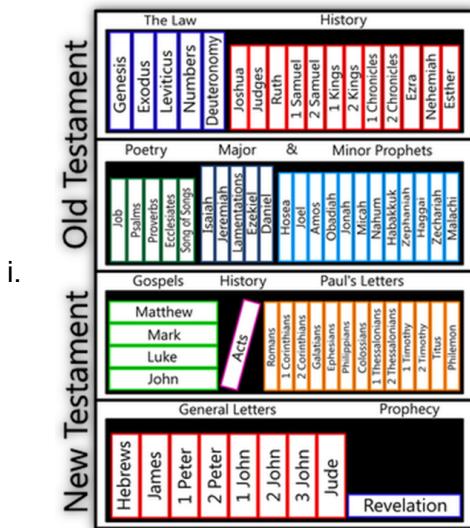
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## Principle 3: Make allowances for the Genre

50. If I said to you that when my Alex was a little more than a toddler, we watched a film together that came on TV, where in the story one man upset his brother so much that the older brother restrained him, then poked his eyes aggressively before bashing his brains with a brick
- a. Perhaps you would be alarmed at my parenting until I told you that the genre was comedy & the film was the Three Stooges - then you would make allowances



- b. c. There are many genres within the Bible - each requires appropriate treatment



- d. You don't read law in the same way as you read poetry for example
51. Attempt to answer these Quality Questions
- What is the genre of the text
  - How was that genre treated by the original audience
    - We tend to treat genealogy differently to an ANE person. They tolerate gaps etc whereas we treat them as a complete historical record (rather like tree rings)

!! We do so with all other literature naturally

**Principle 4: Take it Literally or Literarily? Take it the way the author intended, which means recognizing figures of speech!**

## Do you take the Bible Literally?

52.



'slaughtered', 'annihilated', 'obliterated'

53. Do you take the sports reports literally?

- a. Yes when scores and statistics are given
- b. But you take them literarily when colorful terms are used like 'slaughtered', 'annihilated', 'obliterated'

54. The Bible is literature, with all the familiar figures of speech found in other forms of literature, therefore no surprises when they turn up

55. **Quality Question: Are there any figures of speech being used?**

56. Examples of figures of speech

57. **Hyperbole** - when more is said than is actually meant - exaggeration (to make a point)

- a. Familiar examples
  - i. The whole sky was lit up with the fireworks
  - ii. Everybody was at her party
- b. Biblical examples of hyperbole
  - i. **Acts 2:5** Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. **6** And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. (NASB)
    - 1. If you were to take this literally rather than literarily, then you would have to conclude that there were Jews present from Aboriginal Australia
    - 2. The point being made is that many Jews from many nations were represented, therefore the miracle was significant because there were many languages spoken
  - ii. Paul, in Galatians, having just given his opinion on circumcision (not being necessary for Christians), gives his opinion on those who insist on it for salvation: **Ga 5:12** So then, what about troublemakers who try to get others to be circumcised? I wish they would go the whole way! I wish they would cut off everything that

marks them as men!

58. **Metaphor:** when is a word being used as a metaphor?

- a. A bible dictionary does not help here. If you look up the Greek word ‘thura’ you get ‘door’
- b. This does not tell you that it is used as a metaphor in John 10:9 where Jesus tells us he is the door
- c. How a word is used elsewhere in the Bible is not a test of whether a word is being used in this instance as a metaphor
- d. Luke 13:32 uses the word fox. Every other occurrence in the Bible of the word ‘fox’ means an orange pointy eared dog. Here Jesus is saying, “go tell that fox, Herod . . . ”. It is a fallacious argument to claim that because every other instance of the word fox is an animal, Jesus thinks Herod is a canine.
- e. Fox does mean fox, but it is being used as a metaphor.

59. **Euphemism:**

- a. Definition: inoffensive expression is substituted for one that would be considered culturally indequate
- b. Usually around sex death and toilet
- c. Song of songs
- d. 1 Sam. 24:3 cover feet = relieve oneself (an English euphemism!)  
2 Sam. 16:21 go in to = have sex with  
1 Kings 2:6 go down to the grave = die  
1 Kings 18:27 gone aside = relieving himself
- e. 2 Kings 2:10 slept with his fathers = died

60. **Idiom:**

- a. A saying, the meaning is familiar within a culture, but not necessarily to anyone outside that culture - without explanation
- b. eg 1 Kings 12:10 My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. (KJV)
  - i. means I will be more severe than my father

61. **Anthropomorphism**

- a. A type of metaphor where the subject (non human) takes on human attributes
- b. Folly as a wayward woman in Proverbs
- c. eg Mat 7:~5 wisdom is vindicated by its children

!! Recognize figures of speech and treat them appropriately!

|

## **Principle 5. Apparent Contradictions are impossible. Scripture validates scripture**

62. A contradiction: A = Not A. Jemima is pregnant and Jemima is not pregnant (at the same time, in the same way)

63. Given that God tells the truth, then he can not contradict himself, therefore we can safely assume that if there is a contradiction, then we have not fully understood one or both of the texts
64. For example nothing is impossible for God?
  - a. **Mat 19:26** Jesus said to them, "... but with God all things are possible."
65. Not if you read Hebrews 6, there are two listed
  - a. **He 6:13** For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,
  - b. **He 6:18** it is impossible for God to lie
66. If you are still tempted to think that nothing is impossible for God, ask yourself, can God name something that it is impossible for him to do?
67. We must revisit our understanding of Matt 19:26

**Mat 19:26** Jesus said to them, "... but with God all things are possible."

**Heb 6:13** For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

68. **Heb 6:18** it is impossible for God to lie

**Luke 9:24** For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

69. Paradoxes are not contradictions

- a. **Luke 9:24** For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.
- b. the life being talked about in both propositions is not the same

!! If our interpretation of one scripture contradicts another, then they both can't be correct interpretations. Scripture validates scripture

|

## Watch out! Volatile definitions

#### Volatile Definitions



70.

*"Hey can mean anything. It can mean yes, it can mean maybe, it could mean no, it could mean next week. Hey, the bottom line is you have to understand me to understand hey."*

71. For example, the concept of Abraham's seed or descendants has four different meanings in scripture.
- a. Jews, the literal physical descendants of Abraham eg Gen 17:19
  - b. Believing Gentiles, the recipients of blessing Rom 4 11-12
  - c. Believing Jews, the literal physical descendants of Abraham and recipients of the blessing Rom 11: 2-5
  - d. Jesus Christ, Gal 3:16

**!! You can get in to trouble if you import the wrong definition in to your interpretation**

|

### **Watch out! When the modern word paints the wrong picture**

72. For example 'Ambassador'
73. Today means rank, has an embassy,
74. In Ga, Paul's notion of an Ambassador is someone who communicates terms for peace on behalf of a waring leader to the weaker enemy. They were expendable
75. Knowing this gives a deeper understanding of the passage

**!! Being aware of the original meaning gets us closer to what the author intended us to understand**

|

### **Watch out! Correlation doesn't necessarily mean causation**

76. If you start with a notion, and find a correlation within the Bible with, say, an account or a character, but the original author did not have your notion in mind when he wrote . .
  - a. then you may have helped explain your notion by using something fa,iliar
  - b. but you have done nothing to interpret the text.

77. In other words, you may be able to map your idea on to a Bible account, but you would never in a million years arrive at your idea starting from the text . . . because it has nothing to do with it.
78. Under these circumstances, the Bible has just acted like any other familiar literature.
79. You could equally have used Star Wars or Winnie the Pooh

**!! If the notion is the inevitable consequence of the text then the text supports the notion. Otherwise it just correlates. Other work need to be done to see if the notion is 'Biblical'**

|

**Application: When you know “What it meant”? then you can answer “what does it mean to me today”? with more chance of accuracy**

80. More Quality Questions
81. **What was being said to what is always being said?**
82. **What was being taught to what is always being taught?**
83. **What the (human) author was saying to his audience to what the Author (God) is always saying to all people?**
  - a. Timeless principles for all people, of all places, of all times. emerge
84. Sometimes it is easy : ‘do not commit adultery’.
85. Sometimes there is no principle: ‘2 Timothy 4:13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with...’
86. Sometimes it is hard: ‘women cover your heads in church???’

**!! Knowing the original meaning gets us closer to what the modern application is**

|

**So we have our quality questions, So what?**

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I. Ask "What did it mean"? (Exegesis) before answering "what does it mean to me today"?	1. Who was the author & who were the primary recipients of the scripture? 2. What was going on at the time? 3. Why did he write what he wrote?
II. The meaning flows from larger units to the smaller (Context)	4. What is the flow of thought through the Book 5. What are the developing arguments before & after this paragraph 6. Why did the author place that paragraph, right there?
III. Make allowances for the genre	7. What is the genre of the text 8. How was that genre treated by the original audience
IV. Literally or literarily? Take it the way the author intended, recognizing figures of speech	9. Are there any figures of speech being used? 10. Where else does the Bible teach on this
V. Scripture validates scripture: real contradictions are impossible	<b>The Application</b> 1. Move through what <u>was</u> being said to what <u>is always</u> being said 2. Move from what <u>was</u> being taught what <u>is always</u> being taught ( <u>ie Doctrine</u> ). Sometimes easy, sometimes hard, sometimes no application



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Impossible contradictions



- Tools
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\*\* Insert some types of resources here!!

1. I am not saying that you need the help of experts to read & understand your Bible
2. But I am saying it is false to believe that Experts have nothing to bring (why else would God bless the church with the gift of gifted teachers)

!! The quality questions help us make accurate interpretations that lead to sound doctrine. Inaccurate interpretations lead to false doctrines, that can be dangerous.

## Example of how a nearly right message can be deadly

1. Paul's dying exhortation, therefore important

**2 Tim 4:2** *Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.<sup>3</sup> For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.*"

3. Blatant lies are easy to detect, but nearly true is a different matter. Nearly correct can kill!

2. hardest electrical wiring mistake to find is within wiring that is nearly correct;

3. This from a talk from a famous megachurch leader, who has a presence on TV, supermarket bookshelves etc;

"In dealing with people for several years, thousands of people, one thing I can tell you is that 99.9% of people are not bad people.

They may make poor choices, but deep down they've got a good heart."

4. Emphasis, my goal is not to throw mud (anyone who throws mud rapidly loses the ground they are standing on - [R.Z.]) but to offer a way of getting to the truth without descending into character assassination - a way to go for the idea, not the man:

a. Some background first. The context to his talk is about not being judgmental—until you understand what someone is going through, don't be quick to come to conclusions about their behavior. Love them

5. He seems to be saying in this quote that the overwhelming majority of people he has dealt with are not bad people, they have good hearts but make poor choices.

6. Is this true? - PAUSE

a. what verses come to mind that speak about this?  
b. PAUSE

7. Compare

a. All people have sinned (Rom. 3:23) - not just 0.1%  
b. The penalty for our sin is death (Rom. 6:23) - a bit harsh for good hearted people that only make mistakes  
c. Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins (Rom. 5:8) (not our poor choices)  
d. The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure (Jer 17:9)  
e. Mat 7:7 - the world hates me because I testify of it that its deeds are evil

"In dealing with people for several years, thousands of people, one thing I can tell you is that 99.9% of people are not bad people.

They may make poor choices, but deep down they've got a good heart."

f.

- All people have sinned ([Rom. 3:23](#)) - *not just 0.1%*
- The penalty for our sin is death ([Rom. 6:23](#)) - *a bit harsh for good hearted people that only make mistakes*
- Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins ([Rom. 5:8](#)) (*not our poor choices*)
- The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure ([Jer. 17:9](#))

8. Why is this life & death?

- a. More background: at the end of talk "#494" the presenter concludes thus:
  - b. *"We never close our broadcasts without giving you the opportunity to make Jesus the Lord of your Life. Would you pray with me? Just say - Lord Jesus, I repent of my sin. Come in to my heart. Wash me clean. I make you my Lord & saviour. Friends if you prayed that simple prayer, we believe you got born again . . ."*
  - c. It is plausible that many would put themselves in with 99.9% (0.1% reserved for people like Stalin, Hitler, that man who held those girls in that Cleveland basement for years)
  - d. If someone comes to the cross, thinking that they are basically good, then isn't this justification by works, rather than by grace? (there are lots of scripture that deal with his wrong notion)
  - e. Lord Jesus ..Come in to my heart, which like 99.9% of people's is a good heart . .
9. Things to do with communicating & understanding the Gospel are life and death issues!

!! If a suspect teaching or doctrine has verses supporting it, then Hermeneutics can be used to examine the merits of the case

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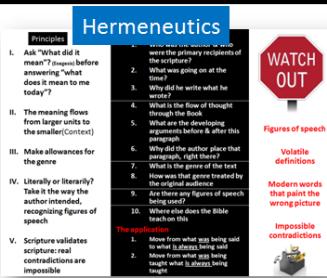
## So How can Hermeneutics be Applied?

!! Whenever we are taught, whenever we are teaching, whenever we are handling the Word of God, accurate interpretation should be the goal.

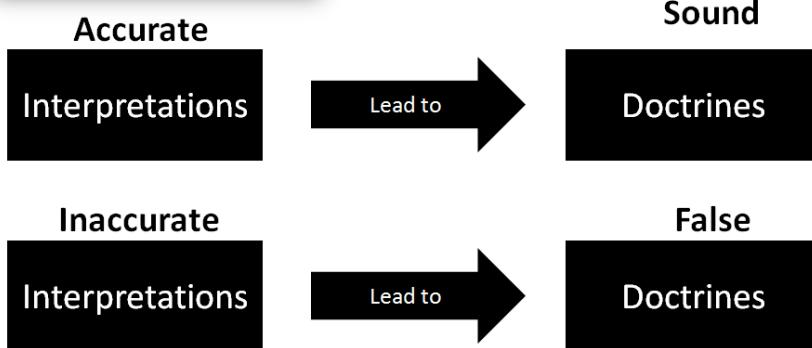
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**A year's focus on Doctrine exposes us to teaching that may be new, we may find controversial or challenging to our existing views (hopefully!)**

### Hermeneutics & Doctrine [that which is taught]



Helps improve accuracy  
of Interpretation



2. Some Doctrines are non negotiable for Classical Christians
  - a. see the Apostles' Creed
3. Accurate interpretations lead to sound doctrines, Inaccurate interpretations lead to false doctrines
  - a. Sound doctrine is to be 'guarded' (Titus 1 & 2')
  - b. False doctrines are dangerous - false teachers are to be recognized & dealt with (1 Tim 1:3 for example)
4. With some doctrines, controversy & alternative views may always exist (by design?)
  - a. eg between present & past self, (those of us who admit we have changed our minds)
  - b. between friends
  - c. between the authority and yourself
  - d. often between what I have always believed and what I now am convinced is true
5. I may be a problem!

What I like to hear is not a reliable indicator of what is true

**2 Tim 4:3** *For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.*

- a. The flashy package: Signs and wonders are not a reliable indicator that the source is telling the truth

**Matt 7:22** *Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!*

### Hermeneutics makes what God said the focus

- b. my itching ears may give me selective hearing
- c. my seduction by the trappings causing me to overlook what is actually being said
- d. my focus on the abuse of what is being taught, rather than the appropriate use what is being taught causing me to miss the point. I keep saying "Yeah but . . ." in my head so loudly that I drown out the good points.
6. How we prefer one another is a huge point
7. We can do some of this alone, but there is immense value in the exploration of the texts together. After all God gave the gift of teachers to the church
8. A loving process to resolve conflicting ideas, worthy of the Bride of Christ is needed.
2. First of all is it right for members of the body to have robust debate?
  - a. Let's say someone thinks it is wrong to argue (I don't mean quarrel)
    - i. If I assert "It is right to argue", what can they do but keep silent.
    - ii. If I assert that you have to be circumcised to be saved?
  - b. Obviously some things are worth arguing for (and not remaining silent over - especially if I get my **Mohel** out)
    - i. Paul & Peter Acts 15, Ga 2 thought so
    - ii. **Ga 2:11** When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.
  - c. Some things are not (foolish & stupid arguments). Once we abandon the contest then it's very easy for bad teaching to rule.
    - i. probably with demonic approval
  - d. However as brothers and sisters, we need to not only be concerned with both unity and harmony of the body, but also concerned with discovering truth.
3. What Hermeneutics does for us to make the debate OBJECTIVE,
  - a. the OBJECT is what God said
4. Hermeneutics removes the SUBJECTIVITY, because the SUBJECT is no longer me and you
5. Positions like these no longer poison relationships
  - a. I've always believed . . .

- b. I prefer to believe . . .
- c. That's just your opinion . . .

!! The exact forum for doing this is likely to be culture specific - but there is one necessary element: Hermeneutics!

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## Concluding Remarks

- 4. God should be obeyed & trusted, his word (rightly) interpreted gives me all the whos, whats, whens whys wheres & hows to obey and trust Him that I need
- 5. Hermeneutics gives us a common objective tool to apply Doctrine to our lives and helps us mature.
- 6. It removes the focus from us and our biases and places the focus on God's word, that which has power in our lives!
- 87. Diligence & hard work required... or be ashamed 2Tim 2:15
- 88. Gaining insight into hard passages of the Bible is often an exciting adventure.
- 89. However the Bible is less about a puzzle to solve and more about an Author to know.
  - a. As you tackle some of the tougher texts, don't glory in your knowledge.
  - b. Instead, Glory in God, who graciously condescend to you and reveals Himself through His Word.
- 7. My closing paryer (Paul's prayer for the Ephesians)
  - a. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may (he) give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. **18** *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the [y]saints, **19** and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.