

GOOD NEWS
for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#137)
Learning the basics about being saved:
Principles & issues.

1

THIS PRESENTATION HAS 3 SECTIONS:

★ The first 2 are OPTIONAL. ★

Our goal today is to look at how we can understand what a Scripture passage says – *and to do so with a reasonable degree of certainty.* (Next time, we hope to illustrate this, by looking at words related to the concept of "save/savior/salvation/save.")

For those who are interested, this presentation begins with a look at the modern-day attack on language, and how we need to respond to it.

THESE ARE THE 3 SECTIONS:

1. [OPTIONAL] The present-day attack on language. (Beginning on slide 4.)
2. [OPTIONAL] Responding to the world's attack; preparing to understand the Bible (foundational issues). (Beginning on slide 14.)
3. A basic method for understanding Scripture. (Beginning on slide 21.)

2

THE WORLD'S HOSTILITY TOWARD GOD AND HIS WORD.

We know that we are of God, and **the whole world is under the sway of the evil one.**

1 John 5:19 (CSB)

⇒ **The world** is doing all it can to limit the ability of people to understand and apply Scripture to life.

⇒ **Some of the ways it is being done:**

- ✓ Suppressing the public expression of the Bible and what it says.
- ✓ Hindering the private pursuit of Bible understanding (by distractions, time constraints, peer pressure, downplaying its value, etc.).

⇒ **One of the ways the world does this involves language:**

- ✓ By distorting the nature of language and communication, people who do pursue the Bible won't be able to accurately understand it.

3

① THE PRESENT-DAY ATTACK ON LANGUAGE (AND ON THE BIBLE).

You've probably noticed that, in recent years...

There have been major changes in the nature of the language – changes which are being pushed upon people, whether they like it or not.

ABOUT THIS CHANGE:

⇒ **Who is doing it:** Those who have the greatest control over the ways people think.

- This includes the media in its various forms (TV, radio, internet...), teachers who have an anti-God agenda, politicians, some religious leaders (apostate fakes), etc.
- These people know what they are doing – although they may be ignorant of how the *devil* is using their efforts.

4

⇒ **Their ultimate goal:** To shift and distort society's perception of language, so that it will result in a society who's concepts of moral *good* and *evil* are turned around. (One's language influences one's perception of reality.)

- This is not something new; it's just more comprehensive, deliberate (on the human level), and more thought-out.
- Ultimately, it's just another way that sinful people have rebelled against the Bible and its authority.

⇒ **How they are accomplishing it:**

- Redefining words and changing their significance.
- Suppressing the use of some words (especially those that promote moral concepts).
- Inventing words that promote evil as morally "good" or "neutral."
- Verbally (and sometimes physically) attacking people who don't go along with their views. (Compare to 1 Peter 4:4.)

5

⇒ **Types of changes:**

- **Some of these changes are obvious** – such as:
 - ✓ Attacks on issues related to moral conduct and gender.
 - ✓ The creation of words that promote views that are hostile to the Bible and moral values.
 - ✓ The creation of terms that are loaded with derogatory meanings and innuendos – used against those who accept what the Bible says about values and human nature.
- **There are also less-obvious changes** – "quiet" shifts in meanings and connotations of words.

⇒ **The effect this has on people:**

- Those who don't go along with these changes are often verbally bullied, "cancelled," threatened, silenced, and sometimes even physically abused.
- Even when responses are not this extreme, the changes result in a breakdown in communication. People end up using the same words, yet interpret them in *opposite* ways.

6

How did we get to this point in society?

- ⇒ For quite some time, major universities (atheistic state-controlled, as well as pseudo-christian) have been teaching that there are no standards or continuity in language.
- They teach that "meaning" is not based on what the author or speaker meant, but on what the hearer or interpreter chooses to believe (even if it is the *opposite* of the author's intent).
- ⇒ This is based on the view that there is *no such thing* as an "absolute truth" that doesn't change.
- Ultimately, this view originates in a rejection of God – even though (as we have seen in the past) it is a willful rejection of truth they once knew... but suppressed by their wickedness (Romans 1:18+).
 - With this relativistic view, each person can decide for *himself** what he wants to believe... and for that person, it becomes "truth."

* Today, they would probably say "theirself," instead of "himself," because they have even distorted God's standard of "gender."

7

How successful are they?

- ⇒ This distortion has been so successful, that even those who claim to be non-atheist (or even "religious" or "Christian") are being influenced by it.
- The words and concepts used by many people have changed so much, that the people now have a totally different view of "reality" than they had even a few years ago.
 - It is a view that is completely *incompatible* with the language and reality of the Bible.
 - If such people do try to find out what the Bible says, their revised "understanding" of language will lead them away from what the Bible actually says.

This is one of the reasons we need to pursue the "renewed" mind, mentioned in Romans 12:2.

8

Society's changing attitude toward God and his followers.

- ⇒ As language (words and connotations) is changing, society's attitude toward God, the Bible, and Christians is changing.
- There is increased hostility and hatred toward God and his people, and a deliberate suppression of what the Bible says.
 - With increasing fervor, they *suppress* the truth they know about God... and *earn* his wrath *because it is a willful act*. *
 - In the Bible, God clearly warns such people that there will be consequences. But instead of repenting, they do all they can to sway others into the same rebellion.
 - Since they refuse to accept the Bible, they lose their only opportunity to recognize reality and to repent. Their future judgment is their own doing.

* In the past, we looked rather extensively at the fact that unsaved people do have a knowledge of the truth, which, by their wickedness, they deliberately suppress. They also have a conscience that they *choose* to go against. *Therefore, they will be without excuse at the Day of Judgment.*

9

The effect of all this on Bible comprehension:

- ⇒ Since it destroys one's ability to *accurately* comprehend what is communicated, *it destroys one's ability to accurately understand what the Bible says*.
- Eventually, the Bible becomes impossible to comprehend. It is treated as though it was full of error, and often as though it was even dangerous.
- ⇒ All this results in a bias against the Bible, the God of the Bible, the moral principles of the Bible, those who follow the Bible, etc.
- A typical response to the Bible: "There is no 'truth' in the Bible that is binding upon all people. The Bible can mean whatever a person decides, and that becomes the person's 'truth.' Or the person can freely reject it all."
 - People who claim that the Bible does speak a truth that all must accept (and obey) – as the Bible itself claims – tend to be ignored, silenced – or worse.

10

We don't need to join them in their rebellion!

Though the world is promoting ignorance of the Bible, we can promote understanding of the Bible.

THEIR GOAL:

- To remove all moral absolutes and standards from having an influence on society.
- To suppress all public expression of Christianity in society. (This is why, for instance, they are so hostile to the 10 Commandments, Bible reading, prayer, etc.)

OUR GOAL (for those who are willing to rely on God's power):

- We can fight back. We can resist the world's influence, *at least in our own lives* (if not in the lives of others).
- We can grow in our knowledge of the truth and in the freedom that obeying the truth brings (James 1:25; 2:12; John 8:31-32).

11

⇒ But FIRST, we need to recognize what's happening!

- People who haven't been consciously opposing the world's ways will have difficulty in recognizing them. But if they are willing to put some effort into learning the differences (relying on God and his Word), it will become obvious.
- ⇒ **If we are willing:** We can learn how the language (and its connotations) has shifted in what it communicates.
- We can compare "now" to "the way it was" – even a few years ago. **EXAMPLES:** Interacting with people of past generations; reading books and literature from past generations; even looking at older dictionaries (and also Bible dictionaries) can be helpful.
 - We can carefully observe how the Bible uses words and language, and how certain concepts go together (and other concepts don't). **EXAMPLE:** The Bible connects "freedom" to "obeying God's commands." The world connects "freedom" to "rebelliousness against authority."

12

THE WORD OF GOD CAN BE UNDERSTOOD!

Our ability to understand *language* determines our ability to understand the Word of God.

We must also be willing to *accept* and *live* by what the Word of God says. We must trust God for the ability to accept its message. Otherwise, knowing what it says has no value.

Satan, the ruler of this world (John 12:31, etc.) knows this.

So it's no mere coincidence that the people of the world – those who are under Satan's control (1 John 5:19) – are actively attacking the nature and general stability of language.

↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
★ WE MUST OPPOSE THIS ATTACK, but also ★
the Satanic forces that are behind it!

13

② RESPONDING TO THE WORLD'S ATTACK; PREPARING TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE.

THINGS WE CAN AFFIRM.

1. Though some language changes do naturally occur, what's happening today is different.



Some language changes naturally occur over time.
[EXAMPLE: "thee," from over 400 years ago, is now "you" (singular); "ye" is now "you" (plural).]
But what is currently happening goes far *beyond* that.



⇒ *Sinful redefinitions* of words and concepts have occurred down through the ages. But today, it's more intense and deliberate, willful and sometimes vicious.

14

2. Words do have value.



Words and sentences communicate meaning – concepts, values, information. Even figurative language, taken within its context, conveys information.



We don't have to be 100.00% certain of what a person may be saying. We can *still* communicate with *adequate* comprehension.

It's when a person starts to deliberately change definitions (or they blindly accept definitions pushed upon them by others) that we run into problems.

Ironically, those who attack the stability of language USE it to promote their views! They want us to accept as *absolutely true* their claim that nothing is *absolutely true*! They also want us to believe that the views of *anyone* who disagrees with them are false, and should be ignored and suppressed!

15

3. We CAN learn what the Bible says, with a high degree of accuracy.

- Our duty is to determine, to whatever extent possible, what the original author meant (and ultimately what God meant) – and we can get reasonably close, if we are willing.
- We won't attain 100% knowledge of everything; but we can learn all that is necessary for life and godliness.

4. It's not for us to invent our own personal interpretations, but to find out what it means *according to the Bible*.

When you say this:

I DON'T CARE WHAT THE ORIGINAL WRITER MEANT.
I WANT TO DECIDE WHAT IT MEANS TO ME!

Jesus says this:

You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.

Mark 7:8 (NIV)

16

OUR STARTING POINT:

1. We start with God!

- **GOD is the ultimate source of communication.**
 - Because we have been created in the "image of God" (Genesis 1:26), we are able to communicate in ways that animals can't.
 - When we, the human race, chose to sin, it had a negative effect on our ability to communicate. *But it hasn't totally destroyed our ability to do so.*

2. We start with the Bible!

- **GOD gave us Scripture. He used words that are clear enough to leave all people without excuse.**
 - The Bible *is* comprehensible and accurate (2 Timothy 3:16-17), though some parts are more difficult than others (2 Peter 3:16).
 - Because of sin's effect on the human race, we won't reach a 100.00% *perfect* understanding of the Bible. But we can attain an *adequate* knowledge of what God said – all that we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).

17

3. We start with definitions!

⇒ For accurate communication, we need to know what we're talking about. THIS IS WHY WE DEFINE ISSUES, when studying the Bible!

⇒ As we've looked at various Good News topics, we've normally included something about the *meaning* of the words.

EXAMPLES: "Repentance means..." / "Faith means..."

- This is because the world has distorted these concepts, to make them more compatible with what the *sinful nature* wants.
- We need to understand the words the way *God* intended them, or we lose the ability to accurately comprehend what the Bible is saying. (We can learn these things, but we must be *willing* to put forth the effort.)

It may take time,
but we CAN GROW in our knowledge of the truth!

18

⇒ **GROWING in our knowledge of the truth.** To counteract the world's influence, we must respond the same way that everyone else down through history has needed to respond:

- We must let Scripture *change* the way we think and act. We need "renewed minds" – Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:10.
- We need to learn to accept Scripture the way it presents itself.
- With the modern-day attack on language, we may also need to focus on "re-learning" various aspects of our own language (i.e., prior to the world's distortions).
- Changes like this take time. This is why Scripture says we *grow* in our knowledge of the truth – Colossians 1:10; 1 Peter 3:18.

⇒ **We can do something to promote this growing in the truth!**

- The Spirit of God works in our lives to make it possible. But there is also a "human responsibility" aspect, which will be our focus here.

OUR GOAL:

NOT THIS! So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles [= unsaved] do, in **the futility of their thinking**. They are **darkened in their understanding** and separated from the life of God because of the **ignorance** that is in them due to the **hardening of their hearts**. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

BUT THIS! That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to **put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be **made new in the attitude of your minds**; and to **put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:17–24 (NIV)

③ A BASIC METHOD FOR UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE.

We need to pay attention to:

- ① The words and their meanings.
- ② How those words connect.
- ③ The context of the passage.
- ④ What other passages say.

START AT THE CENTER
1 2 3 4
AND WORK OUT!

- Doing this can help us gain a better understanding of Scripture passages (single verses and large sections), as well as Scripture concepts (words and topics).
- We can base our study on what we find in Bible translations; or we can focus on the original languages that the Bible was written in. (Both ways have value.)

DEMONSTRATING THIS METHOD WITH THE TOPIC OF SALVATION.

- We will look at the New Testament word group (nouns, verbs, etc.) that gives us the words: salvation, save, savior, safe.
- To get the *full* picture of what salvation is all about, we would need to look at other concepts (which we have done in the past); but even limiting ourselves to just this "save" concept will teach us a lot about it!

“ **WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT SALVATION, IF WE SIMPLY PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS IN VERSES THAT MENTION THIS "SAVE" CONCEPT?** ”

Some parts of Scripture are more difficult to understand than others. But we will see that God made matters about salvation clear enough, that nobody has an excuse for not paying attention to it!

Paying attention to:

- ① The words and their meanings.

CORE CONCEPT
SPECIAL APPLICATIONS
OTHER USES (LESS FREQUENT)

- Words tend to have a *core concept*. This is a good place to start, as we try to understand what a word communicates.
- Surrounding this core might be a range of *special applications*. Figures of speech may also be included here.
- Sometimes, other factors may cause a word to develop in a way that seems unrelated to its core concept. (The context will help us in this matter; as will Bible dictionaries, etc.)

Applied to the Salvation/Save Concept:

- ✓ The core concept is "to deliver."
- ✓ In different contexts, this "delivering" can refer to: being *healed, rescued, or saved (eternally)*. But they all communicate the basic core concept of being *delivered* from something.

Paying attention to:

- ② How those words connect.

“Every day he sends his closest friends some e-mail.”

he | sends | e-mail | friends | some | day | Every

THOUGH HELPFUL, THIS TYPE OF DIAGRAMMING IS NOT NEEDED!

- Some people may be familiar with "sentence diagramming." Though this can be helpful, simply paying attention to the words (especially connectors and prepositions) will teach us a lot about a passage.

EXAMPLES of: ① CONJUNCTIONS– and, for, because, but, therefore, so that, however...; ② PREPOSITIONS– in, above, through, by, over, against, beside, down, out of...

Applied to the Salvation/Save Concept:

- ✓ There is a *huge* difference between "saved for works" and "saved by works"! Scripture tells us that *works* are one of the *purposes* of salvation, not the *cause* of it! (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Paying attention to:

③ The context of the passage.

- What is the passage about?
The context will influence the significance of the words we are studying.



Applied to the Salvation/Save Concept:

- ✓ Some saving is *eternal*; some saving is *temporary*.

EXAMPLES: ① *eternal* – what Jesus accomplished on the cross (mentioned in many passages); ② *temporary* – the people who were saved (kept alive) in Noah's ark (1 Peter 3:20).

- ✓ In New Testament Greek, the *same* phrase, "your faith has *saved* you" can apply to eternal salvation... or to physical healing. English translations tend to make it easier for us, by using two words, *save* and *heal*, depending on the context.

25

Paying attention to:

④ What other passages say.

- Different passages may focus on different (but related) issues. The passage we are studying may say one thing... but another passage may say something different. Taken together, we can develop a better understanding of the *whole* issue.
- As we grow in our understanding, we will want to look at other related issues. Ultimately, we would consider the content of the *whole* Bible!

I WANT TO AVOID
HALF-TRUTH!



Applied to the Salvation/Save Concept:

- ✓ One verse may tell us that we are saved *by faith*. Others may tell us that it is because of *what Jesus did*. We may also learn that salvation is an *internal (heart) change* that influences external actions, and that we *need to tell others* about it, etc.

26

BUT WHAT IF I *STILL* DON'T UNDERSTAND A VERSE?

- ❖ It's OK! There are plenty of other Scripture passages on the issue. Start there, and the passage you're questioning may become clearer at a later time.
- ❖ You can often narrow down the possibilities, by eliminating interpretations that *cannot* apply. Then, even if you can't reach a final conclusion, you will know that your options are all compatible with truth that you *do* know!
- ❖ Saying "I don't know" is a legitimate response. We are not God! Don't *force* an opinion onto the passage so that you can pretend to "know it all"!

WARNING!

Scripture itself tells us that some things in the Bible are "hard to understand." In other words, it may take time and effort! Those who try to come up with an "easy" answer *distort* it, potentially "to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16).

27

Next time:

It will be our goal to look at some of the things we can discover, when we apply these study techniques to the words that have to do with being SAVED.



“ WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT SALVATION, IF WE SIMPLY PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS IN VERSES THAT MENTION THIS "SAVE" CONCEPT? ”

We will include verses that use the words: salvation, save, savior, safe.

28

Today:

We would encourage you to make it

Your MISSION

to use these basic study principles
in *your own* Bible study.



In doing so,

you will be obeying God's command to "grow" in knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). If you're willing to *apply* what you learn to your life, you will also be "growing up" in your *salvation* (1 Peter 2:2)!

29

Credits

SCRIPTURE

- Scriptures marked "NIV" - Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. (www.biblica.com)

PICTURES (original sources; modifications may have been made)

- Megaphone – roshelin / CC0: <https://openclipart.org/detail/167691/megafono>
- Page divider – GDJ / CC0: <https://openclipart.org/detail/294129/lancy-etlegant-dvd-4>
- Sentence diagram – DennisHinks © 2005
- Ark – J4p4n / CC0: <https://openclipart.org/detail/193158/noahs-ark>
- Cross – GDJ / CC0: <https://openclipart.org/detail/308355/jesus-on-the-cross-line-art>
- Student and open book – johnny_automatic / CC0: <https://openclipart.org/detail/1036/look-it-up>

Presentation – Dennis Hinks © 2022.

30