

# How to Correctly Interpret God's Word 2

Presented by Chris Rosebrough



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# Class Premise

**Sola Scriptura** - The Bible is the inerrant word of God and the ONLY authority of truth and doctrine regarding the true worship of God

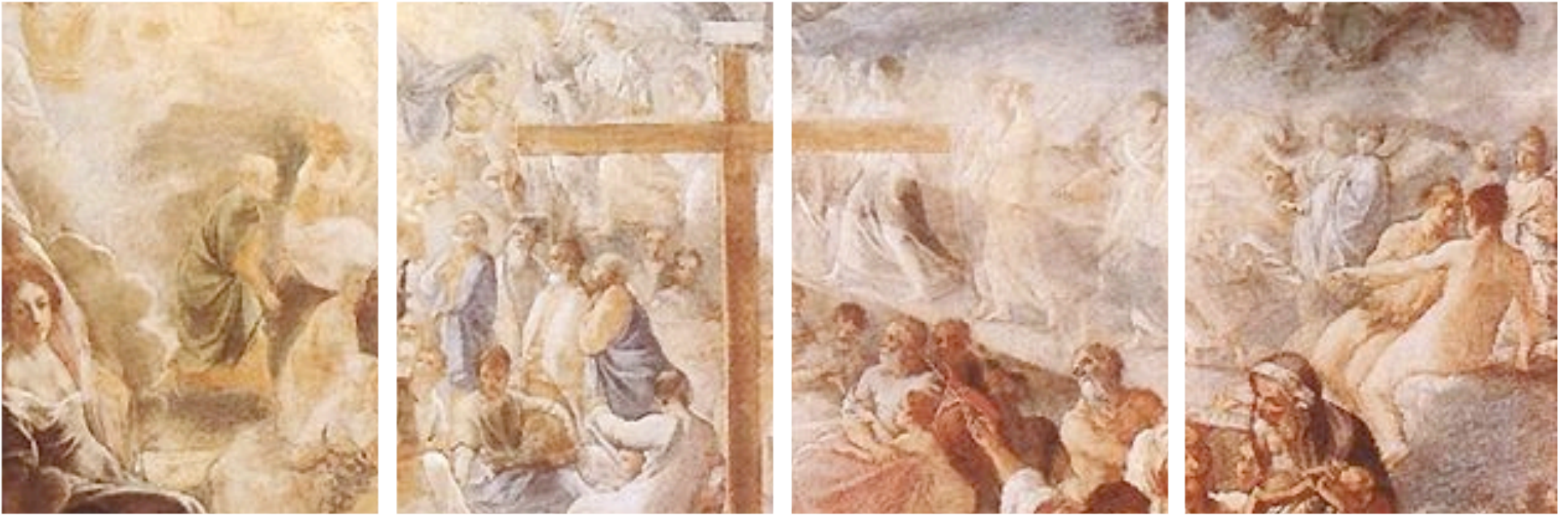
**Solus Christus** - We are saved through Christ's work Alone

**Sola Gratia** - We are saved by Grace Alone

**Sola Fide** - Through Faith Alone

**Interactiva** - The class is interactive, stop me and ask questions.





# How to Properly Read the Bible

- ❖ An Introductory Series on “Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth”
  - ❖ The Mechanics



**2 Tim. 2:15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, **rightly handling the word of truth.**



**Rom. 16:17** I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles **contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught**; avoid them. 18 For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and **by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.**

**Matt. 24:3** As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

Matt. 24:4 Jesus answered: **“Watch out that no one deceives you.**





## **Quadrica** (Four-Fold Meaning)

- Literal
- Allegorical
- Tropological - Moral
- Anagogical - Relating to the Eternal Glory



“The great weakness and deficiency of this method was its obscuration of the true meaning of Scripture. Mixed hopelessly with the allegorical method was an exaggerated typical interpretation. The allegorical methodology allowed the imagination of the interpreter to run wild so that the Bible becomes putty in the hands of the interpreter. **Luther protested that his antagonist treat scriptures as if they were a wax nose to be pulled about at will. It was possible for different doctrinal systems to originate by use of the allegorical method, yet there was nothing within the method to distinguish the true from the false.”**

“The Roman Catholic Church has always welcomed the use of the four-fold sense of scripture, because this method of interpretation permits the justification of any doctrine



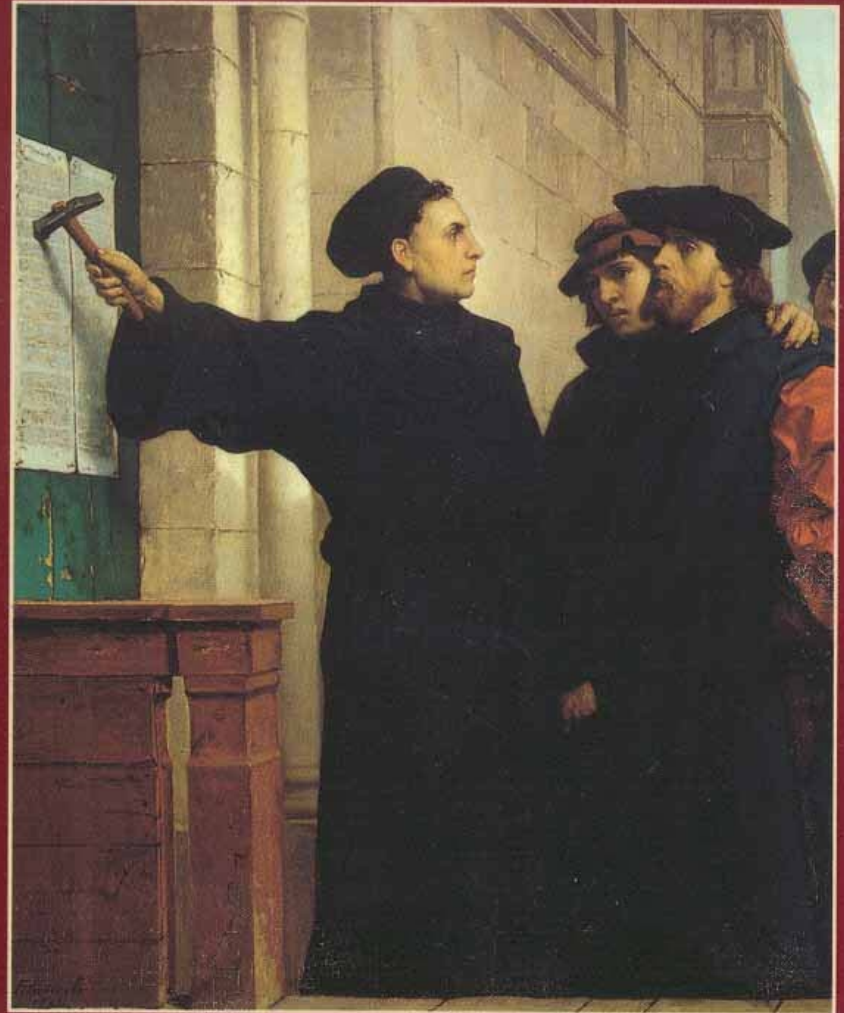


## An Under Appreciated Fact of History

“Many students of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, while recognizing the religious nature of the Protestant Revolt, have not been aware that, above all, the movement inaugurated by Martin Luther was a hermeneutical revolution of the first magnitude. Luther’s ultimate break with Rome was **made possible by the discovery of principles of interpretation, which were either forgotten or unknown to the Medieval Church.** Only as these new principles were found and applied, was it possible for Luther to direct the attention of European Christianity to the teachings of Christ and his Apostles”

**Raymond F. Surburg**

Concordia Theological Monthly, April 1953



# **Historical-Grammatical**

**Encompasses Three Primary scopes.**

**Biblical Interpretation must be:**

- 1. Historical**
- 2. Grammatical**
- 3. Theological**



# Historical

Since the books of the Bible were written at certain times over a 1550-year period of history and at certain places on earth and for various purposes and groups of readers, biblical interpretation must be historical. Accordingly, the exegete must carefully consider the historical circumstances under which each Bible book was written, as well as the the historical contents of each book.

# Grammatical

**Rule #1** - Since the books of the Bible were written by men in certain ordinary, human languages, **no interpretation of Scripture is to be accepted which does not agree with the established rules of grammar.** Here the term grammar is employed in a broad sense, signifying the study of all aspects of language.

This takes interpretation out of the subjective realm and puts it into the objective.



# Follow Rules of Grammar

# Grammatical

**Rule #2** - An interpreter's primary and chief aim should be to ascertain the meaning of words according to the meaning in actual popular usage (*usus loquendi*).

The etymological meaning of a word may or may not have been retained in popular usage.



# Grammatical

**Rule #2b** - The meaning of a word according to the meaning it most generally carried in common/popular usage (uses generalis) **is to be preferred, unless there are sufficient reasons to compel the exegete to accept some other meaning.**

We must assume that a speaker or writer would use his words in that sense in which those to whom he speaks or writes are accustomed to use them.

Follow Rules of Grammar

Words Defined According  
to Popular Usage  
(usus generalis)

# ὕδωρ (hudor)

**In the first century this word meant ‘water’ according to popular usage.**

**If you travel to Greece today and order a glass of ὕδωρ at a restaurant the waiter will look at you funny. Why?**

**Because ὕδωρ today mean’s ‘holy water’.**



# Confused interpretation

**Matt. 17:15** said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the **water**. (holy water)

**Interpretation** - The boy is constantly disrupting church services?

Maybe the fire is from the candles in the service.

# Grammatical

**Rule #3** - A special meaning of a word (uses specialis), differing from the uses generalis, is often found in certain circles or with certain classes of men. At times a writer employs various words altogether or preponderantly in a certain sense, different from the uses generalis. The exegete must take into consideration an usus specialis in his exposition of a biblical text; also any variations within the usus specialis, as used in a broader or narrower sense.

# Rule 3 Examples

**Gal 2:6**- whatever they were then, it makes no difference to me — the face of man God receives not,

Hebraism- it means God is not impartial

**Luke 20:11** 'And he added to send another servant, and they that one also having beaten and dishonoured, did send away empty; 12 and he added to send a third, and this one also, having wounded, they did cast out.

Hebraism- means to continue to do something



## Follow Rules of Grammar

Words Defined According  
to Popular Usage  
(usus generalis)

In Rare Cases, Words Carry  
Special Meanings  
(usus specialis)

# Grammatical

**Rule #4** - The exposition of a passage must agree with the context, immediate and remote. **The immediate context is the more important and usually decisive.**

Follow Rules of Grammar

Words Defined According  
to Popular Usage  
(usus generalis)

In Rare Cases, Words Carry  
Special Meanings  
(usus specialis)

Context



# Grammatical

**Rule #5** - Every word in holy scripture can have only one intended meaning in any one place and in any one relation. *The intended sense is one (sensus literalis unus est).*

This rule enunciates a fundamental law of human communication, without which intelligent communication would be impossible.

Follow Rules of Grammar

Words Defined According  
to Popular Usage  
(usus generalis)

In Rare Cases, Words Carry  
Special Meanings  
(usus specialis)

Context - Goal: Find the ONE Intended Meaning

# Grammatical

**Rule #6** - The literal meaning (*sensus literae*) of a word should in all cases be accepted as one intended sense (*sensus literalis*), unless sufficient reasons prompt the interpreter to accept figurative use of a word, or figurative speech.

The reason for departing from the literal meaning of words is usually provided in the immediate context.

In this connection, the literary genre of a Bible book should be taken into consideration; this at the outset of this study will help the exegete decide whether to interpret a passage literally, figuratively or symbolically.

Follow Rules of Grammar

Words Defined According  
to Popular Usage  
(usus generalis)

In Rare Cases, Words Carry  
Special Meanings  
(usus specialis)

Context - Goal: Find the ONE Intended Meaning

Figurative or symbolic  
meaning is possible and  
is determined by genre  
& context

# Incorrect Interpretation

**Matt. 23:37** “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!

Interpretation - Jesus is a female chicken and has wings (we just can't see them). But since HE SAID that he would gather them as a “hen gather her brood under her wings” we can be assured that he meant what he said.

However, Jesus in context is speaking figuratively.



# Theological

**Rule #1** - Because the Scripture is of divine origin and is the verbally inspired Word of God, it is wholly without inconsistency of thought or speech, without contradiction, without the slightest error (in the original manuscripts).

The Bible is the inscripured Word of God, and as such presents the truth in ordinary language in all matters of which it treats. The kind of truth the Bible claims for itself is correspondence to reality (the correspondence theory of truth)

# Theological

**Rule #2** - Scripture (not human reason, personal feeling, church, or tradition) is the sole source and norm of true doctrine in the sphere of religion and theology.

This is the Sola Scriptura Principle of the Lutheran Reformation

# Theological

**Rule #3** - The less clear or plain passages of scripture MUST be interpreted in the light of the clearer passages.

This method must NEVER be reversed.

Scripture interprets scripture.

# Theological

**Rule #4** - All biblical interpretation must take cognizance of, and be guided by, **Scripture's self-announced purpose** - to make people wise unto salvation and to train them in holy living. All interpretation must be edifying.

**2 Tim. 3:15** and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, **which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.** 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE

- 
- God is bigger and better and closer than we can imagine.
- The Bible is God's perfect guidebook for living.
- Jesus is God showing himself to us.
- Through His Holy Spirit, God lives in and through us now.



# Theological

**Rule #5** - To rightly understand and interpret Scripture is to necessarily distinguish between Law & Gospel elements in the text and then properly relate the former (law) to the latter (gospel). Justification by grace through faith in Christ is the res (main subject) of all true biblical and Christian theology.

The interpreter **MUST** see to it the his interpretation of the text has CHRIST as its center, teaches HIM, and glorifies HIM as Savior and Lord.

1Tim. 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, 1Tim. 1:2 To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 1 Tim. 1:3 As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus that you may **charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine**, 4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.



**1 Tim 1:5** The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6 Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

**1Tim. 1:8** *Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,* 9

understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers,





**1 Tim 1:10** the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, 11 in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.



**John 5: 39** You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; **and it is they that bear witness about me**, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.





**Luke 24:13** That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” 19 And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.



**Luke 24:21** But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” 25 And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in **all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**





**Luke 24:28** So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, 29 but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, “**Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?**” 33 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.



**Romans 8:1-6:** 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. **6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.** 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (ESV)





**History:** Written by the Apostle Paul to the Christian Church in Rome. Written in the summer of A.D. 51 or Spring of A.D. 52. Probably written in Corinth

**Context:** The general context of this passage begins with the gospel proclamation that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. This passage announces the good news that what we were unable to do (perfectly keep God's law) was done for us by Christ. Therefore, Christians no longer walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

**Verses 5-8** describe the contrast and consequences between the life of the mind set on the things of the spirit and the mind set on things of the flesh (Sinful Nature).





**Main Points from verses 5-8:**

1. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

1.1 to set the mind on the flesh is death  
1.2 the mind set on the flesh is hostile to God  
1.2.1 the mind set on the flesh does not submit to God's law.  
1.2.2 the mind set on the flesh cannot submit to God's law.  
1.2.3 Those who are 'in the flesh' cannot please God.

2 Those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit.

2.1 to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace



## Interpretation

Christ has redeemed us and we do not live under God's condemnation because of our sinfulness and lawlessness.

The law of the spirit (gospel) has set us free from the law of sin and death. Christ accomplished this FOR us.

Those who live according to the flesh (sinful nature) set their minds on the things of the flesh.

The mind set on the flesh IS DEATH.  
The mind set on the flesh is hostile to God and cannot submit to God's law or even please God.





## **Law done lawfully**

Total depravity, utter sinfulness, in ability to save ourselves.

## **Christ as Center of Theology**

Christ has saved us, redeemed us, fulfilled the perfect requirements of the law for us. Faith = the life of the spirit.

