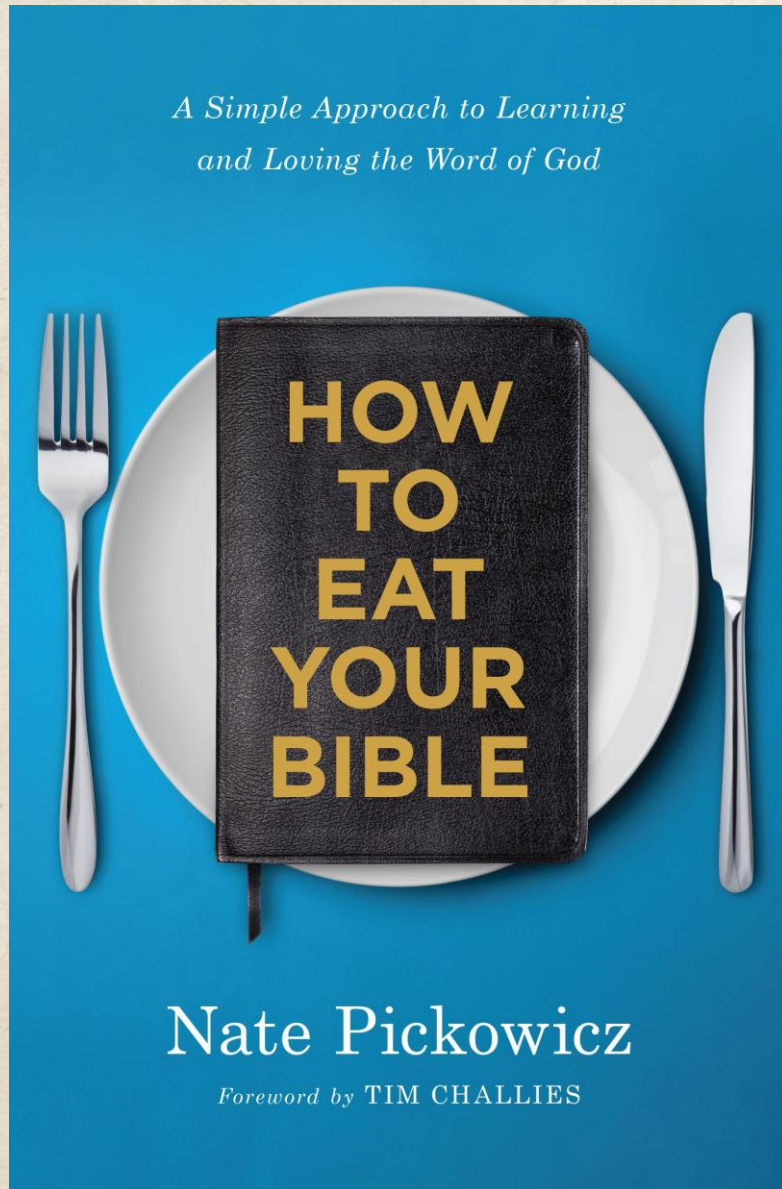


Men *of the* Word

SESSION 12:

**The Principles
of Bible Study, Pt 2**

IT IS WRITTEN



RECOMMENDED RESOURCE FOR BEGINNERS

Nate Pickowicz

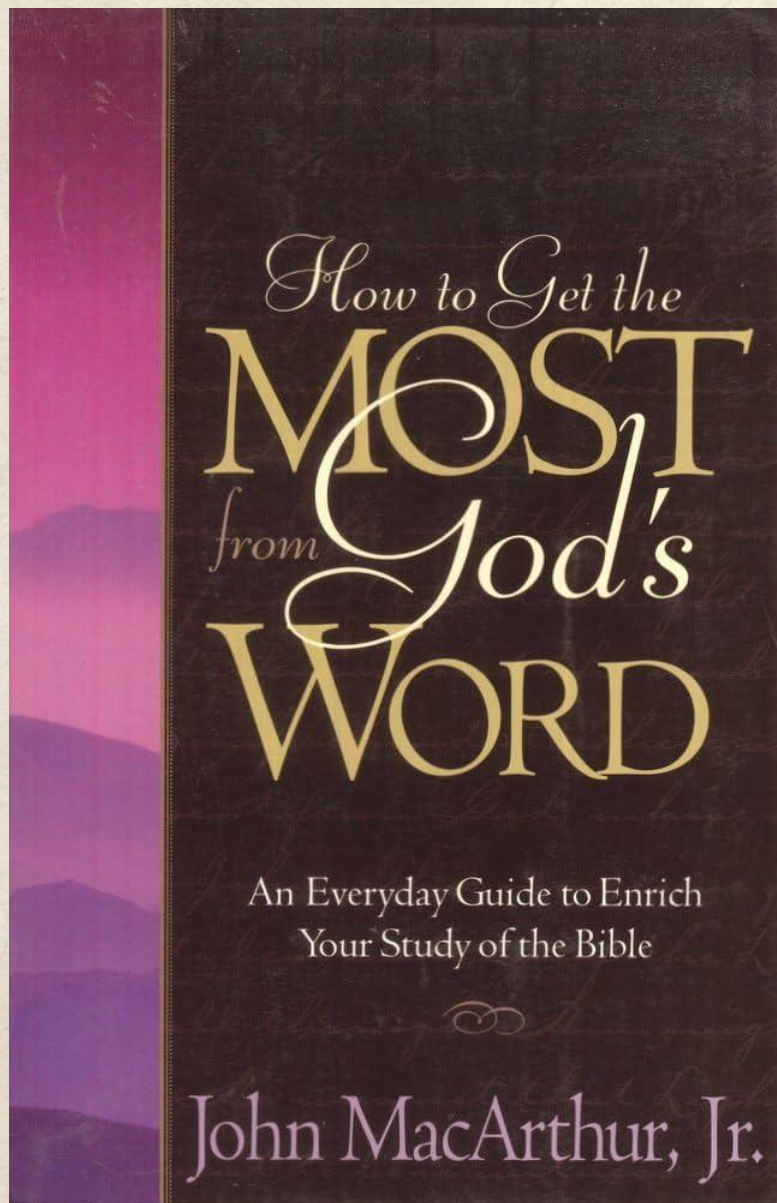
How to Eat Your Bible: A Simple Approach to Learning and Loving the Word of God.

Men of the Word

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE FOR BEGINNERS

John MacArthur

***How to Get the Most from God's Word:
An Everyday Guide to Enrich Your Study
of the Bible.***



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“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

—2 Timothy 2:15

(1) A Command (v. 15a)

“Be diligent” = “to be especially conscious in discharging an obligation”

(2) A Comparison (v. 15b)

“Ashamed” = “to experience a painful sense of loss of status because of some particular event or activity”

(3) A Course (v. 15c)

“Accurately handling” = “to cut a path in a straight direction”

The Essential Principles of Bible Study

I. Submit to Scripture's authority and seek divine enablement.

II. Suspend preunderstandings and search for the writer's intent.

III. Respect the context and read the language naturally.

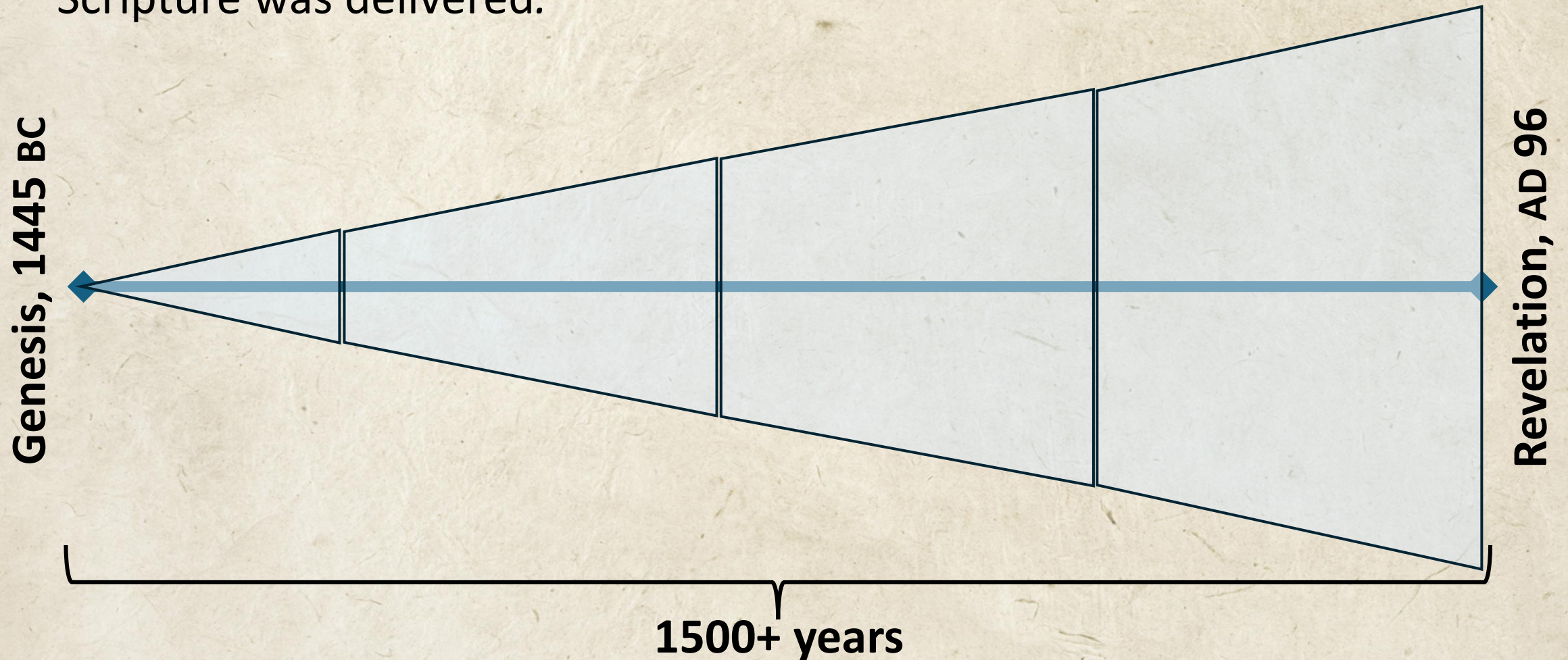
IV. Pursue a single meaning for each text.

V. Read in the light of antecedent revelation.

VI. Validate your interpretation by external sources.

V. Read in the light of antecedent revelation.

- The way in which we interpret Scripture should reflect the way in which Scripture was delivered.



- As a considerate and masterful Teacher, God educated humanity about His glorious character and redemption *progressively*, through an emerging story of His mighty words and mighty acts.
- We call this the doctrine of “**progressive**” or “**cumulative revelation**”—as God inspired more and more Scripture, the breadth of topics revealed, and depth of topics revealed increased.
- John Feinberg: “New revelation doesn’t void prior revelation but amplifies it. Hence, as time passes the total amount of divine revelation given accumulates. On the other hand, later revelation doesn’t merely elaborate points already revealed but can add new content never before revealed. In this respect, revelation also progresses” (*Light in a Dark Place*, 45 fn. 18).

- **John 16:12–13** – “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”
- **Hebrews 1:1–2** – “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in *His* Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”
- “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy”: “We affirm that God’s revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive. We deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. . .” (Article V).

THE NATURE OF PROGRESSIVE/ CUMULATIVE REVELATION



Foundation



Frame



Roof



Facade

“Progressive revelation from the New Testament does not interpret the Old Testament passages in a way that cancels the original authorial intent of the Old Testament writers.”

—Michael Vlach, *Christ's Prophetic Plans*, 24

- **QUESTION:** How does this impact our reading of Scripture?
- **ANSWER:** We are to read Scripture in the same way that it was delivered—in the light of antecedent Scripture.
- When David wrote his psalms, he presupposed the Law of Moses; when Isaiah recorded his prophecies, he presupposed the writings of David and Moses; when Paul wrote to the Romans, he presupposed Isaiah and David and Moses, etc.
- This requires students to give attention to the reading of *the whole Bible, in chronological order*—not just to isolated parts taken out of order.
- This also requires students to consider what *antecedent theology* is being assumed and developed by the writer of the text they are studying.

VI. Validate your interpretation by external sources.

- The Word of God is objective and transcendent in meaning.
- Each text means what it always meant, and each text means what it means whether that meaning is understood and accepted or not.
- Consequently, interpretation cannot be a subjective experience or a private affair.
- Interpretations cannot be asserted as true based simply on one's own personal authority.
- External affirmation is necessary because there are no infallible interpreters.

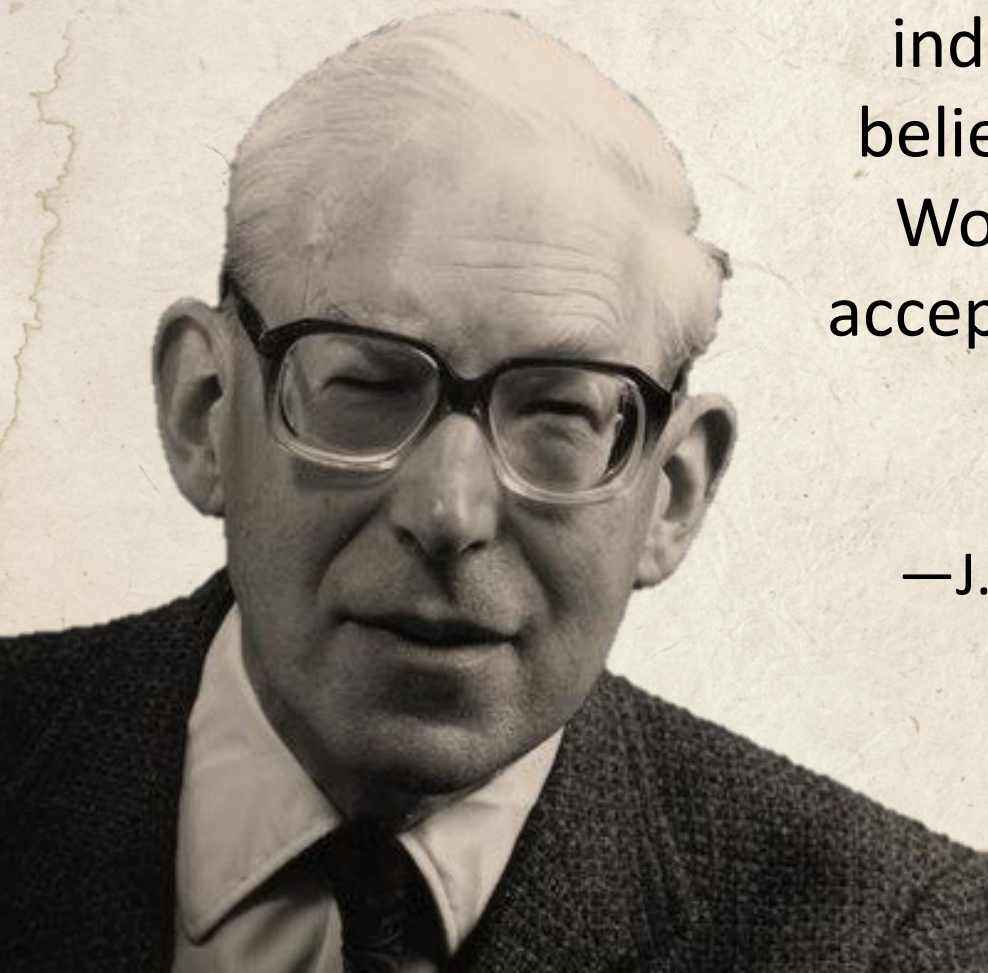
- **Acts 17:11** – “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”
- **Ephesians 4:11–16** – “And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head”

“Revelation, then, is public, not private. It is public in the sense that God’s primary locus of communication is not within the self nor are his intentions accessed by intuition. He has spoken and he continues to speak, through the words of Scripture which constitute the Word of God. . . . And though it has to be understood and interpreted, its meaning is always objective to the interpreter.”

—David F. Wells, *Above All Earthly Powers*, 174

A. The Totality of Scripture

- The ***analogy of Scripture*** principle; Scripture is its own standard.
- It is based on the premise that *Scripture is not contradictory*; a text rightly interpreted will never contradict another text rightly interpreted, for God cannot lie or change His mind (Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18).
- This principle of interpretive validation is the most authoritative, for it acknowledges the perfection and sufficiency of God's Word.
- **KEY QUESTION:** "Does my interpretive conclusion contradict what Scripture as a whole teaches on this subject?"
- This principle disallows conflicting interpretations that render God as incompetent and irrational.



“The proper ground for believing a thing is not that the Church or reason says it. Both of these authorities may err, and in any case it is not to them that God has told us to go for authoritative indications of His mind. The proper ground for believing a thing is that God says it in His written Word, and a readiness to take God’s word and accept what He asserts in the Bible is fundamental to faith.”

—J. I. Packer, *“Fundamentalism” and the Word of God*,
48–49

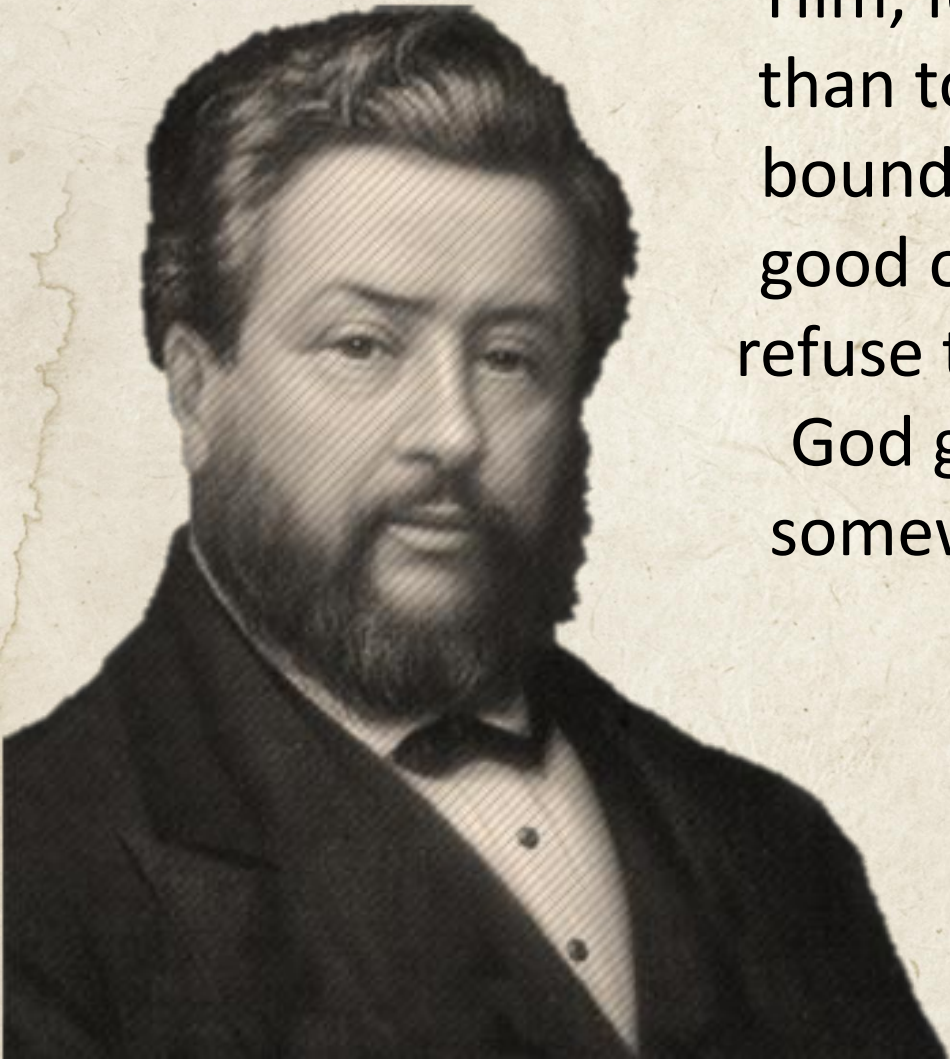
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B. The History of Interpretation

- The ***catholicity of truth*** principle; Scripture should be read with all of God's people throughout the ages.
- It is based on the premise that *the meaning of Scripture was not hidden at times in history, nor does it change through time*; it is fixed, necessary, and sufficiently clear to all of God's people from the moment it was revealed (Deut 29:29; 1 Tim 3:15; Rev 2:7a, 11a, etc.).
- Its authority does not rise to the level of the first source for validation (Scripture), for while Scripture is infallible, tradition is not.
- **KEY QUESTION:** "Does my interpretive conclusion represent a novel interpretation never seen before in church history?"
- This principle discredits the notion that novel interpretations are best.

C. The Function of the Local Church

- The ***community of faith*** principle; Scripture should be read in accountability to the elders and fellow members of one's local church.
- It is based on the premise that *God* illumines the individual believer *through the ministry of the local church* (Acts 17:11; Eph 4:11–16; Titus 1:9).
- Its authority also does not rise to the level of the first source for validation, for while Scripture is infallible, a local church is not.
- **KEY QUESTION:** “Is my interpretive conclusion accountable to my elders and fellow church members?”
- This principle disallows the notion that one can be unaccountable to his local church and yet be wholly successful in how he interprets the Bible.



“Some, under pretense of being taught of the Spirit of God, refuse to be instructed by books or by living men. This is not honoring of the Spirit of God; it is disrespect for Him, for if He gives to some of His servants more light than to others—and it is clear He does—then they are bound to give that light to others, and to use it for the good of the church. But if the other part of the church refuse to receive that light, to what end did the Spirit of God give it? This would imply that there is a mistake somewhere in the economy of God’s gifts and graces, which is managed by the Holy Spirit.”

—Charles Spurgeon, *Words of Counsel
for Christian Workers*, 111

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2024–2025

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A Study of
the Doctrine
of Scripture