The Process of Studying Salvation

Introduction

* New Living Translation: more than Bible verses are needed for right doctrine of salvation
* Last time we talked about the **power** and **problems** of studying salvation, this time the **process**
* “Without correct interpretation, the Bible becomes a destructive weapon used by the great Deceiver. With it, the Bible becomes a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.”

Rule #1 🡪 Determine a word’s meaning by context

* Bible’s words are from God and therefore important (Prov. 30:5, Matt. 4:4)
* Since God communicated through humans, we need to use the rules of human language
* Illustration: Trunk and Ship (Acts 27:31) – context determines meaning
* Force yourself to look at context by using questions like saved *from what* or chosen *to do what?*
* James 2 example: he’s talking about being saved from the damage of sin, not going to heaven

Rule #2 🡪 Each passage truthfully and sufficiently does what it sets out to do

* Due diligence: companies have to give necessary information, like MacDonald’s or a bank
* Later revelation is not necessary, but can be supplementary
* Illustration: The redeemer in Genesis 3 and then Isaiah 53.
* Illustration: Return from exile– Zechariah couldn’t have known amillenialism’s interpretation
* Illustration: Did Jesus forget a step when talking to Nicodemus?
* Illustration: Directions to my house – I wouldn’t give only half the steps
* Application: gospel tracts shouldn’t jump around

Rule #3 🡪 Instead of fudging the facts, we make more categories

* Illustration: do we know the same guy from Canada? One difference means different person
* Illustration: rapture is different from return of Christ since they have different features
* Illustration: discipleship is different from eternal life since they have different features
* Application: when sharing the gospel, explain that there are different categories. God does want us to act a certain way, but not for eternal life.

Rule #4 🡪 When a passage can have multiple interpretations, let the clearer guide the obscure

* Illustration: Detective with Mr. Red and Mr. Green. Rely on more certain evidence
* Clarification: This means we start with easier ones, not that we start with ones we like.
* Illustration: There are verses that suggest baptism as a requirement for salvation, but they are difficult passages. The passages saying baptism isn’t needed are much clearer.