



HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE FOR YOURSELF

PART 5

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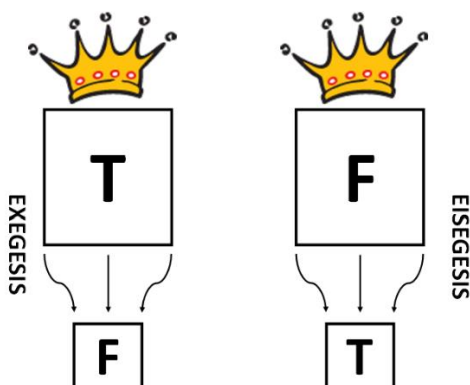
Tools #4 - Text & Framework

Principle: We must let the bible shape our frameworks, rather than letting our frameworks shape our interpretations of the Bible

Explanation: We all have frameworks which will unconsciously inform or bias our reading of the text

- **Theological** (Calvinism, Arminianism, Believers or Infant Baptist, Cessationist or Continuationist)
- **Political** (Right, Left, Democratic, Socialist etc)
- **Cultural** (Western, African etc)
- **Social** (Individual, Community etc)

Our own experiences, training, desires, traditions etc will emerge each time we sit down to study the bible. But in order to get at the meaning of the text, we must let the Text be sovereign.

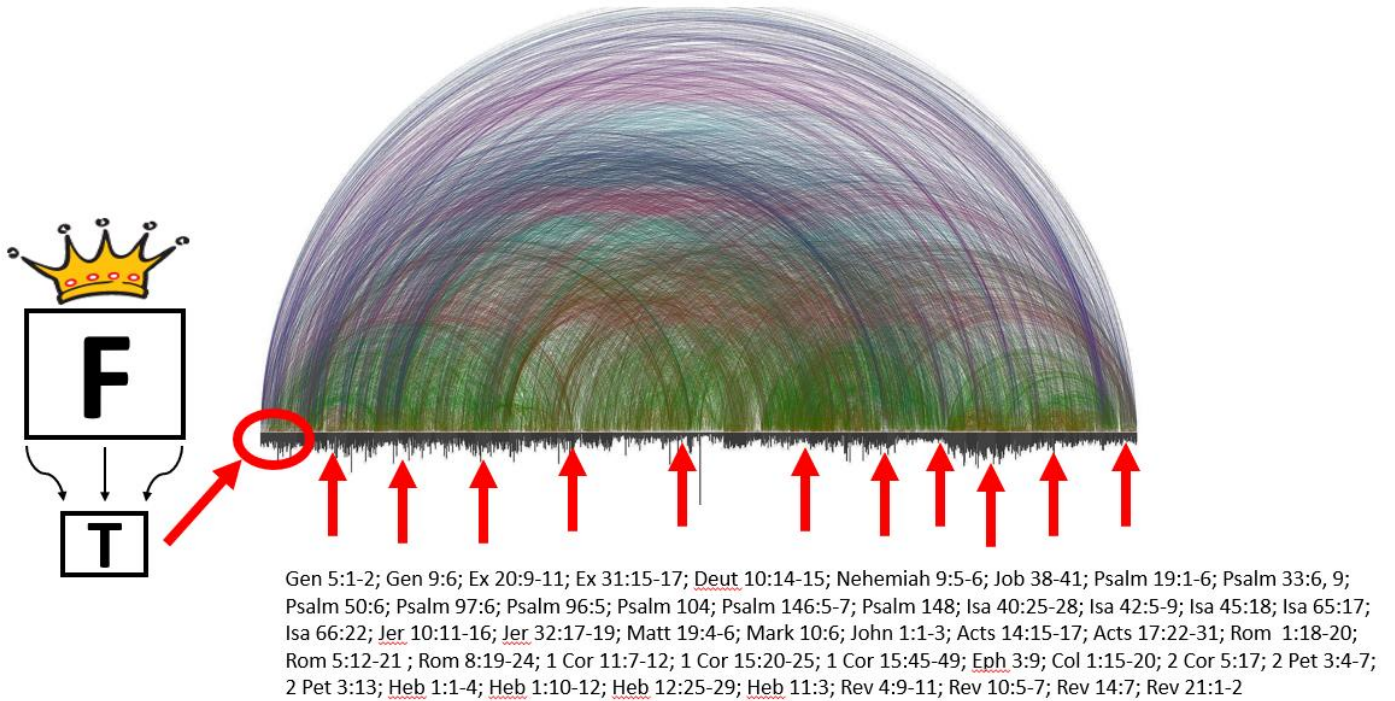


We must be aware of our own frameworks and then adjust them, rather than bending the text until it says "what we want it to say." We must hear it for "what it says"! Otherwise we are like drunken readers, using the bible like a drunk uses a lamppost: More for support than for illumination!

"The study of texts is always undertaken within some larger framework, whether this is recognized or not. The larger framework, constituted by interpreter's interests, determines what questions are considered important, what methods are found appropriate, and what explanations are deemed satisfying."

Robert Morgan with John Barton, *Biblical Interpretation*
(Oxford University, 1988) pg 22

Example 2: Theistic Evolution vs Six Day Creation



Example 3: Arminian vs Calvinistic Framework

Q: Can a Christian Lose their Salvation?

• The Arminian Framework

- Man has an independent free-will
- We choose God to be saved
- Salvation comes through faith in Jesus
- We can however unchoose God
- We can freely abandon our faith in Jesus
- Therefore...
 - **We can lose our Salvation**

Deuteronomy 30:19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live (CSB)

• The Calvinistic Framework

- God has an independent free-will
- God chooses us to be saved
- Salvation comes through faith in Jesus
- God never revokes his choice
- God will keep us trusting in Jesus
- Therefore...
 - **We cannot lose our Salvation**

Acts 13:48 When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord, and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Example 3: Arminian vs Calvinistic Framework

Q: Can a Christian Lose their Salvation?

Hebrews 6:4–6 (ESV) — ⁴ For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

Hebrews 10:26–27 (ESV) — ²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

- What "Framework Issues" do we bring to these warning passages?
 - Perseverance of the Saints
 - Once Saved - Always Saved
 - Calvinism
 - Assurance of Salvation
- If you believe in "Perseverance of the Saints"... or Assurance of Salvation... you will have the following verses in mind:
 - **Philippians 1:6 (ESV)** — ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
 - **Romans 8:38–39 (ESV)** — ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - **Ephesians 1:13–14 (ESV)** — ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
- These wonderful verses would have formed part of your theological framework... which leads you to conclude that a person who is truly saved, cannot lose their salvation.
- We then test our framework against other passages, which confirm this...
 - **1 John 2:19 (ESV)** — ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

- Then we come to these warning Passages in Hebrews and we find that the simple reading clashes with our Framework! The simple reading of the passage says that Believers can lose their salvation!
- The real temptation now is to force the text into our framework! As many have done in History!

Example 3: Arminian vs Calvinistic Framework

Q: Can a Christian Lose their Salvation?

The Arminian Framework

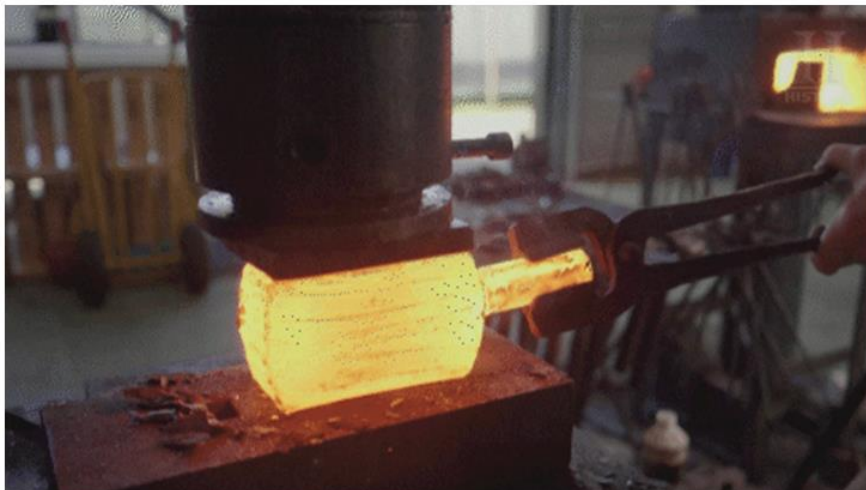
- ✓ This text says that you can lose salvation
- ✗ This text also says that if you do lose your salvation, you can never be saved again!

The Calvinistic Framework

- ✗ This text says that you can lose salvation
- ✓ This text means that if you fall away... you were never elected / appointed to eternal life in the first place!

Example 3: Arminian vs Calvinistic Framework

When the Text clashes with our framework... The temptation is to force / squeeze / twist / distort the Text to align with our framework...



Example 3: Arminian vs Calvinistic Framework

Charles Spurgeon said about these Hebrews passages...

If you read Dr. Gill, Dr. Owen and almost all the eminent Calvinistic writers they all of them assert that these persons are not Christians. They say that enough is said here to represent a man who is a Christian externally but not enough to give the portrait of a true Believer. Now, it strikes me they would not have said this if they had not had some doctrine [framework!] to uphold—for a child reading this passage would say that the persons intended by it must be Christians.

Historically - these are the main views:

The Arminian View

- Addressed to believers
- Regarding Salvation
- Therefore - Apostasy is always possible
- BUT... Apostasy is always permanent!

The Loss of Reward View

- Addressed to believers
- Regarding Rewards
- Therefore - Salvation is secure - but Rewards not

The Test of Genuineness View

- This is the typical Calvinistic / Reformed view
- Warnings address to "Professing Believers"
- Regarding Salvation
- Therefore - those who fall away were never truly saved in the first place (1 John 2:19)
- Owen, Grudem, Olyott

The Federal Vision view (Some Presbyterians)

- Addressed to Believers (New Covenant)
- Regarding Salvation
- But - some in the covenant (church) are not elect
- Thus the non-elect can fall away.

The Hypothetical View

- Addressed to Believers
- Regarding Salvation
- But – Apostasy is impossible / Salvation is Secure
- Spurgeon

The Means of Grace View

- Addressed to Believers
- Regarding salvation
- The very reality of the warning is the means God uses to ensure that true believers will not fall away

Because we are rational beings with the ability to make choices (free will) ... Warnings are a means of grace through which God accomplishes his purposes (eternal security)!

Colossians 1:28 — ²⁸ We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. (CSB)

1 Corinthians 10:9–12 — ⁹ Let us not test Christ as some of them did and were destroyed by snakes. ¹⁰ And don't complain as some of them did, and were killed by the destroyer. ¹¹ These things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² So, whoever thinks he stands must be careful not to fall. (CSB)

Five Warning Passages in Hebrews



Mary... Don't get too close... or you will get hurt! (Heb 2:1-4)

Mary... I'm not joking... If you keep on playing with fire you will get Burned! (Heb 3:7-4:13)

Mary... Are you deaf! If you fall into the fire you will be scarred for life! (Heb 5:11-6:12)

Mary! This is serious! If you fall into the fire you will die... and there will be no hope of recovery! (Heb 10:19-39)

Mary... Mary... If you ignore all my words... how can you think that you will escape? (Heb 12:14-29)

So what does that make me?

A Calvinian / Arminist!!

The “means of Grace” view seeks to honor what the Bible teaches about man’s responsibility to respond to God... while at the same time honoring God’s promises to preserve to the end those whom God has chosen to save!

Example 4: Poverty vs Prosperity?

James 2:5 (ESV) — ⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

- **Context?** Vs 1-13 - Sin of showing partiality / discrimination
- **Melodic Line?** Practical Christian Living in a sinful world
- **Structure?**
 - Vs 1 - Instruction / Principle (Show no partiality)
 - Vs 2-4 - Example
 - Vs 5 - Explanation
 - Vs 6-7 - Example
 - Vs 8-9 - Summary
 - Vs 10-13 - Example / Explanation
- **Text & Framework?**
 - Identify Frameworks...
 - Poverty
 - Social Class (Rich / Poor)
 - Who does vs 5 say that God has chosen?
 - The Poor? All Poor?
 - Or... Those who love him (including some who are poor)