

# Interpreting the Interpreter

## What We Bring to the Table

### I. The Goal of Biblical Interpretation

- A. The Goal of Biblical Interpretation: To discover the meaning that the author intended to communicate to his original audience, and apply it today.
- B. The Bible was NOT written *to* you. It was written *for* you.

### II. Preunderstanding: What It Is and How It Works

- A. Preunderstanding: The assumptions, attitudes, and worldview that we bring to a text.
- B. A Help
- C. A Hindrance
  - 1. Much of our preunderstanding is different from the biblical authors.
  - 2. Our preunderstanding is shaped by our culture.
    - a. Individualism: An ideology that emphasizes the autonomy and interests of the individual, as opposed to a group.
    - b. Anti-Institutionalism: A suspicion or rejection of institutions.
  - 3. We are usually unaware of our preunderstanding.
    - “Perhaps the most important thing to realize is that this ‘worldview’ is so deeply embedded in our consciousness, in the habits of our lives, and in our social practices that to question one’s worldview is to question ‘reality’ itself. Sometimes, we are self-conscious of and articulate about our worldview, but for most of us, the frameworks of meaning by which we navigate life exist ‘prereflectively,’ prior to conscious awareness.” -James Davidson Hunter

### III. What To Do About Preunderstanding?

- A. Have the humility to listen to others.
- B. Let Scripture challenge your preunderstanding.

