

Hermeneutics session 10
Figures of Speech, part 2

- Interpretive principles for figures of speech:
 - Recognize that a passage is actually a figure of speech, and not to be taken literally.
 - Corollary: When a passage is meant to be taken literally, don't soften it by assuming it to be a figure of speech.
 - Closest thing to a fixed rule for recognizing a figure of speech: If taken literally, does it become something absurd, or does it contradict other portions of Scripture?
 - Study the various categories of figures of speech, so that you "know it when you see it."
 - Find the main idea (the "big idea") that the figure of speech is communicating.
 - Don't be overly creative in extending the figure of speech beyond what is intended by the divine author.
 - Check your conclusions against other Scripture.
 - Immediate context
 - All of Scripture
 - The use of a figure of speech does not mean that the Scripture is "less true" at that point.
 - Behind every figure of speech is a literal statement.
- Hyperbole: A figure of speech that uses deliberate exaggeration to make a point.
- Euphemism: Substitutes an agreeable word for a difficult, disagreeable, or offensive word.
- Personification: Things spoken of as though they are persons, or as though they have human intelligence or human capabilities.
- Irony: A figure of speech where the writer means the opposite of what he says.
 - Not done to mislead; it is assumed the reader will understand the opposite is meant.
 - Irony is used to give emphasis to a point.
- Phenomenological language: A figure of speech where we describe something by how it appears to our eyes, rather than according to its reality.