Fifth International Conference on Creationism

Biblical Hermeneutics and Creation

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August 7, 2003
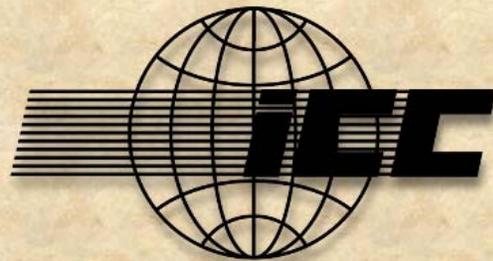
Goal and Purpose

- To examine the proper method for understanding the Biblical Text, especially with regard to the Creation / Flood Narratives

- To provide *a portion* of the necessary machinery for the student of Scripture to ascertain Biblical information for *himself / herself*.
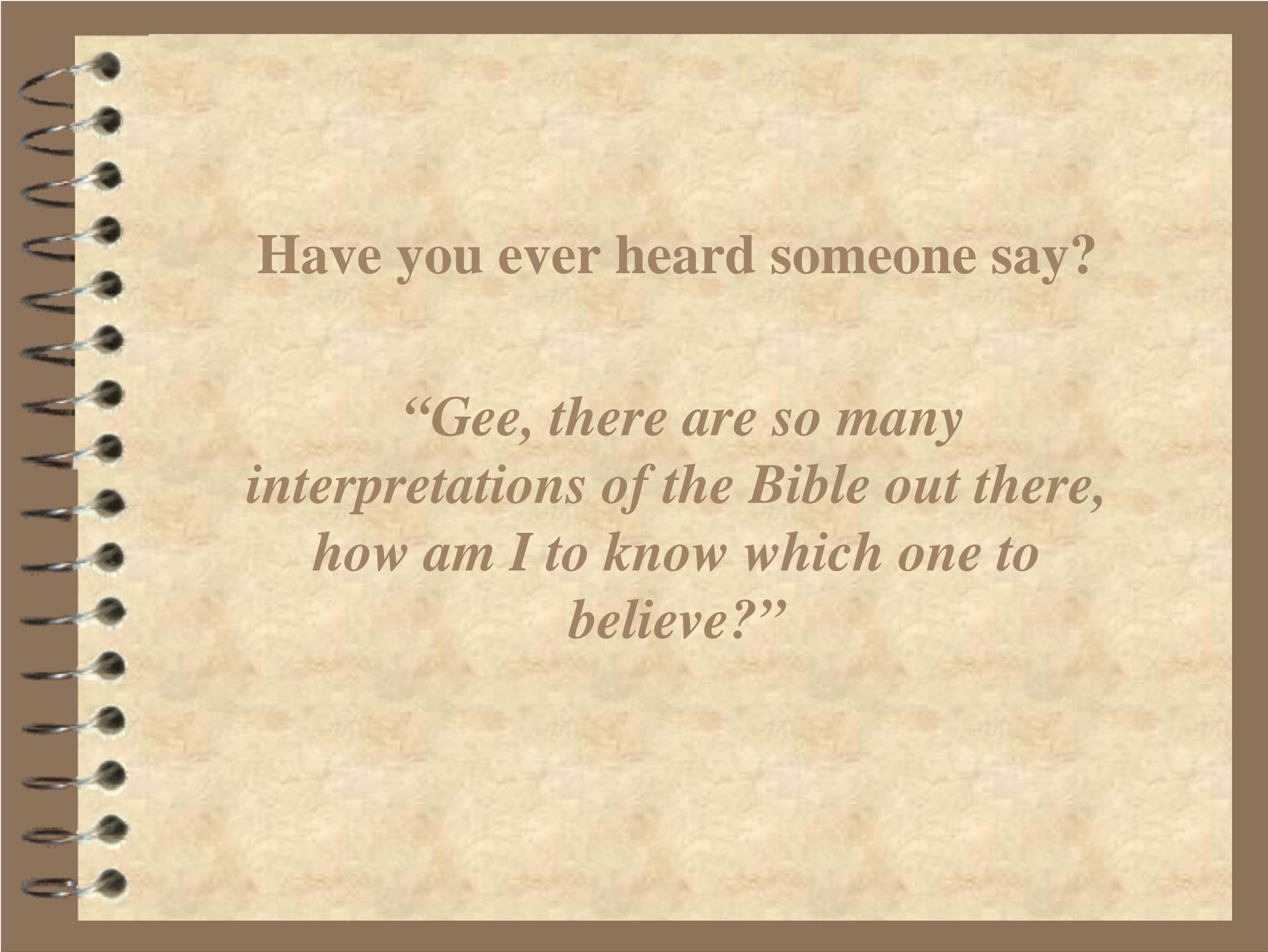
Have you ever heard someone say?

"Gee, there are so many interpretations of the Bible out there, how am I to know which one to believe?"

At first this question seems to be a daunting one, but with a little "gray matter action" a reasonable response can be easily provided and rigorously as well!

What follows is a response to that often asked question.

We begin our discussion with the *Doctrine of Scripture…*

The Doctrine of Scripture

- General Definition
- How We are to Understand the Scriptures
- A Brief Statement on the Inerrancy of Scriptures

Doctrine of Scripture
(A) General Definition

In their *original* autographs the Scriptures are the inspired word of God, accurate and inerrant in all that they *affirm*, both in the whole and in the part. The Scriptures constitute the *necessary* and *sufficient* rules for doctrine and practice.

Doctrine of Scripture
(B) *Understanding the Scriptures*

- The Scriptures can *only* be properly read, interpreted, understood, and applied when using the *same* rules of accidence, syntax, and grammar that the writers used when writing the original autographs.

- This set of rules is called the *Normative Hermeneutic*

Doctrine of Scripture
(C) *The Inerrancy of Scripture*

4 The Scriptures are inerrant in all that they affirm, both in the whole and in the part, *if and only if*, they are *consistently* understood by the **Normative Hermeneutic**.
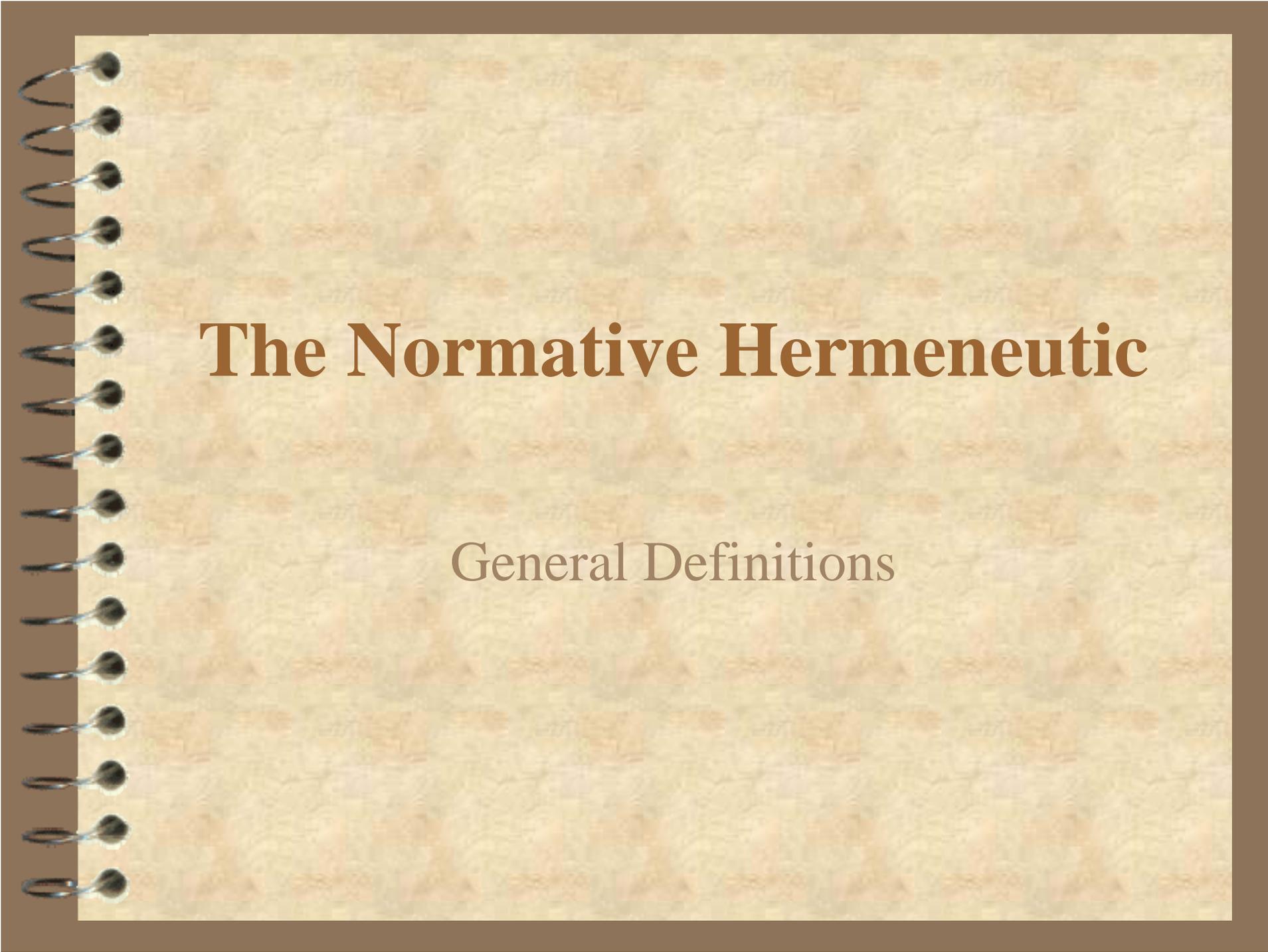
The Normative Hermeneutic

General Definitions

The Meaning of Normative

- "Standard" Usage
- "Customary" Usage
- "Normal" Usage
- … that which is "typically" or "generally" understood by the audience.

The Etymology of Hermeneutics

- **Hermeneutics** - a compound word from:
  - **Hermes** - the Greek god of speech and writing responsible for communicating the will of the gods to the people - Hermes had to be familiar with the everyday language of the people.
  - **Tekne** - meaning "art", "craft", "technique"
- The "**Technique of Hermes**" - in this role Hermes is the pagan corruption of Christ as the Godhead's Logos (Ancient of Days)

General Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics

4 The student of Scripture is to understand the Biblical text by using the same rules of language that the writers used when penning the text. This is the only methodology by which the audience ascertains the *original* intent of the writers / Author.
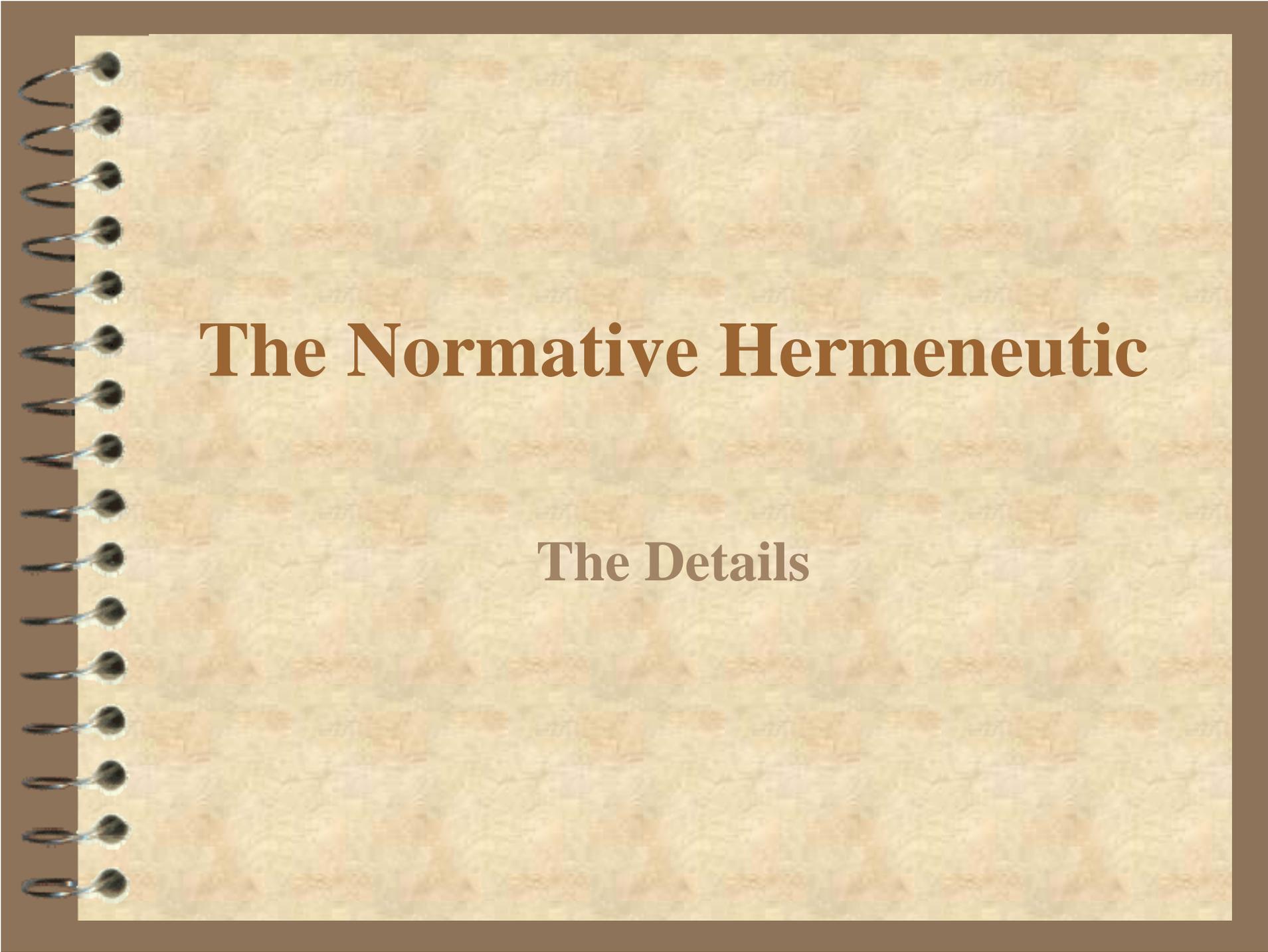
The Normative Hermeneutic

The Details

Details of the Normative Hermeneutic

- Word Usage Rules

- Phrase and Grammatical Construction Rules

- Figures of Speech Rules

- The Laws of Precedence

- The Characteristics of the Doctrinal Framework Contained in Scripture
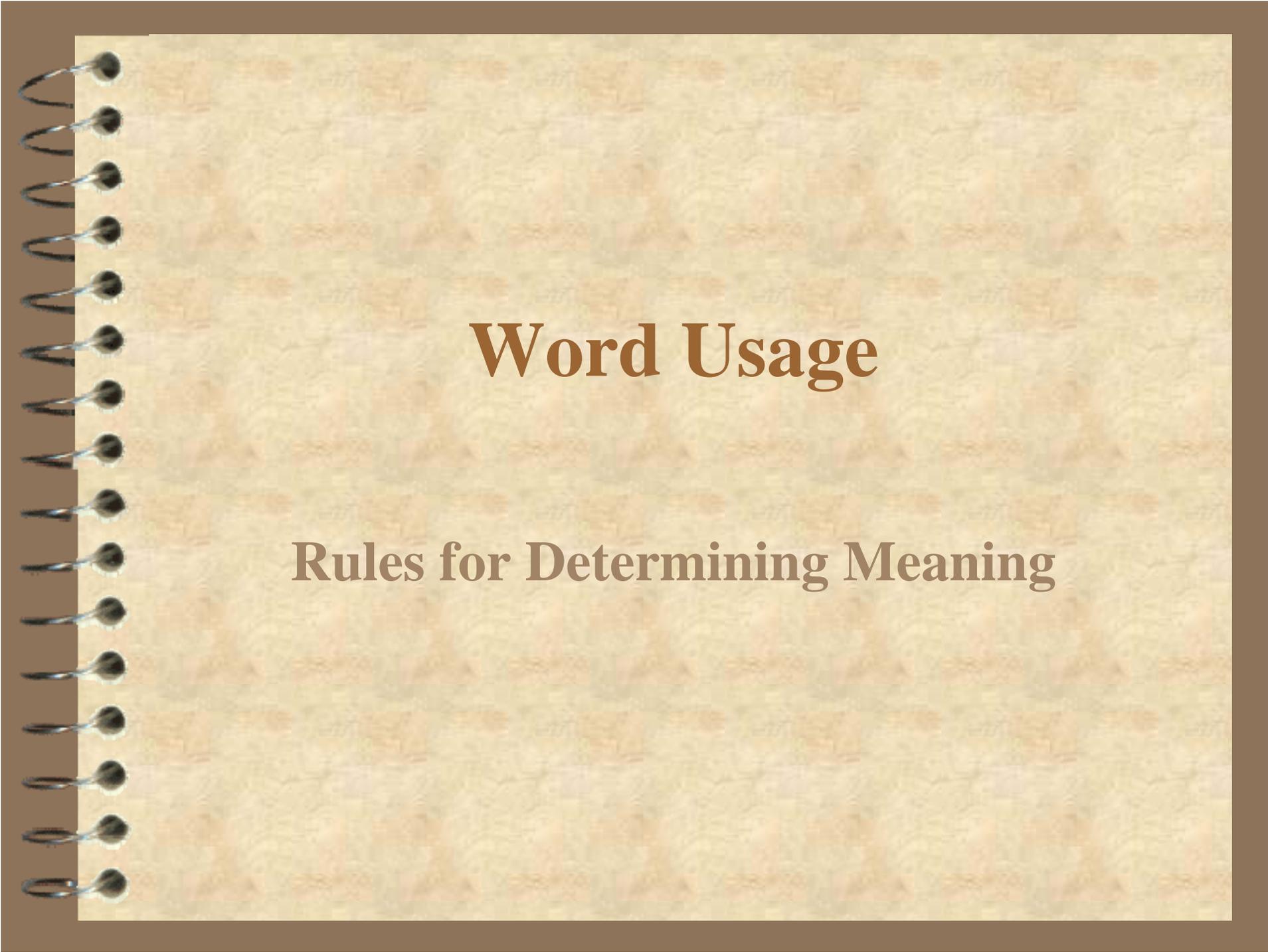
Word Usage

Rules for Determining Meaning

Word Usage Rules

(1) Unless something in the context demands otherwise, a word is assigned the *meaning* that is consistent with its biblical usage elsewhere in that type of context, its usage in parallel passages, its usage in the LXX, its secular usage, its root meaning, etc.

Word Usage Rules

- (2) A greater burden of proof is required to justify a rare meaning than a common *meaning*.

- (3) A word otherwise *fixed* in *meaning* shapes the context of and hence the *meaning* of a word otherwise *variable* in *meaning*.

Word Usage Rules

(4) If a word is found to be quite variable in *meaning* in previously considered contexts, then its *meaning* in future considered contexts is considered on a "context-by-context" basis. *The burden of proof rests upon the shoulders of each proposed meaning.*
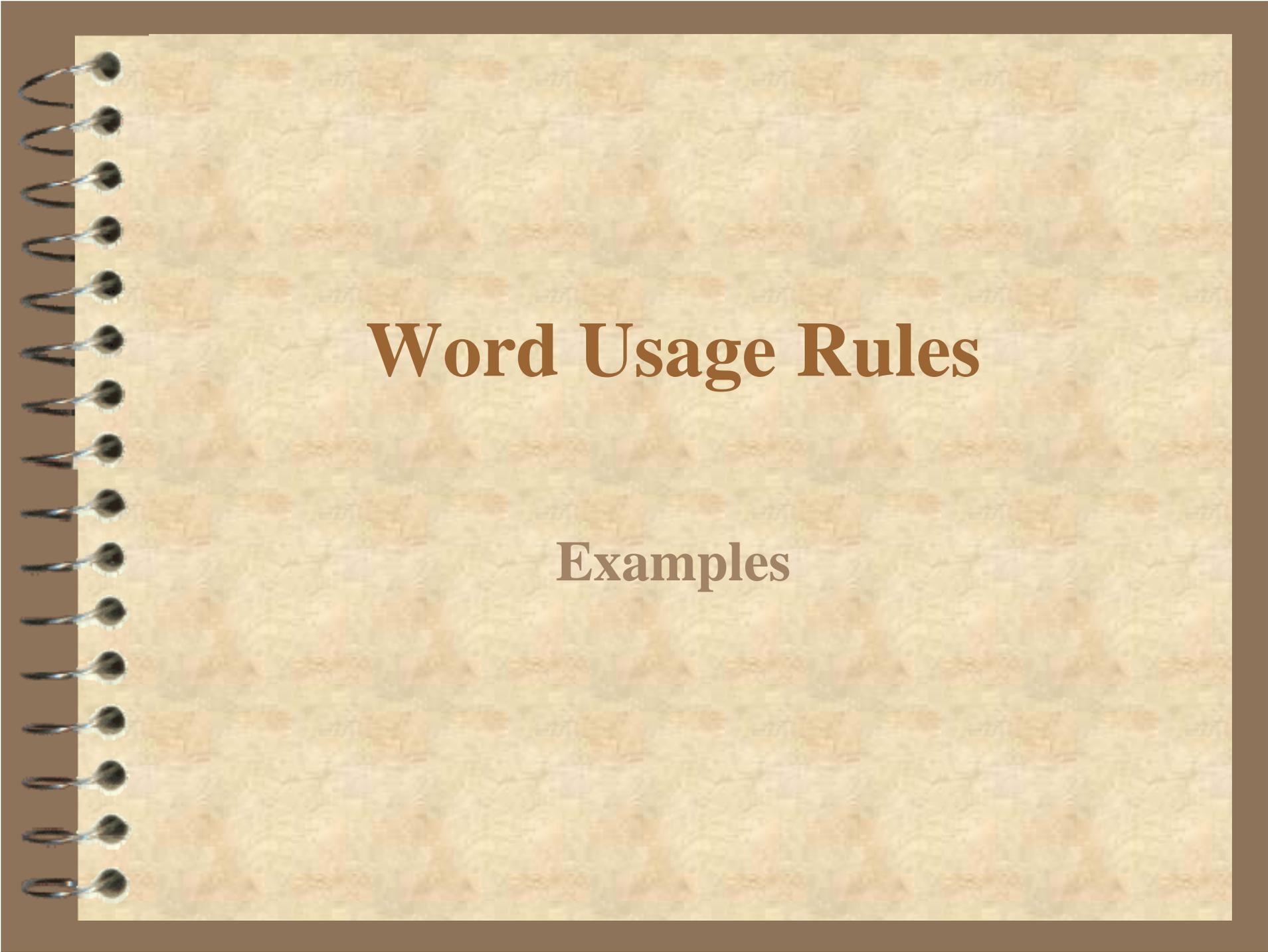
Word Usage Rules

Examples

Word Usage - Example #1 (1 of 2)

- **"I read the book"**
  - This sentence can either be read in the present or past tense.
    - I "reed" the book [Present Tense]
    - I "red" the book [Past Tense]
  - Insufficient context is provided to rigorously determine the meaning of the word "read".

  - However…...

Word Usage-Example #1 (2 of 2)

⬜ **I read the book yesterday**

– By adding the word "yesterday", we have restricted the context to *past* action, and hence we have shaped the meaning of the word "read" to mean "red".

– This is a wonderful example of Word Usage Rule 3, where the strict meaning word "yesterday" shapes the context and hence meaning of the word "read".

Word Usage-Example #2 (1 of 3)

- **The Days in Genesis One**
  - The Hebrew Word for "Day" is "Yom"
  - Over 95% of the occurrences of "Yom" refer to a 24-hour period
  - **This *overwhelming* usage places the *burden of proof* on the shoulders of those who say otherwise.**

The Context of "Yom"

- Over 95% of the occurrences of "Yom" refer to a 24-hour period

- "Evening and Morning" is a *context driving* phrase, in that it *always without exception* refers to a 24-hour period.

- "Yom" when modified by an ordinal or cardinal number typically refers to a single 24 hour period.

Word Usage-Example #2 (3 of 3)

◢ **Contextual Issues**

– Exodus 20:8-11 (Does the Sabbath equal a long period of geologic time?)

– Creation of vegetation on Day (Yom) 3 prior to the creation of the Sun and Moon on Day (Yom) 4 - photosynthesis, etc.

◢ **Conclusion**

– The Days of Genesis One refer to 24-hour periods, not long periods of geologic time - this is the **Normative** Understanding of context and hence the Genesis One text. *The Burden of Proof is **overwhelmingly** on those who wish to speak otherwise!*
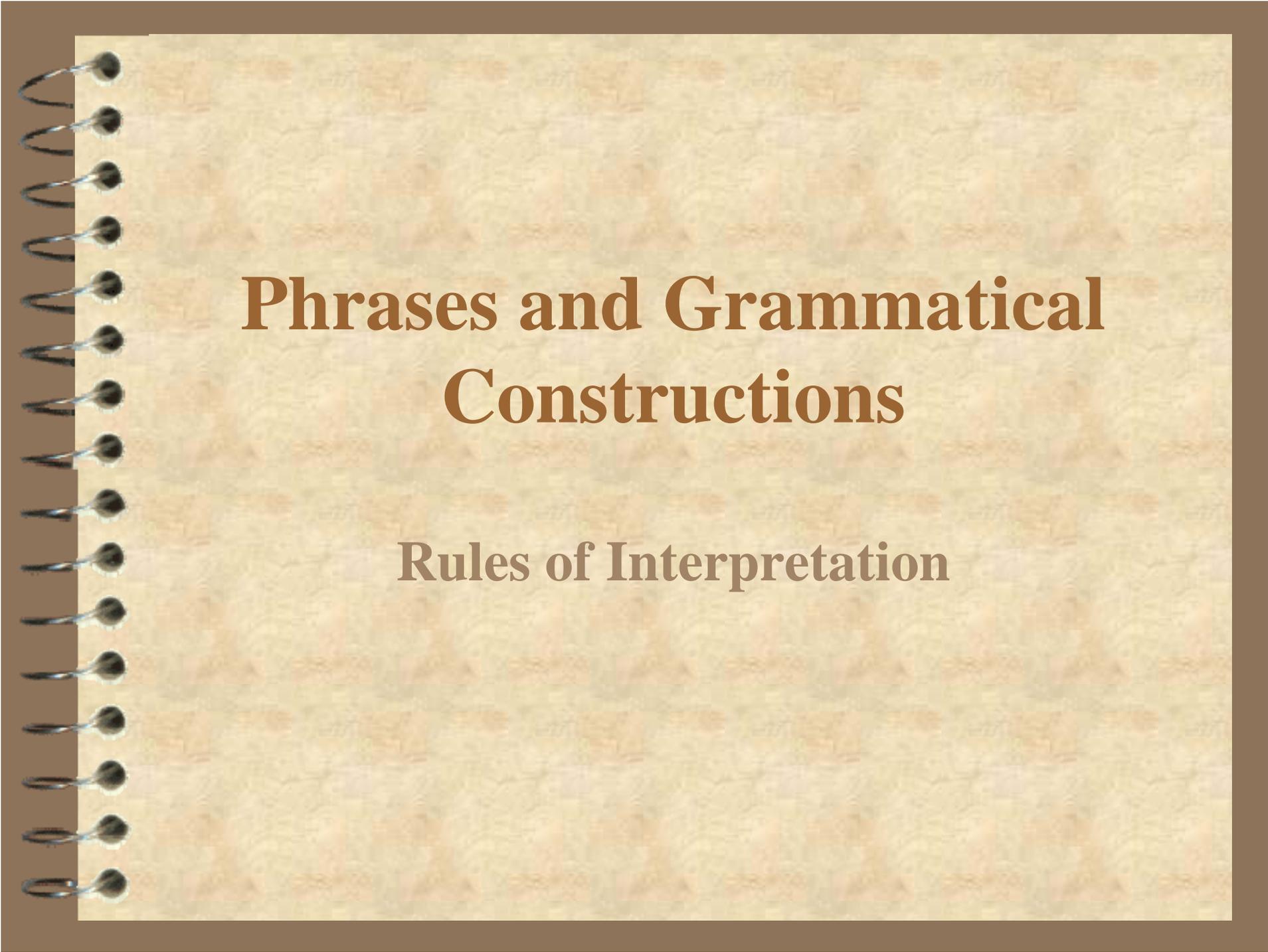
Phrases and Grammatical Constructions

Rules of Interpretation

Phrase and Grammatical Construction Rules

- (1) Unless something in the context demands otherwise, a phrase or grammatical construction is assigned the *interpretation* that is consistent with its biblical usage elsewhere in that type of context, its usage in parallel passages, its usage in the LXX, its secular usage, etc.

Phrase and Grammatical Construction Rules

- (2) A greater burden of proof is required to justify a rare *interpretation* than a common interpretation.

- (3) A phrase or grammatical construction otherwise *fixed* in *interpretation* shapes the context of and hence the *interpretation* of a phrase or grammatical construction otherwise *variable* in *interpretation*.

Phrase and Grammatical Construction Rules

(4) If a phrase or grammatical construction is found to be quite variable in *interpretation* in previously considered contexts, then its *interpretation* in future considered contexts is considered on a "context-by-context" basis. *The burden of proof rests upon the shoulders of each proposed interpretation.*
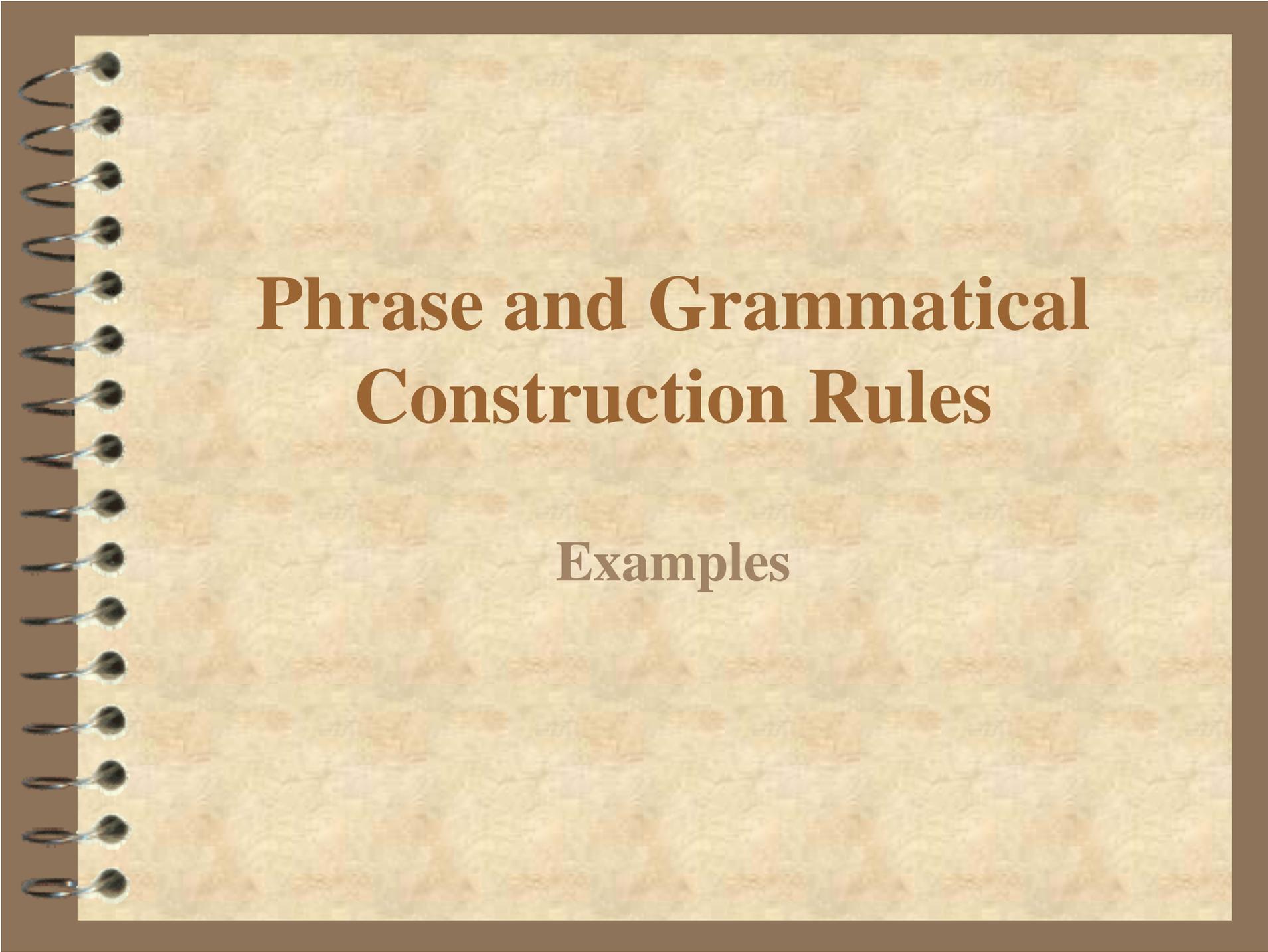
Phrase and Grammatical Construction Rules

Examples

Examples

- "Evening and Morning" of Genesis One
  - See the earlier discussion on the Genesis "Day" (Yom)
- Purpose Clauses
  - John 3:16
- Holy Spirit
  - with articles
  - without articles
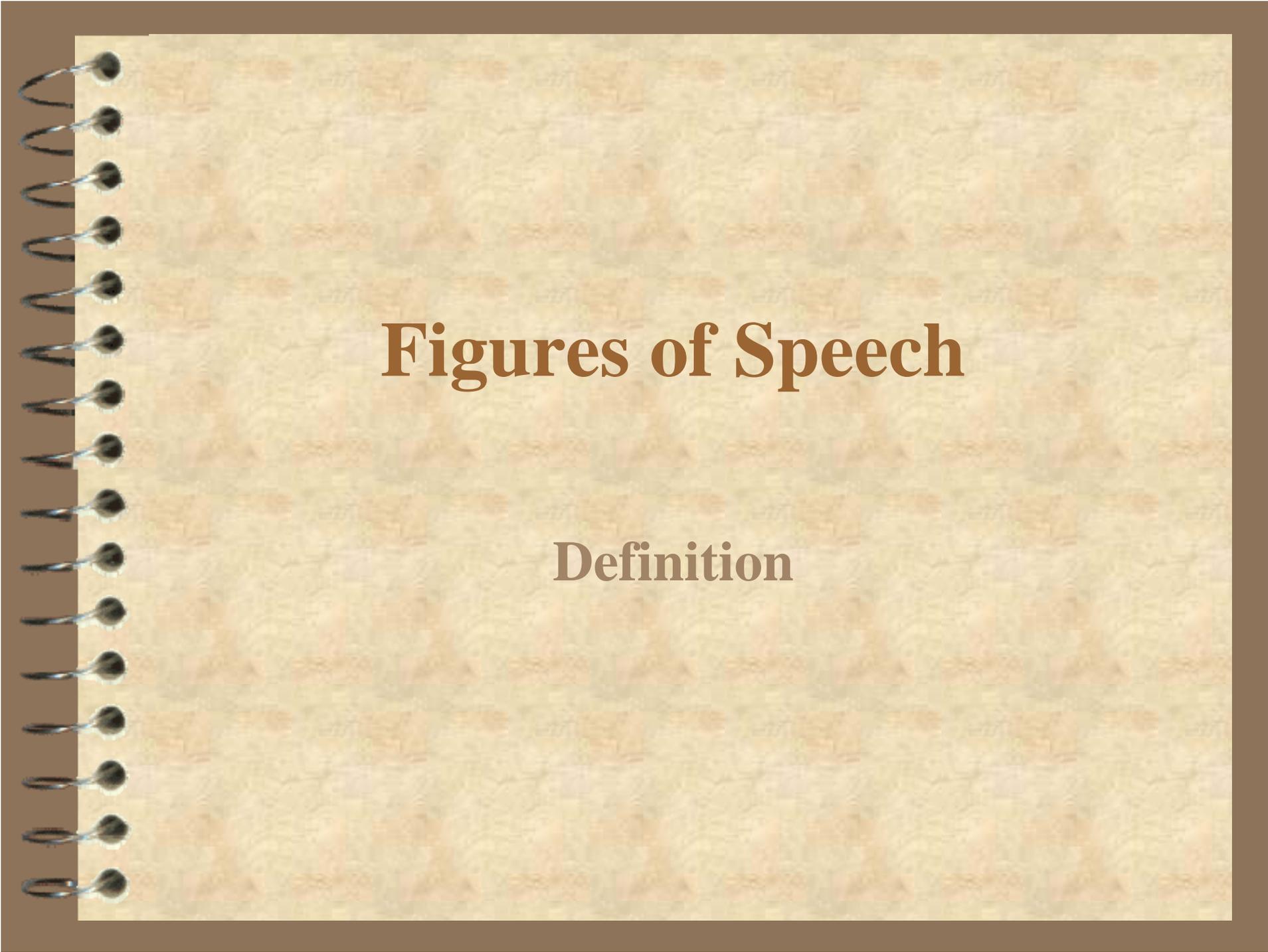
Figures of Speech

Definition

Figure of Speech - Definition

"… some form which a word or sentence takes, different from its ordinary and natural form. This is <u>always</u> for the purpose of giving additional force, more life, intensified feeling, and greater emphasis. Whereas today, figurative language is *ignorantly* spoken of as though it made less of the meaning, and deprived the words of their power and force." (Bullinger)
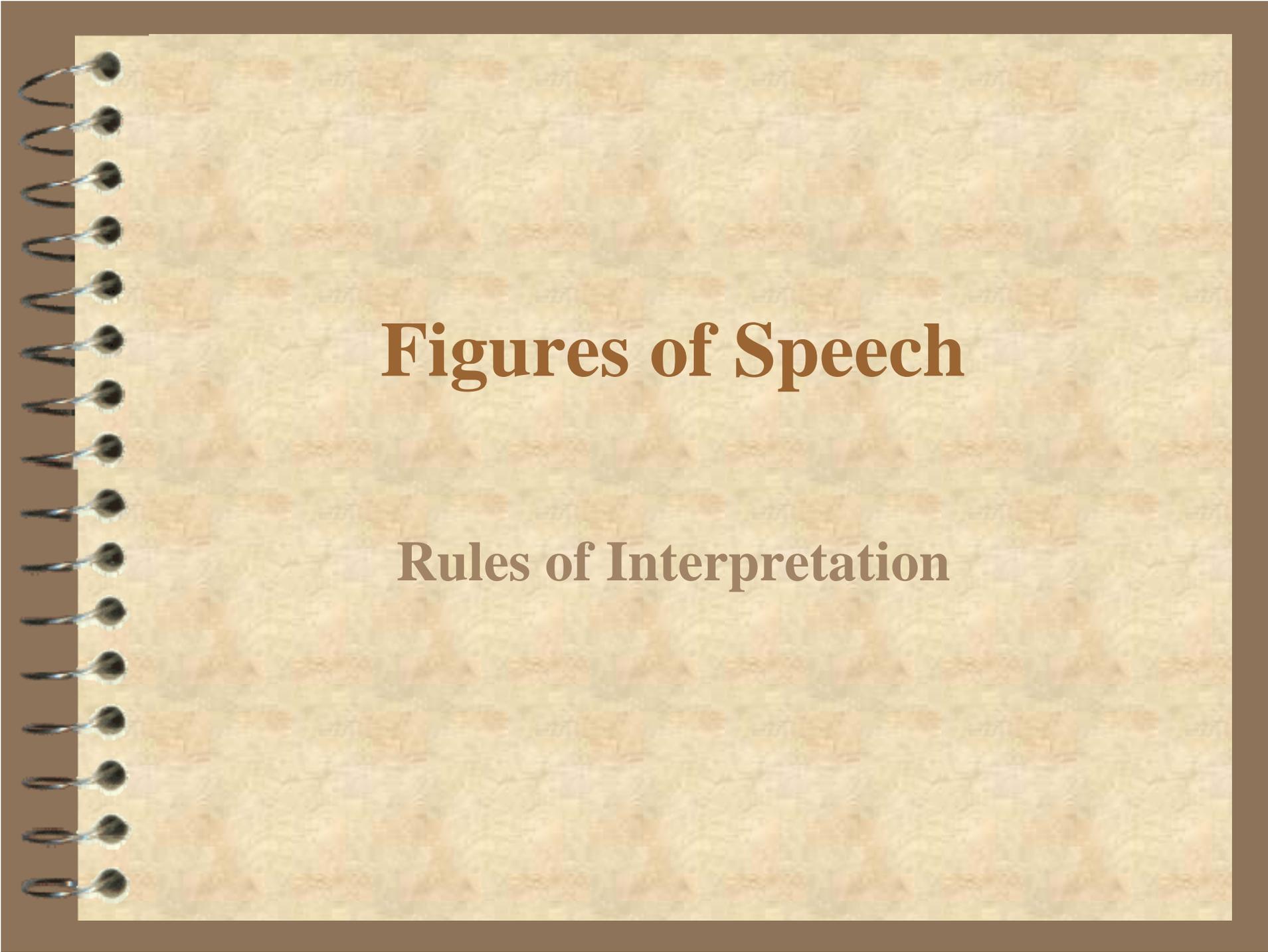
Figures of Speech

Rules of Interpretation

Figure of Speech Rules

- (1) Unless something in the context demands otherwise, a Figure of Speech is assigned the *interpretation* that is consistent with its biblical usage elsewhere in that type of context, its usage in parallel passages, its usage in the LXX, its secular usage, etc.

Figure of Speech Rules

- (2) A greater burden of proof is required to justify a rare *interpretation* than a common interpretation.

- (3) A Figure of Speech otherwise *fixed* in *interpretation* shapes the context of and hence the *interpretation* of a phrase or grammatical construction otherwise *variable* in *interpretation*.

Figure of Speech Rules

(4) If a Figure of Speech is found to be quite variable in *interpretation* in previously considered contexts, then its *interpretation* in future considered contexts is considered on a "context-by-context" basis. *The burden of proof rests upon the shoulders of each proposed interpretation.*
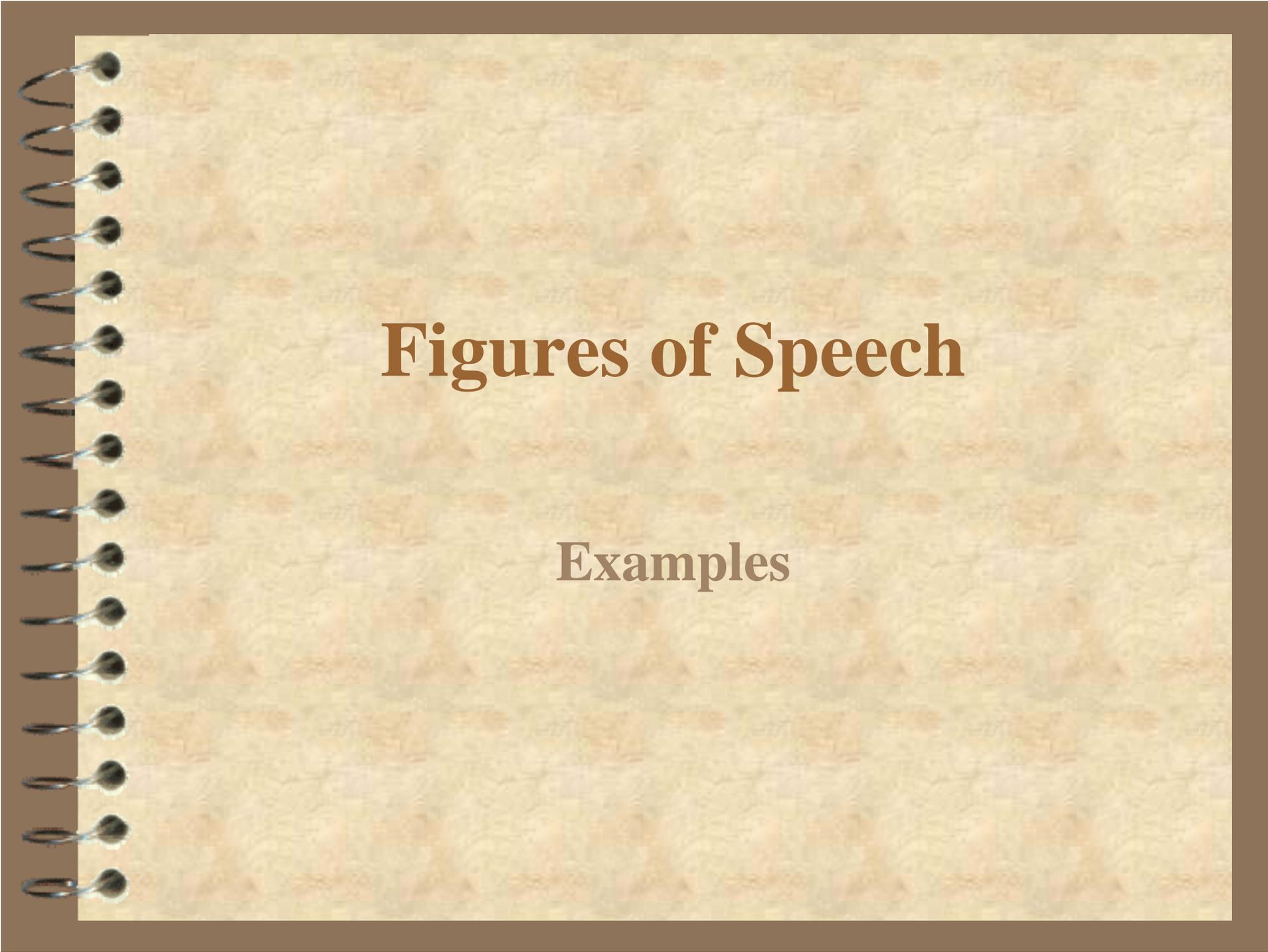
Figures of Speech

Examples

Example 1 - The Hendiadys

- **Hendiadys** - "One through Two" - this Figure is composed of two nouns or verbs joined by the conjunction "and", where the second word becomes an adjective or adverb (respectively) of superlative degree.
  - **Gen 1:26** (After the "likeness of Our Own Image)
  - **Gen 2:9** (The tree of the knowledge of "evil pleasure")

Example 2 - The Euphemy

- **Euphemy** - literally, "a good speak" - Replacing something pleasant for something potentially unpleasant
  - **1 Sam 24:3** - Saul "covering his feet" in the cave.
  - **Song of Solomon** - Euphemy is employed through out the book to softened the sexual content.

Example 3 - Polysyndeton

Polysyndeton - "Many Ands" - a Figure of Speech formed with the conjunction "and" to form a list of items, telling the reader to pay close attention to the *details* of each "and"

– Gen 1

- And God said…
- And God said...

Example 4 - Figures of Comparison (1 of 2)

- **Simile** - a declaration that one thing resembles another or is "similar" to another (*A Comparison by Similarity*)
  - "the team played *like* a bunch of old ladies"
  - the new boss is *like* a breath of fresh air
- **Metaphor** - a declaration that one thing is another or "represents" another (*A Comparison by Representation*)
  - "you *are* a turkey"

Example 4 - Figures of Comparison (1 of 2)

Hypocatastasis - a declaration that "implies" (or assumes) resemblance or representation (*A Comparison by Implication*)

– "Dogs have compassed me" (Psm 22:16)

• The evil watchers by are called "dogs" by the Crucified Christ.

Poor Old Sally (1 of 6)

Sally's eating habits are bad, and you feel a need to help her in this area. You must determine how well she will take the advice and how dense she might be. To be successful in telling her this bad news, you need to decide *how* to tell her of bad eating habits.

Poor Old Sally (2 of 6)

- **First**, you might decide to simply state the case with *literal* language.
  - "Sally, your eating habits have little to recommend them, may I help you improve upon them?"
  - Hopefully, Sally is not offended and agrees to your help.
  - BUT WHAT IF.....

Poor Old Sally (3 of 6)

- **Secondly**, you don't think she will get the point, so you need to be "stronger" in your approach, so you decide to use the next method, the Simile.
  - "Sally, you eat *like* a pig."
  - The Simile tells her the truth of the matter, yet preserves her emotions, by keeping her abstracted from the Figure.
  - BUT WAIT…

Poor Old Sally (4 of 6)

Thirdly, you begin to despair over your future success and decide she needs additional force. In comes the Metaphor!

– "Sally, you *are* a pig."

– The Metaphor has a stronger "edge" to it, because you have just "equated" her with a pig. Thus, you have brought her more into the Figure emotionally.

– BUT WAIT...

Finally, you realize that she needs a "stronger bite" (Pun). So you finally break down and implement the feared Hypocatastasis. You get right up into her face and shout...

– **PIG!**

– You have brought her completely into the Figure emotionally, for you have addressed her as if she were a pig.

Literal Usage and Figures of Comparison		
Type of Language	**Level of Reality**	**Level of Emotion**
Literal Language	Highest	Lowest
Figure of Simile	High	Low
Figure of Metaphor	Medium	Medium
Figure of Hypocatastasis	Low	High

Christ Himself employed the Figure of Hypocatastasis when addressing the religious leaders of his day. Addressing them as snakes and as offspring of vipers (Mat 23:33)
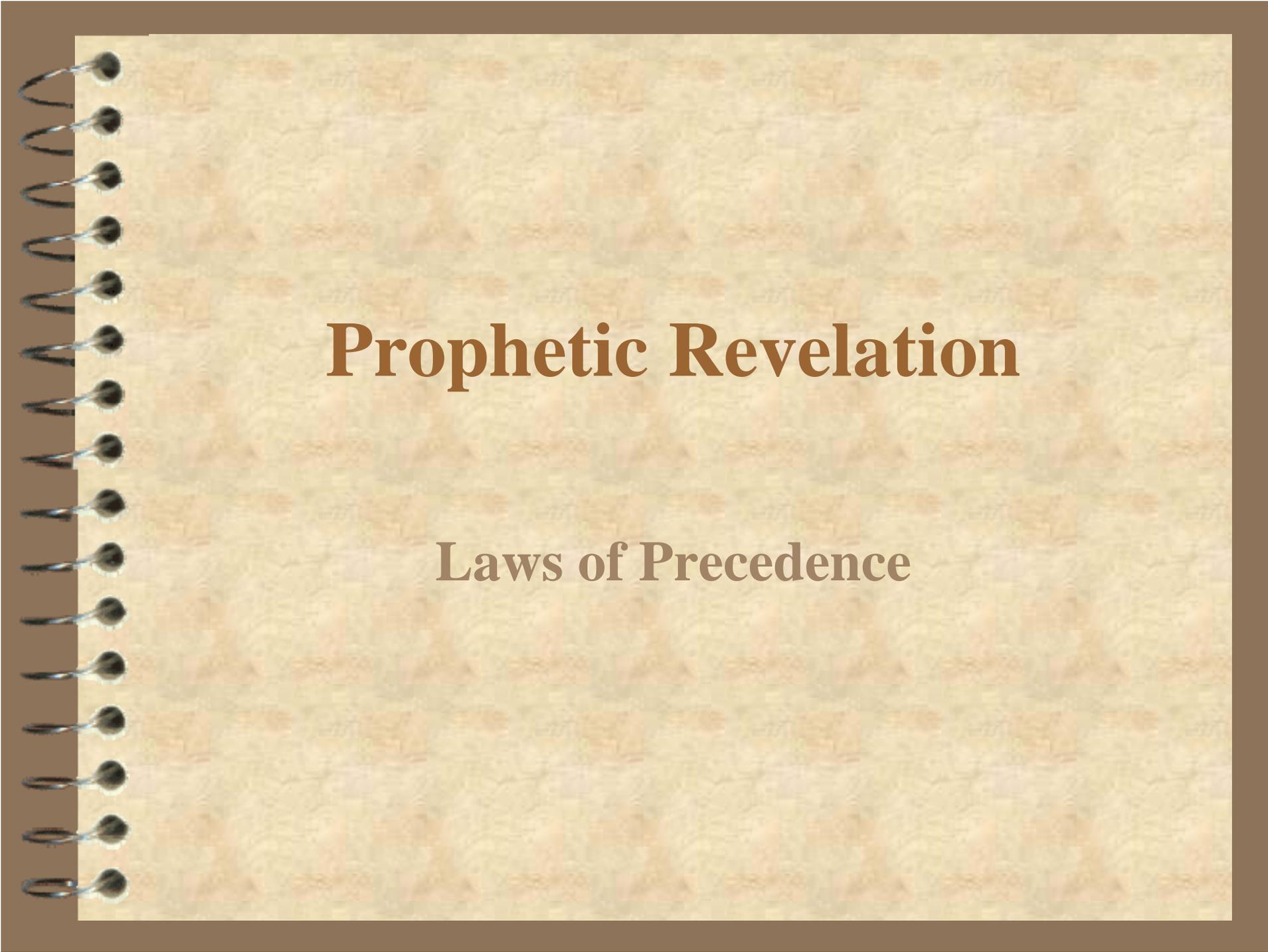
Prophetic Revelation

Laws of Precedence

Laws of Precedence

- (1) Older revelation must be interpreted and understood by the above rules BEFORE newer revelation is interpreted and understood by the above rules.

- (2) If after this is done, it is decided that both older and newer revelations address the same subject, then the interpretation of the newer is tailored, if need be, by the interpretation of the older … NEVER the reverse
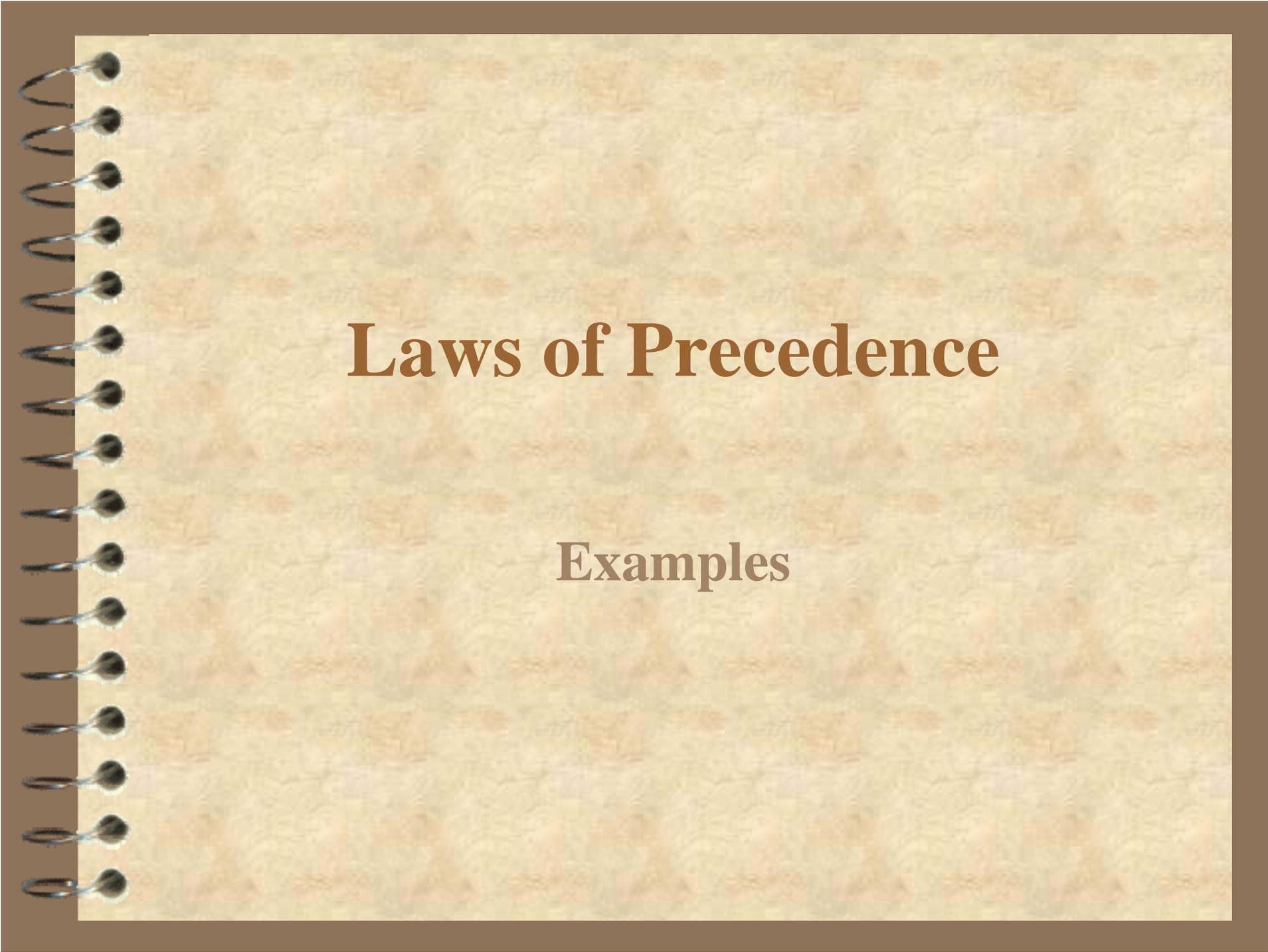
Laws of Precedence

Examples

Laws of Precedence - Examples (1 of 3)

- "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man"

  – To have a proper understanding of certain eschatological passages, we must FIRST understand the Creation / Flood passages.

  – Mat 24:37

  – Luke 17:26

Laws of Precedence - Examples (2 of 3)

◢ **The Virgin Birth of Messiah in Isa 7:14**

– The Hebrew word "Almh" means "technical virgin" while the related word "Btvlh" has two historic meanings: (1) an early meaning of technical virginity, and (2) a latter meaning of one who is merely separated in some fashion (e.g., to a man). Isaiah is a latter book and uses "Almh" in the culture of "Btvlh", making the case even stronger for the Virgin Birth of Messiah (S.E. Rodabaugh).

Laws of Precedence - Examples (3 of 3)

📄 **The Beasts of Daniel and Revelation**

- Daniel MUST be understood by the Normative Hermeneutic BEFORE Revelation.

- The Beasts in Daniel 7 form the basis for the identity of the Beast in Revelation 13

  - Among the four Danielian Beasts are 7 heads

  - The one Beast in Rev 13 has 7 heads

  - Daniel contains the creatures: lion (Mouth), bear (Feet), and leopard (Body)

    - Parentheses represent the body parts of the beast in Revelation
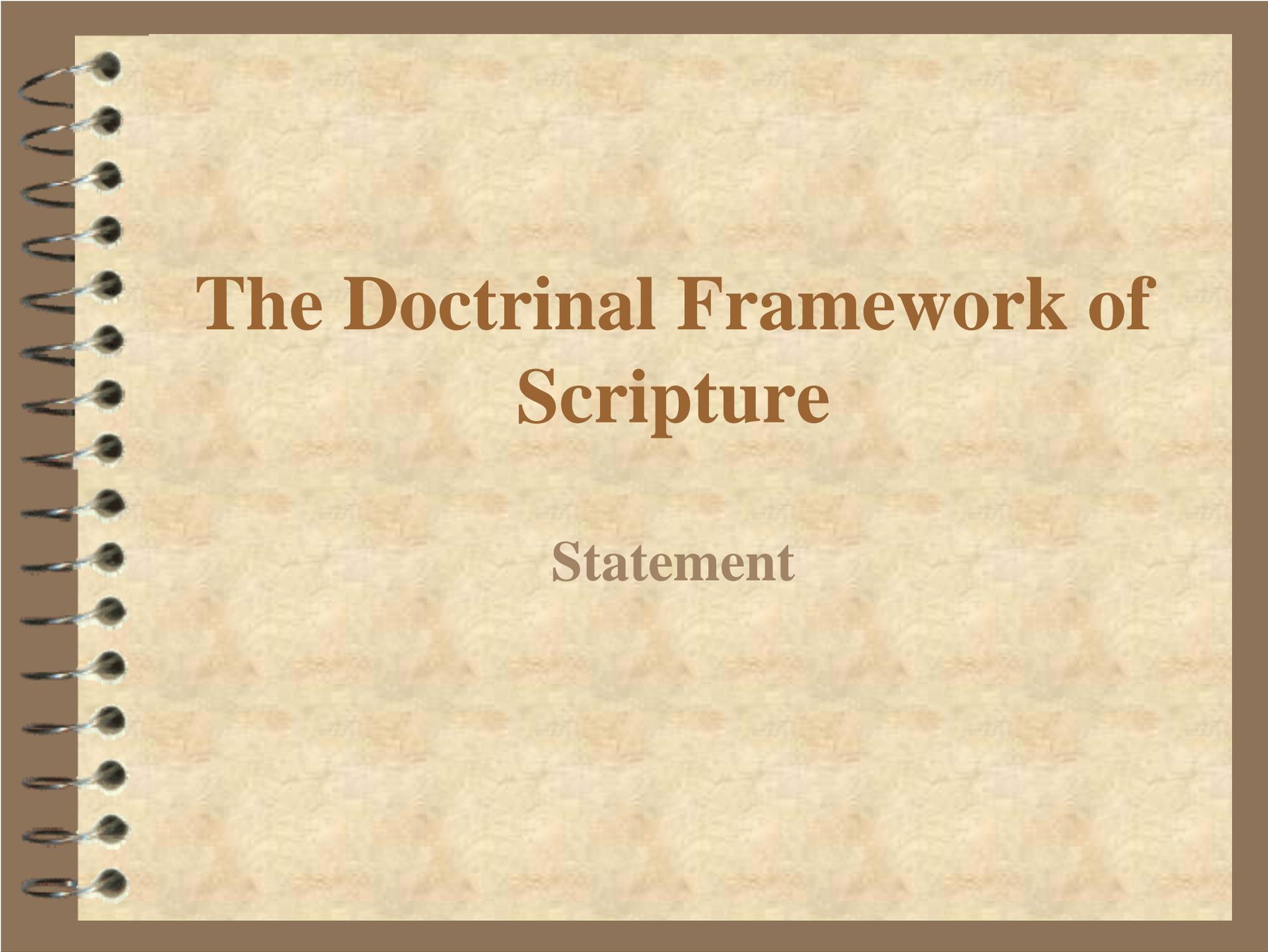
The Doctrinal Framework of Scripture

Statement

Generating Statement of the Framework

- The *consistent* application of the **Normative Hermeneutic** will generate the doctrinal framework contained in Scripture.
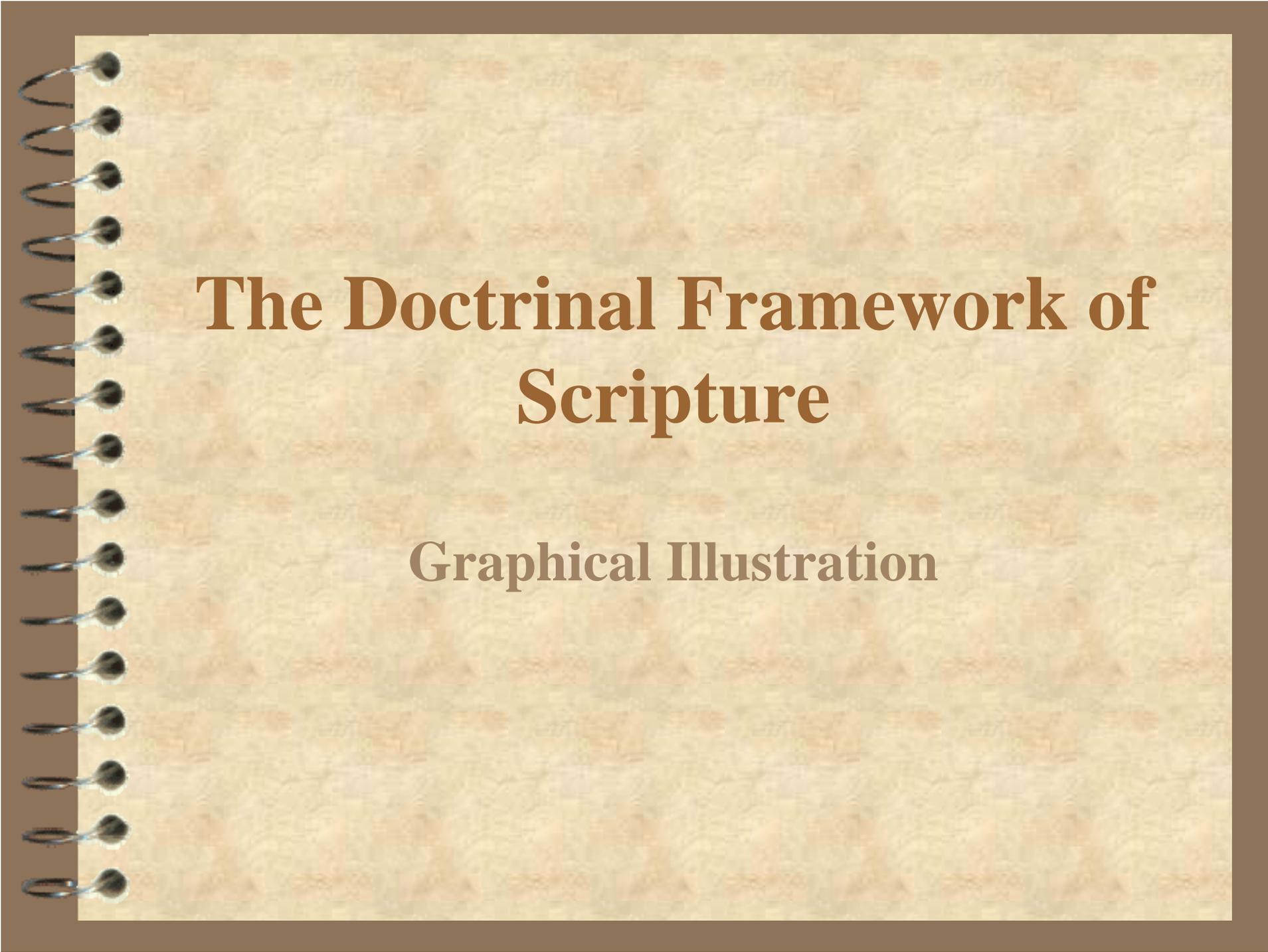
The Doctrinal Framework of Scripture

Graphical Illustration

The Doctrinal Framework
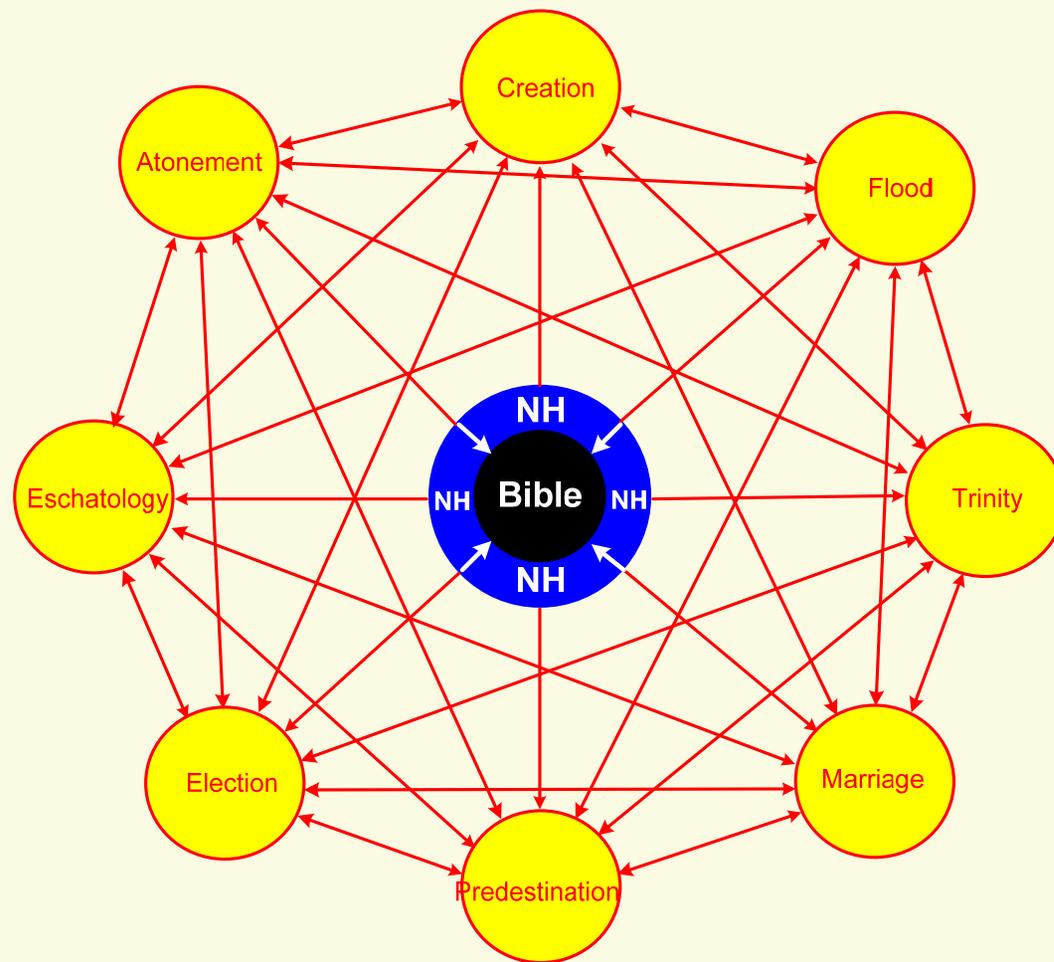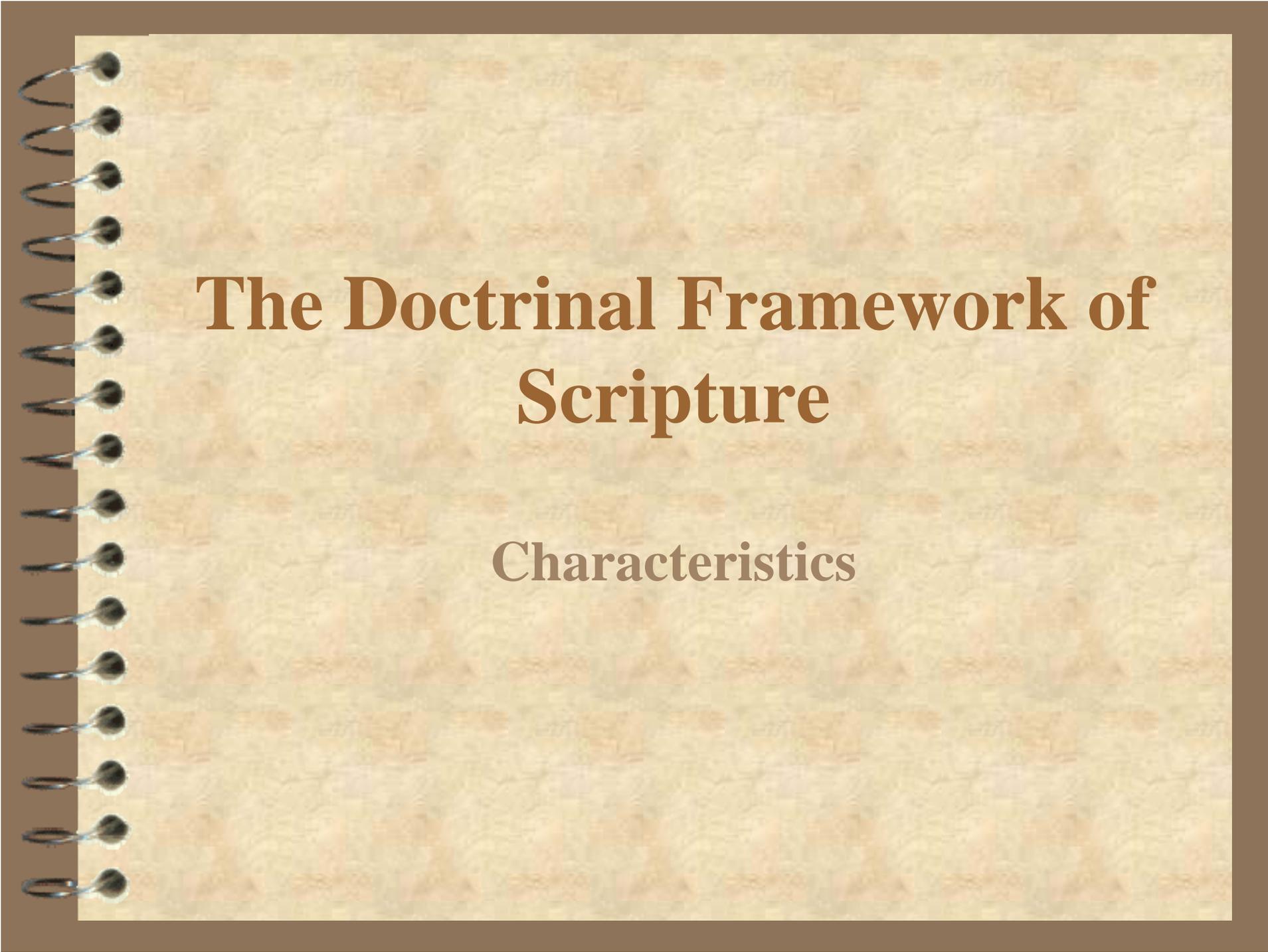
The Doctrinal Framework of Scripture

Characteristics

Characteristics of the Bible's Doctrinal Framework (1 of 4)

⊠ **Simplicity** - the correct doctrinal framework is that framework which is the simplest when dealing with *all* Biblical data, especially "difficult" data. It is *never* simplistic.

⊠ **Clarity** - the correct doctrinal framework is that framework which gives the utmost clarity when dealing with *all* Biblical data.

Characteristics of the Bible's Doctrinal Framework (2 of 4)

Knowability - the correct doctrinal framework is that framework which does not raise questions which cannot eventually be answered in conformity with the Normative Hermeneutic. Only answerable questions are a natural product of the correct doctrinal framework.

Characteristics of the Bible's Doctrinal Framework (3 of 4)

- **Efficiency** - the correct doctrinal framework is that framework which is the most efficient when dealing with *all* Biblical data.

- **Elegance** - the correct doctrinal framework is that framework which produces the most elegance and beauty when dealing with *all* Biblical data.

- **No Contradictions** - the correct doctrinal framework is that framework which does not lead to any contradictions when dealing with *all* Biblical data.

- **No Tautologies** - the correct doctrinal framework is that framework which does not contain or lead to "circular" arguments when dealing with *all* Biblical data.

Summary Comments (1 of 2)

- The **consistent** application of the *Normative Hermeneutic* upon the Biblical Text, in particular, those passages dealing with Creation and the Flood leads to:
  - **(1) A young earth model**
  - **(2) A global flood model**

Summary Comments (2 of 2)

- **The regenerated student of Scripture is driven to know and master the Scriptures in a detailed way.**

    – "till we all come in … the epignosis (detailed knowledge) of the Son of God…" (Eph 4:13)

- **The religious reprobate never comes to a detailed knowledge of Christ as Head.**

    – "… ever learning and <u>never</u> able to come to the "epignosis (detailed knowledge) of the truth" (2 Tim 3:7)

Biblical Hermeneutics and Creation

Questions?

Appendices

- (1) An abbreviated list of sources related to Hermeneutics
- (2) The practical ramifications of the Normative Hermeneutic and its Doctrinal Framework
- (3) An abbreviated list of additional Figures of Speech

Brief Popular References

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- [P = Popular] and [S = Scholarly]

Practical Characteristics of the Normative Hermeneutic

- **Objective** - The NH lies outside of the student's subjective experience, i.e., lies outside of one's theological preconceptions.

- **Testable** - The NH is testable from one person to another and therefore provides the "objective" mechanism by which saints come to agreement upon the text.

Additional Figures of Speech

📄 **The are over 200 Figures of Speech used in the Bible. The student of Scripture ought to be familiar with the usage rules for each Figure. Some examples...**

– **Polyptoton** - Differing inflections of the same part of speech - used for emphasis (Gen 2:16,17)

– **Asyndeton** - in contrast to the Polysyndeton, the Asyndeton has "no" ands (Rom 1:29,30)

– **Ellipsis** - The act of omitting words (1 Cor 7:17)

– **Metonomy** - A change of one noun for another related noun (Jn 3:34; 1 Cor 9:12)

– **Synecdoche** - An exchange of one thing for another ("Save our Ship [S.O.S., Lev 20:9 [Blood = Guilt])

– **Allegory** - An extended Metaphor or Hypocatastasis (Judg 9:7-15; Mat 3:10,12)

– **Parable** - An extended Simile (Kingdom Parables of Mat 13)

– **Oxymoron** - Literally "sharp-dull" (Mat 16:25; 2 Cor 7:4,8-10)

– **Idiom** - A peculiar usage of words and / or phrase (Gal 5:4)