

Hermeneutics

The Science and Art of Biblical Interpretation

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Preface

This Bible study course is designed to acquaint the serious student of the Word of God with equipment that will help in the interpretation of the Scriptures.

We are going to begin with an introduction to the various schools of hermeneutical thought and then proceed to the various principles that are used in the Protestant system of Biblical interpretation.

The approach that will be used is based on the personal belief of the author that the Scriptures are totally and completely inspired by God and that He communicates to His people that which He desires them to know.

We will not only explore the basic principles of interpretation, but will also consider some specialized areas such as symbols, types, parables and prophecy.

Please begin and end this course with prayer, praying as you go. Seek to know God's Word for He has promised that you can (Matt 7:7-8; James 1:5), but more than just knowing God's Word, seek to know Him (Phil. 3:10) in a more personal and intimate way for many have known His Word, but did not really know the Father (John 5:39-45).

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Bible published by the Lockman Foundation.

This study course was derived from class notes gleaned from Dr. Dale Carnagey of Tulsa Seminary of Biblical Languages in the fall of 1978, our textbook, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, by Bernard Ramm (Baker Book House, 1970), and my personal teaching notes.

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Lesson 1

Introduction

Hermeneutics is the science and art of Biblical interpretation. It is a *science* because it is guided by rules. The *art* is in the application of the rules.

The primary need of hermeneutics is to determine the meaning of the Word of God. Since all doctrine rests upon interpretation, we must have correct interpretation to develop correct doctrine.

Hermeneutics seeks to bridge the gap between our minds and the minds of the Biblical writers. The best way to accomplish this bridge is through a thorough knowledge of the original languages, ancient history and comparison of Scripture with Scripture. An extensive knowledge of geography and culture is also invaluable.

The step of faith that we must make is the inspiration of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16). This establishes the boundaries for correct understanding of the Word.

We also must seek to determine the true text. This discipline is called *textual criticism*. *Lower criticism* seeks to determine the author and date of the writing. So called "*Higher Criticism*" is a liberal approach to Scripture that does not accept complete inspiration of the Bible.

There is a need for intellectual honesty and education. One may have the rules memorized, but may not be able to apply them, or may seek to apply them in a biased manner. The objective of the interpreter is to read out of the text (exegesis) not to read one's own viewpoints in to the text (eisegesis). One way to become as objective as possible is prayerfully and thoughtfully consider any and all alternatives in a given passage.

Interpreters should approach the text in humility, meaning that the interpreter must be teachable and realize that he should never stop learning. Interpreters must also recognize that inspiration (which comes from God) is infallible, but personal illumination is not.

The Qualifications of an Interpreter:

1. One must be a Believer because correct interpretation requires the work of the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor 2:14-16
2. One must be filled with the Holy Spirit. Eph 5:18
3. One must possess a desire to know. Matt 7:7-8
4. One must be seeking to correctly interpret God's Word. 2 Tim 2:15
5. One should have some spiritual education over a period of time. 1 Tim 3:6

For Personal Study

1. Why is the study of Hermeneutics both a science and an art?
2. What is the primary need of Hermeneutics?
3. What is the best way to bridge the gap between my mind and the mind of the writer?
4. What is the "step of faith" that I must take to begin to interpret the Scripture?
5. Is my interpretation infallible? Explain.
6. Do I fit the qualifications for an interpreter? If not, why?

Lesson 2

Historical Schools-Allegorists

General

An "Allegory" is a symbolic representation. There were schools of interpretation that took the literal words of Scripture and assumed that they were symbolic of deeper spiritual truths. While there are some obvious symbols in the Word of God such as in Ezekiel 1, it would be a human assumption to claim that all of Scripture is symbolic and that the literal has no significant meaning.

Greek Allegorical Schools:

The Greek Allegorical Schools were concerned only with their own writings, but their method of interpretation was adopted by both Jews and Christians. Their philosophical and historical traditions which were stated by Thucydides and Herodotus were always at odds with their religious traditions which were stated by Homer and Hesiod. They relieved the tension by allegorizing the religious.

Jewish Allegorical Schools:

The major writers for the Jewish Allegorical School were Aristobulus (160 BC) and Philo (20 BC - 54 AD). Philo tried to reconcile the Hebrew faith with Greek philosophy. These allegorists claimed that the literal was for the immature.

The Jewish Allegorists developed Canons (a regulation or standard) for allegorical interpretation that told them when they were to interpret in this manner. If they found a statement that was "unworthy" of God, or statements that either seemed to contradict or in any way presented a difficulty, they felt free to interpret allegorically. Also, if the record itself was allegorical in nature or they ran into grammatical peculiarities or symbols they turned to allegory.

Christian and Patristic Allegorists:

The Christian and Patristic Allegorists believed that the Old Testament was a Christian document but considered it to be full of parables, enigmas, and riddles. They also ignored the historical connections of scripture and believed that Greek philosophy was to be found in the Old Testament.

One of the major writers was Clement of Alexandria (c.150 A.D.) who claimed that there were five possible meanings. The Historical meaning which concerned the actual event; The Doctrinal meaning which included moral and theological teachings; The Prophetic meaning which was concerned with

predictions and types; the Philosophical meaning which sees meaning in objects and historical persons; and the Mystical meaning which involved deeper moral, spiritual or religious truth found via symbols.

Origen was a student of Clement who sought to escape the crudities of lay people by taking everything symbolically. He tried to make scripture acceptable to philosophers. Origen's approach was threefold in that the Literal meaning was the Body of Scripture, the Moral sense was the Soul of Scripture, and the Allegorical sense was the Spirit of Scripture. He believed that true exegesis was Spiritual (allegorical) exegesis.

Jerome (347-420) translated the Bible into Latin and that translation is called the Vulgate. It has been the only official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church since the Council of Trent in 1545. Jerome suggested that the Apocrypha be put in Bible.

Augustine sought to develop a theory of signs. A sign is a thing apart from the impression that it presents to the senses and which causes of itself some other thing to enter our thoughts. He based his position on 2 Cor 3:6 which says "who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." Augustine's requirements for proper interpretation were: 1) an interpreter must be a believer; 2) the literal meaning and historical setting must be held in high regard; 3) Scripture has a double meaning, therefore the Allegorical method is proper; 4) recognize that there is significance in numbers; and 5) the Old Testament was a Christian document and Christ should be sought there. Augustine believed that true exegesis had to consult the meaning of the writer, then the "analogy of faith" which is found in the true orthodox creed and add love, which is spiritual intuition.

Some of Augustine's other teachings were: 1) that one had to pay attention to the context; 2) if the interpreter is insecure in his basic beliefs, he can't be part of the orthodox faith; 3) that one must not try and make the Holy Spirit a substitute for the tools; 4) that the obscure passage must yield to clear; and 5) that one must also note progressive revelation within its historical context (some say that he failed to apply this point himself).

Roman Catholic School:

The Allegorism of Roman Catholicism employed a "spiritual" or "mystical" interpretation of the Word. In general, the Roman Catholics combined Typol-

ogy and Allegory and sought the Moral Interpretation. They believed that the literal and historical interpretation is the foundation of the study of the Bible, but that the "spiritual" or "mystical" meaning, which is beyond the literal, is what we should really seek.

The Roman Catholics use the Latin Vulgate (a Latin translation by Jerome from the Hebrew and Greek) as though it were the original text. The Catholic interpreter accepts what The Church has said about various matters as unequivocal truth. They believe that The Church is the official interpreter since The Bible is not given to the world but deposited with the Church. Also at the heart of their beliefs is that the Christian *Deposit of Faith* is in the Catholic Church. Therefore, no passage of Scripture can be validly interpreted in a manner that conflicts with the Roman Catholic Doctrinal system. Their view of the "analogy of faith" is to compare a particular interpretation with Church Dogma.

The Roman Catholic "Guide to Interpretation" is that interpretation:

- must be solely about faith and morals.
- is not bound by national or scientific matters.
- must bear witness to Catholic tradition.
- must have a unanimous witness by the Church Fathers.
- is to be explained by unwritten tradition when the passage is obscure.
- follows the "Principle of Development" meaning the doctrines of the New Testament were 'seeds' and not complete units in themselves.
- also follows the "Principle of Implication" which is called "Epigenesis" meaning that doctrines grow, develop and change.

For Personal Study

1. What is an allegory?
2. What is the major assumption of the Allegorical School of thought?
3. From which Allegorical School did both the Jews and Christians get their foundation?
4. How did the Jewish Allegorical School originate?
5. How do Allegorists view Literalists?

6. What were the five possible meanings of Scripture according to Clement of Alexandria?
7. What were the body, soul and spirit of Scripture according to Origen?
8. Evaluate the basic teachings of Augustine.
9. Discuss the basic hermeneutical system of Roman Catholicism.

Lesson 3

Historical Schools-Literalists

General:

The literal method of interpreting the Bible is to accept as basic the literal rendering of the sentences unless by virtue of the nature of the sentence or phrase this is not possible. This allows for figures of speech, fables and allegories. When reasons exist for something beyond the literal meaning, there must be some type of control.

Jewish Literal School

Ezra founded this school when he translated the Hebrew to Aramaic for the Jews who were coming out of captivity (Neh 8:1-8). The Jewish Canons of interpretation were that:

- the Word is to be understood in terms of sentence and the sentence by its context.
- one should compare similar topics of scripture and give the clear passages preference over the obscure.
- one must pay close attention to spelling, grammar, and figures of speech.
- Logic is to be used to apply scripture to life in circumstances where the Bible is silent.

The Literal school recognizes the Divine accommodation of Revelation to men.

Some Problems in the Literal School:

The “hyperliteralists” who are also called “letterists” took things to the extreme and were constantly looking for hidden meanings lying “under” the surface of the text.

The Cabbalists (Kabbalists) often allegorized the letters. They used *notarikon* where each letter stood for another word. They also used a method called *gematria* which assigned numerical values to words, and then compared

numbers and a system called *termura* which changed the letters of words to form new words.

Syrian School of Antioch

The Syrian School of Antioch avoided letterism and allegories. Lucian and Dorotheus were founders, around 325 A.D. Arius and Eusebius studied at this school. Diodorus who was the first presbyter of Antioch until 378 AD, then the Bishop of Tarsus, also was part of the school at Antioch. There exist many extant writings from the students of this ancient school.

Theodore of Mopsuestia was a student of Diodorus who was intellectual and dogmatic. He denied the inspiration of some books of the Bible, but he also denied Allegory.

John Chrysostom who was also called “the golden-mouthed” was a talented exegete and communicator who recognized inspiration and totality of the Canon.

This School debated Origen’s Allegorical school.

The Syrian School:

- recognized a plain-literal and a figurative-literal sense of Scripture.
- were not “letterists.”
- avoided the authoritarian exegesis of the Roman Catholics.
- insisted on historicity of Old Testament events.
- related the Old Testament and New Testament *Typologically*, not Allegorically.
- recognized Progressive Revelation.
- held that the bond between the Old Testament and New Testament is prophecy.

This is the line of descent passed through by the writer of this course.

The Victorines:

The major representatives of The Victorines were Hugo of St. Victor, Richard of St. Victor, and Andrew of St. Victor. They noted the importance of history and geography, which is the natural background for literal exegesis. They emphasized syntax, grammar and exegesis and did not get involved in letterism.

The Reformers:

The Reformers based their approach on the philosophical system of Occam. This system first separated Grace and Nature and said everything we know about God is via Divine Revelation. The second factor involved a renewed study of Hebrew and Greek. Erasmus published the first Greek New Testament in 1516.

The Reformer Martin Luther held the following hermeneutical principles:

- The Psychological Principle which recognized faith and illumination.
- The Authority Principle which held that the Bible is the supreme authority and is above church authority.
- The Literal Principle, which rejected allegory as, used by the Catholics. (They were not adverse though if the context were Christ and not something about the papacy). They accepted the primacy of the original languages and paid attention to grammar, time frame, circumstances, conditions, and context.
- The Sufficiency Principle, which indicates that the Bible is a clear book and a devout student, can understand it. This includes the fact that Scripture interprets scripture, so one must let the clear interpret the obscure. They also employed the “Analogy of Faith” which was believed to be the theological unity of the Bible and not the recognized dogma of an institution.
- The Christological Principle states that the function of all interpreters is to find Christ. (The Roman Catholics seek to do this with Allegory)
- The Law-Gospel Principle which recognizes that the Law is not necessary for salvation.

In the Post-Reformation Era Ernesti published *Institutio Interpretis* in 1761 which stated that grammatical exegesis had authority over dogmatic exegesis which was the Roman Catholic method.

Devotional Schools:

This group emphasizes the edifying aspects of Scripture as per 2 Tim 3:16. The Medieval Mystics who used the Scriptures to promote the mystical experience led this school. The Victorines fell into this category.

Pietists

This was started by Philip Spener (1635-1705) and August Francke (1663-1727) who attempted to recover the Bible as spiritual with the intended use of edification. It was a reaction against those who read the Bible only to tear down others. Bengel was the chief exponent. The Pietists emphasized grammatical and historical interpretation seeking to apply it to life.

The Pietists influenced the Moravians. This evangelical movement can be traced to Moravia and Bohemia (Czechoslovakia). Count von Zinzendorf (1700 - 1760), the leader of the Bohemian Brethren was a part of the Devotional School. The Pietists also influenced the Puritans including John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Mathew Henry, and the Quakers.

The problem they faced was one of having only pious reflections of Scripture without clear explanations. The Modern Devotional School claims devotions are absolutely necessary as Christians need applications to live by. The weaknesses of this school are that it can easily fall prey to Allegory, and often, pious reflections are substituted for valid exegesis.

For Personal Study

1. Describe the Literal approach to God’s Word.
2. What were some of the problems in the Literal School and why would they be problems?
3. Which Literal School debated Origen’s Allegorical School and who were some of its famous students?
4. Discuss the principles held by the Syrian School.
5. Discuss Luther’s principles of hermeneutics.
6. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Pietists.

Lesson 4

Historical Schools-Liberals

The Liberal School of interpretation grew primarily out of the debate between rationalism and authoritarianism. Whatever was not in harmony with ‘educated’ morality was rejected.

The Liberal system of hermeneutics is that:

- The Modern Mentality was to govern one's approach to scripture.
- The Bible is just another book.
- Miracles are not to be accepted because they are not scientific.
- Hell, sin, and depravity are rejected because they offend moral sensitivities.
- The text may be rearranged.
- They reject all forms of Inspiration.
- Revelation is redefined to mean human insight into religious truth.
- Doctrinal and theological content are not binding.
- They believe that religious experience is fundamental and that theology is an afterthought.

The Liberal School applied Evolution to the religion of Israel. Thus they held that Jesus was a good man of the highest prophetic order and was transmuted by theological speculation and Greek metaphysics into the God-man of the creeds.

They believe that the writers of the Bible accommodated their recipients and hence the Bible is not binding on us. Liberalism also rejects typology and prophecy. They place a high value on philosophy and use a synthetic system that comes from beginning with a thesis and adding to it an antithesis thus forming a synthesis.

Some of the different names Liberalism appears under are:

- Neo-Orthodoxy which seeks to recover the insights of the Reformers. Karl Barth was the chief representative of this movement.
- Neo-Supernaturalism which reinstates category of transcendental.
- Logotheism which seeks a new theology of the Word of God.
- Neo-Evangelicalism which seeks to recover the Christian gospel in contrast to social gospel.
- Neo-Liberalism which has not really broken with liberalism.

- Biblical Realism which is a new effort to discover theological interpretation of the Bible.

Neo-Orthodoxy:

The approach of Neo-Orthodoxy to the interpretation of the Bible:

- denies the infallibility, inerrancy, and Divine revelation of Scripture.
- says that only God can speak for God and thus revelation only comes when God speaks.
- claims that His speech is His personal presence, not mere words.
- views the Bible as a witness and record to revelation, but is not revelation.
- believes only that which witnesses to Christ is binding.
- believes we cannot interpret the particulars or specifics of Scripture.
- interprets mythologically the Creation accounts, the fall of man, and the Second Advent.
- believes you can read the Bible without any attempt to understand it (Existential).
- recognizes paradoxes.

“Holy History” School:

Another part of the Liberal School believed in a *Heilsgeschichtliche*, which is German meaning “Holy History” or “Salvation History.” Von Hoffman who tried a new system based on the experience of regeneration, history, the fact of the Church and Scripture started it. They accepted “Higher Criticism” which believed the books in the Bible to be written by several authors over the period of several hundred years.

The approach of the “Holy History” was that an historical event had roots in the past, meaning in the present, and was a preview of the future. It was also called the “Organic” view and when applied meant that interpretation was to be dynamic (ever-changing). This school turned applications into interpretations and believed that the Bible is the Bible if you make it *your* Bible.

Their Hermeneutics involve:

- The “Quest for Life” movement of document which is an attempt to discover unity of the book, to determine to whom it was written and find the flow of ideas
- comprehending the Bible’s message in context of the author’s view of life and reality as seen by the rational mind.
- determining the relationship, which exists between the ideas of the documents and the ideas of our own mind, namely reading into The Word our viewpoints which is, called eisegesis.
- critically studying the Bible since criticism establishes authenticity.

The New Hermeneutics:

Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) introduced the German Hermeneutical Principle also called the “New Hermeneutics.” Its principles are that:

- all matters of fact are settled by science and thus rejects miracles. (Scientific)
- the historical setting of a concept becomes more important than the strict interpretation of that concept. (Critical)
- the 1st Century church expressed faith mythologically. (Mythological)
- the modern person must strip away the myths. (Demythological)
- faith lives only by decision and does not need to be objective or have historical support. (Dialectical)
- scriptures are a witness that revelation does occur, but it is not directly the Word of God. (Revelational)
- there is no Old Testament predictions of the New Testament events. (The Law)

They are on a quest for the “historical Jesus” speaking of the person apart from what they view as myth. The Liberal Hermeneutic is based on how each person may see or understand his own world and experience. They view language as a “speech-event” and thus it does not carry responsibility even if coming from God.

For Personal Study:

1. Where did the Liberal School of interpretation come from?
2. What philosophical theory did the Liberals apply to Scripture?
3. Discuss their basic positions.
4. What is my overall evaluation of the liberal hermeneutical system?

Lesson 5

The Protestant System Of Hermeneutics

Introduction

The Divine Inspiration of Scripture is the foundation from which we begin, for “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2Tim 3:16-17). The Protestant Approach to Hermeneutics recognizes that the Bible must be understood as absolute truth including all the miracles. This adds new depth to common words such faith, love, redemption and salvation because not only are concepts presented but facts are given to validate the concepts.

Also at the core of “How to Study the Bible” is acceptance of the fact that the Bible has been inspired by God in its entirety. This is called verbal-plenary inspiration indicating that every part of the Bible has been inspired by God.

To correctly interpret God’s Word first requires that the individual is a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ because, “a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:14-16).” The second requirement for correct interpretation of God’s Word is directly related to one’s relationship with the Holy Spirit, because it is His function to “guide us into all truth (John 16:13).” The third requirement is an intellectual honesty that consistently and eagerly uses the tools that God has given us to learn His Word. We are instructed to, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not

need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15).”

The goal of interpretation is always to be love. All goals in life are supposed to revolve around what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself called the “Two Greatest Commandments.” In Mark 12:28-31, the text reports, “And one of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ “The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” The Apostle Paul gave his teaching objective in 1 Tim 1:5 which says, “the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

The intent of this love-guided teaching should be to promote the Spiritual growth of the Believer in the Lord Jesus. This principle is clearly taught in Ephesians 4:11-16, that says, “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

Interpretation must be tested with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1 Timothy 6:3-5, Paul says, “If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he

is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.”

For Personal Study

1. What is the foundation of the Protestant system of Hermeneutics? Why?
2. What are three personal requirements for the interpretation of Scripture?
3. What should be the objective of all interpretation and why?
4. What should our teaching promote and why?
5. What is the standard we are to use to test interpretation?

Lesson 6

The Protestant System Of Hermeneutics:

Theological Perspectives

There are certain theological perspectives that our method of Bible study must include in order for us to approach the text and interpret Scripture properly.

The first principle involves the Clarity of Scripture, which is clearly taught in 2 Pet 1:20-21 and 1Cor 14:33. The passage in 2 Peter says, “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” Scripture is clear because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. We must remember that although Scripture is “clear” there still may be parts that are difficult to understand.

One of our basic guiding principles though is that “God said what He meant and meant what He said.” We must seek to know His Word as He intended. We also know that, “God is not a God of confusion but of peace (1 Cor 14:33),” so where there is confusion it is on our part and not God’s. Therefore, “problem passages” come from our lack of knowledge, our perspective or desire to “do His will (John 7:17). The use of the original languages under the ministry of the Holy Spirit will clarify many of these problems.

The second principle is that Revelation is Accommodated, which means that it was originally communicated in language to be understood by the initial recipients. The Scripture often uses analogies to inescapable realities that fit the time frame in which it was written. The application of this principle requires some knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of the people to which the portion of the Word was addressed.

The third theological principle is that Revelation is Progressive. This refers to the fact that various precepts are initially presented in a summary form and then enlarged. A wonderful example is found in the “promised seed of the woman” found in Genesis 3:15. More information about the Messiah is found throughout the Old Testament, especially in the types and symbols that are used to give a vivid picture of the Messiah who was to come. The New Testament is documentation of the reality that Messiah has come. While this is the clearest example of Progressive Revelation, there are many concepts that are initially presented and then developed.

The fourth principle is that Scripture interprets Scripture meaning that the obscure passage should give way to the clear. This principle realizes that essential truths are not hidden. We should look for detailed passages on a given subject and let them be the guide in the interpretation of the passages with less detail. An illustration of this principle is found in the comparison of Matthew 24:40 with Matthew 13:49.

In Matthew 24, the phrase “one will be taken, and one will be left” could refer either to the righteous being taken at the Rapture of the church or the wicked being taken at the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. The passage in Matthew 13 which is also found in a context dealing with the “last days” says that it will be the “wicked who will be taken out from the righteous.” Thus, we are able to interpret the Matthew 24 passage as referring to the Second Advent and not the Rapture because Scripture has interpreted Scripture.

The fifth principle is the Analogy of Faith. This principle means that there is only one system of truth in Scripture. There are not two or more theological systems. The practical application of this is that all doctrines and conceptual studies must be in harmony

with one another. The interpretation of particular passages of Scripture must not contradict the total teaching of Scripture on a given subject. For example, eternal salvation is either by grace through faith, or by works, but not both. God’s Word does not have two different systems or means to eternal salvation, but rather it has one (Eph 2:8-9). Therefore, passages that relate our “works” done in this body to eternity must be understood in view the passages that clearly specify that our eternal salvation is by grace.

The sixth theological principle is the Unity of Meaning of the Scripture. This is why believers develop a systematic theology that seeks to understand and explain how various passages and concepts fit together. This principle seeks to understand and communicate how God has put His Word together. Man’s tendency though is to “read into” God’s Word what he wants to find (eisegesis). When man desires (either intentionally or not) to impose his system upon God’s Word he is prone to presumptive allegories and distortions of the Scriptures. Knowing what God says and desires should always be the first priority of the student of His Word.

For Personal Study

1. Explain in your own words the principle of the Clarity of Scripture.
2. Explain in your own words the principle that Revelation is Accommodated.
3. Explain in your own words the principle that Revelation is Progressive.
4. What is the significance and importance of the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture?
5. What is the Analogy of Faith?
6. What is the value of the principle regarding the Unity of Meaning?

Lesson 7

The Protestant System Of Hermeneutics
Grammatical Perspectives

Philology is a technical term meaning a “friend of words.” It refers to a love of learning and desire to study the disciplines of language. Since the Bible is made up of words, there is need for the technical and comparative study of the words that are used in the Bible. The student of the Word of God must pay careful attention to the specific words

and the context in which the Holy Spirit placed them into the Scripture. While it is possible to gain some tremendous insights into God's Word from a study of the words used in various translations, one must be very careful of trying to develop a theology from anything other than the original languages. The disciple with no training in the original languages will need to rely on the work of others in many of these areas.

The first principle we will consider is that we should approach the Scriptures believing that God's Word is Basically Literal. The Literal Approach to Scripture recognizes the natural or usual speech constructions and implications of a particular writing or expression. It follows the ordinary and apparent sense of the words that are used in their historical context. This is not letterist approach that reads meaning into letters but instead is the usual method of interpretation of any literature. We approach God's Word literally because we find that the statements and descriptions He gives of the Messiah had literal fulfillment in Jesus Christ. If there are spiritual meanings that come from signs, symbols, parables and the like they still depend on the literal strata of a language. Only in a literal approach is there any control against abuse of the interpretation of the Scriptures. The Literal Approach does not overlook figures of speech, symbols, types, and the like.

The practice of the literal is done by the Study of Words which is our second principle. Words establish the context of a body of literature. In the study of words, you will find that some are technical or very specific in their meaning while others are non-technical or general in their meanings. It makes sense that the non-technical words should be interpreted in view of the technical words that surround them. This is actually a specific application of letting Scripture interpret Scripture and the clear passage interpret the obscure.

As we study the words we look at the way they were formed which is called "etymology." This type of study can give tremendous insight into the meaning of the word. For example, the Greek word PARAKALEO is formed from the word PARA meaning "alongside" and KALEO meaning "to call." The word itself then means to "call alongside." It is a word variously translated as "comfort,"

"encourage," or "exhort." It implies though a call to another person into a relationship that is "arm-in-arm" with you. There are many good lexicons available that explain the way the words were formed.

We also must study words comparatively referring to how they relate to other words. This will involve Concordance studies. An exhaustive Concordance will show every place a given word is used. Many also have number codes that tell which Greek or Hebrew words have been translated by that particular word. Strong's Concordance is probably the best for the beginning student. It is also valuable for the advanced student. The Comparative Study of words also considers synonyms (words with similar or identical meanings) and antonyms which are words with opposite meanings. There are very few pure synonyms, so the careful student will find beautiful subtleties of meaning that can greatly enhance his understanding of the Word.

It is also important to study words culturally meaning their significance to the culture that used them in the era in which they were used. There is a trap of not applying a correct Biblical chronology to the study of the words. We must realize that words change meanings over the course of time. The meanings also tend to go from specific to general. This principle was espoused by Martin Luther and John Calvin and sought to determine the original designation of a particular word. In Latin it is known as the *usus loquendi*.

When possible, the serious student may also consider cognate languages, which are languages of the same linguistic family. However, one must beware of placing too much emphasis on this study.

The Literal Approach to Scripture is also practiced by considering the grammatical structure of sentences because words form sentences. Sentences are units of thought. The research is the same as for the study of words. One must consider the Context in which the sentence is found. The immediate context considers the sentences and paragraphs in closest proximity to the one under consideration. The intermediate context considers the book in which the sentence is placed and the remote context considers the rest of the Bible.

In our study of sentences we must also know

what type of language is under consideration. It may be “Analytic” which depends on the word order to communicate the meaning. Hebrew and English are examples of “Analytic” languages. It may also be “Agglutinative” which is considered a “synthetic” language where case endings are primarily used to convey the intended meaning.

The study of parallel passages is also important to the Literal Approach to the Scripture. Just because one finds wording similar to that found in another passage, the passages still may not be parallel. The issue should not be forced.

One should also look at similar concepts. An example of this would be to study the “Resurrection of the Dead” as found in 1Corinthians 15 and Revelation 20.

The Literal Approach also considers the Literary Genre of the passage under consideration. A genre is a standardized pattern of writing, such as poetry and prose. The Literary Genre makes us consider various figures of speech, such as in Revelation 5:5 where the Lord is called the “lion” of Judah. Jesus Christ is not a literal “lion,” so the figure of speech represents a trait that He literally possesses. Scripture also uses Parables and even an Allegory (Gal 4:24). Recognizing the Literary Genre does not touch the literal hermeneutical principles, but instead clearly identifies figurative language and literally interprets. Song of Solomon is clearly loaded with figurative language, but its interpretation must be first considered literally.

It is extremely important that the interpreter of Scripture have some knowledge of Biblical history and chronology in particular. This is important in understanding the Biblical culture customs and rituals. Revelation comes in and through a cultural form and in some cases the principles taught are transcultural. It is an art determining when.

The student of God’s word must come to the Scriptures with some basic questions. As we approach any passage we must seek to answer the “Who, what, when, where, why and how.” After those questions are answered, there are some secondary questions we would ask such as, “How does this apply to me or the ones I am to teach?” and “Are there any conditions to these principles such as special circumstances?”

The student of God’s Word must approach His Word with Intellectual Honesty, seeking to know what God has said. There are many hindrances to correct interpretation including the desire for the applause of men, vanity, flattery, fear, and inconsistent or unbalanced study (like only studying topics and not studying through a book). Every time we go into the Word we should submit our biases to the absolute standard of truth, the Word of God, because only His Word is Truth (John 17:17). We also must seek to learn from Him in order to do His will (John 7:17) and not simply as an academic exercise. The Pharisees demonstrate what happens when we leave the desire for a relationship with the Living God out of our study of His Word (also read John 5:39-47). Let us pray, pray and pray.

The Sequence Of Interpretation

The first step is to analyze the words realizing that the technical or specific words set the context and that the non-technical or general words are interpreted by the context.

The next step is to analyze the grammar recognizing the word functions that are forced by the words themselves or the grammatical construction. These set the context and serve as the basis to interpret the words that can have optional grammatical functions. In other words we are letting the clear interpret the questionable.

We must also interpret based on the contexts, looking first at the immediate context in which we find the word, namely within the sentence or paragraph, then at the intermediate context which refers to its location within the book in which it is found and then at the remote context which considers the rest of the Scripture. Correct interpretation will not violate any of these contexts.

For Personal Study

1. Why would we accept a principle that says we would first consider words to be basically literal in their meaning?
2. How do we establish the literal meaning?
3. What value can there be in the study of how words are formed?
4. What is the value of comparing words?

5. Why would we want to study the grammatical structure of sentences?
6. Why would the context be important in the interpretation of the word?
7. Why would we want to study parallel passages and similar concepts?
8. Why would history and culture also impact our study?
9. What are some hindrances to the correct interpretation of Scripture?

Lesson 8:

The Doctrinal Use Of The Bible

The Theological or Doctrinal Interpretation extends the study of the grammar to its full significance. It is a Synoptic or Comparative view of all the Biblical data on a given subject. Theology must be built upon general hermeneutical principles.

Principles Of Doctrinal Studies

The Theologian is a redeemed man standing in the midst of Divine Revelation. Thus he must be committed to understanding the Word of God. This should not be a dry, abstract, or impersonal investigation, but one must seek to set personal biases aside.

The main themes of the Bible are God, man, Jesus Christ and the Christian life. At the heart of the Bible is Jesus Christ and Salvation. The Bible is often mistreated when people try and make it a handbook for politics.

Theology must rest on the Literal Interpretation, which does not overlook figurative language. The Main Burden of Theology must totally include the theology of the New Testament. Determining what God's Word has to say through exegesis (reading out) must be prior to any system of theology. The System has to be built up exegetically, brick by brick. Of necessity, one will have to use the rules of logic within this system, but the theologian must be careful to not extend his doctrines beyond the Scriptural evidence because his evidence is Scripture itself.

The Theologian is striving for a system, which is a group of interrelated assertions. Therefore, there must be a systematic gathering of data from the entire Bible before it is interrelated into a coherent system. It is helpful to know the history of philosophy and

the history of theological development. Liberal theologians claim there are many systems of theology found within the Bible, yet such would be confusing which is not a characteristic of God (1 Cor 14:33). Conservative scholars believe that there is one interpretation of a given passage while there may be many applications.

Proper Theological development of necessity must have proof texts given that are the result of the correct understanding of the Scriptures. This means that the exegesis "reading out" must be done according to basic principles of interpretation that properly recognize the context. Liberal theologians do not believe one needs a proof text to establish theology, but they even use a proof text to try and prove that we shouldn't use them (2Cor 3:6 Letter kills, but the Spirit gives life).

What is not a matter of clear cut revelation should not be made a matter of creed or faith. This leads to making moral judgments without the benefit of Scripture, in effect defining sin. In Romans 5:13, it says, "sin is not imputed where there is no law." Thus, when man starts defining law apart from God's Word, he is playing God. What is specifically spelled out as sin, we can and should learn and apply.

The Theologian must also keep the practical nature of the Word in mind. There is plenty of information on living the Christian Life. The Scriptures do not deal specifically with every little thing or circumstance we will deal with in life, but they will touch upon every aspect of our lives by means of principles.

The Theologian must also recognize his responsibility to the Universal Church. There has clearly been enough division within Christ's Body through the centuries over so-called "doctrinal" issues to last us for eternity. For the Theologian to present information to the Church that is not based upon sound principles of hermeneutics is irresponsible and denotes a lack of love.

For Personal Study

1. What is the doctrinal study of the Bible designed to do?
2. What is the Theologian?
3. What are the main themes of the Bible?
4. What must theology rest on?

5. What is the Theologian striving for? How is it built?
6. What is a requirement for a proper theological system?
7. Consider how legalism occurs when one goes beyond the Word.
8. What should not be made a matter of creed or faith? Why?
9. Why should we keep in mind the question, "How then should we live?"
10. Why should the Theologian not present principles to the Church that are not firmly grounded in Scripture?

Lesson 9

The Devotional And Practical Use Of The Bible

All practical lessons, applications, and devotional uses of the Bible should be governed by general hermeneutical principles. This means that sound interpretation must precede any applications that are made. The Bible does not justify using any means to derive a personal application. Some people have been known to use the Bible in ways that approach divination and sorcery rather than as the revealed Word of God. If one closes his eyes, opens the Bible and then blindly points to a passage looking for direction for the day, that disgraces God's Word. In an emergency, our loving God may choose to help out in an unusual way, but for the day-to-day living of life, that approach simply is not satisfactory. At times people take passages and then distort them for "devotional" purposes. That is really not devotion to God but self. If it is done for those one is attempting to teach, it is manipulation and a lack of reliance on the truth of God's Word to change lives.

The Bible is more a book of principles than a catalog of specific directions. Principles are necessary to cover all contingencies. A set of specifics would indirectly foster hypocrisy and artificial spirituality. True principles that are misapplied can also lead to hypocrisy and pseudo-spirituality. The Bible emphasizes the "Inner Spirit" much more than the outward religious cloak as is spelled out clearly in 1 Samuel 15:22 which says, "And Samuel said, 'Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey

is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.

The Old Testament taught right and wrong on a material level so that hopefully it would be discerned on the more subtle, spiritual level. Morality and Spirituality were lifted to a higher level by being inward and spiritual. Neither morality nor spirituality was to be based solely on the overt (Heb 10:5). The importance of the Mental Attitude, even in the Old Testament is clear.

In some instances the Spirit of the statement is clearly to be our guide. In Matthew 5:29-30, the Word says, "And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell." And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell." The "spirit" of the statement involves causes for stumbling over the gospel of Jesus Christ. These "stumbling blocks" should be removed at all costs. Hopefully, without loss of an eye or a hand.

We must also translate commands given in the context of one culture into our culture. In Exodus 23:19; 34:26 and Deuteronomy 14:21, there is a command to "not boil a baby goat in its mother's milk." This command is difficult to even understand in most of today's cultures. This action refers to one of the Canaanite fertility rituals. The principle taught is to not embrace the pagan practices of other cultures, which has meaning for today in any culture.

We may also receive guidance from examples that the Bible records. We must however, make a distinction between what the Bible records and what it approves. The Inspiration of Scripture extends only to truthfulness of the recording. We may make direct application from incidents that the Bible directly censures or approves.

Specific commands to individuals are not the Will of God for us. For example, Abraham was commanded to offer up Isaac as a picture or type of the sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen 22 cf. Heb 11:17-19). There are principles to be learned from that

incident and applied to our lives, but the specific requirement for us is not there. It is best to seek to determine the outstanding Spiritual Principle in the lives of people in Scripture that cross all time frames and cultures and then apply that principle to our life.

The application in our lives does not need a literal reproduction of the Biblical situation. For example, water Baptism does not need to be done in the Jordan River and the Lord's Table does not need to be done in an "upper room" to honor and glorify our Lord by fulfilling His commands.

The Practical and Devotional use of the Bible probably concerns itself with the Promises of God more than any other thing. There have been many disappointed and angry people throughout the centuries who have taken a "promise" out of context and then "claimed" it as being from God. We must remember that practical application must be drawn from correct interpretation. At times we may think that God has reneged on His Word, when the real problem is in our understanding. Just because God made a promise to Abraham does not mean that He has made the same promise to you. We must seek to determine if the promise was to a specific individual or nation.

When we study God's Promises we must first determine whether or not they are universal or personal in nature. For example, John 3:16 says "whosoever believes in Him shall have eternal life." That is an example of a universal promise that is open to anyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. A personal promise would be found in the Abrahamic Covenant. The promise was given to Abraham. If we "go forth from the land of our relatives," it does not mean that God will make a new covenant with us.

We must also determine if a promise is conditional or unconditional. Are there requirements that we are to meet before a promise is fulfilled?

We must also determine if the promise is for our time frame or it involves a specific time frame. We know that the wolf and lamb will dwell together and that the leopard will lie down with the goat (Isa 11:6; 65:25), but those passages refer to the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The communicator of God's Word must remember that he is bound to it in his preaching and teaching. His primary job is to communicate God's Word to those "allotted to his charge (1 Pet 5:2)" accurately and in an understandable manner. The use of vocabulary that the hearers cannot understand is tantamount to "speaking in tongues with no interpreter (1 Cor 14:27-28). The test of the communication is whether or not the hearers grow in love (1 Tim 1:5) and grace (2 Pet 3:18).

Some common problems involve pulling verses out of context and then "sermonizing" or "allegorizing" them, seeking to impart a meaning that does not come from that verse.

What is wonderful is that in spite of our inadequacies and mistakes, we serve a God who is gracious and will use us to further His plan.

For Personal Study

1. What must govern all practical uses of the Bible? Why?
2. Discuss the statement, "the Bible is more a book of principles than a catalog of specific directions."
3. How did the Old Testament teach moral truth?
4. Why should we look for the "spirit" of statements without allegorizing them?
5. Why is it important to look for the cultural significance before making practical applications?
6. What are important things we should look for in determining God's promises.
7. What is the test of a communicator?

Lesson 10

Inerrancy And Secular Science the Issue Of Infallibility And Inerrancy

Infallibility concerns faith and morals while inerrancy is concerned with historical and factual matters. The Bible claims inerrancy in all matters of history pertaining to faith and morals. This recognizes the common usage of the words and figures of speech.

Inerrancy does not demand lucidity as a clear interpretation of every passage may not be possible due to our lack of knowledge. We should expect some passages to be difficult to understand. The Bible does not reveal everything on a given subject in one place, so it

is possible to miss something that may clarify the passage under consideration.

Belief in inerrancy leads us to affirm that there are no contradictions. Logic involves the principles of non-contradiction. Thus, many parts of the Word will be clearly logical. There may be parts of the Word that appear to not be logical, but we must remember that man's logic may not be God's. When things appear illogical, it is because we are missing the God-factor in our understanding.

As we pursue our belief in inerrancy we must be sure that we have the correct text. We must also realize that inerrancy does not mean completeness of detail. That which is revealed though is literal.

Inerrancy does not demand that we possess the original manuscripts nor have a perfect text. What we do have has so few textual variants that there is no cause for alarm.

The "Problem" of Science

The Bible makes no assertion of being done in a scientific language. The language of the Bible is phenomenal which means it is descriptive. For example, snails would be called, "crawling things," along with any number of other creatures that crawl along the ground.

The Bible is a culturally conditioned revelation meaning that it was written to communicate to people with terms that they understood. Therefore, we don't need to seek modern scientific theories. Science though can attempt to fill in what is found in outline form.

God will often use natural phenomena to bring about super-scientific events, such as the Genesis Flood. In Genesis 7:11, the verb in the phrase "all the fountains of the great deep burst open" is in a passive voice and is more accurately translated "were burst open" indicating that it was done by an outside force. In the 1990's, the theory has been advanced by science that a meteor or comet hit the earth and caused the extinction of the dinosaurs, "millions and millions" of years ago. Donald Wesley Patten wrote a book in 1966 called *The Biblical Flood and the Ice Epoch* that describes in detail a model for just such an event. Patten's scientific model fits the Biblical description. Where the Bible touches on science, we are assured accuracy.

Since God is eternal and Creation is temporal, it should be clear that space, time energy,

matter, the material and the immaterial are all subordinate to God (Col 1:17). God is not bound by any law higher than Himself (Heb 6:13).

Science can only generalize how God works in some places at some times (2Pet3:4).

Any scientific law only talks about how God *did* act at certain times and places, not how He *must* act at all times and places. Any scientific law doesn't find God and is not a law for God but only a normal expression of man for that condition. If God reveals that He acted in some way at some time at some point contrary to how He usually acts, this supersedes any scientific law

Although science can be trusted in most cases (and should be), whenever we have outside authoritative revelation from God we are bound to trust the Word of God instead of man's beliefs.

For Personal Study

1. Describe the difference between infallibility and inerrancy.
2. What does belief in inerrancy lead us to affirm?
3. Seek to explain how the Theologian should view science.

Lesson 11

Types, Symbols And Parables

Introduction

There is a clear cut justification for typology even though the critics claim it is *forced* exegesis or interpretation. Typology shows the relationship of the Old Testament with the New Testament. The prophetic elements of Scripture may be verbally predictive or the future may be displayed in types.

Typological interpretation is based on unity of the two Testaments. The Lord's use of Old Testament invites us to find Him in the pages of the ancient Scriptures.

There is a distinct vocabulary found in the New Testament that references the Old Testament. The Greek word HUPODEIGMA means that which is shown privately as an example or pattern. TUPOS is an impression that is left from the blow of a hammer. SKIA is a shadow or the outline cast by a real object. PARABOL8 means to place side-by-side as a

comparison. An EIKWN refers to an image like found on a coin. An ANTITUPON is a counterpart like an echo. An ALL8GOREW is the speaking of another thing (only in Gal 4:24).

Schools Of Typological Interpretation

The early church fathers sought to strengthen New Testament truth and they used types from the Old Testament. Many claim they were guilty of too much typology. Still others believed that all typology is forced interpretation and hence they believed there was no typology.

Some, such as Bishop Marsh, believed that one could only consider something as a type if it was designated as a type in the New Testament.

The Moderate School of interpretation though believed that both innate and inferred types existed. Solomon Glassius led this school. He defined the “innate” types as though that were specifically declared as such in the New Testament and the inferred types as those that were justified by the nature of the New Testament.

An Evaluation Of The Methods

Bishop Marsh’s view becomes too limited, as it is mechanical and artificial. This is the “safest” route to pursue but as one studies the richness of Scripture it becomes apparent that not everything must be specifically declared to be a type for it to exist.

The school that believed there were no types came from a reaction to the allegorists and to liberals, who wanted to give everything a “deeper” meaning.

The Book of Hebrews, while explaining many types only points out a small part of the significance. If the whole is a type then so are its parts. When the writer of Hebrews points to the earthly Tabernacle being a type in chapter 9:23-25, or the Law being a “shadow” in 10:1, he is clearly inferring that the parts have significance as well. Too much typology can be avoided by diligent and careful study of the Scriptures under the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Typological interpretation differs greatly from allegorical interpretation in that Allegorical interpretation introduces something

foreign into the meaning, whereas Typological interpretation has limits that are set by the nature of the type.

The Nature And Interpretation Of Types

The interpretation of a type depends on the nature of the type. A type is a preordained representative relationship that certain persons, events and institutions of the Old Testament bear to corresponding persons, events and institutions in the New Testament. There must be a genuine resemblance in form or idea between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The resemblance must either be designated innately or have a clear inference. Dissimilarity is to be expected, but the truth is found at the point of similarity. One must determine how the New Testament treats the subject.

Types are inherently prophetic by their very nature as they point to the reality. Some of the mistakes of the Christian Allegorists could have been avoided had they not gone beyond simple common sense. An important principle is to not attempt to prove any doctrine or position from types unless there is clear New Testament authority. Types are illustrations of what would come.

There are several different kinds of types. Types of Persons would include such people as Adam because Jesus Christ is called the “last Adam (1 Cor 15:45).” Institutional Types would include the Sacrifices, Feasts, and Promised Land. Types concerning Offices would include Moses as the Lawgiver and Prophet, Aaron as a type of the High Priest and Melchizedek as a picture of the new priesthood of Jesus Christ. Events such as the Crossing of the Red Sea and the Wilderness Wanderings are pictures for us to learn from (1 Cor 10:6). Actions can also be types such as the lifting up of brazen serpent (Nu 21:9 cf. John 3:14) and Things such as the Tabernacle (Heb 9:23-25).

The Interpretation Of Symbols

A symbol may represent a thing either past, present or future whereas a type inherently represents the future. A symbol has no inherent reference to time, but it often can be determined by the context. The names of symbols have to be understood literally first. Symbols always denote something essentially different from themselves and yet some resem-

blance must be traceable.

There are two elements in a symbol, the mental image it represents and the image that represents it. Numerals, metals and colors may all be symbols, depending on the context in which they are found. While all of these may have significance within the scope of a study of the Tabernacle or Temple, they probably have no significance if they are found in an undesignated type. For example, the gold used in the Tabernacle represents Deity, but the gold that used as a medium of exchange in a simple historical transaction would probably have no such significance.

Symbols are usually explained somewhere in Scripture, so uninterpreted symbols need to be approached with caution. The approach is the same as for the interpretation of types. Special consideration must also be given to the context. Cross-references need to be diligently checked. The nature of the symbol must be considered, such as the "Lion" of the Tribe of Judah. There will be similarities and dissimilarities. Truth is found in the similarities.

We must be especially careful of reading meanings from our culture into the symbols. If the symbol is in a prophetic context, then the symbol may indeed be referring to something from that prophetic culture, but again, caution must be exercised and doctrine must not be built on the interpretation of symbols. Doctrines should be built on hard evidence from the Word of God and not from the opinions of man.

In the study of symbols we should be aware of "Double Imagery," where a symbol has more than one meaning. Jesus Christ is a "Lion" (Rev 5:5) and Satan is "like a lion (1 Pet 5:8)." We must guide ourselves by the General Principles of Interpretation. One entity may be represented by more than one symbol as is evident in the many symbols that are used to describe the Lord Jesus Christ, such as the "Lion" of the Tribe of Judah of Revelation 5:5 and the "Bright Morning Star" of Revelation 22:16.

We should also recognize that there is some symbolism in numbers, but this is easily abused. Let General Hermeneutics again be the guide.

Realize that each symbol has only one signif-

icant meaning and always has the same fundamental meaning.

The symbols represented in Scripture are a basis for further studies.

The Interpretation Of Parables

A Parable is a narrative that is constructed for the sake of conveying important truth. It is inherently figurative language that draws an illustration from life to teach spiritual truth.

When studying parables we should seek to determine the central truth of the parable. Part of doing this is to look for contextual clues to help in the interpretation, namely, look to see if the Lord states the central principle that He wanted to communicate and then uses a parable to illustrate the principle. We should also look carefully to determine how much of the parable Christ interpreted Himself, separating the essential from what is only attendant to the theme.

We also note the time period for which the Lord designed the parable. Parables should not be made the primary or sole source for a doctrine. There should be a solid backing from elsewhere in Scripture.

For Personal Study

1. Why do we recognize Typological interpretation?
2. Consider the different schools of interpretation of types and tell why you would hold the position you do.
3. What is at the core of the interpretation of types?
4. Even though types are inherently prophetic by their very nature, what must we be careful of?
5. List and consider the different kinds of types.
6. Explain the difference between types and symbols.
7. What are the two main elements of a symbol?
8. Explain the importance of culture on the interpretation of symbols.
9. Explain what is meant by "double imagery."
10. What is a parable designed to do?
11. What is the main thing we are to look for in parables?

12. What cautions would you give to those interpreting parables?

Lesson 12

The Interpretation Of Prophecy

Prophecy predicts by the Word while Typology predicts by the institution, act or person. Prophecy foretells an event while typology prefigures it.

The interpretation of prophecy is one of the most difficult areas of Scripture. Prophecy is often clothed in highly symbolic and typological vocabulary. There are principles to follow, but no formulas. Interpreting prophecy is like putting together a puzzle. Each piece is important and the lack of some pieces can give a distorted picture. The vocabulary is not easy. The historical setting is often difficult to find. Sometimes, key words in Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek are used only once in all of Scripture and their meanings are open to question. An incorrectly interpreted type or symbol, or one distorted for the personal fame of the student can distort the entire picture. We in effect must look for the chronological control verses and then seek to fill in the blanks. The bulk of information is overwhelming. Just add up the number of chapters in the prophetic books and compare that to the 1,189 chapters in Scripture. Even if we do not include other prophetic references, we can easily see that almost 25% of the Scriptures are prophetic in nature. It is also amazing to realize that often we must look at prophecy that has been fulfilled in order to see how the original prophecy was intended. The study of prophecy is not easy, but it is rewarding (Rev 1:3).

The principles of the interpretation of Biblical prophecy must recognize the literal fulfillment of the Word of God, paying careful attention to the grammar and the historical setting. All other prophecies in the Bible, especially those concerning the cross of Jesus Christ had a literal fulfillment, so why should we expect anything different for the balance of prophecy yet to be fulfilled? The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said that "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away (Mark 13:31)." This carries a clear cut implication that the Lord's words will be literally fulfilled, even though it may be cloaked in highly figurative language. Often times there is confusion in the terminology

that is used. The "Literal" School of Interpretation recognizes types and symbols and means that the predicted events will be literally fulfilled. Some would argue that this is not being truly literal. A simple reading of the Song of Solomon though should let one realize that symbolic language is clearly employed in the Scriptures. We must be careful of allegorizing passages that are clearly prophetic in nature. We do not want to read our thoughts and viewpoints into the passage, but instead determine what God wants us to know.

We should seek to determine the exact meanings of the words that are used from the original languages. Many problems are cleared up when we take the simplest meaning of the words and avoid trying to read things into them. We must recognize the use of figurative language in the revelation of prophecy. Even though there is figurative language, once again, it will still have a literal fulfillment, since the figurative is a "shadow" of the reality it represents (Heb 10:1-14).

In seeking to interpret literally we must pay careful attention to the historical setting in which the prophecy was given. It is therefore extremely important to know chronology and the specified time frames of history. Literal interpretation means that the prophecy will have a literal fulfillment. Thus, when the Lord says that He will "come again," it refers to a literal return-not just "in the hearts of men."

We must realize that there is a harmony in prophecy as God is not a God of confusion (1 Cor 14:33). Where harmony does not exist between various passages, we must have the humility to shift our understanding and see the "picture" from a different perspective, by allowing our picture to include those pieces. Prophecy does not shift with our ideas, perspectives or desires. It is from God. We must be the ones willing to make the changes. Sadly, history is full of examples of people who developed a system and then held on to it at all costs-in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Just consider the Pharisees.

The harmony of prophecy inherently involves the comparison of Scripture with Scripture. A specific event may be described in many different places in the Bible. For example, the end-time entity of Babylon (Rev 17-18)

is also discussed in detail in Isaiah 13 and 47 and Jeremiah 50-51. Many people try to go to a prophetic book and interpret it as a finished, complete unit. While major points may be given in that book, there are frequently many other passages that fill in the details. We therefore must be very careful of what we develop and hold up as “doctrine.” Jesus Christ said that He will return (John 14:1-3). That is doctrine. Whether it is Pre-Tribulational, Mid-Tribulational, Post-Tribulational, Pre-wrath or whatever other position may be presented, these are conclusions that are drawn by men based on how they see the evidence. The author, for example, holds very strong convictions that the Rapture of the Church will occur before the Tribulation, and firmly believes that that is what the evidence teaches, but because I or you hold a certain position does not mean that it is provable beyond any doubt.

Since the entirety of God’s Word revolves around His Son, Jesus Christ, it is essential to interpret Christologically (1 Pet 1:10-1). This means that we should realize that Jesus Christ is at the center of all theology and all history. We are told that, “His testimony is the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19:10.” History is indeed “His Story” and is the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ. Prophecy is focused on that fact. If we cannot explain His relationship to the position we have taken, then the position needs to be reconsidered.

Prophecy must also recognize the fact that God has ordained different time frames called Dispensations, in which certain methods are different. For example, in the second and third chapters of Revelation, there are letters written to seven different churches. Beginning with Chapter 4 all the way through Chapter 18, the church is not mentioned. Facts such as these must be considered when interpreting those chapters.

Another very important factor in the interpretation of prophecy is that we must determine if a given prophecy is fulfilled in the part, the whole or not at all. If it is totally fulfilled, it need not be repeated. If it is partially fulfilled, then it makes sense that the Lord will bring about similar circumstances so that the balance of the prophecy might be completed. After all, God is truth (Isa 65:16) and His Words are truth (2 Sam 7:28), so what He

has had written must be literally true. If the prophecy is not yet fulfilled, then it will be.

Also widely recognized by those who diligently study prophecy is the principle of Double Reference. This involves two events that are widely separated in time and may be brought together in a single reference. The Lord Himself pointed this out when He read from Isaiah and said that today “this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing (Luke 4:21).” He is quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2, but if you will notice that He did not say the next phrase in Isaiah had been fulfilled. It says, “and the day of vengeance of our God,” which is a reference to His Second Coming. God is not bound by time and sees the “end from the beginning (Rev 21:6; 22:13),” so it is not a problem for Him to include two events in one prophecy.

A final point to recognize in the interpretation of the prophetic word is that we must not only look for similarities in events, but for differences. The differences may often lead us to conclude that there are two events in view and not one. The return of the Lord is a good example. We are told in one passage that the saints will “meet Him in the air (1 Thes 4:13-18).” In another passage, we are told that, “His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,” and it will split in two and He will go forth then to fight (Zech 14:1-5). In putting together the puzzle of the prophetic word, we must consider the differences.

For Personal Study

1. What are some of the factors that make the interpretation of prophecy one of the most difficult areas in the Scriptures?
2. What reasons lead us to expect a literal fulfillment of prophecy?
3. What is essential in finding the harmony of prophecy?
4. Who should we find at the center of the prophetic word?
5. What role does “Dispensations” play in the study of prophecy?
6. Why is it important to determine the degree of fulfillment if a given prophecy?
7. Why is it important to look for differences in prophetic events?

Lesson 13

The Use Of The Old Testament In The New Testament

The Use Of The Law In The New Testament

There exists a correct use of the Mosaic Law in the Church Age even though we are not under the Law. In First Timothy we are told that “we know the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching (1Tim 1:8-10).” We are also told in Romans 6:14-15 that, “sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!” We must seek how to lawfully use The Mosaic Law.

The Law was designed to show our need for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and to proclaim Him (John 5:39-47). The Law was also designed to teach us so that we may be led to Christ and be justified by faith (Gal 3:24-25).

The entirety of the Law and the Prophets were designed to get mankind to fulfill the Two Greatest Commandments, to love God with every part of their being and to love their neighbor as themselves (Matt 22:36-40). The principles gleaned can teach us about fulfilling these commandments. In Galatians 5:14 we are told that, “the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the {statement},” “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” and in Matthew 7:12 we are instructed that, “however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” It is quite clear that the Law has value, but it is also quite clear that we are no longer under the specifics of it.

There are several categories of the Law that are found in the word including the Sacrifices, the Feasts, the Dietary Code, the Hygiene Code, the Social Code, the National Code, the Tabernacle Code and the Ten Commandments.

Several of these categories have been directly and specifically removed. For example, the Sacrificial system is no longer to be observed

because Jesus Christ offered the “one sacrifice for all time (Heb 10:8-13).” The observance of Feasts was also removed as law because they were “but a mere shadow of Jesus Christ (Col 2:16-17).” Jesus Himself declared that all foods were now clean in Mark 7:19, thus removing the Dietary Code (see also Acts 11:1-9 and Col 2:20-23). The Hygiene Code with all of its specific instructions is also gone (Col 2:16-23) as well as the Tabernacle Code. When Jesus Christ entered into the true heavenly tabernacle, there was no longer a need for the earthly one which was but a type of the reality (Heb 9:24).

Categories of the Law that are not specifically deleted are still gone under the fact that they were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. There are principles to be learned from the Social Code which includes “loving your neighbor as yourself (Gal 5:14),” but they are part of the “new commandment (John 13:34-35)” that should be done out of love for our master, not because they are law.

The National Code teaches principles of righteous government and thus much can be learned. The principles of the Ten Commandments with the exception of the Sabbath day (Col 2:16) are all retained in the New Testament. This is an excellent exercise for the student of the Word of God to go through.

The “lawful use of the Law” means that it must be used in accordance with its design. It was never designed to eternally save the soul from death, but was in fact designed to teach us that we need a Savior (Gal 3:24). The Law also taught us about sin and actually defined sin, because “where there is no law, sin is not imputed (Rom 5:13).” The Law was never designed to be the foundation or that which motivates the righteous man. Love is to be the foundation of our life (John 14:15,21,23).

No ritual or punishment has been retained in the Church Age. This does not give us a “license to sin,” but instead a “license to serve (Gal 5:13).” When we walk according to the Holy Spirit we are fulfilling the Law. This is made clear in Romans 8:2-4, which declares, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin

in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

Hermeneutics Of Old Testament Quotations

The first thing that we must determine in an examination of an Old Testament quotation found in the New Testament is whether or not it is an exact quotation from the Old Testament or if it is quoted from the Septuagint (The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, also seen as the “LXX”). We must also realize that the quotation could be a paraphrase. In short, this means we must determine if there are any differences in the New Testament quotation from the original Old Testament Scripture.

The next step we must take is to note the context of the cited passage. From this we can determine whether the New Testament quotation interprets the Old Testament passage, is an application of the passage or simply an illustration.

If the Septuagint is quoted, Inspiration guarantees that the Septuagint translation is correct for the quoted portion of Scripture, but it does *not* mean the Septuagint was inspired at that point.

Paraphrases refer to legitimate applications of the Old Testament passage and may or may not be the interpretation of it.

For Personal Study

1. What New Testament Passage Tells Us That There Is A “Lawful” Use Of The Law?
2. Why Was The Law Designed And What Are The Proof Texts?
3. Find The Ten Commandments In The New Testament.
4. What Is The “Lawful Use Of The Law.”
5. What May We Find In A New Testament Quotation Of An Old Testament Passage?

Lesson 14

The Hermeneutics Of Logic

Logic is by definition the rules of non-contradiction and correct reasoning. Even though attempts to use logic throughout the history of the church have gotten people into

trouble and caused divisions, nevertheless, it is a valuable tool for our understanding.

Deductive Reasoning occurs when a necessary conclusion is drawn from one or more statements. For the conclusion to be correct, both of the statements have to be correct. For example, from the statements, “All life requires water,” and “There is no water on the moon,” one can deduct that, “there is no life on the moon.” The truth of the deductive conclusion depends on the truth of the statements from which it is drawn. A deduction can prove only that if certain things are true, then certain things will follow.

Inductive Reasoning involves the observance of all possible cases and then assumes it is true in the other cases that have not been tested. Needless to say, this type of reasoning is much less certain than deductive reasoning. For example, the observation that heat expands iron, gold and platinum might lead one to believe that heat expands all metals. Each metal must be tested though in order to be certain.

The expression of a logical argument in a formal way is called a “Syllogism.” Logic is divided into Concepts, Propositions and Arguments.

Defined words are used to define a concept. Concepts are derived by words that are used to form further definitions. Propositions declare what we intend to prove or disprove. They are statements that our concepts exist in a certain way. Propositions must be stated in terms of true or false. Commands, exclamations and questions do not and cannot express propositions. Propositions are concerned with the relationship between concepts. They can be wrong either by designation or they can ascribe to the subject what does not belong to the subject. For example, to say that, “World War II killed 300 million people,” and then try and to make a deduction from a comparison with the statement that, “Noah took two of each animal into the ark,” will not be fruitful. Both statements may be correct but have no connection to each other. We can compare propositions only when they contain the same words.

Any inferences that we draw from a proposition can be valid only if the proposition is true. If we consider the proposition, “All

snakes are poisonous,” there are other inferences we can consider such as, “No snakes are poisonous,” “Some snakes are poisonous,” and, “Some snakes are not poisonous.” When the proposition is false though, the truth of the comparable propositions or inferences is not determinable. When we know the truth and falsity of a given proposition, we can determine the truth and falsity of the inferences

Contradictions are those comparisons that communicate when one thing is true then another is false. For example, if it is true that we are saved by grace through faith, not works, then for one to say that we are saved by works is a contradiction to truth. If one statement is indeed true then other is false. Both cannot be true.

A Superimplication exists when one statement is true and another statement implied from it is also true. From the universal you can validly infer the specific but from the specific you cannot validly infer the universal. For example if “whoever believes in Jesus Christ shall be saved (John 3:16), is true (and thank God it is), then since I have believed in Jesus Christ it is validly inferred that I am saved.

A Complementary Statement occurs when we say the same thing in a different way. If we say that, “very well-educated student of history studies Greek,” we can also validly

say that, “no well-educated student of history fails to study Greek.” The statements do not contradict but are simply restated.

The reasons that are given for one’s deductions and the validity of those deductions are called, “Arguments.” Conclusions are reached using reasoning. They are found throughout God’s word and they are introduced by many different words such as therefore, so, as a result and the like.

The “most important term” of an argument is called the “Predicate.” The “minor term” of the argument is called the “Subject” and what appears in both arguments is called the “middle term.” For example, take the statements.

- Whatever is constitutional is just.
- Whatever is decided by the Supreme Court is constitutional.

The conclusion would be, “Therefore, whatever is decided by the Supreme Court is just.”

In this example, “Whatever is just” is the predicate. “Whatever is constitutional is the middle term which does not appear in the conclusion and, “Decisions reached” is the subject. The Conclusion is a mediate inference, which is drawn around the major and minor terms based on their relationship to the middle term.