

# Hermeneutics

A Study of  
the History and Science  
of Bible Interpretation

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## PROGRAM FOR BIN IMFR 360

**TITLE AND DESCRIPTION:** Hermeneutics [Preaching and Interpretation]. A study of the principles, tools, and methodology of sound interpretation. Selected passages are examined for illustration of how the interpretative procedure operates.

**OBJECTIVES:** When you have completed this course you should be able to:

1. describe several general methods of interpretations.
2. list and illustrate several basic principles of interpretation.
3. define and illustrate several different kinds of figures of speech found in the Bible.
4. set forth the basic principles which apply to the interpretation of parabolic, prophetic, poetic and apocalyptic sections within the Bible.
5. discuss intelligently the relationship between the Old and New Covenants, and the concept of typology.

**GRADING:** The student's grade will be computed on the basis of the following general criteria:

1. Attendance (as measured by quizzes)--25%
2. Term paper--25%.
3. Two major exams--50%.

### AGENDA AND ASSIGNMENTS:

March 20 Introduction to the Field.

#### PART ONE: PRINCIPLES

March 22 False Principles of Interpretation.

READING: Fee and Stuart, chapter 1.

March 27 The Axioms of Hermeneutics.

READING: Fee and Stuart, chapter 2.

March 29 Perspective Principles of Interpretations

READING: Fee and Stuart, chapter 3.

April 3 Rules Based on General Sense.

READING: Fee and Stuart, chapter 4.

April 5 Rules for the Meaning of Words and Expressions.

READING: Fee and Stuart, chapter 5.

April 10 Rules for Interpreting Figurative Language.

READING: Fee and Stuart, chapter 6.

April 12 Rules for Interpreting Prophecy.

READING: Fee and Stuart, chapter 7.

April 17 Rules for Interpreting Prophetic Symbols.

April 19 Rules for Interpreting Typology.

April 24 Catch-up and Mid-Term Test.

#### PART TWO: HISTORY

April 26 Jesus, the Apostles and Prophets.  
Rabbinic Interpretation.

1 Alexandrian Hermeneutics.  
Patristic Hermeneutics.

May 3 Scholastic Hermeneutics.  
Reformation Hermeneutics.

May 8 Post-Reformation Hermeneutics.  
Hermeneutics and Negative Criticism

May 10 Restoration Hermeneutics.

May 15 READING: Fee and Stuart, chapters, 8.9

17 READING: Fee and Stuart, chapters 10.11.

May 22 READING: Fee and Stuart, chapters 12.13.

24 FINAL EXAM

## BIN 322 Hermeneutics

### Content and Purpose:

BIN 311 is an undergraduate introduction to the history and science of Bible interpretation. In general, you will, upon the completion of this course, have a working knowledge of the principles, tools, and methodology of sound interpretation. In particular, you will be able to (1) describe several general methods of interpretation with reference to their history and their relationship to various theologies, (2) list and illustrate several basic principles of interpretation, (3) define and illustrate the primary kinds of figures of speech found in the Bible, (4) set forth the basic principles that apply to the interpretation of parabolic, prophetic, poetic, and apocalyptic elements in the Bible, and (5) discuss the relation between the Old and New Covenants and the concept of typology.

Texts: Ramm, B. L. Hermeneutics. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980.

\_\_\_\_\_. Protestant Biblical Interpretation. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.

### Grading Standard:

20% quizzes  
40% major examinations  
40% term paper or essay

After the final grade has been computed in terms of the above standard, it is subject to adjustment of as much as 15% at the discretion of the teacher. This factor may reflect such considerations as classroom participation, attendance, attitude, degree of progress, completion of reading assignments on schedule, extra study projects, and written grammatical skill.

Teacher: Dr. Roger Chambers



BIN 322' requires an exegetical study as a term paper. The approximate length required is 20 pages typewritten double spaced. You must select from the following list of Bible passages. Alternate texts must be approved by the instructor at the earliest possible date. Following are some of the considerations that will be given the selected passage:

1. The history of its interpretation.
2. Modern interpretations and their theological contexts.
3. The principles of interpretation applied or ignored in the various interpretations presented.
4. Your interpretation and the hermeneutics supporting it.
5. The significance of the text to modern theological systems.

Genesis 1:1-2:3  
                   9:18-27  
 Exodus 21:22-25  
 Judges 11:34-40  
 I Samuel 28:8-25  
 Isaiah 7:10-19  
 Ezekiel 38:1-6  
 Matthew 24:29-35  
                   26:26-29  
 Acts 15:19-21  
 I Cor. 7:12-16  
                   15:29-31  
                   13:8-13  
 II Cor. 2:14-17  
 Galatians 4:21-31  
 II Thess. 2:1-12  
 I Timothy 4:1-5  
 Hebrews 10:26-31  
 James 5:14-16.  
 I Peter 3:18-22  
 Revelation 13:11-18

## BIN 322 Hermeneutics

## Selected Bibliography

- Berkhof, L. Principles of Biblical Interpretation. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. 1977.
- Blackman, E. Biblical Interpretation. London: Independent Press. 1957.
- Dana, H.E. Searching the Scriptures. New Orleans: Bible Institute Memorial Press. 1963.
- Farrar, Frederic W. History of Interpretation. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. 1961.
- Grant, R.M. The Bible and the Church. New York: Macmillan Co. 1948.\*
- \_\_\_\_\_. J.T. McNeill, Samuel Terrien, "History of the Interpretation of the Bible: in The Interpreter's Bible. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury. 1952, vol. 1, pp. 106-141.
- Hunter, A. Interpreting the New Testament, (1900-1950,) Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951.\*\*
- Lockhart, Clinton. Principles of Interpretation. Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Co.
- Mickelsen, A. Berkeley. Interpreting the Bible. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1977.
- Robinson, J.M. The New Hermeneutic. New York: Harper & Row. 1964.
- Smalley, Beryl. The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1941.
- Terry, Milton S. Biblical Hermeneutics. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1978.

\* liberal

\*\*This work has serious problems and should be used with care and reservation.

## Periodicals available in the CFBC library:

Grace Theological Journal  
Journal of Jewish Studies  
Seminary Review  
Themelios  
New Testament Studies  
Interpretation  
Concordia Theological Quarterly  
Journal of Biblical Literature  
Novum Testamentum  
Vetus Testamentum

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## BIN 311 Hermeneutics

### Introduction\*

- A. Etymology: ἑρμῆς = Hermes (Roman Mercury), the messenger of the gods; the dream-god, presiding over some kinds of popular divination. Hermes brought the message of the gods to men.
- B. Hermeneutics as a technical term.
  - 1. First used as a technical term by Plato.
  - 2. The word hermeneutics is being used less in favor of the term interpretation.
- C. Definition: the science of the interpretation of the Bible
- D. Hermeneutics and exegesis.
  - 1. II Peter 3:15,16; II Tim. 2:15
  - 2. Exegesis is the scientific determination of the meaning of the text as it stands in its total context. Hermeneutics informs and guides exegesis.
- E. Hermeneutics and exposition.
  - 1. Exposition is the relevant and dynamic proclamation of that which is learned through exegesis, guided by sound principles of hermeneutics. In this sense, hermeneutics is an art as well as a science.
  - 2. Hermeneutics guides the process by which divine messages revealed to an ancient world are applied and expounded to the modern world.
- F. The importance of hermeneutics
  - 1. The Bible does not interpret itself. While it is true that some texts refer to other texts, the determination of the existence and the significance of the reference is a matter of interpretation.

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\*Reading: Ramm, Hermeneutics, pp. 1-28; PBI, pp. 1-22.

2. That which exists in our minds is not the Word of God itself, but a concept of the Word of God. No one can say, "I don't interpret the Bible, I just read it and let the words speak for themselves." When anyone forms concepts (accurate or inaccurate) of that which is spoken of in the words of the Bible, interpretation is taking place.
3. The need to know the will of God from an objective source (vs. intuition).
4. The need to bridge the culture-time gap, i.e., "What did it mean to those who first read the documents?" vs. "What would it mean if I had written it?"
  - a. The language gap
  - b. The culture gap
  - c. The geographical gap
  - d. Historical context and occasion
5. Hermeneutics must be a continuing science because the discipline of archaeology adds new possibilities, sheds new light on the meaning of words, furnishes new information concerning historical events.

Example: Gen. 6:1-4. Who were the "sons of God/god/gods" who married the "daughters of men?"

- Sethites marrying Cainites?
- Angels marrying ordinary mortals?
- Ancient tribal kings practicing eugenics for martial purposes? (Cf. ANET, pp. 265ff.)

6. The need to move up to the esthetic level of understanding, i.e., the beauty and value of knowing in an of itself.
- G. The danger of hermeneutics: In all interpretation, the human element is conveyed to the Word of God.
- H. The false doctrine of Illumination.

1. A representative statement of the doctrine:

"God moves upon man by the Holy Spirit who illuminates the mind and witnesses to the veracity of the divine verities. But the man upon whom the Spirit moves must be a partaker of the Spirit in regeneration. The Scriptures are most likely to be understood when a regenerate man trusts the Holy Spirit to illumine his mind as he interprets Scripture." (Ramm, Hermeneutics, p. 18.)

2. The consistent application of the doctrine, example:

"In a word: The perspicuity of Scripture is twofold, just as there is a double lack of light. The first is external, and relates to the ministry of the Word; the second concerns the knowledge of the heart. If you speak of internal perspicuity, the truth is that nobody who has not the Spirit of God sees a jot of what is in the Scriptures. All men have their hearts darkened, so that, even when they can discuss and quote all that is in Scripture, they do not understand or really know any of it." (Martin Luther, Bondage of the Will; "Of the perspicuity of Scripture, 606-609")

3. The inconsistent application of the doctrine, examples:

"It must be conceded that an ignorant Christian is no match for a learned unbeliever. Reliance upon the Spirit must always be in conjunction with the best possible procedures in exegesis." (Ramm, Hermeneutics, p. 18.)

"This leading of the Holy Spirit will never be as crystal clear as the original inspiration of the Scriptures." (Ramm, PBI, p. 14.)

Question: Of what value is the illumination of the Holy Spirit if the interpretation arrived at by the Christian is subject to the objective conclusions of direct literary analysis, i.e., if he is in exactly the position he would be in this regard if there were no Holy Spirit?

4. Non-Christian rejection of the doctrine of illumination, example:

"It has seemed to me very often that piety has served as an obstacle to comprehension rather than a channel for it . . . I feel this also when I read that only a believing Christian can understand the Christian documents, on the basis that faith speaks only to faith; I do not understand what there can be about the Christian ideas that render them so esoteric as to be beyond the comprehension of a diligent student of whatever background, or beyond the potential grasp of them by a non-Christian mind, if it is only nearly equal in capacity to a Christian mind." (Samuel Sandmel, The First Christian Century in Judaism and Christianity, pp. 4-5)

5. The doctrine of illumination summarized:

- a. The "real" meaning of Scripture does not consist in the words and grammatical construction of the text.
- b. Revelation and inspiration is to be distinguished from illumination.
- c. The non-Christian, therefore, can understand the meaning of the words and the grammatical significance of the text, but he cannot comprehend the real meaning of the revelation. (Ramm et al. reduce illumination, in practice, to the area of application.)

Example:

"No man can say he has had infallible illumination from the Holy Spirit. The illumination of the Spirit is not the conveyance of truth for that is the function of inspiration. The Holy Spirit influences our attitude and spiritual perception." (Ramm)

Comment: This is not what Calvin and Luther meant by illumination!

6. The doctrine of illumination is antithetical to the science of hermeneutics.

- a. The meaning of the Bible consists in the meaning of the words of the Bible.
- b. The devotional application of the message of the Bible is implicit in the meaning of the words of the Bible. The decision to obey or disobey has nothing to do with the understanding of the meaning of the commandment.
- c. Pious and devout ignorance is the enemy of sound hermeneutics, and has always been antagonistic to doctrinal truth.
- d. Erasmus:

"The Holy Ghost does not sit as a dove on the back of a chair to whisper in anybody's ear, as in the pictures of Gregory the Great. There are those who ask why they should fritter away their days over books when knowledge comes in a flash, as Paul was caught up to the third heaven. But if you are looking for flashes from heaven you will spend a lifetime waiting."

I. The assumptions of hermeneutics

- 1. Re the divine origin of the Bible
- 2. Re the canon.
- 3. Re the text.
- 4. Re higher criticism

J. The limitations of hermeneutics.

- 1. A particular interpretation is ever subject to revision in the light of better method or added information.
- 2. An interpretation is just that; it is never the Word of God itself.

K. The qualifications of an interpreter.

1. Spiritual

- a. A passion to know the Word of God.
- b. A deep reverence for God and His Word
- c. Sympathy with divine truth.

## 2. Educational

- a. No one possess all the requirements.
- b. Language
- c. Discipline of study
- d. Special acquaintance with history, anthropology, and geography.

## 3. Intellectual

- a. Supreme regard for the truth
- b. Vivid conception
- c. Sound judgment

## L. The tools of the interpreter\*

- 1. Versions
- 2. Concordances
- 3. Dictionaries
- 4. Atlases
- 5. Books on historical background
- 6. Introductions
- 7. Commentaries

## M. The rewards of hermeneutics.

- 1. Personal. Wherever we put down shovel in the Word of God, we come up with treasure. Other books thrill us with first reading, but pall with subsequent use. Not so with the Bible.

In physics, the more telescopic power applied to man-made objects, the more the flaws become evident. When applied to the natural order, ever-closer examination reveals progressive order, design, and perfection. New worlds open up. So it is with the Bible; the closer we look, the richer the returns.

- 2. Evangelistic. Acts 8:30-31; I Tim. 4:16

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\*Reading: Ramm, Hermeneutics, pp. 140-152.



## PART ONE: PRINCIPLES

## I. False Principles of Interpretation

It is necessary to introduce samples of false principles of interpretation at the beginning of the study of principles in order to (1) underscore the need for a general return to sound hermeneutics, and (2) furnish a context of comparison for the study of principles. This section will also introduce important words and concepts used in the study of hermeneutics.

## A. Allegorical

1. Definition: the introduction of esoteric meanings that transcend the literal sense of the text where no such interpretation is suggested or justified.

## 2. Examples:

- a. D. L. Petry, I Have Found an Elephant in the Bible, p. 87:

Jesus, according to his elephant symbolism, at his baptism when he became 'The Christ, or The Messiah, had a set of milch tusks that he was born with at said baptism, but he lost them after a few months. The new born elephant calf keeps them for about six months and then sheds these milch tusks just like we do our baby teeth. Then after he is weaned at around three years he begins to grow his permanent horns. In Jesus' case, as it pertains to this fact, He lost his power when God's Spirit deserted him and permitted his enemies to triumph over him, and put him to death. Yes we can say that in Christ's case, which is parallel to Adam and Eve's case that when God permitted spiritual wickedness to triumph over the Flesh involved in both cases, that we have redemption beginning to come to pass in the downfall of Adam and Eve, but redemption becoming complete in Jesus Christ's case. Thus we can say that from the time that Christ ascended above all the heavens until the time of his second coming, that he is growing his permanent set of horns. The tusks of the elephant would be his sword. Since he has one on both sides it would make give him a two edged sword which comes out of his mouth. This is parallel of what is said about Christ in Revelations. This is also parallel to the two disciples asking if they could set, one on each side of Christ, the head.

- b. M. B. Eddy, Science and Health 109:15-27:

For three years after my discovery, I sought the solution of this problem of Mind-healing, searched the Scriptures and read little else, kept aloof from society, and devoted time and energies to discovering a positive rule. The

search was sweet, calm, and buoyant with hope, not selfish nor depressing. I knew the Principle of all harmonious Mind-action to be God, and that cures were produced in primitive Christian healing, and I won my way to absolute conclusions through divine revelation, reason, and demonstration. The revelation of Truth in the understanding came to me gradually and apparently through divine power. When a new spiritual idea is borne to earth, the prophetic Scripture of Isaiah is renewedly fulfilled: "Unto us a child is born, . . . and his name shall be called Wonderful."

3. The mystical and spiritual methods of interpretation grow out of allegorism and are often synonymous with it. Various kinds of mystical and spiritual hermeneutics will be discussed as the history of hermeneutics is examined.
  - a. Example of a modern commentator who often attributes to a text a spiritual significance not justified in the text itself: Halford E. Luccock, Preaching Values in the Epistles of Paul, pp. 126-127:

## 82. BEYOND EYE AND EAR

*What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him. 1 COR. 2:9*

These words are Paul's description, really a rhapsody, rather than an exact description, of the secret wisdom of God. This wisdom is not attained by study, by laborious days and nights, nor by any initiation, such as was common in the mystery religions, but by the gift of the Spirit.

This gift is beyond the senses, beyond eye and ear, beyond touch and taste and feeling. This gift is beyond the boundaries of the physical attainment. It is a journey into wonder. The whole thrilling history of the modern world, for five centuries, has been truly a journey into wonder, all the way from Columbus to the unveiling of the latest life-saving drug. Each new generation has had inspired curiosity, the vision which has guided all scientific searchers into the wonders of an unknown world. But in what "God has prepared for those who love him," there is a more momentous journey into wonder. It is a journey past "the last frontier." That so-called last frontier of man has been moved many times in recent years, exploration has moved so rapidly. Some years ago, the last frontier was in Central Africa. Then it was moved to the Antarctic, where the thrust into the unknown with men, dogs, and machines has continued in a heroic story. Today, that last frontier has been placed in outer space, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be in the crossing of that last frontier.

But, in the highest and deepest sense, the last frontier of man is in the spirit. It is beyond what eye can see and ear hear, in the spirit, that horizon on the rim of our knowledge where the known shades into the unknown, the seen into the unseen, the human into the divine, man into God. That is the last frontier in this great passage of Paul—man's relation to God.

- b. Example of a popular writer who tends to see moral lessons that are not suggested by the text he uses or suggested in only the most indirect way: Norman Vincent Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, p. 104:

A woman was compelled by adversity to go into sales work, a type of activity for which she had no training. She undertook to demonstrate vacuum cleaners from house to house. She took a negative attitude toward herself and her work. She "just didn't believe she could do this job." She "knew" she was going to fail. She feared to approach a house even though she came for a requested demonstration. She believed that she could not make the sale. As a result, as is not surprising, she failed in a high percentage of her interviews.

One day she chanced to call upon a woman who evidenced consideration beyond the average. To this customer the saleswoman poured out her tale of defeat and powerlessness. The other woman listened patiently, then said quietly, "If you expect failure, you will get failure, but if you expect to succeed, I am sure you will succeed." And she added, "I will give you a formula which I believe will help you. It will restyle your thinking, give you new confidence, and help you to accomplish your goals. Repeat this formula before every call. Believe in it and then marvel at what it will do for you. This is it. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' (Romans 8:31) But change it by personalizing it so that you say, 'If God be for me, who can be against me?' If God be for me, then I know that with God's help I can sell vacuum cleaners. God realizes that you want security and support for your little children and yourself, and by practicing the method I suggest you will be given power to get what you want."

## B. Rationalistic

1. Definition: to approach the Scriptures with the assumption that they are purely human documents, the uninspired product of oral tradition, myth, etc.
2. Example: Burris Jenkins, American Religion as I See it Lived, pp. 82-83 (Jenkins was a member of the Campbell Institute.):

There is something to be said for this rather autocratic method of running a church; or better, perhaps, there is something to be said for the pulpit, the school, the teaching rostrum, without any church attached. Quite possibly the founder of Christianity never intended a church at all, and quite possibly Saint Paul is responsible for the organization of the church. Jesus never wrote anything, never administered anything, never displayed any executive genius, never formed a committee or an official board, nor designed any type of machinery. To be sure, he selected twelve men to follow him about, to listen to

what he had to say, to learn his message, and then to be prepared to multigraph it for the rest of the world; to be sure, he alluded at least once to "my church," but this allusion probably meant nothing more than an assembly of listeners. Certainly there is nothing in the four Gospels to indicate that Jesus ever dreamed of the tremendous, unwieldy, noisy and divided machinery which the centuries have created and multiplied to carry on his simple message. Fortunately or unfortunately, his greatest and most indefatigable follower, unofficial at that, Paul of Tarsus, possessed all the genius for organization which does not appear, even if it was there, in the make-up of Jesus. This restless and highly practical missionary secretary, Paul, went everywhere in the ancient world teaching, pulpiteering and then organizing. By the time he had ended his tireless career of some twenty years, not a city of the first, second or third class in the Roman Empire, and scarcely a scattered and isolated village, but had its church. I have often wondered whether the world would be better off if the Christian religion had followed the planless method of Jesus instead of the highly artificial and institutional method of Paul; indeed, whether it would have been possible to scatter the ideas of Jesus over a whole world without institutions to carry them.

### C. Apologetic

1. Definition: the use of Scripture(s) to rationalize and justify a theological concept or a religious idea which originated independent of the exegetical process. This method is sometimes called "proof-texting."
2. Example: The papal bull "Unum Sanctum" (1302) issued by Boniface VIII addressed to Philip the Fair of France affirming the ascendancy of Church over State:

We are obliged by the faith to believe and hold. . . that there is one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and that outside this Church there is neither salvation nor remission of sins. . . Of this one and only Church there is one body--not two heads, like a monster--namely Christ, and Christ's vicar Peter, and Peter's successor, for the Lord said to Peter himself, "Feed my sheep".

## D. Super-literal

1. Definition: to impose an arbitrary, selective, and modern literalism on the text without consideration of literary or theological context.

2. Examples:

a. Ha Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth, p. 176:

We are "premillennialists" in viewpoint. The real issue between the amillennial and the premillennial viewpoints is whether prophecy should be interpreted literally or allegorically. As it has been demonstrated many times in this book, all prophecy about past events has been fulfilled literally, particularly the predictions regarding the first coming of Christ. The words of prophecy were demonstrated as being literal, that is, having the normal meaning understood by the people of the time in which it was written. The words were not intended to be explained away by men who cannot believe what is clearly predicted.

pp. 165-166:

So here it is--the last great conflict. After the Antichrist assembles the forces of the rest of the whole world together, they meet the onrushing charge of the kings of the East in a battle line which will extend throughout Israel with the vortex centered at the Valley of Megiddo.

According to Zechariah, terrible fighting will center around the city of Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:2,3; 14:1,2).

Isaiah speaks of a frightful carnage taking place south of the Dead Sea in ancient Edom (Isaiah 63:1-4).

The apostle John predicts that so many people will be slaughtered in the conflict that blood will stand to the horses' bridles for a total distance of 200 miles northward and southward of Jerusalem (Revelation 14:20).

(Mr. Lindsey neglects to tell us (1) how human blood comes out of a winepress, (2) how many bodies would have to be drained to produce such a sea of blood, (3) why such a flood of blood would not quickly drain off and fill the Dead Sea basin, and (3) why modern armies were using horses.)

b. Martin Luther refused to join with Zwingli at Marburg in 1529 for the joint survival of the Protestant territories. The reason: Zwingli interpreted the elements of the Lord's Supper symbolically whereas Luther held that hoc est meum corpus means literally and exactly that (Real Presence).

## II. The Axioms of Hermeneutics (Lockhart)

- A. The true purpose of speech is the impartation of thought.
- B. The true object of interpretation is to apprehend the exact thought of the author.
- C. Language is a reliable medium of communication.
- D. Usage determines the meaning of words
- E. Two writers do not independently express thought alike.
- F. Every writer is influenced by his environment.
- G. An author's purpose determines the character of his production.
- H. Any writing is liable to modification in copying, translating, and the gradual change of a living tongue.
- I. By one expression one thought is conveyed, and only one.
- J. The function of a word depends on its association with other words.
- K. A correct definition of a word substituted for the word itself will not modify the meaning of the text.
- L. One of two contradictory statements must be false, unless corresponding terms have different meanings or applications.
- M. Truth must accord with truth; and statements of truth apparently discrepant can be harmonized if the facts are known. (Law of Harmony)
- N. An assertion of truth necessarily excludes that to which it is essentially opposed and no more.
- O. Every communication of thought, human and divine, given in the language of men, is subject to the ordinary rules of interpretation.

## III. Perspective Principles of Interpretation\*

- A. The principle of induction
  - 1. The inductive method
  - 2. Conclusions are probabilities, not absolutes

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\*Reading: Ramm, PBI, pp. 93-113.

**B. The priority of original languages**

1. No such thing as a divinely-sanctioned version or translation.
2. Examples of versions sometimes offered as superseding the original text:
  - a. The Vulgate
  - b. King James Version
  - c. The Talmud

**C. The principle of accomodation**

The interpreter must accomodate himself to the writer of the document and the language of that writer; he also must consider the character or tone of the message. The interpreter must recognize:

1. The culture and literary tradition of the writer.
2. That our understanding of the spiritual world must be generally analogical.
3. The necessary use of anthropomorphic language

**D. The principle of progressive revelation**

1. Dispensational revelation (Heb. 1:1-2)
2. The theory of the "level Bible"

**E. The principle of preference for the clearest interpretation**

1. Occam's Razor
2. Obscure texts are to be interpreted in the light of clearer texts on the same subject.
3. When there is no other text to which an obscure text can be compared, the interpreter will generally place the simplest possible construction on the words.

**F. The principle of historical priority**

1. What did it mean to "them?" - induction - interpretation
2. What does it mean to me? - deduction - application

**G. The principle of the distinction between interpretation and application**

1. Inductive interpretation
2. Deductive application

#### H. The principle of the unity of sense in Scripture

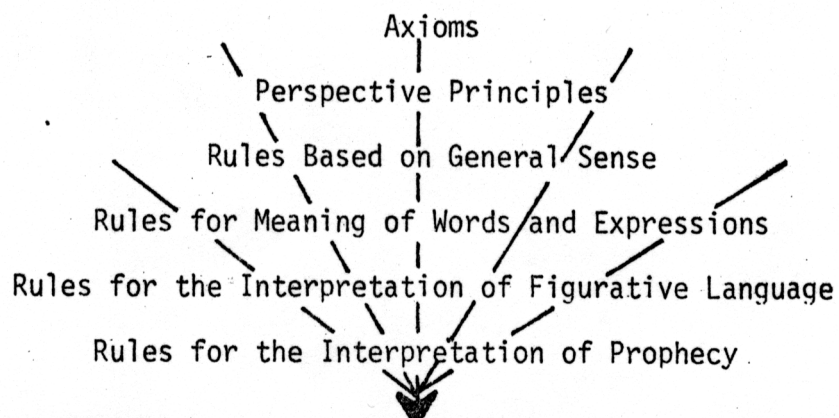
1. The interpreter must not attribute plural meanings to Scripture in a metaphysical or transcendental way.
2. The interpreter has no right to extract individual guidance from texts taken out of context.
3. Illumination cannot supersede direct literary analysis. (What does one mean by "The Lord speaks to me in this text."?)

#### I. The principle of the Analogy of Faith

1. The interpretation of a passage must not contradict explicit statements or general truths found elsewhere.
2. Example: Deductive systematic theologies, such as the doctrine of Original Sin, contradict clear statements about the nature of man and the nature of sin.

#### Parentetical Summary

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION ARE SURVEYED IN THIS STUDY MOVING FROM THE GENERAL TO THE PARTICULAR, THUS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES WILL FIND EXPRESSION IN OVERLAPPING AND INCLUSIVE RULES OR OBSERVATIONS.





#### IV. Rules Based on General Sense\*

- A. An author's own explanation of his meaning takes precedence over any other interpretation.
  1. This rule does not apply to every text, because often the author does not explain what he means by the use of a word or phrase.
  2. Example: Paul's dichotomy of faith vs. works compared to the that set up by James (Ro. 3:19-28; Jas. 2:14-26).
- B. The interpretation of a text must respect the writer's purpose.
  1. The purpose of the author is not always explained or implied.
  2. This rule preserves the emphasis given in the exegesis of a text.
  3. The author's purpose may be determined by:
    - a. Direct statement
 

Example: Luke 18:1; Jo. 20:31; Jude 3; I Jo. 2:26.
    - b. Inference
 

Example: the theme of Hebrews implies the purpose

Example: clear statements made to those initially receiving the document, e.g., I Cor. 4:3; Gal. 1:6.
    - c. Context
 

Example: I Cor. 13
  4. Often there will be an overlapping of the above indicating the purpose of a document or a portion of a document.
- C. The simplest and most natural interpretation must be preferred (see Perspective Principle E).
  1. It is to be presumed that the meaning of almost any passage was simple to the writer, otherwise he would have attempted to simplify it by explanation or further development. The correct interpretation will, therefore, be the simplest one of alternatives. Any intricate, ingenious, or devious method of interpretation may be reasonably suspected of error.

2. Many errors of interpretation are errors of over-interpretation.

- a. Derives from the Roman Catholic hermeneutic which relies heavily on allegory and mysticism.
- b. Derives from the Roman Catholic and Protestant doctrine of illumination, i.e., a meaning "beyond" that which the words and grammar yield.
- d. Derives from the desire to have the Scriptures support a subjective conviction.
- e. Derives from a misunderstanding of the limitations of figurative language (to be discussed later).

3. Examples: Luke 18:25; John 19:30

D. Good interpretation will, in general, move from abstruseness to clarity.

- 1. It must be generally assumed that the meaning was clear to the author himself and he uses language to communicate that clarity. Any interpretation, therefore, that is not clear must be suspect.

2. Examples: John 3:5; I Peter 3:21.

E. Any interpretation must be in harmony with grammar, rhetoric, logic, and consistency, if the nature of the case permit.

- 1. The author must be presumed to be grammatical and consistent in his use of language.

2. Examples:

- a. In grammar: Eph. 2:8
- b. In rhetoric: Matt. 16:18
- c. In logic: Gal. 3:16, 29
- d. In consistency: Matt. 10:34-35

F. Good interpretation recognizes the condition of the writing.

- 1. An interpretation should conform to known laws, customs, opinions, history, country, biology, circumstances, and character of the source at the time.

2. Examples:

- a. Laws: Matt. 28:14; Jo. 18:31
  - b. Customs: Deut. 11:10; Ecc. 11:1 (Gen. 24:64-65; 29:23-25)
  - c. Opinions: Heb. 2:2; II Cor. 12:2
  - d. History: II Kings 23:29
  - e. Geography: Gen. 19:28
  - f. Biology: Gen. 25:29,30
  - g. Circumstances: Rev. 1:9
  - h. Character of the source: John 18:38; Acts 26:28; Acts 5:37ff
- G. An event is to be regarded as miraculous only when it may not be consistently interpreted otherwise.
- 1. God follows the general principle of parsimony of miracles. It is, therefore, pseudo-spirituality to "read in" miracles wherever possible.
  - 2. Examples:
    - a. Gen. 42:8
    - b. I Sam. 17:31-37
- H. Good hermeneutics requires the discriminating use of cross references and parallel passages.

- 1. The need to recognize the uninspired and arbitrary character of cross-referenced Bibles.

Example of misleading cross reference (Scofield Reference Bible):

Matt. 24

II John

| 24 5]  | ST. MATTHEW                 |
|--|-----------------------------|
| unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.  | A.D. 33.                    |
| 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.   | Rev. 19:11-13, 1 John 2:18. |
| 6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.        | Rev. 19:11-13, 1 John 2:18. |
| 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. | Rev. 19:11-13, 1 John 2:18. |
| 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.  | Rev. 19:11-13, 1 John 2:18. |

| After A.D. 90.  | Part II. Doctrine the final test of reality. (Cf. John 6. 60-66.)   |
|---|---|
| 7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.                      | 7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.                      |
| 8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.   | 8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.   |
| 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. | 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. |
| 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:   | 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:   |
| 11 For he that biddeth him God  | 11 For he that biddeth him God  |

## 2. Ramm's distinction

- a. Verbal cross reference: An apparent cross reference in which the wording in one passage is similar or identical to that of another, but it is a case of pure verbal coincidence.

Example: John 3:6 and Romans 8:8

- b. Conceptual cross reference: ". . . a passage in one book of Holy Scripture that has the identical substance or content of another part of Scripture, even though there is no use of common words."

Example: John 1:14 and Matthew 1:18

## 3. Degrees of affinity in parallels (Lockhart) (ascending order)

- a. An important word recurring in different contexts.

Example: Acts 11:26 and Acts 26:28

- b. The same or similar thought, but different words

Example: Matt. 10:37 and Luke 14:26

- c. Similar language referring to the same thought.

Example: Acts 2:38 and Acts 3:19

- d. Quotations, or materia from a common source

Examples:

(1) Parallels in the Synoptics

(2) New Testament quotations of passages from the Old Testament

## 4. The use of parallel passages (Lockhart)

- a. Statements made by credible authors relating to the same thing should, within reason, be interpreted harmoniously.

Example: Mark 15:25 and John 19:14

Harmony

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- b. The interpreter must allow for difference in conception and expression by different writers.

Example: Matt. 20:20 and Mark 10:35

Differences of authors

- c. The more explicit and definite of two or more parallels should explain the more general and indefinite.

Example: Acts 2:38 and John 3:16

Explicit and general

- d. The interpreter must respect essential differences that exist in passages that relate to the same theme but are different in purpose or emphasis.

Example: Matt. 16:18 and I Cor. 3:11

- e. If possible, interpret a quotation as a parallel and consistent with the original; but always in harmony with its own setting.

Example: Matt. 2:23 and Isa. 11:1

## V. Rules for the Meaning of Words and Expressions\* (Lockhart)

### A. Context

1. Words and expressions must be interpreted in such a way as to conform to context.

- a. Immediate context
- b. Remote context

Example: Romans 11:26

- The need to identify Israel from the immediate context.
- The need to interpret Romans 9-11 in light of the overall theme of the Book of Romans.

2. The adjuncts of a word in the context indicate its meaning

Example: "faith"

- Matt. 8:10 (trust)
- I Tim. 4:1; Jude 3 (body of doctrine)
- Romans 3:28 (trust in imputed righteousness in Christ vs dependence upon the personal merit that one claims by keeping the Law of Moses)

3. Many texts use statement and reason to indicate the special meaning of a word.

Example: John 8:47 hear

4. Many texts use question and answer to indicate the specific meaning of a word.

Example: Luke 10:29-37 neighbor

5. Often an antithesis is established to indicate the meaning of a word or words.

Example: Romans 16:19 wise vs. innocent  
Galatians 5:17 spirit vs. flesh  
Romans 2:13 hearers vs. doers

6. Sometimes the meaning of a word is indicated by parallelism.

Example: Isa. 46:11 and 45:1

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\*Reading: Ramm PBI, pp. 128-140.

- 7 The repetition of a word in a passage generally assumes continuity of thought and the use of the word in a unified sense.

Examples: Matt. 25:46 eternal  
 Romans 8:1-13 flesh = "disposition to evil" vs.  
 " 9:3,5,8 flesh = natural descent  
 Matt. 3:10-12 fire

Exceptions: Matt. 8:22  
 Luke 8:20-21

In most exceptions, a positive and obvious shift is made in the meaning of words with a view to establishing a thesis by the shift itself.

8. Contextual interpretation preserves the intended meaning and emphasis of words by giving careful attention to the trend of thought.

Example I Cor. 3:15

## B. Usage

1. Principle: In sound hermeneutics, the etymological meaning of a word must give place to the current established usage. To determine the usage of a word, consult its occurrences in literature, and depend most on those nearest the passage in point of context, authorship, date and character of the composition.
2. Example of meaning grounded in etymology: Isa. 7:14 Immanuel
3. Examples of drift by usage: angel; spirit, psallo, hades
4. Example of process of determining usage:
  - a. Jo. 15:26: Helper-Comforter (paraclete) (Jo. 16:7)
  - b. Other appearance in Scripture: I Jo. 2:1 "Advocate"
  - c. Extrabiblical appearances:
    - (1) Philo (De Josepho, c. 40, 2. 75) "Intercessor"
    - (2) Classic Greek: "attorney at law"
  - d. Conclusion: The emphasis or tone of paraclete probably should be on the ministry of the Holy Spirit as a helper or advocate rather than a comforter in trouble.

### C. Rare Words

1. Principle: The meaning of a rare word, not determined by usage should be sought first in etymology, then in early versions, finally in kindred tongues.
2. Example: Lev. 16:8, 10, 26 Azazel
  - a. KJV "scapegoat" (But Azazel is not the goat itself.)
  - b. Arabic: "demon," but probably a corruption of the Hebrew tradition.
  - c. LXX: apompaioi, the averter of evil
  - d. Vulgate: caper emissarius, "the goat sent away"
  - e. Etymology: (Arabic) azal "to remove"
  - f. Probable interpretation: One goat for Jehovah as a sin offering, another for symbolic separation of one who bears sins away from the people.

### D. Technical Terms

1. Principle: The meaning of a technical word must be determined by its usage among authors in its particular sphere.
2. Example: apostle, saint

### E. Linguistic Peculiarities

1. Principle: An expression must be interpreted in harmony with the linguistic peculiarities of the document, author, language, and of the dialect in which it originated.

#### 2. Examples:

- a. In document and author: righteousness in II Cor. 9:9,10 vs. Romans 3:26.
- b. Compound words: Col. 2:23 ethelo-threskeia; KJV "will-worship," NAS "self-made religion," NIV "self-imposed worship," i.e., worship originating in the will rather than worship of the will.
- c. Idiom: I Jo. 2:22 Lit. "Who is a liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is not the Christ." (double negative)

II Cor. 2:16: "life to life--death to death"

II Cor. 3:18: "glory to glory"

Romans 1:17: "faith to faith"



## F. Synonyms

1. Principle: Every language contains words that are roughly synonymous. As a writer is familiar with his own language, he must be generally given credit for choosing the synonym which properly conveys the shade of meaning intended.
2. Example: agape vs. phileo

## G. The Broad Meaning

1. Principle: Choose the broad meaning of a word unless it is restricted by context. Words often have a comprehensive meaning in one context and a restricted meaning in another context. The reader will assume the broad meaning unless he has a contextual reason for regarding it as limited.
2. Examples:
  - a. Restriction by context: Matt. 5:48 perfect
  - b. Nature of the situation: Matt. 3:5,6; Heb. 2:17 all

## H. Emphatic Words

1. Principle: Due weight must be given to emphatic words when interpreting a sentence.
2. Examples:
  - a. Repetition: Deut. 16:20; Gen 7:19
  - b. In Greek, the location of a word toward the first of the sentence: John 6:57 sent; I Cor. 5:6 little

## VI. Rules for the Interpretation of Figurative Language\* (Lockhart)

- A. If a word is not normally used with a figurative force, a literal interpretation is to be preferred over a symbolic/or allegorical.

Example: Cor. 10:2; I Cor. 15:29 baptism

- B. When interpreting figures based on similitude or analogy, the nature of the imagery must be carefully considered.

Examples:

1. Simile: Matt. 13:44-50
2. Metaphor: Jeremiah 2:13; Luke 13:32; Matt. 5:13; Ecc. 12
3. Allegory: Psalm 8:8-15

- C. In similes or analogies, very few points of comparison must be expected.

Examples: Matt. 13:18-23; Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8

- D. In extended figures, interpret first the major points; then work out minor points with reserve. (This is an extension of the preceding rule.)

Example: Luke 15

- E. In working with analogy, distinguish essential elements from those which serve only to complete or embellish the figure.

Example: Luke 11:5-18

The midnight hour, the number of loaves, the friend from a journey, the shut door, and the children in bed must be considered simply as necessary elements in the analogy and not as having particular analogical significance.

- F. In interpreting figures based on similitude, carefully follow the indications given by the author.

Examples; Luke 12:16-21; Matt. 18:21-35

- G. A figure must be studied in the light of its historical context; details are not to be added from imagination.

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\*Reading: Ramm, Herm., pp. 29-40; PBI, pp. 142-148; 276-287

## Examples:

1. Matt. 25:1-12. The true-to-history quality of the parable must be preserved, such as the custom of waiting for the bridegroom to a very late hour, trimming lamps to preserve oil, the rule that the door was to be closed to exclude rowdy late-comers.
2. Luke 19:11-27. Josephus (Ant. 17. 9) tells how Archelaus visited Rome to secure from Augustus the office of king over the Jews. Leading Jews who hated Archelaus sent an embassy to Augustus requesting him to deny the petition. Archelaus had many of the Jews who opposed his appointment killed.

H. If a superficial reading of the figure yields inconsistency or contradiction, careful attention must be given to resolving the problems. Often nonliteral language is used for dramatic effect.

## Examples:

1. Paradox: Matt. 10:34; 39
2. Oxymoron (the apparent inconsistency between an epithet and its noun): Matt. 6:23
3. Irony: Isa. 6:9-10; I Cor. 4:8
4. Personification: Matt. 6:34
5. Paronomasia (a play on words; a pun): Jer. 1:11,12; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 16:18; Gal. 1:15.
6. Anthropomorphism: Isa 52:10
7. Anthropopathy (the ascription of the passions of a man to God): Zech. 8:2
8. Hyperbole: I Cor. 13:1-3; Gal. 1:8
9. Litotes (the mild affirmation of a fact by denying its contrary): Matt. 6:13 (Does not suggest that God tempts man.)
10. Synecdoche
  - a. The use of a part for the whole: Rom. 1:16 Greek
  - b. The use of the whole for a part: Matt. 2:3 all Jerusalem

- I. If a part of a passage seems to be omitted, supply only that which is essential to express the evident intent of the author.

1. Example: Matt. 16:3 (Note ellipses filled in with italicized words.)

2. Aposiopesis

- a. Definition: A sudden break in a sentence, as if the author were not able to finish.

- b. Examples: Exodus 32:32; Luke 19:42; Eph. 3:1,2

3. Interrogation

- a. Definition: A question asked to argue the contrary

- b. Examples: John 8:46; Heb. 1:14; Romans 8:31-33

- J. The extent of the meaning of any figure must be determined by the nature of the subject and the intent of the author as well as by the figure itself.

Examples:

1. Metonymy

- a. Definition: The application of the name of one object to another because of the connection.

- b. Examples: Luke 16:29; Romans 3:30

2. Illustration by metaphor: Matt. 3:10; Matt. 13:31,32. (This metaphor must be interpreted in light of the general teaching of the Kingdom because of the limited nature of the metaphor in and of itself.)

- K. Only one function must be assigned to any part of a figure.

Example: Matt. 16:18-19. Peter cannot be both the foundation rock of the building and the door-keeper.

- L. Comprehensive rules for the interpretation of parables. (Ramm)

1. Parable is to be distinguished from pure allegory. An allegory, by definition, carries specific meaning at many points in the narrative. This is not necessarily true for a parable.

2. Types of parables:

- a. Simple utterances (Matt. 13:44)

- b. "One-point" parables (Luke 15:4-7)

- c. Extended parables (taking on the nature of allegory) (Matt. 13:4-9)

### 3. Identifying marks of a parable

- a. Parables are about common things, events, customs, etc.
- b. The parable intends to teach a spiritual or theological truth; (It is not simply the telling of a story, and the application is not accidental.)
- c. The earthly element bears analogical relationship to the spiritual element.
- d. The parable requires bilevel interpretation (the common event, custom, etc. itself and the analogical application). This is not the process of allegorizing.

### 4. Parables are usually eschatological in nature. (Eschatological from the Old Testament point of view.)

- a. The character of the Messianic Kingdom. (Matt. 13)
- b. The future and fate of Jewish national religion. (Matt. 22:1-14)

### 5. The purpose of parables (Matt. 13:11-17)

- a. To identify and bless those who were willing to learn.
- b. To judge those who were unwilling to learn.

### 6. Rules for interpreting parables

- a. Perspective principle: Parables must be interpreted with the understanding that Jesus was teaching about his Messianic ministry and that Jesus was announcing the presence of the Kingdom.
- b. Cultural principle: Parables must be interpreted in light of their cultural background, i.e., ancient Palestine.
- c. Exegetical principles:
  - (1) In most parables, the interpreter should seek to identify the "one central truth."
  - (2) The interpreter must determine how Jesus Himself interpreted the parable if this information is available.
  - (3) The interpreter must identify available information from the context as it points to the meaning of the parable (e.g., Luke 15:1-2).
  - (4) The interpreter must consider Old Testament and inter-testamental elements as points of reference.
- d. Doctrinal principle: The interpreter must not read modern theological or eschatological systems into the parables.

#### M. Rules for the interpretation of apocalyptic literature

1. Apocalyptic, by its very nature, does not permit a literalistic interpretation, even where the text, at first glance, appears to make room for literalism.
2. The interpreter must determine, if possible, the significance of the symbol(s) in the culture of the writer.
3. The text must be examined to see if the meaning of the symbol(s) is indicated in the passage itself.
4. Ancient history must be consulted to determine the possible fulfillment of apocalyptic prediction.
5. In the interpretation of New Testament apocalyptic, consideration must be given to the use of the symbols in the Old Testament (if they appear in the Old Testament).

## VII. Rules for the Interpretation of Prophecy\* (Lockhart)

- A The form and meaning of a prediction must be studied in the light of the situation of the prophet.
1. The work of a prophet is so intimately connected with the needs and condition of his people that his predictions as well as his instructions must be studied in their historical setting. It must not be assumed that a prophet's message is designed wholly for future generations. They were intended to encourage or restrain the people of his own age.
  2. Examples:
    - a. The Protevangelium, Gen. 3:15
    - b. Noah's prophecy, Gen. 9:25-27
    - c. Isaiah 9:6-7. A glorious Messianic prophecy framed in the language which contrasts the beauty of the future King with the shame of Ahaz of Judah and the ugly arrogance of the king of Assyria.

- B. A prophecy must be interpreted in harmony with its fulfillment if that be known.

Example II Sam. 7:12-16

- a. Solomon?
- b. Acts 2:29-32

- C. No prophecy should be approached with an assumption of what it should contain.

Example: Jer. 31:15 & Matt. 2:17-18. Matthew uses the word "fulfill" in the sense of a striking parallel. The prophecy has a clear fulfillment in the grief of the captives gathered at Ramah weeping over the fate of Jerusalem and over their own misery at the hands of the Babylonians.

- D. Prophetic numbers should be interpreted literally when consistent, otherwise as definite or indefinite.

Examples:

- a. Numbers used literally, if not exactly: Gen. 7:4; Isa. 7:8; Daniel 9:2

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\*Reading: Ramm, Herm., pp. 41-53; 94-129; PBI, pp. 215-275.

- b. It is often thought that the number seven stands symbolically for perfection or completeness, often an indefinite number standing for the whole: Joshua 6:13-15; Lev. 23:24; Isa. 30:26; Daniel 3:19; Rev. 1-3.
- c. Large numbers are often used as adjectives, roughly synonymous for much.
- d. The number 10 is often used for small, but significant numbers: Gen. 31:41; Lev. 26:26; I Sam. 1:8; Dan. 7:7; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:12.
- e. The number 12 often has symbolic significance: Ex. 28:21; Lev. 24:5; Numbers 7:87; Rev. 7:4-8; 21:12-14.
- f. The Year-Day theory.
  - (1) Definition: The theory that, in prophecy, a day represents a year.
  - (2) Use: Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14; the 1260 days (Rev. 11:3; 12:6); the 2300 days (Dan. 8:14); the 1290 and 1335 days (Dan. 12:11,12). The forth-two months (Rev. 11:2; 13:5) are composed of thirty days each, making 1260 days, which represent 1260 years.
  - (3) "Proof": Numbers 14:33,34; Ezekiel 4:5-6.
  - (4) Comment: There is no hermeneutical grounds for using such symbolic prophetic events as the "key to prophecy."

#### VIII. Rules for the Interpretation of Prophetic Symbols

- A. Interpret symbols by the same principles as ordinary figures based on resemblance or analogy.
- B. Examples of symbols:
  - 1. Daniel 7
  - 2. " 8:5-7
  - 3. Rev. 12:3
  - 4. " 9:7
- C. A prophetic symbol must be examined with regard to the scope and context of the prophecy where it is used and by its analogy to other symbols.

#### Examples:

- 1. The bow = power of conquest: Rev. 6:2.
- 2. Trees = men: Ezekiel 31:3-14; Isa. 6:13; Zech. 6:12; Rev. 7:1; 8:7.



#### D. Colors and metals

1. Although no colors or metals have a fixed or arbitrary symbolic meaning, there are recurring themes in the prophetic and figurative language of Scripture.

##### Examples:

- a. White = purity, joy, or riches.
- b. Red = cruelty, punishment, or war.
- c. Black = disaster, doom or mourning.
- d. Pale = death.
- e. Purple = royalty or riches.
- f. Metals: Dan. 2:32-35
- g. Colors: Rev. 6:1-8; Dan. 5:7

#### E. Names

1. Babylon = A pagan city antagonistic to the people of God.  
Rev. 17:5; I Peter 5:13.
2. Isa. 1:9-10: Sodom and Gomorrah symbolic of Jerusalem.

### IX. Rules for the Interpretation of Biblical Typology

#### A. The nature of types

- 1 Definition: A type is an object that antedates another object which it is designed to prefigure, and with which it enjoys a like moral or religious principle. A type is not necessarily a prophecy and may not be recognized as a type in its own age. Often the connection is made "after the fact."
2. Distinctions:
  - a. Types are not accidental analogies; rather they are objects or actions that intentionally refer to their antitypes.
  - b. Typology is not simply history repeating itself.
  - c. Types are not precisely like the antitypes.
  - d. Types are less exalted than their antitypes.

- B. Principle: Before an object or action can be regarded as a type, clear evidence must exist that it is divinely intended to be typical.

#### C. Examples:

1. The tabernacle: Heb. 8:1; 9:11-12:24.
2. Melchizedek, a type of Christ: Heb. 7:1-25.
3. Doubtful types: Heb. 4:9; I Cor. 10:1,2.

## PART TWO: HISTORY

## I Jesus, the Apostles, and the Prophets\*

## Introduction

1. A primary guide to interpretation: How do Jesus and the inspired Apostles and Prophets use and interpret Scripture?
2. This has been discussed in part in Part One: Principles
3. There are between 160 and 600 citations of the Old Testament found in the New Testament, depending upon what degree of paraphrase, allusion, etc. constitutes a citation.
4. In many cases Old Testament passages receive new clarity and beauty; just as in building a rock wall, selected stones are given honored places in the face of the wall as the mason lays the stone, fills in the space around it, and smooths the mortar that "points up" the stone in its new position. Thus all the stones in the wall, even the less prominent, are seen in a fuller and richer light.

## A. Jesus

1. In the time of Christ, Scripture existed in two or three languages:
  - a. Targums = Aramaic translations. The lingua franca. In public teaching, Jesus probably used Aramaic translations or paraphrased the LXX in Aramaic. It is not known exactly when the Targums were written down.
  - b. Hebrew, read in the synagogues; the "Holy Language."
  - c. Septuagint: Tradition assigns the LXX to 72 scholars in Alexandria about 285 B.C. Greek was the international language. All the New Testament books were originally circulated in Greek. It is likely that all were originally written in Greek. Hellenistic Jews and, later, Christians used the LXX almost exclusively. It is often difficult to decide which translation is being cited, because of copyist variations and paraphrasing.
2. Jesus and His view of Scripture
  - a. Jesus occupied common ground with the believing Jew.

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\*Reading: Ramm, Herm., pp. 54-80

- (1) John 10:35: "And the Scripture cannot be broken."
- (2) Jesus stood closer to the Pharisees than to the Sadducees: Luke 20:37-39.

b. In many ways, Jesus was not like contemporary Jews in His use of Scripture.

- (1) Re authority: Matt. 5:21-22; 7:29

In contrast to the rabbis, who would proceed to uphold a particular interpretation by citing Scripture or interpretations of respected scholars of the past, Jesus often affirmed his own authority.

In Matt. 19:3-9 (the controversy over divorce), it is evident that, in this case, Jesus sided with the "liberal" Hillel. Shammai and Hillel held opposite views on the subject of divorce. Shammai was strict, Hillel more permissive. Jesus held, in effect, that Hillel was right, but held also that Shammai was closer to the truth in that his was the proper moral standard. Jesus annulled the temporary concession allowed in the Law of Moses because of the hardness of men's hearts. Jesus mentioned neither Hillel nor Shammai, but took higher ground than either.

The Jews recognized that Jesus was claiming personal authority (Matt. 21:23).

- (2) Re fulfillment: Matt. 5:17.

- (3) Re the inherent wisdom, truth, and quality of His interpretation: Luke 24:32.

### 3. The warning of Jesus to contemporary interpreters

a. Jesus did not draw up a list of hermeneutical rules, nor did He leave us an annotated list of false principles of interpretation. His criticisms were aimed at those specific false belief and practices that were separating man from God. He did not hesitate to point out the subjective nature of many false interpretations.

b. "Principles" inferred from the criticism by Jesus of contemporary interpreters:

- (1) Priority and emphasis: Matt. 9:13; 23:23. Jesus made it clear that application is inextricably intertwined with interpretation, and that good hermeneutics preserves the emphases of Scripture.

- (2) Sincerity: Matt. 15:3-6. Some of the Pharisees and scribes were teaching their disciples to bring their subjective prejudices and passions to the Scriptures.
- (3) Belief: John 5:38-40; 46-47; Luke 16:31 (Matt. 13:11-13). (If one refuses to accept the possibility of the supernatural, or the Deity of Jesus, it must certainly guide his interpretation of texts which discuss and depend upon such belief.)

## B. The Apostles and Prophets

### 1. The Gospel writers

#### a. Matthew

- (1) Makes the most frequent use of the Old Testament.
- (2) Matthew often uses the specific introductory formula: "This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet. . ." He does this about ten times, and the phrase always appears as an editorial comment. Often it has a literary rather than an evidential force. (This was discussed under Principles.)

#### b. Mark

- (1) The Gospel of Mark contains but few passages that correspond to Matthew's formula. (Mark 15:28 suffers textual difficulty.)
- (2) For the most part, Mark's use of prophecy is found in the quotations of those whose speeches he records. (E.g. 11:9-10.)

#### c. Luke uses Old Testament Scripture in a way generally parallel to Mark.

#### d. John makes "editorial" citations of the Old Testament more than either Mark or Luke.

#### e. The Gospel writers in summary:

- (1) They take Old Testament Scripture at face value, as did Jesus.
- (2) They remind us that both literal and literary citation of Old Testament material enjoy hermeneutical integrity.
- (3) They give an inspired interpretation of many particular Old Testament Scriptures.

## 2. The Book of Acts (Luke)

- a. All the recorded O.T. quotations in Acts occur in recorded speeches, conversations, or prayers, and not in the descriptive portions of the book.
- b. Jesus is presented as the Messiah in terms of fulfilled prophecy: 3:24; 17:1-3; 26:27; 8:30-35.
- c. The Church is presented as the Messianic Kingdom in terms of fulfilled prophecy: 2:27ff; 15:15-18.

## 3. The Pauline Epistles

- a. Paul, being of the Pharisaic tradition and being inspired by the Holy Spirit, accepted the O.T. as literally true.
- b. Paul's use of Scripture
  - (1) Prophecy: Of 94 passages quoted messianically in the Pauline letters, only 54 are interpreted in accord with the Pharasaic tradition, thus manifesting Paul's lack of dependence on his hermeneutical training. (E.g., Romans 9:33.)
  - (2) Non-prophetic material
    - (a) The literal meaning of non-prophetic passages are cited to support argument: Ro. 3:10; Gal. 3:11.
    - (b) Old Testament principles are applied to issues in the New Covenant Church: I Cor. 9:9; I Tim. 5:18
  - (3) Allegory
    - (a) Gal. 4:22-31 (the allegory of Hagar and Sarah): Paul does not use "allegory" in the same sense as did Philo. Paul uses it more as a type or an illustration.
    - (b) See also I Cor. 10:1-6.
  - (4) Chain passages: Paul linked together scriptures in order to bind the reason and faith of man to the truths of God. (E.g., Romans 3:10-18; chapters 9-11.)
  - (5) True meaning: It is difficult to analyze the few passages in which Paul's wording is different from either the Hebrew or Greek manuscripts of the Old Testament available today. It should be assumed that Paul, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, conveys the true meaning of the original text. This helps clear up problems created by ambiguous transmission, idiom, etc. (E.g., Eph. 4:8 and Psalm 68:18.)

#### 4. The Epistle to the Hebrews

- a. No other book of the New Testament treats the interpretation of the Old Testament more directly than Hebrews.
- b. The Old Covenant is presented as temporary and insufficient for ultimate redemption. Its preparatory character is emphasized, in terms of types and shadows (such as the Melchizedekian priesthood and tabernacle worship). Hebrews interprets the Old Testament in such a way as to make it clear that the Old Covenant contained within itself the promise and terms of its own abrogation.

#### 5. The General Epistles

a.

- (1) Jewish in tone.
- (2) Few direct allusions to the Old Testament.
- (3) Old Testament personalities (Abraham, Rahab, Job, Elijah) are used as examples.
- (4) Often profitably compared to the Sermon on the Mount.

b. Peter

- (1) Makes extensive use of the Old Testament.
- (2) Kinds of allusions
  - (a) Prophetic: I Peter 2:4-8.
  - (b) Moral application: I Peter 3:8-12.
  - (c) Illustrative material: I Peter 3:20.

c.

- (1) Not as much use made of O.T. as in other General Epistles.
- (2) No prophecy or quotation is cited in the Epistles of John, probably because he was dealing with a "Gentile" heresy.

#### 6. The Book of Revelation

- a. No other New Testament book is so affected by the Old Testament.
- b. There is no direct quotation, but, in its literary arrangement, O.T. language and figures are intertwined to form a mosaic that manifests the unity of divine revelation.
- c. Old Testament prophecies are given explicit interpretation and application. (E.g., 1:7 & Da. 7:13; 2:27 & Psalm 2:8.)
- d. Old Testament imagery is used as a code, i.e., the general kind of thing symbolized, not necessarily the same specific fulfillment. (E.g., 13:1-11 & Da. 7--beast=king or kingdom; horn=particular blasphemous rulers within the kingdom.)

C. Summary of Section I--The New Testament writers, often quoting Jesus, use the Old Testament in the following ways:

1. Illustration (sometimes as a modified allegory).
2. Moral application.
3. Imagery and thought used to present similar concepts in terms of the New-Covenant revelation.
4. Specific fulfillment of specific prophecies, types, and shadows.
5. As bases for fuller New Covenant extensions of theological themes began in the Old Testament.

## II. Rabbinic Interpretation\*

### A. History

1. The early defection from the Mosaic system of sacrificial worship--Temple ritual.
  - a. Corruption in the preexilic period: II Kings. 22:8-15.
  - b. In the exilic period, the prophets set themselves against the priest and Temple worship: Amos 5:21-24.
2. Even after the Temple was rebuilt, it never enjoyed the central place in Jewish worship as in the days of the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple.
  - a. The Jews who returned from the captivity were more urban and commercial than before. Life centered in the city rather than the farm.
  - b. After Alexander the Great (332-323 B.C.), there was increasing pressure toward Hellenic culture.
3. The program, by the Sopherim (discussed later) and others, to revive Law-keeping required that the Law be adapted to contemporary life. The alternative was for the Law to be lost again.
4. Ezra, the "Second Moses"
  - a. According to tradition, Ezra was responsible for:
    - (1) The restoration of the Law (Ezra 10:1-5).
    - (2) The founding of the Great Synagogue.
      - (a) Said to consist of 20 members.
      - (b) First of a class which came to be called the Sopherim or Scribes.
  - b. Ezra marks the beginning of a new approach to Scripture
    - (1) Emphasis passed from written Law to oral Law.
    - (2) " " " Scripture to tradition.
    - (3) " " " faith to ceremony and outward observance.
5. The succession of rabbinic bodies
  - a. The Sopherim, 458-320 B.C.: From Ezra to the death of Simon the Just.
  - b. The Chakhamim, 323 B.C.-A.D.13: From Simon to the death of Hillel.

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Reading: Ramm, PBI, pp. 45-48.



- c. The Tannaim, A.D. 13-190: From Hillel to the death of Rabbi.
- d. The Amorim, 190-498. From Rabbi to R. Ashi.
- e. The Gaonim, A.D. 689-900.

## B. Jewish Literature

### 1. Talmud (Babylonian and Jerusalem--2947 pages, 22 vols)

a. Torah = Pentateuch/Law (First five books)

b. Mishna = commentary on Torah.

- (1) "Repitition" משנה
- (2) Written down by A.D. 250.
- (3) Consists primarily of Halakhah ("to walk"), i.e., practical application of Torah.
- (4) The character of Mishnah: Accepted conclusions arrived at by thorough discussion by the rabbis and therefore representing codification of Oral Law.

c. Gemara = commentary on Mishna

- (1) "Completion" גמרה
- (2) Written down by A.D. 427
- (3) Consists primarily of Haggadah ("story, legend").

d. Mishna + Gemara = Talmud

The Talmud is the work of hundreds of learned men of different ages, countries, and conditions, it forms a wonderful monument of human industry, human wisdom, and human folly. Written in a style of lapidary brevity, it reads like a collection of telegraphic messages. It is full of uncouth grammar, barbarous solecisms, and exotic words. We can hardly wonder that it is difficult to discover the method of its apparently confused and desultory discussions, when we remember that it was developed amid conditions of peril and discouragement, amid endless disturbances of war and violences of persecution, under the jealous eye of Roman informers or the cruel greed and fanatical malice of Persian oppressors. Such being its origin, it naturally teems with errors, exaggerations, and even obscenities; with strange superstitions of Eastern demonology; with wild Arabian tales about the freaks of Ashmodai; with childish extravagances of fancy about Behemoth and the bird Bar Juchean and the Shorhabor; with perverted logic; with confusions of genealogy, chronology, and history; with exorcisms, incantations, and magic formulae; with profane and old wives fables, of which some few may have had a hidden significance to those who had the key to their meaning, but of which the majority were understood by the multitude in their literal absurdity.

These "Jewish myths and genealogies," as St. Paul calls them, have their dark side. All that can be urged by way of excuse for their baser elements is that they were not always meant to be taken literally, or to be weighed in jeweler's scales. The rabbi, talking familiarly in his lighter and unguarded moments, did not intend his eager pupils to retain and record his most rash and accidental utterances. Here, however, in this strange literary Herculaneum all things are swept together in wild confusion. Things grave and fantastic, great and small, valuable and worthless, Jewish and pagan, the altar and its ashes are piled together in wild disorder. Amid the labyrinths of rubbish we require a torch to enable us to pick up an accidental gem.

-Farrar

2. Midrash = מדרש = "to inquire, seek, consult, i.e., commentary"

- a. The exposition of the Pentateuch, the Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, collected by the Midrash Rabbi.
- b. Jewish exegesis, as represented in the Midrashim, was founded on four methods, mnemonically described as PaRDeS.

- 1) Peshat: the literal sense; the grammitico-historical meaning of the words and sentences. (Only the Peshat is of any hermeneutical value.)
- (2) Remez: hint, the development of latent meanings. The Remez was chiefly devoted to the development of Halakhah.
- (3) Darush: homilies, including allegory and all kinds of illustration. The Darush was chiefly devoted to the development of Haggadah.
- (4) Sod: mystery

C. The Seven Rules of Hillel

- 1. Light and Heavy: Inference from minor to major, from less to great. E.g.: The Sabbath is, in some respects, to be regarded as more important than any other religious festival. Therefore, if certain work is forbidden on the festival day (light), it is all the more imperative to refrain from that kind of work on the Sabbath (heavy).

2. Equivalence: The inference from the similar, or the analogy of ideas, or coincidence of words. E.g.: In Lev. 16:29, the law relating to the Day of Atonement called for Israel to humble themselves, without defining the precise nature of this humiliation. In Deut. 8:3 the word humble appears in the statement: "He humbles you and lets you be hungry." Therefore humble in the Leviticus passage requires fasting.
3. Extension from particular to general: A general rule or law is inferred from a special or particular commandment. E.g.: In Deut. 24:6 it is specified that "no man shall take the upper millstone as a pledge" for a debt. This is obviously designed to prevent the creditor from removing from the debtor the means of living and repaying the debt. The rabbis generalized this law so that nothing used in the preparation of food can be deemed as a pledge for a debt and taken. The application of this principle led to the development of the Kosher rules for the preparation of food, based on Exodus 23:19.
4. General premise derived from the analogy of two objects in two verses: A generalization of two specific laws or provisions. E.g.: Exodus 21:26 & 27 provides in one verse that if a master destroys the eye of a slave, he must set the slave free. In the next verse the law provides that if a tooth is destroyed, he must also set the slave free. The rabbis drew from these two provisions the general law that the mutilation of any member of a servant's body calls for the immediate manumission of the slave (Talmud Kidush 24a).
5. Inference from general to particular. E.g.: In the commandment in Deut. 22:11 "You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together," the rabbis saw that the general term "material" is defined by the particulars "wool" and "linen." They concluded that the restriction could only be applied to these two materials, other mixtures were permitted.
6. Explanation from analogy of other passages: A more precise statement achieved by the help of other passages. Extension to other passages where you have a more precise definition or a more complete explanation. (This is a sound principle.)
7. The Connection (context): Application of self-evident inferences. Clarification from the context. E.g.: In Exodus 16:29 the rule is "Abide you every man in his place on the 7th day." If taken by itself, it would mean that no Israelite should leave his place on the Sabbath. The context, however, makes it clear that it applies only to those who were gathering manna, prohibiting them from going out on the 7th day to seek manna. (This is a sound principle.)

## D. The Eminent Rabbis

### 1 Hillel (70 B.C.-A.D. 10)

- a. Born in Babylon, studied in Jerusalem, lived a life of voluntary poverty.
- b. In his determination to build a hedge about the law, he elevated Oral Law, and is recognized as the earliest founder of the Talmudic system.
- c. Once summarized the whole of the Law: "Love thy neighbor."

### 2. Shammai (contemporary of Hillel)

- a. A formalist of the narrowest school.
- b. Bitter opponent of Hillel; their disciples often shed one another's blood.
- c. Jewish maxim: "Shammi bound; Hillel loosed."  
Shammai once drove away a Gentile who said he would convert if the rabbi would teach him the whole Law while standing on one foot. Hillel converted him by telling him: "What is hateful to yourself, do not to thy neighbor; this is the whole Law, the rest is but comment and fringe." (Mark 12: 32-34)

### 3. Johanan ben Zakkai (contemporary of the Apostles)

- a. A disciple of Hillel who rallied Judaism after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. Vespasian permitted him to establish a school at Jamnia (Yavneh).
- b. ben Zakkai began to create an interpretation of the Law that did not require the Temple.

### 4. Rabbi Aquiba (A.D. 40-135)

- a. The greatest of the Tannaites, a casuist par-excellence.
- b. Aquiba recognized Bar Kokhba as a possible Messiah and hated Christianity with a passion.
- c. Founded the system of exegesis developed in the Talmud. Through his fantastic and arbitrary hermeneutics, the plain meaning of the Written Law became of less and less importance.
- d. Aquiba attached significance to every letter, the shape of every letter, the size of the letters in relation to other letters, whether letters might be inverted or suspended, the horns or tittles on the letters, and, of course, every word in the text. He considered the mystic or allegorical meaning of the Scriptures to be the most important.

### 5. Rabbi Juda (d. A.D. 200)

- a. With Rabbi Juda, the Oral Law was committed to writing for the first time. He compiled the Mishna.
- b. With his death the glory of the rabbinic "Patriarchate" declined. Scholastic discussions of the Amorim (200-500) resulted in the Jerusalem Talmud.

## E. Cabbalism (also transliterated Kabbalism and Qabbalism)

1. A development of the Sod of the Midrash.
2. Kabal = קבל = "a thing received," i.e., that it was of equal sanctity and authority with the Law and had been received by Moses on Sinai at the time he received the written Law.
3. Influenced by Persian and Greek sources, especially the Pythagoreans of the fifth century B.C.
4. In ancient times numbers had a legendary, mystic, esoteric significance. Cabbalism is based on the delusion that the whole of Scripture, even down to the verses, words, letters, vowel points, and accents, the numbers of the letters, every single collocation of every letter has a special, even a super-natural power and significance.
5. Cabbalistic principles of interpretation.

### a. Gematria (corruption of Greek geometria)

- (1) Isopsephism: Giving words numerical value and attaching significance to numerical equivalents.

Examples:

Gen. 49:10: The scepter shall not depart from Judah  
... until Shiloh comes.

יבא שילה = "Shilo come"

משיח = Messiah

י = 10  
ב = 2  
א = 1

ש = 300  
י = 10  
ל = 30  
ה = 5  

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מ = 40  
ש = 300  
י = 10  
ח = 8  

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∴ Shilo = Messiah

In Gen. 14:14 Abraham has 318 servants.

In Gen. 15:2 "Eleazar" = 318

∴ Eleazar is equal to all the other servants of Abraham.

- (2) Architectonic: A lesser area of interpretation which concerns itself with calculations connected with the Tabernacle, the Temple, and the ideal Temple of Ezekiel
- (3) Figurative: Speculation based on the size and shape of letters.

Example:

Deut. 6:4 **יְשׁוּעָה** **יִשְׂרָאֵל** **יְהוָה** **אֱלֹהֵינוּ** **יְהוָה** **אֶחָד**

- The oversized letters demonstrate the comparative magnitude of the doctrine ("Hear, Oh Israel, the LORD our God; the LORD is one!")
- The oversized י speaks of the power of God in the four corners of the world (י = 4).
- The two oversized letters taken as a word command that this affirmation be Israel's witness to the Gentiles (עד = witness).

- b. Notarikon (notarius = shorthand writer): Letters used to stand for words by the use of the acrostic.

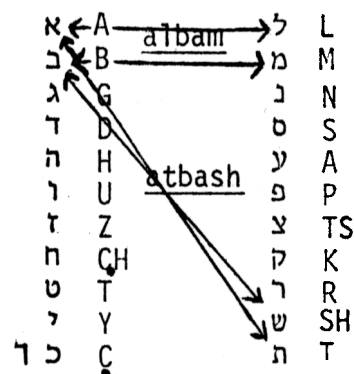
Example:

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| אָדָם    | Adam    |
| ↓        |         |
| דָּוִד   | David   |
| ↓        |         |
| מָשִׁיחַ | Messiah |
| ↓        |         |
| אָדָם    |         |

- Adam's soul passed into David and shall pass into Messiah.

- c. Temoorah ("change")

- 1) The process of inferring esoteric meanings by the interchange of letters, often substituting for a letter in a word, or for every letter in a word, the letter that stands opposite in the two-column listing of the Hebrew alphabet. There were two ways of doing this, one called atbash, the other albam:



Jer. 25:26 is an atbash: Sheshach = Babylon  
ששך      בבבל

- (2) The process simply interchanging or transposing letters within a word.

Example:

Psalm 21:1 ". . . and in thy salvation how greatly he will rejoice."

ישמח = rejoice

משיח = Messiah

♣ The reference is to the Messiah

#### F. Positive results of rabbinic interpretation

1. The text was preserved with great care.
2. The Massoretes furnished grammars and lexicons upon which, after fifteen centuries of Christianity, a sounder exegetic method was gradually built.
3. Indirectly they have preserved information of value to the historian.

#### G. Negative results of rabbinic interpretation

1. The emphasis moved from Scripture to tradition.

Talmud: Scripture is like water.  
Mishna is like wine.  
Gemara is like spiced wine

2. The tyranny of rabbinism over Jewish thought. (Matt. 23:1-7)
3. The elevation of casuistry at the expense of sound hermeneutics.

Talmud: No one is appointed a member of the Sanhedrin who is not ingenious enough to prove from the Law that a creeping thing is ceremonially clean.

4. Exegesis became the mere art of leading astray.
5. Rabbinic interpretation created an idolatry--a biblioatry--in regard to the text itself.
6. Rabbinic hermeneutics became a device whereby the interpreter could inject his opinions, desires, prejudices into what was offered as the Word of God.
7. The divine revelation was ultimately hidden behind the hedge.

Matt. 15:6 . . . And thus you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

### III. Alexandrian Hermeneutics\*

#### A. History

1. Alexandrian exegesis represents the second great tendency among the Jews.
  - a. The rabbis of Palestine and Babylon represent national, orthodox, indigenous Judaism.
  - b. Alexandrian Jews absorbed Greek thought.
2. Alexandrian hermeneutics had more impact on the Church than rabbinic exegesis.
3. The chief representative: Philo of Alexandria
4. Character: universal, cosmopolitan vs. parochial and narrow Judaism as represented in the rabbinic tradition.
5. Historical context:
  - a. The hellenistic Judaism of the diaspora.
  - b. The allegorical approach.
  - c. Alexandria
    - (1) The intellectual center of the world.
    - (2) Two of five districts in the city were Jewish.
    - (3) More Jews lived in Alexandria in the days of Jesus than in the whole of Palestine (Harnack).
    - (4) The "Second City" of the Roman Empire.
    - (5) Claimed the largest library in antiquity: 400,000+ volumes.
    - (6) Was to become a center of Christian studies.
  - d. Alexandrian Jews
    - (1) Ignorant of Hebrew.
    - (2) Dependent on the LXX.
6. Intellectual situation: the uselessness of rabbinic exegesis to meet the challenge of a dying paganism.

#### B. Allegorical method: source and purpose

1. Arose from a need to harmonize Greek philosophy and Jewish legislation (written and oral): the need to conform religion to culture.
  - a. To extort Greek philosophy out of the Pentateuch.
  - b. Rabbis killed spirit on behalf of letter, allegorists killed letter on behalf of spirit.

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\*Reading: Ramm, PBI, pp. 23-28



2. Allegorism, as a methodology, rose from the desire to defend Judaism from sneering Greeks, wavering Jews, narrow minded Pharisees.
3. Allegorism has been developed by pagan philosophers in their attempt to rationalize Homer and the Greek myths.

#### C. Philo

- 1 Philo did not originate the system of Jewish allegorism, but he brought it to completion.
2. Philo held that Greek philosophers had plagiarized Moses.
3. Allegorism enabled Philo to regard himself as a Stoic philosopher and a faithful Jew at the same time.
4. Basic approach: fundamental Platonism.

|      |   |             |   |               |
|------|---|-------------|---|---------------|
| SOUL | = | allegorical | = | "higher/real" |
| BODY | = | body        | = | inferior      |

5. Philo believed himself to be inspired.
6. Philo concerned himself almost exclusively with the Pentateuch.

#### D. Philonic principles of interpretation

1. Every name in the Torah has a deep meaning

Examples: Cain=self-seeking; Abel=devotion to God; Noah=righteousness; Abraham=the soul grown wise through discipline; Isaac=the soul grown wise through nature; Jacob=the soul grown wise through practice; Reuben=insight; Simeon=learning; Judah=praise of God; Egypt=the body.

2. Synonyms in the Bible have special value, as do particles of words.

Example: עֵשָׂו = Esau; עָשָׂה = to do, make, עֵשָׂו = sham or "made up" greatness.

3. Repetition of a word or thought signifies a deeper meaning.

Example: Gen. 16:3: And Sarah, Abraham's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian.

Philo: Since we already knew that Sarah was Abraham's wife; why then does the Scripture mention it

again? Then, following certain values which he has made--Sarah is wisdom and Hagar is grammar--he draws the lesson that the study of philosophy must always go together with the study of general culture.

4. Anything unexpected, whether the form of the word or in its choice or its position in the sentence, is a plain indication to the wise man that there is some hidden meaning to be found

Example: Gen. 4:2: And Abel was the keeper of sheep but Cain was the tiller of the ground.

Philo: Why, since Cain was older than Abel, is Abel mentioned first? The answer is plain: Moses wished to teach in this manner that wickedness is older than virtue in point of time but younger in power and rank.

5. All objects have hidden meaning or meanings

Examples: Heaven=mind; earth=sensation; a field=revolt (battles take place on open ground); sheep=irrational passions; a ring=the form which God stamps on the individual soul; a well=knowledge because it is deep; a garment=speech, for a garment is a kind of defensive armor, so speech is a most impregnable protection.

6. Numbers have a deep and hidden meaning

Examples: See discussion on Gematria, p. 42

#### E. The character of allegorism

1. It represents a departure from the legitimate observance of figurative language in the Bible.
2. It is subjective
  - a. Untrue to the intended meaning.
  - b. Minimizes or ignores the historical, normal meaning.
3. It is the consummate method of eisegesis.

#### IV. Patristic Hermeneutics\*

##### A. The Apostolic Fathers

###### 1. Identification

###### a. Time context:

|    |               |                   |          |
|----|---------------|-------------------|----------|
|    | New Testament | Apostolic Fathers |          |
| 45 | -----         | 96                | -----140 |
|    |               | (Revelation)      |          |
|    |               | (I, II Clement)   |          |

###### b. Names and dates:

I, II Clement 96  
 Ignatius 117  
 Barnabas 132 (Authenticity questioned.)  
 Martyrdom of Polycarp 156  
 Shepherd of Hermas 140  
 Didache 140  
 Ep. to Diognetus 180  
 Fragments of Papias 125

###### 2. The Apostolic Fathers and hermeneutics

- a. The Apostolic Fathers did not write commentaries; they were primarily concerned with problems and issues in the Church
- b. They used the Old Testament more than the New.
- c. They used paraphrase more than direct citation and quotation.
- d. They often appealed to apocryphal literature.
- e. They often leaned toward allegorism.

##### B. The Church Fathers

###### 1. Identification

###### a. Time context: @ 150-350.

###### b. Names and dates:

Justyn Martyr c.100  
 Irenaeus c.130  
 Clement of Alexandria 150-215  
 Tertullian 155-222  
 Hippolytus 165-235  
 Origen 185-254  
 Eusebius 260-340

## 2. The Church Fathers and hermeneutics

- a. The Church Fathers did not write commentaries; they were apologists.
- b. The criticism by Irenaeus (Against Heresies) of the defective hermeneutics of false teachers:
  - (1) They used their speculative theories as the starting place.
  - (2) They interpreted the clear and obvious by the dark and obscure.
  - (3) They ignored the "rule of faith" as defined by apostolic succession. By this Irenaeus meant that which had always been believed by most Christians in most places, especially at Rome.
  - (4) They neglected the order and context of passages.
- c. Irenaeus identified the true apostolic tradition in terms of HISTORY, SCRIPTURE, TRADITION, and REASON.

## C. The Great Schools

### 1. Alexandria: Typology and Allegory

#### a. Origen and his three-fold interpretation of Scripture

Every passage has: SPIRIT = allegorical sense, understood by the "perfect."

= mystical sense; the deeper things understood by those who are maturing.

the normal, historical, grammatical sense, understood by beginners and simple people.

#### b. Hermeneutical principle of the Alexandrian School:

The normal sense of a passage must be denied or ignored if

- (1) The passage contains statements unworthy of God.
- (2) The passage is difficult to understand, improbable, apparently inconsistent.
- (3) The language is clearly allegorical.
- (4) The passage suggests multiple meaning(s); i.e., repeated statements, unusual punctuation, suggestive letters, numbers, objects, etc.

## 2. Antioch: Grammatico-historical

### a. The phases of the Antiochan School

- (1) 280-360 Lucian and Diodorus
- (2) 360-430 Diodorus and Theodore of Mopsuestia (the glory age)
- (3) 430-500 Decline

### b. Hermeneutical principles of the Antiochan School

- (1) Every passage has its literal, normal meaning and this is the only meaning; it is established by context.
- (2) The character of the passage itself determines the distinction(s) to be drawn between plain and figurative language, if such a distinction is necessary.
- (3) The New and Old Testaments are to be carefully distinguished from one another. The typical sense of Scripture arises from this relationship.

### c. The Antiochan School was discredited and died out because it was associated with the Nestorian heresy.

## D. The hermeneutical principles of Tertullian

1. The Scripture contains both normal and allegorical material; the normal is preferred over the allegorical.
2. Any passage is to be interpreted in harmony with "unity of doctrine," i.e., the teaching of the Church. (Scripture belongs to the Church vs. heretics.)

## E. The hermeneutical principles of Augustine (@397)

1. The literal meaning is preferred.
2. The context must be considered.
3. The difficult and distasteful is interpreted allegorically.
4. The standard of truth is the tradition of the Church; the interpretation of Scripture affirms this tradition, but cannot change or go beyond it. All innovation in doctrine comes from the Church, not from Scripture.

(If Augustine had difficulty confirming traditional doctrine from the normal meaning of the text, he used allegory as a stepping stone to "final" meaning.)

## F. The hermeneutical principles of Gregory of Thaumaturgus

1. Gregory emphasized secular learning vs. divine insight; considered Origen inspired as were the apostles and prophets.
2. Used a tri-level hermeneutic: HISTORICAL, TYPICAL (allegorical), MORAL.

## V. Scholastic Hermeneutics\*

### A The historical setting: 7-16th centuries

1. Disintegration of urban, classical society and culture.
2. Decline in learning ("Dark Ages")
3. The rise of the Roman Catholic system as the only cohesive element in society.

### B. The character of scholarship in the 7-12th centuries

1. Almost complete absence of originality.
2. Extension of the Augustinian principle: Scripture must be interpreted with reference to Church orthodoxy.
  - a. The Bible was viewed as a book of mysteries (allegorisms), understandable only to the high clergy.
  - b. Authority was based on tradition, i.e., that which was agreed upon by the Fathers.

### 3. Representatives

- a. Venerable Bede (England)
- b. John of Damascus

### 4. Deficiencies

- a. Antiochan scholars were ignored.
- b. The Bible became a relic/idol.
- c. Hermeneutics became nonexistent.

Hugo of St. Victor: "Learn first what you should believe, and then go to the Bible to find it there."

- d. The only attempts at hermeneutics were the glosses, marginal and interlinear comments. Their character: chaotic, contradictory, allegorical, inconclusive, shallow, etc.
- e. Few, if any, were equipped for scientific exegesis.

- (a) Few knew Greek.
- (b) Few knew Scripture in any language.
- (c) There was no concept of systematic scholarship.

### C. The rise of Scholasticism: 12-16th centuries

#### 1. Johannes Scotus Erigena

- a. Represents the collision of independent thought vs. Church authority, i.e., reason vs. authority.
- b. Reflected the challenge existing in the work of the Moslem scholar Avveroes et al.
- c. Represents the "rediscovery" of Aristotle.
- d. The work of Erigena was burned by Pope Honorius III.

#### 2. Anselm "the first of the great Schoolmen"

#### 3. Abelard (powerful and popular teacher at the University of Paris)

#### 4. Thomas Aquinas

- a. Greatest representative of Scholasticism
- b. Summa Theologica

#### 5. Peter Lombard

His Sentences constitutes a textbook of Scholasticism.

### D. The Character of Scholasticism

#### 1. Scholasticism is a methodology, not a set of conclusions

- a. Blind ecclesiastical authority vs. reason.
- b. Purpose: to formulate, codify vs. discovery.
- c. To systematize in a chain of continuous logic.
- d. Method: Dialectic; endless definition of terms, analysis of language, casuistry, sophistry, The Schoolmen were the "Christian rabbis."

#### 2. In hermeneutics we see Scholasticism at its worst

- a. Allegorism reigned.
- b. Even allegorism could not bridge the awful chasm between Scripture and medieval church doctrine.
- c. It preserved Augustinianism as far as the Bible was used. "The soul of Augustine passed into Aquinas."
- d. Scholasticism departed from Augustine in that it codified dogma that had evolved since Augustine.

#### 3. The three branches of Scholasticism:

- a. Nominalism - the purest expression of Aristotelean reason.
- b. Moderate Realism - mainstream Scholasticism (Aquinas)
- c. Realism - Platonic; purely Augustinian

## E. Scholastic principles of hermeneutics

### 1. Each scripture has a fourfold sense:

- a. Historical, normal, literal
- b. Anagogical (how the church on earth anticipates the church glorified)
- c. Allegorical, mystical, "deep" meaning
- d. Tropological: moral application

### 2. Examples:

Jerusalem:

- Historical = the city itself.
- Anagogical = the church triumphant
- Allegorical = the church militant
- Tropological = the faithful soul

water:

- Historical = that which comes from the well.
- Anagogical = eternal happiness.
- Allegorical = baptism, the nations, or grace.
- Tropological = sorrow, wisdom, heresies, or prosperity.

- 3. The tropological came to be much-used by the clergy. E.g., Jesus raising the dead before few witnesses proved the duty of private confession to a priest.

## F. The results of Scholasticism

- 1. Scholasticism fossilized into an intricate system of sophistry reminiscent of rabbinic exegesis.
- 2. Micrological subtlety
- 3. Endless speculation, e.g.: How many angels could dance on the head of a pin? Can an angel be in two places at once? Can God create a stone which He cannot lift?
- 4. Scripture became the private preserve of the clergy.
- 5. The Roman Catholic Church was reinforced in its practice of using Scripture to justify that which it was doing and might choose to do in the future.



## VI. Reformation Hermeneutics\*

### A. The intellectual background

1. Scholasticism had failed to reconcile Church dogma and Aristotelean reason.
2. The Roman Church was in a constant ferment for moral and administrative reform; not necessarily for doctrinal reform.
3. The Bible was not a vital element in the life of Christendom.
4. Christendom was in mental bondage to the Roman Church; there was no freedom to think, much less interpret Scripture.
5. The Bible was not generally available.

### B. Pre-reformation figures who used the Bible systematically.

1. Minor figures in the history of hermeneutics (not necessarily minor in the history of religion)

- a. The Waldenses
- b. Wyclif
- c. Huss
- d. Brethren of the Common Life

2. Major figures in the history of hermeneutics

#### a. Lorenzo Valla (1465)

- (1) Recognized the necessity of using laws of grammar and language.
- (2) Denied the apostolic source of the Apostles' Creed.
- (3) Criticized the Vulgate for inaccuracies.
- (4) Called for a return to the original meaning

(Valla was a Christian humanist who greatly influenced Erasmus.)

#### b. Jacques Le Febvre D'Etaples

- (1) Made a new Latin translation of the Pauline letters.
- (2) Published the first French version of the Scriptures (1523).

#### c. Reuchlin (1455-?)

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\* Reading: Ramm, Herm, pp. 81-93; PBI, pp. 51-59.

- (1) A Humanist; student of languages. (Reuchlin once paid a Jew 10 gold pieces for the explanation of a text.)
- (2) Published a Hebrew grammar.
- (3) Frequently corrected the Vulgate.
- (4) Was condemned by the Church for being a "Jew-lover."

#### d. Erasmus

- (1) Europe's leading international Christian Humanist.
- (2) Edited the Greek New Testament: Textus Receptus (The TR was to be the basic text supporting the KJV.)
- (3) Proclaimed that the Bible was for all:  
When a theologian said to Tyndale, "We had better be without God's laws than the Pope's," Tyndale borrowed a phrase from Erasmus to respond: "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause the boy that driveth the plough to know more of Scripture than thou dost."

"The veil of the Temple has now been rent in twain, and it is no longer a single High Priest who can enter into the Holy of Holies."

- (4) Edited many of the Church fathers. Erasmus helped break down extravagant belief in their authority; he did not hesitate to disagree with them.
- (5) Denied the exegetical infallibility of the Church and the Pope. Erasmus, however, never formally broke with Rome. The primary reason why Erasmus could not identify with Reformation or Reformed theology was their illogical anthropology and soteriology.
- (6) The chief founder of modern textual criticism.

### C. Martin Luther

#### 1. General importance to the history of hermeneutics

- a. Undermined sacramental theology.
- b. Gave the Germans a Bible.
- c. Studied Greek and Hebrew.
- d. Proclaimed sola scriptura, i.e., the authority of the Bible over the Fathers, Councils, and the Pope.

#### 2. Luther's views on hermeneutics

- a. Denied the fourfold sense of Scholasticism.
- b. Rejected the arbitrary imposition of allegory on the text.
- c. Affirmed the primary importance of the normal, grammatical sense of the text.

- d. Affirmed the right of private interpretation, but also declared the absolute necessity of Illumination. (Since he felt himself illumined, Luther could never quite understand why other Protestants, such as Zwingli, and Erasmus did not always agree with him.)
- e. Declared the necessity of grammatical knowledge.
- f. Affirmed the "Proportion of Faith," i.e., interpretation must not contradict other Scriptures (this came to mean that neither Augustinianism nor credal Lutheranism could be violated).
- g. Affirmed that all Scripture must ultimately make reference to Christ. (Luther often resorted to allegorism to make this principle work.)
- h. Luther felt free to attribute relative value to Scripture. (He felt that James was inferior and Revelation crazy.)

#### D. John Calvin

##### 1. General importance to the history of hermeneutics

- a. The greatest exegete and theologian of the Reformation.
- b. Wrote commentaries on much of the Bible.

##### 2. Calvin's views on hermeneutics

- a. Set for his goal clarity and brevity.
- b. Rejected Alexandrian allegory (more so than Luther).
- c. Agreed with Luther on the necessity of Illumination.
- d. Preserved Augustinianism, but was otherwise willing to overturn traditional interpretations:

Calvin's Golden Rule of Hermeneutics (from the preface to his commentary on Romans): "It is the first business of an interpreter to let his author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say."

## VII. Post-Reformation Hermeneutics\*

A. General statement: The post-Reformation period saw intelligent hermeneutics surrender to petrified dogmatism.

1. Roman Catholic dogmatism, set in concrete by the Council of Trent, continued to be based on the authority of the church.
2. Protestantism doctrine was fixed in the creeds, e.g., The Formula of Concord (Lutheran), The Augsburg Confession of Faith (Lutheran), the Westminster Confession of Faith (Calvinistic-Presbyterian), the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (Calvinistic-Baptist).
3. Free hermeneutics was in bondage to dead, unchanging, authoritarian credal dogma. It has been called "Lutheran patristics" and "Protestant scholasticism."
- 4 This new scholasticism, working from Reformation and Reformed theology, produced massive commentaries that were, in fact, theologies. E.g., Calvin's Commentaries.

### B. Theological controversy

1. The illogic character of Protestant theology produced endless controversy, e.g.:
  - a. The Lutheran-Zwinglian controversy over the Lord's Supper.
  - b. The Infralapsarian-Supralapsarian disputes in Holland.
  - c. The Arminian controversy.
2. Theological controversy, along with the religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries, created a negative attitude toward Christianity.

### C. Summary

1. Protestant hermeneutics ossified into creed-bound orthodoxy.
2. Augustinianism reigned supreme
3. Hermeneutics degenerated into proof-texting.
4. The doctrine of Illumination stifled creative scholarship
5. Protestantism was endlessly fragmented.

\*Reading: Ramm, PBI, pp. 59-63.

## VIII. Hermeneutics and Negative Criticism\*

### A. The confusion inherent in post-Reformation scholasticism and the negative results in Europe contributed to the rise of intellectual scepticism.

#### 1. The rise of rationalism

- a. The overthrow of the monolithic authority of the Roman Catholic Church.
- b. The reaction to the authority of Scripture, based on the "new learning."
- c. Human reason came to be regarded as the only source of information (vs. revelation).
- d. The anti-supernatural bias profoundly changed the hermeneutical approach to those texts that speak of the supernatural.

#### 2. Leading figures

- a. The Socinians (Fausto Sozzini (1539-1604)
- b. Thomas Hobbes (c. 1651)
- c. Benedict Spinoza (c. 1670)

### B. German Rationalism; leading figures

#### 1. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1804-1834)

- a. "Father of Modern Theology"
- b. Experience vs. doctrine as the heart of religion.

#### 2. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

### C. The Rise of Neo-orthodoxy"

1. Leading figures: Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Paul Tillich, Rudolf Bultmann, Reinhold Niebuhr.
2. View of Scripture: Scripture is a purely human "witness" to the human experience of God's revelation.
3. The Character of Neo-orthodoxy: An attempt to recover the benefits of biblical religion without a commitment to traditional plenary inspiration and inerrancy.

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\*Reading: Ramm PBI, pp. 63-92; 201-214

## IX. Restoration Hermeneutics: Alexander Campbell and Hermeneutics

### A. Starting points

1. The Bible as the Word of God, i.e., only the Bible is the Word of God; all the Bible is the Word of God.
2. The ability of human reason to understand divine revelation.

The Christian System, p. 3: "There is an intellectual and a moral universe as clearly bounded as the system of material nature. Man belongs to the whole three. He is an animal, intellectual, and moral being. Sense is his guide in nature, faith in religion, reason in both."

### B. Campbell's rules of interpretation (The Christian System, p.3)

1. On opening any book in the sacred Scriptures, consider first the historical circumstances of the book, i.e., the order, the title the author, the date, the place, and the occasion.
2. In examining the contents of any book, as respects, percepts, promises, exhortations, etc., observe who is speaking, and under what dispensation he officiates. Is he a Patriarch, a Jew, or a Christian?
3. To understand the meaning of what is commanded, promised, taught, etc., the same philological principles, deduced from the nature of languages, or the same laws of interpretation which are applied to the language of other books, are to be applied to the language of the Bible.
4. Common usage which can only be ascertained by testimony, must always decide the meaning of any word which has but one signification; but when words have, according to testimony (i.e., the Dictionary), more meanings than one, whether literal or figurative, the scope, the context, or parallel passages must decide the meaning; for if common usage, the design of the writer, the context, and parallel passages fail, there can be no certainty in the interpretation of language.
5. In all tropical (figurative) language, ascertain the point of resemblance, and judge of the nature of the trope, and its kind, from the point of resemblance.
6. In the interpretation of symbols, types, allegories, and parables, this rule is supreme: Ascertain the point to be illustrated, for comparison is never to be extended beyond that point--to all the attributes, qualities, or circumstances of the symbol, type, allegory, or parable.

7. For the salutary and sanctifying intelligence of the Oracles of God, the following rule is indispensable: We must come within the understanding distance. There is a distance which is properly called the speaking distance, or the hearing distance; beyond which the voice reaches not, and the ears hear not. To hear another, we must come within that circle which the voice audibly fills.

Now we may with propriety say, that as it respects God, there is an understanding distance. All beyond that distance can not understand God; all within it can easily understand him in all matters of piety and morality. God himself is the center of that circle, and humility is its circumference.

### C. Major contribution

The field of Biblical Introduction had its formal beginnings with Richard Simon, priest of the Oratory of Paris (d. 1712). It was another hundred years before works in Introduction became well known. Alexander Campbell was one of the early advocates for the understanding of Scripture in its full context of historical setting.