

Basic Bible Interpretation

Course Notes

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Chapter 1  
"The What and Why of Bible Interpretation"

**INTRODUCTION**

There are two items that need to be understood regarding the value of interpreting the Bible. The first is that words on a page of the Bible that can be read do not suggest that the reader knows what they mean. The second is that proper guidelines are beneficial in understanding the meaning of things that are written, especially as this pertains to the Bible.

**CHAPTER OULINE**

**1. Why is Bible interpretation important?**

a) **It is essential for understanding and teaching the Bible properly.** Knowing the meaning of the Bible helps us understand its meaning for our lives today. There are three considerations important in regards to studying the Bible:

- 1) **Observation:** "What does it say?"
- 2) **Interpretation:** "What does it mean?"
- 3) **Application:** "How does it apply to me?"

Attempting to study the Bible without adequate guidelines can lead to confusion and conflicting interpretations. In addition, it can cause abuse and misalignment of the Scriptures.

b) **It is essential as a step beyond observation**

Studying the Bible with a proper hermeneutical approach allows you to dig deep to find the true meaning of what is being said. Not just in part, but as whole. Then you will be rightly handling the Word of Truth.

c) **It is essential for applying the Bible properly**

Only thru proper hermeneutical interpretation can the student of the Scriptures be able to correctly apply what he has learned in order to live it out in his life style. This is where true spiritual maturity takes place. It is not found only in the reading (observing) of the Word of God, and the understanding (interpreting) of the Word of God, but in the doing (applying) of the Word of God.

**2. The challenge of Bible interpretation**

As Christians, knowing the truth of the Bible is the responsibility of every one of us. For what we share with others and what we hear from others will either offer good information and guidance, or cause confusion, frustration, and difficulties in the our lives and the lives of those we share with. It is a lifelong

project with many challenges - intellectually and spiritually.

### 3. Problems in Bible interpretation

In the study of Hermeneutics, we are dealing with a very ancient Book. And in this study we are confronted with at least seven gaps due to the age of the Book.

- a) **A Time Gap:** We do not have firsthand knowledge of what the speakers and writers were trying to say, and what the hearers actually understood.
- b) **A Space Gap:** Differences that exist in today's world and what existed in the area in which the Bible was written, puts us at a big disadvantage. Life here as opposed to life there is quite different even today.
- c) **A Customs Gap:** Knowing the customs of the Bible times has many benefits. By knowing the customs we will be better able to understand and interpret what was being communicated in the Scriptures.
- d) **A Language Gap:** The languages of the Bible were constructed quite differently than what we are used to. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek have words with no English interpretations. The Hebrews and Armenians wrote only the consonants, and not the vowels, and to make things worse they wrote from right to left rather than from left to right. They had no punctuation, either.
- e) **A Writing Gap:** The styles and writing forms of the Bible authors is quite different than ours today. In addition, the 40 different authors wrote in the form of proverbs and/or parables.
- f) **A Spiritual Gap:** The true Author of the Bible (God) being Incomprehensible, Infinite, Omniscient (among other things) places this Book in an entirely unique category. This Book is written about God by God. It is also written about men by men (under his inspiration). Although much of the Scriptures is easy enough for a child to understand, other parts of it are almost beyond comprehension.

### 4. Defining Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics come from two Greek words. Hermeneia (a noun) and hermeneuo (a verb). In the New testament these two words are generally used as "translating".

- a) **Hermeneutics:** The study of the principles and task of interpreting the Bible

b) **Exegesis:** Determining the meaning of the Scriptures in their historical and literary sense. The actual interpreting of the Bible.

c) **Exposition:** Communicating the meaning of the Bible along with its present day application

1) **Homiletics:** The principles and task of preaching the meaning and relevance of the Bible.

2) **Pedagogy:** the principles and task of teaching the meaning and relevance of the Bible.

## 5 Qualifications for interpreting the Bible

a) **Regeneration of the Individual:** Without regeneration the individual has no capacity to understand God's Word. This means that even though he may understand what is being said, he is unable to accept its message and apply it to his life. This is due to his need for the other factors necessary in the equation

b) **A Reverence for, and Interest in God's word.** These are very important in interpreting the Bible.

c) **A Willingness to Obey the Scriptures:** And a willingness put into practice what he has learned.

d) **A Dependence on the Holy Spirit in his Life:** And even with this taking place, the individual must realize several things.

1) **Bible interpretations can be Fallible.** This is due to the passing down of the Scriptures. The original manuscripts are infallible, but not necessarily the interpretations.

2) **The Holy Spirit does not give Special Meaning to One Person** He gives the normal, literal meanings of the passages, and

3) **Carnal Christians are susceptible to erroneous Biblical Interpretations.** One's heart and mind must be sensitive to the leading to the Holy Spirit in order to obtain correct Bible interpretations.

4). **The Holy Spirit will Guide the Obedient Christian into All Truth** This is just as Jesus promised that He (the Holy Spirit) would do, by clarifying and amplifying the truth of the Scriptures.

5) **The Holy Spirit does not give Flashes of Insight to**

**Meanings of the Bible.** Difficult passages are understood through prayer and careful study.

**6) The Holy Spirit's involvement in the interpreting of the Bible gives indication that the Bible was meant to be understood by all people** - not an elite few as some denominations would have you believe.

Other qualifications include:

- 1) **The Desire to Study,**
- 2) **A knowledge of Bible History**
- 3) **A knowledge of Bible Background**
- 4) **A knowledge of Theology.**

In addition approaching the Bible with sound judgment and reason, and objective attitude, and no preconceived ideas or prejudices is important.

## **6. Can the Bible be understood?**

The Bible is not written in some mystical fashion, but is quite accessible to true believers everywhere. It is God's revelation of His character, plans and standards. As He inspired the 40 human authors to write it, He directed them to write in their normal, everyday style.

### **CONCLUSION**

Because there are difficulties created by the various gaps to understanding the Bible, the need to communicate to its readers and hearers requires help. This help comes in the form of hermeneutics, exegesis, and exposition through homiletics and pedagogy and a reliance on the Holy Spirit .

## **Chapter 2 "Bible Interpretation - Then and Now"**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 2 explains the history and development of Bible interpretation over the centuries. This has become very important for us today. Understanding how those before us have interpreted the Scriptures not only gives us helpful information and direction, but it can also warn us of errors that were made in the various approaches to interpretation.

Some of the approaches taken over the centuries have been:

- a) **The Literal Approach**
- b) **The Allegorical Approach**
- c) **The Traditional Approach**
- d) **The Rationalistic Approach**
- e) **The Subjective Approach**

All but one of these approaches had created problems regarding hermeneutics, and had had negative effects not only on the development of hermeneutics, but also on the church as a whole. The main emphasis of hermeneutical development will have proven to be toward the **Literal Approach** and the **Allegorical Approach** of interpretation.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### 1. Jewish Interpretation:

#### a) **Ezra**

After the Jews returned from Babylon, and the books of Moses were found, Ezra was able to read them, but the people were unable to understand what was being read. The first interpreters of the Scriptures then were the Levites. As Ezra read the Word of God, the Levites interpreted God's Word for those returning. As part of the interpretation, they not only gave the meanings, but also explained what was meant.

#### b) **The Scribes**

Scribes were a member of the learned class in ancient Israel who studied, taught, copied, and edited the Scriptures. Unfortunately, they developed an excessive veneration for the Scriptures. Because of this, an approach was developed that made every aspect of the words, the letters, and the shapes of the letters special in their sight, prompting them to give special meaning to each aspect of the Scriptures.

### 2. Hillel & Shammai

These two men were prominent Rabbis from about 70 BC until 10 AD.

#### a) **Rabbi Hillel** He developed seven rules for interpretation:

- 1) Inferences were to be taken from the less to the more important and vice-versa
- 2) Inference were made by analogy

- 3) Construction of "families" from groups of passages with similar content.
- 4) This was the same as #2 but was only applied to two passages
- 5) The relationship between the general and the particular
- 6) Exposition by means of a similar passages
- 7) Deductions taken from the context of passages.

b) **Rabbi Shammai** He was very rigid in his interpretations.

### 3. Jewish Allegorization

Jewish allegorization developed because of the Greek philosophers who were embarrassed by the writings of Homer and Hesiod. This was due to the immoral conduct and anthropomorphisms of the many gods of Greek mythology. So, the Greek philosophers started allegorizing the many stories to cover up their embarrassments. Then the Jews who wanted to accept both the Greek philosophies and the Old Testament writings use allegorization to solve their own problems. The best known of these Jewish allegorizers was

- 1) **Philo** (20 BC - 54 AD) He took to allegorizing for two reasons. He did not like contradictions, and he did not like the blasphemies of God that took place.

### 4. Early Church Fathers

These men started out by quoting frequently from the Old Testament, but were eventually influenced by allegorizing. However, they did see the Old Testament as containing many types of Christ pointing to his arrival. Some of the more prominent early church fathers included the following:

- 1) **Clement of Rome** (30 -95 AD) He quoted at length from the Old Testament, and quoted from the New Testament to fortify his own

exhortations.

2) **Ignatius of Antioch in Pisidai** (35-107 AD) In letters to Rome he emphasized the Lord Jesus Christ.

3) **Polycarp of Smyrna** (70-155 AD) He wrote to the Philippians wherein he quoted frequently from the Old and New Testaments.

4) **Irenaeus** (130 -202 AD). He stressed that the Bible is to be understood in its obvious and natural sense, and that the Old Testament was acceptable for Christians because of the types of Christ that were throughout it. Unfortunately, he wanted to apply the traditions of the church and their "rule of faith" which stated that the exposition should be by educated elders who could claim apostolic succession.

5) **Tertullian of Carthage** (160-220 AD) . He wanted the Bible to be the property of the church. However, he also believed that the Bible passages should be taken in its natural sense, as they were spoken or written. But, although he believed allegorizing was incorrect, he used that method when it served his purpose.

## 5. Alexandrian and Antiochene Fathers

Two schools developed approximately 200 years after Christ that influenced the development of hermeneutics and the church for 200 to 300 years - one through the allegorization approach to hermeneutics, and the other with the literal approach to hermeneutics:

### a) **Alexandrian Fathers:**

This was the Catechetical School in Alexandria, Egypt. Out of this school came

1) **Clement** (153-216 AD) He taught that all scripture was symbolic, and that passages from the Bible may contain up to five meanings. He was also known for excessive allegorizing.

2) **Origen** (185-254 AD) He theorized that the meaning of the Scriptures must be found at a deeper level, and demanded that interpreters used the allegorical method to arrive at those meanings. He felt the Scriptures held a threefold meaning - literal, moral, and allegorical. However, he ignored the literal meaning to the point of becoming excessively allegorical.



## b) **Antiochene Fathers:**

The Antiochene church leaders set the stage for future Bible interpreters. They focused on the historical, literal interpretation approach with added emphasis on the original languages of the Bible. They also wrote commentaries, and indicated that the thing that united the Old and New Testaments was the use of typologies and predictive prophecy. They also included in their interpretations the use of figurative language.

- 1) **Theodore of Mopsuestia** He was said to have been that school's greatest interpreter, and was called "the prince of ancient exegesis".
- 2) **John Chrysostom** (354-407 AD) He was considered "the greatest commentator of the early church fathers".
- 3) **Theodoret** (386-458 AD) He wrote commentaries on most of the Old testament and the Epistles of Paul, which are considered to be "among the best specimens of ancient exegesis".

## 6. **Late Church Fathers**

- 1) **Jerome** (347-419 AD) One of the two best known late church fathers. Initially Jerome was an allegorist, but was influenced by the Antiochene school and switched over to being a literalist. His greatest work was the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible.
- 2). **Augustine** (354-430 AD) He was the other of the two best known late church fathers. Augustine, who was a leading theologian of that time, emphasized that the interpreters job is to discover the meaning of the text (exegesis), not to put meaning into it (eisegesis). But, he did not practice what he preached, indicating that the Bible has more than one meaning, giving allowance for allegorizing. He emphasized the use of the "rule of faith" (the teaching of the church and Scriptures), and at the same time developed "the analogy of faith" (that no interpretation is acceptable if it is not in correlation with the rest of Scripture).

These two influence the church for over 1000 years with their emphasis on allegorization and church authority. Of course, there were others.

- 3) **John Cassian** (360-435 AD) He taught that the Bible had moral meanings (tropological) as well as secret or heavenly meanings (anagogical).

4) **Eucherius of Lyons** ( ? - 450 AD) He taught the existence of symbolic language, and because of this, the truths of the Bible are not to be given to the unspiritual.

5) **Adrian of Antioch** He believed that anthropomorphisms should not be taken literally. He stressed the literal interpretation of the Bible, but added that there were deeper understanding of it also. At the same time he made way for metaphorical expression and rhetorical forms.

6) **Janilius** He wrote a manual of interpretation called the "Rules for the Divine Law" around 550 AD, indicating that faith and reason were not opposite. He, like Adrian, stated that interpretation of the Scriptures should begin with grammatical analysis, but must not be limited to it.

## 7. Middle Ages

During this time period, nothing new developed in the area of hermeneutics. The allegorical approach to interpretation was continually emphasized and added to. Very common was the use of the "catena" (interpretations pieced together from the works of the church father, in particular Ambrose, Hilary, Augustine, and Jerome).

1) **Rabbi Shilomo bar Isaac** (aka Rashi) (1040-1105) He had a great influence on Jewish and Christian interpretations. He emphasized the use of Hebrew grammar and syntax. His focus was that "the literal must stand no matter what that might mean for the traditional. He greatly influenced three men of the Abbey of Saint Victor, **Hugo** (1097-1140), **Richard**, and **Andrew**, who became known as the "**Victorines**".

2) **Stephen Langton** took the position that spiritual interpretation was superior to literal interpretation. However, he was the one who put chapters into the Vulgate Bible.

3) **Thomas Aquinas** (1225-1274) He was the Catholic Church's most famous theologian. To him the literal sense of the Bible is basic, but that other meaning are built on it.

4) **Nicholas of Lyra** (1279-1340) He bridged the gap between the dark ages and the coming of the Reformation. He did this by rejecting the Catholic Bible and by returning to the Hebrew texts. Unfortunately, he did not know Greek. He was influenced by Rashi. Nicholas was a strong influence on Martin Luther.

5) **John Wycliff** (1330-1384) He was also known as "the morning star of the Reformation". He stressed the grammatical and historical approach to Bible hermeneutics, and indicated that "all things necessary in Scripture are contained in a proper literal and historical sense". He emphasized that the Scriptures are the final authority. And, he offered several rules for interpretation:

- a) **Have available a reliable text**
- b) **Understand the logic of the Scriptures**
- c) **Compare Scripture with Scripture**

In addition to all of this, he was the first translator of the Bible into English.

## 8. The Reformation

The Reformation used the literal approach to hermeneutics from the Antiochene school and the Victorines to develop their approach to the Bible. It saw a new interest in the Hebrew and Greek as important factors in the area of interpretation. This time offered better methods of theological study.

1) **Desiderius Erasmus**. He published and edited the first edition of the **Greek New Testament** (1516).

2) **Martin Luther** (1483-1546). He was the most prominent man of the reformation period. He denounced the use of allegories in the interpretation of the Scriptures, indicating that those before him who used the allegorical method were juggling the Scriptures, and that their allegories were "so much dirt". He strongly stressed the literal sense of the Bible, as well as the original languages it was written in. He promoted the idea that the student of the Word must also be illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and that Christ Jesus is to be the end in the study of God's Word by Scripture being its own interpreter. He pointed out that the Scriptures can and should be understood by common people, and that the Roman Catholic Church should not be controlling its petitioners. He saw Christ repeatedly in the Old Testament. But, although his rejection of the allegorical approach to interpretation was revolutionary, he at times allegorized.

3) **Philip Malanchothon** (1497-1560) He was thoroughly acquainted with Greek and Hebrew. He was preeminent in Biblical exegesis.

4) **John Calvin** (1509-1564) He was another great man of the

Reformation. He was the Reformation leader in Geneva. He approached study with five main points:

- a) **The Christology of the Bible**
- b) **The grammatical, historical method**
- c) **Exegesis rather than eisegesis**
- d) **The illuminating of the Holy Spirit**
- e) **A balanced approach to typology**

As did Luther, Calvin stressed that "Scripture interprets Scripture", and that the Author/author says what He/he means and means what He/he says.

5) **Ulrich Zwingli** (1484-1531) He was the reformation leader in Zurich. He rejected the authority of the Catholic Church. He stated that Bible passages should be interpreted based on their context.

6) **William Tyndale** (1494-1536) He translated the New Testament into English in 1525. He focused on the literal meaning of the Bible.

7) **Anabaptists** These people ( the re-baptizers) showed that the individuals, aided by the Holy Spirit, could also interpret the Bible. They believed there should be a separation of church and state. Their desire was to see a church that was pure, loyal to the Bible, humble, disciplined, and obedient to Christ.

Obviously, The Roman Catholic Church responded to the Reformation by trying to say that the Bible is not the supreme authority, and that interpretation is possible only by the Roman Catholic Church.

## 9. The Post-Reformation

The Post-Reformation was a period of 200 years (the 17th and 18th centuries). There were three movements during this time that gained great influence:

### a) **Confirming the Spread of Calvinism**

The Westminster Confession spelled out the doctrine of Calvinism for the English and Scottish in the mid 1600's. It stated, "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore when there

is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture, it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly".

1) **Francis Turretin** (1623-1687) He was one important man of this era who taught the inerrancy and authority of the Bible, and the importance of the original Greek and Hebrew texts. He wrote "Institutio Theologicae Elencticae" and discussed the four major aspects of Scripture:

- a) **The Necessity**
- b) **The Authority**
- 3) **The Perfection**
- 4) **The Perpicuity**

2) **Jean-Alphonse** (1648-1737) He was Francis' son who, in pertaining to grammatical, historical exegesis, stressed these methods of understanding:

- a) Scripture should be interpreted like any other book
- b) Attention should be given to words and expressions
- c) The objective is to determine the author's intent or purpose
- d) The interpreter should be able to see that Scripture does not contradict itself
- e) The cultural and historical background should be considered

3) **Johann Ernesti** (1707-1781) He was called "the most distinguished name in the history of exegesis in the 18th century". His book on hermeneutics was used for more than 100 years. In it he stresses the importance of grammar, emphasized the literal approach to interpretation, and rejected allegorizing.

## b) **Reactions to Calvinism**

There were a number of negative reactions to Calvinism, but during this period there were also some positive reactions. Among the:

1) **John Wesley** (1703-1791). He stressed that the Bible was to direct the readers to Jesus Christ, and that its meaning was plain.

## c) **Textural and Linguistic Studies**

Through the 17th and 18th centuries positive breakthroughs took place.

"Great strides were made in determining the original text of the Bible."  
Some of the prominent people of this time were

1) **Louis Cappell** In 1650 he wrote "Critica Sacra", making him the first textual critic of the Old Testament.

2) **Johann A. Bengel** (1687-1752) He influenced others by determining of the original texts of the Bible (the development of textual criticism) and the grouping of manuscripts based on common characteristics. He published a critical edition of the Greek New Testament, and a verse by verse critical commentary on the New testament.

#### d) **Rationalism**

The rationalists attempted to develop a doctrine that stated that since man was intelligent he could decide on what was true and false, and therefore, could accept the Bible as true if it corresponded to his own reasoning

1) **Baruch Spinoza** (1632-1677) He taught that human should be free from theology. He denied the miracles of the Bible, but did set forth rule of interpreting the Bible. Within these rules he expressed the need to know Hebrew and Greek plus the background of each book of the Bible.

### 10. **The Modern Era**

#### a) **The Nineteenth Century**

The modern era (19th century) was prominent in Bible criticism. The human authorship, not the spiritual Authorship, was emphasized. This era brought in:

1) **Subjectivism** This was a view that held that knowledge came by experience. There were two men prominent during this time:

1) **Fredrich D. E. Schleiermacher** (1768-1834) He foolishly rejected the authority of the Bible and focused on one's feeling and self-consciousness, and indicated that Christianity should be looked at as a religion based on emotions.

2) **Soren Kierkegaard** (1813-1855) He was known as the "father of modern existentialism"), but he did not better than Schleiermacher in that he tried to make it appear that faith is

subjective and is based on one's moments of despair.

3) **David Strauss** (1808-1874) He approached the Bible mythologically. He denied the grammatical, historical approach to interpretation and miracles.

2) **Historical Criticism** any Bible students rejected the inspiration of and the supernatural aspects of the Scriptures. The rationalistic Bible students of this era rejected the supernatural character of the Bible and its inspiration.

1) **Benjamin Jowett** (1817-1893) He said that the Bible should be interpreted like any other book and stressed the importance of knowing the original languages. He believed the Bible was not supernatural and was no different than any other book.

2) **Ferdinand C. Baur** (1792-1860) He was strongly influenced by the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis philosophy of Hegel. One such point he tried to make was that Peter and Paul directed two antagonistic groups that were finally synthesized in the ancient catholic (universal) church.

3) **David F. Strauss** (1808-1874) He took a mythological approach to the Bible. This resulted in his denying the grammatical, historical interpretation and miracles of the Bible.

4) **Julius Wellhausen** (1844-1918) He developed the Documentary Hypothesis. He saw the books of Moses as being written by multiple authors. He also believed that in Old Testament history people developed from polytheism to animism to monotheism.

5) **Adolph von Harnack** (1851-1930) He actually dissected the Bible much as a biologist examines a dead animal.

3) **Exegetical work.**

Also during this time, a good many conservative scholars were writing exegetical commentaries on the Bible. This was done in contrast to the works of the subjectivists and historical critics.

## b) **The Twentieth Century**

In the twentieth century several approaches to Bible interpretation have

been present:

- 1) **Liberalism:** This approach continued the rationalistic approach of the 19th century. To the liberals the Bible is not a divine book, is not supernatural, but is, in fact, no different than any other book. All aspects of the Bible can be rationalized away, and sin and hell are rejected as nonexistent.
- 2) **Orthodoxy:** This approach (Fundamentalism) continues the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of the Bible. They follow the Antiochenes, the Victorines, and the Reformers, holding to the fact that the Bible is a supernatural, God inspired, divine revelation given to man through the prophets and apostles.
- 3) **Neoorthodoxy:** This approach interprets the Bible based on a mythological theology. They believe the Scriptures to be fallible and inerrant.
- 4) **Bultmannism :** Rudolph Bultman (1884-1976) taught the "demythologizing" of the Bible - eliminating all the miracles and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He stated that these miracles of the Bible are not for today. "The new hermeneutic" approach allows the Bible to mean whatever someone wants it to mean, denying propositional truth. By the demythologization method, "the Bible no longer rules us, we rule it".

## **CONCLUSION**

As we can see, the development of hermeneutics in history has taken on numerous approaches:

- a) **The Literal approach (the correct approach)**
- b) **The Allegorical approach which neglects the literal with fantasies**
- c) **The Traditional approach which neglects the individual and makes the church the authority**
- d) **The Rationalistic approach which tries to leave out God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, making man's intellect supreme**
- e) **The Subjective approach which eliminates any objectivity to the study of hermeneutics.**



Obviously, only one of the approaches makes any practical sense. and unfortunately, new approaches are developing all of the time. And in closing, I just want to point them out for my own reasons:

- a) The **Structuralistic approach** which puts the Bible on par with any fictional narrative book out there.
- b) The **Liberation theology approach** which looks at the interpretation of Scripture for the politically and economically oppressed in the world.
- c) The **Feminist theology approach** which deals with those oppressed by sexism (this more than likely is for the benefit of feminists, homosexuals, and lesbians)
- d) The **Ethno-hermeneutic approach** that deals with supracultural elements of human society.

To understand God's word, the literal, grammatical, historical approach is the correct approach to use for hermeneutics.

### Chapter 3 "Whose View is Valid?"

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

In studying the Bible we are confronted with two axioms (self evident truths):

- a) **The Bible is a book** written by men:
- b) **The Bible is a divine book** authored by God.

From these axioms we can draw several points:

- a) **The Rules of interpretation are not arbitrary**
- b) **The Rules are not the result of a select few individuals**
- c) **The Rules are not invented or learned but are discovered or observed**
  - 1) **They are communicative**
  - 2) **They are practical** (the hearer or reader being the interpreter)
  - 3) **They are common to every country**
- d) **The Rules are not special only to the Bible**

The rules of hermeneutics are both a science and an art.

- a) **As a Science they are rules to be employed in interpreting**
- b) **As an Art they are to be observed properly**

## CHAPTER OUTLINE:

### 1. Axiom One: The Bible is a Human Book

Because the Bible is a book, written by humans, it was written to be understood. It was written to communicate. Communication involves :

- a) **A speaker/writer(s)** (communicator)
- b) **A message** (given in words)
- c) **A hearer/reader(s)**

From the Axiom "the Bible is a human book" come six corollaries:

- a) **Each word, sentence, and book - was recorded in a written language and followed normal, grammatical meaning, including figurative language.**

The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, and as such there was no need to decode it or translate it to its original audiences. Therefore, there was no need to look for "mystical or deeper" meanings beyond its normal every day, normal message. The language was quite understandable, communicating its concepts to its readers.

Because God is a God of sense, and not nonsense, it pointed to the fact that it made sense to its readers. Because of this going to the Bible with preconceived ideas is in error. The Bible should be allowed to speak for itself. When the Old testament was quoted, it was treated by the writers as normal human communication. Because of this, Bible interpretation should be to determine the original meaning of the Author/text.

- b) **Someone wrote to specific hearers or readers in a specific historical, geographical situation for a specific purpose**

The Bible was written to specific readers/hearers, at a specific place, during a specific time in history, for a specific purpose. Therefore, exegesis is to discover the original meaning of the Author/text

- c) **The Bible is affected and influenced by the cultural environment from which each human writers wrote**

The Bible interpreters, therefore, need to consider the culture of those to whom the Bible was written. Along with that the needed to consider the following areas of influence :

- 1) **Agriculture**
- 2) **Architecture**
- 3) **Geography**
- 4) **Military**
- 5) **Politics**

d) **Each biblical writing was accepted or understood in the light of its context**

The Bible was written to be understood by its context. Without the ability to understand the context of a message, the understanding can be distorted. Some of the basic things to be considered when dealing with context are:

- 1) What was said/written?
- 2) By whom was said/written?
- 3) To whom was it said/written?
- 4) At what time was it said/written?
- 5) Where was it said/written?
- 6) To what extent was it said/written?
- 7) Under what circumstances was it said/written?
- 8) What preceded what was said/written?
- 9) What succeeded what was said/written?

e) **Each Biblical writing took on the nature of a specific literary form**

The Bible was written in many different literary forms which should be confronted when interpreting it. These forms will have an effect on how it is interpreted. They include:

- 1) **Narratives**
- 2) **Poetry**
- 3) **Prophecy**
- 4) **Letters (epistles)**
- 5) **Proverbs**
- 6) **Drama**
- 7) **Legal**
- 8) **Parables**
- 9) **Discourses**
- 10) **Wisdom Literature**
- 11) **Apocalyptic visions**

f) **Each Biblical writing was understood by its initial readers in accord with the basic principles of logic and communication**

The Bible sometimes appears to contradict itself. However, God never contradicts Himself, so there is something the interpreter is missing. Because of this, the interpreter needs to find an explanation for the misunderstanding which will eliminate the contradiction. This can be done by using corollaries that ask the following question:

- 1) What is the normal grammatical meaning implied to the reader?
- 2) What historical, geographical situation was the sentence about?
- 3) What was the cultural setting where the words were spoken?
- 4) What was the contextual meaning in the sentence?
- 5) What was the literary form used and how does it affect what is said?
- 6) What principles of logic and normal communication were used and how do they affect the meaning?

## 2. **Axiom Two: The Bible is a Divine Book**

The Bible is a divine revelation. From this axiom stem four corollaries:

**a) The Bible, being a Divine Book, is Inerrant.**

This states that the original writings of the Bible in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek contained no errors. Since they were inspired by the Holy Spirit they were a "word for word" recording of what He wanted.

**b) The Bible, being a Divine Book, is Authoritative**

This states that because the Bible is inerrant and is inspired by the Holy Spirit, it is intrinsically authoritative. This is pointed out by the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ accepted it as authoritative. This in itself should help us understand that accurate interpretation of the Scriptures is of utmost importance.

**c) The Bible, being a Divine Book, has Unity**

This states that since God is the Author, the Bible should be expected to possess a singularity in its construction and message. This suggests that it contains the following attributes:

- 1) Some passages, appearing to have contradictions, should be

interpreted in light of their harmony with other Scriptures.

2) Some obscure and secondary passages are to be interpreted in light of primary passages. (Always go by the clear passage)

3) Some passages give light to other passages. "Scripture interprets Scripture".

4) The Bible contains a "progress of revelation".

a) Later Scripture adds to what God had given in earlier portions of the Bible (i.e. Daniel & Revelation)

b) Some commands were later changed.

c) By accepting the progress of revelation, the interpreter acknowledges that he will be careful not to read back into the Old testament things found in the New Testament.

d) By failing to recognize this progressiveness of revelation the interpreter would create contradictions between passages.

**d) The Bible, being a divine book, has Mystery**

This states that the Bible has certain things about it that are difficult to understand. This is shown in certain areas of mystery.

1) **Prophecy** The Bible includes predictions of the future that need to be considered when interpreting it. Only by divine revelation could this have been built into the Scriptures.

2) **Miracles** These take place only because of God's divine intervention.

3) **Doctrine** These constitute some of the unexplainable teachings of the Bible, for they are basically incomprehensible to the human mind. Examples are:

a) **The Trinity**

b) **The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**

c) **The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each believer**

## **CONCLUSION**

As has been shown, the Bible is a unique book as well as a divine book.

When we interpret it, this very important fact needs to be taken into consideration, for it is filled with truths from God.

## Chapter 4 "Bridging the Cultural gap"

### INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the cultural gap of the Bible we must first understand the meaning of the context of what is taking place in the cultural environment in which it was written. Unfortunately, people often take individual words, sentences, or paragraphs and try to make them say what they want them to say, ignoring the context in which they were written. In reality they need to take into consideration the sentences and paragraphs that come before and succeed a particular passage and also include the cultural setting in which it was said/written.

To correctly understand the Bible, we need to put ourselves in the shoes of the biblical writers. Interpreters of the past would emphasize three areas of interpretation:

- a) **The Historical area** (the settings and circumstances in which the Bible was written)
- b) **The Grammatical area** (the determining of meanings by the studying of the words and sentences Scripture in their normal, natural, plain sense)
- c) **The Rhetorical area** (the studying of how the literary quality affects the interpretation of a particular passage)

The context influences the understanding of the passages. It includes the following:

- a) **The verses immediately before and after a passage**
- b) **The paragraph and book in which the verses occur**

- c) **The dispensation in which it was written**
  - d) **The message of the entire Bible**
  - e) **The historical-cultural environment when it was written**
- Because the writers and readers are influenced by the social setting in

which they wrote/read, it is extremely important to understand the cultural background of the time. Since the goal of Bible interpretation is to discover the original meanings the Author/authors were intending, being familiar with the customs and culture of the times is very beneficial. And the Bible of all books, reflects the culture of its day.

## **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

### **1. What do we mean by Culturalism?**

Webster defines culture as "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. The set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that characterize an institution or organization". It includes what people think and believe, say , do, and make.

If we do not take into account cultural matters, then we may start reading into the Bible our own ideas. Therefore, concern for the context forces us to return to the intent of the Author/authors.

Giving attention to cultural studies allows us to focus on the original, literal, socially designated meaning of the words, phrases or customs of the time.

### **2. How do Various Cultural Customs affect the Interpretation of Certain Passages?**

There are four aspects of a culture, each affecting the other:

- a) **Thoughts (and beliefs)**
- b) **Speech**

- c) **Actions**
- d) **Artifacts**

These may be grouped into 11 categories:

- a) **Political (including national, international, and civil)**
- b) **Religious**
- c) **Economic**
- d) **Legal**
- e) **Agricultural**
- f) **Architectural**
- g) **Clothing**
- h) **Domestic**
- i) **Geographical**
- j) **Military**
- k) **Social**

Each one of these categories gives us reason to ask the question "why" regarding a particular passage conforming to that category. Without the knowledge of the customs and culture of the times and places being questioned, a misunderstanding of the meaning of a passage is inevitable. This is why it is important to be aware of unusual customs referred to in order to determine what is meant to the people in those original areas.

### **3. To what extent are Passages of the Bible limited by the Culture?**

Cultural relevance is important because of two tasks placed upon the interpreter. He must be able to ascertain the following:

- a) **What did the text mean to the immediate reader in that particular cultural setting?**
- b) **What does the text mean to us now in this time and place?**

This allows the interpreter to decide which practices are and are not transferable to today. Another way of stating this is, which practices are considered permanent and relevant for us and which one are considered temporal and



cultural for the time of the Bible?

There are four principles which help us determine which practices, situations, commands, and precepts are transferable to our culture and which ones are not transferable. They are:

**a) Some situations, commands, or principles are repeatable, continuous, or not revoked and/or pertain to moral and theological subjects, and /or are repeated elsewhere in Scriptures**

All Scripture should be considered normal unless the Bible limits the audience to which that Scripture pertains. If the Bible gives a command and nowhere else nullifies that command, then that command is the expressed will of God and stands as a command for all time and for all peoples. This is based on the fact that the Bible is its own authority. If the passage or command in question is paralleled in the Scriptures, then it is repeatable, and remains in effect.

**b) Some situations, commands, or principles pertain to an individual's specific non-repeatable circumstances, and/or non-moral or non-theological subjects, an/or have been revoked, and are therefore not transferable to today.**

A good example of this is Abraham being told to offer Isaac up as a sacrifice to God. That particular requirement was to Abraham only, and not to succeeding fathers.

Another good example of this is the Mosaic Law given in the Old Testament. The coming of Jesus, His death and resurrection did away with the law. Therefore, it no longer applies to us today.

**c) Some situations or commands pertain to cultural settings that are only partially similar to ours and in which only the principles are transferable.**

A good example of this is how the first Christian- Jews were to greet their Brothers in Christ with a "holy kiss". That is unquestionably a command of the culture of the times in which it was initiated. Today, it would be out of place. However, the principle of expressing love and friendship to all Christians has taken its place in our culture, and because of this, we should not do something that would "cause a brother to stumble".

**d) Some situations or commands pertain to cultural settings with no similarities but in which the principles are transferable.**

A good example of this when Moses was required to remove his sandals at the burning bush (in the presence of God) because he was standing on holy ground. How does this apply to us today? Are we to do the same as Moses did whenever we go to church or pray? A certain meaning in one culture may carry a different meaning in another culture.

#### **4. Guidelines for determining whether Bible practices are culture-bound or trans-cultural. Four steps are mentioned:**

Sometimes it is difficult to discern whether principle 3 or principle 4 should be applied. Below are three ways to help the interpreter to understand which principle is best understood:

- a) **Does the behavior in the Biblical culture have a different meaning from our culture?** Part of this step is determining if the practice is used in our culture any longer.
- b) **If the activity does have a different meaning in our culture today, try to determine the timeless principle that was implied in the practice during Bible times.**
- c) **Try to find out how the principle can be applied in an equivalent way in our culture today.**

### **CONCLUSION**

As Dr. Zuck points out, "Spiritual discernment and careful study of the Scriptures are important in considering the impact of cultural matters on Bible interpretation".

## **Chapter 5 "Bridging the Grammatical Gap"**

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the main events of the reformation was a return by Bible interpreters to the historical, grammatical interpretation of the Bible. They had rejected the allegorical approach to interpretation being used along with the church's position of superiority and control over the people and had decided to go

back to the fact that God had given His truths in "written form, using words and sentences" that were to be taken "in their normal plain sense".

## **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

### **1. Why is Grammatical interpretation important?**

The grammatical interpretation of the Bible is important for the following reasons:

#### **a) The Nature of Interpretation**

Since the Bible was considered to be inspired by God, they felt that every word of the Bible was important, and that all words and sentences served a purpose. If that was the case, then only grammatical interpretation was the most meaningful approach to interpretation.

#### **b) The Goal of Exegesis**

The purpose of exegesis is to discover what the Author/author said and meant at the time what they said or wrote it. And, to not let prejudices cause him to read something into it. By studying God's words and how they are associated with other words in sentences, we can determine what His thoughts were. Only then will we obtain correct interpretations.

#### **c) The Problems of Communication**

The biggest problem in communication is being misunderstood. When it regards the Bible, we are confronted with knowing Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Only then are we able to get as close to possible to what God meant via His inspiration of the Scriptures through the prophets and apostles.

### **2. What is Grammatical Interpretation?**

This is the process of seeking to determine the meanings of the words of the Bible. This is accomplished by ascertaining four things:

#### **a) The Meaning of Words (Lexicology)**

When we are concerned with lexicology, we are concerned with four things:

- 1) **Etymology** How words are derived and developed
- 2) **Usage** How words are used by the same and different authors
- 3) **Synonyms and antonyms** How similar and opposite words are used
- 4) **Context** How words are used in various contexts

#### **b) The Form of Words (Morphology)**

When we are concerned with morphology, we are concerned with how words are structured and how that structuring affects their meaning. A singular word "part" versus the plural of the same word "parts".

#### **c) The Function of Words (Parts of Speech)**

When we are concerned with the parts of speech, we are concerned with the function of the words and what those various forms do.

#### **d) The Relationship of Words (Syntax)**

When we are concerned with the syntax, we are concerned with the ways words are put together to form phrases, clauses and sentences.

### **3. How do we determine the Meaning of Words?**

#### **a) Examine the Etymology of the Words**

The etymology of a word has to do with the history of the word, not its meaning. Therefore, there are two very important things in etymology:

- 1) **Getting back to the root meaning of the word**
- 2) **Seeing how the word developed**

One of the problems that arises here is that the fluctuating use of a word can give rise to changes in its meaning. Also, there are times, when in the development of a word, it will take on a different meaning from its original meaning. A big mistake is thinking that a Biblical word can be explained on the basis of its English etymology. This is a form of eisegesis, and presents its own set of problems. Another mistake is comparing Biblical Greek with classical Greek. That procedure will not work either.

#### **b) Discover the usage of the Words**

The usage of a word in its context will often help the interpreter determine its meaning, for it is in its context that a word can have different meanings. The following show several kinds of meaning of a word:

- 1) **Note the usage by the same writer in the Same book**
- 2) **Note the usage by the same writer in Other books**
- 3) **Note the usage by Other Writers in the Bible**
- 4) **Note the usage by Writers Outside the Bible**

Be sure to note that the meaning of a word is not always the same in all its occurrences. There are numerous times a word occurs only once or twice in the entire Bible. In these occasions it is important to look outside of the Bible to derive their meanings. There are even instances where looking to another language will help us understand a word (Arabic and Aramaic in place of Hebrew).

**c) Discover the meanings of similar words (synonyms) and opposite words (antonyms)**

Seeing how a word differs from its near or exact opposite word or near or exact similar word can help determine the meaning of the word. For example, in Colossians 2:22 commands suggest laws to be obeyed, and teachings imply truths to be believed.

**d) Consider the context**

There are three reasons why the context is considered to be important:

- 1) **Words, phrases and clauses may have multiple meanings. Examining how they are used in a particular context will help determine the meaning.**
- 2) **Thoughts are usually expressed by a series of words or sentences in association. The preceding and the following verses directly influences the meaning of the text.**
- 3) **False interpretations often arise from ignoring the context.**

There are several kinds of context to be considered:

- 1) **The Immediate Context.** Many times the sentence in which the word is used will clarify the meaning

- 2) **The Context of the Paragraph or Chapter.** This is helpful in clarifying a word, phrase or sentence that is not made clear in the sentence in which it is used.
- 3) **The Context of the Bible Book in which the word, phrase or sentence occurs.** Knowing the context of a book makes the understanding of that book easier.
- 4) **The context of a parallel passage** This is also helpful. These passages may be verbal parallels or idea parallels.
- 5) **The context of the entire Bible** This should also be considered. Two corollaries of this principle should be noted:
  - a) An **obscure text** should never be interpreted so that it contradicts a **plain text**.
  - b) A **complex or devious interpretation** should never be given preference over a **simple more natural interpretation**

To summarize **lexicology** (the meaning of words) the following principles should be kept in mind:

- a) A word does not usually mean what it originally meant, nor is its meaning often determined by its component parts.
- b) The meaning of words in English should not be read back into the Biblical meaning
- c) The same word may have different meanings in its various occurrences in the Bible.
- d) Each word or phrase normally has only one meaning, which is indicated by its usage in the sentence and/or one of several contexts.
- e) The same word in the Bible does not always mean the same thing.
- f) A word should not be given all its shades of meaning in any one occurrence.

Always assume one meaning unless there is a strong reason in the context to do otherwise.

#### 4. How does the forms of words (Morphology) and the functions of Words (Parts of Speech) relate to Bible interpretation?

Morphology refers to how words are formed or put together. The way words are constructed will reflect their meaning. In considering this process regarding interpretation it is good to know the parts of speech of a language. There are eight parts of speech which are placed into one of two groups

##### a) The Noun family

- 1) **Nouns** This is a word that names a person, a place, a thing, a concept or idea (blessing), or an action (ascension). In number, they may be singular (heart) or plural (eyes). In gender, they may be masculine (man), feminine (woman), or neuter (salve).
- 2) **Pronouns** This is a word that substitutes for a noun. They may be personal (you), relative (that), intensive (himself), or reciprocal (one another).
- 3) **Adjectives** This is a word that modifies a noun or pronoun. It can refer to extent (large city), or a quality or characteristic (a wonderful God).
- 4) **Prepositions** This is a word that goes with a noun to form a prepositional phrase, and can point to any number of relationships.

##### b) The Verb family

- 1) **Verb** This is a word that tells us what a noun or pronoun is or does. They have the following qualities:
  - a) **Tense** The time an action took place
    - 1) **Past** (ran)
    - 2) **Present** (run) This may refer to something that is
      - a) **Permanently true**
      - b) **Continuous**
      - c) **Repeated**
      - d) **Habitual**
      - e) **Future**

3) **Future** (will run)

b) **Voice** This can be an active or passive action

1) **Active** (Chose)

2) **Passive** (were chosen)

c) **Mood** Suggests the kind of action

1) **Indicative mood** (ran - a statement)

2) **Interrogative mood** (is running? - a question)

3) **Imperative mood** (run! - a command)

3) **Operative mood** (please run - a request)

### c) The Adverb family

This is a word that modifies or qualifies a verb. It may suggest one of the following:

1) **A Manner or Quality** (telling how)

2) **A Place** (indicating where)

3) **A Degree** (indicating how much)

4) **A Time** (indicating when)

5) **A Purpose or Result** (indicating why)

### d) The Conjunction

This is a word that connects words, phrases or clauses, such as but, because, although, and therefore

### e) The Interjections

This is a word that expresses:

1) **A Negative** (not)

2) **An Interrogation** (why)

3) **An Affirmation** (certainly)

4) **An Exclamation** (oh)



## 5. Why know the parts of speech?

The function of a word influences its meaning. Sometimes a word can convey more than one meaning. This is called a "polysemy". But, knowing certain things about the parts of speech in phrases and sentences can be very helpful in interpreting the Bible.

## 6. How do the relationships of words (syntax) help in interpreting the Bible?

The word "syntax", according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, means "the way in which linguistic elements are put together to form constituents (as phrases and clauses)". The use and understanding of syntax is important because single words by themselves cannot normally convey a complete thought. However, the way they are put together can convey the thought the author intended.

### a) **Phrase**

A phrase is a short grammatical group of words without a verb. In a "**prepositional phrase**", this is a very common form of conveying a thought. In a "**participle phrase**", the participle is verbal in nature and is dependent on a main clause, and the participle usually ends in "ing".

### b) **Clauses**

A clause is a grammatical unit of words comprised of a subject (person, place, thing, etc.) being discussed and a predicate (a verb indicating action, state, or condition). There are two types of clauses:

1) **Independent Clause:** In the independent clause the thought stands alone, and is complete by itself.

2) **Dependent Clause:** In the dependent clause the thought is dependent on the independent clause for its full meaning. The dependent clause, if separated from the rest of a sentence, does not make a complete sentence in itself. There are various kinds of dependent clauses:

- a) **Casual** (We want to...because we...)
- b) **Concessive** (In which the thought is conceded - "Though I am just...")
- c) **Comparative** (Just as you have received...)
- e) **Conditional** (Since you went...)
- f) **Purpose** (We do this in order that...)
- g) **Result** (Do that...so that you...)
- h) **Temporal** (When you were gone from...)

c) **Sentences**

A sentence may be in one of the following three forms:

- 1) **Simple** A simple sentence has only one independent clause (at least a subject and a predicate). An example is "[You] get going or you will be late for work."
- 2) **Compound** A compound sentence has at least two independent (and coordinate) clauses. An example is "Gentlemen, start your engines!"
- 3) **Complex** A complex sentence has at least one independent clause and one dependent clause. An example is " We always do this because we want to."

A sentence , as to their purpose , may be as follows:

- 1) **A Statement** It will assert a fact, opinion, complaint, emotion observation, etc. It may be
  - a) **Positive**
  - b) **Negative**
- 2) **A Question** It will raise an inquiry
- 3) **A Command**
  - a) **A Positive Command** It will give an order or charge

- b) **A Negative Command** It will give a prohibition
- 4) **A Request** It will ask for something
- 5) **A Wish** It will express a desire

In the interpretation process it is important to notice is a sentence is a statement, question, command, or if it serves another purpose. It is referred to as the **mood** of a verb.

d) **Word Order and Repetition**

- 1) In **Greek**, the emphasis given to words, phrases, or clauses is done by placing them at the beginning of a sentence (and sometimes at the end) as compared to the normal word order of subject, verb and object.
- 2) In **Hebrew**, the normal order is verb, subject, and object. If the subject or object comes first, it is being emphasized. emphasis is also given by repeating the word.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I want to submit the summarization of the chapter noted on page 121 of Dr. Zuke's book since it is so well put together:

A) **Procedure in Discovering the Meaning of a Word**

- 1) Examine the etymology (history) of the word, including its original meaning and any different meanings that develop from it.
- 2) Discover the usage of the word
  - a) **By the same writer in the same book**
  - b) **By the same writer in other Bible books**
  - c) **By other writers in the Bible**
  - d) **By other writers outside the Bible**
- 3) Discover how synonyms and antonyms are used
- 4) Consider the context
  - a) **The immediate context**
  - b) **The context of the paragraph or chapter**
  - c) **The context of the book**

- d) **The context of parallel passages**
- e) **The context of the entire Bible**

5) Decide which of one of several possible meanings best fits the thoughts of the passage.

**B) Procedures for discovering the meaning of a sentence:**

- 1) Analyze the sentence and its elements, noting its parts of speech, the kind of sentence it is, the kind of clause it has, and the word order.
- 2) Discover the meaning of each key word (see the five points above under "Procedure in Discovering the Meaning of a Word", and how they contribute to the meaning of a sentence.
- 3) Consider the influence of each part of the sentence on the thoughts of the whole.

## Chapter 6 "Bridging the Literary Gap"

### INTRODUCTION

To better understand the books of the Bible one needs to know the purpose and unique character of each of them. This comes through knowing the patterns, styles, and forms of the various units in each book.

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

#### 1. **What is rhetorical interpretation?**

Rhetoric is defined in the Merriman-Webster Dictionary as "The art of speaking or writing effectively a) the study of the principles and rules of composition formulated by critics of ancient times b) the study of writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion".

It is the process of determining the literary quality of a writing by analyzing

the genre, structure, and figures of speech and how those factors influence the meaning of the text.

a) **Style:** This is the particular verbal elements or ways of expression.

b) **Forms:** This is the organizational structure that influences how the interpretation is to be understood. It can be an artistic form of literature with an interpretation presentation.

## 2. Does the Bible have literary luster?

Yes, for two reasons

### a) **The Bible presents People as Real Live People**

The Bible records human experiences, indicating their emotions, conflicts, victories and defeats, and so on. All the various experiences of mankind make it into a literary work.

### b) **The Bible presents Authors as Capable Literary Writers**

It has been said that the Bible is comprised of "literary artistry of the highest order". The writers understood literary principles and wrote in well understood literary conventions. They wrote different types of literary composition such as history, narrative, poetry, prophecy, and so on. Because of this, the Bible is considered a literary masterpiece.

## 3. Literary genre in the Bible

### a) **What is Literary Genre?**

This refers to the category of writing characterized by a particular form or by content. This factor helps us interpret the Bible more accurately. It is because that there are different styles for different occasions that this is important to the interpreter. Awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, are very important for proper exegesis so that they correspond to historical fact. Therefore, interpretation based on the literal, normal sense should take into account the figures of speech and literary forms in the Bible.

### b) **What are some literary genre in the Bible?**

There are seven different literary genre mentioned. They are:

1) **Legal** This applies to more than the Law of Moses. It also takes

into account the commandments of Leviticus, part of the book of Numbers, and most of Deuteronomy. There are two kinds of legal material found:

a) **Apodictic Law:** These are direct commands. These commands usually start with the phrase, "Thou shalt not..." as in the Ten Commandments, or the phrase, "do not...", and are not necessarily exhaustive.

b) **Casuistic Law:** The term refers to case-by-case law. In it there is a condition that introduces the law

2) **Narrative** This is a Biblical story that is told to present a message. The story is about people and their problems or situations. Many times the story will follow a pattern showing a problem at the beginning, complications that reach a climax, and a solution at the end where the problem is solved. There are six kinds of narratives:

a) **Tragedy:** This is a narrative about a person whose life declines from that of being honest and truthful to that of a catastrophe. An example is King David.

b) **Epic:** This is a long narrative about an individual or group of people who have a series of episodes take place. An example is Israel's wandering in the wilderness.

c) **Romance:** This is a narrative where a romantic relationship between a man and a woman is narrated. An example is Song of Songs.

d) **Heroic:** This is a narrative about the life and exploits of a hero or protagonist. An example is Gideon.

e) **Satire:** This is a narrative about human vices or follies that are exposed through ridicule or rebuke. An example is the book of Jonah.

f) **Polemic:** This is a narrative about the aggressive attack of or the refuting of the opinions of others. An example is Elijah's contest with the 450 prophets of Baal.

3) **Poetry** In The Bible there are five major poetical books of the Old Testament.. They are the books of Job, the book of Psalms, the book of proverbs, the book of Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. A distinct feature is that the biblical poetry has two or three lines

stated in parallel forms. Rarely it will appear in rhyme form.

a) **Psalms Literature** There are eight kinds of psalms recognized:

1) **Lament of the People** This type usually has an introductory petition, the lament, a confession of trust, a petition to be heard (by the psalmist), and a vow of praise.

2) **Lament of the Individual** This type usually has an introduction, the lament, a confession of trust, a petition to be heard and delivered, an expression that the petition has been heard, and a vow of praise.

3) **Declarative Praise of the People** This type includes an exhortation, words of praise, reflection on past needs, and the report of deliverance.

4) **Declarative Praise of the Individual** This type includes a proclamation given, an introductory summary, reflection of past needs, a report of deliverance, and a vow of descriptive praise and/or instruction.

5) **Descriptive Praise** This type includes a call for praise, a statement of the cause for praise, a conclusion which gives either a renewed call to praise, a restatement of cause for praise, or a statement of blessing.

6) **Songs of Zion** There are 6 songs in this category

7) **Wisdom Psalms** There are 8 psalms in this category

8) **Songs of Trust** There are 10 songs (psalms) in this category

b) **There are five things to consider in studying and interpreting the psalms.** They are as follows:

1) Look for the category of the psalm and the elements in each category

2) Realize that many figures of speech are included in

the psalms

3) Be aware of any kinds of parallelism attached to the psalm

4) Study the historical background of the psalm

5) Look for the idea, unifying message, or thought in the psalm

4) **Wisdom Literature** The Wisdom literature is poetry, but be conscience of the fact that not all poetic literature is Wisdom literature. The books included in this category are the book of Job, the book of Proverbs, and the book of Ecclesiastes. Within these books two kinds of Wisdom literature are present:

a) **Proverbial Literature** This type consists of general truths based on broad experiences and observations. They are guidelines which are generally true. However, these are guidelines, not guarantees, and precepts, not promises.

b) **Reflective literature**; This types involves a discussion of the mysteries in life.

5) **Gospels Literature** The Gospel literature includes historical biographies on the Lord Jesus Christ, plus both doctrine and narrative about His personage. The activities of His later life in His teachings, parables, miracles and encounters with individuals. The main purpose of the Gospel literature is to explain and praise the Person and work of The Lord Jesus Christ, through His actions, through His words, and through the response of other people to Him.

6) **Logical disclosure** This genre is also referred to as epistolary literature of the New Testament and includes the books of Romans through Jude. They are known as the Epistles and are comprised of two kinds of discourse:

a) **Expository discourse** This type of discourse expounds on certain truths or doctrines with logical support for them

b) **Hortatory discourse** This type of discourse deals with exhortation to follow the truths presented in the expository discourses. They are used to direct toward certain courses of action or to develop specific characteristics reflecting those truths.



The Epistles differ from normal letters in three ways:

- a) **They are presented as messages from God**
- b) **They are given with apostolic authority**
- c) **They are intended to be read in the churches**

In addition to the above, many Epistles were directed to specific groups of believers, or individuals. The interpreter should be aware of instructions given in the Epistles that are universal and applicable for all ages and cultures. Plus, they should be able to distinguish between principles and specific applications from them.

7) **Prophetic literature** The Prophetic literature includes information that is predictive of the future (from the time the material was written) with direction included that the hearers of the prophecy adjust their lives accordingly.

- a) **Apocalyptic** This is a special form of Prophetic literature that focuses specifically on the end times. Much of the information and predictions are in symbolic form.

#### c) **How does an awareness of literary genre help in understanding the Bible?**

An awareness of literary genre helps in synthesis and detailed analysis. It gives a sense of the overall picture of any particular book of the Bible so that verses and paragraphs can be seen in light of the whole, and therefore, prevent taking Scripture out of context.

#### 4) **Structural Analysis**

Structural analysis indicates that the different structures or patterns of the writings will give different effects. It allows the interpreter to analyze the relationships of structural elements in self-contained portions of the Bible. There are two types of Structural Patterns in the Scriptures. They are:

##### a) **Larger structural Patterns**

This aspect of Structural Patterns deal with large sections of the Bible such as entire books. Examples are

1) **The book of Acts** can be divided into three parts based on geographical area. These are indicated in Acts 1:8 "...witnesses in Jerusalem, Jude and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth".

2) **The book of Revelation** can be divided into three parts based on :

- 1) Rev. 1 - What you have seen (Past)
- 2) Rev. 2 & 3 - What is now (Present)
- 3) Rev. 4-22 - What will take place later (Future)

The books of Job and Matthew are rather unique also.

#### b) **Smaller structural patterns**

This aspect of Structural Patterns deals with smaller sections of the Bible such as individual verses or portions of a chapter. However, they do add a great deal of literary luster of the Bible as a whole. Ten types of smaller structural patterns are listed below.

1) **Parallel patterns** This type of pattern can be broken down into five types of parallelism.

a) **Comparison parallelism** Here, the thoughts of the second line repeats the thoughts on the first line. An example is Psalm 1:5

b) **Contrast parallelism** Here, the thoughts of the second line contrasts the thoughts of first line. An example is Psalm 1:6.

c) **Completion parallelism** Here, the thoughts of the second line complete the thoughts of the first line or vice versa. Psalm 1:3

d) **Figurative parallelism** Here, The thoughts of the second line illumines the thoughts of the first line by a figure of speech or vice versa. An Example is Psalm 1:4

e) **Stair step parallelism** Here, the second line repeats apart of the first line and then adds something to make the sentence complete. An example is Psalm 29:1

2) **Ring Patterns** This type of pattern the central portion is preceded and followed by parallel material. In other words the first thought is the center of a bull's eye with successive rings around it.

The purpose of this is to set off something by contrasting it with something else.

3) **Chiasm Patterns** This type of pattern is very common in Scripture. Here, elements 1 & 4 in one or more verses are parallel in thought, and points 2 & 3 are parallel in thought. An example is Psalm 137:5-6

4) **Alternating Patterns** This type of pattern is set where points 1 & 3 in a passage are parallel and points 2 & 4 are parallel

5) **Inversion Patterns** This type of pattern is similar to a Chiasm pattern except it includes more than four elements. Because of this it has additional contrasting or comparative elements. In this type the center portion is usually emphasized. An example of this is:

2  
4  
16  
4  
2

6) **Inclusion Patterns** This type of pattern offers a situation in which the beginning and ending of a paragraph (or longer section) start and end in the same way. An example is Proverbs 1: 2 & 7

7) **Trilogy Patterns** This type of pattern three related things are mentioned. An example of this is Jude chapter 11.

8) **Acrostic Pattern** This type of pattern each verse begins in succession with a separate letter of the alphabet. An example of this is Psalm 119.

9) **Ascending or Descending Patterns** This type of pattern is where each section leads to the next section. An example is the following:

a) first  
1) second  
a) third  
1) fourth

10) **Repetition Patterns** This type of pattern is used mostly for emotional impact. An example is the recurring subject in Mark regarding the growing opposition to Jesus. It came because the Lord Jesus Christ forgave sins, ate with sinners, neglected the tradition of fasting, and "broke" the Sabbath.

## CONCLUSION

Attention to literary quality, literary genre, and structure contribute to the overall picture of the Scriptures. By having this available, the interpreter is better able to get a clearer picture of what took place, which leads to a better understanding and interpretation of the parts of the Bible he is dealing with.

### Chapter 7 "Figures of Speech"

## INTRODUCTION

The Bible uses hundreds of figures of speech, for it is by figures of speech men have run their lives. This shows up daily in the lives of many who use their imagination at work, play, or study. For, it is from the imagination that figures of speech are born.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### 1. What is a Figure of Speech?

A figure of speech could be described as a word, group of words, or a sentence used outside their original or normal meaning. It is a word or phrases communicating something other than its normal, everyday meaning. In this way parts of or all of the sentence or phrase are conveying a truth. In other words, a figure of speech is a way of expressing a truth in a more interesting way.

### 2. Why are Figures of Speech used?

There are basically six reasons why figures of speech are used. They are as follows:

a) **Figures of Speech are Add Color or Vividness:** An example of this is "The Lord is my Rock" (Ps 18:2) as opposed to saying the Lord is strong and unmovable.

b) **Figures of Speech Attract Attention:** An example of this is "The tongue also is a fire" (James 3:6). Here a comparison is made between two things that is not normal, creating an element of surprise.

c) **Figures of Speech make Abstract or Intellectual Ideas more Concrete:** An example of this is "Underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27). This is a much more concrete way of saying "The Lord will take care of you"

d) **Figures of Speech Aid in Retention:** An example of this is "That bed is as hard as a board" as opposed to saying "That bed is not very soft". It is a phrase that would be easier to remember because it will leave an indelible impression.

e) **Figures of Speech Abbreviate an Idea:** An example of this is "Cool!" as opposed to saying "That is really neat". The first one captures and conveys an idea in a brief way. Sometimes they are graphic and, being so, they eliminate the need for elaborate descriptions.

f) **Figures of Speech Encourage Reflection:** This is a phrase or sentence which would cause a reader or hearer to pause and think.

### 3. How do you know if an Expression is Figurative or Literal?

An expression is figurative if it is out of character with what is being discussed, or is contrary to a fact, an experience, or an observation. The following six guidelines should be helpful in detecting figures of speech:

#### a) **Figurative Language**

1) Always take a passage in its literal sense unless there is good reason for doing otherwise. An example is referring to Jesus as The Lamb of God. Jesus is not an animal.

2) A figurative sense is intended if the literal sense would involve an impossibility. An example is "Listen, o earth" (Micah 1:2). The earth does not have ears.

3) A figurative sense is intended if the literal sense is an absurdity. An example is the "...trees clapping their hands" (Isa. 55:12). The trees do not have hands.

4) A figurative sense is intended if the literal sense would demand

immoral action. An example is eating the flesh of Jesus which would make it a cannibalistic action.

5) Note when a figure of speech is followed by an explanatory literal statement. An example is "Those who "fall asleep"" (1 Thes. 4:13-15). Verse 6 then speaks of those who died.

6) Sometimes a figure of speech is marked by a qualifying adjective, such as "Heavenly Father". Or sometimes a prepositional phrase indicates that the preceding noun is not literal as in "the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. 6:12)

#### 4. Is Figurative Language the Opposite of Literal Interpretation?

A figure of speech is an out-of-the-ordinary way of presenting a literal fact that could be presented in a ordinary way. So, behind every figure of speech is a literal meaning, and with the historical-grammatical exegesis of the text, these literal meaning can be found. This is to say that an interpretation is literal only when it expounds what the author intended it to say. Therefore, figurative speech is not opposed to literal meaning, it is part of it. It can and should be approached as ordinary-literal and figurative-literal. Both are part of what is meant by literal interpretation based on the historical-grammatical approach.

a) **Ordinary-Literal:** Here we are talking about the normal, plain, ordinary usage of words, phrases, etc. These are plainly expressed literal facts.

b) **Figurative-Literal:** Here we are talking about picturesque, out-of-the-ordinary usage of words, phrases, etc.

#### 5. What are some Figures of Speech?

Describing figures of speech depends on how they are used in words, phrases, sentences, etc.

a) **Figures of Speech involving Comparison** Many figures of speech come from nature, others involve humans objects, and others refer to human experiences. Three types of figures of speech are:

1) **Simile:** This is a comparison where one thing explicitly resembles another. The words "like" or "as" are used. Make sure you can see where the comparison is valid (how the two things are similar).

2) **Metaphor:** This is a comparison where one thing is, acts like, or represents another when in fact they are unlike. Here the comparison is implicit. The words "is", "are", "was", "were", or "have been" are used all being a form of "to be". An example is "all flesh is grass" (Isa. 40:6). Make sure you can see how the comparison is valid.

3) **Hypocatastasis:** This is a comparison where the likeness is implied by a direct naming. An example is "You dogs" when talking about people. Here the context should be considered in determining the referent.

b) **Figure of Speech involving Substitution** There are 10 types of figures of speech that relate to substitution:

1) **Metonymy:** This is a substituting of one word for another. In the Bible there are three kinds of metonymies:

a) **The cause is used for the effect.** An example is "Let's attack him with our tongues". (Jer. 18:18) "Tongues" was substituted for "words". The tongue was the cause, and the words were the effect.

b) **The effect is used for the cause.** An example is "...oh Lord, my strength". Strength, the effect is used for the cause, the Lord.

c) **The object is used for something next to it or associated with it.** An example is "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord" (1 Cor. 10:21). The contents of the cup were being referred to, not the cup itself.

2) **Synecdoche:** This is the substituting of a part of something for the whole of that thing, or the whole for the part. An example of this is "Greek" (Romans 1:16) includes all non-Jews.

3) **Merism:** This is the substituting of a totality or whole by two contrasting or opposite parts. An example is "You know when I sit down and when I rise" (Ps. 139:2) This does not say the Lord only knows those two things about David, but that the Lord knows all things.

4) **Hendiadys:** This is the substituting of two coordinated terms (joined by the word "and") for a single concept where one defines the other. An example is "The sacrifice and service" (Phil. 2:17) probably means sacrificial service.

5) **Personification:** This is the ascribing of human characteristics or actions for that of inanimate objects, ideas, or animals. An example is "...the stones will cry out" as quoted by the Lord Jesus Christ.

6) **Anthropomorphism:** This is ascribing human characteristics for God. An example is referring to God's "eyes" in (2 Chron. 16:9).

7) **Anthropopathism:** This is ascribing human emotions to God. An example is "I am very jealous for Zion" as said by God (Zech. 8:1)

8) **Zoomorphism:** This is ascribing animal characteristics to God or others. An example is "...gnashes His teeth at me". (Job 16:9)

9) **Apostrophe:** This is addressing an object as if it were human, or addressing a person as if he were there when he was not. An example is "Why was it o sea that you fled?" (Ps. 114:5)

10) **Euphemism:** This is substituting of an inoffensive or mild comment for an offensive or personal one. An example is "went home to be with the Lord" instead of "died".

c) **Figures of Speech involving Omission or Suppression:** There are four types of figures of speech that relate to omission or suppression:

1) **Ellipsis:** This is the elimination of a word or group of words that are necessary to complete a sentence. An example is "the twelve" which represents the 12 Apostles (1 Cor. 15:5).

2) **Zuegma:** This is the joining of two nouns with one verb when only one noun goes with that verb. An example is "His mouth was open and his tongue". (Luke 1:64)

3) **Aposiopesis** This is a sudden break in a sentence as if the speaker were not able to finish. An example is Luke 19:42 where the Lord Jesus Christ wept over Jerusalem.

4) **Rhetorical question** This is a situation where a question is asked that does not require a verbal response, but forces the



listener to answer in his mind and consider the implications of the answer. An example is God asking Moses, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Some rhetorical questions rebuke or admonish, others express surprise, some are spoken to get attention.

d) **Figures of Speech involving Overstatement or Understatement:**

There are four types of figures of speech that relate to Overstatement or Understatement

1) **Hyperbole** This is a deliberate exaggeration in which more is said than is literally meant, in order to add emphasis. An example is "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands".

2) **Litotes** This is an understatement or negative statement to express affirmation which is emphasized.. It is the opposite of a hyperbole. An example is Paul said, "For I am the least of the apostles". (1 Cor. 15:9)

3) **Irony (sarcasm)** This is a kind of ridicule expressed indirectly in the form of a compliment. It is sometimes sensed in humor. An example is Elijah's taunting the prophets of Baal when he said, "Shout louder"...surely he is a god!" 1Kings 18:27)

a) **Verbal Irony** This is as was shown above

b) **Dramatic Irony** This is a kind of situation where the reader/hearer knows some facts that the writer/speaker is not aware of. An example of this is in the book of Job wherein the reader knew Satan was behind Job's problems and Job did not.

Iron & sarcasm are often used interchangeably. The main difference is that sarcasm is usually heavier in tone and is used as an instrument to wound. Irony is used to ridicule.

4) **Pleonasm** This is a repetition of word or the adding of similar words. An example of this is Job saying to God, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear. (Job 42:5)

e) **Figures of Speech involving Inconsistency** There are two types of figures of speech involving inconsistencies:

1) **Oxymoron** This is a combining together two words that are opposites or contradictory to one another. An example of this is

"an original copy".

2) **Paradox** This is a statement that is absurd or contrary to normal opinion. An example of this is when the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Whosoever loses his life for Me and the Gospel will save it". (Mark 8:35)

f) **Figures of speech involving Sound** There are two types of figures of speech involving sound

1) **Paronomasia** This is a statement using the same words or similar-sounding words to suggest different meanings, better known as a play on words. An example of this is when The Lord Jesus said, "...let the dead bury their own dead". (Matt. 8:22) The first dead signifies spiritually dead; the second dead signifies physically dead.

a) **Illiteration** This is a situation where writers use words that begin with the same letters, which adds to the impact of the sentence. This is more apparently obvious in the Greek writing of the new Testament. an example of this is when Luke wrote famines (Greek =loimoi) and pestilence (Greek=limoi) Luke 21:11)

2) **Onomatopoeia** This is the occurrence of a word where the sound of it gives hints of its meaning. An example of this is the Hebrew word for "swoops" which is tus' which sounds like the motion of an eagle in the air. (Job 9:26)

## 6. How should we Interpret Figures of Speech?

a) **Determine if a Figure of Speech is Involved** If the figure of speech is not recognized, the statement will be misunderstood. An example of this is when the Lord Jesus Christ said, "... do not throw pearls to the swine" (Matt 7:6) he was saying in effect, do not entrust holy things to unholy people. in other instances a normal statement can be wrongly taken as a figure of speech.

b) **Discover the Image and the Non-image in the Figure of Speech** Sometimes both the image and non-image are in the same sentence. Other times the non-image is not specified and may be misunderstood. An example of this is when the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Destroy this temple ..." Temple was the image which the hearers took to be Herod's temple when in reality the Lord Jesus Christ was talking of His body.

c) **State the Point of Comparison** This is a situation where the points of

comparison are not always evident in similes or metaphors. An example of this is "He shall be like a tree planted by ..." (Ps. 1:3) where the tree in the image, He (believer) is the non-image, and the points of comparison are security, prosperous, and fruitful.

d) **Do not assume a Figure of Speech always means the Same Thing**  
An example of this is where "dew" describes a short duration of Judah's love (Hosea 6:4), and "dew" speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ's blessing on Israel (Hosea 14:5).

e) **Place Legitimate Limits or Controls on the Figure of Speech by means of Logic and Communication**  
An example of this is when the Lord Jesus Christ said "I will come like a thief". (Rev. 3:3) He did not mean he was coming to rob, but that He was coming unexpectedly.

## 7. How does an Idiom differ from a Figure of Speech?

An idiom is particular to a given language or people in a particular area. It is a combination of words that have a meaning as a whole, but in which the meaning of the combination is not the same as the meaning of the individual words. Examples of this are, "down in the dumps", or "hit the sack".

Linguists call idioms "dead metaphors" such as in "foot of the stairs". In this case the person hearing or reading does not think about the comparison but about the meaning of the idiom.

## CONCLUSION

Without the proper understanding of the nature and structure of a language, in reference to figures of speech, the interpreter of the Bible would have a most difficult time arriving at the proper meaning of what the Author/authors were trying to communicate.

Chapter 8  
"Testing the Types and Sensing the Symbols"

## INTRODUCTION

The Old and the New Testaments are related by types and antitypes, shadows and fulfillments. Much controversy surrounds the discussion as to what types and antitypes, shadows and fulfillments exist. Some try to make everything a type while others deny the existence of them. Some say they are either explicitly designated or implicit. Finally there are those who say that the only types that exist are those that are designated as such in the New Testament.

What we need to know is, what is a type, how is it derived as such, and what guidelines are needed for interpreting types?

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### 1. New Testament terms used in relation to typology?

Type come from the Greek word "typos", which can be translated in a number of different ways. The Merriman-Webster defines it as "a person or thing believed to foreshadow another".

a) **Type:** A type contains ideas common to the following in that it corresponds or resembles a person, event, or something else. It is sort of a match to the other thing. However, it does not always mean an official type of something in the Old Testament is foreshadowing in the New Testament. It may be revealed in a number of ways.

- 1) **Mark**
- 2) **Form**
- 3) **Pattern**
- 4) **Model**
- 5) **Example**

b) **Antitype:** An antitype is a counterpart to a type. The idea of resemblance is present. It corresponds to the type. (I could not find it in the dictionary)

c) **Shadow** A shadow implies something that is dim and transitory, but with a degree of resemblance.

## 2) When is a type a type?

A type must meet the following five criteria. Unless all five criteria are present, a type does not exist.

- a) **Resemblance** A type has a resemblance, similarity or a correspondence which exists between the type and antitype. It should be considered as a substantial counterpart.
- b) **Historical Reality** A type has a historical value is. Types were actual people, events or things. They were not something that were read into the text.
- c) **Prefiguring** A type had a predictive or foreshadowing element to it. It is a shadow that points ahead to the antitype. It is a prophecy. The difference is that a prophecy is a prediction by words, whereas a typology is prediction by correspondence between two realities, the type and the antitype. To be an official type, the correspondence must have a predictive element and anticipation of the antitype. It has a forward focus.
- d) **Heightening** In typology there is an increase, a heightening , an escalation, for the antitype is greater than the type. Unless there are the elements of heightening and prefiguring, they are not a type, because the antitype is greater than the type.
- e) **Devine Design** Types are a resemblance planned by God. It will carry a likeness to the antitype, and be planned by God to be a fulfillment of the type. Types also are of value because they are evidence of a divine design between the Old Testament and the New Testaments.

Without the involvement of these elements, there is no type.

## 3) Must types be designated as such in the New testament?

For a figure to be a type it must have a sixth criteria in addition the five mentioned above. The sixth criteria is that it must be designated in the New testament. Scripture must in some way indicate that an item is typical.

Illustrations are a different thing. below is a comparison between the two:

- a) **Type** A type then is an Old testament person, event, or thing having historical reality and designated by God to prefigure (foreshadow) in a

preparatory way a real person, event, or thing so designated in the New Testament and that corresponds to and fulfill( heightens ) the type. They look forward to and prefigures the antitype.

b) **Illustration** An illustration may be a biblical person, event, or thing having a historical reality, that pictures or is analogous to some corresponding spiritual truth in a natural unforced way and is not explicitly designated in the New Testament as a type. They are not predictive, do not include a heightening or escalation, and are not called a type. They point back from the New Testament to the Old Testament to an analogous person, event, or thing.

#### 4) Which types are valid?

In order for a type to be valid it must meet the following six criteria:

- a) The has a natural Correspondence or resemblance
- b) The type has a historical reality.
- c) The type is a prefiguring or foreshadowing of the antitype
- d) The type is fulfilled (or completed or heightened)
- e) The type is divinely designed
- f) The type and antitype are designated as such in the New Testament

Only one of Israel's seven Feasts of the Lord is pointed out as a type - the Passover, but all the other six are shown as types, calling them "... a shadow of things to come". (Cor. 2:16-17) In the same way Hebrews 9:9-10 suggests that all five of Israel's sacrificial offerings were types.

#### 5) What steps should be followed in interpreting types?

Four things should be considered when interpreting types:

- a) **Determine the literal sense of the type** This is always basic to accurate interpretation of the Scriptures.
- b) **Note the specific point or points of correspondence or resemblance between the type and its antitype** The major points of similarity should be looked for, not the incidental and trivial.
- c) **Not the specific areas of contrast or dissimilarity in order to avoid making those elements aspects of the type**
- d) **Note the direct assertions in the New Testament that verify the**

## typological correspondence

### 6) Why be concerned about typology?

The study of types and their antitypes has definite benefits:

- a) **Benefit one** It helps us see God's design in history through the relationships between the type and the antitype
- b) **Benefit two** It helps give us more tangible controls in interpreting the Old Testament

### 7) Sensing the symbols

a) **What constitutes a Symbol?** A symbol is some object (real or imagined) or action which is assigned a meaning for the purpose of depicting rather than stating the qualities of something else. Unlike a type, it has no time reference. In speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ as a lion, any lion one thinks of depicts a certain characteristic of the Lord Jesus Christ.

b) **What are some principles for interpreting symbols?** There are nine principles for interpreting symbols in the Bible.

#### 1) Note the three elements in symbolic interpretation

- a) The object (which is the symbol)
- b) The referent (what the symbol refers to)
- c) The meaning (the resemblance between the symbol and the referent)

2) **Remember the symbol have their place in reality** Symbols are based on actual objects and/or actions, but in prophetic passages symbols are based on imagination.

3) **Determine what meaning or resemblance, if any, is explicitly assigned by the text to the referent** In prophecy the text usually indicates that an object or action is a symbol

4) **If the verse does not give the meaning or resemblance of the symbol, then check other passages, check the nature of the symbol, and check which major characteristic the referent and the object have in common**

5) **Be careful not to assign the wrong characteristic of the symbol to the referent** A case in point here is that the Lord Jesus

Christ is the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" referring to its strong nature, but Satan "... walks about as a roaring lion ..." referring to its furious nature.

6) **Look for the one major point of resemblance** Be careful not to draw a lot of parallels between the symbol and that which it symbolizes

7) **Realize that one referent may be depicted by several objects** The Lord Jesus Christ is symbolized by a lamb (the Lamb of God), a lion (the Lion of the tribe of Judah), a Branch (I Am the Branch), and others. The Holy Spirit is symbolized by water, oil, wind, and a dove.

8) **In Prophetic Literature do not assume that because a prophecy contains some symbol everything else in that prophecy is symbolic**

9) **In Prophetic Literature do not symbolize descriptions of the future that are possible or plausible**

b) **What are some of the Symbols in the Bible?**

The symbols in the Bible are divided into six categories. These are only some of the symbols taken from the Scriptures. With each symbol a meaning of it is given. Here are five of those categories as per Dr. Zuck's text.

- 1) **Divine Symbols** (Only three are indicated here)
  - a) Sword at the east of Eden (Gen. 3:24) This means the "Breach of fellowship between man and God"
  - b) Burning bush (Ex. 3:2) This means "God's holiness"
  - c) Pillar of cloud (Ex. 13:21-22) This means "God's presence and guidance"
  
- 2) **Symbols Seen in Visions** (Only five are indicated here)
  - a) Boiling pot (Jer. 1:13) This means "Judgment from the North"
  - b) Good figs (Jer. 24:3-5) this means "Jewish captives in Babylon"
  - c) Bad figs (Jer. 24:3 & 8) This means "Remnant of Jews who stayed in Judah"
  - d) Dry bones given new flesh (Ezek. 37) This means "Israel restored"
  - e) Four beasts (Dan. 7) This means "Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, & Rome"



- 3) **Material Symbols** (Only four are given here)
  - a) Bread and wine (Luke 22:19-20) This means "the Lord Jesus Christ's body and blood"
  - b) Dragon (rev. 12:3-17) this means "Satan"
  - c) Lion (Rev. 5:5) this means "the Lord Jesus Christ as King"
  - d) Rainbow (Gen 9:13-16) This means "God's faithfulness"
  
- 4) **Symbolic Gestures** (Only four are given here)
  - a) Beating one's breast (Luke 18:13) This means "expressing remorse"
  - b) Tearing one's clothes (Job 1:20) This means "symbolizing grief"
  - c) Sitting in dust and ashes (Job 42:6) This means "expressing repentance"
  - d) Washing one's hands (Matt. 27:24) This means "expressing innocence and removal of responsibility"
  
- 5) **Symbolic Actions** (Only four are given here)
  - a) A seraph placed a live coal on Isaiah's lips (Isa. 6:5-6) This means "Isaiah was cleansed inwardly" (Isa. 6:7)
  - b) Jeremiah watched a potter making a clay pot (Jer. 18:1-4) This means "God is sovereign over His people" (Jer. 18: 5-6)
  - c) Jeremiah wore a yoke (Jer. Jer. 27:1-2) This means "Zedekiah was to surrender to the authority of Babylon" (Jer. 27:12)
  - d) John ate a scroll (Rev. 10: 9-10) This means "John was to appropriate the message God would give him" (Rev. 10:11)

Even baptism and the Lord's Supper are symbolic actions. Water baptism symbolizes the believers identification with the Lord Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. When taking the Lord's Supper believers are symbolically proclaiming the Lord Jesus Christ's death, with the bread picturing His body which was broken in His crucifixion, and the cup picturing His blood which was shed on the cross for the remission of sins.

### c) **Symbolic Numbers**

Some of the number mentioned in the Bible suggest certain concepts because they are frequently used in association with those ideas. For instance

- 1) Seven is often associated with "perfection"
- 2) Forty is often associated with "testing"

Keep in mind though, that although some numbers have symbolic connotations because of their associations, this does not mean that all number are significant in that way. Most numbers mean only their

ordinary, normal, literal meaning.

d) **Symbolic Names**

Only the names designated in the scriptures as symbolic should be considered as symbolic.

1) **People** The name "Eve" was given to Adam's wife because "she would become the mother of all the living". Abram's ("exalted father") was changed to Abraham ("father of many") because God wanted to signify that he would have many ancestors.

2) **Places (Location)** Sometime the names of places took on significance in relation to events that occurred at those spots, or in relation to the characteristics of the people at those places.

3) **City or Nation** Occasionally a city or nation was given a new name. An example is God giving the inhabitants of Jerusalem the title of the "people of Gomorrah".

e) **Symbolic colors**

Sometime colors take on an emblematic significance. But, caution should be used here. Normally, use the clearly designated meaning of the color.

1) Purple used in fabric designates royalty

2) White designates purity (wedding dresses - Is this true any more?)

## CONCLUSION

This very informative chapter will benefit the interpreter a great deal. But, unfortunately, many will ignore its message and plow ahead giving everything a meaning other than what the Author/author intended. This makes the literal, historical-grammatical interpretation of even greater importance.

The further I have gotten into this study, the more clearer the division of the church into the various denominations becomes. Unfortunately, people will believe just about anything (especially what they want to believe), instead of searching it out for themselves. The Lord knows I have been guilty of that fact myself.

## Chapter 9 "Probing the Parables and Analyzing the Allegories"

### INTRODUCTION

We will start by defining what a parable is. A parable is a form of figurative language involving comparison which is usually in the form of an extended analogy in story form. It is normally a true-to-life story used to illustrate, illuminate, or teach a particular truth. Hearers or readers, who see a comparison or analogy between the story and their own situation, are prodded to think how the story applies to them.

In addition to stories there are also short statements, or similitudes, and proverbs. Whereas a parable uses a specific instance from the past in its story, a similitude will normally refer to a customary habit which takes place in the present.

There are also the use of proverbs.

In the new Testament the Lord Jesus Christ used both methods of communication.

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

#### 1. Parables, Similitudes, and Proverbs

a) **Jesus' Similitudes** The similitudes fall into five categories

1) **Paradoxical Statement** An example of this is "What comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean' ... His disciples asked Him about this parable".(Mark 7:16-17) The meaning is, Evil deeds come from the heart. (vv 21-23).

2) **Admonitions** An example of this is, "He told them this parable: When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor...but when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when you host comes, he will say to you, "Friend, move up to a better place" ' ". (Luke 14:7-8, & 10) The meaning is that everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and vice versa. (v 11)

3) **Questions** An example of this is "Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?" (Luke 5:34) The meaning is, the Lord Jesus Christ's disciples were not fasting because He was with them.

4) **Maxims about Life** An example of this is, " 'If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.' Peter said, "Explain the parable to us' ". (Matt. 15: 14-15) The meaning is, The Pharisees, being blind spiritually, are leading others astray spiritually. (v 12)

5) **Observations from Nature** An example of this is, "He told them this parable: 'Look at .. all the tree. When they sprout leaves, you ... know that summer is near' ". (Luke 21:30) The meaning is that certain events will indicate that "the kingdom of God is near". (v 31)

b) **Jesus' Proverbs** The proverbs fall into three categories

1) **Statements** An example of this is, " No servant is greater than his master". (John 13:16)

2) **Questions** An example of this is "You are the salt of the... how can it be made salty again?"

3) **Commands** An example of this is, "Physician, heal thyself". (Luke 4:23).

## 2. Why did Jesus Speak in Parables?

The Lord Jesus Christ responded to a question from His disciples as to why He spoke in parables. He told them it was for two reasons They were to:

- a) **Reveal Truths to his Followers**
- b) **Hide Truths from Unbelievers**

Parables were used to

- a) **Spark Interest in the Hearers** This was because the people listening to them were drawn into the stories, and were curious as

to how the stories would develop and conclude.

b) **To Encourage People to Think** This was because the Lord Jesus Christ wanted His hearers to "pass judgment on things they were well acquainted with, and then to compel them to transfer that judgment to something to whose significance they had been blind".

c) **To Disarm the Hearers** He relayed parables so those for whom they were intended would apply them to themselves. This is even if the hearers were resentful or reluctant to do so.

### 3. What Features Characterize Jesus' Parables?

The Lord Jesus Christ's parables appeal to the hearers because they dealt with everyday aspects of life. Some of these are:

- a) **Commercial** (Fishermen, employers, tax collectors, etc.)
- b) **Farming** (Shepherds, soil, vineyards, fig trees)
- c) **Domestic** (Sewing, eating, widows, doorkeeper)
- d) **Social** (Father & son, bridesmaid, host, wedding)
- e) **Religious** (Priest, Samaritan, Pharisee, Levites)
- f) **Civil** (King, judge, war)

They included such things

- 1) **Suspense** Unexpected turns of events are seen in parables.
- 2) **Conflicts** This approach was very common in the parables.
- 3) **Contrasts** This had a tendency to heighten the hearers' and readers' interest. The effect of some of the parables is increased by their departure from normal procedures.
- 4) **Exaggerations** This would increase the impact of the parable.
- 5) **End Stress** This approach was used to wait until the last to state the most important item of the story.
- 6) **Rhetorical Questions** This approach was used to get the listener/reader to respond in his mind to the challenges the Lord Jesus Christ gave.

### 4. What Kind of Parables did Jesus Tell?

All of the parables teach something about the Lord Jesus Christ, His kingdom, or His followers. When interpreting them it is important to remember that they all refer in some way to the "kingdom of God". These are categorized under seven headings:

- a) Progress in the Kingdom
- b) Conflict between the Lord Jesus Christ's concept of the kingdom and that of the Pharisees
- c) Grace and sinners in the kingdom
- d) Characteristics of those in the kingdom

- 1) **Compassion:** The good Samaritan
- 2) **Humility:** The Servant's Reward
- 3) **Faithfulness:** The Two Servants
- 4) **Persistent Prayer:** The Unjust Judge
- 5) **Attitude toward Wealth:** The Rich Fool
- 6) **Forgiveness:** The Unforgiving Servant
- 8) **Willingness to Sacrifice:** The Unfinished Tower

- e) Reaction of the King and His kingdom
- f) Judgment on those who reject the King and/or reward for those who accept Him
- g) Alertness at and preparedness for the King's coming

There are also Parables of the Kingdom in Matt. 13. The following is a list of them with their locations and meanings:

- a) **The Sower** (Matt: 13:13-23) This parable meant that the good news of the Gospel will be rejected by more people.
- b) **The Wheat and the Weeds (Tares)** (Matt. 13:24-30 & 36-43)  
This parable meant that people with genuine faith and people with a false profession of faith will exist together between the Lord Jesus Christ's two Advents.
- c) **The Mustard Seed** (Matt 13:31-32) This parable meant that Christendom, including the believers and the unbelievers, will grow rapidly from a small beginning.
- d) **The Yeast** (Matt. 13:33-35) This parable means that people who profess to belong to God will grow in numbers without being stopped.

- e) **The Hidden Treasure** (Matt. 13:44) This parable means the Lord Jesus Christ came to purchase (redeem) Israel, God's treasured possession.
- f) **The Pearl** (Matt: 13:45-46) This parable meant that the Lord Jesus Christ gave His life to provide redemption for His people (the church).
- g) **The Net** (Mat. 13:47-52) This parable meant that angels will separate the wicked from the righteous when the Lord Jesus Christ comes.

If we were to take all the parables and classify them, they would be as

follows according to Dr. Zuck:

- a) **Seed Parables:** The Sower (Matt. 13:3-8)
- b) **Nature Parables:** The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:4-7)
- c) **Servant Parables:** There are two categories here:
  - 1) The Master departs: The Doorkeeper (Mark 13:34-37)
  - 2) The Servant departs: The Servant's Reward (Luke 17:7-10)
- d) **Father Parables:** The Two Sons (Matt. 21:28-32)
- e) **King Parables:** The Wedding Banquet (Matt. 22:1-14)
- f) **Money (or Treasure) Parables:** The Shrewd Manager (Luke 16:1-9)
- g) **Harvest Parables:** The Wicked Vine growers (Matt. 21:33-46)
- h) **Women Parables:** The Virgins (Matt. 25: 1-13)
- i) **Social or Domestic Parables:** The Rude Children (Luke 7:31-35)
- j) **Compassion Parables:** The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- k) **Rejoicing Parables:** The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10)
- l) **Refusal Parables:** The Unforgiving Servant (Matt. 18:23-35)

## 5) What are some Guidelines for Interpreting the Parables?

- a) **Note the Story's Natural Meaning** This relates to understanding a passage in its normal grammatical sense, without reading something into it. Two things are being brought together in a parable:
  - 1) **True-to-Life Incidents** To understand the spiritual truth of a parable properly, it is important to first comprehend the true-to-life incident.
  - 2) **The Spiritual Truth it is Illustrating or Illuminating** This comes through understanding the elements involved in the parable. Only then can the correct transition be made to understanding the spiritual truth of the parable.
- b) **Determine the Problem, Question, or Situation that Prompted the**

**Parable** Understanding why the Lord Jesus Christ told certain parables when He did helps us understand the analogy between the life incident He related and the spiritual truth He was making. These parables may be grouped into nine occasions or purposes:

- 1) **Parables in Answer to Question** The Parable of the Good Samaritan was used to answer a question from a lawyer regarding "Who is my neighbor?".
  - 2) **Parables in Answer to Requests** The parable of the Friend at Midnight was used to emphasize persistence in prayer after the Lord Jesus Christ was asked to "teach us to pray"
  - 3) **Parables in Answer to Complaints** The Parable of the Lost Sheep was used to answer a complaint about the Lord Jesus Christ eating with sinners.
  - 4) **Parables given with a Stated Purpose** The Parable of the Unjust Judge gave a stated purpose of praying and not giving up.
  - 5) **Parables of the Kingdom given because of Israel's Rejection of Jesus as Messiah** The Parables of the Kingdom were used to counter the rejections by various groups by the Lord Jesus Christ. These are the seven parables in Matt. 13.
  - 6) **Parables Following an Exhortation or Principle** The Parable of the Doorkeeper was used by the Lord Jesus Christ to warn the people of false teachers and false messiahs
  - 7) **Parables Followed by an Exhortation or Principle** The Parable of the Unfinished Tower was used to explain that discipleship involves sacrifice
  - 8) **Parables to Illustrate a Situation** The Parable of the Two Houses was used by the Lord Jesus Christ to indicate that those who put his words into action were equivalent to wise builders.
  - 9) **Parables with the Purpose Implied but Not Stated** The Parable of the Talents was used by the Lord Jesus Christ to emphasize what is expected of His followers while He is away, and to serve Him faithfully during that time.
- c) **Ascertain the Main Truth being illustrated by the Parable**  
Usually a parable is teaching a single truth. However, some details are analogous to certain spiritual facts. Sometimes these are necessary in order for the major point of the parable to be fully understood. Many times



the Lord Jesus Christ did not point out the analogies. The important thing is to find the major point of a parable and to stick with it, and not to allow an allegory to develop.

d) **Validate the Main Truth of the Parable with Direct Teaching of Scripture** Some elements in the parables do not necessarily need to always mean the same thing everywhere in Scripture. The interpreter should be cautious of this possibly happening.

e) **Note the Actual or Intended Response of the Hearer** This is important because the hearer's response will give clues to the meaning of the parable. Therefore, give attention to the cultural and historical setting, consider the plain statements of the Scriptures, let the passage speak for itself without reading into it, and note the rhetorical-literary structure and quality of the passage.

## 6) Analyzing allegories

The Following is a summary of the differences between allegories, parables, and fables.

### a) Allegory

- 1) It has many points of comparison
- 2) It may be true-to-life or fictitious
- 3) The interpretations of the points are intertwined in the story
- 4) It is an extended metaphor

### b) Parable

- 1) It has one major point of comparison
- 2) It is true-to-life
- 3) The interpretation, if given, can occur at the beginning of the parable, but it usually occurs at the end of the parable

### c) Fable

- 1) It is a fictitious story
- 2) Animals or inanimate objects are personified
- 3) It teaches a moral lesson

d) **Three Guidelines to Interpreting Allegories** When interpreting allegories be sure to follow these three guidelines:

- 1) **Note the Points of Comparison that are Explained or Interpreted in the Passage** Each allegory has a number of points of comparison, but not every element of those points is interpreted.

2) **Do Not Attempt to Interpret Details in Allegories that are Not Explained** Sometimes details in allegories are there just to add color to the allegory. At the same time, not every point in an allegory is to be compared to some spiritual truth. At other times, the details of an allegory are there to adorn the narrative to give the reader a certain impression

3) **Determine the Main Point of the Teaching** It is important to look for the major point of analogy or resemblance in an allegory. The reader should ask, "What is the main point in this allegory?" The interpretation of allegories should not be confused with "allegorizing" or the allegorical method of interpretation. Allegorizing searches for "deeper meaning" to the text. There is a difference.

## CONCLUSION

It is quite clear that the Lord Jesus Christ was a brilliant communicator, far above what the so called "educated people" of the day thought. In so being, He used some very interesting methods of getting across important spiritual points of interest to everyone. Some were able to understand and appropriate what He taught; others were not able to understand to the point of accepting and appropriating what He taught.

It is a most interesting fact to find out that He used parables, similitudes, proverbs, analogies, and allegories to reveal truths to his followers, and to conceal truths from unbelievers. The people that surrounded Him during that time must have been fascinated.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The unknown future brings anxiety to human beings. And yet only God knows the future. Interpreting Prophecy is all about that future.

Prophecy comes from two Greek words meaning "to speak for" or "before". The Merriman-Webster Dictionary defines prophecy as "the inspired declaration of divine will and purpose; a prediction of something to come". So part of this definition is the speaking and/or writing of events before they take place.

The prophecies of the Scripture were God-breathed. They came from God Himself. Many have been fulfilled in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ: Some prophecies await to be fulfilled. And all of these prophecies contained details that were unheard of, yet they were fulfilled down to the last detail.

In prophecy, some were fulfilled shortly after they were expounded. These are known as "near" prophecies. Others were fulfilled after long periods of time, and some are still not yet fulfilled. These are known as "far" prophecies.

The area of prophecy, and especially the study of end time events (eschatology), has created a great deal of differences and debate among Bible interpreters.

## **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

### **1. Why study Prophecy?**

The Bible gives six reasons for studying its own prophetic literature. They are as follows:

a) **Prophecy Comforts** The bible use the Greek word "parakaleo" which basically means "comforting and encouraging". This words is translated as "comfort" (1Thes. 4:18)

b) **Prophecy Calms** The Bible talks about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as "the Blessed hope". Christians rest in the hope of the fulfillment of that event.

3) **Prophecy Converts** In the past century plus, many people have come to the Lord Jesus Christ as a result of hearing sermons on prophetic events. Throughout the scriptures messages about God's plans for the future have been preached , and many believed of Him. (1 Peter 4:4)

4) **Prophecy Cleanses** The Bible talks about the fact that "God desires to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do good" (Titus 2:14), and "... make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with Him". ((2 Peter 3:14)

5) **Prophecy Compels** The Bible states "Christ's love compels us ...", or motivates us, to action. (2 Cor. 5:11)

6) **Prophecy Clarifies** The Bible presents a harmonized pattern of God's future program for the church, the world, the unbelievers, the nations, and for Satan.

## 2. What are the Differences between Millennial Views?

There are two issues which are basic to the study of the end times (eschatology). One is the study of the millennial positions which is described as the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth for 1000 years. The other is the study of dispensational theology verses covenant theology.

At this time we will deal with the three main view of millennialism. They are as follows:

a) **What is Pre-millennialism?** The word pre-millennialism comes from the Latin words "mille" which means "thousand", and "annus" which means "year". The prefix "pre" means "before". So Pre-millennialism teaches that the Millennium will be preceded by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ who will reign on the earth for 1000 years. This position has the following basis teachings:

1) The Lord Jesus Christ will return in the rapture at the end of this age and will reign with His saints on the earth for 1000 years as King.

2) During this reign, the nation of Israel will experience the blessings of God promised to Abraham and David pertaining to Israel's land, nationality "seed", and king (throne).

3) The church today is not fulfilling these promises made to Israel as a nation.

b) **What is A-millennialism?** The prefix "a" means "no" or "none". So A-Millennialism teaches that there will be no literal reign of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth for 1000 years. This position has the following basis teachings:

1) We are in the Millennium now. The Lord Jesus Christ is ruling from heaven now.

2) The kingdom is either the church on earth or the saints in heaven. The 1000 years is symbolic for a long period of time. There will be no future reign of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth.

3) The promises to Israel are now being fulfilled in a spiritual way by believers in the church.

4) God's promises to Israel were conditional and have been transferred to the church due to Israel's disobedience to God.

5) The Lord Jesus Christ is now ruling from heaven, and Satan is bound between His two advents.

c) **What is Post-millennialism?** The prefix "post" means "after". So Post-Millennialism teaches that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will be after the Millennium. This position has the following tenets:

1) The church is not the kingdom but it will bring the kingdom to the earth by preaching the Gospel. Some liberal theologians teach that the Millennium will come about through human effort and natural processes.

2) The Lord Jesus Christ will not be here during the kingdom. He will rule in the hearts of people, and will return after the millennium.

3) The Millennium to the church will not last 1000 years.

d) **Hermeneutical Bases of A-millennialism** The A-Millennialists base their position on the following four items.

1) **The Kingdom in the Church** In their position, the A-Millennialists assume that God's kingdom is being manifested in the church now. This was the same theory that Augustine held.

2) **The Unity of the People of God** In their position the A-Millennialists assume that God has a single overall program that includes all ages. They believe that since He is ruling in His kingdom now, the above assumption holds to be valid.

3) **Israel and the Church** In their position the A-Millennialists assume that because the above two items exist, then Israel and the church do not have separate programs in God's plan. Because of this, the promises made directly to Israel are applicable to the church today. They believe what Allis wrote, "The millennium is to be interpreted spiritually, as fulfilled in the Christian Church".

4) **"Spiritualizing" of Prophecy** In their position the A-Millennialists assume that because the above three items exist, they can add a "spiritual sense" to the interpretation of the Scriptures that makes everything valid in their sight. Spiritualizing, unfortunately, becomes "allegorizing. They argue that the New testament takes Old testament passages non-literally, but prophecy can be spiritualized because it contains figurative and symbolic language, and the teachings of the Bible are spiritual, not earthly.

e) **Hermeneutical bases of Pre-millennialism** The Pre-Millennialists base their position on the following four items:

1) **Normal, Grammatical Interpretation of the Scriptures** In their position the Pre-Millennialists believe the scriptures are to be taken literally. Based on this position, God is presently ruling in heaven, but will be present on earth during the Millennium following the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2) **Israel in the Land with the King** In their position the Pre-Millennialists believe that the promises to Israel, which are unconditional, have not been fulfilled. Therefore, they are yet to be fulfilled. This will take place in the Millennial kingdom based on the three biblical covenants -the covenant with Abraham , the covenant with Davidic, and the New covenant with the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ ("... the new covenant in my blood").

3) **Israel and the Church** In this position, The Pre-Millennialists believe that since the church began on the day of Pentecost, the church is separate from the nation of Israel, and therefore cannot inherit Israel's promises from God. They are to be considered as two separate entities. With proper grammatical interpretation there is a definite distinction between the two.

4) **Consistency in Interpretation** There is a definite consistency in the hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures by the Pre-Millennialists., for there is no distinction on how they approach prophetic and non-prophetic Scripture the. They approach both in the literal, natural, grammatical sense. This disallows any spiritualizing or allegorizing of the Bible.

### 3) **What are the Basic Differences between Covenant Theology and Dispensational Theology?**

There are two distinct theological positions held within the church today.

The two positions Covenant Theology and Dispensational Theology. Their basic tenets are as follows:

a) **Covenant Theology's Basic Tenants** This position is centered on the "Covenant of Grace", which God made between Himself and the sinner for the purpose of the sinner's salvation.

1) **The "Church" Consists of God's Redeemed of all Ages**

This tenet suggests that the church did not start on the day of Pentecost, but that it has always existed.

2) **The Three Covenants are Fulfilled in the Present Age**

This tenet suggests that there will be no future fulfillment of the three covenants mentioned above.

3) **The Purpose of God's Program is Soteriological**

This tenet suggests that God's purpose is to bring people to salvation.

b) **Dispensational Theology's Basic Tenants** This position includes two concepts:

1) **The Church is Distinct from Israel** This position is centered on the fact that the church has a distinct character from that of Israel. This position is held for the following reasons:

- a) Paul wrote of a dispensation in which Jews and Gentiles were equal members in the body of Christ. (Eph. 3:5-6)
- b) Today the church consists of Jews and Gentiles in one body of Christ, the church.
- c) All believers are baptized into that body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:13)
- d) The nation Israel is distinct from the church. (1 Cor. 10:32 and Rom. 10:1) This is not only because of its distinct character, but also because of its distinct time. The church age began after Christ's resurrection (Eph. 1:20-22), and ascension (Eph. 4:7-12). The beginning of the Church Age is to be identified with the events when the Holy Spirit began His baptizing ministry.
- e) A future administration is coming referred to as the millennium kingdom. (Eph.10:1)

The church, a unique program which began on the day of Pentecost, distinguishes the present age (the Church Age) from the giving of the Law to the nation Israel. God gave special promises to Israel, and He has given separate, special promises to the church, the body of Christ. Therefore, if one keeps to the principles and rules of hermeneutics, there is a definite distinction between Israel and the church. In the Scriptures, the term Israel always mean Israel and is never switched with the term church, not is the term church ever used interchangeably with or as a symbol of the church.

**2) The Purpose of God's program is Doxological - to bring Glory to Himself** Although Covenant Theologians agree that God's program is to bring glory to Himself (through the Covenant of Grace), they emphasize His soterological purpose. The Dispensationalists emphasize God's plan of salvation through faith, while making the glory of God the primary principle that unifies all the dispensations. Here they state that the overriding purpose of God in each dispensation is to glorify Himself.

#### 4) **What Guidelines should be Followed in Interpreting Prophecy?**

Two axioms give a foundation for interpreting the Bible. The two axioms are: Axiom #1, the Bible is a (human) book, and Axiom #2, the Bible is a divine

Book. There are three principles that build on Axiom #1, and three more



principles that build on Axiom #2.

a) **Axiom #1 - The Bible is a Human Book**

1) **Follow the Normal Principles of the Hermeneutical System know as Historical, Grammatical, Literary Interpretation** In following this system, the interpreter is taking into consideration the cultural background and circumstances of the prophets. The prophets, speaking on behalf of God, spoke of circumstances contemporary to their generation. Sometime they spoke of things that were going to happen in the immediate future, and other times they spoke of things that were going to happen in the distant future. What this indicates is that God's words were not isolated from the stream of history. What all of this points to is that all the prophets of God spoke prophetic words in their cultural settings.

2) **Take Words of Prophecy in their Normal, Grammatical Sense** The interpretation of Scripture should be based on the same rules for the prophetic as well as the non-prophetic. Although figures of speech and symbolism is used in some of the prophetic, that does not mean that all of prophetic Scripture is that way. Therefore, the words should be taken in their normal sense unless they are pointed out as figures of speech or symbols. Keep in mind that some prophecies are conditional, some are unconditional, and that some are "everlasting" covenants.

3) **Consider the Literary Element, which Recognizes the Place of Figurative and Symbolic Language** The first prophecy in the Bible, Gen. 3:15 includes figurative language. It includes a "synecdoche" in which one part represents the whole (Satan's "head" represents him completely). John the Apostle uses several similes in his description of the Lord Jesus Christ. (rev. 1:13-16). In revelation there are also metaphors, metonymies, personifications, hyperboles, and rhetorical questions. A large portion of the Bible records visions (apocalyptic in nature) by some of the prophets. This type of prophetic literature contains four characteristics. They can be:

- a) Prophecies given in elaborate visions
- b) Prophecies given with symbolism included in them
- c) Prophecies given by angles in visions. The angles interpreted the prophecy
- d) Prophecies given with messages regarding the distant future.

The heavy symbolic content of some of the prophecies make them difficult to interpret. But, if we follow the basic hermeneutical principles of normal, grammatical interpretation, we should be able to understand prophetic literature in its normal, ordinary-literal sense unless there is reason for taking the material figuratively or symbolically.

## b) **Axiom #2 - The Bible is a Divine Book**

1) **View Prophecy as Focusing Primarily on the Messiah and the Establishing of His Reign** Because the bible is a divine book it is easy to understand why God focuses the prophecies of His Book on the Lord Jesus Christ and His first and second advents. An angel said "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10) So the purpose of prophecy is to testify of the Lord Jesus Christ and to bring Him glory. It is clear in the Bible that He is reigning now in heaven, and that He will return and reign from His throne in Jerusalem in the Temple. The prophetic words show that history will culminate in His return, His 1000 year reign on the earth, and will be followed by His eternal reign in the new heaven and the new earth.

2) **Recognize the Principle of "Foreshortening"** As we look back into time in the Scriptures we see the two advents of the Lord Jesus Christ with a time gap between them. It is common in the Old Testament that the prophets blended these two advents into one passage. They were not aware that there were many other events that were to take place between the first and second advent. This inability to see the whole picture left them with the understanding that only one event was to take place. This is referred to as prophetic "foreshortening". It is a case of one event being the forerunner of the other, greater climatic event.

3) **Look for God's Built-in Interpretation** This is a situation where the prophetic Scriptures themselves include the interpretation of its passage. Some symbols in the book of revelation are explained (by word or local custom) and some are not explained at all.

4) **Compare Parallel Passages** In that God is the Author, it is easy to understand that all the prophecies of the Scriptures can fit into a consistent pattern of the future.

Chafer points out that the Old Testament includes seven major prophetic themes:

### a) **Prophecies regarding the Gentiles**

- b) **Prophecies regarding the Nation of Israel**
- c) **Prophecies regarding the Dispersion & Regathering of the Nation of Israel**
- d) **Prophecies regarding the Advent of the Messiah**
- e) **Prophecies regarding the Great Tribulation**
- f) **Prophecies regarding the Day of the Lord**
- g) **Prophecies regarding the Messianic Kingdom**

Chafer also points out that the New Testament includes nine major prophetic themes:

- a) **Prophecies regarding the New Church Age**
- b) **Prophecies regarding the New Divine Purpose**
- c) **Prophecies regarding the Nation of Israel**
- d) **Prophecies regarding the Gentiles**
- e) **Prophecies regarding the Great Tribulation**
- f) **Prophecies regarding Satan and the Forces of Evil**
- g) **Prophecies regarding the Second Coming of Christ**
- h) **Prophecies regarding the Eternal State**

From these we can see that all of these divinely inspired prophecies regarding future events are non-contradictory and fit together into a consistent pattern of the future.

5) **Look for Prophecies that are Fulfilled and Prophecies that are Yet to be Fulfilled** Because the Bible is the Word of God, and because certain predictions have been fulfilled in a literal way, we can expect that the unfulfilled predictions will be fulfilled literally also.

## **CONCLUSION**

Dr. Zuck give an excellent summary on page 249 which I would like to use as a conclusion.

"...the following questions should be asked when studying the prophecies of the Bible:

- 1) **What is conditional and what is unconditional?**
- 2) **What is figurative or symbolic, and what is nonfigurative?**
- 3) **What is fulfilled, and what, as a "far" fulfillment, remains to be fulfilled?**

**4) What is interpreted by God in the passage?**

**5) What is interpreted in parallel passages?"**

If the interpreter uses these as a springboard to studying the prophetic literature of the Bible, although the task may require a lot of hard work, it will inevitably be very rewarding.

## Chapter 11 "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament"

### **INTRODUCTION**

A very difficult aspect of Bible interpretation is the use of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament. Many times they are not exactly word for word quotations. Since a discrepancy exists, does this present a problem in the area of inerrancy in the Scriptures? A related problem deals with the New Testament writers possibly bringing out meaning in the Old Testament not seen by the Old Testaments writers. Does this mean that the New Testament writers were taking undue freedom in reinterpreting the Old Testament? And, does this possibly mean the New Testament conflicts with the Old Testament? If so, how did it affect the New Testament?

### **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

#### **1. The Extent of New Testament Quotations from and Allusions To the Old Testament.**

There are between 250 and 300 Old Testament quotations in the New Testament. Nicole presents 295 as the accurate number of quotations. Of those, 224 are direct quotations which are prefixed with, "as it is written". Nineteen

passages are paraphrased or summaries of an Old Testament passage. Forty-five are given without being introduced as Old Testament quotations. Several others use "and" to connect two quotations together.

Twenty-three of the 25 New Testaments books cite the Old Testament. The exceptions are Philemon, First John, Second John, and Third John.

Allusions to the Old testament verses are more numerous. The allusions refer to Old Testament terminology or phrases, and to Old Testament people and historical events. The book of Revelation, having no direct quotes from the Old testament, alludes to it 331 times.

In all, citations and allusions to the Old Testament constitute 10 percent of the New Testament. Because of this, and the fact that both Testaments have one divine Author, the Old testament cannot be neglected when interpreting the New Testament. At no time did the New Testament writers question or repudiate the truth of the Old Testament. In fact, 56 times they actually indicated that these (quotations) were from God. They also referred to the Old Testament writers by name in addition to referring to the divine Author, showing that they believed in its dual authorship.

## **2. Ways the Quotations are Introduced**

The New Testament writers introduced quotations in various ways.

Some examples are:

"It is written"

"Have you not read in the book of Moses?"

"This is what the prophet has written"

"This was to fulfill what was spoken"

In addition, many times the passages were quoted without any type of

introduction. Plus, they would often string several quotations together.

### 3. Variations in the Wording of the Quotations

Oftentimes, the New testament writers would change the wording or omit some of the words. Other times they would string two quotations together. They would use freedom in changing points of grammar, paraphrasing, omitting portions, give partial quotations using synonyms, and recognize new aspects of truth. Some of the ways they did this are as follows:

#### a) Making Variations in Grammar

- 1) Sometimes substitute a pronoun for a noun
- 2) Sometimes used nouns in place of pronouns
- 3) Sometimes use a plural noun in place of a singular noun
- 4) Sometimes changed a pronoun
- 5) Occasionally identified the speaker in the quotation
- 6) Sometimes changed a direct discourse to an indirect discourse
- 7) Sometimes changed an indirect discourse to a direct discourse
- 8) Sometimes altered the verbal form slightly
- 9) Occasionally made a general reference more specific in the New Testament
- 10) Sometimes changed the extent of the reference
- 11) Sometimes rearranged the order of the clauses
- 12) Sometimes two quotations are combined and assigned to the more prominent Old Testament quotation
- 13) Sometimes the sense of an Old Testament passage is rendered loosely as a paraphrase

b) **Omitting Certain Portions of Verses** Occasionally New Testaments writers shortened Old Testament verses they quoted. An example of this is "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord (Luke 19:38) instead of the direct quote, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord". (Psa. 118:26)

c) **Giving Partial Quotations** When the Lord Jesus Christ quoted a verse (on a few occasions) He would leave out a portion of the verse, and for good reason. An example of this is when He said, " My house will be a called a house of prayer" (Matt. 21:13) He left out the rest of the verse "for all nations". This was due to the fact that during His earthly ministry the temple was only for the Jews. It was not for all nations then, as it will be during the Millennium.

d) **Using Synonyms** At times the New Testament speakers would substitute one word for another because they felt it would be more appropriate for the situation. A case in point is when John the Baptist used a substituted word "path" (Matt. 3:3) for "highway" (Isa. 40:3) as he quoted to his audience in the desert of Judea. Also, the Septuagint was quoted. This is because it was the common translation of the Old Testament Hebrew into Greek.

e) **Giving New Aspects of Truth** The New Testament writers often preserved the Old Testament thoughts of passages cited, rather than giving direct quotations. Therefore we should not conclude that these variations are inaccurate. This is because they do not affect the doctrine of the verbally inspired Scriptures. The Holy Spirit, being the Author God, had the freedom to modify the wording of the Old Testament as He saw fit. The end product is still the inspired Word Of God, whether or not the quotation is complete and exact or partial and varied.

About 150 years ago Horne classified the New Testament quotations of the Old testament into 11 categories:

- a) Those agreeing exactly with the Hebrew
- b) Those nearly agreeing with the Hebrew
- c) Those agreeing with the Hebrew in sense but not in words
- d) Those that give the general sense but that abridge the material or add to it
- e) Those taken from several passages of Scripture
- f) Those differing from the Hebrew but agreeing with the Septuagint
- g) Those agreeing verbatim with the Septuagint or changing the number of persons
- h) Those taken from the Septuagint but with some variation
- i) Those agreeing with the Septuagint but not in words
- j) Those differing from the Septuagint but agreeing exactly or nearly so with the Hebrew
- k) Those differing from both the Hebrew and the Septuagint which were probably taken from some other translation or paraphrase.

The Septuagint is the translation of the Hebrew Old testament into Greek. Evangelical scholars have pointed out that no New Testament quote from this translation differs in any substantive way from the Old Testament.

#### 4) **Purposes of Old Testament quotations**

The purpose of quoting other writers of books is four fold:

- a) **To support what they themselves were saying**
- b) **To give an example of or illustration of their viewpoint**
- c) **To summarize their points**
- d) **To make comparisons or parallels between their material and that of someone else**

Human writers of the New Testament quoted the books of the Old

Testament in 10 different ways:

- a) **To Point Up the Accomplishments or Realizations of an Old Testament Prediction** This was usually done to highlight or point out the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy. An example is the Lord Jesus Christ's riding on a donkey in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:4) This was a fulfillment of the prophet Zechariah's words. (Zech. 9:9)
- b) **To Confirm that a New Testament Incident is in Agreement with an Old Testament Principle** An example this is: The Apostle James said that the salvation of the Gentiles does not conflict with the Old Testament. He stated, "The words of the prophets are in agreement with, as it is written" (Acts 15:15). In the next three verses he quoted from the Old Testament (Amos 9:11-12)
- c) **To Explain a Point Given in the Old Testament** An example of this is: On the Day of Pentecost Peter quoted from the Old Testament where it is written "And afterwards ... ". (Joel2:28) Peter began with, "In the last days ... ". Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was explaining that the "afterwards" referred to "the last days".
- d) **To Support a Point Being Made in the New Testament** Quite a few Old Testament quotations are used to support a point being made in the New Testament. An Example of this is when the Lord Jesus Christ said, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob". (Ex. 3:6) He did this to support His point that He was the God of the living and that the resurrection is a reality.
- e) **To Illustrate a New Testament Truth** An example of this is that Paul wrote about many Israelites not accepting the good news of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 10:16). This was illustrated by the same situation in the days of Isaiah when he wrote, "who has believed our message?" (Isa. 53:1)
- f) **To Apply the Old Testament to a New Testament Incident or Truth** An example of this is when Paul quoted, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion". (Ex. 33:19) In Exodus God spoke to Moses to assure him of His presence



and blessings. But, Paul applied these words to a different situation: God's election of Jacob instead of Esau. So, Paul was indicating that those whom God chooses are based on His mercy and not on their own efforts.

g) **To Summarize an Old testament Concept** On two occasions Matthew wrote quotations that are not in the Old Testament. It appears he was summarizing the concept instead of quoting the exact text. An example of this is when Matthew wrote, "He will be called a Nazarene". There is no Old testament verse that says that.

h) **To Use Old Testament Terminology** On Occasion New Testament writers quoted Old Testament passages to make their point. An Example is when the Lord Jesus Christ shouted from the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46) Here He was quoting Psalm 22:1, which was an immediate reference to David, as verses 1 & 2 make clear. What He was doing was relating David's situation to Himself.

i) **To Draw a Parallel with an Old Testament Incident** This is a situation when a verse from the Old Testament is quoted to parallel and incident from that time to New Testament time. An example of this is when Paul drew a parallel between the hardening of Israel in the present Church Age (Rom. 11: 7-8) and a similar situation of the hardening of Israel in Isaiah's time. This was indicated when Paul quoted Isa. 29:10.

j) **To Relate and Old Testament Situation to Christ** This is a situation where New testament writers referred to Old Testament statements and enlarged them beyond their original historical settings to refer to the Lord Jesus Christ. Parallels and analogies were seen which pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament did not contradict the passages of the Old Testament, they expanded them. What they saw many times as incomplete was now brought to a climax.

## 5. Did the Old Testament Authors Understand All They Wrote

The question arises, did God intend more in some Old Testament passages than the human authors intend? Several things need to be considered regarding that question.

a) **The Human Authors of the Bible books Apparently Did Not Always Fully Comprehend All They Wrote** Sometimes God hid things from the understanding of the human authors. An example of this is when Caiaphas said, "It is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish". (John 11:50) Unknown to him, he was

speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ dying in order for sinners to be saved. So it seems that the human authors didn't comprehend all that they wrote about. This is evident in other verses that required an explanation by God or a messenger.

b) **Progress of Revelation must be Acknowledged** As the Bible developed, God progressively revealed more truths about many subjects. It doesn't mean the earlier verses were in error; it means that they were probably incomplete. Even the Apostles didn't fully understand some of the Lord Jesus Christ's was doing or teaching. After His resurrection (John 2:22) and ascension (John 12:16), they looked back and then understood what the Scriptures taught. There was progress in their understanding.

c) **Some Passages May Not have been Recognized as Prophetic Until They were Fulfilled** If the readers did not realize that certain passages were prophetic until they were fulfilled, more than likely neither did the writers of those prophecies. An example for us today is the Two separate comings of the Lord Jesus Christ. We now see that in His first advent He would be the Suffering Servant, and in His second advent He would be the Reigning King.

d) **The Enlarging or Heightening of Passages in Relation to Christ is another Factor that Suggests that God had in mind More than the Authors Knew** This position does not present a contradiction to the Old Testament meanings, it is a related expansion of it.

## 6. Do the Scriptures have Single Meanings or Multiple Meanings?

If, in fact, God intended more than is written in some passages, what limits can be placed on those meanings? And, how does this relate to hermeneutics where a single, grammatical meaning of each text is sought,. Four views are held regarding this:

### a) **The Four Views held:**

- 1) The first view is that each passage has one, and only one, meaning
- 2) The second view is that readers may find in any given passage a number of meanings that are unrelated. Unfortunately, this view allows for no controls in interpretation. It removes the objective approach, and disregards the clear grammatical statements in the Scriptures. It nullifies the fact that the Bible is God's revelation to

man, and that it communicates His truth to mankind.

3) The third view is called "sensus plenior". It is Latin which means "fuller sense". Raymond E. Brown, a Catholic scholar defines it as "that additional deeper meaning intended by God but not clearly intended by the human authors". It supposedly exists in the words of the text when they are studied in light of fuller revelation or development in the understanding of revelation. However, they present problems. The main problem is that authoritative interpretations become authorities in the sense that it comes from one of the guides to revelation (The Church Fathers, Church pronouncements, etc). This creates an interpretation of the Scriptures open to fallible church dogma. Also, many of those church statements conflict with Scripture and with each other.

**4) The fourth view is that each text of Scripture has a single meaning, but some may have related implications referred to as "references plenior".** It seems preferable to the others for the following reasons:

- a) Historical, grammatical interpretation requires seeing a single meaning, not multiple meaning, in each biblical text.
- b) The idea that single meaning may have more than one referent is consistent with the way the New Testament uses the Old Testament.
- c) This view is consistent with the "progress of revelation".
- d) The related meanings are not bases for approaching the Scriptures allegorically, in which the interpreter looks for hidden meanings.
- e) This view seems the best way to understand the use of Psalms 8, 16, and 22 in the New testament.

## **7. What Procedures should be Followed in Interpreting New testament Quotations of the Old Testament?**

The following procedures are suggested:

- a) **Investigate the New Testament Context** Try to see if the context in which the quotations of or allusions to the Old Testament occurs.
- b) **Investigate the Old Testament Context** Try to see what is in the context of the passage to which the quotation or allusion refers. Be sure not to read back into the Old Testament. Note what the passage would

have conveyed to the Old Testament readers before it was quoted in the New Testament.

c) **Note the Differences Between the Old Testament Passages and Its New Testament Quotation or Illusion**

d) **Determine How the New Testament Passage is Using the Old Testament Passage** Is it paraphrasing or using synonyms? Which is the New Testament citing, the Hebrew text or the Septuagint?

e) **Relate the Conclusion to the Interpretation of the New Testament Passage**

## CONCLUSION

This chapter makes it obvious that there are many problems that can arise from the way the New Testament uses quotations from the Old Testament.

Again, without proper understanding, a person could easily develop a wrong interpretation or conclude that the Bible did, in fact, contradict itself. Dr. Zuck has made it clear what precautions should be used in negating these problems, and what step to take to ensure appropriate results.

## Chapter 12 "Applying God's Word Today"

### INTRODUCTION

Christians today make one of two mistakes when interpreting the Bible.

The either:

a) **Give it Too Little Attention** To this group the interpretation is all that is needed. But, there is no application. Neglecting to apply the Bible makes Bible study no more than an academic pursuit. Then there is no impact on their lives by the Word of God. The Bible is to be applied in order that we will do what it says. (James 1:22) In this case, the hearers are not doers of the Word, and they deceive themselves. (James 1:22) Luther wrote that

the Bible "is not merely to be repeated or known, but to be lived and felt".

b) **Give it Too Much Attention.** To this group applying the Bible before fully understanding the interpretation leads to misapplying the Scriptures.

In 2 Tim. 3:16, we see the benefits of the Scriptures. It is useful for

- 1) **Teaching** - To impart knowledge
- 2) **Reproof** - To rebuke
- 3) **Correction** - To bring into conformity to
- 4) **Training in Righteousness** - To direct the growth (to righteousness)

We also see the purpose of these benefits - that "the man of God may be

thoroughly equipped for every good work". The Scripture have the ability:

- 1) To **Convict**
- 2) To **Regenerate**
- 3) To **Nurture**
- 4) To **Cleanse**
- 5) To **Prevent Sin**
- 6) To **Renew**
- 7) To **Counsel and Guide**
- 8) To **Strengthen**
- 9) To **Sustain**
- 10) To **Give Wisdom**
- 11) To **Deliver**

when they are applied to our lives. Having been born by the Word of God,

believers are to grow by the same means. It is our responsibility to relate the

Bible to life today.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### 1. Problems in Bible Application

Six gaps were mentioned in the first chapter that create problems for the modern day interpreter. One of the gaps, the **Historical Distance Gap**, leaves us with concerns and questions regarding the 4000 year difference between Abrahams time and our present day.

Another one of the gaps is the **Cultural Gap**. Each of the human writers of the Bible wrote for particular audiences of their times. Does the information and the messages they conveyed in their writings relate to present day audiences?

It is clear by the New Testament writings that the Old Testament does have current relevance. Determining how God's Word relates to us today and how we should respond to it is the task of application. Application is the bridge between the Bible's meanings and our present-day situations.

## 2. Guidelines for Relevance-and-Response Application

Dr. Zuck suggests nine ways in which we can apply God's Word to our lives today:

a) **Build Application on Interpretation** Be sure that the application of God's word stems directly out of proper interpretation. It should be based on the meaning and relevance of the text to its original audience. If we have not accurately obtained the meaning of a passage for the initial hearer, we will not be able to adequately apply that meaning today. Sound interpretation is the only adequate basis for relevant application. A good example of how this would affect our life is the story of Jacob wrestling with God. (Gen 32:24-30)

b) **Determine What was Expected of the Original Audience** Some of the commands, admonitions and exhortations in the Scriptures are directives for all generations of believers since the time they were written. But, some of the commands are given directly or indirectly, such as in the book of Proverbs. Usually narratives are teachings by illustration. There are two types of narrative teachings:

1) **Explicit Teachings** This is that which the inspired narrator actually says.

2) **Implicit. Teachings** This is that which is clearly present, but not stated in so many words. It must be seen as implied in the story

God reveals His will in the Bible by "explicit declarations" and by "genetic principles".

c) **Base Applications on Elements Present-Day Readers Share with the Original Audience** Commonality between the original audience and people today is the best basis for valid application of the Scriptures. Both the early Christians and Christians today belong to the universal Church which makes the relationship one of direct theological heritage.

d) **Recognize how God's Working Varies in Different Ages** God's working with man has differed from one dispensation to another. It is important to be aware of those differences when desiring to apply the Bible. At the same time, some of God's commands have not changed. For instance "Love your neighbor" is the same now as it was then. However, nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated by God but with higher standards attached. "You shall not murder" (Ex. 20:13) has an added touch. The Lord Jesus Christ prohibited not only murder but even hatred ("Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer"). (1 John 3:15)

e) **Determine What is Normative for Today** Generalizing for today things that happened in Bible times is not a good idea. Just because God did something for someone in the past does not mean we can expect Him to do the same for us today. It is necessary to see if that same principal taught elsewhere. If it is considered a normal event in the Bible, then we can expect it to be for our time also. The Lord Jesus Christ's command for the 12 Apostles to raise the dead was given only to them, and is not for anyone else. Mc Quilkin wrote, "To be authoritative as a model for behavior - a God-given norm for all people of all time - any historic event must be so designated by an authorized spokesman for God". He also stated, "Since the Bible is God's revelation of His will for all mankind, any teaching of Scripture should be taken as normative for contemporary faith and living unless Scripture itself indicates otherwise."

f) **See the Principle Inherent in the Text** At times the Bible gives specific commands (directives specific for all believers). Other times these commands are not explicit. Therefore, we are to look for principles inherent within the text. The principles we are to look for are generalized statements we derive from the specific original situation. Then we are to apply them to different specific similar situations now. Remember, principles must be affirmed elsewhere in the Bible. From this comes two very important points:

- 1) We should derive principles directly from the text
- 2) We should be sure the principle is consistent with other areas within the Scriptures.

**g) Think of the Principle as an Implication (or Extrapolation) of the Text, and as a Bridge to Application** When we see a principle in the Scriptures it is an essential step in drawing out what is intended, and it helps us formulate a bridge with which to regulate the Bible to today's situations. When a thought is not explicitly stated it may be implied, giving us the principle which serves as a bridge between interpretation and application. Things that are not explicitly stated may be there implicitly. An example is "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in the womb".(Luke 1:41) From this we may imply that unborn babies have life and therefore abortion is wrong.

Principles that are drawn from narratives seem to be more of an extrapolation than an implication. Narratives illustrate what is shown directly in other locations. So, how do we determine which narratives have principles for us today and which ones do not?

Here Mc Quilkin points out, "a historic events always has some sort of implication". Many historic events either commend an action or condemn an action. In some cases it will even give an explanation as to why it does so.

**h) Write out Specific Action-Responses** An as person studies the Bible and is able to draw out principles and implications, he is then ready to apply what he has learned. Therefore, as that person studies, he should look for ways he can apply it. Hall suggests we ask five questions regarding the application of the Scriptures to our lives.

Does the Bible :

- 1) **Speak of any Sin to be Forsaken?**
- 2) **Speak of Promises to be Claimed?**
- 3) **Speak of Examples to be Followed?**
- 4) **Speak of Commands to be Obeyed?**
- 5) **Speak of Stumbling Blocks or Hindrances to be Avoided?**

Make your applications fit your own situation. Be specific. But, remember, some applications will take longer than others to fulfill. Also, be selective. It is better to have fewer than more applications to work on so as not to get overwhelmed and discouraged.

**i) Rely on the Holy Spirit** Ask for the Lord's help and enabling to carry out the applications. This should not be done in our own strength. We should do it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **CONCLUSION**



Being able to understand the Scriptures is more than grasping the historical setting or the literary structure of a passage. It is more than **Observation** and **Interpretation**. The real understanding of what is learned requires a personal response to God. Knowing the truth is very important, but the blessings come from the **Application of the Bible** to your own life.. As Johann Bengel wrote in 1792, "Apply yourself wholly to the text and apply the text wholly to yourself". Good advice.