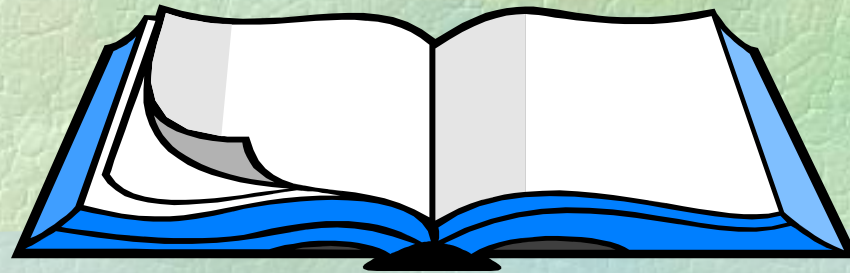


How To Read The Bible



For All Its Worth!

Goals For This Class

- To give a basic approach to understanding the biblical text
- To examine historical methods of interpretation
- To consider other methods of interpretation
- To promote unity of shared understanding
- To relate elders' views on interpretation

Not Goals For This Class

- To ensure everybody believes what I do
- To ensure everybody believes the same thing
- To debate controversial passages of scripture
- To negate or endorse any particular interpretative approach
- To confuse, frustrate, or agitate truthseekers

Basic Components of Biblical Interpretation

■ Exegesis


- 1. Determining what the passage says
- 2. Determining what the passage *meant*

■ Hermeneutics

- 1. Determining what the passage *means*
- 2. Making application in our daily lives

The Task of Exegesis:

Determining the original intent of the
words of the Bible



Interpretive Corollary Number 1

The text cannot mean something to us today, that it did not mean to the people who first read it.

Basic Definitions

- *Exegesis*

- “to bring out”
- concerned with language, grammar, context, etc

- *Eisegesis*

- “to bring in”
- reading meaning into the text that isn't there

Why Exegesis Is Important

- The Bible is a **HISTORICAL** work
- The Bible is a **LINGUISTIC** work
- The Bible has a **CULTURAL SETTING**
- The Bible has a **BACKGROUND**
- The Bible has a **HISTORICAL** and **SITUATIONAL** context

How The Bible Compares

Author	Written	Earliest	Time	MSS
Caesar	100-44BC	900 AD	1000 yrs	10
Plato	427-347 BC	900 AD	1200 yrs	7
Homer	900 BC	400 BC	500 yrs	643
Tacitus	100 AD	1100 AD	1000 yrs	20
Suetonius	75-180 AD	950 AD	800 yrs	8
N.T.	40-100 AD	125 AD	25-50	>24,000

Possible Problems With Exegesis

- Only done with problem texts
- Not the only task - just the first task
- Selective exegesis - I Thess 5:22
- Beginning with the experts
- Use good experts - Mark 10:23

Disciplines Involved in Exegesis

- Original languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek)
- Textual criticism - study of manuscripts
- Customs and culture
- Inspiration and canonicity
- Translation
- Biblical archaeology

How To Do Biblical Exegesis

- Read the passage several times in different versions - note differences in translations
- Begin a close study of the text:
 - What is the historical context?
 - What is the literary context?
 - What is the grammatical construction?
- Develop a tentative reconstruction
- Consult commentaries

Examining The Text

- Autographs - all lost; none extant
- Manuscript copies - variants
- Versions - differing Biblical translations
- Lectionaries - quotations from scripture
- Patristic quotations - early church writers
- Greek text
- Contemporary translations

Examining The Linguistics

- Grammar
- Syntax
- Septuagint
- Vocabulary of writer
 - lexical aids - definitions
 - word studies
 - Hebrew and Greek concordances

Examining The Context

- What does immediate text say?
- What does the chapter say?
- What does the author say elsewhere?
- What does the testament say?
- What do parallel passages say?

Examining The Background

- Who wrote the text?
- When?
- Why?
- What was the setting?
- What was the culture?
- What were the circumstances?

Examining The Foreground

- Writings of early church fathers
- Writings of later church leaders
- Writings of the reformers
- Writings of restoration movement writers
- Writings of modern commentators

Two Keys To Good Exegesis

- Read the text carefully
- Ask the right questions
 - context
 - content

Basic Questions To Ask Of The Text

- What was said?
- Where was it said?
- When was it said?
- Who said it?
- Why did they say it?

Questions or Comments?



Next Week:

Biblical Tools and Translations