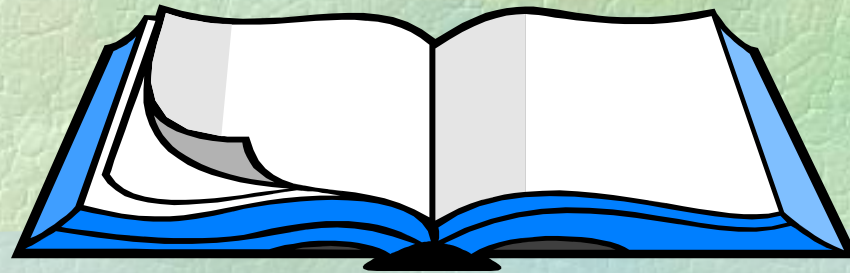


How To Read The Bible



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

Hermeneutics II:



The “New” Hermeneutic

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

Interpretive Corollary Number 1

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

Interpretive Corollary Number 2

Everyone uses a hermeneutic of some type. There is no right or wrong hermeneutic.

Hermeneutics are from man, not God.

Pattern or Authorization Hermeneutics

- Rational approach using inductive reasoning
- View N.T. as “legal code” or “constitution”
- Requires commands, approved examples, or necessary inferences
- Requires authority of silence
- Determines the bounds of fellowship

Positive Attributes Of This Approach

- A statement of faith in God's revelation
- Establishes authority of scripture as primary
- Rejects human creeds and commits us to God's revelation
- Calls us back to God's written word
- The "pattern" concept is biblical

Negative Aspects Of This Approach

- Originates from man, not from God
- Lends itself to legalistic application
- Requires consistency in application
- Puts focus on church rather than on Jesus
- Tends to divide rather than unite believers
- Returns us to an “old law” style covenant

Definition of the “New” Hermeneutic

“In vain, I keep looking for a definitive model or articulated statement of what everyone seems to be calling the “new” hermeneutic.”

F. LaGard Smith
The Cultural Church

Other Hermeneutical Approaches

- Revised Authorization Hermeneutic
- Love Letter Hermeneutic
- Revelation Hermeneutic
- Narrative Hermeneutic
- Utilitarian Hermeneutic
- Pluralistic Hermeneutic

Revised Authorization Hermeneutic

- Purpose
- Principle
- Precedent

Love Letter Hermeneutic

- The social nature of God
- Consequences of free will
- The nature of the enemy
- God's relentless love for man
- Sin and Forgiveness
- The ministry of reconciliation
- The greatest commandments

The Revelation Hermeneutic

- Purpose of Bible is to reveal God's work and will for man
- Tells how God has worked and acted
- Does not necessarily prescribe how God works and acts today
- Views text as spiritual "history" rather than legal document

The Narrative Hermeneutic

- Focuses on narratives, metaphors, and story
- Life changing way of understanding text
- Relates well to contemporary life
- Point of stories may require inference
- “My Story” vs “Your Story”
- Open to cultural relativism

The Utilitarian Hermeneutic

- What works - nothing more, nothing less
- Determined by majority rule
- Determined by “might makes right”
- Leaves God out of the equation

The Pluralistic Hermeneutic

- Based on universal acceptance of all thoughts, beliefs, and actions
- Seeks to include the entire community
- Spirit of gratuitous accommodation
- Focuses on diversity and sensitivity
- Probably the extreme opposite of legalism

Summary of Hermeneutical Approaches

- All are from man, not God
- There is no right or wrong hermeneutic
- Most have positive and negative aspects
- May want to use a “mixed” approach
- It’s okay to use good common sense!

Questions or Comments?



Next Week:

Old Testament Narratives