

Week 5: Biblical Interpretation

Grudem_{ST} 6; Grudem_{BD} 3; Ryrie 16

Hermeneutics: From the Greek word *hermeneuo* (Luke 24:27). *The study of the principles of interpretation.* (Ryrie, 125)

Exegesis: *The actual interpretation of the Bible, the bringing out of its meaning* (Ryrie, 125)

Eisegesis: *A misinterpretation of the text in such a way that it introduces one's own ideas, reading into the text* (Wikipedia)

Bible Interpretation Guidelines: *adapted and expanded from www.carm.org*

1. Who wrote/spoke the passage and to whom was it addressed?
2. What does the passage say?
3. Are there any words or phrases in the passage that need to be examined?
 - a. *Interpret grammatically* – Since words are the vehicles of thoughts, and since the meaning of any passage must be determined by a study of the words therein and the relationships in the sentences, this must be the starting point. (Ryrie, 129)
 - b. Look up words in a concordance, and examine every other usage in context to develop a biblical definition. Also, look up words in a lexicon for more information about the word.
4. What is the immediate context?
 - a. *Interpret contextually* – Since words and sentences do not stand in isolation, the context must be studied to see the relation each verse has with those which precede and those which follow. Then, look to the theme and scope of the entire book. (Ryrie, 129)
5. What is the broader context in the chapter and book?
 - a. Consider the literary genre of the Book, its form and purpose
 - 1) Prose: Narrative, law, gospel, epistle, genealogy
 - 2) Poetry: Wisdom, proverb, psalm, prophecy, apocalypse
6. What are other related Scripture passages and how do they affect the understanding of this passage?
 - a. *Compare Scripture with Scripture* – God's meaning may not be fully revealed in one individual author's writing. It must be compared with the whole of Scripture. (Ryrie, 129)
 - b. *Recognize the progressiveness of revelation* – This means that God may add or even change in one era what He gave in another. Failure to recognize this will raise irresolvable contradictions between passages if taken literally. Examples: Matt 10:5-7 & Matt. 28:18-20; Gen. 17:10 & Gal. 5:2; Ex. 20:8 & Luke 6:1-5 & Col. 2:16-17. (Ryrie, 130)
7. What is the historical and cultural background?
8. What do I conclude about the passage?
 - a. *Literal interpretation* – Understanding words in their "plain" or "normal" sense (Ryrie, 126)
 - b. *Allegorical interpretation* – An allegory is a symbolic representation (figurative). Usually used when the literal sense seems unacceptable. (Ryrie, 125)
 - c. Consider each of the above hermeneutical systems when interpreting these passages
 - 1) What if we interpret these verses literally? - Ps. 18:6-10; Song 7:1-5; John 6:53
 - a) The NT interprets OT figuratively (Is. 40:3-4 > Luke 3:4-6)
 - 2) What if we took these verses figuratively? - Gen. 2:7; John 3:16; Rom. 3:23
 - a) The NT interprets the OT literally (Is. 7:14 > Matt. 1:23)
9. Do my conclusions agree or disagree with other Scripture, and others who have studied the passage?
10. What have I learned and what must I apply to my life?

The Doctrine of Illumination: (Ryrie, 131-133)

- A. *Meaning:* The ministry of the Holy Spirit helping the believer to understand the truth of the Bible
- B. *The Means:* (John 16:12-15; 1Cor 2:9-3:2)
- C. *Not concerned with facts, but using those facts to promote Christ-likeness*

Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God." (Matt. 22:29 NIV) – Jesus never suggests that the Scriptures are unclear. Rather, the responsibility is on us to properly interpret and understand them.