

SECTION 17

Interpretation: What does it mean?

THE ART OF INTERPRETATION

(Determining What the Author Meant By What and How He Said It)

“The aim of good interpretation is simple: to get at the “plain meaning” of the text.... The most important ingredient one brings to that task is enlightened common senses.”

-Gordon Fee

“Many heresies or occasions for controversy through the ages could have been avoided if every interpretation of scripture had been subjected to the test of total scripture.”

- James W. Cox, *Preaching* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 65.

“In expounding the Word of God, there is a grave responsibility upon the preacher to convey the truth without distortion.”-Charles Keller, p.64.

“With eternities at stake, the hearers can not afford to be in error, nor can the spiritual teacher whom he trusts.” (Ibid.)

“Every man has a right to his opinion, but no man has a right to be wrong in his facts.”
(Ibid.)

“The integrity of the pulpit demand accuracy, thoroughness, and a scrupulous regard for text and context.” (Ibid., p. 65.)

I. THE HISTORY OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

1. Ancient Jewish Interpretation
2. Use of the O.T.
3. Patristic Interpretation
4. Medieval Interpretation
5. Reformation Interpretation
6. Post-Reformation Interpretation
7. Modern Interpretation

A. ANCIENT JEWISH INTERPRETATION

1. The ministry of Ezra - Nehemiah 8:8 – “And they read from the book, from the Law of God, translating (explaining) to give the sense so that they (the people) understood the reading.”
2. At the time of Christ - 4 main types of Jewish interpretation existed:
 - Literal - (*peshat*)
 - Midrash - Rabbinic expositional commentary on the OT Rabbi Hillel - developed basic rules of Rabbinic interpretation
 - Peshet - (Hebrew for “commentary”) - unique form of Midrash found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Noted by the phrase “This is that” - meaning “this present phenomenon is a fulfillment of that ancient prophecy.”
 - Allegorical - true meaning lies beneath the literal meaning (symbolic interpretation) Philo of Alexandria (c.20BC - 50AD) was a leading exponent. Often led to fanciful interpretation.

SUMMARY -

1. Literal employed in areas of judicial and practical concerns
2. Mostly employed Midrashic methods
3. Most used allegory to some extent

B. N.T. USE OF THE O.T.

Approximately 10% of the NT is OT quotation, paraphrase, or allusion. Of the 39 OT books, only 9 are not referred to in the NT.

1. Jesus’ use of the OT
 - Jesus accepted the entire OT as Word of God and completely true (Matt. 5:17-18)
 - Normal, literal interpretation as opposed to allegorical was His method.
 - Historical narratives of OT were accepted as straightforward records of fact.

2. Apostles' use of the OT
 - Following Jesus, they viewed Scripture as the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)
 - When quoting the OT, the apostles sometimes modify the wording.
 - Several Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek versions were circulating.
 - It is not necessary to quote the OT verbatim. (Remember the translation issue. Faithfulness not exactness is the issue.)
 - Freedom from verbatim quotation is a sign of mastery of the material.
 - Mostly they interpreted the OT literally - history as history, poetry as poetry, Symbols as symbols, etc. (Literally here = "normally" or "naturally" in its historical-grammatical sense.)

C. PATRISTIC (CHURCH FATHERS) INTERPRETATION (AD 100-500)

*Allegorical method dominated

*2 Major schools of interpretation develop: Alexandria (allegorical) and Antioch (literal)

1. Alexandrian School - (emp. allegorical interpretation)
 - A. Clement of Alexandria (c.150-c.215)
 1. Scripture hides its true meaning behind the literal words.
 2. Hence, there is a need for allegorical method.
 3. Clement accepted the allegorical method of Plato and applied it to the NT Scriptures.
 - B. Irenaeus (d. ca. 200)
 1. Took interpretation in a typological direction.
 2. Followed the principle that obscure passages should be interpreted in light of clear.
 3. Introduced the idea of authoritative exegesis - true meaning of Scripture invested in church where apostolic authority is preserved. (Led to the Catholic error that true interpretation is what the church leaders say it is rather than in careful study of the Bible. Reformation opposed this error vehemently. Catholic Council of Trent affirmed ecclesiastical infallibility).
 - C. Origen (185-254)
 1. Systematized allegorical method.
 2. Wrote *De Principiis* - deals with inspiration and interpretation
 3. All Scripture has a spiritual meaning, not all has a literal meaning.

4. His emphasis on scripture having a divine allegorical meaning which was different from the literal meaning set the tone for interpretation through the Middle Ages.
2. Antioch School (emp. literal interpretation)
 1. Defended the grammatical-historical method of interpretation against the allegorizing of the Alexandrian School.
 2. Literal interpretation of Scripture paramount.
 3. Spiritual meaning not opposed to the literal but flows out of the literal.
 4. Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428) most well known.
 5. Laid groundwork for Reformation and modern evangelical hermeneutics.

*Augustine - (354-430)

1. Wrote *On Christian Doctrine* - outlined rules for interpretation.
2. Tended toward excessive allegorizing.
3. Scripture has a 4-fold sense:
 - Historical
 - Allegorical
 - Tropological - (moral)
 - Anagogical - (spiritual meaning as it relates to the future and the eternal...)

D. MEDIEVAL INTERPRETATION - (600-1500)

Augustine's 4-fold sense of Scripture came to dominate Medieval interpretation. The following little verse was used during the time:

*“The letter shows us what God and our fathers did;
The allegory shows us where our faith is hid;
The moral meaning give us rules of daily life;
The anagogy show us where we end our strife.”*

*William Tyndale (1494-1536) was a forerunner of the Reformation. He aided the return to historical-grammatical interpretation. Addressing this 4-fold approach to Scripture he wrote: “They divide Scripture into four senses, the literal, typological, allegorical, and anagogical. The literal sense is become nothing at all: for the pope hath taken it clean away, and hath made it his profession. He hath partly locked it up with the false and counterfeited keys of his traditions, ceremonies, and feigned lies; and driveth men from it with violence of sword: for no man dare abide by the literal sense of the text, but under a protestation, ‘If it shall please the pope.’ ...Thou

shalt understand, therefore, that the Scriptures hath but one sense, which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth, whereunto if thou cleave, thou canst never err or go out of the way.” -William Tyndale, “The Observance of a Christian Man” in *Doctrinal Treatises* (Cambridge, 1848, pgs. 303-304)

Example: “Jerusalem” in Galatians 4:22 understood in 4 different ways:

- Historically - literally city of the Jews
 - Allegorically - church of Christ
 - Morally - human soul
 - Analogically - heavenly city
1. 2-fold reason for insistence on multiple meanings of Scripture:
 - A. No adequate theory of the relation of revelation to reason had been worked out.
 - B. Through the Greek Patristics and Augustine, Platonism influenced the Christian worldview. God's Word and will not overtly expressed in Scripture, but hidden in symbolic meaning behind the literal words. Scripture was like a Medieval Cathedral, which spoke to the people in the language of symbols.
 2. Thomas Aquinas - (1225-1274)
 - A. Most influential and important theologian of Middle Ages.
 - B. Principle exponent of the literal sense during the Middle Ages.
 - C. Views expressed in his most famous work, *Summa Theologica*.
 - D. Aquinas made the declaration of independence from the allegorical method.
 - E. Catholic Church viewed as the authoritative interpreter of Scripture.

SUMMARY:

1. Late Middle Ages began a return to a study of Hebrew and the production of literal and historical commentaries on the OT.
2. Rejection of the Patristic theological method - theology now divorced from exegesis.
3. This divorce was followed immediately by a remarriage of theology to philosophy.
4. Emphasis on historical studies led to claim of objectivity in interpretive understanding.
5. Heavy emphasis on Rationalism (Aristotleanism).
6. Claim to objectivity would come to fruition in the Modern era of biblical interpretation in a negative way - rejection of inspiration, inerrancy, etc.

7. Throughout Medieval Period, the source of theology is not the Bible alone, but the Bible as interpreted by the Church and tradition.

E. REFORMATION INTERPRETATION - (1500-1600)

2 Watchwords of the Reformation:

Sola Fide - "Faith alone"

Sola Scriptura - "Scripture alone"

1. Luther - (1483-1546)

- Believed Faith and the Spirit's illumination were prerequisites for interpretation.
- Church should not determine what the Scripture,s teach.
- Rejected the allegorical method (called it "dirt" and "scum") in favor of a return to the literal method.
- Affirmed the perspicuity of Scripture - clarity of Bible.
- All OT and NT points to Christ.
- Carefully distinguished between Law and Gospel.
- Scripture is its own best interpreter.

2. John Calvin - (1509-1564)

- Greatest exegete of the Reformation - *Institutes* and *Commentaries* are must reading.
- Rejected allegory in favor of literal interpretation.
- Return to a study of the original languages of Scripture in exegesis.

SUMMARY:

Reformation period was a return to the Bible alone as the sole rule of faith and practice. Rejection of the authority of the Catholic Church in providing the only true interpretation of Scripture. Priesthood of believer rediscovered in biblical interpretation. Translation of Scripture undertaken by Luther and others.

F. POST-REFORMATION INTERPRETATION - (1600-1800)

1. Rationalism - intellectual movement - human mind is an independent authority capable of determining truth.
2. Rationalism became a tool of reason used against the Bible (The Enlightenment).
3. Rise of Empiricism - valid knowledge obtained through the five senses.
4. Scripture subjected to the authority of the human mind rather than the other way around.

17th Century Examples:

- Thomas Hobbes - Anglican Philosopher
- Richard Simon - French Catholic Priest
- Bernard Spinoza - Jewish Philosopher

5. Reason rather than revelation is now the key to biblical interpretation. Later, in reaction to a dead rationalistic religion, there will be a turn to experience.

G. MODERN INTERPRETATION - (1800-PRESENT)

Influenced by Freud, Nietzsche, Darwin and Hegel, the Bible came to be viewed as a record of the evolutionary development of Israel's religious consciousness and an expression of the religious experiences of its authors.

1. 19th Century - Rise of Liberalism

A. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) – “father of modern liberalism”

1. Must interpret the Bible like any other book.
2. Confluence of Rationalism with Subjectivism
3. Rejected the absolute authority of Scripture and a supernatural worldview.
4. Pioneer in Hermeneutics - identified 2 sides to understanding texts:
 - a. Grammatical Interpretation - objective side - focus on grammar, words, etc.
 - b. Technical Interpretation - subjective side - focus on attempts to get into the mind of the author.

B. Birth of the Historical-Critical Method of interpretation

1. Rationalistic assumption
2. Naturalistic worldview
3. Bible's greatest contribution is its moral emphasis rather than its theological teachings.

C. 3 Influential German scholars: F.C. Baur, Julius Wellhausen, and Adolf von Harnack - Harnack's book, *What is Christianity?* (1901), summarized liberal theology as shaped by its biblical interpretation with its evolutionary matrix and antisupernatural worldview.

2. 20th Century (Neo-Orthodoxy)

A. Karl Barth - (1886-1968)

1. Commentary on *Romans* (1919) was a watershed book.

2. Attacked liberalism as inadequate.
 3. Reemphasized authority of Scripture.
 4. Reemphasized need for personal encounter with God.
 5. Multi-volumed *Church Dogmatics* his major work.
- B. Rudolph Bultmann - (1884-1976)
1. Applied method of Form Criticism to Gospel.
 2. He sought to “Demythologize” the Bible, strip away the mythical (supernatural) embellishments/framework.

BASIC TENETS OF NEO-ORTHODOXY

1. Words of the Bible cannot convey the knowledge of God as abstract propositions. God can only be known in personal encounter.
The Bible is not the Word of God but the record of God's involvement in history. The Bible becomes the Word of God to us in existential encounter.
2. A gulf separates God from fallen humanity - myths can bridge this gulf. Neoorthodoxy downplays the historicity of biblical events.
3. Truth is viewed as ultimately paradoxical (dialectical) in nature. There is no underlying rational coherence that binds the diverse ideas of Scripture together.

II. A CRASH COURSE IN LINGUISTICS (Language philosophy at the end of the 20th century.)

A. IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

- **Linguistics** - The study of the structure of language, including phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.
- **Phonology** - The identification and classification of all sounds used in a given language.
- **Morphology** - The study of the structure of words: the classification of word formation including inflection, derivation, prefixes, suffixes, roots, etc.
- **Syntax** - The study of the arrangement of words as elements in phrases, clauses, or sentences to show their relationship. Study of phrase, clause and sentence structure.
- **Semantics** - The branch of Linguistics concerned with meaning, its nature, structure, and development.
- **Grammar** - The study of the forms and structure of words (Morphology) and their arrangements in phrases, clauses, and sentences (Syntax). Also, a system of rules relating to morphology and syntax.
- **Translation** - The transfer of meaning from one language to another.
- **Source Language** - The language we are translating - ex. Greek for the NT
- **Receptor Language** - The language we are translating into - ex. the English Bible for us.
- **Surface Structure** - The form of a text which includes phonology, lexicon, and grammar. Words, phrases, clauses, sentences, etc. are a language's surface structure.
- **Semantic Structure** - The content of a text which includes its meaning.
- **Meaning** - All the relevant information that is transmitted by an act of communication (spoken or written). (See under "Types of Meanings" below)

B. THE HIERARCHY OF LANGUAGE

In all languages words are combined into larger units of meaning: Words - Phrases - Clauses - Sentences - Paragraphs - Discourse

Important principles to remember:

1. The whole is more than the sum of its parts.
2. Language is characterized by the concept of "embedding."
Example: a sentence may have embedded within it smaller sentences I John 1:5 – "God is light" is embedded within the *oti* clause.
3. Language has "content" words and "function" words.

Example: Content words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs
Function words: articles, prepositions, conjunctions

C. TYPES OF MEANING

1. Referential Meaning: that which is being talked about; the subject matter of a text.
2. Situational Meaning: information pertaining to the participants in a communication act (environment, social status, etc.)
3. Structural Meaning: arrangement of the information in the text itself; the grammar and syntax of a text.

Illustration of the 3 types of meaning in the following sentence:

DAVID OWNS A DODGE PICKUP.

Referential Meaning - David, a pickup truck; a relationship that exists between them, namely, ownership. This sentence is about these things.

If the sentence reads: David owns a Dodge clunker.

Situational Meaning: the referents have not changed, but with the substitution of “clunker” for “pickup” we learn something about the attitude of the speaker toward the pickup and possibly toward David. In the first sentence nothing is said about the attitude of the speaker, not so in the second sentence.

If the sentence reads: He owns a Dodge pickup.

Structural Meaning: same referents but “he” is linked to another sentence in context not given here. Furthermore, the structure within this sentence is:

He = pronoun functioning as Subject

owns = verb

a = indefinite article modifying “pickup”

Dodge = adjective modifying “pickup” describing kind

pickup = noun functioning as the object of the verb

D. KEY ELEMENTS IN LANGUAGE THEORY

Semiotics - Study of human communication as a signaling system.

Linguistics - Study of the structure of human communication (written or verbal)

Semantics - Structure and development of meaning in a text

Pragmatics - Circumstances that accompany communication

THE GRAMMATICAL-HISTORICAL APPROACH TO INTERPRETATION

We are to understand the text literally (naturally/normally) not allegorically. Literal - the simple, direct, plain, ordinary meaning We communicate truth in 1 of 2 ways:

1. Literal - no figures of speech...explicit assertion of words.
2. Figurative literal - interpret using the specific intention of the figure and what that figure connotes.

*Importance of Authorial intent cannot be overstated. We should honor the author's intended meaning as discovered in the text (not his mind. Schleirmacher was wrong).

3. To take the figurative-literal text and interpret it as a plain literal text is to interpret it allegorically.
Ex. Isaiah 55:12 - Mountains and Fields
4. To take the plain literal and interpret it as figurative-literal is to interpret it allegorically as well.
5. The joint authorship of Scripture must be affirmed (Confluency) - 100% divine, 100% human.
6. Progressive Revelation - a later author will have fuller insight than an earlier author. A later writer may understand a given passage to imply more than the original author understood or applied (sensus plenary - a hotly debated issue!)
Ex. Matt. 1:23 and Isaiah 7:14 - Matthew infers more from the text than Isaiah stated at the time.

GUIDELINES:

1. Assume a plain literal sense.
2. If plain literal sense involves a contradiction to known literal truth, interpret the passage figuratively. Ex. - Isaiah 55:12
3. If interpreting figuratively, look to the immediate context for the explanation of the figure.
Ex. - Rev. 20:2 - Dragon = Satan
(The material on linguistics comes from David Allen of Criswell College in Dallas, Texas)

III. THE PROCESS OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Hermeneutics is the science and art of interpretation. It is a science because it follows certain rules. It is an art because it is a skill one develops with practice.

Hermeneutics is the study of methodological principles of interpretation which allows us to take what we see and determine what it means.

Three Truths to remember:

1. It takes time - to expose oneself to the brilliance of revealed truth.
2. There is more truth in the Bible than we can grasp in one or many readings. Infinite, eternal truth has this nature.
3. It takes practice and experience - skills to develop an understanding of the text with accuracy.

A. SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION – ANSWERING THE QUESTION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- **Content** - What is actually before you in the text. It is discovered by the results of your observational study. How to read and what to look for is the key (there is a huge difference between seeing and reading).
- **Clue** - The more time spent in observation, the less time you will spend in interpretation and the more accurate will be the results of your interpretation.
- **Context** - What goes before and after? (There is both a near and a far context).
- **Comparison** - Compare Scripture with Scripture.
*Remember the parts always take on meaning in the light of the whole.
- **Culture** - What was the social setting at that time? What was the historical situation? What was the *chronos*, language, customs, political environment?
- **Consultation** - Use resource tools (after you have done personal study). This includes dictionaries, atlases, concordance, commentaries, etc.; check your interpretation with other great women and men of God. If you are the only one to see the text a certain way, you are probably wrong.
- **Construction** - Build an exegetically and homiletically sound outline that arises clearly out of the text. Let the text determine the structure of your outline.

Remember: First comes God's Word, then secondary sources!

B. TEN INTERPRETIVE RULES

Just as there must be the proper use of the proper tools, there must also be the observance of some simple rules if accurate interpretation is to take place. Remember that hermeneutics is both an art and a science; a science because there are rules and principles.

1. Work from the assumption that the Bible is authoritative.
2. Interpret difficult passages in the light of clear passages. Let the Bible interpret itself.
3. Interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in the light of personal experience.
4. Remember that Scripture has only ONE MEANING but many applications.
 - One Meaning (Sense)
 - Many Applications (Significance)
5. Interpret words and passages in harmony with their meaning in the time of the author.

INTERPRETATION IS BRIDGING THE GAPS

- The Language Gap
 - The Historical Gap
 - The Cultural Gap
 - The Geographical Gap
 - The Literary Gap
 - The Theological Gap
6. Interpret Scripture in light of its PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.
 7. Remember you must understand the Bible grammatically before you can understand it theologically
 8. A doctrine cannot be considered biblical unless it includes all the Scriptures say about it. DO not practice “selective citation” or “proof-texting.”
 9. Distinguish between the PROVERBS and the PROMISES of God.
 10. When two doctrines taught in the Bible appear to be contradictory, accept both as Scriptural in the confident belief that they resolve themselves in a higher unity.

CHARLES KOLLER SAYS 3 BASIC STEPS ARE INVOLVED IN THE ANALYSIS OF THE SCRIPTURAL PASSAGE:

1. The Preacher should determine the subject matter of the passage.
2. Divide the passage into sections and dissect the principal idea into sections.
3. Reread the passage as often as necessary to ascertain ideas that sustain and explain the principal idea or superior emphasis.

KOLLER THEN CAUTIONS PREACHERS TO MAINTAIN A WATCHFUL EYE FOR THE FOLLOWING 10 ITEMS:

1. Change of persons.
2. Progression related to time, place, and action.
3. Examples or instances.
4. Enunciation of ideas, principles, or teachings.
5. Parallelism of ideas.
6. Contrasting ideas.
7. Indications of cause and effect.
8. Division of the whole into units.
9. Repetition.
10. Transitional clauses or connective words.

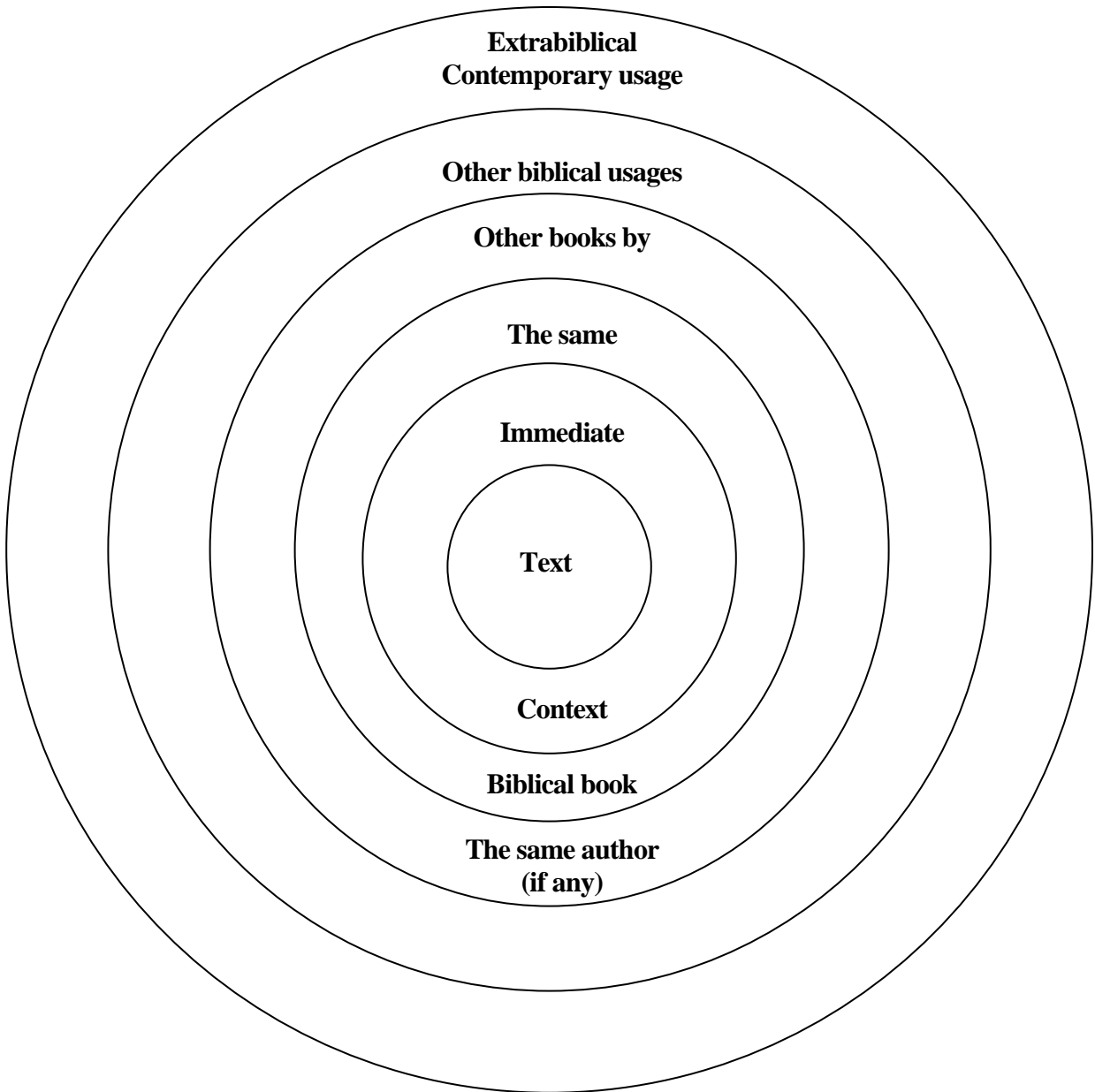
Once these steps have been followed, the preacher should proceed to formulate his analysis of the passage.

SIX STEPS ARE INVOLVED IN THIS PROCESS.

1. Limit the analysis to the contents of the passage.
2. Follow the sequence of the passage.
3. Relate the main points to particular verses in the passage.
4. Relate sub-points to particular verses in the passage.
5. Be concise.
6. Omit irrelevant material.

After intensive investigation, Koller suggests that preachers allow the acquired information “to incubate in their hearts.”

THE PREACHER AND PREPARATION: INVESTIGATION



THE PROCESS OF INTERPRETATION

1. Determine the book's occasion
2. Study the key words
3. Cross reference
4. Identify figures of speech
5. Identify literary devices
6. Identify the type of literature
7. Study the composition

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETATION

1. The context rules when interpreting the text.
2. The text must be interpreted in light of all Scripture.
3. Scripture will never contradict itself.
4. Scripture should be interpreted literally.
5. Do not develop doctrine from obscure or difficult passages.
6. Discover the author's original intended meaning.
7. Check your conclusions using reliable resources.

Analyzing The Text

Verse 1 (1/4 page to a full page)

Verse 2 (1/4 page to a full page)

Verse 3 (1/4 page to a full page)

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1. Pray.
 2. Track the verbs and parse them.
 3. Look for key words needing definition.
 4. Look for repetition of phrases and words.
 5. Look for seams in the text which will inform the number of points and the nature of the sermon outline.
 6. Note the near and far context.
 7. Search for helpful and supporting Scripture.
 8. Write out any and all observations and applications you see in the text.
 9. Examine your study aids and write out any helpful insights (note the source for future reference and appropriate).
 10. Look for exegetical truth and avenues the text logically supports.
 11. Merge your exegesis into the outline structure of your sermon.

Appendix 1

A STUDY METHOD FOR EXPOSITORY PREACHING

John MacArthur, Jr.

(Rediscovering Expository Preaching, 209-222)

Careful and diligent Bible study is the key to effective expository preaching. Because the Bible is God's Holy Word, it must be treated with respect, not expounded flippantly or carelessly. An effective method of sermon preparation is based on general rules for Bible study.

THREE BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR BIBLE STUDY

1. Observation: Answers the question: What does the passage say?
Includes a broad awareness of the terms, structure, and literary forms of the passage.

3 Be's
 - Be careful
 - Be systematic
 - Be persistent

2. Interpretation: Answers the question: What does the passage mean?
 - It is concerned with bridging the gap between the Bible writers and the present day.
 - The Language gap - understand the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
 - The Cultural gap - understand the culture of the time.
 - The Geographical gap - essential in understanding a passage like 1 Thess. 1:8.
 - The Historical gap - often the key to interpretation.

3. Application - Answers the question: How does the passage relate to me?
 - Are there examples to follow?
 - Are there commands to obey?
 - Are there errors to avoid?
 - Are there sins to forsake?
 - Are there promises to claim?
 - Are there new thoughts about God?
 - Are there principles to live by?
 - Meditation - focusing the mind on one subject, involving reason, imagination, and emotions – is an important final step in the process.

Excellent Bible study skills are the foundation upon which good expository sermons are built. The expository preacher is, by definition, a skilled Bible student. He interprets Scripture accurately, applies its truth in his own life, and then proclaims them to his congregation.

STUDYING FOR THE EXPOSITORY SERMON

1. Read the Book - become familiar with the theme, understand the context, put together a general outline and identify key verses.
2. Read the Passage - familiarize yourself with the passage, try to memorize it.
3. Find the Main Point - the 'big idea' or 'the proposition.' It is often connected with the main verb.
4. Write it out in a complete sentence.
5. Organize the Passage - Look for the subordinate points (support the main clause). This is the first step in outlining the passage.
6. Analyze the Structure - Work through the passage in detail in the original language. Use study tools. Diagram the passage. At this point consult good commentaries.
7. Put Together an Exegetical Outline - The final step in the process is to put together a preliminary outline. This is not alliterated. This outline is drawn from the passage.
8. Add Illustrations - Search for the best Bible illustrations, then add other illustrations - if necessary.

(Write Introduction and Conclusion)

THREE KEY WORDS

1. **Inductive** - We approach the text to find out what it means.
2. **Exegetical** - Follow proper exegetical and hermeneutical principles and practice.
3. **Expositional** - Opens up the Word and exposes the less obvious meanings and applications it contains.

Appendix 2

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Figurative (meaning) – “the representation of one concept in terms of another because the nature of the two things compared allows such an analogy.” -(B. Mickelsen, p. 179)

A. Short Figures of Speech

1. **Simile** (resemblance - an explicitly stated comparison using the words “like” or “as”).
 - a. 1 Peter 1:24
 - b. Luke 10:3
2. **Metaphor** (representation) - a comparison by direct assertion or description.
 - a. Isaiah 40:6
 - b. Luke 8:21
3. **Metonymy** (“change of name”) - the substitution of one word for another.
 - a. The cause for the effect: Luke 16:29
 - b. The effect for the cause: Isaiah 22:22
4. **Synecdoche** (transfer) - the substitution of related ideas one for another.
 - a. The part for the whole: Psalm 87:2
 - b. The whole for the part: Luke 2:1
5. **Personification** - ascribing of personal characteristics to animals or objects.
 - a. Isaiah 55:12
 - b. Psalm 114
6. **Apostrophe** - a direct address to a thing as if it were a person.
 - a. Judges 5:3,4
 - b. Zechariah 13:7
7. **Ellipsis** - the omission of a word or phrase necessary for the complete thought.
 - a. Acts 18:6
 - b. Romans 8:3
8. **Hyperbole** - a conscious exaggeration by the author for heightened effect.
 - a. John 21:25
 - b. Deuteronomy 1:28
9. **Litotes** - an understatement or negative to express an affirmation.
 - a. Acts 1:5
 - b. 1 Thess. 2:14,15
10. **Irony** - using language in an opposite or different meaning than stated for the purpose of ridicule.
 - a. I Kings 18:27
 - b. Job 12:2

11. **Paradox** - a statement of truth in what appears a contradiction of ideas.
 - a. Matt. 13:12
 - b. Mark 8:35
12. **Anthropomorphism** - ascribing human characteristics to God.
 - a. Psalm 19:1
 - b. Psalm 59:1
13. **Anthropopathism** - ascribing human emotions to God.
 - a. Psalm 95:10
 - b. Zechariah 8:1
14. **Euphemism** - the substitution of a less direct or offensive word for one more graphic.
 - a. Judges 3:24
 - b. Acts 1:25
15. **Rhetorical Question** - a question asked which does not expect a verbal response but one which forces the responder to consider the implications mentally.
 - a. Jeremiah 32:37
 - b. Romans 8:31-34

B. DISTINGUISHING THE FIGURATIVE AND THE LITERAL

1. Always use the literal sense unless there is some good reason for departure.
Ex. Rev. 7:1-8
2. Use the figurative sense when the passage is stated to be figurative.
Ex. Zech. 12:6
3. Use the figurative sense if the literal involves an impossibility.
Ex. Jer. 1:18; Rev. 1:16
4. Use the figurative sense if the literal commands immoral action.
Ex. John 6:53
5. Use the figurative sense if the expression fits into one of the classes of the figures of speech.
Ex. Zech. 12:2
6. Use the figurative sense if the literal is contrary to the context and scope of the passage.
Ex. Zech. 13:1; Matt. 5:42; Rev. 20:1 (chain)
7. Use the figurative sense if the literal is contrary to the general character and style of the book.
8. Use the figurative sense if the literal is contrary to the plan and purpose of the author.
9. Use the figurative sense if the literal involves a contradiction with a parallel passage.
10. Use the figurative sense if the literal involves a contradiction of doctrine.

C. SUMMARY PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

1. Determine if a figure of speech is used.
2. Determine the image and referent.
3. State the purpose for the figure.
4. Don't assume a figure always means the same thing.
5. Place limits of control by the use of logic and language.

D. SAMPLE PROCEDURE

FIGURE	IMAGE	REFERENT	POINT OF COMPARISON
Simile (Psalm 1:3)	Tree	Believer	Growth, Fruitfulness, Stability

The devotional method of studying the Bible is rooted in a strong desire to apply the Bible to one's everyday life. It correctly believes that the Words of Scripture are clear enough to be understood in their basic message, but it does not demand that all Scripture be equally clear and perspicuous. The reader is dependent on the Holy Spirit for the work of illuminating those Scriptures use in a devotional study. Especially included in the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit are the issues of application, the ministry of encouragement and the task of convicting of sin as readers are exposed to the Scriptures.

Central to the devotional method is the act of meditating on the Word of God. Meditation does not have as its goal self-abnegation, as it usually does in oriental religions and some of the contemporary cults. Instead, biblical meditation seeks to establish communion with and the worship of the living God by involving the entirety of one's person - body, soul, and mind. It uses the Scriptures as the place where meditation is centered.