

**SUBJECT: "BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS"**

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- Definition - Biblical hermeneutics is the science of knowing how to properly interpret the various types of literature found in the Bible. By literature we mean psalms, prophecy, proverb, a law. Its purpose is to help us to know how to interpret, understand, and apply the Bible!
- This simply means to "rightfully divide" the word of truth! **NO ONE can rightfully divide the Word without the Holy Ghost!**
- Read II Pet.1:20-21; This is our base, our foundation...without this everything else is built on a false premise.
- Many Bible scholars state that the Bible contains the "Word of God." Wrong premise...the Bible is the "Word of God."
- The most important law of biblical hermeneutics is that the Bible should be interpreted literally. Literal Bible interpretation means you understand the Bible in its normal/plain meaning.
- The Bible says what it means and means what it says. Many make the mistake of trying to read between the lines and come up with meanings for Scriptures that are not truly in the text.
- **Biblical hermeneutics keeps us faithful to the intended meaning Scripture and away from allegorizing and symbolizing Bible verses and passages that should be understood literally.**
- A second crucial law of biblical hermeneutics is that a verse or passage must be interpreted historically, grammatically, and contextually.
- ***Historical interpretation*** refers to understanding the culture, background and situation which prompted the text.

- **Grammatical interpretation** is recognizing the rules of grammar and nuances of the Hebrew and Greek languages and applying those principles to the understanding of a passage.
- **Contextual interpretation** involves always taking the surrounding context of a verse/passage into consideration when trying to determine the meaning.
- Some mistakenly view biblical hermeneutics as limiting our ability to learn new truths from God's Word or stifling the Holy Spirit's ability to reveal to us the meaning of God's Word.
- The goal of biblical hermeneutics is to point us to the correct interpretation which the Holy Spirit has already inspired into the text.
- Therefore the purpose of biblical hermeneutics is to protect us from improperly applying Scripture to a particular situation.
- **WHAT IS BIBLICAL EXEGESIS?** *EXEGESIS* means "exposition or explanation." It involves the examination of a particular text of Scripture in order to properly interpret it. A person who practices exegesis is called an "exegete."
- The word literally means "to lead out of." That means that the interpreter is led to his conclusions by following the text.
- The opposite approach to Scripture is **EISEGESIS**, which is the interpretation of a passage based on a subjective, non-analytical reading. The word eisegesis literally means "to lead into," which means the interpreter injects his own ideas into the text, making it mean whatever he wants.
- **Eisegesis** is a mishandling of the text and often leads to a misinterpretation. Exegesis is concerned with discovering the true meaning of the text, respecting its grammar, syntax, and setting.
- **Eisegesis** is concerned only with making a point, even at the expense of the meaning of words.
- Read 2 Tim.2:15;
- There are some basic principles of good exegesis which must be followed: **The Grammatical Principle** - The Bible was written in human language, and language

has a certain structure and follows certain rules. We must interpret the Bible in a manner consistent with the basic rules of language.

- Start your examination of a passage by defining the words in it. Definitions are basic to understanding the passage as a whole, and it is important that the words be defined according to their original intent and not according to modern usage.
- To ensure accuracy, the exegete uses a precise translation and Greek and Hebrew dictionaries.
- **The Literal Principle** - We assume that each word in a passage has a normal, literal meaning, unless there is good reason to view it as a figure of speech. The exegete does not go out of his way to spiritualize or allegorize. Words mean what words mean.
- If the Bible mentions "horse", it means a horse. When the Bible speaks of the Promised Land, it means a literal land given to Israel and should not be interpreted as a reference to heaven.
- **The Historical Principle** - As time passes, culture changes, points of view change, languages change. We must guard against interpreting scripture according to how our culture views things; we must always place scripture in its historical context.
- The diligent Bible student will consider the geography, the customs, the current events, and even the politics of the time when a passage was written.
- Also, an understanding of ancient Jewish culture can greatly aid in our understanding of the scripture. Use Biblical dictionaries, **glean from commentaries**, and use books on history.
- **The Synthesis Principle** - The best interpreter of the scripture is scripture itself. We must examine a passage in relation to its immediate context (verses surrounding it), its wider context (the book it's found in), and its complete context (The Bible as a whole).
- One thing we must understand this morning, the Bible does not contradict itself! Any theological statement in one verse can and should be harmonized with theological statements in other parts of scripture.

- Good Bible interpretation relates any one passage to the total content of scripture.
- **The Practical Principle** - Once we have properly examined the passage to understand its meaning, we have the responsibility to apply it to our own lives. To "rightly divide the word of truth" is more than an intellectual exercise; it is a life-changing event.
- **The First Mention Principle** - That principle by which God indicates in the first mention of a subject, the truth with which that subject stands connected in the mind of God.
- In other words, the first occurrence of a word, expression, or utterance, is the key to its subsequent meaning, or it will be a guide to ascertaining the essential truth connected with it.
- *The first time a thing is mentioned in Scripture it carries with it a meaning that will be carried all through the Word of God.*
- Example...we find 13 in Scripture used in connection with rebellion. All through Scripture, 13 is a number that has in it the note of rebellion against God. It foreshadows "apostasy." There is only one speaker throughout all Scripture, although there are many mouths.
- Only one providing, governing, controlling mind (Heb.1:1). God spake through holy men of old....
- No matter when, where, or how, the message is the given, God is the speaker, and since there is only one speaker, and since that speaker knows from the beginning what He is going to say, He can so shape the first utterances as to forecast everything that is to follow.
- Example..."The subtlety of satan" Gen.3:1; This is the first time the serpent is mentioned, and the characteristic mentioned is subtlety. All through the Book you will find satan to subtle. Expect subtlety every you met him. Matt. 4 (Jesus with "hunger")