



Hermeneutics

Session 1: Introduction to Terms

Definitions

- Hermeneutics
- Exegesis
- Eisegesis

HERMENEUTICS

- The science of interpretation
- The art of interpretation
- Interpretation of anything
- Interpretation of Scripture

EXEGESIS

- “ex” means “out of”
- **Exegesis** draws meaning **out of** a text

EISEGESIS

- “eis” means “into”
- **Eisegesis** reads meaning **into** a text

Hermeneutics

Session 2

The Need for Hermeneutics

In-Class Exercise

- In order to be an informed citizen, you regularly read your local newspaper. Are you typically aware of the process of interpretation you utilize to understand the articles? Why, or why not?

In-Class Exercise

- Suppose you were to read Abraham Lincoln's *Emancipation Proclamation* written in 1863. Are you likely to be more aware or less aware of your hermeneutical process?
- Consider the same question for your reading of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

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- Describe the additional barriers to understanding that exist for you when you read the *Emancipation Proclamation* and *Macbeth* that do not exist when you read today's newspaper.

Four Barriers to Spontaneous Understanding of Scripture

1. Historical gap

Four Barriers to Spontaneous Understanding of Scripture

1. Historical gap
2. Cultural gap

Four Barriers to Spontaneous Understanding of Scripture

1. Historical gap
2. Cultural gap
3. Philosophical/worldview gap

Four Barriers to Spontaneous Understanding of Scripture

1. Historical gap
2. Cultural gap
3. Philosophical/worldview gap
4. Linguistic gap



Hermeneutics

Session 3

Issues in Hermeneutics: Inspiration,
Inerrancy, and Infallibility

“The Bible is an inspired text.”

View 1:

The biblical writers were inspired in somewhat the same sense as Shakespeare and other great writers.



- Hermeneutic:

- The Old Testament transcribes primitive Hebrew religious conceptions about God and his workings. The interpreter should develop theories of how editors pieced the ancient manuscript together from previous writings in an attempt to determine what the compilations reveal about the growing spiritual awareness of the compilers.

“The Bible is an inspired text.”

View 2:

God reveals himself in acts, not words. The words of the Bible are a human attempt to express an encounter with God in human, culturally meaningful words. The Bible *becomes* the Word of God when individuals read it and the words acquire personal, existential significance for them.

- Hermeneutic:

- The reader should attempt to remove the archaic kernel (meaningful in a previous culture but not in ours) in which existential truth exists so that she or he may have a personal encounter with that truth.

“The Bible is an inspired text.”

View 3:

God worked through the personalities of the biblical writers in such a way that, without suspending their personal styles or expression or freedom, what they produced was literally “God-breathed.” Scripture itself, not only its writers, was inspired.

- Hermeneutic:

- Read Scripture to seek the objective, propositional truth it presents. Scripture is true whether or not the reader appropriates it personally.

Inerrancy

- Full Inerrancy:

The original manuscripts of Scripture are without error in ALL those things that they assert.

Full Inerrancy

- It is important to distinguish levels of intended precision. Full inerrancy maintains that statements in Scripture are understood within the parameters of precision intended by their authors.

Full Inerrancy

1. Numbers are often given approximately, a frequent practice in popular communication (Acts 2:41).

Full Inerrancy

2. Speeches and quotations may be paraphrased rather than reproduced verbatim, a usual practice when summarizing someone's words (Acts 7:2f).

Full Inerrancy

3. The world may be described in phenomenological terms (how events appear to human viewers) (Judges 19:14).

Full Inerrancy

4. Speeches made by people are recorded or paraphrased accurately without implying that what these persons communicated was correct (Job 11:1f).

Inerrancy

- Limited Inerrancy

Scripture is without error in matters of faith and practice. The biblical writings may include errors on other matters such as history, geography, science, and so forth.

In-class Discussion

- How might my interaction with a biblical text (my rules of interpretation) vary if my view on inerrancy shifts?

Arguments for Full Inerrancy

1. Jesus consistently treated the historical narratives of the OT as straightforward records of fact.

Arguments for Full Inerrancy

1. Jesus consistently treated the historical narratives of the OT as straightforward records of fact.
2. Jesus often chose as the basis of his teaching those very stories that modern critics find unacceptable.

Discuss

- What position should we take on inerrancy?

Infallibility

- The Bible cannot fail to achieve its purpose.

- What is the Bible's purpose?

Hermeneutics

Session 4

Issues in Hermeneutics: Where Does
Meaning Reside?

The Naphtunkian's Dilemma

- *Situation:* You once wrote a letter to a close friend. Enroute to its destination the postal service lost your message, and it remained lost for the next two thousand years, amid nuclear wars and other historical transitions. One day it is discovered and reclaimed. Three poets from the contemporary Naphtunkian society translate your letter separately, but unfortunately arrive at three different meanings. “What this means to me,” says Tunky I, “is . . .” “I disagree,” says Tunky II. “What this means to me is . . .” “You’re both wrong,” claims Tunky III. “My interpretation is the correct one.”

The Naphtunkian's Dilemma

- *Resolution:* As a dispassionate observer viewing the controversy from your celestial (we hope) perspective, what advice would you like to give the Tunkies to resolve their differences? We will assume that you have been a fairly articulate writer.

The Naphunktian's Dilemma

- a. Is it possible that your letter actually has more than one valid meaning? If your answer is “Yes,” go to (b). If “no,” go to (c).
- b. If your letter can have a variety of meanings, is there any limit on the number of its valid meanings? If there is a limit, what criteria would you propose to differentiate between valid and invalid meanings?
- c. If there is only one valid meaning of your letter, what criteria will you use to discern whether Tunky I, II, or III has the best interpretation?
- If you conclude that Tunky II's interpretation is superior, how would you justify this to Tunkies I and III?



Hermeneutics

Session 5

Issues in Hermeneutics: The Role of the
Holy Spirit

In-Class Exercise

- Group 1

- “An unbeliever cannot understand Scripture.”

- Group 2

- “An unbeliever can understand Scripture just as well as a believer can.”

“An unbeliever cannot understand Scripture.”

- “A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor. 2:14).

“An unbeliever can understand Scripture just as well as a believer.”

- The Bible is a book. Any literate person can read and understand a book by looking at the meaning of the words, the rules of grammar, and so on. One's religious convictions have no effect on the ability to read and understand.

Can an unbeliever understand Scripture?

- Yes and no
 - The reality of sin
 - Matching presuppositions to those of the text's author
 - Understanding is not merely cognitive but experiential

In-Class Exercise

- Group 1

- As a believer, when I interpret Scripture I can expect the Holy Spirit to. . .

- Group 2

- As a believer, when I interpret Scripture I cannot expect the Holy Spirit to. . .

I can expect the Holy Spirit to . . .

- bring understanding of the things of God.
 - “13 But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you” (John 16:13-14).
- apply and convict

I cannot expect the Spirit to . . .

- do all the work for me
- take the place of my mind/guarantee accurate intellectual understanding
- create new meaning
- do my Hermeneutics homework

Sensus Plenior

- Sensus plenior (“fuller sense”): the belief that the Holy Spirit may intend a fuller meaning than that intended by the human author.
- This is an issue that arises primarily with the interpretation of prophetic texts.

Support of Sensus Plenior

- “As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look” (1 Peter 1:10-12).

Support of Sensus Plenior

- “As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, “My lord, what *will be* the outcome of these *events?*” 9 He said, “Go *your way*, Daniel, for *these* words are concealed and sealed up until the end time” (Daniel 12:8).

Opposition to Sensus Plenior

- If we accept sensus plenior, we open the door to all kinds of possible misinterpretations and eisegesis.
- 1 Peter 1:10–12 may simply mean that the OT prophets did not know the time of the fulfillment of their prophecy even though they knew the meaning.

Opposition to Sensus Plenior

- Sometimes the prophets understood the meaning of their words but not the full implications of them (see John 11:50).
- At times the OT prophets could have understood the meaning of their prophecy but not its historical referent.

In-Class Exercise

- Discuss: Does *sensus plenior* exist?
 - If yes, how are the “fuller meanings” of a text identified?
 - If no, how do you explain a passage like Matthew 1:22–23?

Hermeneutics

Session 6

History of Hermeneutics: The Old
Testament through the New Testament

Why Study the History of Hermeneutics?

- To realize that our method is not the only one
- To identify (and hopefully avoid) mistakes of the past
- As a caution that good theory and good practice do not always go hand in hand

Ancient Jewish Hermeneutics

- Hermeneutics begins following the Babylonian Captivity
 - “They [Ezra and the Levites] read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they [the people] understood the reading” (Nehemiah 8:8).

Four Strands of Ancient Jewish Hermeneutics

- Literal (*Peshat*)
- Midrash
- Peshet
- Allegorical

Literal (*Peshat*)

- Often not recorded in written form
- Rules of Hillel:
 - Inference from lesser to greater
 - Analogy of expression
 - Application from specific to general
 - Inference from general to specific
 - Reading in light of context

Midrash

- “Exposition”
- Focus on making texts relevant or applicable to the contemporary situation
- Pharisees, Mishnah, Talmuds
- Led to fanciful and imaginative interpretation
- Letterism

Pesher

- Eschatological midrash
- “This is that. . .”
- Dead Sea Scrolls

Allegorical

- Details are thought to be symbolic of deeper spiritual truth
- Philo

Hermeneutics in the New Testament

- New Testament authors' quotation of and allusion to Old Testament texts is plentiful
- Discuss: Did the New Testament authors use all four of the methods above?



Hermeneutics

Session 8

History of Hermeneutics: Patristics
through Reformation

Patristic Hermeneutics (AD 100–600)

- Three broad categories
 - Alexandrian School
 - School of Antioch
 - Western School

Alexandrian School

- Clement of Alexandria (AD 150–215)
- Origen (AD 185–253)
- Threefold sense of Scripture
- Allegorical method

School of Antioch

- Spiritual sense is in no way separate from the literal sense.

Western School

- A mixed bag
- Augustine (AD 354–430)
 - Interpreters must have Christian faith.
 - The literal and historical meaning is held in high regard.
 - Scripture has more than one meaning so allegory is also a proper method.
 - The interpreter should seek the meaning of the author rather than his own meaning.
 - A verse should be studied in context.
 - Obscure passages should be interpreted in light of clear passages.

Western School

- “Rule of faith”
- Fourfold sense of Scripture
 - Literal
 - Allegorical
 - Tropological (moral and ethical)
 - Anagogical (mystical or eschatological)

Middle Ages (AD 600–1500)

- Few hermeneutical developments
 - Limited access to Scripture

Middle Ages (AD 600–1500)

- Continuation of fourfold sense of Scripture
 - “The *letter* (literal) shows us what God and our fathers did (historical). The *allegory* shows us where our faith is hid. The *moral* meaning gives us rules for daily life. The *anagogy* shows us where we end our strife (eschatological).”

Middle Ages (AD 600–1500)

- Continuation of “rule of faith”
 - “Learn first what you should believe, and then go to the Bible and find it there.” – Hugo of St. Victor

Middle Ages (AD 600–1500)

- Cabbalists
 - Extreme letterism

Middle Ages (AD 600–1500)

- Few advocates of peshat
 - Spanish Jews of twelfth through fifteenth centuries
 - Victorines at Abbey of St. Victor
 - Nicholas of Lyra
 - Consult the original languages

Middle Ages (AD 600–1500)

- Chapter and verse divisions added

- Discuss:
 - Does the presence of chapter and verse demarcations influence your interpretive process?
 - How?
 - What advantages do they provide?
Disadvantages?

Reformation (1500s)

- Groundwork with original languages laid by Reuchlin and Erasmus.

Reformation (1500s)

- Martin Luther
 - Translated the Bible into the vernacular
 - Advocated literal interpretation
 - Perspicuity of Scripture
 - Rejected allegorical interpretation
 - “Christ principle”

Reformation (1500s)

- John Calvin (1509–1564)
 - *Sola Scriptura* replaced “rule of faith”
 - “It is the first business of an interpreter to let the author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say.”

Reformation (1500s)

- William Tyndale

- “Thou shalt understand, therefore, that the Scripture 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.”

Hermeneutics

Session 9

History of Hermeneutics: Reformation
through Twentieth-Century Developments

Post-Reformation (1550–1800s)

- Three trends
 - Confessionalism
 - Pietism
 - Rationalism/Liberalism

Confessionalism

- Dogmatics
- Proof-texting

Pietism

- Arose in reaction to bitter fighting of the Reformation
- Used Scripture for mutual Christian concern
- Early Pietists used grammatical-historical methods.
- Later Pietists used subjective, pious reflections

Rationalism/Liberalism

- Rationalism upheld human reason as the highest authority
 - Ministerial use of reason
 - Magisterial use of reason

Rationalism/Liberalism

- The application of rationalistic principles to theology results in theological liberalism
- Focus on human authorship rather than divine authorship

Rationalism/Liberalism

- Limited inerrancy
- Rejection of the supernatural
- Source criticism

Trends of Twentieth-Century Hermeneutics

- Dominance of Historical-Critical Method
- Neoorthodoxy
- “New Hermeneutic”
- Structuralism
- Reader-Response
- Deconstructionism

Historical-Critical Method

- Emphasis on the human author

- Naturalism

- Evolutionary models
 - What sources does this text incorporate?
 - What does the text tell me about the developing religious consciousness of this primitive Hebrew cult?

Historical-Critical Method

- Source Criticism
 - Pentateuch: Documentary Hypothesis
 - Gospels: Two-Source Theory and “Q”
- Form Criticism



Hermeneutics

Session 10

History of Hermeneutics: Twentieth-Century Developments, cont.

Neoorthodoxy

- Bible as myth
- Method is to demythologize to an existential core
- Rudolf Bultmann

“New Hermeneutic”

- Not a method per se
- Asks *how* understanding occurs

“New Hermeneutic”

1. Texts are distanced from their authors

- Author’s intended meaning is irretrievable because a text stands in the author’s place
- Reading is an encounter with the subject discussed in the text NOT an encounter with an author
- Thiselton’s example: joy

“New Hermeneutic”

2. The reader contributes to the interpretive process

- Preunderstanding

- Does preunderstanding influence interpretation?
- Does preunderstanding determine interpretation?

“New Hermeneutic”

- H. G. Gadamer
- “Fusion of horizons” as goal of interpretation
 - Author’s horizons
 - Reader’s horizons
 - A fusion is a mutual influencing

Structuralism

- Desired a “scientific” approach to studying literature that would produce consistent results
- Deep structures exist for all texts
- The goal of interpretation is to reconstruct these deep structures

Structuralism

- Several kinds of structuralist approaches
 - Actantial analysis
 - Sender
 - Subject
 - Helper
 - Opponent
 - Object
 - Receiver

Structuralism

- Several kinds of structuralist approaches
 - Paradigmatic analysis
 - Repetition
 - Binary opposites
 - Metaphor and metonymy
 - Diachronic/synchronic study

Reader-Response

- Two kinds of reader-response:
 - Moderate reader-response
 - Radical reader-response

Moderate Reader-Response

- Reader *contributes* to the meaning
- See “New Hermeneutic”
- Multiple, but limited, interpretations possible

Radical Reader-Response

- Reader *produces* the meaning
 - The “reader’s response is not *to* the meaning; it *is* the meaning.” – Stanley Fish
- Unlimited possible meanings

Radical Reader-Response

- Reader = “reading community”
 - Communities have shared preunderstandings because of similar social locations and experiences.
 - Communities establish localized rather than normative meanings.

Radical Reader-Response

- Socio-Critical Theologies
 - Liberation
 - Feminist
 - Black
 - Queer

Deconstructionism

- Meaning can never be fixed.
 - “Iterability alters.” – Jacques Derrida
- The interpreter should “play” with the text so as to avoid all normative interpretation.
 - Musical example

Hermeneutics

Session 12
Steps in the
Exegetical Process

Pre-Steps to the Exegetical Process

- Determining the Text
- Observations

The Text

- What constitutes an appropriate passage to study? Where do I start and stop the passage?
- What words did my author write? Since we don't have his original copy, is there any debate about the text he actually penned?
- Which translation should I work from if I don't know the original languages?

Observations

- What factual observations can I draw from this text?
- What have I read into the text?

The Exegetical Process

- Historical-Cultural and Contextual Analysis
- Lexical Analysis
- Canonical and Theological Analysis
- Literary (Genre) Analysis
- Secondary Sources
- Application

Historical-Cultural and Contextual Analysis

- Broad Historical-Cultural
 - What significant philosophical, geographical, historical, or cultural influences do I need to know to understand this text?

Historical-Cultural and Contextual Analysis

- Narrow Historical

- What is the specific history of this written text?
 - Author
 - Audience
 - Dating
 - Situation for Writing

Historical-Cultural and Contextual Analysis

- Contextual: Outlining
 - How does my passage fit into the larger literary context in which it is found?
 - Outline

Historical-Cultural and Contextual Analysis

- Contextual: Logical Relationships
 - What is the flow or logic *within* my passage?
 - Sentence flow

Lexical Analysis

- What do the words in my text mean?
 - Unclear words
 - Repeated words
 - “Technical” words

Canonical and Theological Analysis

- How does the rest of biblical teaching relate to my passage?
- What other passages speak of similar issues?
- To what systematic categories does my text contribute?

Literary (Genre) Analysis

- What literary genre is my text?
- What reading strategy does the author expect a reader of that genre to use?
- What pitfalls do I need to avoid in interpreting this genre?

Secondary Sources

- What have other students of this text understood it to be saying?
- What issues have I missed?

Application

- How does this text apply today?
- What principles does the text convey?
- Are there any culturally comparable situations to the situation of the text?
- Are the commands of the text culturally bound or transcultural?



Hermeneutics



Session 15
Observations

Mark 14:3–9

- While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly. “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

Describe the woman

- Is she of questionable background?
- Does she have great faith?
- Is she Mary?
 - Of Bethany?
 - Magdalene?

Observation vs. Interpretation

■ Observation:

- An act or instance of noticing or perceiving
- An act or instance of regarding attentively or watching
- An act or instance of viewing or noting a fact of occurrence

■ Interpretation:

- To set forth the meaning of; explain; explicate; elucidate
- To construe or understand in a particular way

Example

- Observation:
 - The man opened the door for the woman.

- Interpretations:
 - He has romantic intentions.
 - He's being helpful.
 - He's being chauvinistic.

Example

- Observation:

- A student fails to submit homework when I collect it in class.

- Interpretation:

- He is lazy.
- He has poor time-management skills.
- He failed to understand the assignment.
- He had a family emergency.
- He already slipped it under my office door.

Reader's Digest example

- “Every year there’s a softball game between our marketing department and support staff. And every year, the support staff wins. Or so they thought before the spinmeisters [interpreters] took over. “The marketing department is pleased to announce,” read a memo issued to all employees after the game, “that for the 2005 softball season, we came in second place, having lost but one game all year. The support department, however, had a rather dismal season, as they won only one game.”

Observations vs. Interpretations

- Observations generally answer:
 - Who?
 - What?
 - When?
 - Where?
- If someone can disagree with you, you have probably made an interpretation.

Why Observe?

- The same facts can be open to multiple interpretations.
 - It is not wrong to interpret. We just need to know when we're doing it.
 - Observations can be asserted. Interpretations must be supported.

Why Observe?

- We so often miss details
 - Story of Agassiz and the fish

Observation Worksheet

- Use the New American Standard
- Write in full sentences
- Provide parenthetical verse references for each observation

Hermeneutics

Session 16
More Observations

Review

- An observation is factual. No one can disagree with it.
- Often observations answer who, what, when, or where.

Acts 1:8

- “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”



Hermeneutics

Session 17

Historical-Cultural Analysis: Broad
Historical Issues

Historical-Cultural Analysis

- Fact: We face a historical and cultural gap when we read the Bible.

What Is Culture?

- Eugene Nida: “All learned behavior which is socially acquired; that is the material and non-material traits that are passed on from one generation to another.”



■ Culture provides:

- Set of accepted behaviors/values for a community
- Set of possibilities
- Set of personal and collective lived experiences

Discuss

- Have you ever had a cross-cultural experience? In that experience did you experience any “cultural misunderstandings?”

Broad Historical-Cultural Analysis

- “What significant philosophical, geographical, historical, or cultural influences are in the background of this text?”
 - I have to ask this question because
 - God’s revelation took place within history
 - I do not share the same history and culture as the biblical authors

Example One

- A young boy in a cowboy hat knocks on the door of a stranger's home, waves a gun, and makes a demand. The homeowner appears unfazed by the child's clothing, gives the child what he demands, and sends him to the house next door where the scenario repeats itself.

Example One

- What cultural context is an important background to this scenario?
 - The awareness that this event occurred on Halloween along with an explanation of “trick or treating” would be necessary to prevent the bewildered observer from calling the police.

Example Two

- An individual with a beat-up sac stands on the side of the road. He put his thumb in the air and got a ride to the next town.

Example Two

- What cultural context is an important background to this scenario?
 - Hitchhiking

Genesis 15:9ff

- 9 So the LORD said to him [Abram], “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.” 10 Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. . . . 17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendents I give this land. . . .”

Brainstorm Questions

- What is a covenant?
- How are animals used in establishing a covenant?
- Why does the smoking firepot pass between the pieces?

Genesis 29

- “When the morning came, there was Leah.”
- Research ancient Near Eastern wedding customs

Sources

- Questions about geography
 - Consult a Bible atlas

Sources

- Questions about large-scale historical developments
 - Consult
 - Old/New Testament History
 - Old/New Testament Introduction
 - Old/New Testament Survey

Sources

- Questions about specific cultural practices
 - Consult
 - Bible handbooks
 - Bible dictionaries
 - Old/New Testament introductions
 - Commentaries

Cautions

- Beware of using theological dictionaries in this step
- Beware of anachronistic information

Hermeneutics

Session 18

Historical-Cultural Analysis: Broad
Historical Issues, cont.

Romans 14

- “One man’s faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.”

-
- Meat
 - Vegetables
 - Food
 - Food offered to idols

1 Corinthians 9:24–25

- “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.”

1 Corinthians 9:24–25

- Running
- Prize
- Athletic competition
- Crown

Matthew 1:18–20

- Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 1:18–20

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Engagement
- Betrothal

-
- Brainstorm topics for broad historical-cultural analysis in your texts!



Hermeneutics

Session 19

Historical-Cultural Analysis: Narrow
Historical Issues

Narrow Historical Context

- We want to know the history and culture of the people involved with that particular literary creation.
 - Author
 - Audience
 - Date
 - Provenance
 - Purpose

Author

- Does it give a name?
- Can you conclude the author's ethnicity (Jew, gentile) and/or region of origin?
- Is the author an eyewitness of recorded events?
- What kind of person is the author?
Background? Traits?

Audience

- Who is the intended/original audience of the writing?
- Are they people in a specific geographic region?
- Can you determine the social and/or economic background?
- What customs/concepts are they familiar with and what customs/concepts must the author explain?
- What is their spiritual state?
- What is their relationship to the author?
- Is the author in the community with them or writing from a distance?

Dating

- Can you specify a year or a time range?
- What historical events or people are referenced?
- What notable historical events or people are not referenced?
- If you have a timeline for the author's life, when in his/her life was it written?
- If the author has written multiple texts, when was this text written in comparison to others?

Provenance

- Where was the document written?
- Does the author explicitly state his/her location or context?
- What implicit information is given?

Purpose

- Does the author state a purpose for writing?
- What events or information prompted the author to write to these people at this time?
- What does the author want the audience to do as a result of this information?

Two-Step Process

1. Consult the text itself

- What does the author explicitly or implicitly reveal about his life, his background, his identity?
- What knowledge does he assume his readers have? What must he explain to them?
- What historical events are mentioned that might help you to date the writing?
- What topics receive the most attention, suggesting the primary purpose or theme of the writing as a whole?

Two-Step Process

2. Confirm and augment your work by consulting secondary sources about these issues. Secondary sources will alert you to the conversations in the field regarding author, audience, dating, and so on.

Introduction information in a commentary

OT/NT introduction

Bible dictionary that gives introductory info

Hermeneutics

Session 20

Contextual Analysis: Outlining

Contextual Analysis

- Broad – Outlining
- Narrow – Logical Relationships

Broad Contextual Analysis

- What is the literary context of my passage?
- How does my passage fit into the larger context in which it is found?
- How do the main points of my passage relate to the main points of the writing (letter, gospel, history, etc.) as a whole?

Difference from Historical Analysis

- The analysis of literary context has different interests from historical analysis.
- **It is concerned not with the entire historical context but with the particular way a biblical author has placed an individual passage within an entire block of literature.**

-
- For biblical exegesis, the most important literary context of a passage is the entire biblical book in which it is found. How a given passage fits within that book – what it contributes to the entire flow of that book AND what the structure of that book contributes to it – is of significant interest in the literary context step in exegesis.

Hermeneutical Circle

- One cannot fully understand a selected passage without understanding the literary whole in which it is found.
- One cannot fully understand a literary whole without understanding the selected passages within it.

The Process of Outlining

1. Read the entire biblical writing.

- It might be useful to print out an *unmarked* copy of the entire biblical book where your passage appears.
- You should not follow chapter and verse breaks uncritically. You should not blindly accept the translation's paragraph or stanza breaks, nor should you opt for changes without good reason. These are interpretive decisions that you must make and you must be prepared to argue for your choice.

The Process of Outlining

2. Identify larger sections and changes in topic.

The Process of Outlining

- Clues to identify transitions between sections in a text:
 - Repeated words and phrases that serve as structural clues
 - Changes in concepts and themes
 - Transitional words or phrases

The Process of Outlining

3. Consider the relationship between the various sections.

The Process of Outlining

Material might be arranged by:

- **Chronology**
- **Geography**
- **Topic**
- **Doctrine**
- **Reigns of Kings**
- **Major Characters**
- **Major Events**

The Process of Outlining

■ Gospels

- All four gospels can be outlined chronologically or geographically.
- A topical outline is far more informative.

The Process of Outlining

4. Complete the outline of the text

- Outlining is somewhat subjective.
- Consult other outlines and compare!

A Three-Level Outline

- I. Main topics/central ideas should be listed.
 - A. Provide subtopics to the main topic.
 - B. Include at least two or it becomes a main topic.
 - 1. Subpoints to subtopics appear here.
 - 2. Write in complete sentences.
 - 3. Be sure to include parenthetical verse references for ALL sections.

Additional Questions for Outlining

- With your completed outline, write 1–2 sentences (each) summarizing each *major* section (should be the A, B, C. . . level) in your outline that *precedes* your passage.
- Write one paragraph summarizing the *entirety* of topics and literary context that come after your passage. Think about how your text is instrumental in preparing the reader for what will follow.

Additional Questions for Outlining

- What is the main point of the section immediately before your passage? How does it relate to the passage you are studying?
- Write one paragraph about the theme and purpose of your book as a whole, highlighting the place of your text within the larger purpose.

Examples

- Genesis 22
- Ruth 4
- Why is it important to know what preceded these texts?

Genesis 17

- How would you “outline” this passage?
- How many paragraphs would you identify?
- How are they connected to one another?



Hermeneutics

Session 26

Lexical-Syntactical Analysis: Translations
and Translation Theory

Issues in Translation

- Moving from one language to another is complicated.
- Languages do not have a one for one correlation.

Bible Translations

- There are many English translations of the Bible available.
 - NAS
 - KJV/NKJV
 - TEV
 - RSV/NRSV
 - NIV
 - NLT
- Which is the best? How do they differ?

Translation Theory

- Formal Equivalence
 - Gives preference to the *form* of the original language at the expense of function in the receptor language
 - NASB, KJV

- Functional/Dynamic Equivalence
 - Gives preference to the function in the receptor language at the expense of the form of the original language
 - NIV

- Paraphrase/Free Translation
 - Intentional translation plus full interpretation in one
 - NLT

Which translation theory is best?

- Formal equivalents add the least interpretation
 - BUT in their desire to maintain a closeness to the words and grammar of the original language, formal equivalents may introduce ambiguities into the receptor language.

Which translation theory is best?

- Functional equivalents provide good, readable English.
- Doing so requires making interpretive decisions.
 - Example: genitive relationships
- The reader may be unaware of other interpretive options.

Which translation theory is best?

- Paraphrases/free translations are the easiest to understand.
 - When they provide the right interpretation, they make it incredibly clear.
 - What if the interpretation chosen is wrong?
- The reader is unaware of other interpretive options.

Which translation will I use?

- The reader cannot simply choose the translation that he/she likes best.
- An author-centered hermeneutic requires a comparison of translations.
 - By identify places where translations differ in significant ways, the reader knows there is an interpretive choice to be made.

Example – Genesis 2:18

- Difference in word connotations
 - NIV: “The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a **helper suitable** for him.’”
 - NEV: “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will provide a **partner** for him.’”

Example – Genesis 19:5

- Difference in word connotations
 - NIV: “They called to Lot, ‘Where are they men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can **have sex with** them.’”
 - NRSV: “and they called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may **know** them.’”

Example – Matthew 28:19–20

- Grammar and syntax
- NRSV: “**Go** therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and **teaching** them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

-
- Where is the main verb? What actions are subordinate to the main verb?
 - Go?
 - Make disciples?
 - Baptize?
 - Teach?

Example – Judges 19:25

■ Referents

- “**The man** took his concubine and sent her outside to them.”
- Who is “the man”?

The exegetical steps

- Word studies
 - When words are translated in significantly different ways
- Consult secondary sources/commentaries
 - When grammatical/syntactical issues are apparent

Hermeneutics

Session 27

Lexical-Syntactical Analysis: Word
Studies

Steps in a Word Study

- Choose a word to study.
- Identify the original language word.
- Find the range of meaning.
- Modify the range of meaning based upon comparisons with author.
- Draw a conclusion for a given use of the word.
- Compare your results with secondary literature as needed.

Choose a word

- What words should I choose?
 - Compare translations. Words that are translated in significantly different ways are good choices.
 - Repeated words
 - Words whose meaning will have a significant impact on your interpretation
 - “Technical” words

Identify the original language word

- For each English word that needs to be studied, the original word from which it was translated must be identified.
 - The Old Testament was written mainly in Hebrew with a few sections in Aramaic.
 - The New Testament was written in Greek.

Determining original language words

- If you know Hebrew/Greek:
 - Consult BHS or UBS/NA and find your word.
 - Determine its lexical form.
 - An analytical lexicon can provide assistance if needed.

Determining original language words

- If you do not know Hebrew/Greek:
 - Consult an exhaustive concordance and look up your English word.
 - Be sure you are using the word that appears in the translation that corresponds to the translation of your concordance!
 - Under the entry for your word, find your passage.
 - These are listed in biblical order.
 - Identify the numerical code for your word listed at the end of the column.

Determining original language words

- If you do not know Hebrew/Greek:
 - Turn to the appropriate dictionary section in the back of the concordance.
 - Be sure you're in the Hebrew section for OT words and the Greek section for NT words.
 - Search by number to find your original language word.
 - Listed in the original language alphabet.
 - English transliteration is provided.

Find the range of meaning

- With your original language word in hand, “look it up.”
 - There is a simplistic dictionary in the Exhaustive Concordance.
 - An original language lexicon is a better dictionary.
 - Consult the alphabetical list of Greek/Hebrew letters for assistance.
 - Remember: Hebrew reads from right to left.
- List out the dictionary entries; these are the semantic range of the word.

Modify the range of meaning based upon comparisons with author

- Not all of the semantic range is possible for any given use of a word.
 - Beware anachronistic meanings.
 - Avoid the “root meaning” fallacy.

Modify the range of meaning based upon comparisons with author

- Determine which meanings were possible for your author.
 - Consult an original language concordance.
 - Look up your word (listed alphabetically).
 - List the other places where your author (or those closest to him) use the same word.
- Look up these passages and read them in their context.
 - Use contextual clues to augment the dictionary definitions. Create subcategories to your semantic range.

Draw a conclusion for a given use of the word

- Consider the similarities and differences of your text's context with other uses of the word.
 - From the augmented list of definitions, which category fits the use in your text?



Hermeneutics

Session 30

Theological Analysis: Continuity and
Discontinuity

Theological Analysis

- The presence of one biblical text in a volume alongside other biblical texts creates a theological and canonical context that must be considered in exegesis.

Theological Analysis

- How does this passage fit into the total pattern of God's revelation?
- Accurate interpretation must consider
 - how the passage contributes to the theology of the whole canon
 - how the passage is influenced by the theology of the canon

The Hermeneutical Circle

- Although theological analysis wants to know how one text fits into the total pattern of God's revelation, such a question requires that one first identify what God's pattern of revelation is.

Solution

- Take a preliminary theological position
- Begin the exegetical process with a self-aware commitment to that perspective
- Reassess the theological position if data does not fit the initial framework

Theories about the pattern of God's revelation

- Stress discontinuity
 - “Theologies but no theology”
 - Dispensationalism

- Stress continuity
 - Lutheran
 - Covenantal
 - Epigenetic

Theologies but No Theology

- Scripture is a product of evolutionary development of religion.
- The writings in the Bible reflect different levels of sophistication and may conflict with one another.

Dispensationalism

- Dispensationalism recognizes multiple distinct dispensations throughout salvation history.
 - A dispensation is “a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some *specific* revelation of the will of God.”

-
- In each dispensation
 - God establishes a pattern for obedience
 - Humans fail to obey
 - God responds in mercy by giving a new pattern for obedience

-
- Dispensationalism has changed throughout the past 200 years.
 - Dispensationalism has recognized between four and nine dispensations.

Ryrie's Seven Dispensations

- Dispensation of Innocence or Freedom (Gen 1:28–3:6)
- Dispensation of Conscience (Gen. 4:1–8:14)
- Dispensation of Civil Government (Gen. 8:15–11:9)
- Dispensation of Promise (Gen. 11:10–Exod. 18:27)
- Dispensation of Mosaic Law (Exod. 18:28–Acts 1:26)
- Dispensation of Grace (Acts 2:1–Rev. 19:21)
- Dispensation of the Millennium (Rev. 20)

Lutheran

- Law and Gospel are two parallel and ever-present truths in Scripture. God has always responded to man with **both** Law and Gospel. They are not two different epochs in God's dealing with man.
 - Law: God in his hatred of sin, judgment, and wrath
 - Gospel: God in his grace, love, and salvation

Covenantal

- All biblical history is divided into two covenants.
 - A covenant of works in place until the fall.
 - A covenant of grace in place from the fall to the present.

Epigenetic

- Divine revelation is analogous to the growth of a tree. All parts are always present even prior to full maturity.
- Progressive revelation
 - God's revelation gradually increased in definiteness and clarity.

Hermeneutics

Session 31
Theological Analysis

Steps in Theological Analysis

1. Determine your own view of the pattern of God's revelation.
2. Identify implications of this view for the passage you are studying.

Steps in Theological Analysis

3. Assess the extent of theological knowledge available to the people of that time (biblical theology).
4. Determine the meaning of the passage for its original recipients in light of their knowledge.
5. Identify additional knowledge about this topic which is available in light of later revelation (systematic theology).

Seven Categories of Systematic Theology

- Theology
 - What is God like?

- Anthropology
 - What are people like?

- Christology
 - The person and work of Christ

Seven Categories

- Pneumatology
 - The person and work of the Holy Spirit
- Soteriology
 - How is salvation accomplished?
- Ecclesiology
 - How are the people of God (“church”) understood?
- Eschatology
 - What can we know about the end times?

Example: 1 Thess 4:13-18

- What theological categories are addressed in this text?
 - “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

- Christology
 - Belief that Jesus died and rose again.

- Eschatology
 - What Jesus' return will be like.
 - The “end” result for individual believers.

-
- Compare and contrast the passage with other texts that address the same issues.
 - Interpret less clear texts in light of clearer ones.

Finding other texts

- Concordance
 - Look up a particular word
- Chain reference Bible
 - Consult the verse references provided

Finding other texts

- Bible dictionary
 - Look up a given topic

- Systematic theology textbook
 - Consult the chapter on your topic for discussions of major texts



Hermeneutics

Session 33
Secondary Sources

The final exegetical step. . .

- Compare your work with others
 - Because you have done the exegetical work, you are not merely dependent upon the views of other scholars, but you are prepared to be in dialogue with them.

Kinds of secondary sources

- Monographs
- Commentaries
- Journal articles

Commentaries

- One-volume commentaries on the whole Bible
 - Very limited information on any given passage
 - If you've done the exegetical process well, you probably know everything that it says already!

Commentaries

- English-language commentaries
 - Can offer more detail than one-volume commentaries
 - Do not have grammatical, syntactical, or lexical insight because they work only from the English translation

Homiletical/Expository Commentaries

- “Preachy”
- Excellent at application and relevance

Exegetical Commentaries

- Based on the original language text
- Discuss various possible meanings, evaluates them, then argue for the one the author thinks is correct
- Include text critical discussions
- Provide in-depth historical context (broad and narrow)
- Provide a bibliography

Recommended commentaries

- Word
- NICOT/NICNT

- See the Appendix in Fee/Stuart
- See the bibliography in Duvall/Hays,
Grasping God's Word

Journal Articles

- ATLA search engine
 - Some articles are available with full text

- Recommended journals:
 - *JETS*
 - *JBL*
 - *Novum Testamentum*
 - *Bibliotheca Sacra*
 - *Hermeneia*
 - *JSOT/JSNT*

Internet Resources

- Is the author clearly stated (i.e., an individual or a professional group)?
- Does the author have credentials on the topic about which he is writing?
- Does the writing style/content demonstrate interaction with other materials in the field?
- Is the purpose to inform and educate or to sell you something?
- Are the content and conclusions compatible with other established knowledge in the area?

Hermeneutics

Session 34

Literary Analysis: Epistles

Special Hermeneutics

- General hermeneutics provides the rules that we use in interpreting any text
- Special hermeneutics refers to the unique additional guidelines that arise for any given literary type/genre
- We want to identify the unique reading strategy that is required for various genres

Epistles

- Which biblical texts are epistles?
 - Paul's thirteen New Testament letters (Romans through Philemon)
 - Hebrews
 - James
 - 1 and 2 Peter
 - 1, 2, 3 John
 - Jude

Discuss

- When you write a letter, what parts do you include?
- How do you start?
- How do you finish?

Letter Structure

- The first-century Greco-Roman world had an expected letter structure which is visible in many of the biblical epistles
 - Salutation
 - Author
 - Audience
 - Greetings
 - Thanksgiving
 - Body
 - Concluding Greetings/Benediction

Example

- Turn to Philemon
 - Where is the salutation?
 - Where is the thanksgiving?
 - Where is the body?
 - Where are the concluding greetings and benediction?

Situational/Occasional Documents

- Letters are written in a particular time and place between people who actually lived and communicated. They were written in historical situations and on historical occasions.
- Discuss the implications of this for the hermeneutical process.

Discuss

- Describe the reading strategy that you will use when interpreting a letter.



Hermeneutics

Session 35
Literary Analysis:
Old Testament Narrative and Acts

Historical Narrative

- The purpose of historical narrative is to:
 - Tell what actually happened
 - To interpret historical events for the reader
 - Can a narrative be both “biased” and historically accurate?
 - Biblical narrative emphasizes God’s activity in human history

Three Levels of Historical Narrative

- Third (“top”) level: Metanarrative
- Second level: Covenants
- First level: individual stories/pericopae

Elements of a Narrative

- Narrator
- Scenes
- Characters
- Dialogue
- Plot

Clues for Finding an Author's Point

- Introductory and concluding statements
- Repetition of key words or phrases
- Comments where the author actually tells the reader how to interpret an event
 - Side comments by the narrator
 - Words attributed to God
- Use of summary statements
- Movement from indirect to direct dialogue

Reading Strategies for Narrative

- Narrative RARELY teaches doctrine.
- Narratives are descriptive NOT prescriptive.
- Key figures in narratives should not be glorified.
- Narratives are selective.
- Look for God as a “silent character.”

Acts is Historical Narrative

- It is historical, NOT doctrinal.
- It is descriptive, NOT prescriptive.
- It is selective and incomplete.

- Christians err when we read Acts as setting historical precedent for the church; only what is intended to be taught is normative for contemporary (or any!) Christian practice!

Example: Acts 1:21–26

- Are these valid conclusions from this text?
 - Casting lots is a satisfactory means of determining God's will.
 - Prayer is a necessary means of seeking God's will.
 - Jesus' apostles cast lots and prayed to seek God's will.

Example: Acts 2:42–46

- Are these valid conclusions from this text?
 - It is wrong for rich Christians today to hold on to their possessions rather than selling their possessions in order to provide for those in the church who are in need.
 - The most Christian form of government is communism (believers hold everything in common).
 - If our churches could follow this model, then God will add to the number of those being saved each day.
 - Studying the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer are activities that are appropriate for God's people.

Example: Acts 10:44–48

- Are these valid conclusions from this text?
 - The Holy Spirit is poured out on Gentile believers in Christ.
 - Speaking in tongues provides the necessary proof of whether someone has received the Holy Spirit.
 - Believer's baptism is preferable to infant baptism.
 - All believers in Christ should be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.
 - God has included non-Jews among his New Covenant people.

Hermeneutics

Session 36

Literary Analysis: Gospels and Gospel
Parallels

The Gospel Genre

- Gospels are historical narratives
 - Three levels of narrative apply to gospels
 - Individual stories/pericopae
 - The evangelist's arrangement of the material into a gospel
 - God's metanarrative

Additional Form within Gospels

- Various forms within the gospels require specific reading strategies to avoid misinterpretation
 - Parables
 - Hyperbole
 - Proverbs
 - Poetry

Unique Factors for Gospel Interpretation

- The gospels reflect multiple historical contexts.
 - Jesus' context.
 - The context of the early church and their memories about Jesus.
 - The context of the gospel writer and his audience.

Unique Factors for Gospel Interpretation

- We have four gospels.
 - They are similar to each other.
 - They differ from each other.

Higher Criticisms in Gospel Studies

- One's decision about the relationship between the gospels and the relative reliability of the early believers will affect one's interpretation of the gospels.
- Source Criticism
- Form Criticism
- Redaction Criticism

Clues to the Author's Intent

- Selectivity
- Arrangement
- Adaptation

- Use a gospel synopsis to compare parallel texts between gospels.

Contradiction or Different Perspective?

- Read Luke 19:28f and Matthew 21:1–7.
- How many donkeys?



Hermeneutics



Session 37
Literary Analysis: Parables

Compare Similes and Metaphors

■ Simile:

- An expressed comparison
- Uses the words *like* or *as*
- Compares the subject and thing compared

■ Metaphor:

- An unexpressed comparison
- Does not use the words *like* or *as*
- Intertwines the subject and the thing compared
- Not meant to be taken literally; rather stresses a single point of comparison

“Parables” and “Allegories”

- Parable:
 - An extended simile
- Allegory:
 - An extended metaphor
- The words *parabole* (Gk) and *mashal* (Heb), translated as “parable,” have broader definitions!
- The “distinction between *parable* and *allegory*. . . is among the most debated issues in New Testament studies.”

Getting to the Point. . .

- How many points does a “parable” intend to make?
 - Many – read them as full allegories
 - One and only one
 - Several – one main point per main character?

Example: Matthew 13:33

- “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”
- Simile?
- Parable?
- Allegory?

Jesus' use of Parables

- The word “parable” appears more than 50 times in the gospels
- Typical parables draw on common images in life to emphasize a spiritual truth
- Jesus frequently teaches by means of parables
 - Why? (Matt. 13:10f; Mark 4:11f)
 - Reveal truth to believers
 - Prevent understanding

Reading Strategies for Parables

■ Literary Context

- Sometimes the intended meaning is stated explicitly in the introduction to the parable.
- Sometimes the intended meaning is conveyed through the application that is made of the parable.
- Sometimes the placement of the parable near a certain event in Jesus' ministry or with other teachings of similar themes clarifies meaning.

Reading Strategies for Parables

- Historical-Cultural Analysis
 - Parables draw on examples from everyday life requiring historical-cultural awareness for full understanding.
 - The stories expressed within parables themselves are not historic occurrences. The characters are literary creations not actual people.

Reading Strategies for Parables

- Clues to the main point(s):
 - Main characters
 - Topics receiving the most attention
 - Elements in direct dialogue
 - Principle of end stress
 - Identify the unexpected twist that catches the listeners off guard and forces them to reconsider their perspective

Can a parable be explained?

- Know any good jokes?
 - When you fail to “get” a joke and someone has to explain it to you, does it lose its meaning?
- If parables have to be explained, do they lose their punch?
- If we already know the ending, is the parable stripped of its power to shock?
- Consider “rewriting” parables so that they are truly heard

Caution!

- Parables are not primarily doctrinal or historical
 - Consider Luke 16:19–31 – Lazarus and the rich man
 - Consider Luke 16:1–8 – the Shrewd Manager

Hermeneutics

Session 38

Literary Analysis: Law

Which Texts Are Law?

- Books of the Law:
 - Genesis
 - Exodus
 - Leviticus
 - Numbers
 - Deuteronomy

Historical Context of the Law

- The Law cannot be understood apart from the historical context in which it is given
 - It is given to the redeemed Israelites
 - Freed from Egyptian bondage
 - Headed to the Promised Land

Purpose of the Law

- The Law is to make God's people distinct from those around them.
- “When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there” (Deut. 18:9).

Purpose of the Law

- The Law reveals something of God's character.
 - The individual precepts are tied to God's character.
 - “Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD. . .” (Lev. 19:16).

Purpose of the Law

- The Law points people to their guilt as lawbreakers and hence it highlights their need for God's grace.
 - “Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin” (Rom. 3:20).
 - “The law was added so that trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (Rom. 5:20).

Three Categories of Laws

■ Ritual

- Worship
 - Sacrificial system
 - Priestly requirements
-
- “From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. . . . Then present an offering of new grain to the Lord” (Lev. 23:15).

Three Categories of Laws

- Civil
 - Governmental
 - Deut. 19:1-4: Set up cities of refuge for those who are guilty of accidental murder

Three Categories of Laws

- Moral/Ethical

- “Do not steal” (Lev. 19:11)

Two Types of Laws

- Apodictic

- Direct commands of general application
 - Ten Commandments
 - Apply to everyone in all circumstances

- Casuistic

- Case law
 - If. . . then. . .
 - Apply to some people in certain circumstances

Discuss

- How do we read the Law today?
 - To understand how it was helpful to them in their historical setting
 - To learn about God

- Fee and Stuart say the Old Testament Law is “still the Word of God for us, even though it is not the command of God to us.” What does this mean?



Hermeneutics

Session 39
Literary Analysis: Prophecy

What Biblical Books Are Prophecy?

■ Major Prophets

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Ezekiel

■ Minor Prophets

- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

What Is Prophecy?

- When we use the word “prophecy” we typically mean a prediction of future events.

-
- Sometimes the OT prophets predict future events:
 - In their own time
 - In the time of Christ
 - In the end time

Can prophecies overlap the times?

- Isaiah 7:14 predicts the birth of a child.
 - Most likely this was fulfilled in Isaiah's own time.
- Matthew 1:21–22 claims the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 in the birth of Jesus.

Fulfillment of Prophecy

- Any predictive element in prophecy looks to a time in the future (so far as the author and audience are concerned).
- The great majority of the time these predictive elements are PAST to us.
 - We do not need to look for further fulfillment.

What Is Prophecy?

- Fee and Stuart argue that Old Testament prophets are better understood as “forthtellers” rather than “foretellers.”
 - Forthtelling occurs within the covenant context.
 - Prophets are covenant enforcers.
 - The blessings and curses of the covenant apply corporately rather than individualistically.

The Purpose of Prophecy

- Prophecy [including predictive prophecy] is generally concerned to
 - Bring about repentance
 - Reestablish proper covenant relationship
- The majority of prophecy maintains an opportunity for repentance
 - Jonah example

The Hermeneutic Challenge

- The intended meaning of prophecy cannot be fully grasped without knowing the historical context in which the prophet is speaking.
- Challenge: Most of our prophetic texts lack historical narrative to give the contextual data!
- Bible dictionaries and commentaries are invaluable helps.

The Hermeneutical Challenge

- Minimal context given for prophetic oracles
- Where does one oracle start and the next begin?
- Identify various “forms” of prophetic oracles can help
 - Lawsuit
 - Woe
 - Enactment

The Hermeneutic Challenge

- *Sensus plenior*

- Look to see if a New Testament text has already identified a secondary fulfillment of your text.
- Can you identify a *sensus plenior*?

The Hermeneutic Challenge

- Prophetic texts often incorporate poetic language.
 - Synonymous parallelism
 - Antithetical parallelism
 - Chiasm

Hermeneutics

Sessions 40–41
Application

Exegesis Leads to Application

- Exegesis determines historical meaning.
- Application focuses on contemporary relevance.

-
- Exegesis must lead to application; a text can't mean (apply) what it never meant.
 - But how do we move from then to now? What is a valid application?

Leading Questions. . .

. . . as we move from meaning to application

1. What is the main point of my passage?
 - This is the meaning discovered through exegesis.

Leading Questions. . .

2. What general principles (spiritual, moral, theological) can be deduced from the main point of the passage?
 - What does this passage teach about God?
 - What does this passage teach about the nature of people?
 - Is it concerned with proper belief? Proper action?

 - Avoid allegories here!

Leading Questions. . .

3. What is the expression of that principle in its own historical context?
 - Within what sectors of life does it require application?
 - Interpersonal? Piety? Social? Economic? Spiritual? Familial?

Leading Questions. . .

4. Do the same life issues addressed by the passage in its historical context continue to exist today?
 - What specific situations today are comparable to those of the historical context?

Leading Questions. . .

5. What is the specific audience of the application in its historical context?
 - Individual?
 - Corporate?

6. Does that same audience exist now?

Leading Questions. . .

7. Is there an application that is primary?
 - Even though other secondary applications may be present, it is best to focus on the one, primary application.
 - State it as concretely as possible

Leading Questions. . .

8. Are any responses/expressions culturally or temporally bound? What is pancultural and pantemporal?

Is the Command Culturally Bound?

- Distinguish between the command and the principle behind it
- What is the reason given for the principle?
- Either. . .
 - Retain the command as it stands
 - Retain the principle but modify its expression
- Who are the intended recipients?

Examples

- 2 Timothy 4:13 – “Do your best to come to me quickly. . . When you come bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, and the parchments.”
- Leviticus 19:9–10 – Gleaning
- “Greet one another with a holy kiss”
- John 13:12–16
- 1 Peter 2:13–17
- Colossians 3:22–25