Hermeneutics
Principles of Bible Interpretation

Hosted by:
Tabernacle Baptist Church
“Growing and Changing in Christ”
7020 Barrington Road
Hanover Park, Illinois 60133
630-289-4110
I. Course Information ________________________________________________________________ 4
   A. Course Description ______________________________________________________________ 4
   B. Course Schedule ________________________________________________________________ 4
II. Introduction to Hermeneutics ______________________________________________________ 5
   A. Definitions within Hermeneutics ________________________________________________ 5
   B. Importance of Hermeneutics ____________________________________________________ 9
   C. Christocentricity of Hermeneutics ______________________________________________ 13
   D. Qualification for Hermeneutics _________________________________________________ 16
   F. Possibility of Hermeneutics ____________________________________________________ 28
   G. Presuppositions of Hermeneutics _______________________________________________ 36
III. Introduction to the History of Hermeneutics up to the Reformation _______________________ 67
   A. The Aim of a History of Hermeneutics: A history of hermeneutical principles seeks to answer three questions: _________________________________________________________________________________ 67
   B. The Result of a History of Hermeneutics _________________________________________ 67
   C. The Definitions within the History of Hermeneutics ___________________________________ 68
   D. The History of the Hermeneutics in the Patristic Age __________________________________ 73
   E. The History of Hermeneutics in the Middle Ages ___________________________________ 83
   F. The History of Hermeneutics in the Reformation Age ________________________________ 86
IV. General Hermeneutics: Contextual Interpretation _____________________________________ 91
   A. Definition ____________________________________________________________________ 91
   B. Importance ____________________________________________________________________ 91
   C. Overview ____________________________________________________________________ 92
   D. Sectional Context ______________________________________________________________ 93
   E. The Book of Context ___________________________________________________________ 95
   F. The Canonical Context _________________________________________________________ 96
   G. The Immediate Context _________________________________________________________ 97
V. Historical Interpretation (Berkhof, 113f.) ____________________________________________ 98
   A. Definition ____________________________________________________________________ 98
   B. Basic Assumptions For Historical Interpretation ______________________________________ 99
   C. Demands on The Exegete _______________________________________________________ 99
   D. Elements of Historical Interpretation _____________________________________________ 99
   E. Sources of Historical Interpretation _____________________________________________ 100
   F. Specific Areas of Historical Interpretation ________________________________________ 100
   G. Helps for the Historical Interpretation __________________________________________ 105
VI. Grammatical Interpretation _____________________________________________________ 112
   A. Introduction _________________________________________________________________ 112
   B. Lexical Analysis ______________________________________________________________ 112
   C. Syntactical Analysis ___________________________________________________________ 120
VII. Theological Interpretation
   A. Introduction
   B. The Concept of Analogy of Faith

VIII. Figures of Speech
   A. Introduction
   B. Interpreting Figures of Speech
   C. Types of Figures of Speech
   D. Practicum on Figures of Speech

IX. Typology
   A. Introduction of Typology
   B. Views on Typology
   C. Principles for Typology
   D. Scope of Typology

X. Interpretation of Prophecy
   A. Introduction to the Interpretation of Prophecy
   B. Issues in the Interpretation of Prophecy
   C. Principles for the Interpretation of Prophecy

XI. Interpretation of Biblical Poetry
   A. Introduction to Biblical Poetry
   B. Characteristics of Biblical Poetry
   C. Types of Biblical Poetry
   D. Interpretation of Biblical Poetry

XII. Interpreting Narratives
   A. Introduction
   B. Theology of Narrative Interpretation
   C. The Principles of Narrative Interpretation
   D. Steps of Narrative Interpretation
   E. Practicum of Narrative Interpretation
   F. Fallacious Methods of Narrative Interpretation

XIII. Interpretation of Parables
   A. Introduction to the Interpretation of Parables
   B. Meaning(s) in the Interpretation of Parables
   C. Principles for the Interpretation of Parables
   D. Practicum of the Interpretation of Parables

XIV. Appendix of Jesus’ Parables

XV. Appendix: Application Table

XVI. Appendix: Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics

XVII. Appendix: Answers to Practicum

XVIII. Appendix: Bibliography of Biblical Interpretation
I. Course Information

A. Course Description
This course of Biblical Hermeneutics introduces the student to the principles and task of interpreting the Bible. First, the course introduces the student to the definition, principles, presuppositions, qualifications and history of hermeneutics. Then it goes through the various principles and tasks involved in interpreting the Bible literarily, grammatically, and historically.

B. Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week One</td>
<td>Introduction to Hermeneutics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Two</td>
<td>Introduction to Hermeneutics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Three</td>
<td>History of Hermeneutics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Four</td>
<td>General Hermeneutics: Context and History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Five</td>
<td>General Hermeneutics: Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Six</td>
<td>General Hermeneutics: Theological Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Seven</td>
<td>Special Hermeneutics: Figures of Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Eight</td>
<td>Special Hermeneutics: Typology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Nine</td>
<td>Special Hermeneutics: Prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Ten</td>
<td>Special Hermeneutics: Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Eleven</td>
<td>Special Hermeneutics: Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Twelve</td>
<td>Issues in Hermeneutics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Thirteen</td>
<td>Application of Hermeneutics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Introduction to Hermeneutics

A. Definitions within Hermeneutics

1. Hermeneutics

   a) The term ‘hermeneutics’ designates both the science and art of interpretation. The Greek verb *hermeneuo* means ‘to interpret or explain.’ The Greek noun *hermenia* means ‘interpretation,’ ‘explanation.’ In both the Greek counterpart and the contemporary technical term, interpretation has to do with meaning. Interpretation as a discipline is important because meaning has to do with the core of a man’s thinking” (Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible*, 3).

   b) “Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation. The word is usually applied to the explanation of written documents, and may therefore be more specifically defined as the science of interpreting an author’s language. This science assumes that there are diverse modes of thought and ambiguities of expression among men, and, accordingly, it aims to remove the supposable differences between a writer and his readers, so that the meaning of the one may be truly and accurately apprehended by the others” (Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, p.17).

   c) “As a theological discipline hermeneutics is the science of the correct interpretation of the Bible. It is a special application of the general science of linguistics and meaning. It seeks to formulate those particular rules which pertain to the special factors connected with the Bible. It stands in the same relationship to exegesis that a rule-book stands to a game. The rule-book is written in terms of reflection, analysis, and experience. The game is played by concrete actualization of the rules. The rules are not the game, and the game is meaningless without the rules. Hermeneutics proper is not exegesis, but exegesis is applied hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is a science in that it can determine certain principles for discovering the meaning of a document, and in that these principles are not a mere list of rules but bear organic connection to each other. It is also an art as we previously indicated because principles or rules cannot never be applied mechanically but involve the skill of
the interpreter” (Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, p.11).

d) “The study of the principles and methods of interpretation. The term is sometimes used to emphasize the present relevance of the text. (The form *hermeneutic* often refers to a specific theological perspective that may guide one’s interpretation.)” (Kaiser and Silva, An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics, 285).

e) “Hermeneutics is the science that teaches us the principles, laws, and methods of interpretation” (Berkhof, Principles of Biblical Interpretation, 11).

f) “In its technical meaning, hermeneutics is often defined as the science and art of biblical interpretation. Hermeneutics is considered a science because it has rules and these rules can be classified into an orderly system. It is considered an art because communication is flexible, and therefore a mechanical and rigid application of rules will sometimes distort the true meaning of a communication. To be a good interpreter one must learn the rules of hermeneutics as well as the art of applying these rules” (Virkler, Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation, 16).

g) Thus, “Hermeneutics” is the science and art of interpreting the Bible. By means of various recognized and established principles, it seeks to discover the precise meaning of the original authors of Scripture.

2. General and Specific Hermeneutics

a) It is common to distinguish between General and Special Hermeneutics. General Hermeneutics is devoted to the general principles which are applicable to the interpretation of all languages and writing. It may appropriately take cognizance of the logical operations of the human mind, and the philosophy of human speech, Special Hermeneutics is devoted rather to the explanation of particular books and classes of writings. Thus, historical, poetical, philosophical, and prophetical writings differ from each other in numerous particulars, and each class requires for its proper exposition the application of principles and methods adapted to its own peculiar character and style. Special Hermeneutics,
according to Cellerier, is a science practical and almost empirical, and searches after rules and solutions; while General Hermeneutics is methodical and philosophical, and searches for principles and methods [Manuel d’Hermneutique Biblique, p. 5. Geneva, 1852] (Terry, Ibid.).

b) “We must distinguish between general and specific Hermeneutics. The former applies to interpretation of all kinds of writings; the latter to that of certain definite kinds of literary productions, such as laws, history, prophecy, poetry” (Berkhof, Ibid.).

c) “Hermeneutical theory is sometimes divided into subcategories—general and special hermeneutics. General hermeneutics is the study of those rules that govern interpretation of the entire biblical text. It includes the topics of historical-cultural, contextual, lexical-syntactical, and theological analysis. Special hermeneutics is the study of those rules that apply to specific genres, such as parables, allegories, types, and prophecy” (Virkler, Ibid.).

d) “The phrase general hermeneutics refers to principles that are applicable to the interpretation of any text; special hermeneutics deals with issues that are distinctive to a particular text (or group of texts)” (Kaiser and Silva, Ibid.).

3. Exegesis

a) “The analysis and explanation of a text, usually with reference to detailed, scientific (‘critical’) interpretation. The term is often distinguished from hermeneutics in that the latter refers to principles of interpretation, whereas exegesis has to do with the practice of explaining texts” (Kaiser and Silva, Ibid.).

b) Exegesis, therefore, is the application of hermeneutics which seeks to extract from the Scriptural text that meaning which is already present. The exegete (one who practices exegesis) examines closely the words of Scripture, and by the means of hermeneutical principles, defines their meaning, elucidates the scope and plan of each writer, and brings forth the historical-grammatical sense of what each book or chapter contains.
c) “Hermeneutics is like a cookbook. Exegesis is the preparing and baking of the cake, and Exposition is serving the cake” (Roy B. Zuck, Basic Bible Interpretation, p.22).

d) “Exegesis is the application of these principles and laws, the actual bringing out into formal statement, and by other terms, the meaning of the author's words. Exegesis is related to hermeneutics as preaching is to homiletics, or, in general, as practice is to theory. Exposition is another word often used synonymously with exegesis, and has essentially the same signification; and yet, perhaps, in common usage, exposition denotes a more extended development and illustration of the sense, dealing more largely with other scriptures by comparison and contrast. We observe, accordingly, that the writer on Biblical Introduction examines the historical foundations and canonical authority of the books of Scripture. The textual critic detects interpolations, emends false readings, and aims to give us the very words which the sacred writers used. The exegete takes up these words, and by means of the principles of hermeneutics, defines their meaning, elucidates the scope and plan of each writer, and brings forth the grammatico, historical sense, of what each book contains. The expositor builds upon the labors both of critics and exegetes, and sets forth in fuller form, and by ample illustration, the ideas, doctrines, and moral lessons of the Scripture” (Terry, Ibid.)

e) But while we are careful to distinguish hermeneutics from these kindred branches of exegetical theology, we should not fail to note that a science of interpretation must essentially depend on exegesis for the maintenance and illustration of its principles and rules. As the full grammar of a language establishes its principles by sufficient examples and by formal praxis, so a science of hermeneutics must needs verify and illustrate its principles by examples of their practical application. Its province is not merely to define principles and methods, but also to exemplify and illustrate them” (Terry, Ibid.).

f) The opposite of exegesis is the error of eisegesis, which is not concerned with extracting the meaning of the original text, but with reading into Scripture one’s own ideas or preconceived theology. Such an approach
to Scripture, however, leads us to replace God’s truth and wisdom with human inventions, in addition to robbing us of the blessing which comes when we obey what the Bible actually teaches. As the Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther, once said: “The best teacher is the one who does not bring his meaning into the Scripture, but gets his meaning from the Scripture.”

B. Importance of Hermeneutics

1. The Bible, which was completed approximately two-thousand years ago, is widely separated in its language, culture, customs, and topography from ours in the twenty-first century – and, therefore, there is the need to bridge that gap by seeking to understand those principles which help modern readers to grasp ancient languages, customs, and how to interpret antiquated documents in order to gain comprehension of its original meaning. Moreover, the diversity of the kinds of literary genres found in the Bible (e.g., poetry, prophecy, parables, ancient figures of speech) makes hermeneutics mandatory for the Christian who takes the Scriptures seriously.

2. Every Christian, to some extent, engages in hermeneutics since none of us comes to the Scriptural text mindlessly. Each one of us brings his/her presuppositions or theological baggage when attempting to understand the Bible’s message. The real question is: Are we following sound guidelines that will help us to comprehend the text – or – Are we reading the Bible with no real direction or employing faulty rules of interpretation?

3. Proper hermeneutical principles serve as the foundation for systematic theology. A true understanding of the Bible’s message (via hermeneutics) forms the basis out of which Christian theology can be developed.

    a) “Exegesis is prior to any system of theology . . . We can only know the truth of God by a correct exegesis of Scripture . . . Great mischief has been done in the church when the system of theology or its framework has been derived extra-biblically . . . If the grounds of Christian theology is the revelation of God, then theology must be grounded in revelation and not in philosophy. The historic Protestant position is to ground theology in biblical exegesis. A theological system is to be built up exegetically brick by brick. Hence the theology is no better than the exegesis that underlies it. The task of the systematic theologian is to commence
with these bricks ascertained through exegesis, and build the temple of his theological system. But only when he is sure of his individual bricks is he able to make the necessary generalizations, and to carry on the synthetic and creative activity that is necessary for the construction of a theological system (Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, pp.168-169).

b) “Exegesis is prior to any system of theology . . . We can only know the truth of God by a correct exegesis of Scripture . . . Great mischief has been done in the church when the system of theology or its framework has been derived extra-biblically . . . If the grounds of Christian theology is the revelation of God, then theology must be grounded in revelation and not in philosophy. The historic Protestant position is to ground theology in biblical exegesis. A theological system is to be built up exegetically brick by brick. Hence the theology is no better than the exegesis that underlies it. The task of the systematic theologian is to commence with these bricks ascertained through exegesis, and build the temple of his theological system. But only when he is sure of his individual bricks is he able to make the necessary generalizations, and to carry on the synthetic and creative activity that is necessary for the construction of a theological system (Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, pp.168-169).

c) “The rank and importance of Biblical Hermeneutics among the various studies embraced in Theological Encyclopedia and Methodology is apparent from the fundamental relation which it sustains to them all. For the Scripture revelation is itself essentially the center and substance of all theological science. It contains the clearest and fullest exhibition of the person and character of God, and of the spiritual needs and possibilities of man. A sound and trustworthy interpretation of the Scripture records, therefore, is the root and basis of all revealed theology. Without it Systematic Theology, or Dogmatics, could not be legitimately constructed, and would, in fact, be essentially impossible. For the doctrines of revelation can only be learned from a correct understanding of the oracles of God (Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, pp.21-22).

4. A sound hermeneutic will keep us from drifting into heresy or falling prey to a religious cult.
a) The vast majority of people who join a cult or an apostate religious system (such as Rome) are not persons who possess a strong grasp of Scripture and its intended meaning, but persons who are woefully ignorant of God’s Word as well as those hermeneutical principles which would have kept them from twisting God’s revelation.

b) As James Sire has noted, “If traditional Christianity affirms the Bible as its sole authority – Sola Scriptura, as the Reformers said – how can these very different religious movements [i.e., Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Christian Science] claim Scripture for their own? The obvious answer is the right one, I believe. They can only do so by violating the principles of sound literary interpretation” (Scripture Twisting, p.12).

5. A sound hermeneutic, especially a clear understanding of redemptive history and the differences which exist between the Old and New Covenants, will help us to avoid making wrong deductions from the Old Testament

a) This is has been a common mistake throughout church history that has led to all sorts of abuses and atrocities in the name of Christ.

b) “Because Scripture has not been properly interpreted the following has been urged as the voice of God: in that the patriarchs practiced polygamy we may practice it; in that the Old Testament sanctioned the divine right of the king of Israel, we may sanction the divine right of kings everywhere; because the Old Testament sanctioned the death of witches, we too may put them to death; because the Old Testament declared that some plagues were from God, we may not use methods of sanitation, for that would be thwarting the purposes of God; because the Old Testament forbade usury in the agrarian commonwealth of Israel we may not employ it in our economic system; because the Scriptures make certain remarks about the suffering of women in childbirth we may not approve any method of easing the pain; because tithing was a law (de jure) in Israel, it is a law to the Church . . . A sound hermeneutics would have prevented all of this. It would prevent an uncritical and unrealistic application of the Old Testament to Christian morality. It would prevent an expositor from using some mere phrase as an eternal
principle of morality. It would prevent the effort of trying to force some binding principle upon contemporary life from an obscure Old Testament incident. It would prevent the justification of ritualism and priestcraft from an improper extension of the Tabernacle worship and sacrificial system. The result of an erratic hermeneutics is that the Bible has been made the source of confusion rather than light (Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, pp.2-3).

c) Proper hermeneutical principles are essential for those who are teachers of God’s Word – for if they are poor at interpretation, the saints are not likely to be edified and brought to greater spiritual maturity.

d) The goal of hermeneutics is not to feed our intellectual pride or mere academic interests, but so that we might be better interpreters of Scripture and, thereby, kept from doctrinal error and many other abuses that arise from a mishandling of Holy Writ. But perhaps the greatest reason is so that we might discern God’s will on any matter confronting us and, as a result, glorify our Triune God and Redeemer.

e) Hermeneutics is vital for our development in the Christian life since a proper application of biblical truth is dependent upon a correct interpretation of it – as John Balchin has said, “Interpreting the Bible is one of the most important issues facing Christians today. It lies behind what we believe, how we live, how we get on together, and what we have to offer to the world.”

6. Note the following passages that highlight the importance of good hermeneutics:

a) “And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading” (Nehemiah 8:8).

b) “And He said to them, ‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter His glory?’ And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:25-27).
c) “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11; see also Acts 8:27-35).

d) “. . . as also in all his [Paul] letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16).

e) 2 Tim. 2:15 (ESV): “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

C. Christocentricity of Hermeneutics

1. We must recognize the Christocentric focus of the Bible. The New Testament writers primarily viewed the Old Testament as Christological documents. In other words, they understood the Hebrew Scriptures as ultimately pointing to the person of Christ and the redemptive-historical fulfillment that He would bring.

2. As Martin Luther once said, “If you will interpret well and securely, take Christ with you, for He is the man whom everything concerns.”

3. The Following Verses bring this truth out:

   a) “And He took the twelve aside and said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished’” (Luke 18:31).

   b) “And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27).

   c) “Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled’” (Luke 24:44).

   d) “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the
Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph”” (John 1:45).

e) “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me” (John 5:46).

f) “And so, because he [David] was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay” (Acts 2:30-31).

g) “But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled” (Acts 3:18).


i) “And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ’” (Acts 17:2-3).

j) “And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:4).

k) “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

l) “As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, 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” (1 Peter 1:10-11).

4. In light of this, we should view the Old Testament not as Israel-centered (as Dispensationalists mistakenly assume) nor as law-centered (as many Covenant theologians think to practice), but as
having its focus on the person of Christ and His redemptive mission – for “of Him all the prophets bear witness” (Acts 10:43).

5. This doesn’t mean that every text of Scripture in the Old Testament speaks directly or explicitly of Him; rather, that every text of Scripture within the Hebrew Bible is part of the one story which has its ultimate focus in Him.

6. As the late New Testament scholar, F.F. Bruce, has written: “In Jesus the promise is confirmed, the covenant is renewed, the prophecies are fulfilled, the law is vindicated, salvation is brought near, sacred history has reached its climax, the perfect sacrifice has been offered and accepted, the great High Priest over the household of God has taken His seat at God’s right hand, the Prophet like Moses has been raised up, the Son of David reigns, the kingdom of God has been inaugurated, the Son of Man has received dominion from the Ancient of Days, the Servant of the Lord, having been smitten to death for His people’s transgression and borne the sin of many, has accomplished the divine purpose, has seen light after the travail of His soul and is now exalted and extolled and made very high (New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes, p.21).

7. The Chicago Statement on this:

   a) **WE AFFIRM** that the Person and work of Jesus Christ are the central focus of the entire Bible.

   b) **WE DENY** that any method of interpretation which rejects or obscures the Christ-centeredness of Scripture is correct.

   c) This Affirmation follows the teaching of Christ that He is the central theme of Scripture (Matt. 5:17; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Heb. 10:7). This is to say that focus on the person and work of Christ runs throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. To be sure there are other and tangential topics, but the person and work of Jesus Christ are central.

   d) In view of the focus of Scripture on Christ, the Denial stresses a hermeneutical obligation to make this Christocentric message clear in the expounding of Scripture. As other articles (cf. Article XV) emphasize the "literal" interpretation of Scripture, this article is no license for allegorization and unwarranted typology which see Christ portrayed in every detail of Old
Testament proclamation. The article simply points to the centrality of Christ's mission in the unfolding of God's revelation to man.

e) Neither is there any thought in this article of making the role of Christ more ultimate than that of the Father. What is in view here is the focus of Scripture and not the ultimate source or object of the whole plan of redemption.

D. Qualification for Hermeneutics

1. Spiritual Qualifications—See Spirit’s Role in Hermeneutics below for more data.

a) No one can fully comprehend the meaning of the Bible unless he/she is regenerated (Born Again). The unsaved person is spiritually blind (2 Cor. 4:4) and dead (Eph 2:2). (1 Cor 2:14)

(1) "In order to appreciate and use the Bible, the reader of it must himself have the the same spirit which enabled its writers to understand their revelation of God and to record it. The Bible is a record, but it is not a dead record of dead persons and events, but a record inspired by the living Spirit who uses it to speak to men now... It is the medium through which the living God now makes himself known. But to find in it the Spirit of God the reader must himself have that Spirit" (Marcus Dods, The Nature and Origin of the Bible, 102).

(2) “The first spiritual qualification of the interpreter is that he is born again” ((Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, 13).

(3) Angus and Green state, “This first principle of Bible interpretation is taken from the Bible itself. It occupies the same place, too, in the teaching of our Lord, who, in the first recorded discourse, assured Nicodemus that ‘except a man be born again, he cannot see’—can neither understand the nature nor share the blessedness—of the kingdom of God” (Cyclopedic Handbook, 179).

b) More than regeneration is necessary. Also reverence for and interest in God and His Word are essential to interpreting the Bible properly.

(1) The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov, 1:7).

(2) “Such hallowed fervor should be chastened and controlled by a true reverence. “The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of
knowledge” (Prov, 1:7). There must be the devout frame of mind, as well as the pure desire to know the truth. “God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Therefore, they who would attain the true knowledge of God must possess the reverent, truth-loving spirit; and, having attained this, God will seek them (John 4:23) and reveal himself to them as he does not unto the world. Comp. Matt. 11:25; 26:11. Nor should we allow ourselves to be deluded by the idea that the human mind must be a tabula rasa in order to arrive at sound conclusions. To conform to such an assumption is well pronounced by Neander to be impracticable. “The very attempt,” he observes, “contradicts the sacred laws of our being. We cannot entirely free ourselves from presuppositions, which are born with our nature, and which attach to the fixed course of progress in which we ourselves are involved. They control our consciousness, whether we will or no; and the supposed freedom from them is, in fact, nothing else but the exchange of one set for another. Some of these prepossessions, springing from a higher necessity, founded in the moral order of the universe, and derived from the eternal laws of the Creator, constitute the very ground and support of our nature. From them we must not free ourselves” (Terry, Ibid.).

c) The interpreter must also depend upon the Holy Spirit.

(1) His role does not mean that one’s interpretations are infallible. Inerrancy and infallibility are characteristics of the Bible’s original manuscripts, but not of the Bible’s interpreters.

(2) The work of the Holy Spirit in interpretation does not mean that He gives some interpreters a “hidden” meaning divergent from the norm, literal meaning of the passage.

(3) As already suggested, a Christian who is living in sin is susceptible to making inaccurate Bible interpretations because his heart and mind are not in harmony with the Holy Spirit.

(4) The Holy Spirit guides into all truth (John 16:13). The word “guide” means “to lead the way or guide along the way or road.”

(5) The place of the Holy Spirit in interpreting the Bible means that He does not normally give sudden intuitive flashes of insight into the meaning of scripture. Many passages are readily understood, but the meaning of others may come to light only gradually as the result of careful study.

(6) The Spirit’s role in interpretation means that the Bible was given to be understood by all believers. Its interpretation is not in the hands of an elite few scholars.
“Finally, the expounder of the Holy Scriptures needs to have living fellowship and communion with the Holy Spirit. Inasmuch as “all Scripture is God-breathed” (2nd Tim. 3:16), and the sacred writers spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2nd Pet. 1:21), the interpreter of Scripture must be a partaker of the same Holy Spirit. He must, by a profound experience of the soul, attain the saving knowledge of Christ, and in proportion to the depth and fullness of that experience he will know the life and peace of the “mind of the Spirit” (Rom. 6:6). “We speak God's wisdom in a mystery,” says Paul (1st Cor. 2:7-11), the hidden spiritual wisdom of a divinely illuminated heart, which none of the princes of this world have known, but (as it is in substance written in Isa. 64:4), a wisdom relating to “what things (a) eye did not see, and ear did not hear, and into man's heart did not enter—whatever things (οὐδὲ ἀπόκρυπτα) God prepared for them that love him; for (3) to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who of men knows the. things of the man except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also the things of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.” He, then, who would know and explain to others “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 13:11) must enter into blessed communion and fellowship with the Holy One. He should never cease to pray (Eph. 1:17, 18) “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give him the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the full knowledge (ἐπίγνωσία) of him, the eyes of his heart being enlightened for the purpose of knowing what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe” (Terry, Ibid.).

(8) Chicago Statement on this issue:

(a) **WE AFFIRM** that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives.

(b) **WE DENY** that the natural man is able to discern spiritually the biblical message apart from the Holy Spirit.

(c) The design of this article is to indicate that the ministry of the Holy Spirit extends beyond the inspiration of Scripture to its very application to the lives of the believer. Just as no one calls Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit (l Cor. 12:3), so no one can appropriate the message of Scripture to his life apart from the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.

(d) The Denial stresses the truth that the natural man does not receive the spiritual message of
Scripture. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit there is no welcome for its truth in an unregenerate heart.

(c) This does not imply that a non-Christian is unable to understand the meaning of any Scripture. It means that whatever he may perceive of the message of Scripture, that without the Holy Spirit’s work he will not welcome the message in his heart.
2. Mental Qualifications

   a) Understanding of language
   b) Understanding of history
   c) Understanding of literature
   d) Understanding of geography


1. Introduction

   a) “The blessed Spirit is not only the true Author of the written Word but also its supreme and true Expositor” (H. C. G. Moule, Veni Creator: Thoughts on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit of Promise, p. 63).

   b) “There is no function assigned to the Spirit more important for us to understand than that by which He assures to the church a profound and correct interpretation of Scripture” (Joseph Parker, The Paraclete, p. 78).

   c) How does the Holy Spirit "guide and direct" believers in their involvement in the interpretive process? What does that guidance mean? Zuck suggests fourteen propositions.

2. The Spirit's ministry in Bible interpretation does not mean He gives new revelation.

   a) His work is always through and in association with the written Word of God, not beyond it or in addition to it.

   b) The Holy Spirit and the Word operate together. The Bible, being God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16), has power to generate faith (Ps 19:7; Rom 10:17; 2 Tim 3:15; James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23), to sanctify and nurture (John 17:17-19; Acts 20:32; Eph 5:26; 1 Pet 2:2), and to enlighten (Ps 119:105,130; 2 Tim 3:16).

   c) The Holy Spirit, along with the Word, is said to regenerate (John 3:5-7: Titus 3:5). to sanctify (2 Thess
2:13; 1 Pet 1:2) and to enlighten (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Cor 2:10-15).


e) The Bible, God's Word, is "living and active" "operative or effective" (Heb 4:12; cf. 1 Thess 2:13: 1 Pet 1:23).

f) But its effectiveness is evident only when the Holy Spirit is at work in connection with the Word. "The Word of God can have no efficacy unless at the same time the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of the hearers, creating faith and making men's minds open to receive the Word" (Ronald S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacraments, pp. 128-29).

g) In relation to man's receptivity, Calvin wrote, "The heavenly doctrine proves to be useful and efficacious to us in so far as the Spirit both forms our minds to understand it and our hearts to submit to its yoke" (Comment on Luke 24:45).

3. The role of the Spirit in interpreting the Bible does not mean that one's interpretations are infallible.

a) Inerrancy and hence infallibility are characteristics of the Bible's original manuscripts, but not of the Bible's interpreters. The manuscripts were inerrant because of the Holy Spirit's guarding and guiding the writers to record what He wanted recorded, word for word.

b) But such a superintending work cannot be claimed for interpreters of the Word. In inspiration the Holy Spirit superintended the authors in order to override any human error. In interpretation the Holy Spirit guides but He does not guard against infallibility. To elevate one's interpretations to the level of infallibility would blur the distinctions between inspiration (a past, now completed work of the Spirit in the recording of Scripture) and interpretation (a present, ongoing work of the Spirit in helping interpreters in the comprehending of Scripture). Also it would ascribe to Protestants a level of infallibility
for human leaders which evangelicals reject in Roman Catholicism.

c) Therefore allowing the right of private (individual) judgment in interpreting the Bible does not mean that all the results of private interpretation are accurate.

4. The work of the Spirit in interpretation does not mean that He gives some interpreters a mental acuity for seeing truths under the surface that are not evident to any other dedicated Bible students.

a) The interpreter, then, if he thinks he finds a "hidden" meaning divergent from the normal, literal meaning of the passage, cannot claim the Holy Spirit's help.

b) He gives insight to its original intent.

5. The role of the Holy Spirit in Bible interpretation means that the unregenerate do not welcome and apply God's truth, though they are able to comprehend many of its statements cognitively.

a) Obviously unsaved men can mentally grasp something of the objective data of the Bible. Many unbelievers have understood many of the historical facts presented in the Word of God. Some have even followed the logic of certain portions of the Bible. They have cognitively grasped certain objective biblical facts - that certain Bible personalities performed certain tasks, said certain words, went to certain geographical locations, argued with certain points of logic, and so on - yet they do not personally know the God of the Scriptures. "The world through its wisdom did not know him" (1 Cor 1:21).

b) Even with determined and diligent research on a high scholarly level, they are unable to respond to the true divine sense of the Scriptures. The Spirit's illuminating of Christians, then, must include something more than mental apprehension of the Bible of which non-Christians are capable.

c) Though the unsaved may mentally observe objective data of the Bible, it remains foolishness to them (1 Cor 1:18; 2:14). Though perhaps able to follow the logic of Paul's reasoning in his epistles, unbelievers do not "take to heart" the truth involved. The grammar of John 3:16 may be clear to the unsaved, but this does not mean that they receive to their hearts the truth of the
verse. The unsaved do not welcome God's truth, because it strikes at the very core of their sinfulness.

d) Only the saved are able to welcome God's truth. When Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that "the man without the Spirit (soulish, unsaved man") does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, "he did not mean that an unsaved person is totally incapable of comprehending any of the grammatical data of the Bible. Rather, Paul meant that a non-Christian does not welcome its truth! The Greek word translated "accept" means "welcome." If "receive" were intended, a different Greek word () would have been used. The verse does not mean that an unsaved person, who is devoid of the

e) Holy Spirit, cannot understand mentally what the Bible is saying; instead it means that he does not welcome its message of redemption to his own heart. He rejects the message, refusing to appropriate it and act on it. By contrast, people in Berea "received (from ) the message with great eagerness" (Acts 17:11), and the Thessalonians "received (from ) the Word... with the joy of the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess 1:6).

f) The statement in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that the things of the Spirit of God are "foolishness" to an unbeliever would indicate that he has some understanding of what the Bible says. Otherwise, if nothing were communicated to him, how could he judge such a communication to be foolish? He could not call something foolishness unless he had some cognitive awareness of it.

g) "But," someone may argue, "this verse also states that an unsaved person cannot even know the things of the Spirit. Does not this argue against the point being made that the unsaved can be cognizant of Bible facts?" No, because the Greek word that is used means "know by experience" as opposed to which means "know intuitively or intrinsically." An unbeliever does not know God's truth experientially. He may grasp portions of it mentally, but he does not discern it spiritually nor experience it personally.
h) Virkler summarizes this point well when he writes: “Thus unbelievers do not know the full meaning of scriptural teaching, not because that meaning is unavailable to them in the words of the text, but because they refuse to act on and appropriate spiritual truths for their own lives. Furthermore, the psychological results of such refusal make them less and less able (and willing) to comprehend these truths” (Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*, p. 30).

i) In illumination the Holy Spirit's work is not only to show what the Bible means, but also to persuade Christians of its truth. Illumination is the Spirit's work, enabling Christians to discern the meaning of the message and to welcome and receive it as from God. Hodge states that obedience in the believer's life is the inevitable result of the illuminating work of the Spirit (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:403).

j) To receive God's truths fully, one must first understand them and then appropriate them. Bromiley expresses this fact when he says that the Holy Spirit, who has given the Word of God, seeks to "open the eyes of the readers to perceive its truth and receive its light" (Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration," *Christianity Today*, November 23, 1959, p. 139).

k) Klooster puts it this way: "Understanding Scripture requires more than an intellectual grasp of the historical setting of the text or the literary structure of the passage. Heart-understanding demands the heart response in the totality of one's being to the living, triune God" (Fred H. Klooster, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Hermeneutic Process," Paper read at the Chicago Summit Conference II, p. 16).

6. *The Spirit's role in hermeneutics does not mean that only Bible scholars can understand the Bible.*

   a) The Bible was given to be understood by all; hence its interpretation is not in the hands of an elite few. (cf. 1 John 2:20, 27).

   b) And yet believers ought not neglect the interpretive helps that can be afforded by biblical scholars.
7. The Holy Spirit’s role in interpreting Scripture requires spiritual devotion on the part of the interpreter.

   a) Thomas "Aquinas used to pray and fast when he came to a difficult passage of Scripture. Most of the scholars whose Biblical studies have blessed the church have mixed prayers generously with their studies" (Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, pp. 13-14).

   b) "A deep religious experience has enlightened many an otherwise ill-instructed mind as to the meaning of much of the Holy Writ" (John McClintock and James Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, 4:205).

   c) "Apart from the quickening of the Spirit, the interpreter will have only words and phrases. Only through the Holy Spirit can he enter into the meaning of the biblical writers..."Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible, p. 39).

   d) However, this is not to say that prayer automatically guarantees that a person’s interpretations will be accurate. Spiritual devotion, depth, and sensitivity make correct interpretations more possible, but does not assure their accuracy. More is involved, as other propositions indicate.

8. The Holy Spirit in interpretation means that lack of spiritual preparedness hinders accurate interpretation.

   a) A worldly Christian, one who is not obeying the truth and is not yielded to the Lord, is unable to understand the Word fully (1 Cor 3:1-3) and "is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness" (Heb 5:13).

   b) A Christian who is in sin is susceptible to making inaccurate interpretations of the Bible because his mind and heart are not in harmony with the Spirit.

9. The role of the Spirit in interpretation is no substitute for diligent study.

   a) With a heart sensitive to the Spirit, the interpreter must study the Word intensely. The point here is that the Spirit does not make study superfluous.
b) "The more self-consciously active the interpreter is in the process, the more likely is the Spirit's illumination" (Klooster, "The Role of the Holy Spirit," pp. 12-13).

c) The Holy Spirit works through the efforts of the individual as he reads the Bible, and studies it, meditates on it, and consults other works about it. In the inspiration of the Bible the Holy Spirit was working but so were the human authors. In a similar way in the interpretation of the Bible, human work is involved.

10. The Spirit's work in biblical interpretation does not rule out the use of study helps such as commentaries and Bible dictionaries.

a) "It is often asserted by devout people that they can know the Bible competently without helps" (Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, p. 17).

b) They assume they can go to the Bible and that the Holy Spirit interprets it for them directly. This seems to them more spiritual than relying on man's writings. Ramm answers this view by stating that no one has either the right or the learning to bypass all the godly learning of other Bible scholars both past and present.

c) He suggests that such an affirmation is "a veiled egotism" (Ibid.)

d) Of course commentaries can come between a person and the Bible. It is possible to rely on others' interpretations to the neglect of one's own personal study of the Scriptures. Rather than using commentaries and other study helps as a crutch and accepting others' views unquestioningly, one should consult them and evaluate the views suggested in the light of his own study of the Scriptures (cf. Acts 17:11). This should be done prayerfully and humbly in dependence on the Spirit's guidance.

e) Chafer addresses this point well: “No student of the Scriptures should be satisfied to traffic only in the results of the study of other men. The field is inexhaustible and its treasures ever new. No worthy astronomer limits his attention to the findings of other men, but is himself ever gazing into the heavens both to verify and to discover; and no worthy theologian will be
satisfied alone with the result of the research of other theologians, but will himself be ever searching the Scriptures” (Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, 1:vi).

11. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in Bible interpretation does not mean interpreters can ignore common sense and logic.

a) Since the Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13), He would not teach concepts that failed to meet the tests of truth. (In a correspondence theory of truth, truth is what corresponds to the actual state of affairs.

b) The Holy Spirit does not guide into interpretations that contradict each other or fail to have logical, internal consistency.

12. The place of the Holy Spirit in interpreting the Bible means that He does not normally give sudden intuitive flashes of insight into the meaning of Scripture.

a) Though many passages are readily understood, the meaning of others may come to light only gradually in the arduous process of careful study (as stated earlier in proposition 8). Still other times an interpreter may concentrate on a passage a long time with its meaning still eluding him. But later, after leaving the passage for awhile, the meaning may seem to jump to his mind suddenly.

b) "The interpreter's struggle to understand always precedes that... experience, it does not occur in connection with a text on which one has expended no effort" (Klooster, "The Role of the Holy Spirit," p. 14).

13. The Spirit's ministry in interpreting the Bible is included in but not identical with illumination.

a) In interpretation a believer is aided by the Spirit to ascertain the meaning of a passage.

b) This is the first step in illumination. But illumination is not complete until one has appropriated it to his life. Interpretation involves perception; illumination includes it but also involves reception.
14. The role of the Spirit in scriptural interpretation does not mean that all parts of the Bible are equally clear in meaning.

a) Some scholars claim that all the Bible is equally perspicuous, that its meaning is clear and plain. However, perspicuity does not mean that all parts of the Bible are equally clear.

b) Even Peter said that Paul's epistles "contain some things that are hard to understand" (2 Pet 3:16). Perspecuity means, instead, that the central message of the Bible, the message of salvation, is clear to all.

15. The Spirit's work in interpretation does not result in believers having a comprehensive and completely accurate understanding of the entire Scriptures.

a) The exact meaning of many passages still eludes many Bible scholars, even after a lifetime of study in the Scriptures.

b) The precise meaning of some verses will not be known until believers see the Savior "face to face" (1 Cor 13:12). Students of the Bible, even though they are devout and are Spirit-taught, must admit that the correct interpretation of at least some passages simply cannot be fully ascertained this side of heaven.

16. These propositions suggest that at least five elements are necessary for properly interpreting the Bible: salvation, spiritual maturity, diligent study, common sense and logic, and humble dependence on the Spirit of God for discernment. Clearly the Holy Spirit needs to be much involved in the process of a believer's efforts to comprehend and interpret the Bible.

F. Possibility of Hermeneutics

1. Issues involved with Revelation

   a) Rejection of True Hermeneutics

   (1) "The pictures in which we view God, the thoughts in which we think of Him, the words with which we can define Him, are in themselves unfitted to this object and thus inappropriate to express and affirm the Knowledge of Him" (Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, II.1., p. 188).
(2) “The Bible, further is not a itself and in itself God’s past revelation, but by becoming God’s Word it attests God’s past revelation and is God’s past revelation in the form of attestation…Attestation is, therefore, the service of this something else, which the witness answers for the truth of this something else” (Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.1.125).

(3) Words are very unfit because they are not themselves the revelation of God; they only point to the revelation. They, however, are important because “from time to time such and such a word, spoken by prophets and apostles and proclaimed in the church, become His Word” (Barth, Ibid., p. 156f.).

(4) Hence, Barth argues that God cannot be truly spoken of in human language, seeing that God is too large and transcendent for language. Man’s creatureness makes language unfit to convey the infinite.

b) Argument for True Hermeneutics

(1) God can accommodate to man’s language

(2) While man cannot understand fully and comprehensively, man can apprehend God truly.

(3) “If anyone is able to speak in an absolutely unambiguous fashion, and to make himself understood with irresistible efficacy, such a one is God; therefore, if there is any word that might not require a hermeneutics, it would be the divine word” (Luis Alonso-Schökel, *Herenèutica de la Palabra*, 1:83).

2. Issues involved with Language

a) The Approach of Gadamer

(1) Hans-George Gadamer, whose name is usually associated with a relativistic approach to interpretation.

   (a) Indeed, Gadamer went so far as to give the impression that truth in interpretation is a matter of personal taste.

   (b) Joel C. Weinsheimer, Gadamer’s Hermeneutics: A Reading of Truth and Method (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), puts it this way: “Whether an interpretation is true is a matter of taste. If this seems to denigrate truth, that is only because we have denigrated taste as a cognitive capacity able to arrive at the truth. It is only because we have thought truth is exclusively something that has been or can be proven” (111).
(2) Much of his thought was a reaction to the Enlightenment’s distrust of prejudices and preunderstandings.

(3) His view is that the subjectivity and objectivity merge together in such a way as to become the process of interpretation. In this way, we can never re-create the original intent of the author.

(4) In this view, there are no criteria for distinguishing a false and true interpretation.

(5) In addition, this theory fails to avoid multiple meanings from any text; thus, anarchy will rule.

b) The Approach of Structuralism

(1) Denial of history

(2) No freedom, seeing that signs and symbols are organized according to universal patterns in the brain; thus, meaning is not found in the individual, but in the group.

(3) Radically deny any intention by author.

(4) This view is out of touch with reality and subverts all meaning into some man-made code-system of determined, closed-system signs and symbols.

c) The Approach of Poststructuralism

(1) “As an institution, the author is dead”

(2) There is an autonomy of the text

(3) It is seen as art—it has life within itself and after completed it is merely displayed.

(4) It has innumerable meanings

(5) At the moment the reader takes up the work, he makes it his own.

(6) This is extremely subjective and relativistic.

(7) If it has any meaning, it then has no real objective meaning.

(8) One historian has commented: "But the linguistics of French structuralism and poststructuralism was a mirage. Those who used its notions understood neither the technical aspects of linguistics nor the theoretical stakes involved (Thomas G. Pavel,
The Feud of Language: A History of Structuralist Thought, vii; see also 76 and 130-32).

d) The Approach of Deconstructionism

(1) “Deconstruction is nothing less than an attack on some fundamental concepts of Western culture, since it appears to call into question the very possibility of literary communication by insisting on the absence of a fixed language” (Silva, Moisés. “Contemporary Theories of Biblical Interpretation.” In New Interpreter’s Bible, Vol. 1, 107-124).

(2) “And the fundamental one which generates all the others is presumably the paradox that, if perception creates reality, then perception (mine, yours, ours together) must also be creating the perceive (me, yours, us together) .... The core paradox of the perceived perceive, is, once again, a destiny to be accepted, not a difficulty to be solved (John Dominic Crossan, Cliffs of Falls: Paradox and Polyvalence in the Parables of Jesus, 9-10, 71).

(3) There is an insurmountable gap between the signifier and the signified; thus, stripping all hope of interpretation away.

(4) Language is no help in understanding reality. There is no meaning within a text because we can no longer identify the original meaning. One merely creates a meaning.

(5) This radical approach is not consistent with the way in which we live.

(6) Furthermore, it ignores the bridge between the signifier and the signified—context.

e) The Approach of Phenomenalism

(1) We live in the world: in history, in concretion: we do not live any where else, and all meaning is only meaning in relation to particular, concrete, historical existence.

(2) Our existence as beings includes: our situation; our tools-to-hand with and through which we manipulate and articulate the world; and our fore-understandings of the world.

(3) We share reality through common signs. We cannot share anyone else's reality except through the mediation of our symbolic world -- that is, through a 'text' of some sort, which text has a context -- in fact, many contexts. Thus, language forms the core of being.

(4) 4. Our symbolic world is not separate from our beings, especially in regard to language: we 'are' language, in that what
distinguishes us as persons is that we are beings who are conscious of themselves, that is, can know themselves symbolically and self-reflexively. As Paul Ricouer remarks in "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics", "To bring [experience] into language is not to change it into something else, but, in articulating and developing it, to make it become itself."

(5) Nonetheless, the text has limited autonomy from the author. We have a vital part in assimilating the symbol and reorienting the meaning in a ‘reality-shaping’ mode. We, thus, appropriate the text’s meaning for current understanding.

f) The Approach of Hirsch

(1) Meaning is rooted in Author’s intent

(2) Significance is rooted in the meaning and applied to current circumstances

(3) Thus, the author’s intent is preserved.

(4) Hirsch lacked means of checking both interpretation and significance

g) The Approach of Evangelicalism

(1) All biblical language is rooted in the creature-Creator worldview

   (a) “Christianity’s basic ontological premise is the triune personal God’s existence as sovereign creator and as rational and moral ruler of the universe.

   (b) “The basic Christian epistemic premise is the self-revealing God intelligibly disclosed in nature, in history, and in the reason and conscience of all humankind, and self-disclosed supremely in Jesus Christ and the Bible.

   (c) “Logical consistency serves universally as a test of truth. Logical contradiction disqualifies truth-claims. Logical consistency is a negative test; a rational system predicated on logical contradiction cannot be true” (C. H. Henry, “Fortunes of the Christian World View,” in Trinity Journal 19:2 [1998]: 175).

(2) All language has one meaning
(a) “WE AFFIRM" that the meaning expressed in each biblical text is single, definite and fixed.

(b) “WE DENY" that the recognition of this single meaning eliminates the variety of its application.

(c) “The Affirmation here is directed at those who claim a "double" or "deeper" meaning to Scripture than that expressed by the authors. It stresses the unity and fixity of meaning as opposed to those who find multiple and pliable meanings. What a passage means is fixed by the author and is not subject to change by readers. This does not imply that further revelation on the subject cannot help one come to a fuller understanding, but simply that the meaning given in a text is not changed because additional truth is revealed subsequently.

(d) Meaning is also definite in that there are defined limits by virtue of the author's expressed meaning in the given linguistic form and cultural context. Meaning is determined by an author; it is discovered by the readers.

(e) The Denial adds the clarification that simply because Scripture has one meaning does not imply that its messages cannot be applied to a variety of individuals or situations. While the interpretation is one, the applications can be many” (Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics with Commentary by Geisler, Article VII).

(3) Biblical Truth is transcultural

(a) WE AFFIRM that translations of the text of Scripture can communicate knowledge of God across all temporal and cultural boundaries.

(b) WE DENY that the meaning of biblical texts is so tied to the culture out of which they came that understanding of the same meaning in other cultures is impossible.

(c) Simply because the truth of Scripture was conveyed by God in the original writings does not mean that it cannot be translated into another language. This article affirms the translatability of God's truth into other cultures. It affirms that since truth is transcendent (see Article XX) it is not culture-bound. Hence the truth of God expressed in a first-century culture is not limited to that culture. For the nature of truth is not limited to any particular medium through which it is expressed.
(d) The Denial notes that since meaning is not inextricably tied to a given culture it can be adequately expressed in another culture. Thus the message of Scripture need not be relativized by translation. What is expressed can be the same even though how it is expressed differs” (Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics, Article XI).

(4) One should and must come to the Text with a preunderstanding

(a) **WE AFFIRM** that any preunderstandings which the interpreter brings to Scripture should be in harmony with scriptural teaching and subject to correction by it.

(b) **WE DENY** that Scripture should be required to fit alien preunderstandings, inconsistent with itself, such as naturalism, evolutionism, scientism, secular humanism, and relativism.

(c) The question of preunderstanding is a crucial one in contemporary hermeneutics. The careful wording of the Affirmation does not discuss the issue of whether one should approach Scripture with a particular preunderstanding, but simply which kinds of preunderstanding one has are legitimate. This question is answered by affirming that only those preunderstandings which are compatible with the teaching of Scripture are legitimate. In fact, the statement goes further and demands that all preunderstanding be subject to "correction" by the teaching of Scripture.

(d) The point of this article is to avoid interpreting Scripture through an alien grid or filter which obscures or negates its true message. For it acknowledges that one's preunderstanding will affect his understanding of a text. Hence to avoid misinterpreting Scripture one must be careful to examine his own presuppositions in the light of Scripture (Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics, Article XIX).

(5) The Bible language is consistent with all other reality and facts—not a religious language with no meaning and with meaning that deceives:

(a) **WE AFFIRM** that the Bible expresses God's truth in propositional statements, and we declare that biblical truth is both objective and absolute. We further affirm that a statement is true if it represents matters as they actually are, but is an error if it misrepresents the facts.
(b) **WE DENY** that, while Scripture is able to make us wise unto salvation, biblical truth should be defined in terms of this function. We further deny that error should be defined as that which willfully deceives.

(c) Since hermeneutics is concerned with understanding the truth of Scripture, attention is directed here to the nature of truth. Several significant affirmations are made about the nature of truth.

(d) First, in contrast to contemporary relativism it is declared that truth is absolute. Second, as opposed to subjectivism it is acknowledged that truth is objective. Finally, in opposition to existential and pragmatic views of truth, this article affirms that truth is what corresponds to reality. This same point was made in the "Chicago Statement on Inerrancy" (1978) in Article XIII and the commentary on it.

(e) The Denial makes it evident that views which redefine an error to mean what "misleads," rather than what is a mistake, must be rejected. This redefinition of the word "error" is both contrary to Scripture and to common sense. In Scripture the word error is used of unintentional acts (Lev. 4:2) as well as intentional ones. Also, in common parlance a statement is in error if it is a factual mistake, even if there was no intention to mislead anyone by it. So to suggest that the Bible contains mistakes, but that these are not errors so long as they do not mislead, is contrary to both Scripture and ordinary usage.

(f) By this subtle redefinition of error to mean only what misleads but not what misrepresents, some have tried to maintain that the Bible is wholly true (in that it never misleads) and yet that it may have some mistakes in it. This position is emphatically rejected by the confessors of this document. (Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics, Article VI).

(6) Interpretation maintains a proper balance between the author’s intent and the reader’s perception

(a) **WE AFFIRM** that the term hermeneutics, which historically signified the rules of exegesis, may properly be extended to cover all that is involved in the process of perceiving what the biblical revelation means and how it bears on our lives.

(b) **WE DENY** that the message of Scripture derives from, or is dictated by, the interpreter's understanding.
Thus we deny that the "horizons" of the biblical writer and the interpreter may rightly "fuse" in such a way that what the text communicates to the interpreter is not ultimately controlled by the expressed meaning of the Scripture.

(c) The primary thrust of this Affirmation is definitional. It desires to clarify the meaning of the term hermeneutics by indicating that it includes not only perception of the declared meaning of a text but also an understanding of the implications that text has for one's life. Thus, hermeneutics is more than biblical exegesis. It is not only the science that leads forth the meaning of a passage but also that which enables one (by the Holy Spirit) to understand the spiritual implications the truth(s) of this passage has for Christian living.

(d) The Denial notes that the meaning of a passage is not derived from or dictated by the interpreter. Rather, meaning comes from the author who wrote it. Thus the reader's understanding has no hermeneutically definitive role. Readers must listen to the meaning of a text and not attempt to legislate it. Of course, the meaning listened to should be applied to the reader's life. But the need or desire for specific application should not color the interpretation of a passage (Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics, Article IX).

G. Presuppositions of Hermeneutics

1. The Revelation of Scripture

a) Significance

(1) This is one of the axioms of the Christian Faith

(2) "In other words, the religion of the Bible presents itself as distinctly a revealed religion, or rather, to speak more exactly, it announces itself as revealed religion, as the only revealed religion; and sets itself as such against all other religions, which are represented as all products in a sense in which it is not, of the art and device of man" (Warfield, I:4).

b) Definition

(1) It is a self-disclosure of God to His rational creatures.

(2) "Revelation [from Latin revelatio, and unveiling, revealing, derivative of revelare, unveil; re-, bat + velare, to veil, derivative of velum, a veil]; in its active meaning, the act of God by which we communicates to man the truth concerning himself-- his
nature, works, will, or purpose; in the passive meaning, the knowledge resultant upon such activity of God” (Warfield, I:37).

**c) Models of Revelation (House, 18-20)**

(1) Revelation as Doctrine

(a) Adherents

(i) Patristic Fathers

(ii) Medieval Church

(iii) Reformers

(iv) B. B. Warfield

(v) Francis Schaeffer

(vi) International Council of Biblical Inerrancy

(b) Definition of Revelation

(i) It is divine

(ii) It is authoritative

(iii) It is objective

(iv) It is propositional and usually in doctrine

(v) It is through the medium of the Bible

(c) Purpose of Revelation

(i) To elicit saving faith in the truth

(ii) Truth is ultimately in Christ

(d) General View of the Bible

(i) The Bible is the Word of God

(ii) Both in Word and Content

(e) Means of Human Apprehension- Illumination By Spirit

(f) Basic Hermeneutic- induction (objective)

(g) Strengths

(i) This is derived by the Scriptures themselves
(ii) This is the traditional, historical view of church

(iii) This possesses internal coherence

(iv) This provides a basis for consistent theology

(2) Revelation as Experience

(a) Adherents

(i) Friedrich Schleiermacher

(ii) Karl Rahner

(b) Definition of Revelation

(i) Self-disclosure of God

(ii) By intimate presence of God

(iii) In the depths of the consciousness of man

(c) Purpose of Revelation

(i) To impart an experience of union with God

(ii) This experience is equal to eternal life

(d) General View of Bible

(i) The Bible contains the Word of God

(ii) This Word of God is mixed with human myths

(iii) The Word of God is only apprehended by personal illumination

(e) Means of Apprehension - Intuition

(f) Basic Hermeneutic - Eclecticism (Subjective)

(g) Problems

(i) Selects what is wants from the Bible

(ii) Divorces revelation from doctrine

(iii) Encourages introspection

(3) Revelation as Dialectic Presence

(a) Adherents
(i) Karl Barth
(ii) Emil Brunner

(b) Definition of Revelation

(i) Revelation is God's message to those whom He encounters
(ii) In either Scripture or preaching of Christ.

(c) Purpose of Revelation

(i) Generate Faith
(ii) This faith becomes the revelation of God

(d) General View of Bible

(i) Bible becomes the Word of God to us
(ii) Revelation is dynamic and depends on faith
(iii) Only as Spirit empowers the Word.

(e) Means of Human Apprehension

(i) “Transactional” Leap of Faith
(ii) Irrational leap

(f) Basic Hermeneutic - inductive (subjective)

(g) Problems: irrational paradoxes

2. The Canon of Scripture

a) Belgic Confession of Faith

(1) We believe that the Holy Scriptures are contained in two books, namely, the Old and the New Testament, which are canonical, against which nothing can be alleged. These are thus named in the Church of God.

(2) The books of the Old Testament are the five books of Moses, to wit: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; the book of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the two books of Samuel, the two of the Kings, two books of the Chronicles, [commonly called Paralipomenon, the first of] Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther; Job, the Psalms [of David], the three books of Solomon, namely, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs; the four great prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, {Lamentations,} Ezekiel, and Daniel; and the twelve lesser prophets, namely, Hosea, Joel,
Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

(3) Those of the New Testament are the four evangelists, to wit: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles; the thirteen [1] epistles of the apostle Paul, namely, one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one to the Galatians, one to the Ephesians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon;[2] Hebrews; the seven epistles of the other apostles, namely, one of James, two of Peter, three of John, one of Jude; and the Revelation of the apostle John.

b) The French Confession

(1) These Holy Scriptures are comprised in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, as follows: the five books of Moses, namely: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; then Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the first and second books of Samuel, the first and second books of the Kings, the first and second books of the Chronicles, otherwise called Paralipomenon, the first book of Ezra; then Nehemiah, the book of Esther, Job, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs or Maxims of Solomon; the book of Ecclesiastes, called the Preacher, the Song of Solomon; then the book of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi;

(2) Then the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, according to St. Mark, according to St. Luke, and according to St. John; then the second book of St. Luke, otherwise called the Acts of the Apostles; then the Epistles of St. Paul: one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one to the Galatians, one to the Ephesians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon; then the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of St. James, the first and second Epistles of St. Peter, the first, second, and third Epistles of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude; and then the Apocalypse, or Revelation of St. John.

c) The Second Helevitic Confession

(1) We believe and confess the canonical Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles of both Testaments to be the true Word of God, and to have sufficient authority of themselves, not of men. For God himself spoke to the fathers, prophets, apostles, and still speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures.

(2) And in this Holy Scripture, the universal Church of Christ has the most complete exposition of all that pertains to a saving
faith, and also to the framing of a life acceptable to God; and in this respect it is expressly commanded by God that nothing either be added to or taken from the same.

d) Westminster, Savoy, and 1689 London Baptist Confessions

(1) Under the name of holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testament; which are these:


(4) All which are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

e) 39 Articles of the Anglican Church

(1) Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. Of the Names and Number of the Canonical Books Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The First Book of Esdras, The Second Book of Esdras, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or Preacher, Cantica, or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the greater, Twelve Prophets the less.
(2) And the other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth
read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth
it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these
following: The Third Book of Esdras, The Fourth Book of
Esdras, The Book of Tobias, The Book of Judith, The rest of the
Book of Esther, The Book of Wisdom, Jesus the Son of Sirach,
Baruch the Prophet, The Song of the Three Children, The Story
of Susanna, Of Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses,
The First Book of Maccabees, The Second Book of Maccabees.
All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly
received, we do receive, and account them Canonical.

3. The Inspiration of Scripture

a) Reason or Necessity of Inspiration

(1) As special revelation is God’s communication to man of the
truth he must know in order to be properly related to God, so
inspiration deals with the preservation of that revelation so that
what was received from God was accurately transmitted to
others beyond the original recipient.

(2) In revelation we have the vertical reception of God’s truth
while in inspiration we have the horizontal communication of
that revelation accurately to others.

(3) The question is how can we be sure the Bible is God’s
revelation to man and not merely the product of human ingenuity
or merely human opinion?

(a) If what God revealed has not been accurately
recorded, then that record is subject to question.

(b) The doctrine of inspiration answers that question
and guarantees the accuracy of the Bible as God’s
special revelation.

(4) If God merely communicated to men who in turn would then
disseminate this information, then what guarantees that this
revelation will be accurately relayed and interpreted by them?
This occurs only by God superintending their actual words so
that God is actually speaking through them.

b) The Definition of Inspiration

(1) Theologians' Definitions

(a) "Inspiration is, therefore, usually defined as a
supernatural influence on the sacred writers by the
Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given
Divine trustworthiness." (Warfield, 1:77-78).
(b) "The term (divine inspiration) is used for the mysterious power which the Divine Spirit put forth on the authors of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, in order to their composing these as they have been received by the Church of God at their hands" (Gaussen, Divine Inspiration, 23).

(c) “Inspiration is a superintendence of God the Holy Spirit over the writers of the Scriptures, as a result of which these Scriptures possess Divine authority and trustworthiness and, possessing such Divine authority and trustworthiness, are free from error” (Edward J. Young, Thy Word Is Truth, 27).

(d) “God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded without error His message to mankind in the words of their original writings” (Charles C. Ryrie, Basic Theology).

(e) “By inspiration of the Scripture we mean that supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon the Scripture writers which rendered their writings an accurate record of the revelation or which resulted in what they wrote actually being the Word of God” (Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology).

(2) According to Enns, there are several important elements that belong in a proper definition of inspiration (Paul Enns, The Moody Handbook of Theology, 163):

(i) The divine element—God the Holy Spirit superintended the writers, ensuring the accuracy of the writing;

(ii) The human element—human authors wrote according to their individual styles and personalities;

(iii) The result of the divine-human authorship is the recording of God’s truth without error;

(iv) Inspiration extends to the selection of words by the writers;

(v) Inspiration relates to the original manuscripts.

c) The Proof of Inspiration

(1) Jesus' View of Inspiration

(a) Importance of Jesus’s view
(i) "The real issue for us in the matter of inspiration then is the authority of Christ as a doctrinal teacher. If we abandon the high view of Scripture, we are in effect abandoning Him in his authority over us" (Clark H. Pinnock, "The Inspiration of the Scripture and the Authority of Jesus Christ," in God's Inerrant Word, 201).

(ii) "If we accept Christ's claims, therefore, we commit ourselves to believe all that he taught--on his authority. If we refuse to believe some part of what he taught, we are in effect denying him to be the divine messiah--on own authority. The question, 'What think ye of the Old Testament?' resolves into the question, 'What think ye of Christ?' As our answer to the first proclaims our answer to the second" (J. I. Packer, "Fundamentalism" and the Word of God, 59).

(b) Areas of Christ's View

(i) History of Old Testament is Accurate and Trustworthy

(a) Our Lord's acceptance of the authority of Scripture is seen in the warp and woof of His teachings.


(c) Jesus Christ accepted the fabric of Old Testament History without reservation. We should note however, for Him this history was not merely academic, for him it held special relevance for each contemporary situation.

(ii) Doctrine of Old Testament is Accurate and Trustworthy

(a) Christ accepted the Old Testament on doctrinal matters.

(b) His own mission (Mark 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13)

(c) Marriage (Matt. 19:4-6)
(d) In his encounter with Satan after his baptism, He appeals to the authority of Scripture on every occasion with the decisive formula, “it is written.”

(e) It is important to note that in his encounters with the religious leaders of the day, He never chide them for too closely observing the Old Testament. Rather the opposite was true. While theologically the Jews held a high view of Scripture, their tradition had so hedged the text that they had in effect nullified its teaching. Jesus condemned them not for their belief but their unbelief (Cf. Mark 7:1-13; Matt. 23:23, etc.).

(iii) Ethics of the Old Testament are Accurate and Trustworthy

(a) Jesus Christ made it plain that his teachings were not opposed to Scripture, but based upon it. “Don’t think I have come to nullify/ abolish the Law and prophets but to establish them.” (Matt 5:17).

(b) In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus did not nullify the OT teachings, rather he rescued them from their then current misapplications. For example, the original injunction, “... an eye for an eye ...” was meant to limit vengeance. The Jews had so twisted the injunction so as to justify it. So when Jesus said “do not resist him who is evil ... but ... turn the other cheek,” (Matt 5:38-42.) he was actually reasserting the principle of not taking vengeance.

(iv) The Words of the Old Testament are the Very Words of God

(a) David spoke by the Spirit (Mark 12:36)

(b) God gave the words recorded in Genesis (Matt. 19:5)

(c) As Clark Pinnock observes, “We can say that Jesus everywhere and always regards Scripture as an authoritative document whose ultimate author is God Himself.”
(v) The Scriptures of the Old Testament are Inviable

(a) Not one iota or jot will pass away (Matt. 5:18)

(b) Greatest in kingdom is he who does and teaches even the least of God's commandments (Matt. 5:19).

(c) Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35).

(d) Word "broken" is normally used for breaking the law, including the Sabbath (John 5:18; 7:23; Matt. 5:19).

(e) "The meaning of the declaration is that is impossible for the Scripture to be annulled, its authority to be withstood, or denied.... What we have here is, therefore, the strongest possible assertion of the indefectible authority of Scripture.... This means, of course, that in the Savior's view the indefectible authority of Scripture attaches to the very form of expression of its most casual clauses. It belongs to Scripture through and through, down to its most minute particulars, that it is of indefectible authority" (Warfield, 1:85-86).

(c) Objections to Jesus' View of Scripture

(i) Ignorance of Jesus

(a) Objection: When Jesus became a man, his human nature was conditioned to the characteristics of his age and country. They will cite Mark 13:22 to support their claim.

(b) Response: When Jesus became a man, he "voluntarily limited himself in the areas of human and divine knowledge (Luke 5:22; John 1:48; Matt. 20:17-19) it should also be recognized that He never spoke on subjects which He was voluntarily ignorant" (Raymond Surburg, "Implications of the Historico-Critical Method in Interpreting the Old Testament," in Crisis in Lutheran Theology, 2:79).
(c) "If His Kenosis is extended beyond the precise delimitation of Scripture, Christ becomes a mere man, and He is no longer infallible in matters either of history or faith" (Merrill F. Unger, "Messiah," in Unger's Bible Dictionary, 226).

(ii) Accommodation of Jesus

(a) Objection: While Jesus knew more information, He refused to disclose it because of man's ignorance. He, therefore, sought to accommodate man

(b) Response: If this is case, then Christ is deceiving us, and therefore, we cannot trust Him. Furthermore, how do we know when he is merely accommodating us?

(iii) Issue at hand:

(a) "He came to reveal God's will, and this implies and requires special knowledge. It demands that every assertion of His be true. The Divine knowledge did not, because it could not, undergo any change in the incarnation. He continued to subsist in the form of God even while He existed in the form of man" (W. H. Griffith, "Old Testament Criticism and New Testament Christianity," in the Fundamentals, 8:22).

(b) "If Christ is not to be trusted completely in all His assertions, how is the reader of His sayings going to know where to draw the line between matters of eternal import and those purely parochial interest? Appropriately the presentation may be concluded with a searching question from the lips of Jesus Himself: 'If I have told you earthly things and ye believe me not how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?'" (Surburg, Ibid., 80).

(2) New Testament Writers

(a) Paul

(i) He made the words of Scripture co-extensive with the words of God. One example
will suffice to illustrate Paul's strict view of inspiration, that is the case of Galatians 3:15-16. Paul states, "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and his seed. It does not say and to seeds as to many, but 'and to your seed,' who is Christ.

(ii) The classical passage is 2 Tim. 3:16.

(a) ἡγεοπνευστο —very distinctly does not mean "inspired by God." This phrase is rather the rendering of the Latin divinitus inspirata... The Greek term has, however, nothing to say of inspiring or of inspiration: it speaks only of "spiring" or "spiration." What it says of Scripture is not that it is "breathed into by God" or is the product of divine "inbreatheing" into the human authors, but that it "breathed out by God" or "God-breathed." In a word, what is being declared by this fundamental passage is simply that the Scriptures are a divine product, without any indication of how God has operated in producing them. No term could have been chosen, however, which would have more emphatically asserted the divine production of Scripture that that which is here employed. The “breath of God” in Scripture is the symbol of His almighty bower, the bearer of His creative word. "By the word of Jehovah," we read in a significant parallel of Ps 33:6, “were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” . . . God's breath is the irresistible outflow of His power. When Paul declares, then, that "every scripture" is a product of the divine breath, "is God-breathed," he asserts with as much energy as he could employ that Scripture is a product of a specifically divine operation. (Warfield, ISBE 3:1474 s.v. “Inspiration”).

(b) ἄν ἀν, “all” or “every” Scripture?

(c) It can be used collectively or distributively. The question here is how did Paul intend it to be understood?

(d) In the immediate context (v. 15) the Scripture is equate with the sacred writings, hence, Paul is here referring collectively to the Scriptures.
(e) Therefore all Scripture is in view here.

(f) The verse is without a verb.

(g) It could legitimately be translated “every/all Scripture inspired by God is also profitable.”

(h) This is not however, normal Pauline style (cf. 1 Tim 4:4, same author, same grammar).

(i) Some who have rejected plenary inspiration have adopted this translation since it seemingly draws a distinction between inspired and non-inspired Scripture. However this sense is not plausible since the previous verse describes the sacred writings which are in this verse described as Scripture. Also, such a distinction was totally foreign to first century Judaism.

(j) \[\text{Gra\'f} \text{h}\] (Literally, “the writing”)

(i) This is a technical term for Scripture as can be seen from Philo, Josephus and the NT itself.

(ii) The Point: God is the author of all Scripture. Therefore inspiration is plenary or full


(l) Note: In the context in which it was written this passage is speaking of the inspiration of the OT. The NT was not yet completed, nor was there yet a New Testament canon.

(b) Peter

(i) The apostle Peter presents a striking example of one for whom the prophetic scripture was even more solidly established than personal experience.

(ii) Stating that he had not followed fables of Christ’s power and glory but was an eyewitness of his majesty of the Mount of transfiguration he continues in 2 Pet 1:19 saying, “And we have an
even surer prophetic Word.” Thus he makes it clear that while he regarded experience as a truthful witness, the divine authority of Holy Scripture coming from men borne along by the Holy Spirit had even greater authority and than experience.

(iii) 2 Pet. 1:21

(a) Prophecy—προφητεία

(i) This is not just the foretelling of an event. Prophecy also involved forthtelling.

(ii) All Scripture was regarded by the Jews as prophetic, and all scriptural authors were regarded as prophets.

(iii) This prophecy

(iv) Did not originate from man’s mind

(v) Did not originate from man’s will

(vi) Did originate from God through men

(b) Spoke—ἐλάβησαν

(i) Starts with a contrast - αλλά - but, to the contrary

(ii) This word spoke implies a verbal aspect to the divine communicative process.

(iii) Emphasis upon the spoken revelation

(iv) Implies also written -- “prophecy of Scripture”

(c) From God—απὸ θεοῦ

(i) This speaks of the origination of the message, Human authors were not involved in the origination of the message but spoke as they were moved by God.

(ii) They were instruments through whom God spoke,
(d) Moved—φερομένοι

(i) This indicates that the human authors did not carry the message, but rather they were carried by the Holy Spirit when writing Scripture.

(ii) God moved them. They were passive in the message, but active in the writing. The Holy Spirit was the active agent.

(iii) Acts 27:14-19 gives an illustration of the process. The boat was driven by the wind. On board the passengers and crew had relative freedom. They could go below deck, or up on deck, stern or aft, port or starboard, but the wind determined the course. In this context the word means to be carried along by the power of another.

(iv) "The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Holy Spirit were there His things, not theirs. And that is the reason which is assigned why 'the prophetic word' is so sure" (Warfield, 1:83).

(c) Writers identified Scripture with God's Word

(i) OT passages in which God is speaker are quoted authoritatively in the NT under the declaration "Scripture said."

(ii) Likewise OT passages in which there is no indication that God is the speaker are quoted in the NT under the declaration, "God said."

(a) Word of God=Scripture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God Said</th>
<th>Scripture Said</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 12:3</td>
<td>Gal. 3:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex. 9:16</td>
<td>Rom. 9:17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Scripture=Word of God

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripture Said</th>
<th>God Said</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
(d) The New Testament Witness to its Own Inspiration

(i) Peter considers the letters of Paul inspired. (2 Peter 3:15-16)

(ii) Paul treats a quotation from the gospel of Luke as inspired citing Luke 10:7 as scripture. (1 Tim. 5:18)

(iii) Revelation is adamant about its own inspiration. (Rev 22:18 cf. 1:10-11)

(iv) Paul (at least) was aware that he was writing with divine authority (Cor. 2:12; 14:37; Gal. 1:11-12; Thess. 2:13).

(3) Spirit's Attestation

(a) "We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts" (WCF, 1.5).

(b) "For, as God alone is a fit witness of Himself in his Word, so also the Word will not find acceptance in men's hearts before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit. The same Spirit, therefore who has spoken by the
mouths of the prophets, must penetrate into our hearts, to persuade us that they faithfully proclaimed what had been divinely commanded" (John Calvin, Institutes of The Christian Religion, 1:75, 79).

(c) "The inward work of the Spirit that testifies to faith concerning the truth of Scripture. The Reformers and Protestant Scholastics were adamant in their belief that both that the testimonium is necessary to the subjective receipt of the truth of Scripture, and that the testimonium only ratifies the truth of the text and adds no new information" (Muller, Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms, 297).

(d) See I Cor. 2:4-5, 9-10; Heb. 4:12; John 10:35; Isa. 55:11, 59:21; Rom. 11:36; Psa. 19:7-11; II Tim. 3:15; I Thess. 1:5; I John 2:20, 27

d) The Theories of Inspiration

(1) Natural Inspiration

(a) The adherents of this view believe that the writers of Scripture were simply men of special genius who possessed unusual religious insight into moral and spiritual truth. Consequently, this view denies any supernatural element of inspiration.

(b) Through their special abilities, they wrote the books of the Bible in much the same way as any individual might write any book. Through their religious insight, they wrote on religious subjects in the same way Shakespeare wrote literature. Writing by their own will, the writers conceived what they wrote. In this, there is no supernatural origin of the Bible.

(c) "But the line of demarcation between it and other religious writings... is not so sharp and final as to establish a qualitative difference between all other writings and every part of canonical Scriptures" (Cecil J. Cadoux, A Pilgrim's Further Progress, 11).

(2) Spiritual or Mystical Illumination

(a) Speaking about this view, Ryrie writes, "This viewpoint goes a step farther than natural inspiration, for it conceives of the writers as more than natural geniuses in that they were also Spirit-filled and guided... Thus, (a) other Christian writings are as inspired as the Bible; (b) the Bible books are not infallible even though
(c) they represent great religious literature that may even contain messages from God (Ryrie, 73).

(b) “The inspiration of the books of the Bible does not imply for us the view that they were produced or written in any manner generically different from that of the writing of other great Christian books. ... There is a wide range of Christian literature from the fifth to the twentieth century which can with propriety be described as inspired by the Holy Spirit in precisely the same formal sense as were the books of the Bible” (Alan Richardson, Christian Apologetics, 207).

(c) In this view any Christian, if illuminated by the Holy Spirit, could be the author of inspired Scripture. Those who hold to this view teach that it is the writers who are inspired, not the writings themselves. Schleiermacher taught this view on the Continent while Coleridge propounded it in England (Enns, 161).

(3) Degrees of Inspiration

(a) This view holds to the inspiration of Scripture, but it holds that some parts are more inspired than other parts.

(b) It is true that some parts of Scripture are more relevant than other parts of Scripture, but all of Scripture is equally inspired and accurate, and it all has an important place in the overall revelation of God.

(c) "Within this one great function of inspiration considerable variety exits. The inspiration of Isaiah or Paul is different from that of the compiler of Proverbs or the annalist who drew up Chronicles" (Marcus Dodds, The Bible, 127).

(d) This view begs the following questions:

   (i) "What determines the degrees of inspiration?"

   (ii) "Who determines the relevancy of passages?"

   (iii) "How can one part be inspired than another?"

(4) Partial Inspiration

(a) The partial inspiration theory teaches that some parts of the Bible are inspired and some parts are not.
Those parts related to matters of salvation and faith are inspired, but those parts that deal with history, science, chronology, or other non-faith matters may be in error.

(b) This view maintains that though some material may be in error, God still preserves the message of salvation. We can trust the Bible in spiritual matters, but in some areas, there may be error.

(c) The partial theory rejects both verbal inspiration (that inspiration extends to the words of Scripture) and plenary inspiration (that inspiration extends to the entirety of Scripture). Despite the presence of errors in Scripture, partial theorists teach that an imperfect medium is a sufficient guide to salvation (Enns, 161).

(d) "One misinterprets Scripture if he tries always to harmonize with science and history aspects of Biblical statements whose purpose is only to facilitate the communication of revelational truth....Since such matters...are non-revelational, they lie outside the boundary of the biblical writers' intention, and are therefore irrelevant to the question of biblical inerrancy" (Daniel Fuller, The Nature of Biblical Inerrancy, American Scientific Affiliation Journal, XXIV/2 [June, 1972], 50).

(e) In response to this, Ryrie writes, "But is not the biblical teaching about salvation based on historical facts? Suppose those facts are inaccurate? Then our understanding about salvation might also be erroneous. You cannot separate history and doctrine and allow for errors (however few) in the historical records and at the same time be certain that the doctrinal parts are true (Ryrie, 74).

5) Conceptual Inspiration

(a) This view says that the concepts or ideas of the writers are inspired but not the words. God communicated the concepts to the human author, but not the words.

(b) It is true that a correct doctrine of inspiration does not include dictation, but God did superintend the authors so that the Holy Spirit guided the words they used from their own vocabularies.

(c) In response, how are concepts expressed, if they are to be expressed accurately? Through carefully chosen words. Further, both Jesus and Paul affirmed the
concept of verbal inspiration (See Matt. 5:18 and Gal. 3:16).

(6) Divine Dictation

(a) The mechanical or dictation view teaches that the whole Bible was dictated word for word by God; the writers were passive, much like secretaries or stenographers who sat and wrote down what was given to them.

(b) Concerning this view, Enns remarks, "This claim would render the Bible similar to the Koran which supposedly was dictated in Arabic from heaven. Although some parts of the Bible were given by dictation (cf. Ex. 20:1, “Then God spoke all these words”), the books of the Bible reveal a distinct contrast in style and vocabulary, suggesting the authors were not mere automatons. The beginning student in Greek will quickly discover the difference in style between the gospel of John and the gospel of Luke. John wrote in a simple style with a limited vocabulary, whereas Luke wrote with an expanded vocabulary and a more sophisticated style. If the dictation theory were true, the style of the books of the Bible should be uniform" (Enns, 161-162).

(7) Neo-orthodox or Barthian View

(a) This view teaches the Bible is not the Word of God, but only becomes the Word of God through a special encounter when God speaks to a person in some kind of subjective experience. In other words, the Bible only witnesses to the Word of God, but it is not the Word of God.

(b) "The Bible is not a book of oracles; it is not an instrument of direct inspiration. It is a genuine witness. And how can it be witness of divine revelation, if the actual purpose, act and decision of God in His only-begotten Son, as seen and heard by the prophets and apostles in that Son, is dissolved in the Bible into a sum total of truths abstracted from that decision-- and those truths are then propounded to us as truths of faith, to be direct impartation, will it not keep us from the best, the one real thing, which God intends to tell us and give us and which we ourselves need" (Karl, Barth, Church Dogmatics, 1:507).

(c) "The Bible is God's Word so far as God lets it be His Word, so far as God speaks through it" (Barth, Ibid., 529-30).
(8) Verbal, Plenary Inspiration

(a) Every part of the Bible is inspired of God

(b) God has communicated to man through the medium of human language and through human agents.

(c) Yet, every word still remains the very words of God and therefore trustworthy.

(d) Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy: A Short Statement

(i) God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.

(ii) Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms: obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.

(iii) The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.

(iv) Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

(v) The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

4. The Inerrancy of Scripture

a) The Importance of Inerrancy

(1) "Inerrancy is a necessary correlate of inspiration: at stake is the issue of divine veracity and truth-telling" (Gore, 66).
(2) "If the testimony of Scripture on the doctrine of Scripture is not authentic and trustworthy, then the finality of Scripture is irretrievably undermined…. And we must not think that the finality of Christ remains unimpaired even if the finality of Scripture is sacrificed. The rejection of the inerrancy of Scripture means the rejection of Christ's own witness to Scripture. Finally and most pointedly, then, the integrity of our Lord's witness is the crucial issue in this battle of faith" (John Murray in *The Infallible Word*, 41, 42).

(3) Ryrie rightly gives the following results of denying inerrancy:

(a) *A denial of inerrancy is a serious matter and will lead to the following kinds of problems doctrinally and practically:*

(i) When inerrancy is denied one may expect some serious fallout in both doctrinal and practical areas.

(a) *Some doctrinal matters which may be affected by denying inerrancy include the following.*

(i) *A denial of the historical fall of Adam.*

(ii) *A denial of the facts of the experiences of the Prophet Jonah.*

(iii) *An explaining away of some of the miracles of both the Old and New Testaments.*

(iv) *A denial of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.*

(v) *A belief in two or more authors of the Book of Isaiah.*

(vi) *A flirting with or embracing of liberation theology with its redefining of sin (as societal rather than individual) and salvation (as political and temporal rather than spiritual and eternal).*

(b) *Some lifestyle errors that may follow a denial of inerrancy include the following.*

(i) *A loose view of the seriousness of adultery.*
(ii) A loose view of the seriousness of homosexuality.

(iii) A loose view of divorce and remarriage.

(iv) “Cultural” reinterpretation of some of the teachings of the Bible (e.g., teaching on women, teaching on civil obedience).

(v) A tendency to view the Bible through a modern psychological grid.

(ii) Inerrancy is an important doctrine, the denial or even diluting of which may result in serious doctrinal and life errors” (Ryrie, 78).

b) Definitions of Inerrancy

(1) Importance of Defining terms

(a) Because this is one of the major issues of today, we ought to define our terms accurately and precisely.

(b) "In the present discussion of the Bible, both the words infallibility and inerrancy are often used without attempt at definition. The result is that much confusion has adhered and does adhere to the current discussions of inspiration. There is not much point in talking of an infallible and inerrant Bible, unless we know what the words mean" (Edward J. Young, Thy Word is Truth, 113).

(2) Infallibility and Inerrancy

(a) Infallibility

(i) "By the term infallible as applied to the Bible, we mean simply that the Scripture possesses an indefectible authority. As our Lord himself said “it cannot be broken” (John 10:31). It can never fail in its judgments and statements. All that it teaches is of unimpeachable, absolute authority, and cannot be contravened, contradicted, or gainsaid. Scripture is unfailing, incapable of proving false, erroneous, or mistaken" (Ibid.).

(ii) "Bearing in mind the root of the word infallibilitas (fallere—put wrong, make a false step, lead into error, deceive, delude), I later translated infallibilitas more precisely and perhaps more felicitously as “indeceivability” (Unträglichkeit), which certainly has a more
general meaning. ... Infallibilitas would then mean being free from what is deceptive, from lying and fraud” (Hans Küng, Infallible? An Inquiry, 140).

(b) Inerrancy

(i) "By this word we mean that the Scriptures possess the quality of freedom from error. They are exempt from the liability to mistake, incapable of error. In all their teachings they are in perfect accord with the truth” (E. J. Young, Thy Word Is Truth, 113).

(ii) "Similarly, inerrant signifies the quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely truth and trustworthy in all its assertions” (Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, Exposition).


(a) Inerrancy does not demand strict adherence to the rules of grammar

(i) "The rules of grammar are merely statements of normal usage of the language” (Feinberg).

(ii) "Inerrancy allows for departure from standard forms of grammar. Obviously it is wrong to force English rules of grammar upon the Scriptures. For example, in John 10:9 Jesus declares, “I am the door,” whereas in verse 11 He states, “I am the Good Shepherd.” In English this is considered mixing metaphors, but this is not a problem to Greek grammar or Hebrew language. In John 14:26 Jesus refers to the Spirit (pneuma = neuter) and then refers to the Spirit as “He” (ekeinos = masculine). This may raise an English grammarian’s eyebrows, but it is not a problem of Greek grammar” (Enns)

(b) Inerrancy does not exclude the use of either figures of speech or a given literary genre.

(i) “The literary style or form has nothing to do with truth or falsity of the content conveyed in that style” (Feinberg).

(ii) Inerrancy allows for variety in style. The gospel of John was written in the simple style
one might expect of an unlearned fisherman; Luke was written with a more sophisticated vocabulary of an educated person; Paul's epistles reflect the logic of a philosopher. All of these variations are entirely compatible with inerrancy" (Enns).

(c) Inerrancy does not demand historical or semantic precision: "The crucial point for inerrancy is this: Is a sentence as stated true?" (Feinberg).

(d) Inerrancy does not demand the technical language of modern science: "Popular or observational language is used even today by the common man" (Feinberg).

(e) Inerrancy does not demand verbal exactness in the citations of the Old Testament by the New

(i) "When we recall a statement or event, we often give only the gist or general idea of what was exactly said or done" (Feinberg).

(ii) "Inerrancy does not demand verbatim reporting of events. "In times of antiquity it was not the practice to give a verbatim repetition every time something was written out" (E. J. Young, Thy Word Is Truth, p. 119). A verbatim quote could not be demanded for several reasons. First, as already mentioned, the writer had to translate from Aramaic to Greek in recording Jesus’ words. Second, in making reference to Old Testament texts it would have been impossible to unroll the lengthy scrolls each time to produce a verbatim quote; furthermore, the scrolls were not readily available, hence, the freedom in Old Testament quotes (William R. Eichhorst, The Issue of Biblical Inerrancy: In Definition and Defence, Winnipeg, Man.: Winnipeg Bible College, n.d., p. 9)" (Enns).

c) Theories of Inerrancy

(1) Denial of Inerrancy

(a) Many deny that the Bible is without any error. Neo-Orthodox theologians are among this group.

(b) "The men whom we hear as witnesses as fallible, erring men like ourselves. What they say, and what we read as their word, can of itself claim to be the word of God, but never sustain that claim. We can read and try to assess their word as a purely human word. It can be subjected to all kinds of immanent criticism, not only in
respect of its philosophical, historical and ethical content, but even of its religious and theological….We can take offence at the Bible" (Barth, Church Dogmatics, 1:507).

(c) "The prophets and apostles as such, even in their office, even in their function as a witness, were real, historical men as we are, and therefore sinful in their action, and capable and actually guilty of error in their spoken and written word" (Barth, Ibid., 60).

(2) Limited Inerrancy

(a) In this theory, the Bible is seen as only inerrant in the issues of doctrines of salvation. Since the Bible was not intended to teach science and history, the Bible reflects the understanding of its culture and therefore may contain errors.

(b) “The Bible is infallible, as I define that term, but not inerrant. That is, there are historical and scientific errors in the Bible, but I have found none on matters of faith and practice” (Stephen T. Davis, The Debate about the Bible, 115).

(c) "One misinterprets Scripture if he tries always to harmonize with science and history aspects of Biblical statements whose purpose is only to facilitate the communication of revelational truth….Since such matters...are non-revelational, they lie outside the boundary of the biblical writers' intention, and are therefore irrelevant to the question of biblical inerrancy” (Daniel Fuller, The Nature of Biblical Inerrancy, American Scientific Affiliation Journal, XXIV/2 [June, 1972], 50).

(3) Inerrancy of Purpose

(a) According to this view, the Bible is without error in its purpose, which is to bring men to a saving knowledge of God through Christ.

(b) Adherents: Jack Rogers, John Henry Newman, James Orr, Vatican II Theologians

(c) "Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully, and without error that truth which God wanted to put into
sacred writings for the sake of our salvation" (Divine Revelation, 11).

(4) Complete Inerrancy

(a) "We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all matters it addresses. We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and Inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated" (Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, Article XI).

(b) "We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit. We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypothesis about earth and history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture and the flood" (Ibid., Article XII).


(1) Confessional Method

(a) The Scriptures are confessed to be the Word of God

(b) This is recognized and accepted on the basis of faith alone.

(c) Believes that the terms inspiration and inerrancy are too formal.

(2) Classical Method

(a) The Bible is a basically reliable and trustworthy document

(b) On the basis of this reliable document we have sufficient evidence to believe confidently that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

(c) Jesus Christ being the Son of God is an infallible authority

(d) Jesus Christ teaches that the Bible is more than generally trustworthy: it is the very Word of God.
(e) That the word, in that it comes from God, is utterly trustworthy because God is utterly trustworthy.

(f) On the basis of the infallible authority of Jesus Christ, the Church believes the Bible to be utterly trustworthy, i.e., infallible

(3) Presuppositional Method

(a) The Bible is the Infallible Word of God

(b) The Bible attests to its own infallibility

(c) The Self-attestation of Scripture is an infallible attestation.

(d) The Bible is the infallible Word of God.

5. The Clarity of Scripture

a) Definitions of the Clarity of the Scripture

(1) "The Clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God's help and being willing follow it" (Grudem, 108).

(2) "Protestants do not affirm that the doctrines revealed in the Scriptures are level to man's powers of understanding. Many of them are confessedly beyond all understanding. Nor do they affirm that every part of Scripture can by certainly and perspicuously expounded, many of the prophecies being perfectly enigmatical until explained by the event. But they do affirm that every essential article of faith and rule of practice is clearly revealed in Scripture, or may be certainly deduced from therefrom. This much the least instructed Christian may learn at once; while, on the other hand, it is true, that with advance of historical and critical knowledge, and by the means of controversies, the Christian church is constantly making progress in the accurate interpretation of Scripture, and in the comprehension in its integrity of the system therein taught" (A. A. Hodge, Outlines of Theology, 85).

b) Affirmations of the Clarity of Scripture

(1) Explicitly asserted in Psalm 119:7, 8; Psalm 119:105, 130; 2 Cor. 3:14; 2 Pet. 1:18, 19; Hab. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:15, 17

(2) Assumed by the fact that they are addressed either to all men generally or to whole congregation of believers (Deut. 6:4-9; Luke 1:3; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; 4:2; Gal. 1:2; Eph.
1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2; James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 Jn. 2:12, 14; Jude 1; Rev. 1:3, 4; 2:7)

(3) Assumed by the fact that all Christians are commanded to search the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15, 17; Acts 17:11; John 5:39).

c) Denial of the Clarity of Scripture

(1) This stands against the denial of the clarity of Scripture by Roman Catholicism

(2) "Furthermore, to keep undisciplined minds under proper control, the council decrees that no one should dare to rely on his own judgment in matters of faith and morals affecting the structure of Christian doctrine and to distort Sacred Scripture to fit meanings of his own that are contrary to the meaning of the Holy Mother Church has held and now holds; for it is her office to judge about the true sense and interpretation of Sacred Scripture" (Council of Trent, Session 4; Confirmed in Vatican I, Dogmatic Decrees of the Vatican Council, chapter ii).

6. The Unity of Scripture

a) WE AFFIRM the unity, harmony and consistency of Scripture and declare that it is its own best interpreter.

b) WE DENY that Scripture may be interpreted in such a way as to suggest that one passage corrects or militates against another. We deny that later writers of Scripture misinterpreted earlier passages of Scripture when quoting from or referring to them.

c) Two points are made in the Affirmation, the unity of Scripture and its self-interpreting ability. Since the former is treated elsewhere (Article XXI), we will comment on the latter here. Not only is the Bible always correct in interpreting itself (see Article XVIII), but it is the "best interpreter" of itself.

d) Another point made here is that comparing Scripture with Scripture is an excellent help to an interpreter. For one passage sheds light on another. Hence the first commentary the interpreter should consult on a passage is what the rest of Scripture may say on that text.

e) The Denial warns against the assumption that an understanding of one passage can lead the interpreter
to reject the teaching of another passage. One passage may help him better comprehend another but it will never contradict another.

f) This last part of the Denial is particularly directed to those who believe the New Testament writers misinterpret the Old Testament, or that they attribute meaning to an Old Testament text not expressed by the author of that text. While it is acknowledged that there is sometimes a wide range of application for a text, this article affirms that the interpretation of a biblical text by another biblical writer is always within the confines of the meaning of the first text (Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics, Article XVII)

7. The Styles of Scripture

a) WE AFFIRM that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of biblical study.

b) WE DENY that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.

c) The awareness of what kind of literature one is interpreting is essential to a correct understanding of the text. A correct genre judgment should be made to ensure correct understanding. A parable, for example, should not be treated like a chronicle, nor should poetry be interpreted as though it were a straightforward narrative. Each passage has its own genre, and the interpreter should be cognizant of the specific kind of literature it is as he attempts to interpret it. Without genre recognition an interpreter can be misled in his understanding of the passage. For example, when the prophet speaks of "trees clapping their hands" (Isa. 55:12) one could assume a kind of animism unless he recognized that this is poetry and not prose.

d) The Denial is directed at an illegitimate use of genre criticism by some who deny the truth of passages which are presented as factual. Some, for instance, take Adam to be a myth, whereas in Scripture he is presented as a real person. Others take Jonah to be an allegory when
he is presented as a historical person and so referred to by Christ (Mat. 12:40-42). This Denial is an appropriate and timely warning not to use genre criticism as a cloak for rejecting the truth of Scripture (Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics, Article XIII).

III. Introduction to the History of Hermeneutics up to the Reformation

A. The Aim of a History of Hermeneutics: A history of hermeneutical principles seeks to answer three questions:

1. What was the prevailing view respecting the Scriptures?

2. What was the prevalent conception of the method of interpretation?

3. What qualifications were regarded as essential in an interpreter?

4. “The first two questions are of a more perennial character than the last one, and naturally require a greater amount of attention” (Berkhof, Principles of Biblical Interpretation, 14).

B. The Result of a History of Hermeneutics

1. An understanding of the success and failures of the past and present.

2. “He who doesn’t learn from history is bound to repeat it” (Santayana).

3. Even the best Christians of the past have not adopted the best procedures.

4. “A knowledge of the history of biblical interpretation is of inestimable value to the student of the Holy Scriptures. It serves to guard against errors and exhibits the activity and efforts of the human mind in its search after truth and in relation to noble themes. It shows what influences have led to the misunderstanding of God’s word, and how acute minds, carried away by a misconception of the nature of the Bible, have sought mystic and manifold meanings in its contents. From the first, the Scriptures, like other writings, were liable to be understood in different ways. The Old Testament prophets complained of the slowness of the people to apprehend spiritual things (Isa. 6:10; Jer. 5:21; Ezek. 12:2). The apostolical epistles were not always clear to those who first received them (comp. 2\textsuperscript{nd} Thess. 2; 2\textsuperscript{nd} Pet. 3:16). When the
Old and New Testaments assumed canonical form and authority, and became the subject of devout study and a means of spiritual discipline, they furnished a most inviting field for literary research and theological controversy” (Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 31).

### C. The Definitions within the History of Hermeneutics

#### 1. The Allegorical Method

**a) Definition:**

(1) Any statement of supposed facts which admits of a literal interpretation, and yet requires or justly admits a moral or figurative one, is called an allegory. It is to narrative or story what trope is to single words, adding to the literal meaning of the terms employed a moral or spiritual one. Sometimes the allegory is "pure," that is, contains no direct reference to the application of it, as in the history of the Prodigal Son. Sometimes it is mixed, as in Ps. 80, where it is plainly intimated (verse 17) that the Jews are the people whom the vine is intended to represent” (Joseph Angus and Samuel G. Green, *The Bible Handbook*, 220).

(2) Ramm defines the allegorical method thus: "Allegorism is the method of interpreting a literary text that regards the literal sense as the vehicle for a secondary, more spiritual and more profound sense" (Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 21).

(3) Fritsch summarizes it thus: “According to this method the literal and historical sense of scripture is completely ignored, and every word and event is made an allegory of some kind either to escape theological difficulties or to maintain certain peculiar religious views” (Charles T. Fritsch, "Biblical Typology," Bibliotheca Sacra, 104:216, April, 1947).

**b) Problems (Taken from Pentecost, Things to Come, 2-9).**

(1) The first great danger of the allegorical method is that it does not interpret scripture.

(a) Terry says: "It will be noticed at once that its habit is to disregard the common signification of words and give wing to all manner of fanciful speculation. It does not draw out the legitimate meaning of an author's language but foists into it whatever the whim or fancy of an interpreter may desire. As a system, therefore, it puts itself beyond all well-defined principles and laws” (Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, pp. 224).
(b) Angus-Green express the same danger when they write: “There is . . . unlimited scope for fancy, if once the principle be admitted, and the only basis of the exposition is found in the mind of the expositor. The scheme can yield no "interpretation," properly so called, although possibly some valuable truths may be illustrated” (Angus-Green, loc. cit.).

(2) The above quotation suggests, also, a second danger in the allegorical method: the basic authority in interpretation ceases to be the Scriptures, but the mind of the interpreter.

(a) The interpretation may then be twisted by the interpreter's doctrinal positions, the authority of the church to which the interpreter adheres, his social or educational background, or a host of other factors. Jerome - . . complainsthat the faultiest style of teaching is to corrupt the meaning of scripture, and to drag its reluctant utterance to our own will, making scriptural mysteries out of our own imaginations.

(b) Farar adds: “When once the principle of allegory is admitted, when once we start with the rule that whole passages and books of scripture say one thing when they mean another, the reader is delivered bound and foot to the caprice of the interpreter” (F. W. Farrar, History of Interpretation, 238).

(3) 3. A third great danger in the allegorical method is that one is left without any means by which the conclusions of the interpreter may be tested.

(a) "He can be sure of absolutely nothing except what is dictated to him by the Church, and in all ages the authority of "the Church" has been falsely claimed for the presumptuous tyranny of false prevalent opinions" (Ibid.)

(b) Ramm adds: “To state that the principle meaning of the Bible is a second-sense meaning, and that the principle method of interpreting is "spiritualizing," is to open the door to almost uncontrolled speculation and imagination. For this reason we have insisted that the ‘control’ in interpretation is the literal method”(Ramm, Op. Cit., 65).

(4) Thus, the great dangers inherent in this system are that it takes away the authority of Scripture, leaves us without any basis on which interpretations may be tested, reduced scripture to what seems reasonable to the interpreter, and, as a result, makes true interpretation of Scripture impossible.
c) Arguments for Allegorizing

(1) The New Testament use of allegory. In order to justify the use of the allegorical method it is often argued that the New Testament itself employs this method and thus it must be a justifiable method of interpretation.

(a) In the first place, reference is frequently made to Galatians 4:21-31, where Paul himself is said to use the allegorical method.

(b) On this usage of allegory, Farrar - . . . of allegories which in any way resemble those of Philo or of the Fathers and the Schoolmen, I can find in the New Testament but one [Gal. 4:21-31]. It may be merely intended as an "argumentum ad hominem;" it is not at all essential to the general argument; it has not a particle of "demonstrative" force; in any case it leaves untouched the actual history. But whatever view we take of it, the occurrence of one such allegory in the epistle of St. Paul no more sanctions the universal application of the method than a few New Testament allusions to the Haggada compel us to accept the accumulations of the Midrashim; or a few quotations from Greek poets prove the divine authority of all Pagan literature” (Farrar, op. cit., p. xxiii).

(c) Gilbert, in the same vein, concludes: “Since Paul explained one historical event of the Old Testament allegorically, it seems likely that he admitted the possibility of applying the principle of allegory elsewhere; but the fact that his letters show no other unmistakable illustration obviously suggests either that he did not feel himself competent to unfold the allegorical meaning of Scripture, or, what is more probably, that he was better satisfied on the whole to give his readers the plain primary sense of the text” (George H. Gilbert, The Interpretation of the Bible, 82).

(d) Concerning the use of this method by other New Testament writers Farrar concludes: “The better Jewish theory, purified in Christianity, takes the teachings of the Old Dispensation literally, but sees in them, as did St. Paul, the shadow and germ of future developments. Allegory, though once used by St. Paul by way of passing illustration, is unknown to the other apostles, and is never sanctioned by Christ” (Farrar, op. Cit., 217).

(2) It must be carefully observed that in Galatians 4:21-31 Paul is not using an allegorical method of interpreting the Old
Testament, but was explaining an allegory. These are two entirely different things. Scripture abounds in allegories, whether types, symbols, or parables. These are accepted and legitimate media of communication of thought. They do not call for an allegorical method of interpretation, which would deny the literal or historical antecedent and use the allegory simply as a springboard for the interpreter's imagination. They do call for a special type of hermeneutics, which will be considered later. But the use of allegories is not a justification for the allegorical method of interpretation. It would be concluded that the usage in Galatians of the Old Testament would be an example of interpretation of an allegory and would not justify the universal application of the allegorical method to all scripture.

2. The Literal Method

a) The definition of the literal method

(1) The literal method of interpretation is that method that gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether employed in writing, speaking or thinking. It is called the grammatical-historical method to emphasize the fact that the meaning is to be determined by both grammatical and historical considerations.

(2) Ramm defines the method thus: The customary, socially-acknowledged designation of a word is the literal meaning of that word. The "literal" meaning of a word is the basic, customary, social designation of that word. The spiritual, or mystical meaning of a word or expression is one that arises after the literal designation and is dependent upon it for its existence. To interpret literally means nothing more or less than to interpret in terms of normal, usual, designation. When the manuscript alters its designation the interpreter immediately shifts his method of interpreting (Ramm, op. cit., 64).

b) The evidence for the literal method.

(1) Strong evidence can be presented to support the literal method of interpretation. Ramm gives a comprehensive summary. In defense of the literal approach it may be argued:

(a) That the literal meaning of sentences is the normal approach in all languages . .

(b) That all secondary meanings of documents, parables, types, allegories and symbols, depend for their very existence on the previous literal meaning of the terms.
(c) That the greater part of the bible makes adequate sense when interpreted literally.

(d) That the literalistic approach does not blindly rule out figures of speech, symbols, allegories and types; but if the nature of the sentence so demands, it readily yields to the second sense.

(e) That this method is the only sane and safe check on the imaginations of man.

(f) That this method is the only one consonant with the nature of inspiration. The plenary inspiration of the bible teaches that the Holy Spirit guided men into truth and away from error. In this process the Spirit of God used language and the units of language (as meaning, not as sound) are words and thoughts. The thought is the thread that strings the words together. Therefore, our very exegesis must commence with a study of words and grammar, the two fundamentals of all meaningful speech (Ramm, Op. Cit., 54ff).

(2) Inasmuch as God gave the Word of God as a revelation to men, it would be expected that His revelation would be given in such exact and specific terms that His thoughts would be accurately conveyed and understood when interpreted according to the laws of grammar and speech. Such presumptive evidence favors the literal interpretation, for an allegorical method of interpretation would cloud the meaning of the message delivered by God to men.

c) The advantages of the literal method

(1) It grounds interpretation in "fact". It seeks to establish itself in objective data - grammar, logic, etymology, history, geography, archaeology, theology . .

(2) It exercises a control over interpretation that experimentation does for the scientific method . . "justification is the control on interpretations." All that do not measure up to the canons of the literal-cultural critical method are to be rejected or placed under suspect. In addition to this the method offers the only reliable check on the constant threat to place double-sense interpretation upon the scripture . .

(3) It has had the greatest success in opening up the Word of God. Exegesis did not start in earnest till the church was a millennium and a half old. With the literalism of Luther and Calvin the light of Scripture literally flamed up . . This method is the honored method of the highest scholastic tradition in conservative Protestantism. It is the method of Bruce, Lightfoot,

D. The History of the Hermeneutics in the Patristic Age

1. Second Century

a) Examples: Didache, The Shepherd of Hermas, the letters of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, the Epistle of Barnabus and some fragmentary works seek to instruct believers in Christian doctrine and defend the Christian faith against Jewish arguments

b) In the now mostly Gentile Church three approaches to the Scriptures of Ancient Israel appeared:

   (1) they were to be read typologically (according to some, such as the Epistle of Barnabas, with no historical relevance)

   (2) their history was accepted but superseded by the Church (e.g., Justin Martyr)

   (3) they were to be rejected (Marcion). This approach was condemned as heretical.

c) Irenaeus [d. 180] taught that the Law of Moses was an authentic revelation of God and valid in its day, but now God had been pleased to provide a new revelation.

   (1) The authoritative reading of scripture was given by Christ [Lk 24:27] and henceforth was transmitted by apostolic succession.

   (2) His interest in grounding apostolic/episcopal authority is a sign of the immense doctrinal debates occurring in Christianity.

   (3) These debates included which Christian writings were to be considered canonically scriptural in the Church.

   (4) Formal lists were composed of a legitimate "New Testament" canon, of the same inspired quality as the "Old Testament".

   (5) This has been called the “Traditional interpretation,” which is based on the interpretation received in the apostolic succession. Whether a passage was taken in its literal sense or allegorized depended on whether the literal interpretation was compatible with the church's teaching.
d) “But though the New Testament exhibits in itself the principles and methods of a sound and trustworthy exegesis, the widely prevalent Hellenistic habit of allegorizing what seemed offensive to philosophic taste carried along with its strong tide many of the Christian writers of the post-apostolic age. The Church of this early period was too much engaged in struggles for life to develop an accurate or scientific interpretation of Scripture. There was great intellectual activity, and the early forms of heresy which disturbed the Church developed by controversy great strength and subtlety of reasoning. But the tone and style or the earlier writers were apologetical and polemical rather than exegetical. Harassed by persecution, distracted by occasional factions, and exposed to manifold dangers, the early Christian propagandists had no opportunities to cultivate those habits of careful study which lead to broad generalization and impartial decisions. In the hurry and pressure of exciting times men take readily what first comes to hand, or serves an immediate purpose, and it was very natural that many of the early Christian writers should make use of methods of Scripture interpretation which were widely prevalent at the time” (Terry).

2. The Third and Fourth Centuries

a) Introduction

(1) Two schools merged

(2) Farrar says: “The Fathers of the third and later centuries may be divided into three exegetical schools. Those schools are the Literal and Realistic as represented predominantly by Tertullian; the Allegorical, of which Origen is the foremost exponent; and the Historical and Grammatical, which flourished chiefly in Antioch, and of which Theodore of Mopsuestia was the acknowledged chief” (Farrar, op. cit., 177).

b) The School of Alexandria

(1) Alexandrian Christians such as Clement and Origen developed an allegorical approach to the Bible. Both were apologetic toward Romans such as Celsus who had attacked Christian use of the Hebrew Bible on several counts.

(2) Its goal was the harmonization of religion and philosophy by allegorizing the text.
(3) Clement of Alexandria

(a) Regarded the Bible as Inspired

(b) He was first to apply the allegorical method to the NT.

(c) Believed that all Scripture must be understood allegorically

(d) However, he did this as part of a system that found five possible means of a text:

(i) Historical sense

(ii) Doctrinal sense

(iii) Prophetic sense

(iv) Philosophical sense

(v) Mystical sense

(e) “But Clement was a fanciful interpreter. He was charmed with the Greek philosophy, read Philo's work with avidity, and adopted his allegorical methods of exposition” (Terry).

(4) Origen thought the scriptures revealed "intellectual truths," rather than God's working in history. The literal sense must yield to the spiritual sense. Reading with "eyes of faith" was crucial.

(a) Student of Clement

(b) Greatest scholar of ancient church

(c) He followed in the path of Philo the Jew, and Clement the Christian, and, assuming that many portions of the Bible are unreasonable and absurd when taken literally he maintained a threefold sense—the corporeal, the physical, and the spiritual. But he protests against being supposed to teach that no history is real, and no laws are to be literally observed, because some narratives and laws, literally understood, are absurd or impossible.

(d) “For the passages that are true in their historical sense are much more numerous than those which have a purely spiritual signification” (De Principiis, book 4, chap. 1, 11.)
(e) Schaff summarizes Origen's influence by saying: "Origen was the first to lay down, in connection with the allegorical method of the Jewish Platonist, Philo, a formal theory of interpretation, which he carried out in a long series of exegetical works remarkable for industry and ingenuity, but meager in solid results. He considered the Bible a living organism, consisting of three elements which answer to the body, soul, and spirit of man, after the Platonic psychology. Accordingly, he attributed to the Scriptures a threefold sense: (1) a somatic, literal, or historical sense, furnished immediately by the meaning of the words, but only serving as a veil for a higher idea; (2) a psychic or moral sense, animating the first, and serving for general edification; (3) a pneumatic or mystic and ideal sense, for those who stand on the high ground of philosophical knowledge. In the application of this theory he shows the same tendency as Philo, to spiritualize away the letter of scripture... and instead of simply bringing out the sense of the Bible, he puts into it all sorts of foreign ideas and irrelevant fancies. But this allegorizing suited the taste of the age, and, with his fertile mind and imposing learning, Origen was the exegetical oracle of the early church, till his orthodoxy fell into disrepute" (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, II, 521).

c) The School of Antioch

(1) Elements within School of Antioch

(a) The Antiochene school, somewhat influenced by Jewish thought, attacked Alexandrian allegorizations and stressed the literal sense of the text.

(b) They insisted that events in the Bible took place, but had a typological meaning beyond the historical. E.g., they claimed the Hebrew prophets literally foresaw Christ; their words were not just pregnant with allegorical meaning as the Alexandrians claimed.

(c) "To Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:26), belongs the honor of introducing a more scientific and profitable system of biblical study. Its founder was Lucian, who in early life studied at Edessa, and laid the foundation of his thorough scholarship under the training of Macarius, an eminent teacher of that city. He afterward removed to Antioch, where he was ordained presbyter, and acquired great fame as a critical student and expounder of the Holy Scriptures. His stricter methods put a check to the allegorical and mystical interpretation so popular at the
time, and which had received great strength and currency by the influence of Origen. This sounder method of exegesis was further promoted by Diodorus, who was also for some time a distinguished presbyter of Antioch, but afterward became bishop of Tarsus. The church historian, Socrates, speaks of him as president of a monastery and author of "many treatises, in which he limited his expositions to the literal sense of Scripture, without attempting to explain what was mystical." He is said to have written commentaries on all the books of the Old Testament, and also on considerable portions of the New. Some do not hesitate to make him the real founder of the school of Antioch" (Terry).

(d) The School of Antioch possessed a deeper insight into the true method of exegesis than any which preceded or succeeded it during a thousand years. . . . Their system of Biblical interpretation approached more nearly than any other to that which is now adopted by the Reformed Churches throughout the world, and that if they had not been too uncharitably anathematized by the angry tongue, and crushed by the iron hand of a dominant orthodoxy, the study of their commentaries, and the adoption of their exegetical system, might have saved Church commentaries from centuries of futility and error. . . . Diodorus of Tarsus must be regarded as the true founder of the School of Antioch. He was a man of eminent learning and of undisputed piety. He was the teacher of Chrysostom and of Theodore of Mopsuestia. . . . His books were devoted to an exposition of Scripture in its literal sense, and he wrote a treatise, now unhappily lost, "on the difference between allegory and spiritual insight".

(e) But the ablest, the most decided, and the most logical representative of the School of Antioch was Theodore of Mopsuestia (428). That clear-minded and original thinker stands out like a "rock in the morass of ancient exegesis." . . . He was a Voice not an Echo; a Voice amid thousands of echoes which repeated only the emptiest sounds. He rejected the theories of Origen, but he had learnt from him the indispensable importance of attention to linguistic details especially in commenting on the New Testament. He pays close attention to particles, moods, prepositions, and to terminology in general. He points out the idiosyncrasies. . . . of St. Paul's style. . . . He is almost the earliest writer who gives much attention to Hermeneutic matters, as for instance in his Introductions to the Epistles to Ephesus.
and Colossae. . . . His highest merit is his constant endeavor to study each passage as a whole and not as "an isolated congeries of separate texts.1' He first considers the sequence of thought, then examines the phraseology and the separate clauses, and finally furnishes us with an exegesis which is often brilliantly characteristic and profoundly suggestive" (Farrar, op. cit., pp. 213-15).

(2) Individuals of the School of Antioch

(a) Theodore of Mopsuestia excluded biblical books based only on human wisdom. John Chrysostom and Jerome were also influential.

(b) Theodore of Mopsuestia

(i) Set forth the principles that would later become the principles for modern evangelical hermeneutics.

(ii) "He was an independent critic, and a straightforward, sober, historical interpreter. He had no sympathy with the mystical methods of the Alexandrian school, and repudiated their extravagant notions of inspiration; but he went to an opposite extreme of denying the inspiration of many portions of the Scriptures, and furnished specimens of rationalistic exposition quite barren and unsatisfactory. Nevertheless the Syrian Nestorians regarded him as the greatest of exegesis. His method of teaching the subjects of Christology and anthropology were severely condemned after his decease, especially because the Nestorians appealed to them as identical with their own" (Terry).

(c) Chrysostom (The golden-mouthed)

(i) More conservative than Theodore

(ii) More practical—the great preacher of the ancient church

(iii) "Through a rich inward experience, he lived into the understanding of the Holy Scriptures; and a prudent method of interpretation, on logical and grammatical principles, kept him in the right track in deriving the spirit from the letter of the sacred volume. His profound and simple, yet fruitful, homiletic method of treating the Scriptures, show to what extent he was indebted to both, and how, in his case, both co-operated
together” (Neander, History of the Christian Religion and Church, 2:693).

(iv) “John Chrysostom is unquestionably the greatest commentator among the early fathers of the Church. Theodore of Mopsuestia may have been more sharply critical, Origen was more encyclopedic in his learning, and others were more original and profound in apprehending some of the doctrines of the Christian faith, but he surpassed them all in the general good judgment which appears in his expositions, in the richness of his suggestions, and the practical value of what he said or wrote. He is the greatest ornament and noblest representative of the exegetical school of Antioch” (Terry).

d) Mediating School

(1) Elements of School

(a) Harbored some elements both schools

(b) Represented by Ambrose, Hilary of Poiteir, Jerome, and Augustine

(c) Advanced the notion of authority of tradition and of the church in interpretation of the Bible

(2) Individuals of School

(a) Jerome

(i) He was the great translator of the ancient church

(ii) He was skilled in the original languages

(iii) “As a commentator,” writes Osgood, “Jerome deserves less hon-or than as a translator, so hasty his comments generally are, and so frequently consisting of fragments, gathered from previous writers. His merit however is—and this was by no means a common one in his day—that he generally aims to give the literal sense of the passages in question. He read apparently all that had been written by the leading interpreters before him, and then wrote his own commentaries in great haste without stopping to distinguish his own views from those of the authorities consulted. He dashed through a thousand lines of the text in a single day, and went through the Gospel of
Matthew in a fortnight. He sometimes yielded to
the allegorical methods of interpretation, and
showed frequent traces of the influence of his
study of Origen. Yet he seems not to have
inclined to this method so much from his own
taste as from the habit of his time. And if, of the
four doctors of the Church particularized by
some writers, to Gregory belongs excellence in
tropology, to Ambrose in allegory, to Augustine
in anagoge, to Jerome is given the palm in the
literal and grammatical sense…. Rich and
elegant as his style frequently is, he does not
appear to have had very good taste as a critic.
He had not that delicate appreciation of an
author's meaning that enables one to seize hold
of the main idea or sentiment, and through this
interpret the language and illustrations. He could
not reproduce the thoughts of the prophets and
poets of the Old Testament in his own mind, and
throw himself into their position. Their poetic
figures he sometimes treats as logical
propositions, and finds grave dogmas in casual
illustrations” (Osgood, “Jerome and his Times,”

(b) Augustine

(i) He was the greatest theologian of the
Ancient Church—with the exception of Christ
and His apostles.

(ii) Set forth rules in his book on Christian
Doctrines, which is a book on hermeneutics and
homiletics:

(a) Interpreter must possess a genuine faith

(b) Literal and historical meaning
should be held in high regard

(c) Scripture has more than one
meaning; therefore, allegorical method
has its place

(d) There is significance to numbers

(e) The OT is a Christian document
because Christ is pictured throughout it

(f) One must consult the true orthodox creed
(g) A verse should be studied in its context, not in isolation from the verses around it

(h) If the meaning of a text is unclear, nothing in the passage can be made a matter of orthodox faith

(i) The Holy Spirit is not a substitute for the necessary learning to understand Scripture. The interpreter should know original languages, history, geography, etc.

(j) The obscure passage must give way to the clear

(k) The expositor should take into account that revelation is progressive

(iii) In practice Augustine forsook most of his own principles and tended towards the allegorical method. His views became predominate in the Middle Ages

(iv) “In learning and general culture Jerome was much superior to Augustine, but in depth and penetration, in originality of genius and power of thought, Augustine, bishop of Hippo, in Africa, was by far the greatest man of his age. If it be any evidence of greatness for one mind to shape and direct the theological studies and speculations of more than a thousand years, and after all the enlightenment of modern times to maintain his hold upon men of the deepest piety and the highest intellectual power, then must it be conceded that few if any Christian writers of all the ages have equaled Augustine. But of his doctrines and his rank as a theologian it is not in our way to speak. Only as an interpreter of Scripture do we here consider him, and as such we cannot in justice award him a place correspondent with his theological fame. His conceptions of divine truth were comprehensive and profound, but having no knowledge of Hebrew and a very imperfect acquaintance with Greek, he was incapacitated for thorough and independent study of the sacred books. He was dependent on the current faulty Latin version, and not a few of his theological arguments are built upon all erroneous interpretation of the Scripture text. In his work on Christian Doctrine he lays down a number of very excellent rules for the exposition of the Bible, but in practice he forsakes his own hermeneutical principles, and often runs into
excessive allegorizing. He allows four different kinds of interpretation, the historical, the etiological, the analogical, and the allegorical, but he treats these methods as traditional, and gives them no extended or uniform application. His commentaries on Genesis and Job are of little value. His exposition of the Psalms contains many rich thoughts, together with much that is vague and mystical. The treatise in four books on the Consensus of the Evangelists is one of the best of the ancient attempts to construct a Gospel harmony, but his Evangelical Inquiries (Quaestiones Evangelicae) are full of fanciful interpretation. His best expositions are of those passages on which his own rich experience and profound acquaintance with the operations of the human heart enabled him to comment with surpassing beauty. His exegetical treatises are the least valuable of his multifarious writings but through all his works are scattered many brilliant and precious gems of thought" (Terry).

(v) While he in theory he articulated many of the principles of sound exegesis, in practice he failed to apply those principles.

(vi) "Summed up the achievements of the Latin Patristic tradition and passed it on to the Medieval church."

(vii) Church tradition as advocated by Irenaeus and Tertullian

(viii) “Snatching up the Old Philonian and Rabbinic rule which had been repeated for so many generations, that everything in Scripture which appeared to be unorthodox or immoral must be interpreted mystically, he introduced confusion into his dogma of supernatural inspiration by admitting that there are many passages 'written by the Holy Ghost,' which are objectionable when taken in their obvious sense. He also opened the door to arbitrary fancy (Farrar, op. cit.,236-37).

(ix) “When once the principle of allegory is admitted, when once we start with the rule that whole passages and books of Scripture say one thing when they mean another, the reader is delivered bound hand and foot to the caprice of the interpreter. He can be sure of absolutely nothing except what is dictated to him by the Church, and in all ages the authority of "the Church" has been falsely claimed for the presumptuous tyranny of false prevalent opinions. In the days of Justin Martyr and of
Origen Christians had been driven to allegory by an imperious necessity. It was the only means known to them by which to meet the shock which wrenched the Gospel free from the fetters of Judaism. They used it to defeat the crude literalism of fanatical heresies; or to reconcile the teachings of philosophy with the truths of the Gospel. But in the days of Augustine the method had degenerated into an artistic method of displaying ingenuity and supporting ecclesiasticism. It had become the resource of a faithlessness which declined to admit, of an ignorance which failed to appreciate, and of an indolence which refused to solve the real difficulties in which the sacred book abounds. ... Unhappily for the Church, unhappily for any real apprehension of Scripture, the allegorists, in spite of protest, were completely victorious” (Farrar, op. cit., pp. 238).

e) Legacy of Patristic Age

(1) By the sixth century, it was stressed that only churches that stood in the succession of the apostles possessed the teaching of Christ.

(2) According to Vincent of Lerinum (434), "that which has been believed everywhere, always, by everyone" was the guide to reading the Bible.

(3) The Holy Spirit guided those united with the Church as they read the Bible and they would have correct understandings.

(4) "There is no innovation except from tradition."

(5) A christocentric, typological, and often allegorical habit of reading the Bible came to prevail in Christianity.

E. The History of Hermeneutics in the Middle Ages

1. Basic Tenets of the Middle Ages

a) In medieval times, either by catenae (chains of quotations) or glosses (marginal or interlineal notes), the interpretations of the Church fathers of a scriptural passage were assembled and framed medieval reading of the Bible. After the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West, literacy plummeted and the reading of the Bible was a privilege only of the higher clergy. However, Byzantine Christianity endured in the East and its reading of the Bible was indebted to the Greek Fathers.
The scriptures were celebrated in the context of the vibrant Eastern liturgical tradition and emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit.

b) In the West, the scriptures were often understood according to four "senses": (1) literal or historical, (2) allegorical or christological, (3) tropological or moral, and (4) analogical or eschatological:

   (1) The letter shows us what God and our fathers did; the allegory shows us where our faith is hid;

   (2) The moral meaning gives us rules of our daily life; The anagogy shows us where we end our strife.

c) E.g., Jerusalem refers to a Judean city, the Church of Christ, the human soul, and/or the heavenly city. There were disputes about which of these four senses was the most important.

d) “In this period, the fourfold sense of Scripture (literal, topological, allegorical, and analogical) was generally accepted, and it became an established principle that the interpretation of the Bible had to adapt itself to tradition and to the doctrine of the Church” (Berkhof, Principles of Biblical Interpretation, 23)

e) Farrar summarizes the whole period by saying: . . . we are compelled to say that during the Dark Ages, from the seventh to the twelfth century, and during the scholastic epoch, from the twelfth to the sixteenth, there are but a few of the many who toiled in this field who add a single essential principle, or furnished a single original contribution to the explanation of the Word of God. During these nine centuries we find very little except the "glimmerings and decays" of patristic exposition. Much of the learning which still continued to exist was devoted to something which was meant for exegesis yet not one writer in hundreds showed any true conception of what exegesis really implies” (Op. Cit., 245).

f) With the revival of Aristotelian philosophy in the works of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), the priority of the literal sense was stressed: "All the senses are founded on one - the literal - from which alone can any argument be drawn, and not from those intended in allegory. . . . Nothing necessary to faith is contained under the
spiritual sense which is not elsewhere put forward in scripture in its literal sense.'"

g) As a result of this emphasis, there was an implicit rejection of patristic allegorical exegesis. Theology, long linked with patristic allegories, thus tended to become divorced from biblical studies and remarried with philosophy. Scholastic theology was therefore grounded more on philosophical systems than on the biblical tradition. Also, following Aristotle, since all knowledge came through the senses, the interpreter of the Bible could not claim direct inspiration by God in the setting forth of exegesis.

2. Individuals of the Middle Ages

a) Thomas Aquinas

(1) Insisted that the literal sense be the basis for the other three.

(2) Greater emphasis on "the study of Hebrew and production of literal and historical commentaries on the Old Testament."

(3) Separated exegesis from theology

(4) Wed theology and philosophy

(5) Reason was set up as equal of revelation.

b) The Catenae

(1) A collection of patristic interpretations strung together—value depended largely upon sources quoted

(2) "It was not an age of original research, but of imitation and appropriation from the treasures of the past. Among the most noted of these compilers are Procopius of Gaza, Andreas, and Arethas. The venerable Bede, one of the most eminent fathers of the English Church, made himself familiar with all the learning of his age, and wrote commentaries on the entire New Testament, and a large portion of the Old. But they are Compilations from the works of Augustine, Basil, and Ambrose. Other names of note are Alcuin, Havino, and Theophylact. The notes of the last named on the New Testament have always been held in high estimation. Although the works of Chrysostom are the chief source of his extracts, he occasionally expresses his dissent from him, and shows more independence than most of the Catenists" (Terry).
c) Nicolas of Lyra

(1) Broke away from the thinking of his age

(2) While not theoretically discarding the four-fold interpretation of Scripture, he practically accepted only two: the literal and mystical. The latter is only based upon the former.

(3) His work influenced Luther profoundly and, consequently, the Reformation and evangelical hermeneutics.

F. The History of Hermeneutics in the Reformation Age

1. Tenets of Reformation

a) The Reformers insisted that the Church was not the arbiter of the Bible, but was indeed subject to the Bible’s judgment. In the words of Martin Luther (1483-1546), "no believing Christian can be forced to recognize any authority beyond the sacred scripture, which is exclusively invested with divine right." Among his influential teachings were:

(1) "When I was a monk . . . I allegorized everything." However, there is but "one simple solid sense" - the literal.

(2) Christ is the focus of all biblical study: "Christ is the point in the circle from which the whole circle is drawn."

(3) The Holy Spirit must inspire the work of exegetes: "God must say to you in your heart, 'This is God’s Word.'"

(4) Theology must flow from biblical exegesis, not from philosophy: "[We] sit in judgment on all the doctors of the church and test them by the judgment of the apostles and prophets."

b) The Reformers resisted purely subjective interpretations of the Bible.

(1) Tyndale says: “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. And if thou leave the literal sense, thou canst not but go out of the way. Nevertheless, the Scripture useth proverbs, similitudes, riddles, or allegories, as all other speeches do; but that which the proverb, similitude, riddle, or allegory signifieth, is over the literal sense, which thou must seek out
diligently” (Quoted in Charles Augustus Briggs, General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture, 456-457).

(2) Luther says: "Every word should be allowed to stand in its natural meaning and that should not be abandoned unless faith forces us to it. It is the attribute of Holy Scripture that it interprets itself by passages and places which belong together, and can only be understood by the rule of faith” (Ibid.).

c) The Reformers believed the Bible to be the inspired Word of God

d) Two main principles

(1) Scriptura Scripturae interpres—Scripture is the interpreter of Scripture

(2) Omnis intellectus ac expositio Scripturae sit analogia fidei—let all understanding and exposition of Scripture be in conformity with the analogy of faith (the uniform teaching of Scripture).

2. Individuals of Reformation

a) Luther

(1) Luther and the German Bible: “This was one of the most valuable services of his life, for it gave to his people the holy oracles in the simple, idiomatic, and racy language of common life, and enabled them to read for themselves the teachings of Christ and the apostles. It was followed by successive portions of the Old Testament until, in 1534, the whole Bible was completed and became of incalculable influence in effecting the triumph of Protestantism. The arduous effort of Luther to make his translation of the Bible as accurate as possible went far toward the establishing of sound methods of criticism and exegesis. His helps in this great enterprise consisted of Erasmus' edition of the New Testament, the Septuagint, the Vulgate, a few of the Latin fathers, and an imperfect knowledge of the Hebrew. He, also received valuable assistance from Melanchthon, Bagenhagen, Jonas, Crucioer, and several learned rabbis. He spent twelve of the best years of his life upon this monumental work. Portions of the original autograph are still preserved in the royal library of Berlin, and show with what anxious care he sought to make the version as faithful as possible” (Terry)

(2) His Expositions: “Sometimes three or four different forms of expression were written down before he determined which one to adopt. Luther's commentary on the Galatians, which has been translated into English, and published in many editions, was characterized by himself as being very “plentiful in words.” It is
an elaborate treatise adapted for use as public lectures and devotional reading, and is particularly notable for its ample exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith. Luther also prepared notes on Genesis, the Psalms, the Sermon on the Mount, the Gospel of John, and other portions of the New Testament. (21) His knowledge of Hebrew and Greek was limited, and he sometimes mistook the meaning of the sacred writer, but his religious intuitions and deep devotional spirit enabled him generally to apprehend the true sense of Scripture” (Terry).

(3) He calls allegorical interpretation “dirt,” “scum,” obsolete loose rags.” He likens it to a harlot and to a monkey game.

(4) He accepted the primacy of the original languages.

(5) He laid down the following rules of interpretation

(a) First among them was the supreme and final authority of Scripture itself, apart from all ecclesiastical authority or interference......

(b) Secondly, he asserted not only the supreme authority but the sufficiency of Scripture.

(c) Like all the other reformers he set aside the dreary fiction of the fourfold sense The literal sense of Scripture alone," said Luther, "is the whole essence of faith and of Christian theology." "I have observed this, that all heresies and errors have originated, not from the simple words of Scripture, as is so universally asserted, but from neglecting the simple words of Scripture, and from the affectation of purely subjective... tropes and inferences." "In the schools of theologians it is a well-known rule that Scripture is to be understood in four ways, literal, allegoric, moral, anagogic. But if we wish to handle Scripture aright, our one effort will be to obtain unum, simplicem, germanum, et certum sensum literalem." "Each passage has one clear, definite, and true sense of its own. All others are but doubtful and uncertain opinions."

(d) It need hardly he said, therefore, that Luther, like most of the Reformers, rejected the validity of allegory. He totally denied its claim to be regarded as a spiritual interpretation.

(e) Luther also maintained the perspicuity of Scripture. . . . He sometimes came near to the modern remark that, "the Bible is to be interpreted like any other book."
Luther maintained with all his force, and almost for the first time in history, the absolute indefeasible right of private judgment, which, with the doctrine of the spiritual priesthood of all Christians, lies at the base of all Protestantism (Farrar, op. cit., pp. 325-30).

b) Melanchthon

(1) Profound knowledge of ancient languages

(2) Worked on two sound principles: scripture must be understood grammatically before they can be understood theologically; and the Scriptures have but one certain and simple sense.

(3) Although Luther occupies the foremost place among the reformers he was far surpassed in scholarship and learning by Philip Melanchthon, in whom he found an indispensable friend and helper, in temperament and manners the counterpart of himself. Luther may be compared with Paul, whose bold and fearless spirit he admirably represented; Melanchthon exhibited rather the tender and loving spirit of John. Melanchthon appears to have been favored with every opportunity and means of education which that age afforded. He was regarded as a prodigy of ancient learning, especially skilled in the knowledge of Greek, a pupil of Reuchlin, and a friend of Erasmus, both of whom extolled his remarkable talents and ripe scholarship. His thorough acquaintance with the original languages of the Scriptures, his calm judgment and cautious methods of procedure, qualified him for pre-eminence in biblical exegesis. He clearly perceived the Hebraic character of the New Testament Greek, and showed the importance of the study of Hebrew even for the exposition of the Christian Scriptures. As an aid in this line of study he published an edition of the Septuagint. Luther listened with delight to his expository lectures on Romans and Corinthians, obtained his manuscript, and sent it without his knowledge to the printer” (Terry).

c) Calvin

(1) The greatest exegete of the Reformation

(2) He believed that the allegorical interpretation was a device of Satan to obscure the Scriptures

(3) Fullerton states that “Calvin may not unfittingly be called the first scientific interpreter in the history of the Christian church” (Prophecy and Authority, 133).

(4) Schaff writes, “Calvin is the founder of the grammatico-historical exegesis. He affirmed and carried out the sound
hermeneutical principle that the Biblical authors, like all sensible writers, wished to convey to their readers one definite thought in words which they could understand. A passage may have a literal or a figurative sense; but cannot have two senses at once. The Word of God is inexhaustible and applicable to all times, but there is a difference between explanation and application, and application must be consistent with explanation" (Philip Schaff, cited by Gerrit H. Hospers, The Principle of Spiritualization in Hermeneutics, 12).

(5) “Of all the exegetes of the period of the Reformation the first place must unquestionably be given to John Calvin, whose learning was ample, whose Latin style surpassed in purity and elegance that of any writer of his time, and whose intellect was at once acute and penetrating, profound and comprehensive. His stern views on predestination are too often offensively prominent, and he at times indulges in harsh words against those who differ from him in opinion. In textual and philological criticism he was not equal to Erasmus, Melanchthon, Oecolampadius, or his intimate friend Beza, and he occasionally falls into notably incorrect interpretation of words and phrases; but as a whole, his commentaries are justly celebrated for clearness, good sense, and masterly apprehension of the meaning and spirit of the sacred writers. With the exception of Judges, Ruth, Kings, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Solomon's Song, and the Apocalypse, his comments, expository lectures, and homilies extend over the whole Bible. In his Preface to the Epistle to the Romans he maintains that the chief excellence of an interpreter is a perspicuous brevity which does not divert the reader's thoughts by long and prolix discussions, but directly lays open the mind of the sacred writer. His commentaries, accordingly, while not altogether free from blemishes, exhibit a happy exegetical tact, a ready grasp of the more obvious meaning of words, and an admirable regard to the context, scope, and plan of the author. He seldom quotes from other commentators, and is conspicuously free from mystical, allegorical, and forced methods of exposition. His exegesis breathes everywhere—especially in the Psalms—a most lively religious feeling, indicating that his own personal experience enabled him to penetrate as by intuition into the depths of meaning treasured in the oracles of God” (Terry).
IV. General Hermeneutics: Contextual Interpretation

A. Definition

1. Context = con ("together") and textus ("woven"). Context = "...connection of thought that runs through a passage, those links that weave it into one piece" (Kaiser, Towards an Exegetical Theology, 71).

2. To interpret contextually, the student of the Bible sees the Bible (in part or in whole) in its entire setting (literary, historical, cultural, etc.)

3. “In scripture the context provides the situation behind the text” (Osborne, Hermeneutical Spiral, 19).

4. In every respect, the contextual interpretation includes every other aspect of hermeneutics, seeing that it includes the historical and grammatical setting.

B. Importance

1. "Good exegetical procedure dictates that the details be viewed in light of the total context....This ability - the ability to state what each section of a book is about and how the paragraphs in each section contribute to that argument- is one of the most critical steps" (Kaiser, Op. Cit., 69)

2. Samuel Davidson's statements include, "A capacity for verbal analysis does not impart the talent of expounding an entire paragraph. Ability [1]to discover the proper causes, [2] the natural sequence, [3] the pertinency of expressions to the subject discussed, and [4] the delicate distinctions of thought which characterize particular kinds of composition is distinct from the habit of carefully tracing out the various senses of separate terms" (Sacred Hermeneutics, 240).

3. "Without thinking they allow this to pass over into a quasi-magical use of the words of Scripture where they may be detached from their context and used at the pleasure of the exegete - just as long as this is done for spiritual purposes and is in general harmony with the teaching of Scripture somewhere else....We must not make a pretense of exegeting a text just because the wording is to our liking. That in essence would be a deliberate misleading of the congregation, for they would assume we are pointing to that text as authoritative for the matter under consideration.....knowledge of the context is extremely necessary and important" (Kaiser, Op. Cit., 70).
4. “Context is important because thought is usually expressed in a series of related ideas. Occasionally a person does make a swift and radical departure from the train of thought he is pursuing. Sometimes thoughts are tied together loosely by a general theme. But whether ideas are thus bound by close logical union or whether the main propositions are developed by repetition, the meaning of any particular is nearly always controlled by what precedes and what follows” (Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible*, 100).

C. Overview

1. We must see the passage as part of the whole (Bible)—Canonical

   a) The locale or habitat of any passage of Scripture is the total Scripture

   b) This is known as the Hermeneutical circle or spiral, wherein the we can a specific passage only when we know the whole of Scripture, and we can only know the whole of Scripture by the part.

   c) “And so all theological interpretation of Scripture is a rotation or ‘spiraling’ from the part to the whole, and whole to part” (Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, 139).

2. We must see the passage as part of the whole (Testament)—Chronological

   a) “Each Testament has unique features of its own...The interpreter comes to the Old Testament or the New Testament with the proper mind set which corresponds to the essence, the composition, the peculiar historical configuration, the place in the progress of divine revelation, of the Testament” (Ramm, Op. Cit., 139).

   b) Thus, progressive revelation must be taken into account—to some degree.

3. We must determine the intention of the writer (Paul, Moses, Luke)

4. We must determine the purpose, outline, and overall theme of the book
a) One must know the Galatian heresy to interpret the book of Galatians properly

b) The context of the book must direct the interpreter’s mindset when coming to a certain passage. It gives him moorings.

5. We must determine the flow of narrative or argument of major section

a) That which goes before and after a passage give the parameters and horizon by which one interprets

b) We must trace the material and argument to and from the text. It is the framework for understanding.

6. We must determine the relationships of the immediate context—often by diagramming or propositional displays

7. We must determine the meaning of the specific passage by word study, grammar and semantic classes (verbs, nouns, adverbs, etc).

D. Sectional Context

1. "The exegete must feel that his primary obligation is to find this thread of thought which runs like a life stream through the smaller and larger parts of every passage. When this connection is missed or avoided, there is a fair chance that the interpreter may miss the scope, end, purpose, and entire plan by which the author ordered the various parts of his work" (Kaiser, Ibid.).

2. How to study context? A preliminary readying with inspection of key vistas and feature such as if author states his intention which will allow the reader to systematically skim how this purpose has been worked out. If definite terms are not stated, then an "x-ray type of approach must be taken."

3. Some clues to look for:

a) Repeated term, etc., that acts as a heading or colophon (tailpiece)

b) Grammatical clues such as transitional conjunctions or adverbs (English or Greek)
c) In narrative materials, there are indications of change of time or location, giving a new setting (cf. Matthew 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1).

d) Rhetorical questions

e) Change in time, location, or setting

f) Vocative form of address shifting attention of audience (Jude 17; Col. 3:18 to 4:1; Matthew 23:13-36).

g) Change in tense, mood, or aspect of the verb

h) Repetition of key words, etc. (cf. 1 Corinthians 13 [love]; Romans 5:12-21 [sin, transgression, trespass, grace, free gift]

i) Announcement of theme (John)

j) *Note for further study: John Beekman and John Callow, Translating the Word of God (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), pp. 279-81.

4. “We must make preliminary inspections of the whole work before being able to identify an concisely state the unifying theme. Beginning at the level of sectional analysis provides for both the overall purpose and connections of the work” (Kaiser, Ibid.).

5. Biblical examples:

a) Genesis often uses repeated phrasing: "The generation of _____" with Adam, Noah, Terah, etc. as headings. Matthew closes 5 times with "And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings..."

b) Ecclesiastes contains the colophon "Eat, drink and find enjoyment in your work, for this is the gift of God."

c) Romans 6:1 uses a rhetorical question to introduce a section. Il Kings 2:3,5 uses a slightly rhetorical question of Elisha: "Do you know that today the Lord will take away your master from you?"

d) Malachi is an obvious use of rhetorical questions with each section beginning with a bold declaration from God only to have the audience respond with "with what?"
e) Micah makes use of repeated material with a vocative word of address...the shout.

f) Colophon usage: Isaiah 40-66: "There is no peace, says the Lord, for the wicked." "Isaiah 40-66 is divided into 3 large teaching blocks, each composed of an ennead (9 addresses roughly corresponding to our present set of 9 chapters each)."

g) Extensive use of repeated vocabulary for sectioning: Amos. Amos 1-2: repeated phrasing 8 times. Amos 3-5: imperative "hear" as a heading to mark chapters. Amos 3 contains 9 rhetorical questions to prove "The Lord has spoken, who can but prophesy?" Amos 4: repeated disasters 5 times. Amos 5: "Seek..."

h) "We should try to explain the position and sequence of every immediate context. Failure to grapple with the problem will generally result in our missing the author's total purpose and plan."

i) I Corinthians is an example of the theme of the section being stated explicitly (I Cor. 12:1 as an example). Question/Answer format is apparently used. Paul introduces the use of a quotation from the Corinthians' letter (a quotation reflected their perspective). We know we are dealing with a quotation and not the author's own point of view because: 1) quotation is marked by a strong contrast to the immediate context; 2) writer alludes to readers' own knowledge of the subject; or 3) a statement is made in marked contrast to other passages of the author.

E. The Book of Context

1. "Now it should be possible to identify the overall purpose and plan of the book. The parts should add up to the total work" (Kaiser, Ibid.)

2. Books that give us a stated goal by which to judge their total progress as the sections unfold: Ecclesiastes - "Fear God and keep his commandments"; Luke - "knoweth certainty"; I John = "that our joy might be complete", John - "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...."

3. The most difficult pattern to determine is narrative materials. Look at selection and arrangement.
4. Example of Ruth: "Ronald M. Hals points out that the writer of Ruth introduced God's name into the narrative 25 times in 85 verses. In 9 of these references God's name is used in a prayer asking for blessing on one of the major characters in the book. It is significant that each of the major characters is the object of at least one such prayer. Even more striking is the fact that, without interrupting the flow of the narration, the writer goes on to show by implication that in each case the prayer was answered." Theme: the "thread of God's plan."

5. 4 ways to ascertain intention of writer's plan/scope:

   a) Search for stated purpose in preface, conclusion, or body of text.

   b) Study parenthetical sections - especially in NT Epistles.

   c) For clues in narrative style look at selection and arrangement

   d) If no clues found, study topic sentences and themes of sections to make interpreter's own statement of the author's purpose.

F. The Canonical Context

1. "Lately there has been in the Church a whole new emphasis on the canon." Brevard S. Childs stands out in this new emphasis on canon. He states that canonical analysis "must focus on the text itself - in the final form which now lies before the Church. Thus the present shape of the text, apart from what he would still regard as the legitimate avenues of historico- and traditio-criticisms, has its own kind of integrity....This approach urges that the interpreter work within the structure which the Biblical text has received from those who shaped and used it as sacred Scripture. This emphasis has been long overdue in a field that has usually felt content to do everything else but to deal with the text precisely as it was canonically contained in the Church of the living God."

2. Childs states that this approach is not New Criticism, Structuralism, or Rhetorical Criticism. He aims at understanding the "theological shape" of the text - not attempting to recover its original literary form or aesthetic unity. He states he is not advocating a form of Gerhard von Rad's "Kerygmatic exegesis." Childs insists that Scripture must not be viewed apart from the Church in order for its normative force as a witness to divine revelation to be understood. "While Childs will allow the historian of
the ancient Near East to approach these written materials from a
documentary and critical position and will agree that one can
distinguish between, say, the Yahwistic and priestly source, he still
feels that it is only the full, combined text as it has now emerged in
the Church (after being indeed redacted from the layers of
tradition!) that 'continues to exercise an authority on the community
of faith.'"

3. Comments: Kaiser’s

a) Child's program takes away from the original writer's
intention in all of its historical particularity. Tradition
will need to be authorized in some way - sounding like
going back to Rome for authenticity of the canon. The
early church insisted that the normativeness of the text
was prior to and the very basis for the Church itself.

b) The whole canon must not be used as the context for
every exegesis. The church is in error when the
analogy of faith is used as an exegetical device for
extricating meaning from or importing meaning to texts
that appeared earlier than that passage where the
teaching is set forth most clearly or perhaps even for
the first time.

c) Child's does disavow Paul Ricoeur as says that he
fails to ground the Biblical metaphors in the context of
historic Israel; instead they become free-floating
metaphors.

d) There is one place where canonical concerns must
be introduced, however. AFTER we have finished our
exegetical work of establishing what the author of the
paragraph/text was trying to say, THEN we go on to set
the teaching in its total Biblical context. Compare this
material to our findings in the passage.... Canonical
context must appear only as part of our summation and
not as part of our exegesis.

G. The Immediate Context

1. Paragraph (prose) analysis: must know the connection between
the paragraph studied and the section of the book in which it is
found.

2. Example: Ex. 6:14-25: Many feel there is nothing worthwhile
here in genealogy, but if this paragraph was skipped, exegetes
miss helpful points. The paragraph is framed by essentially the
same material. The genealogy lists only 3 of Jacobs sons instead of 12 because they are only trying to get to Moses and Aaron. These 3 may have been included to show that although they had committed terrible sins, God's grace was present. God gently reminds the reader not to think as highly about that channel, but as about the Caller and Equipper of men.

3. Types of connections between paragraphs and context:

   a) Historical - connection of facts, events, etc.
   b) Theological - historical fact/circumstance
   c) Logical - may connect with an argument/line of thinking
   d) Psychological - a line of reasoning may suddenly trigger a related idea.
   e) Example of knowing the immediate context when there is a theological connection: Galatians 5:4 "You have fallen away from grace." "Grace" is not personal experience of God's mercy, but rather "grace" is the gospel system of salvation in Christ.
   f) "Only an awareness of and respect for the immediate context will keep the exegete from going off the deep end here. The author has the right to define his own words as he wishes to do so - and context is a key to unlocking part of that meaning."

V. Historical Interpretation (Berkhof, 113f.)

A. Definition

1. “Historical interpretation is used to denote the study of Scripture in the light of those historical circumstances that put their stamp on the different books of the Bible” (Berkhof, Principles of Biblical Interpretation, 113).

2. “Immer calls it, ‘The Real Explanation.’ In distinction from the grammatical and logical interpretation, which apply to the formal side of Scripture - to the language in which it is couched - the historical refers to the material contents of the Bible. It proceeds on the following assumptions.

3. Grammatical and historical interpretation, when rightly understood, are synonymous. The special laws of grammar,
agreeably to which the sacred writers employed language, were the
result of their peculiar circumstances; and history alone throws us
back into those circumstances” (Davidson, Op. Cit, 233).

B. Basic Assumptions For Historical Interpretation

1. The word of God originated in a historical way, and therefore,
can be understood only in the light of history. This does not mean
that everything it contains may be explained historically. As a
supernatural revelation of God it naturally houses elements that
transcend the limits if the historical, but it does not mean the
contents of the Bible are largely historical determined, and to that
extent find their explanation in history .

2. The place, the time, the circumstances, and the prevailing view
of the world and of life in general, will naturally color the writings
that are produced under those conditions of time, place, and
circumstances. This applies also to the books of the Bible,
particularly to those that are historical or of an occasional character.
In all the range of literature, there is no book that equals the Bible in
touching life at every point.

C. Demands on The Exegete

1. In view of these presupposition, historical interpretation makes
the following demands on the exegete:

2. He must see to know the author whose work he would explain:
his parentage, his character and temperament, his intellectual,
moral, and religious characteristics, and also the external
circumstances of his life. He should also acquaint himself with the
speakers who are introduced in the books of the Bible, and with the
original readers.

3. He will have to transfer himself mentally in to the first century
A.D., an into Oriental conditions.

4. He must place himself on the standpoint of the author, and seek
to enter his very soul, until he, as it were, lives his life and thinks his
thoughts. This means that he must guard carefully against the
common mistake of transferring the author to the present day and
making him speak the language of the twentieth century. If he does
not avoid this, the danger exists, as McPheeters expressed it,
that"the voice he hears (will) be merely the echo of his ideas" (Bible

D. Elements of Historical Interpretation
1. Political factors
2. Geography
3. Military and War
4. Cultural Practices
   a) Family practices
   b) Home and dress customs
   c) Societal customs
   d) Athletic and recreational
   e) Music and art
5. Religious customs

**E. Sources of Historical Interpretation**

1. Old Testament Allusions—the original audience would have understood the allusions, and the interpreter must also (cp. Isaiah 53:10, 12 in Mark 10:45; also compare context of Mark 15:34 with Psalm 22, esp. 22-31).

2. Qumran Parallels—Dead Sea Scrolls
3. Rabbinic Parallels
4. Hellenistic Parallels

**F. Specific Areas of Historical Interpretation**

1. **Personal Characteristics of The Author or Speaker**
   a) Preface
      (1) The more we know about an individual the easier it is to interpret his or her writings. Therefore, it is to our decided advantage to learn as much about the author as may be discovered.

      (2) In this learning process, no item of information about the author should be overlooked or held in contempt.
b) **Who Is the Author?**

(1) In the historical interpretation of the book, it is natural to ask first if all: Who was its author? Some books of the Bible name their authors; others do not. Therefore the query, Who was its author?- even if it is merely considered as a question of a name, is not always easy to answer. But, concerning the historical interpretation of the Bible, the question is far more than that.

(2) The mere knowledge of a name does not afford the exegete any material aid. He must seek acquaintance with the author himself: e.g., his character and temperament, his disposition and habitual mode of thought. He should endeavor to penetrate into the secrets of his inner life, so he may understand, as far as possible, the motives controlling his life, and thus get an insight into his thoughts, ambitions and actions. It is highly desirable for him to know something about the author’s profession, which may have exercised a powerful influence on the man, his manner, and his language.

(3) Since the best way to become acquainted with others is to associate with them, so the most effective way to become familiar with an author is to study his writings as diligently as possible, and to pay close attention to all personal touches, and to the incidental remarks that bear on his character and life. If you want to know Moses you must study the Pentateuch, particularly the last four books, and notice especially such passages as Exodus 2-4; 16:15-19; 33:11; 34:5-7; Numbers 12:7,8; Deuteronomy 34:7-11; Acts 7:20-35; and also Hebrews 11:23-29. These shed light on the parentage of the Old Testament mediator, his providential deliverance, his educational advantages, and his loyal love for his people in their distress. They also clearly portray him as a man who, despite the impulsiveness and tendency toward self-assertion in his youth, learned humility and patience during a long period of waiting; a man hesitant to venture out on the great undertaking, and yet well qualified for leadership; a man of great intellectual attainments, but of a very humble character; a man greatly slandered and abused by his people, yet loving them with an unselfish and sincere love—a hero of faith.

(4) To know Paul, it will be necessary to read his history as it is recorded by Luke, and also his epistles. Special attention should be given to such passages as Acts 7:58; 8:1-4; 9:1,2,22,26; 26:9; 13:46-48; Romans 9:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:9; 2 Corinthians 11; 12:1-11; Galatians 1:13-15; 2:11-16; Philippians 1:7,8,12-18; 3:5-14; 1 Timothy 1:13-16. In these passages the figure of Paul stands forth as a product, partly of the diaspora and partly of the rabbinical school of Gamaliel, a man thoroughly versed in the Jewish literature, having the courage of his convictions; a conscientious persecutor of the Church, but also a truly penitent
convert, willing to confess the error of his way; a loyal servant of
Jesus Christ, anxious to spend himself in the service of his Lord;
yeaming for the salvation of his kinsmen, but also praying and
working with untiring zeal and courage for the saving of the
Gentiles; a man willing to deny himself so God in Christ might
receive all the glory.

(5) An intimate acquaintance with the author of the book will
assist in a proper understanding of his words. It will enable the
interpreter to surmise, and, perhaps, to establish conclusively,
how the words and expressions were born within the soul of the
writer. This close acquaintance will illuminate certain phrases
and sentences in an unexpected way, and make them seem more
real. Jeremiah stands before us in Scripture as a sensitive,
tenderhearted, and impulsive character, who, at times, shrinks
from the performance of his duty.

(6) This knowledge will aid the interpreter in understanding the
tenderness and pathetic beauty that characterizes parts of his
writings, and help him to appreciate Jeremiah’s passionate anger
in rebuking the enemy (11:20; 12:3; 15:10 ff.; 17:15-18). Not
until we understand the man are we able to understand his
complaint that the Lord does not reveal the power of his arm,
and his cursing the day of his birth (20:7-18).

(7) The apostle John evidently had an impetuous and vehement
nature, occasionally swayed by selfish ambition, and so zealous
in the work of the Lord that he became severe on those whom he
regarded as unfair competitors and enemies of Jesus. The natural
defects of his character were chastened by grace. His love was
sanctified, his zeal led in proper directions. He drank deeply at
the wonderful life of the Savior. This explains most of the
differences between his Gospel and the Synoptics, and accounts
for his emphasis on the necessity of abiding in Christ and of love
to Christ and the brethren.

(8) In reading the prophecy of Amos, it will be helpful to bear in
mind the simple fact that he was a herdsman of Tekoa, which
will account for many of his figurative expressions. Ezekiel
would hardly have written as he did in chapters 40-48 of his
prophecy, if he had not been an exilic priest, thoroughly
acquainted with the temple ritual and mindful of the fact that
Zion’s past glory had departed.

c) **Who Is The Speaker?**

(1) Another question that comes up under this heading is, “Who
is the speaker?” The Biblical authors often introduce others as
speakers. It is of the utmost importance that the expositor should
carefully distinguish between the words of the author himself
and those of the speaker or speakers who are introduced. In the
historical books, the line of demarcation is generally so clear it is not easily overlooked. Yet there are exceptions.

(2) For example, it is difficult to decide whether the words found in John 3:16-21 were spoken by Jesus to Nicodemus, or form an explanatory addition added by John. In the prophets, the sudden transitions from the human to the divine are, as a rule, easily recognized by the change from the third to the first person.

d) The following rule will be of value to you:

(1) “The writer of the book should be regarded as the speaker until some express evidence to the contrary appears.”

(2) When the interpreter knows who the speaker, as distinguished from the writer, is, he should make it a point to increase his knowledge of him with all the means at his command. Such persons as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, Job and his friends, and classes of persons such as the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Scribes must be made the objects of special study. The better they are known, the better their words will be understood.

2. Circumstances Peculiar to the Writings

a) Besides the general circumstances of the author’s life, there are some if a more special character that directly influenced his writings. Sound interpretation, of course, requires they be given special consideration.

b) The Original Readers And Hearers

(1) For the correct understanding of a writing or discourse, it is extremely important to know for whom it was originally intended. This applies particularly to those books of the Bible that are of an occasional character, such as the prophetic books and the New Testament Epistles. These were naturally adapted to the special circumstances and the particular needs of the reader. The writer necessarily took into account their geographical, historical, and social position; their industrial and commercial relations; their educational and social advantages; their moral and religious character, and their personal idiosyncrasies, prejudices, and peculiar habits of thought.

(2) The writer’s knowledge of these is reflected in his book. The accounts, largely, for the characteristic differences of the Synoptic Gospels. The defection of the Galatians accounts for the severity of the Epistle which Paul wrote to them. And the unselfish devotion of the Philippians to the great apostle of
the Gentiles, and their adherence to his doctrine, explains the fundamental note of gratitude and joy that marking the letter they received from Paul, the prisoner.

(3) The condition of the original readers not only determines the general character of the writing, but also explains many of its particulars.

(4) The divisions at Corinth clearly gave Paul occasion to say: “For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephus, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s (1 Corinthians 3:21-23).”

(5) Where the apostle says in 1 Corinthians 15:32: If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus,

(6) It is not at all unlikely that a form of expression was suggested by because such fights were common place at Corinth. Perhaps the condition of the Galatian church explains why Paul, who himself circumcised Timothy, would write to them: Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

(7) Why would Paul write to the Colossians rather than to others: For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. An intimate knowledge of the original readers will often illuminate the pages of the writing addressed to them in an unexpected manner. The same principle applies to the original heaters of a discourse, so they, too, should be made the object of special study.

3. The Purpose of The Author

a) The writers of the Biblical books naturally had some purpose unfailingly in mind. We may believe the mind of the writer was constantly fixed on it, and that he was guided by it in the selection of his material and in the expression of the thoughts. Therefore, the knowledge of the end he had will not only aid in understanding the book as a whole, but also will illumine the details.

b) It is not always easy too figure out the object of a writing. In some cases the interpreter must depend upon an ecclesiastical tradition that is not always reliable, but should be received with reserve. In other writings, the author states the purpose of his book, as Solomon, in Proverbs 1:2-4; Luke, in Luke 1:1-4; John, in John 20:31, and Revelation 1:1; Peter, in 1 Peter 5:12. In still others, the knowledge of the original readers and the circumstances in which they
lived, together with the occasion that led to the composition of the book, will aid in the discovery of its purpose, as 1 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians, and Hebrews. There are also instances in which only the repeated reading of a book will help you to detect its object.

4. **Time of Life, Special Circumstance, And Frame of Mind**

a) These are the elements of life through which the author wrote his work; they are important considerations. The author’s historical circumstances and his frame of mind also influenced his writing. This applies not only to the books of the Bible but also influenced his writing. This applies not only to the books of the Bible but also to the speeches and discourses recorded in it. It is impossible to interpret the touching elegy of David on the occasion Saul and Jonathan’s death, except in the light of his tremendous for God’s anointed, and his great love for Jonathan. And how can anyone give an adequate explanation of the Lamentations of Jeremiah unless he is acquainted with the sad plight of the Holy City, and with the anguish of the prophet?

b) While the interpreter should gratefully apply whatever historical knowledge he has at his command, in the interpretation of the Bible, he must be careful not to let his imagination run wild at the expenses of Scripture. What is purely the fruit of imagination should never be presented as historical truth.

G. **Helps for the Historical Interpretation**

1. As you may have guessed, there are two types of helps: internal and external. Each of these, along with their intrinsic value, will be discussed here.

2. **Internal**

a) The principle resources for the historical interpretation of Scripture are found in the Bible itself. In distinction from all other writings, it contains the absolute truth, and therefore its information deserves to be preferred to that extracted from other sources. The believing and conscientious exegete will ask first: What does the Bible say?

b) In Chronicles 30:1, King Hezekiah commands all Israel and Judah to keep the Passover. If the interpreter desires more light on this feast, he should not turn to Josephus in
the first place, but to such passages as Exodus 12:2-21; Leviticus 23:4-14; Numbers 28:16 ff.; Deuteronomy 16:1-8.

c) According to the prophecy of the angel to Manoah, Samson was destined to be a Nazarite (Judges 13:5), but what was a Nazarite? The answer to that question is found in Numbers 6.

d) Zechariah pronounces judgment on those “that swear by Malcham.” 1 Kings speaks of him as the god of the Ammonities, and Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2-5 point out he was served with human sacrifices.


f) The Samaritans are repeatedly named also, and, again, we ask, Who were they? The study of passages like 2 Kings 17:24-41; Ezra 4; and Nehemiah 4 will shed light on the question.

3. **External**

   a) If you have exhausted the resources of scripture and still need further information, you should turn to the profane (non-scriptural) sources available to you. The following works are good sources for such information as you may have need of:

   b) **Old Testament**

      (1) Introductions


(2) Ancient Near East and Israel


(3) Manner and Customs


(d) Also to be recommended are: W. Corswant, A Dictionary of Life in Bible Times (Bungay, England: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960); M. S. Miller and J. L. Miller, Encyclopedia of Bible Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), considered by many the best; and still F. H. Wight, Manners and Customs of Bible Lands (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953).

(4) Archaeology


(g) Further works: P. Lapp, The Tale of the Tell, PTMS 5 (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1975) for a treatment of how archaeologists work; for current discussions, subscribe to journals like Biblical Archaeology Review and Bible Review; and for topical treatments, e.g., water systems, walls, town planning, etc., see S. Paul and W. Dever, eds., Biblical Archaeology (Jerusalem, Keter, 1973).

c) New Testament

(1) Dictionaries


(2) Introductions


(3) Background


(c) Edersheim, Alfred, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1927.


(i) Shürer, Emil, A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ (published by various publishers over the years).

(4) Jewish Background


(g) For the best history of the period, S. Safrai, et al, The Jewish People in the First Century (Assen, Amsterdam: Van Gorcum Press, 1974); still the most exhaustive work is the multi-volume commentary on the New Testament by Strack and Billerbeck; and for an introduction to the literature in general, Hermann L. Strack, Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash (New York: Atheneum, 1974). One of the more reliable works, if you can find it, is Thomas Robinson, The Evangelists and the Mishna (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1859); he uses the material carefully, not making it say what it is not saying. Also, for a very practical and critical use of Jewish sources, Harold W. Hoehner, Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979).

(5) The Old Testament in the New


VI. Grammatical Interpretation

A. Introduction

1. God has revealed himself to man in an accommodating manner by which man is able to understand God adequately.

2. God's revelation to man has been inscripturated so that God's revelation is in now written down propositionally.

3. Hence, we must understand the language of Scripture in order to interpret the Scriptures properly.

4. This involves understanding the words (lexical or semantic analysis) and the relationship of the words (syntactical analysis).

5. When the interpreter begins to study a text of scripture he may begin in one of two ways. He may begin with the sentence, with the expression of the writers thought as a unity, and then proceed to the particulars, to the discovering of interpretation of individual words and concepts; or he may begin with the latter and, gradually, ascend to the consideration of the former. Often we must start with the latter because of our inadequacies of the foreign language.

B. Lexical Analysis

1. Canons of Lexical Analysis

   a) The Etymology of the Words

      (1) This deals with the origin and development of a word.

      (2) As a rule, one should not indulge in etymological investigations. Many people have fallen into a fallacious trap by seeking to determine the current meaning of the word by its etymology (e.g., repentance).

      (3) A great deal of work has been produced that calls attention to the misuse of etymologies in biblical studies over the past centuries (and this is important because students are still buying those books that were not always done well); we may learn from such careless and dangerous practices how important valid method is. The most helpful discussions include: P. F. Ackroyd, "Meanings and Exegesis" in Words and Meanings, ed. by Ackroyd and Lindars (Cambridge University Press, 1968); James Barr, Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968); James Barr, "Did Isaiah Know About Hebrew 'Root Meanings'?” ExT 75 (1964); James Barr,

(4) At the same time, it is advisable that the expositor of Scripture take notice of the established etymology of a word, since it may help to determine its real meaning, and may illumine it in a surprising manner.

(5) Think of the Hebrew words: kopher, kippurim, and kapporeth, which are translated respectively “ransom,” ‘redemptions” or “atonements,” and “Mercy-seat.” They are all derived from the root kaphar, which means “to cover, and contains the idea of a redemption or atonement brought about by a certain covering. Or take the New Testament word ,ekklesia, derived from ek and kalein. It is a designation of the Church, both in the Septuagint and in the New Testament, and points to the fact that this consists of a people that is ”called out,” i.e., out of the world in special devotion to God.

b) The Contemporary Use of Word

(1) The current signification of a word is of far greater importance for the interpreter than its etymological meaning. In order to interpret the Bible correctly, the interpreter must be acquainted with the significations that the word acquired in the course of time, and with the sense in which the Biblical authors use them. This is the important point to be settled.

(2) It is often thought that this is easily done by consulting some good Lexicon, which generally gives both the original and the derivative meanings of the words, and generally designates in what sense they are employed in particular passages. And, in most cases, this is true enough, but, at the same time, it is necessary to bear in mind that the Lexicons are not absolutely reliable, and that they are least reliable when they get into particulars.

(3) If the interpreter has any reason to doubt the meaning of a word, as given by the Lexicon, he will have to investigate for himself. Such labors are undoubtedly very fruitful, but they are also extremely difficult.
(a) Most words have several meanings, some literal and some figurative.

(b) The comparative study of analogous words in other languages requires careful discrimination, and does not always help us to fix the exact meaning of a word, since corresponding words in different languages do not always have exactly the same original and derivative meanings.

(c) In the study of New Testament words, it is imperative that account should be taken, not only of the written, but also of the spoken koine.

(d) It is not always safe to conclude from the meaning of a word in classical Greek its signification in the New Testament, since Christianity has, in many cases, given the words a new content.

c) The Synonymous Use of Words

(1) Synonymous words are those that have the same meaning, or agree in one or more of their meanings, though they may differ in others. They often agree in their fundamental signification, but give expression to different shades of it. The use of synonyms ministers to the beauty of the language because it allows an author to vary his expressions.

(2) The importance of determining the exact meaning of synonymous words may be illustrated in the following examples. In Isaiah 53:2, three words are used to express the absence of external glory in the life of the Servant of the Lord.

(3) For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

(4) The first word (tho’ar) means “form,” with the added idea of beauty, and therefore refers to a beautiful bodily form. Compare this with 1 Samuel 16:18. The second word (hadar) designates an ornament, and, as applied to God, is descriptive of majesty. It refers to the way in which the Lord appeared among men rather than to his physical form. He manifested himself in a state of humiliation. The third (mar’eh from ra’ah) “to see,” sometimes refers to an external appearance which is the expression of and therefore in harmony with an inner essential being. The meaning of the
prophet seems to be that the external appearance of the Lord was not what the Jews expected of the Messiah.

(5) The New Testament furnishes a beautiful example in John 21:15-17. When the Lord inquired into the love of fallen Peter, he employed two words: agapao and phileo. The distinction between the two is given by Trench in the following words:

(a) The first expresses a more reasoning attachment of choice and selection, from a seeing in the object upon which is bestowed that which is worthy of regard; or else from a sense that such is due toward the person so regarded, as being a benefactor, or the like; while the second, without being necessarily an unreasoning attachment, does yet give less account of itself to itself; is more instinctive, is more of the feelings or natural affections, implies more passion.

(b) Agapao, based upon admiration and respect, is a love that is controlled by the will and is of an enduring character; while phileo, based on affection, is love that is more impulsive and apt to lose its fervor. When Jesus first put the question to Peter, “lovest thou me?” he used agapao. But Peter did not dare answer in the affirmative to the question, whether he loved the Lord with a permanent love that achieves its greatest triumphs in moments of temptation. So, in answering, he employs the word phileo. The Lord repeats the question, and Peter responds in the same manner as before. The Jesus descends to Peters level, and, in his third question, uses the second word phileo, as if he doubted even the philein of Peter. No wonder that the latter became sorrowful, and made an appeal to the omniscience of Jesus.

(6) But let the student beware. Just because this study is so fascinating, it may also become dangerous. Synonymous words always have a general, as well as a special, distinctive signification; and the expositor should not proceed on the principle that, whenever such words are employed, their distinctive meaning should always be emphasized, for, if he does, he is liable to find himself entangled in all kinds of weird and erroneous interpretations. The context in which a word is used, the predicates ascribed to it, and the adjuncts added to it, must determine whether a word is to be understood in a general or in a special sense.

(7) If two or more synonymous words or expressions are found in the same passage, it is generally safe to assume that their special signification requires consideration.
d) The Contextual Use of the Words

(1) The most important question in the study of individual words is not that of their etymology, nor even that of the various significations which they gradually acquired. The essential point is that of their particular sense in the connection in which they occur.

(2) The interpreter must determine whether the words are used in their general signification or in one of their special significations, and whether they are employed in a literal or in a figurative sense. In the study of the words in their connection, the interpreter should proceed on the following principles:

(a) The language of Scripture should be interpreted according to its grammatical import; and the sense of any expression, proposition, or declaration, is to be determined by the words employed

(i) Theological knowledge will be faulty in proportion to its deviation from the plain meaning of the Bible. Though this canon is perfectly obvious, it is repeatedly violated by those who bring their preconceived ideas to bear upon the interpretation of the Bible.

(ii) By means of forced exegesis, they attempt to make the sense of Scripture square with their pet theories or opinions. The interpreter should carefully guard against this mistake, and conscientiously abide by the plain meaning of the words.

(b) A word can have only one fixed meaning in the connection in which it occurs

(i) The desire to seem original or profound, and to surprise the common people by fanciful expositions of which they have never heard, sometimes tempts interpreter to lose sight of this simple rule of interpretation. We may illustrate this in the following examples.

(ii) The Greek word sarks may designate (a) the bones (1 Corinthians 15:39) (b) when it is synonymous with soma (Acts 2:26); animal [sensuous] nature of man; John 1:13; solid part of the body, except the whole substance of the body, (Ephesians 2:15; Ephesians 5:29); (c) the Romans 10:18); and (d) human nature as dominated by sin, the seat and vehicle of sinful desires (Romans 7:25; Romans 8:4-9; Galatians 5:16-17). If an
interpreter ascribed all these meanings to the word as it is found in John 6:53, he would be attributing sin, in an ethical sense, to Christ, whom the Bible represents as the sinless one.

(iii) The Hebrew word nakar means: (a) not to know, to be ignorant; (b) to contemplate, to look at anything as strange, or little known; and (c) to know, to be acquainted with. The first and third meanings are opposites. It is perfectly obvious, therefore, that if an expositor should seek to combine these various meanings in the interpretations of a single passage like Genesis 42:8, the contrast which this verse contains would be lost, and pure nonsense would be the result.

(c) Cases in which several meanings of a word are united in such a manner that they are resolved into a higher unity do not conflict with the preceding canon

(i) Sometimes a word is used in its most general sense, so as to include its special meanings, though these are not emphasized.

(ii) When Isaiah says in 53:4; Surely, he hath borne our griefs (literally: sicknesses), he certainly refers to the spiritual diseases of which the Servant of the Lord delivers his people. But in Matthew 8:17; we are told that this word was fulfilled in the Savior's ministry of healing. The word of Isaiah is, therefore, taken to mean not only that the Servant of the Lord delivered his people from spiritual ills, i.e., from sin, but also from the resulting physical ailments.

(iii) Then again, an author occasionally employs a word in a pregnant sense, so as to indicate far more than it really expresses.

(iv) This is done especially in the synecdoche, when a part is put for the whole. When the Savior teaches his disciples to pray: “Give us this day our daily bread,” the word “bread” undoubtedly stands for the necessities of life in general.

(d) If a word is used in the same connection more than once, the natural assumption is that it has the same meaning

(i) Usually an author will not use a word in two or three different senses in a single
passage. This would, under ordinary circumstances, lead to confusion. Still, there are a few exceptions to this rule. In a few passages a word is repeated with a change of meaning. But these cases are rare, and the danger of them being misunderstood is eradicated.

(ii) The following examples will suffice to illustrate: Matthew 8:22, Let the dead bury their dead”; Romans 9:6, “For they are not all Israel that are of Israel”; 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

2. Summary of Lexical Analysis

   a) Scan through the categories given in the dictionaries to see how they have arranged the usage.

   b) Look up the references in the Bible to see how the word is used in the contexts. Do not rely on the phrases given in the concordances—you need more context to work with (and their English definition might mislead you). If the word has too many references, be selective—check first the references given in the same category first, then problematic references, and then spot check the common usages.

   c) Start to group similar meanings together and write headings for them.

   d) If you come across non-theological usage, pay close attention to them for they might serve as supportive or illustrative evidence, but do not simply read the meaning into the theological usage without validation.

   e) If you came across synonyms and antonyms, try to determine how your word differs from them.

   f) Consult the basic word study books to see if those writers mentioned something that you may have overlooked. Do not go to these too soon; if you have surveyed usage already, you will be better equipped to evaluate their suggestions. If you have not, they will influence you more.

   g) Put word studies in their proper perspective: they provide the meanings and range of meanings of words—
used in statements. The statements will form the substance of theology. For example, you do not prove the doctrine of the virgin birth from the word study of Hebrew ‘alma, “virgin/young woman”; you learn the possibilities of this word by usage, and then carry those as options to the context being studied. (The doctrine is taught by the clear statement of Scripture.) You would then need to justify your choice by contextual exegesis. If you were to ascribe a contextual meaning to the word that was not found in Scriptural usage, your interpretation would be insupportable and questionable.

3. Exercise of Lexical Analysis—see hand outs for Nephesh

a) Steps

(1) Determine the word that you wish to study. In our case, we will study the word Nephesh (note Strong’s number 5315)

(2) Look up the word in a Lexicon. In our case, we will look at The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon. Remember Strong’s number 5315.

(3) Look up all the references of the word in the Bible—not merely the same English translation of the word. For this purpose, The New Englishman’s Hebrew Concordance is helpful. Remember Strong’s number.

(4) Group the word into categories and then try to find a common theme that gathers all of these meanings into one single, universal meaning.

(5) Compare your groups and basic meaning with a word-study book. For this purpose, we will use TWOT, which is also indexed to Strong’s Concordance.

b) Findings

(1) The basic meaning of the word is self, which has three other senses to it: the inner man (leb), which includes intellect, will, and emotion; the outer man (basar), which includes the physical body as a whole; and the life force.

(2) This has implications upon our interpretation of Genesis 2:7 and the Greek word psyche in Matthew 22:37, 1 Corinthians, and similar passages.
C. Syntactical Analysis

1. Introduction
   
a) In addition to identifying the meaning of individual words, we have the task of determining the relationship of these words to themselves. In other words, what relationship do these words have upon one another? This is syntax.

b) This has three levels. It relates words to words; it relates propositions to propositions; and it relates paragraphs to paragraphs. At this point, we will seek to highlight the grammatical and logical relationships between clauses and phrases of a paragraph.

c) The result of such an effort becomes the basis for an expository outline of the passage, either for preaching, teaching, witnessing, or personal Bible study.

2. Propositions
   
a) To show grammatical subordination, arrange the clauses and phrases of the paragraph in outline form with subordinate items indented below the clause or phrase to which they are subordinate. The paragraph will be analyzed one sentence at a time.

   (1) First, write out the kernel of the sentence, beginning at the left margin. The kernel is the main verb with its subject and compliment. The compliment may be a direct object, a predicate nominative, or a participial or infinite construction that completes the verb. A sentence may have two main verbs, which are normally connected with a conjunction (and, or, but). If this takes place, then express the two kernels on separate lines of your display, introducing the second kernel with the conjunction; e.g.,
(6) Indented under the kernel, write any phrases or clauses that modify some element of the kernel; e.g.,
Continue placing the subordinate elements under the elements to which they are subordinate, indenting to show the subordination. For our purposes, we will use the following sentence: “Having seen the great miracles which he performed and the people whom he healed, we believed in Christ and we were saved from our sins.” This would be displayed in the following way:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Christ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td>having seen the great miracles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td>nd [having seen] the people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Identify the grammatical or logical nature of the subordination of each line with a marginal note or explanation

(1) The logical relationship of a participle, infinitive, or noun to the context will have a certain relationship such as cause, measure, manner, means, result, description, content, contrast, comparison, purpose, modification. To be specific, you should state that this phrase or clause is the cause of ______ or measure of ______.

(2) The prepositional phrase should be identified using some phrase that appropriately expresses its relationship to the context. Some creativity may be required to come up with a label that does not use the meaning of the preposition; see below.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) a. We believed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Object of a</td>
<td>b. In Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) b. In Christ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Cause of a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) c. having seen the great miracles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Modifies ‘miracles’ in c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) d. which he performed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) Cause of a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) e. and [having seen] the people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) Modifies ‘people’ in e</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14) f. whom he healed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>g.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and we were saved

(17) Explains ‘saved’ in g

(18) h From our sins

Note that kernal statements do not need to be labeled, since they are not subordinate elements.

Sentences are often introduced by subordinating conjunctions such as ‘for’ or ‘therefore.’ In such cases, treat them as subordinate elements. For example,

(21) a. We believed

(23) Object of a

(24) b. In Christ

(25) Cause of a

(26) c. having seen the great miracles

(27) Modifies ‘miracles’ in c

(28) d. which he performed

(29) Cause of a

(30) e. and [having seen] the people

(31) Modifies ‘people’ in e

(32) f. whom he healed

(33) 

(34) g. and we were saved

(35) Explains ‘saved’ in g

(36) h From our sins

(37) Result of g, h

(38) a. Therefore we
c) The propositional display now becomes the basis of your teaching, preaching outline

(1) The kernels of the paragraph will center around a single idea; that idea is the theme of thesis of your teaching or preaching.

(2) Each kernel develops that central idea in some way; the kernels suggest main points (Sometimes several successive kernels may be summarized by a general statement, which in turn becomes your main point and the kernels become your sub-points).

(3) The subordinate clauses and phrases suggest sub-points under each main point.

(4) Subordinating conjunctions linking kernels suggest transitions between points in the outline.
3. Practice (1 Thess. 4:3-4)

| a) | b) A. For this is the will of God (τούτο γὰρ εστὶν θεὸς λόγῳ του θεοῦ) |
| c) Appositive to A | δ) B. even your sanctification (ἡ ημισίμως ἡμῶν) |
| e) Appositive of A and B | φ) C. that ye should abstain (ἀπεχεσθαί ημῶν) |
| g) Object of C | η) D. from fornication (ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας) |
| i) Appositive of A and B | ϕ) E. That every one of you should know how to possess (εἰδέναι ἐκαστὸν ὑμῶν σκέυος) |
| k) Object of E | λ) F. his vessel (κτάσθαι) |
| m) Manner of F | ν) G. in sanctification and honour (ἐν ἁγιασμῷ καὶ τῷ μῷ) |

VII. Theological Interpretation
A. Introduction

1. Definition of Theological Analysis

   a) Theological Analysis involves interpreting the Bible in light of the overall revelation of God.

   b) The basic question asked in theological analysis is ‘How does this passage fit into the total pattern of God’s revelation’ (Virkler, 117).

      (1) This has led to great discussions about interpreting the Bible through the lens of a dispensational theology or a covenant theology.

      (2) Other systems have been proposed (progressive dispensationalism, new covenant theology)

   c) The key issue in theological analysis is to determine the passage’s theological significance by bearing the light of previous revelation upon it.

2. Importance of Theological Analysis

   a) If we do not take into count the overall theology of the Bible, we might be led to conflicting views within the Bible

   b) If we do not take into count the overall theology of the Bible, we might be led to the error of having various theologies (Paul’s theology, James’ theology, etc)

3. Helps for Theological Analysis

   a) Parallels

      (1) Verbal—phrases or clauses that appear in a passage (cf. 1 Kings 19:9, 11; cf. Ex. 33:19).

      (2) Topical—same facts, subjects, sentiments or doctrines as the passage being compared


         (b) Didactic parallels (Cp. Matt. 10:37 with Luke 14:26; 1 Peter 2:5 and Romans 12:1; 6:19)
b) Quotations

(1) Some serve the purpose of showing the O. T. predictions were fulfilled in the N. T. (Matthew 2:17, 23; 4:14, 15; John 15:25; 19:36; Heb. 1:13, etc.)

(2) Others are used to establish a doctrine (Romans 3:9-19; 4:3; Gal. 3:6; John 10:34-36).

(3) Many are used to illustrate (Cf. Romans 10:6-8 and Deut. 30:12-14; Romans 8:36 and Psalm 44:22; 1 Tim. 5:18)

c) Chair passages

(1) Key passages are seats of doctrine—key chapters on certain doctrines or issues

(a) Genesis 1-2 = creation

(b) Isaiah 53 = the atonement

(c) 1 Corinthians 15 = resurrection

(d) Phil. 2:1-11 = incarnation

B. The Concept of Analogy of Faith

1. Definition of Analogy of Faith

a) Analogy of Scripture

(1) Analogia scripturae "Analogy of Scripture". The Biblical hermeneutic that Scripture interprets itself, and that context is the key to understanding the Bible.

(2) Analogia totius scripturae "Analogy of the Total Scriptures". The Biblical hermeneutic that Scripture interprets itself, and that the total context of all the Bible has to say must be taken into account.

b) Analogy of Faith

(1) Related to this principle is the principle of Analogia Fide, or "Analogy of Faith." That is, Biblical doctrines are to be interpreted in relation to the basic message of the Bible, the Gospel, the content of faith, often called The Faith. Cf. 1 Cor. 2:13, 15:1-4. (Curt Daniel)

(2) Analogia fidei "Analogy of Faith" is the biblical hermeneutic that Sacred Scripture is God-inspired and, therefore, inerrant in all it's parts. Thus we interpret Scripture using Scripture.
2. Central Issue of Analogy of Faith

a) In Chapter 1:9 of the Westminster Confession of Faith, this principle is taught when it declares, "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself."

(1) The Confession calls the analogy of faith the only "infallible" interpreter of Scripture. The authors of the Confession were reacting against the infallibility of the papacy. By calling the Scripture infallible truth in Section 1:5 and calling Scripture the infallible rule of interpretation in Section 1:9, the Divines were setting an infallible book against an infallible papacy. One modern scholar stated the Westminster Assembly's position in this way,

(2) “It is almost cliche to say the Protestantism revolted against an 'infallible Pope' only to set up an 'infallible Book.' . . . the Westminster Confession leaves no lingering doubts: There are two 'infallibles'. The first, already noted, is the infallible foreknowledge of God. The second is closer to hand: 'The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself' (1.9, cf. XVIII.2)” (Charles K. Robinson, "Philosophical Biblicism: The Teaching of the Westminster Confession Concerning God, the Natural Man, and Revelation and Authority" Scottish Journal of Theology 18 [March 1965]: 37).

b) Thus, the issue at hand is finding an infallible truth and an infallible means of interpreting this infallible truth

(1) Ultimately the Spirit of God must give the proper interpretation

(a) "Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word . . . " (WCF 1:6)

(b) Section 5 on the same topic says, "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word."

(2) The Analogy of Faith is biblical

(a) James Ussher demonstrates that Christ uses this principle of interpretation when he was tempted by the Devil.
(b) Ussher wrote that the texts which are abused by the Devil and his ministers may be properly interpreted using the example of Christ in the Temptation. When the Devil tempted Christ, he abused Psalm 91:11. Christ replied that the Psalm passage must be understood in the light of the clearest and most expressive commandment, Deut. 6:16, “Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God” (James Ussher, A Body of Divinitie, or the Summe and Substance of Christian Religion [London: Printed by M. F. for Tho: Dovvnes and Geo: Badger, 1645], 25.

3. Presuppositions of Analogy of Faith

a) Introduction

(1) The analogy of faith presupposes several assumptions about the Bible, among them its truthfulness, clarity, and consistency.

(2) These presuppositions are based upon a single author that has superintended his work through the agency of men so that all that they wrote is accurate, consistent, and inerrant. In other words, these assumptions are based upon the inspiration of the Scriptures.

b) The presupposition of Coherence

(1) If Scripture were a collection of independent saying, all of them right, but simply juxtaposed, on topics unconnected with one another, how could analogy [of faith] come into play?…But Scripture [is] like ordinary speech and even more so” (Blocher, Analogy of Faith, 32-33).

(2) An example of this is found in Daniel 9:2 and Jer. 25:11-12.

c) The presupposition of Unity

(1) The relationship of the Old to the New

(a) In most Evangelicalism the tendency is to overemphasize the discontinuity of the Old and New

(b) However, there is a fundamental unity that cannot be missed or ignored—The New Testament is implicit in the Old and the Old is explicit in the New

(i) Salvation is the same

(ii) True Israel is not physical and natural descendants as such—but all who share faith
(iii) The differences between Old and New is relative—not absolute

(c) The Old Testament offers the key to understanding the new

(d) The New is a commentary on the New

(e) Should watch minimizing the O. T. and reading too much into it.

(2) The Issue of the progressive revelation—see discussion on antecedent theology below

d) The presupposition of Canon

(1) The Scripture is a norm

(2) This norm is set and defined—not allowing for more.

(3) While each book within the canon is important, the entire corpse is viewed as a whole. It is only by this that the mind of God can be determined on a given topic.

4. Application

a) Introduction

(1) The Bible is analogical – different texts speak to the same issues, thus modifying and reinforcing each other as they present a unified message.

(2) "What God means to teach us in a specific passage cannot be understood apart from everything else he teaches us. And what God teaches us in a specific passage may not be the whole truth he reveals to us about a topic."

(3) Example Paul and James contradictory teaching on faith and works.

(4) Some texts may only be part or one side or one phase of everything God reveals on a matter.

(5) The cumulative teaching of Scripture on a particular issue and as a whole cannot be determined without considering what each relevant text means to say.

b) Forms of Analogy

(1) Positive Analogy – occurs when a number of specific texts clearly and repeatedly express the same doctrine. (Such as God’s
providence or human sinfulness. Such a doctrine is strongly established.)

(2) General Analogy - This "does not rest on the explicit statements of the Bible, but on the obvious scope and import of its teachings as a whole." (Berkhof p. 165)

(3) No part of Scripture explicitly condemns slavery, but slavery is incompatible with the trust of the whole.

(a) The cumulative force of the other doctrines weighs against slavery.

(b) In regards to another contemporary issue of the practice of homosexuality: Both the Positive Analogy and General Analogy reveal this behavior to be sin that is contrary to God’s will for human life.

c) Doctrinal Weight of Analogy: Not all text have Equal Theological –Doctrinal Weight (Berkhof)

(1) The number of passages that teach a doctrine. What is affirmed in a number of places is stronger than what is taught in one or two.

(2) Unanimity or correspondence of passages. If different texts fully agree, their doctrine is firmer than if they are merely similar in teaching.

(3) The clarity of a passage. Appeal to ambiguous or obscure texts is far less sure than appeal to those whose meaning is clear.

(4) The distribution of passages is determinative. What is taught in a single book is not as valuable as that which is taught throughout the entire Bible.

d) Rules for Weighting Texts in Determining Doctrine (Berkhof)

(1) 1. A doctrine that is clearly supported by the analogy of faith cannot be contradicted by a contrary and obscure passage. (Example - 1 John 3:6, which seems to say that believers do not sin.)

(2) 2. A single clear text may be used to support a doctrine. But that doctrine does not have the force of one supported by several clear texts.

(3) 3. If a doctrine is supported by only one obscure text, it must be accepted with great reservation. It may well require reinterpretation.
4. In cases where the analogy of Scripture leads to the establishment of two doctrines that appear contradictory, both doctrines should be accepted as Scriptural in the confident belief that they resolve themselves into a higher unity. (Examples: predestination and free will, total depravity and human responsibility.)

5. Danger of Analogy of Faith

a) One equates the analogy of Faith with their own particular theological system.

(1) This conclusion is confirmed by what Matthaeus Flacius (a Lutheran) said about the analogy of faith in his Key to the Scriptures (1567), the first hermeneutics book to emerge from the Reformation. According to Flacius,

(2) “Every understanding and exposition of Scripture is to be in agreement with the faith. Such [agreement] is, so to speak, the norm or limit of a sound faith, that we may not be thrust over the fence into the abyss by anything, either by a storm from without or by an attack from within (Rom. 12:6). For everything that is said concerning Scripture, or on the basis of Scripture, must be in agreement with all that the catechism declares or that is taught by the articles of faith” (Quoted by Kemmel, History of Investigation, 30).

b) It can end-up in proof-text approach rather than sound exegesis

(1) “This lack of clarity became apparent in the degree to which Reformation theology, like medieval scholasticism, also developed into a scholastic system. What was the relation of the systematic method here [in the post-Reformation] to the exegetical method? Ultimately it was the same as in medieval scholasticism. There, too, exegesis of holy scripture went on not only within systematic theology but also separately alongside of it, yet so that the possibility of a tension between exegesis and systematic theology was a priori excluded. Exegesis was enclosed within the frontiers fixed by systematic theology” (Ebeling, "Meaning of Biblical Theology," 82-83).

(2) In many ways this took place in the Protestant Scholastic era.
6. Practicum of Analogy of Faith

a) View the doctrine of justification in Paul (Galatians 2:15, 16; Romans 3:20, 28).

b) View the doctrine of justification in James (James 1:22—25; 2:8, 14-17, 21-24)

c) Seek to reconcile the two

d) Proposed Solutions

(1) View A. In this view James 2 shows that works are instrumental in a sinner’s justification before God. Those who propose this view assert that James was arguing that a sinner’s acceptance with God depends on both faith and works.

(2) View B. James was dealing with physical deliverance from the devastating affects of sin. James was not addressing unbelievers concerning [eternal] salvation…James then was referring to just-ification/vindication only before others in a nonsalvific context.

(3) View C. James was stating that a Christian’s justification before God depends not on faith alone but, on faith and works and…he was directly refuting Pauline theology (as expressed in Romans 4 and Galatians 2–3). This view is not committed to the inerrancy of Scripture.

(4) View D. James’s concern was to refute antinomianism by showing that one’s true conversion will be “justified” objectively by works… James sought to show that a person who possessed faith in Christ will be justified (i.e., vindicated as a true Christian) by his or her works, and that a mere profession of faith that is not vindicated or evidenced by works is not characteristic of genuine conversion.

7. Antecedent Theology and Analogy of Faith

a) Definition of Antecedent Theology

(1) This is the use of the analogy of faith in a diachronic way. This is to say, one considers the a topic in the sequence of the progress of revelation

(2) Thus, a passage is interpreted theologically in such a way that we limit our theological observations to conclusions drawn from the text being exegeted and from texts which precede it in time.
(3) “As the record progressed, an accumulation of various metaphors and technical terms began to emerge. Many of these focused around the Davidic descendent. He was the ‘Seed,’ ‘Branch,’ ‘Servant,’ Stone,’ ‘Root,’ ‘Lion,’ etc. More often than not, the text had a backward glance to previous contexts which contained parts of the same metaphors and technical terms” (Kaiser, Toward an Old Testament Theology, 34).

b) Clues for Antecedent Theology (Kaiser, Toward An Exegetical Theology, 137)

(1) The use of certain terms which have already acquired a special meaning in the history of salvation and have begun to take on a technical status (e.g., seed, servant, rest, inheritance, etc.).

(2) A direct reference or an indirect allusion to a previous event in the progress of revelation (e.g., exodus, the epiphany on Sinai) with a view to making a related theological statement

(3) Direct or indirect citation or quotations so as to appropriate them for a similar theological point in the new situation (e.g., Be fruitful and multiply…”; “I am the God of your Fathers”).

(4) Reference to covenant(s), its contents of accumulating promises, or its formulae (e.g., I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt”; “I will be your God; you shall be my people, and I will dwell in the midst of you.”

c) Qualifications for Antecedent Theology

(1) Arguing for full involvement of Biblical theology as part of exegesis; must be organized along diachronic lines so as to make its main contribution to the discipline of exegesis. Biblical theology should gather for the exegete all of the pertinent theological materials and organize them in selected historical groupings. Such an "informing theology" significant only if there is a canonical center to the body of theology. Current writers are reluctant to adopt any specific elements as this organizing principle or center of Biblical theology.

(2) Should not abandon the search for a theological center of the Biblical materials; ultimate aim should be to locate and identify that inner unity that binds all the various writers, themes, and histories together.

(3) One unifying principle held in highest esteem was that HISTORY is the chief medium of divine revelation and a cohesive factor - but this idea has fallen on hard times.
(4) Throughout the Bible the substance of blessing/promise is repeated in various ways. Formula appears, new provisions added, history shows and it was and is being fulfilled. All of this is focused around that one center.

(5) Discipline of Biblical theology must be a twin of exegesis. Must have a proper input of "informing theology." Exegete should have well-marked textbook of Biblical theology along with lexicons and grammars. It is helpful if textbook has a Scripture index and theme index. This should fill gap left by the commentators from Reformation and early post-Reformation period that were so strong on theological exegesis.

(6) We do not forget the part of the Bible completed after the text; should be used in conclusions and summaries after we have firmly established on exegetical grounds precisely what the passage means.

d) Practicum of Antecedent Theology

(1) In Revelation 21:3, the Lord states be their God

(a) Perform semantic and syntactical analysis on this passage

(b) Look up the passage that have this theme and that precede this text

(i) Genesis 17:8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

(ii) Exodus 29:45 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

(iii) Leviticus 26:45 But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the LORD.

(iv) Jeremiah 24:7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

(v) Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.
(vi) Jeremiah 32:38  And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

(vii) Ezekiel 11:20  That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

(viii) Ezekiel 14:11  That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord GOD.

(ix) Ezekiel 34:24  And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.

(x) Ezekiel 37:23  Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

(xi) Ezekiel 37:27  My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

(xii) Zechariah 8:8  And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

(xiii) 2 Corinthians 6:16  And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

(xiv) Revelation 21:3  And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God

(c) Make Conclusion about this passage by being informed by this antecedent theology

(2) We are considering Galatians 3:16 and Paul’s theological meaning of “Thy Seed.”

(a) Semantically and Syntactically analyze the text
Consider the theological precursors of this passage

(i) Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

(ii) Genesis 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there built he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

(iii) Genesis 13:15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

(iv) Genesis 13:16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

(v) Genesis 15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

(vi) Genesis 15:13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

(vii) Genesis 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

(viii) Genesis 16:10 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

(ix) Genesis 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

(x) Genesis 17:8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.
(xi) Genesis 17:9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

(xii) Genesis 17:10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

(xiii) Genesis 17:12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.

(xiv) Genesis 21:12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

(xv) Genesis 21:13 And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

(xvi) Genesis 22:17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

(xvii) Genesis 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

(xviii) Genesis 24:7 The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

(xix) Genesis 24:60 And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

(xx) Genesis 26:3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father,
(xxi) Genesis 26:4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

(xxii) Genesis 26:24 And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

(xxiii) Genesis 28:4 And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

(xxiv) Genesis 28:13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

(xxv) Genesis 28:14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

(xxvi) Genesis 32:12 And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

(xxvii) Genesis 35:12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

(xxviii) Genesis 48:4 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.

(xxix) Genesis 48:11 And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.

(xxxx) Exodus 33:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto
Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it:

(Leviticus 18:21) And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.

(Leviticus 21:17) Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God.

(Numbers 18:19) All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee.

(Deuteronomy 11:10) For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs:

(Deuteronomy 14:22) Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.

(Deuteronomy 22:9) Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled.

(Deuteronomy 28:46) And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

(Deuteronomy 28:59) Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

(Deuteronomy 30:6) And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

(Deuteronomy 30:19) I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:
(xlii) Deuteronomy 34:4 And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

(xlii) 1 Samuel 20:42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

(xliii) 2 Samuel 7:12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

(xliv) 2 Kings 5:27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

(xlv) 1 Chronicles 17:11 And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom.

(xlvi) Job 5:25 Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.

(xlvii) Job 39:12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?

(xlviii) Psalms 89:4 Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

(xlix) Ecclesiastes 11:6 In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

(l) Isaiah 17:11 In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.
(ii) Isaiah 30:23  Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.

(iii) Isaiah 43:5  Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

(iii) Isaiah 44:3  For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

(iv) Isaiah 48:19  Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.

(iv) Isaiah 54:3  For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

(vi) Isaiah 59:21  As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

(vii) Jeremiah 30:10  Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.

(viii) Jeremiah 46:27  But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make him afraid.

(ix) Acts 3:25  Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.
(lx) Romans 4:18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

(lxi) Romans 9:7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

(lxii) Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

(c) Make theological conclusions on the basis of this informing theology.

VIII. Figures of Speech

A. Introduction

1. It is most important to notice these. It is absolutely necessary for true interpretation. God's Word is made up of "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1Cor. 2:13. 1Thess. 2:13. 2Tim. 3:16. 2Pet. 1:21, &c.).

2. A "Figure of speech" relates to the form in which the words are used. It consists in the fact that a word or words are used out of their ordinary sense, or place, or manner, for the purpose of attracting our attention to what is thus said. A Figure of speech is a deigned and legitimate departure from the laws of language, in order to emphasize what is said. Hence in such Figures we have the Holy Spirit's own marking, so to speak, of His own words.

3. This peculiar form or unusual manner may not be true, or so true, to the literal meaning of the words; but it is more true to their real sense, and truer to truth.

4. Figures are never used but for the sake of emphasis. They can never, therefore, be ignored. Ignorance of Figures of Speech has led to the grossest errors, which have been caused either from taking literally what is figurative, or from taking figuratively what is literal.

5. The Greeks and Romans named some hundreds of such figures.

6. "Idioms or figures of speech are combinations of words whose meaning cannot be determined by examination of the meanings of the words that make it up. Or, to put it another way, an idiom uses a
number of words to represent a single object, person or concept. Unless you recognise when an idiom is being used you can easily misunderstand the meaning of a text. Modern translations, such as the NIV, use an equivalent figures of speech in English to translate many biblical idioms. More literal versions, particularly the King James Version, translate idioms word for word. It is the reader of the literal versions who needs to be most aware of the meanings of biblical idioms” (Robert Bradshaw, whose material is copiously used in this lecture).

7. “The natural operations of the human mind prompt men to trace analogies and make comparisons. Pleasing emotions are excited and the imagination is gratified by the use of metaphors and similes. Were we to suppose a language sufficiently copious in words to express all possible conceptions, the human mind would still require us to compare and contrast our concepts, and such a procedure would soon necessitate a variety of figures of speech. So much of our knowledge is acquired through the senses, that all our abstract ideas and our spiritual language have a material base. "It is not too much to say," observes Max Muller, "that the whole dictionary of ancient religion is made up of metaphors. With us these metaphors are all forgotten. We speak of spirit without thinking of breath, of heaven without thinking of sky, of pardon without thinking of a release, of revelation without thinking of a veil. But in ancient language every one of these words, nay, every word that does not refer to sensuous objects, is still in a chrysalis stage, half material and half spiritual, and rising and falling in its character according to the capacities of its speakers and hearers” (Milton S. Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics, p. 244).

B. Interpreting Figures of Speech

1. The Concept behind Figures of Speech

   a) There are three components of a figure of speech

      (1) The symbol—the spoken or literal word

      (2) Reference or Thought--The meaning or thought that is brought up in the listener’s mind

      (3) The Referent—the things itself to which reference is made.

   b) The objective is to find the point of similarity between the symbol and the referent. This will bring the thought or reference into light.

      (1) Matthew 10:16—point of similarity is defenselessness
2. The Rules for Figures of Speech

a) **Rule 1**: The literal meaning of a word or phrase, if consistent, should be preferred over a figurative meaning.

(1) **Introduction**

   (a) *A word or phrase should not be interpreted figuratively, unless there are compelling reasons not to interpret the word or phrase literally.*

   (b) *There are various reasons to compel us to interpret some words and phrases figuratively.*

(2) When a literal interpretation involves an impossibility, a figurative interpretation is required.

(3) When a literal interpretation involves a contradiction, a figurative interpretation is required.

(4) When a literal interpretation involves an absurdity, a figurative interpretation is required.

(5) When a literal interpretation causes the scripture to demand that which is wrong, a figurative interpretation is required.

(6) When language is said to be figurative in the context, the language should be interpreted figuratively.

(7) When statements are made in mockery, a figurative interpretation is required.

(8) When common sense rules out a literal interpretation, a figurative interpretation is required.

(9)
b) Rule 2: When interpreting figures of speech consider well the resemblance of things compared.

c) Rule 3: In figures involving comparison, expect only a few points of comparison.

d) Rule 4: When interpreting extended figures such as allegories and similitudes, work out the major points first, and from them work out the minor points with caution.

e) Rule 5: When interpreting figures, observe all indications given by the author.

f) Rule 6: When interpreting figures of speech, any inspired interpretation of the figure will determine its meaning.

g) Rule 7: Study figures in the light of the history and customs of the age in which they are produced.

h) Rule 8: In figures involving omissions (ellipsis and interrogation), supply only what is essential to complete the evident thought of the author.

i) Rule 9: Figures are not always used with the same meaning.

(1) Leaven is good: Matt. 13:33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

(2) Leaven is bad: Matt. 16:6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

j) Rule 10: Figures may explain other figures.

C. Types of Figures of Speech

1. Figures of Comparison

a) Simile

(1) Definition

(a) The likening of one thing to another (usually translated using the English words “like” or “as” (

(b) A formal comparison using "as...so" or "like" to express resemblance.

(2) Examples

(a) For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has gone by, or like a watch in the night. (Psalm 90:4)

(b) “When calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you.” (Prov. 1:27)

(c) Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. (Matt. 23:27)

(d) His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like burning fire. (Rev. 1:14)

b) Metaphor

(1) Definition

(a) An implied comparison between two objects without the use of "like" or "as".

(b) It compares two items and gives the point of similarity, but differs from a simile in that the comparison is not made explicit (formal) by the use of words such as "like" or "as". Rather, the comparison is left inexplicit (direct). The two items being compared are apparently equated.

(2) Examples

(a) But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow your glory on me and lift up my head. (Psalm 3:3)

(b) You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? (Matt. 5:13)

(c) Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. (1 Cor. 11:3)
(d) And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. (Col. 1:18)

c) Idioms of Overstatement

(1) Hyperbole

(a) Definition:

(i) A exaggeration to make or reinforce a point.

(ii) A calculated overstatement, Metonymy or synecdoche with more said that the writer intends to reader to understand. Exaggeration deliberately used for effect.

(b) Examples

(i) Perhaps the most famous (and most misunderstood hyperbole is found in Matt. 19:24 (Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25): "...it is easier for an camel to go through the eye of needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

(a) Traditionally it has been said that there was a gate in the walls of Jerusalem called the “Needle’s Eye,” through which an unladen camel could squeeze through with great difficulty.

(b) Unfortunately this interpretation is simply not true, there was no gate in Jerusalem called the “Needle’s Eye” and there never has been.


(d) Jerusalem had been destroyed twice by this time (in AD 70 and 134-136), but Theophylact had never visited it anyway. He simply made up the interpretation to get around the obvious meaning:

(e) F.F. Bruce, The Hard Sayings of Jesus (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP,
“Others point out that there is a Greek word (kamilos) meaning ‘cable’ very similar in appearance to the word (kamelos) meaning camel. In fact the word meaning ‘cable’ appears in a few late witnesses to the gospel text. In any case, the substitution of ‘cable’ or ‘rope’ for ‘camel’ should probably be recognised as ‘an attempt to soften the rigour of the statement’. To contrast the largest beast of burden known in Palestine with the smallest of artificial apertures is quite the manner of Christ’s proverbial sayings. In Jewish rabbinical literature an elephant passing through the eye of a needle is a figure of speech for sheer impossibility.”

After all, it is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of needle, and that was precisely Jesus’ point. It is impossible for one who trusts in riches to enter the kingdom. It takes a miracle for a rich person to get saved, which is quite the point of what follows: “All things are possible with God” (Gordon D Fee & Douglas Stuart, How to Read The Bible For All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible, 21).

Jesus was very fond of hyperbole, and used it frequently in His teaching.

(i) If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters - yes, even his own life - he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26)

(ii) If your right eyes causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. (Matt. 5:29)

(iii) It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seen you plant in the ground. (Mark 4:31)

(2) Hendiadys

(a) Definitions
(i) The combination of two or three things to express the same meaning.

(ii) Literally a two for one

(b) Examples

(i) The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)

(ii) Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, for they had rebelled against the words of God. (Psalm 107:10)

(iii) ...encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. (1 Thess. 2:12)

(iv) May the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 5:23)

(v) while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. (Tit. 2:13).

d) Idioms of Understatement

(1) Irony

(a) Definitions

(i) Stating one thing while meaning the exact opposite.

(ii) When used to taunt and ridicule irony is called sarcasm.

(b) Examples

(i) Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble! (Judges 10:14)

(ii) When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!" (2 Sam. 6:20)
(iii) When he arrived, the king asked him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?"

(iv) "Attack and be victorious," he answered, "For the Lord will give it into the king's hand." (1 Kings 22:15)

(v) The Job replied: "Doubtless you are the people, and wisdom will die with you." (Job 12:1-2)

(vi) Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men because you pay no attention to who they are." (Matt. 22:15-16)

(vii) ...and they twisted together a crown of thorns and set it upon his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews" they said. (Matt. 27:29)

(viii) Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings - and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you! (1 Cor. 4:8)

(2) Litotes or Meiosis

(a) Definitions:

(i) A phrase that understates or lessens one thing

(ii) in order to magnify another.

(iii) Deliberate understatement or denial of the contrary

(b) Examples

(i) The Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes. (Gen. 18:27)

(ii) We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim).
We looked like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them. (Num. 13:33)

(iii) Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you, declares the Lord. (Isa 41:14)

(iv) Paul answered, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people. (Acts 21:39, italics added)

(v) For I am the least of all the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect… (1 Cor. 15:9-10)

(vi) Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:10)

e) Euphemism

(1) Definitions:

(a) The substitution of a cultured or less offensive term for a harsh one. The Bible contains many similar expressions, particularly in subjects concerning death, bodily functions and reproduction.

(b) Substitution of a less direct word where the more direct term might appear harsh or distasteful for one reason or another. The substitution of an acceptable, inoffensive expression for one that is socially unacceptable, offensive or which may suggest something unpleasant.

(2) Examples

(a) Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain… (Gen. 4:1)

(b) You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. (Gen. 15:15)

(c) After he had gone, the servants came and found the doors of the upper room locked. They said, “he must be relieving himself in the inner room of the house.” (Judges 3:24)
(d) Deal with him according to your wisdom, but do not let his grey head go down to the grave in peace. (1 Kings 2:6)

(e) After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.” (John 11:11)

f) Antithesis

(1) Definition:

(a) A direct contrast in which two sets if figures are set in opposition to one another. Perhaps the best example of this in the New Testament is found in Romans 5:12, where Adam and Christ are the two figure being contrasted.

(2) Examples

(a) So, justice is far from us and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. (Isa. 59:9)

(b) Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. (Rom. 5:12)

(3) Exercise: Determine the two figures being contrasted in the following verses:

1) So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Gal 5:16)

2) This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, in him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

3) But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. (Phil. 3:7)

g) Idioms Involving Omission

(1) Ellipsis

(a) Definitions

(i) A grammatically incomplete expression that requires the reader to add concepts in order to finish the thought.

(ii) A grammatically incomplete structure which requires the interpreter to supply the missing
words or to alter the structure to make sense of the text.

(iii) Most of there omissions are already supplied by the translators of our Bibles.

(b) Examples

(i) May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and [may the Lord cut off] every boastful tongue. (Psalm 12:3)

(ii) Don’t we have the right to food and drink? (1 Cor. 9:4)

(iii) Romans 5:16 And the gift is not like {that which came} through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment {arose} from one (transgression) resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift {arose} from many transgressions resulting in justification. (NASB)

(iv) Romans 3:27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. (NASB)

(v) Romans 11:22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. (NASB)

(2) See handout for more

h) Idioms of Association or Relationship

(1) Metonymy

(a) Definitions

(i) The substitution of a noun for another closely associated noun. The substituted noun derives its meaning in the context its is used by the association produced in the readers mind.

(ii) One term is used for another because the two are frequently associated. A reference to one thing by means of another thing commonly associated with it. The associative relation may temporal, spatial, or logical. The pen (written word) is mightier than the sword (violence).

(iii) In contemporary English when we speak of a statement from the "White House" we understand that this is not a talking building, but
an official communication with the authority of the President of the United States who lives in the White House. There are many Biblical examples of this idiom:

(b) Examples

(i) "He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever." (1 Chron. 17:12)

(ii) Here Kingship is replaced by the word "throne". "These double calamities have come upon you - who can comfort you? Ruin and destruction, famine and sword." (Isa. 51:19)

(iii) Where "sword" stands for "judgement" (cf. Rom. 13:4, "bearing the sword" refers to capital punishment.)

(c) Exercise: Complete the gaps in the following:

(i) I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. (Isa. 22:22, cf. Matt. 16:19)

“key”=________________

(ii) My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart. (Psalm 7:10).

“shield”=________________

(iii) Dogs have surrounded me, a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. (Psalm 22:16)

“dogs”=________________

(iv) Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them. (Luke 16:29)

“Moses”=________________

(v) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21)

(a) “he became sin”

“sin”=________________
(vi) The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. (Acts 10:45)

“Circumcised believers”=________________

(vii) His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the ruler and authorities in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 3:10; cf. 6:12)

“rulers and authorities”=________________

(viii) Woe to you, Ariel, Ariel, the city where David settled… (Isaiah 29:1)

“Ariel”=__________________________

i) Synecdoche

(1) Definitions:

(a) A figure of speech in which the part stands for the whole or the whole for the part.

(b) A part is named for the whole or a whole for the part, covers the relation in either direction.

(c)

(2) Examples

(a) He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. (Psalm 24:4)

(b) “Clean hands and a pure heart” stands for the whole person. Let me know that it is your hand, that you, O LORD, have done it. (Psalm 109:27)

(c) Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father in heaven. (Matt 16:17)

(d) Genesis 42:38 "my gray head" = whole body. But Jacob said, "My son shall not go down with you: for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should befall him on the journey you are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow." (NASB)
(e) Luke 10:23 And turning to the disciples, He said privately, "Blessed {are} the eyes which see the things you see, (NASB)

(f) Acts 5:9 Then Peter {said} to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they shall carry you out {as well}."(NASB)

D. Practicum on Figures of Speech

1. Instructions: Identify the figure of speech used in each example (shown in italics).

   a) And I tell you that on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (Matt. 16:18)

      (1) Simile
      (2) Hyperbole
      (3) Metonymy
      (4) Litotes

   b) Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth, I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. (Matt. 10:34)

      (1) Hyperbole
      (2) Antithesis
      (3) Metonymy
      (4) A), B) & C above

   c) When the Almighty scattered the kings in the land, it was like snow fallen on Zalmon.

      (1) Litotes
      (2) Metonymy
      (3) Simile
      (4) Synecdoche
d) He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and your rampart. (Psalm 91:4)

A) Metonym
B) Metaphor
C) Irony
D) Simile

e) At noon Elisha began to taunt them, “Shout louder!” he said. “Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or travelling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.” (1 Kings 18:27)

(1) Metaphor
(2) Irony
(3) Simile

f) Let them know that it is your hand, that your, O Lord, have done it. (Psalm 109:27)

(1) Synecdoche
(2) Simile
(3) Metonym

2. Look at the handout this week for other types of figures of speech

IX. Typology

A. Introduction of Typology

1. Definition

a) Theological Usage

(1) Theologically speaking, a type may be defined as “a figure or ensample of something future and more or less prophetic, called the ‘Antitype’” (E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, 768).
Muenscher says a type is “the preordained representative relation which certain persons, events, and institutions of the Old Testament bear to corresponding persons, events, and institutions in the New” (quoted in: M. S. Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics, 246).

Wick Broomall has a concise statement that is helpful. “A type is a shadow cast on the pages of Old Testament history by a truth whose full embodiment or antitype is found in the New Testament revelation” (Baker’s Dictionary of Theology, p. 533).


b) Biblical Usage

There are several words used in the Greek New Testament to denote what we have just defined as a type. First, there is the term *tupos* (the basis of our English word “type”).

(a) Though this word is variously employed in the New Testament, it is certainly used in our present sense in Romans 5:14 where Paul declares that Adam “is a figure (tupos) of him that was to come”, i.e., Christ.

(b) The word is used 15x in the N. T.

(c) The basic meaning of this word means to imprint (John 20:25), image (Acts 7:43), form (Rom. 6:17), pattern or example (1 Corinthians 10:6; Heb. 8:5).

(d) The terms is used for the primary concept and the secondary concept (e.g., Acts 7:43; Hebrews 8:5; 9:24).

(e) Second, there is the word *skia*, rendered “shadow.” In Colossians 2:17, certain elements of the Mosaic system are said to be “a shadow of the things to come” (cf. Heb. 8:5; 10:1).

Third, there is the term *hupodeigma*, translated “copy,” and used in conjunction with “shadow” in Hebrews 8:5 (cf. Heb. 9:23).
(3) Fourth, the Greek word *parabole* (compare our English, “parable”) is found in Hebrews 9:9, where certain elements of the tabernacle are “a figure for the present time” (cf. Heb. 11:19).

(4) Finally, one should note the use of *antitupon*, rendered “figure” (KJV) or “pattern” (ASV) in Hebrews 9:24, and “like figure” (KJV) or “true likeness” (ASV) in I Peter 3:21. This word, as used in the New Testament, denotes “that which corresponds to” the type; it is the reality which fulfills the prophetic picture.

c) **Characteristics**

(1) There must be an identifiable Scriptural pattern or correspondence between the OT type and the NT antitype.

(2) The OT type and NT antitype must be based on “historical facts—persons, actions, institutions,” not hidden meanings found in the text.

(3) There must be an escalation or heightening from the OT type to the greater NT antitype.

(4) “Some distinctions are in order. A type is similar to but not the same as prophecy. Both point to the future, but the difference is seen in the form of prediction. In addition prophecy is the more specific and may be used to teach a doctrine, whereas a type should be employed to illustrate a doctrine elsewhere taught. A type also differs from a symbol. There may be in a symbol no time reference of any kind or it may point to the past, present, or future. A type, on the other hand, always looks to the future, always has an obvious predictive message. Finally, a type differs from an allegory. Ramm declares, ‘Allegorism is the method of interpreting a literary text that regards the literal sense as the vehicle for a secondary more spiritual and more profound sense.’ A type is based upon a recognition of the literal meaning of a given text of Scripture. Springing from that literal meaning, however, is a foreshadowing of someone or something yet to come. The allegory minimizes and often destroys the literal and historical, “the milk,” in favor of the secondary sense, “the meat.” This method of interpretation is to be avoided at all costs” (Donald Campbell, “The Interpretation of Types,” Bsac 112 /447 [July 1955], 250-251).

2. **Significance**

a) **Biblical Significance**

(1) Leonhard Goppelt argues that “typology is the method of interpreting Scripture that is predominant in the NT and
characteristic of it” L. Goppelt, Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New, 198).

(2) S. Lewis Johnson says that “one of the happiest results of twentieth-century scholarship has been the rediscovery of the importance of typology for the understanding of the Bible. I am hopeful that evangelicals, who so often follow rather than lead in biblical scholarship, will follow once again, for in this case surely modern scholarship is right” (S. L. Johnson, “A Response to Patrick Fairbairn and Biblical Hermeneutics as Related to Quotations of the Old Testament in the New,” Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible, 794-795).

b) Theological Significance

(1) John Feinberg has stated that the debate between covenant theologians and dispensationalists over what constitutes literal hermeneutics stems from three fundamental and interrelated issues: “the relation of the progress of revelation to the priority of one Testament over the other, the understanding and implications of the NT use of the OT, and the understanding and implications of typology” (J. S. Feinberg, “Systems of Discontinuity,” Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testament, pp. 74-75).

(2) Mark W. Karlberg concurs with Feinberg’s analysis: “Resolution of lingering differences of interpretation among evangelicals depends, to a large extent, on a proper assessment of the nature and function of OT typology” (M. W. Karlberg, “Legitimate Discontinuities Between the Testaments,” JETS 28/1[March 1985], 19).

B. Views on Typology

1. Dispensational View on Typology

a) “In their system of interpretation shadow and reality are not nearly as important as in the covenant system because for the dispensationalist all the OT promises to Israel will be fully realized in a one-thousand-year millennium on earth. The Church age is a parenthetical period in God’s kingdom program with Israel. The promises to Israel are not typically fulfilled in the Church in this age. They can only be literally fulfilled in national, ethnic Israel in the future. Where promises to Israel are applied to the Church in the NT this is done by analogy, because the Church could in no way fulfill or be the recipient of promises made to Israel” (W. Edward

b) Generally speaking, the Dispensationalist limits types to those designated in the Scriptures: “Testament person, event, or thing having historical reality and designed by God to prefigure (foreshadow) in a preparatory way a real person, event, or thing so designated in the New Testament that corresponds to and fulfills (heightens) the type” (R. B. Zuck, Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth, 176).

c) However, most distinguish between types and shadows:

(1) “Nondispensational systems stress that the type is shadow and the antitype is reality; therefore, the meaning of the antitype supersedes and cancels the meaning of the type in its own context. Dispensationalists do not think types necessarily are shadows, and they demand that both type and antitype be given their due meanings in their own contexts while maintaining a typological relation to one another” (J. S. Feinberg, “Systems” 78).

(2) This has great implications upon that the type remains a reality in of itself, even as Feinberg goes on to say, “Proper understanding of typology informs us that even if the NT interprets the OT typologically and even if we are to do so, that does not allow us to ignore or cancel the meaning of the type or substitute the meaning of the antitype for it. If types were allegories or symbols, that could be done. But they are not. They are concrete historical events, persons, promises. They look to the future, but not in a way that makes their meaning equivalent to the antitype. Moreover, if the NT antitype cancels the meaning of the OT type, the NT must tell us so. NT reinterpretations of OT passages are neither explicit nor implicit cancellations of the meaning of the OT. Likewise, NT antitypes neither explicitly nor implicitly cancel the meaning of OT types. Thinking they do misunderstands typology (Ibid. 78-79).

d) Types are not predictive

(1) Paul Feinberg stresses that the relationship between OT types and NT antitypes is not a prediction/fulfillment relationship (P. D. Feinberg, “Hermeneutics” 120).

(2) He uses the quotation from Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15 as an illustration of an analogy between the life of Christ and the history of the nation of Israel. In spite of the fulfillment formula
that introduces the quotation, he questions whether this could be a fulfillment because proper exegesis or understanding of the OT text would not give information about the future. He emphasizes that “predictions or prophecies are not identical with types and analogies,” 42 and predictions about Israel cannot be fulfilled in the Church. If predictions about Israel would be fulfilled in the Church it would be a violation of the OT meaning.

e) Types show forth a double-fulfillment principle

f) Some reject certain fulfillment when the Scriptures clearly indicate that it this is the case.

(1) Acts 2 is not regarded as the fulfillment of Joel 2 by most Dispensationalists

(2) However, Paul Feinberg even argues that the Joel 2 prophecy is fulfilled in Acts 2. (Ibid. 124-128, 118; cf. J. S. Feinberg, “Systems” 77, on double fulfillment).

(a) He does this because he is convinced that the Joel passage indicates it extends beyond the ethnic bounds of the nation (2:28 : “I will pour out my Spirit on all people”). Therefore Acts 2:16–21, as a fulfillment of Joel 2:28–32, is one referent of Joel 2:28–32.

(b) This is supported by the introductory formula “this is that” (Acts 2:16). Second, Acts 2:16–21 is not the complete referent (fulfillment) of Joel 2:28–32 (P. D. Feinberg, “Hermeneutics” 126).
g) Issues within this view: “Several issues in the revised dispensational scheme raise questions. What is the difference between shadows and types? Why must typology only be limited to persons, institutions and things and not ever used as a hermeneutical category, especially in situations like the quotation from Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15 where the nation of Israel, the son of God in the OT, appears to have a typological relationship with Christ, the Son of God? Is not the principle of literal hermeneutics being violated when the relationship between these passages is called merely an analogy, even though they are introduced by a fulfillment formula? And is there any prophetic element in a typological relationship?” (Glenny, Op. Cit. 634).

2. Progressive Dispensational View on Typology (Glenny, Op. Cit. 635f.)

a) “Progressive dispensationalists understand history as kingdom history, but they do not see the present age as a parenthesis in that history. Instead it is an initial stage in the establishment of Christ’s kingdom. Many of the promises that will be completely fulfilled in Christ’s visible future reign on earth are now being initially fulfilled during his invisible reign in the Church.”

b) “Since this is an age of initial fulfillment many of the uses of the OT in the NT that revised dispensationalists call analogy, such as the use of Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15, are called typological-prophetic by progressive dispensationalists. This is done on the basis of a typological relationship between the experience of Israel as described in Hos 11:1 and the experience of Christ in Matt 2:15. This understanding agrees with Matthew’s fulfillment formula and demonstrates that for those taking this position fulfillment does not require a direct prophecy.”

c) “Proponents of this position argue that some prophecies concerning Israel that are applied to the Church in the NT actually realize an initial fulfillment in the Church. The “people of God” quotations in Rom 9:25–26 and 1 Pet 2:9–10 illustrate this. Such an interpretation necessitates allowing God’s intended meaning in the OT passages quoted in the NT to extend beyond the literal meaning connected with the human author’s perceived intentions. The basis for this initial
fulfillment is the application to the Church in NT contexts of fulfillment of promises for Israel from the OT. NT believers participate in these promises through their relationship with Christ. This fulfillment and relationship is a mystery not understood in the OT.

d) “Proponents of this view also believe that the initial application to the Church of OT promises to Israel does not and cannot annul the ultimate fulfillment of those promises to Israel. The initial fulfillment in the Church is an addition to the originally understood application, but it cannot abrogate the original application to Israel. The basis for this future fulfillment is the original contextual meaning of promises to Israel and the number of other promises of a future for Israel in the OT and NT.”

e) “Some of the questions proponents of this approach are being asked are: Can a prophecy for Israel find typological fulfillment in the Church? If so, does it not violate the OT meaning? If a prophecy for Israel finds an initial typological fulfillment in the Church, what basis is there for arguing that it should still be fulfilled in the future for Israel? Does the progress of revelation or the canonical process allow for the additional meaning progressive dispensationalists allow in the OT text as it is used in the NT?”

3. Covenant View on Typology

a) Covenant Theology underscores that all history is united by the theme of salvation in Christ. Thus all history is redemptive history and flows to one end and goal—Christ.

(1) H. K. LaRondelle writes: “The typological approach of the New Testament is motivated by the idea of fulfillment in salvation history. Typology is a theology of the progression of God’s acts of salvation through Jesus Christ” (H. K. LaRondelle, The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation, 44.

(2) Karlberg asserts that “typology deals with the relation between distinct yet inseparable epochs of redemptive revelation” (M. W. Karlberg, “The Significance of Israel in Biblical Typology,” JETS 31/3 [September 1988]: 261).
b) Covenant Theology underscores the notion that Old Testament types are prophetic in nature

(1) Clowney states that “the N.T. interpretation of the O.T. is grounded in this typological structure. The O.T. history is not complete in itself, but provides analogies that anticipate the greater realization of the New” ((E. P. Clowney, “Interpreting the Biblical Models of the Church: A Hermeneutical Deepening of Ecclesiology,” Biblical Interpretation and the Church: The Problem of Contextualization, 90 cf. Matt 12:42).

(2) Clowney expounds this picture with the following words: “We may represent the history of revelation as a horizontal line. Along that line concepts such as the "dwelling of God" motif move forward. Many figures and metaphors are used to represent these concepts. The figures add to the elaboration and communication of the concepts. We may therefore project a line of symbolism in which a particular event, ceremony, or role points to the concept being revealed. In the fullness of revelation the concept reaches its realization in Jesus Christ. Therefore wherever the line of symbolism exists in the history of revelation, the line of typology can also be validly drawn. There are no concepts that drop out of the plan of redemption. In one way or another all point forward to Christ. A concept in the first stages of revelation we may call $C^1$ ($C$ to the first power). That concept as fulfilled in Christ is $C^n$ ($C$ to the nth power). The significance of the event for our understanding is not to be read directly across the bottom of the rectangle. That does not take seriously the presence or absence of symbolism in the O.T. text, nor the development of the history of revelation. Similarly, the full significance of the concept $C^1$ will escape us if we fail to carry it forward to its realization and fulfillment in Christ” (Ibid., 90-91).

c) The Entire OT is Typological in some sense

(1) In Meredith Kline’s words, the Israelite theocracy is “the provisional prefiguration of the eternal kingdom of the new covenant” (M. G. Kline, “Genesis,” New Bible Commentary, 80).
(2) Karlberg’s states that “the earthly promises associated with the Mosaic economy, are symbolic and typical (and thus fulfilled by Christ in two phases: first, in the new, semi-eschatological age of the Spirit, and second, in the new heavens and the new earth yet to come)” (M. W. Karlberg, “Legitimate Discontinuities Between the Testaments,” JETS 28/1 [March 1985]: 19).

(3) He writes elsewhere that “Israel as the Old Covenant people of God served a temporary purpose in God’s plan of salvation” (Karlberg, “Significance of Israel in Biblical Typology,” JETS 31/3 [September 1988], 263).

(4) The Christian Church is therefore “the true people of God, with the privileges, the responsibilities, and the destiny of Israel… [It is they who] assume and carry to completion the destiny which in the Old Testament was to be Israel’s” (R. T. France, Jesus and the Old Testament, 61, 65).

d) “Some questions come to mind concerning this approach. Is Israel in every aspect of its existence a type of the Church, or only in specific instances and experiences where the Bible develops a typological connection? If Israel is a type of the Church, does that require that Israel “no longer retain any independent status whatever,” as Karlberg claims? If so, why is that necessary since types are always historical realities pointing to a later historical reality? Specifically, are the promises to Israel that are sometimes applied to the Church in the NT not to be taken as historically true in their original context? If they were real promises, how can they be annulled?” (Glenny, Op. Cit., 632).

C. Principles for Typology

1. It must be recognized that types are grounded in real history; the people, places, events, etc. were deliberately chosen by God to prepare for the coming of the Christian system.

   a) An old writer has wonderfully described it: God in the types of the last dispensation was teaching His children their letters. In this dispensation He is teaching them to put the letters together, and they find that the letters, arrange them as they will, spell Christ, and nothing but Christ.

   b) For the NT writers a type has not merely the property of ‘typicalness’ or similarity; they view Israel’s history as Heilsgeschichte, and the significance of an OT type
lies in its particular locus in the Divine plan of redemption. When Paul speaks of the Exodus events happening typikos and written ‘for our admonition,’ there can be no doubt that, in the apostle’s mind, Divine intent is of the essence both in their occurrence and in their inscripturation. The rationale of NT typological exegesis is not only ‘the continuity of God’s purpose throughout the history of His Covenant,’ but also His Lordship in moulding and using history to reveal and illumine His purpose. God writes His parables in the sands of time” (E. E. Ellis, Paul’s Use of the Old Testament, 127-128).

c) As J. Steck states, “a type is a historical reality which served a significant historical purpose within its own historical horizon (not merely a symbolic one), but it was also fashioned by Providence in such a way as to contribute to the larger purpose of God, namely, to reveal ‘in successive stages and operations the very truths and principles which were to find in the realities of the Gospel their more complete manifestation’” (“Biblical Typology Yesterday and Today,” CTJS [1970]: 139).

2. It must be clear (on the basis of reasonable evidence) that the type was designed by God to preview its fulfillment in the New Testament.

a) “Typology may, indeed must, go beyond mere exegesis. But it may never introduce into the Old Testament text a principle which was not already present and intelligible to its Old Testament readers. Sound exegesis, and a respect for the sense of the Old Testament text thus discovered, will prevent typology from degenerating into allegory” (R. T. France, Jesus and the Old Testament, 41).


c) Does the context, other passages, or N.T. suggest such a correlation? How and where?
3. There is a graduation from type to antitype; of the lesser to the greater; from the material to the spiritual; the earthly to the heavenly.

4. One must distinguish what is essential in the type and what is merely incidental. A failure to do this can lead to some serious errors. Broomall notes, for example, that “Jonah’s expulsion from the great fish typifies Christ’s resurrection (Matt. 12: 40); but Jonah’s restoration to the land does not necessarily typify Israel’s restoration to Palestine” (Baker’s Dictionary of Theology, 534).

D. Scope of Typology

1. Typical Persons
   a) A number of Old Testament people, due to some character or relation which they sustain in redemptive history, serve as types.

   b) Adam is a type of Christ in that as the former introduced sin into the world, even so, through the latter a system of righteousness was made available for mankind (Rom. 5:19).

   c) Melchizedek, who was both king of Salem and a priest of God - at the same time (Gen. 14:18-20), was a type of Christ - who, at his ascension, began to reign on David’s throne and to simultaneously function as our high priest (cf. Psa. 110:4; Zech. 6:12,13; Heb. 5:5-10; 6:20; 7:1-17). This point, incidentally, is disastrous for millennialism. If Christ is not yet king (as premillennialism asserts), then he is not yet a priest and we are yet in our sins!

   d) Moses, in his noble role of prophet, leader, and mediator for Jehovah’s people, was typical of the Lord Jesus who functions in a similar, though more exalted, capacity (cf. Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22; 1 Cor. 10:2; Gal. 3:27; Gal. 3:19; 1 Tim. 2: 5).

2. Typical Places
   a) Several prominent places emphasized in the Old Testament appear to have a typical significance.

   b) Egypt represents a state of bondage such as holds the sinner prior to his conversion (Gal. 4:2; Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 10:lf).
c) Jerusalem or Zion typifies the church and finally heaven (cf. Gal. 4:25,26; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 21:2).

d) Babylon, which held God’s people captive in the Old Testament, pictures the condition of an apostate church that has departed from the simplicity of the New Testament pattern (Rev. 11:8; 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2ff).

3. Typical Things

a) Certain Old Testament objects preview New Testament truths. For example, Jacob’s ladder, with the angels ascending and descending upon it (Gen. 28:12), apparently pictured Christ (cf. John 1:51), who provides both communication from the Father (John 1:18; Heb. 1:1-2) and access to heaven (John 14:6).

b) The brazen serpent, lifted up in the wilderness, through which the people found physical healing (Num. 21:8) was a type of the lifted-up Christ (John 3:14; 12:32), through whom spiritual healing comes (Isa. 53:5).

c) The tabernacle and many of its features were typical of the present time (cf. Heb. 9:8-9). As the tabernacle was designed to be a “house of God,” and since He is “Lord of heaven and earth” (Acts 17:24), it was proper that the tabernacle be composed of two compartments; one representing God’s heavenly dwelling place and the other His earthly dwelling place. Accordingly, the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle represented Heaven (Heb. 6:19,20; 9:8,24), while the Holy Place was a type of the church (Acts 15:16,17; 1 Cor. 3:16; I Tim. 3:15).

4. Typical Events

a) Several Old Testament events seem to represent things to come. The creation of light on the first day of Earth’s history (Gen. 1:3) suggests the coming brilliant illumination of the gospel of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 4:6).

b) The Flood of Noah’s day (Gen. 6-8) typified the sudden destruction of the world yet to come at the end (Matt. 24:37-39).

c) The miraculous water from the rock in the wilderness (Ex. 17:6) was a preview of the life-sustaining water provided by our Lord (John 4:14; 1 Cor. 10:4).
d) The manna from heaven in the wilderness (Ex. 16:14-16) was a type of that spiritual Bread who came down from heaven to nourish humanity (John 6:32).

e) The deliverance of Noah’s family from a corrupted world, by means of “water,” prefigured our salvation, through baptism, from the power of darkness into the kingdom of Christ (cf. I Pet. 3:20-21; Col. 1:13).

5. Typical Offices

a) There were three offices in the Old Testament characterized by an anointing. Prophets (I Kings 19:16), priests (Ex. 28:41), and kings (I Sam. 10:1) were anointed in anticipation of the coming of the Anointed One (cf. Dan. 9:25,26) who is Prophet (Acts 3:22), Priest (Heb. 3:1), and King (Rev. 17:14).

b) We too, as Christians, have an anointing from God (2 Cor. 1:21) and we function as prophets (not miraculously, but simply as “forth speakers” of the Word of God - cf. I Cor. 11:4,5), priests, and kings (cf. I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6). The anointings of the Old Testament thus prefigured both the work of Christ and our service to Him.

6. Typical Actions

a) Certain ceremonial actions of the Old Testament system typified the atoning work of the Messiah. For instance, on the annual Jewish day of Atonement, amidst numerous other rituals, the High Priest presented two goats before the door of the tabernacle. After the casting of lots upon these animals, one was sacrificed as a “sin-offering” and the other was “set alive before Jehovah” (Lev. 16:9,10).

b) The blood of the slain goat was taken into the Most Holy Place where it was sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat. This, of course, was typical of the sacrificial death of Christ (Heb. 9:11,12). The High Priest then took the living goat, laid hands upon him and confessed over him all the iniquities of the people. Subsequently, by an appointed servant, the animal was led away into the wilderness (Lev. 16:21,22).

c) The two goats were, so to speak, two sides of the same coin; both constituted the solitary offering of
Christ. The one signified his death and the atoning effect of his blood; the other his resurrection (cf. Rom. 4:25) and the complete removal of our sins (cf. Isa. 53:4,6; John 1:29).

d) Note also the similar ceremony in connection with the cleansing of the leper (Lev. 14:4-7). Two birds were selected; one was killed, and the other was dipped in its blood and let loose alive.

7. Typical Institutions

a) Many institutions of the Old Testament era were prophetic shadows of good things to come. The Passover, for instance, with its spotless lamb (Ex. 12:5) which was slain “between the two evenings” (12:6, ASV), i.e., between 3:00 and 5:00 P.M., without any bones being broken (12:46). It was a type of the death of Jesus (cf. I Cor. 5:7), who was without spot or blemish (I Pet. 1:19), who died at about 3:00 P.M. (Matt. 27:46), and who had none of his bones broken (John 19:33ff).

b) The feast of the firstfruits (Lev. 23:10), i.e., Pentecost, was a celebration in which the initial produce of the harvest was offered to God as a token of the full crop to follow. This ritual typified:

(1) the early influx of the Jews into the church of Christ (Rom. 11:16); and,

(2) the resurrection of the Lord Jesus as God’s pledge of the general resurrection to ultimately come (I Cor. 15:20, 23).
c) The feast of the tabernacles was instituted to commemorate Israel's sojourn in the wilderness (Lev. 23:43). But it was also designed to remind us that we are but sojourners on this earth (I Pet. 2:11), and that someday we will lay aside this earthly tabernacle (2 Cor. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:13,14) for a more permanent abiding place (cf. Heb. 11:9-13).

X. Interpretation of Prophecy

A. Introduction to the Interpretation of Prophecy

1. Definition of Prophecy

a) “Prophecy may simply be defined as the proclamation of that which God has revealed” (Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, 148).

b) “A prophet is a spokesman for God who declares God’s will to the people” (Mickeyesen, *Interpreting the Bible*, 280).

c) Prophecy is "a miracle of knowledge, a declaration or representation of something future, beyond human sagacity to discern or to calculate" (Horne)

d) Prediction is so natural to and so much a part of the divine activity that it can almost be ascribed as an attribute of God himself.

(1) One evidence of this is the comparison implied in God's challenge through Isaiah the prophet to the dead idols of the nations:

(a) See Is. 41:22-23

(b) Other evidences: Is. 45:21b-c, ; Is. 46:9b-10; Amos 3:7

(2) John 13:19: "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He. Passages teaches 2 things about prediction:

(a) Historical fulfilment is the ultimate interpreter of prophecy, for it is only when it comes to pass that we will know with certainty what that prophecy really meant (a caution for humility).
(b) All fulfilment of prophecy vindicates the one who is the great "I am."

2. Characteristics of Prophecy

a) Berkhof’s list with my notes

(1) Prophecy as a whole has an organic character.

(a) Not merely a collection of aphoristic predictions

(b) Progressive—from general to specific

(2) Prophecy is closely connected with history

(a) First of all, they were messages to their contemporaries.

(b) However, history by itself will not explain everything in the prophets.

(3) Prophecy has its own peculiar perspective

(a) Time is often blurred

(b) They often compress great events together in time

(c) This is often called ‘foreshortening’

(4) Prophecies may be conditional

(a) Fulfillment may be contingent upon the action of man

(b) The condition may not be expressed (Jer. 26:17-19; 1 Kings 21:17-29; Jonah 3:4, 10).

(c) Excursus:

(i) It became popular in 19th century to point to the following as examples of prophecies that were not fulfilled in precisely the manner that they had been predicted:

(a) Prophecy of the ruin of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar (Ez. 26:7-14; 29:17-20)

(b) Jonah’s prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh (Jon. 3:4)

(c) Elijah’s prophecy against King Ahab for murdering Naboth (1 Kings 21:17-29)
(d) Isaiah's prophecy on the destruction of Damascus (Is. 17:1)

(ii) The so-called nonfulfilment of prophecies is to be explained on the basis of the threefold classification of biblical prophecy:

(a) Prophecy may be unconditionally, conditionally, or sequentially fulfilled.

(b) All 3 types are commonly used and are accompanied by indicators that aid the reader and interpreter in distinguishing between the 3 types of prophecies.

(iii) Those prophecies in which God obligated himself to carry out the terms of the fulfillment are called unconditional. List of unconditional prophecies:

(a) God’s covenant with the seasons (Gen. 8:21-22),

(b) God’s promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:2-3); 15:9-21),

(c) God’s promise to David (2 Sam. 7:8-16), God’s promise of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34),


(iv) The majority of the prophecies in the OT were of the conditional type. The great teaching texts that they rested on were Lev. 26 and Deut. 28:

(a) What should be said here is that almost every prophecy, except for those involved with the provision of our salvation and with the creation, maintenance, and renewal of the universe, has an “unless” or “if” (either expressed or understood) connected with it.

(b) That is the import of the message of Lev. 26 and Deut. 28).

(v) A number of prophecies do not fit comfortably in either: those prophecies are
sequentially fulfilled and thus are a subspecies of the conditional type.

(5) Prophecies are often symbolic

(a) However, not all their language is symbolic

(b) The rule of thumb is to interpret their language as literal unless expressly stated (Dan. 8 and Rev. 17).

(c) Exceptions to this rule do exist.

(d) One of the most challenging forms of prophetic discourse is apocalyptic. Its style is generally figurative. Apocalyptic is also rich in the use of symbolic imagery. Images tend to stay with us longer than do words and the factual information they convey. Herein lie the power and the uniqueness of apocalyptic. Symbols fall into 3 different categories:

(i) Symbols that are definitely explained in the context by the writer or an interpreting angel;

(a) We ought to note the fairly consistent and uniform way in which many of these symbols are treated within each of these books.

(b) Also of interest is that some of the explained symbols are also found with the same meaning in earlier books in the Scriptures.

(ii) Symbols that are unexplained in the context, but are drawn from an OT background

(a) OT imagery is a most important clue in interpreting prophecy. T

(b) The book of Revelation makes extensive use of OT.

(c) This use of symbols implies a similarity to and continuity with the OT message.

(iii) Symbols that are unexplained and novel in character, but that may be drawn from the contemporary culture, including pagan sources.
b) **Girdlestone’s list**

1. Biblical prophecy plainly foretells things to come without clothing them in ambiguities such as the oracles of the pagan nations.

2. It entails designed and intended predictions rather than unwitting prophecies or "lucky guesses" that just happened to come to pass.

3. It is written, published, or proclaimed prior to the event it refers to and could not have been foreseen by ordinary human ingenuity.

4. It is subsequently fulfilled in accordance with the words of the original prediction. (This will be evident, provided due regard is given to the laws of prophetic speech and interpretation.)

5. Prophecy does not work out its own fulfillment, but it stands as a witness until after the event has taken place.

6. A biblical prophecy is not an isolated prediction, but can be correlated with other prophecies and as such is one of a long series of predictions.

3. **Scope of Prophecy**

   a) **In the sense of quantity:** *(Calculations of J. Barton Payne, Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy)*

1. 8,352 verses (out of total 31,124 in Bible) with predictive material (27%). Out of OT 23,210 verses, 6,641 (28.5%) contain predictive material; 1,711 verses of NT 7,914 (21.5%) include predictive material. These verses discuss 737 separate prophetic topics.

2. The only books that have no predictions: Ruth & Song of Solomon in OT; Philemon and 3 Jn. in NT.

3. The highest percentages of predictive material found in the small books of Zephaniah (89%), Obadiah (81%), and Nahum (74%). NT: Rev. (63%), Heb. (45%), and 2 Peter (41%).

   b) **In the sense of quality:**

1. It is particularly through God the Son that the prophecies of the OT and NT come into their sharpest focus. That is the summation given in Rev. 19:10 "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy." Thus the main line of witness of the OT was to the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. All prophecies, whether
central or subsidiary to this theme, contributed to it in one way or another.

(2) The words "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" have been taken in 2 different ways: either Jesus is the common theme or substance of all prophecy, or the true spirit of prophecy always manifests itself in bearing witness to Jesus.

(3) We may be certain that the prophets' area of ignorance about their own prophecies existed exactly where our ignorance occurs: the time of Christ's coming. That is the only issue for which they searched and inquired diligently - even as we do. But they were certain in 5 other areas. They knew they were announcing:

(a) The Messiah

(b) Messiah's sufferings

(c) Messiah's coming in glorious splendor to rule and reign

(d) The sequence of those 2 events - suffering and then glory

(e) A message that had relevance not only for the OT saint, but for another day as well, relevance which Peter declares extends to those of us in the church.

4. Prophets of Prophecy

a) True and False Prophets

(1) Telltale signs found in lying, false prophets (Jer. 23):

(a) False prophets can be detected by their immoral lifestyles: "They prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray....They commit adultery and live a lie" (v. 13-14).

(b) False prophets are crowd pleasers

(c) False prophets fail to distinguish their own thoughts from God's revelation.

(d) Plagiarism: they steal God's true words and use them to their own ends.

(2) 5 tests for a prophet: (Deut.. 13:1-5 & 18:14-22):

(a) Membership in Israel (18:18)
(i) With the exception of Balaam (Num. 22), all biblical prophets came from Jewish roots.

(ii) That was a unique privilege conferred on Israel by God.

(b) Speaking in the name of the Lord (18:19)

(c) Predictions of the near and distant future (18:22)

(d) Performance of signs and wonders (13:1-2)

(e) Conformity with previous revelation (13:2-5)

b) Terms for Prophets

(1) One of the earliest terms was ro'eh (seer). The term seems to stress God's gift of seeing what is lost (as in the case of Samuel with the donkeys of Saul's father) or what is to come in the future.

(2) Second designation for a prophet, hozeh (visionary). Here the focus is not on the natural eye that was given a view of the distant future or of what was lost, but on the mental or inward eye.

(3) Most significant term is nabi. Most students of ancient Near Eastern languages agree that this Hebrew word probably reflects an Akkadian (language of early Mesopotamia) word meaning "to call or to announce."

(a) The debate nowadays centers on whether the root is passive ("one who is called by God") or active ("an announcer.").

(b) Most favor the passive and therefore stress that a prophet is one who has heard the call of God for a very specific task.

(4) We may summarize the terms in this way: a nabi is one who is sent by God to announce his word; roeh is one who is given insight into the past, present, and future.; a hozeh is given his message in a vision.

(5) Only 1 Chron. 29:29 uses all 3 terms in 1 verse: "As for the events of King David's reign,...they are written in the records of Samuel the see (roeh), the records of Nathan the prophet (nabi) and the records of Gad the see (hozeh)."

(6) This is not to suggest that there are no other terms for prophet; indeed there are. "Man of God," "Servant of the Lord," "The Lord's messenger, "Shepherd", "watchman."
B. Issues in the Interpretation of Prophecy

1. Literal versus Figurative Meaning

a) Often we are left with the impression that the Dispensationalist believes that he and his system alone basis their system on sound hermeneutical principles.

(1) Ryrie makes this a sine qua non of Dispensationalism

(2) However, there are many who interpret the Bible literally who do not fall into the camp of Dispenationalism (note Berkhof’s first principle of interpreting prophecy).

(3) Thus, it is improper to use this as a sine qua non.

b) Often we hear from non-dispensationalists that the Dispensationalists are not consistent in interpreting the New Testament as literally as they do the Old Testament

(1) Glenny clearly lays out his view when he notes that “my concern is that the hermeneutic which some traditional dispensationalists call ‘consistently literal’ is not consistent in all contexts, and furthermore, what is being called ‘literal’ interpretation in the Old Testament is not practiced in the New Testament context.” (W. Edward Glenny, “Dispensational Hermeneutics: A Proposal,” Dispensational Study Group, ETS, November 1998, 15).

(2) In summary, Glenny asserts that traditional dispensationalists may do well in certain instances in the Old Testament, but struggle to handle the New Testament.

(3) Recently, Carl Sanders gave an informative paper at the national ETS meeting entitled “The Myth of Normative Dispensationalism” in which he follows the same basic historical outline which is consistent with almost all progressive dispensationalists.

c) “A careful interpreter will interpret both literally and figuratively because the passage he is interpreting demands these procedures. Labels suggesting that a man is either a completely literal interpreter or a completely figurative interpreter are foolish. If they were true, they would indicate that the individual thus designated would be totally unable to grapple with meanings and ideas. Such people usually do not try to interpret. Therefore, a careless tossing around labels should be avoided at all costs. The well-balanced interpreter has objective reasons for both literal and
figurative meanings” (Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible, 305.*).

d) However, it seems to be factual that the more one consistently interprets the Old Testament literally, the more premillennial. This is virtually admitted by Allis: “The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been yet fulfilled or has being capable of fulfillment in this present age” (Allis, *Prophecy and the Church, 238*). Hamilton also agrees, “Now we must frankly admit that a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies gives us such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures” (The Basis of Millennial Faith, 38).

e) Nonetheless, we must stress that this is the foundation for Premillennialism and NOT Dispensationalism!

2. Single verses multiple Meanings

a) Do passages have one meaning or more than one?

b) Some say that passages may have more than one meaning

(1) Pentecost as well as others feel that some prophetic passages have a “double fulfillment.” In fact, in his book *Things to Come*, Pentecost calls this a ‘law.’ While he may be referring to the combining of two successive events into one prophetic context. However, he does refer to double meaning.

(2) Horne states, “The same prophecies have a double meaning….their expressions may be partly applicable to one, and partly to another” (Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scripture, 1:390).

c) Problems with this approach

(1) What a passage really means is one thing. If it meant many things, hermeneutics would be indeterminate” (Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, 88).

(2) Terry states, “The moment we admit the principle that portions of the Scripture contain an occult or double sense we introduce an element of uncertainty in the sacred volume, and unsettle all scientific interpretation” (Biblical Hermeneutics, 413).
(3) Berkhof also remarks, “Scripture has but a single sense, and
is therefore susceptible to a scientific and logical
investigation….To accept a manifold sense…makes any science
of hermeneutics impossible, and opens wide the door of all kinds
of arbitrary interpretations” (Principles of Biblical Interpretation,
57).

d) Clarifications

(1) First, many OT passages have been applied to different
situations, but there is still one sense to passage

(a) “The NT epistles thus repeatedly quote OT
prophecies, though not in reference to their actual
fulfillments; for example, II Corinthians 6:16 cites
Leviticus 26:11…6:17 cites Isaiah 52:11…, and 6:18
freely renders Hosea 1:10…. all to illustrate the
Christians’ present enjoyment of the presence of God
and our need to maintain separation from the
uncleanness of the world, though only the last, Hosea
1:10 had this originally in mind” (Payne, Encyclopedia
of Biblical Prophecy, 128-129).

(b) “We may readily admit that the Scriptures are
capable of manifold practical applications; otherwise
they would not be so useful for doctrine, correction, and
instruction in righteousness” (Terry, Biblical
Hermeneutics, 383).

(2) Secondly, there is the principle of developmental fulfillment,
which indicates the accomplishment of a generalized,
comprehensive prophecy in several progressive stages.

(a) An example of this is found in Genesis 3:15, which
speaks generally of the bruising of Satan’s head.

(b) The progressive stages in the fulfillment of this
prophecy begin with Christ’s death, resurrection and
ascension (John 12:31-32; Rev. 12:5, 10), continue in
the church (Romans 16:20), and end with the
imprisonment in the abyss (Rev. 20:3) and the lake of
fire (Rev. 20:10).

(c) Other examples of this are found in Payne, 135-136.

(3) Thirdly, there is the concept of prophetic telescoping.

(a) Payne defines this in the following way: “Biblical
prophecy may leap from one prominent peak in
predictive topography to another, without notice of the
valley between, which may involve no inconsiderable lapse in chronology” (Payne, 137).

(b) An example of this is found in passages that place the first coming and the second coming together (Isaiah 61:1-3; Cf. Luke 4:18, 19).

C. Principles for the Interpretation of Prophecy

1. Mickelsen gives the following general rules for prophetic interpretation (Interpreting the Bible, 299-305)

   a) Make a careful grammatical-historical-contextual analysis of the passage

   b) State explicitly to whom or to what the statement or passage refers

   c) Determine the kind of Prediction

      (1) Direct prediction

      (2) Typological prediction

   d) Let the finality of God’s revelation in Christ color all earlier revelations

      (1) This is not a reversal of the first principle which centered in the grammatical-historical-contextual approach.

      (2) Rather it is simply the acknowledgement that Christians are Christians when they interpret the Old Testament.

   e) For apocalyptic imagery, follow the principles given on symbols, making sure that interpretation of such imagery would be entirely clear the original author

      (1) Note the qualities of the literal object noted by the symbol

      (2) Try to discover from the context the purpose for using a symbol

      (3) Use any explanation given in the context to connect the symbol and the truth it teaches. If the symbol is not explained, then use every clue found in the immediate context or in any part of the book where the figure occurs

      (4) If the symbol which was clear to the initial readers is not clear to modern readers, state explicitly what the barrier is for the modern reader
(5) Observe the frequency and distribution of a symbol (how often used and where found), but allow each to control the meaning. Do not force symbols into preconceived schemes of uniformity.

(6) Think and meditate on results.

f) Remember that interpretive analysis must precede a discussion on the exact relationship between the literal and figurative use in any passage.

(1) This is based upon the use of grammar, history, culture, context and convictions of the original writer himself.

(2) The literal meaning—the customary and socially acknowledged meaning which carries with it the ideas of actual and earthly—must become the basis for figurative meanings. Upon this basis they depend.


a) Note the type of literature

b) Note the perspective of the passage

(1) Study the aspects emphasized

(2) Study the patterns by which they develop

c) Note the structure of the passage or book

(1) No vision or detail functions by itself

(2) To understand the part, we must see how it fits into the whole

d) Note the function and meaning of the symbols

(1) After determining the whole, one must exegete the part

(2) We must determine if the symbol is interpreted in the immediate context or elsewhere in the book

(3) We must study the use of the symbol in literature of the same period

(4) We must study the symbol in the past for parallels.
e) Stress the theological and the note predictive with humility

(1) This does not mean that the predictive is less important than the theological

(2) Rather the predictive is not an end in itself, but it is a means to an end—comforting and challenging the saints of God.

3. Virkler gives the following general rules for prophetic interpretation (Hermeneutics: Principles and Process of Biblical Interpretation, 207)

a) Historical-cultural and contextual analysis

(1) Determine the specific historical situation surrounding the composition of the writing

(2) Study intervening history to see whether or not the prophecy has been fulfilled

b) Lexical-syntactical analysis:

(1) Expect more words to be used in symbolic senses

(2) Expect more words to be used in analogical senses

c) Theological analysis:

(1) Study other parallel passages

(2) Study cycles within the same prophecy for further information

d) Literary Analysis:

(1) Be aware that the style is generally figurative and symbolic

(2) Watch for supernatural elements which as information conveyed by the announcement of angles, by visions, or by other supernatural means

(3) Notice the emphasis on the unseen world that lies behind the action of the visible world

(4) Follow the action to its usual conclusion by a sovereign intervention of God

(5) Analyze whether this passage is part of a progressive prediction, is capable of developmental fulfillment, or includes prophetic telescoping
e) Compare your analysis with that of others; modify, correct, or expand your interpretation as appropriate.

4. Berkhof’s Principles

a) The words of the prophets should be taken in their usual literal sense, unless the context or the manner in which they are fulfilled clearly indicate that they have a symbolic meaning.

b) In studying the figurative descriptions that are found in the prophets, the interpreter should make it his aim to discover the fundamental idea expressed.

c) In the interpretation of the symbolic actions of the prophets, the interpreter must proceed on the assumption of their reality, i.e., of their occurrence in actual life, unless the connection clearly proves otherwise.

d) The fulfillment of some of the most important prophecies is germinant, i.e., they are fulfilled by installments, each fulfillment being a pledge of that which is to follow.

(1) Hence a mistake to talk about double sense, while a double fulfillment may take place

(2) Joel’s prophecy—not completely fulfilled at Pentecost.
e) Prophecies should be read in the light of their fulfillment for this will often reveal depths that would otherwise have escaped attention

5. Kaiser’s Principles (Back the Future)

a) Determine the relative date of the book or passage under consideration. Determining the general historical period establishes the theater of current events in which the book in question was written.

b) Determine the main divisions of the biblical book and note where the prophetic themes occur in the narrative and logic of the text.

c) Identify the different topics, subjects, or themes within each section.

d) Determine where to make the paragraph divisions within the subject under investigation.

e) Read the text under investigation in light of its direct citations, allusions, and references to its biblical predecessors. The most exhaustive resource I know of is *The Treasury of the Bible*.

f) Do a word study on the most important terms in the passage.

(1) How many times is word used in Scriptures?

(2) How many different ways is it translated?

(3) How many different types of context is found?

(4) Into what categories may these different usages be grouped?

(5) Which usage reflects the meaning in the text we are interpreting, and how do similar contexts illustrate this usage?
g) Summarize what has been learned and relate it to all other biblical teaching on the same subject, especially that which is found in later Scriptures. A cautious use of books on systematic theology or doctrine may be introduced at this point. This will alert us to other contexts of Scripture where the same or similar themes may appear. The claims of these theological reference books should not be automatically accepted, but should be tested in each case.

h) In addition to these general procedural steps, Kaiser adds Girdlestone’s number of questions:

1. What part is historic and what is predictive?
2. What functions as figurative drapery and what is real?
3. What sayings are conditional and what is absolute?
4. What parts have been fulfilled and what remains unfulfilled?
5. What is addressed to Israel and what relates to the nations/church?
6. What is strictly physical and what is spiritual?
7. What is messianic and what is terrestrial?

6. J. Barton Payne’s (illustrates by passages in the mid-yers of Isaiah [711-701])

a) The Nature of Biblical Prediction

1. Historical—prophecy arises out of real situations (32:9)
2. Transcendent—God’s guiding inspiration surpasses human capacities (24:22)
3. Moral—Prediction relates closely to contemporary preaching (32:6-15)
4. Evangelistic (Prophecy motivates men toward commitment to God (31:6-7)
5. Predictive—Foretelling occupies a major place in it (Most of chapters 24-35).
6. Messianic—Prophecy attains its goal in Jesus (35:4).
b) The Form of Biblical Prediction

(1) Literal—Most prophecy is straightforward in its declaration (30:22)

(2) Poetic—Exalted feeling may produce Oriental hyperbole (32:14)

(3) Figurative—Context may demonstrate some language as intentionally non-literal (30:26)

(4) Symbolical—A prediction may be acted as well as spoken (20:2)

(5) Typical—An event may symbolize to its contemporaries a truth later achieved by Christ (36:7)

c) The Fulfillment of Biblical Prediction

(1) Necessary—Prophecy is inspired and therefore, when non-contingent, must be fulfilled (30:19; 44:26)

(2) Contingent—Fulfillment may be modified, provided it is near at hand and subject to conditions affectable by its contemporaries (38:1)

(3) Analogous—Other Scriptures are determinative for interpretation (25:8=1 Corinthians 15:54)

(4) Preferably near—the closest adequate fulfillment is the best (Most chapters of 24-35)

(5) Simple—The meaning of Scripture is not manifold but one (29:3)

(6) Progressive—One context may yet advance through a series of predictions.

(7) Similar—Prophecies may show resemblance without being equivalent (32:15=Acts 2:4)

(8) Telescoped—Prophecy may advance directly from near to a far horizon (31:9-32:1)

(9) Cyclic—Major blocks within a book may reach parallel climaxes (24-27, 34-35)

(10) Eventual—If a prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, it shall be (32:5)
Occasionally Ambiguous—Prophecies vary in perspicuity (32:5).

XI. Interpretation of Biblical Poetry

A. Introduction to Biblical Poetry

1. Definition of Biblical Poetry

   a) Recreation of Experience

      (1) "The poet's business in writing his poem is not to tell us that this 'moment of imaginative experience' has happened to him, but to make it happen to us as well" (S.M. Schreiber, An Introduction to Literary Criticism, 25).

      (2) "The ultimate purpose of lyric poetry is not simply to communicate information to the mind. If that were the case, poetry would be an unnecessarily inefficient means. Poetry does convey cognitive data, but that is only a part of its purpose. The poet uses language to reconstruct in the reader an experience comparable to what the poet felt. The poem broadens and deepens the reader's experience by guiding him into participation with the author's experience" (Daniel J. Estes, "The Hermeneutics of Biblical Lyric Poetry," BibSac 152:608 [Oct. 1995]: 416).

      (3) In effect the poem enables the reader to "remember an experience that he has never had" (Christopher Collins, The Act of Poetry: A Practical Introduction to the Reading of Poems, 6).

   b) Concentrated Expression of Emotion

      (1) It "says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language" (Perrine, Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry, 3).

      (2) "Because the poet compresses so much experience into such a brief utterance, the reader must unpack the language. At the same time the interpreter must not flatten the poem into a prose paraphrase of the content" (Este, Op. Cit., 409).

   c) Skillful Use of Language

      (1) "What one cannot help but sense in good poetry is a sense of the whole language striving toward richer possibilities than one could have foreseen. To consider some of the impressions that can be isolated from that total feeling, and to speculate on their possible causes, is at least to enter the question of how language functions in a poem. One must remember, however, that such impressions do not exist in isolation in the poem. To separate
them for analysis is pointless unless one then attempts to put them back in context. One does not take a poem apart for the love of dissection but only in order to put it back together more meaningfully” (John Ciardi, *How Does a Poem Mean?*, 779).

(2) Poetry achieves its concentrated expression of feelings by the skillful use of language

2. Extent of Biblical Poetry

**a) Most of the biblical poetry of the Bible is found in the Old Testament**

1. Poetic Books: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Lamentations

2. Isaiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah mostly poetry

3. Some in Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, and Amos

4. Also found in Jonah, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zechariah (two sections), several sections within the Pentateuch and historical books


1. First, New Testament quotations from ancient Greek poets are confined to Acts and the Pauline epistles.

   (a) *In his sermon on Mars Hill (Acts 17:22–31)*

   (i) Paul quoted (v. 28) from three poets: Epimenides of Crete, from whom “For in him [thee, in Epimenides] we live and move and have our being” comes

   (ii) Aratus of Cilicia and the Stoic, Cleanthes, who both have the words, “For we are also his offspring.”

   (b) *From the same passage in Epimenides that he drew upon in Acts 17:28, Paul quoted in Titus 1:12: “The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”*

   (c) *In 1 Corinthians 15:33, the apostle used the aphorism of Menander, an Athenian comic poet: “Evil communications corrupt good manners.”*

2. Second, in addition to these quotations, the Pauline epistles contain several poetical fragments that may well have been first-century Christian hymns (cf. Eph 5:14).
(a) First Timothy 3:16 seems certainly to be of such a nature, although it is unknown whether it is by Paul or some unnamed author. The balanced character of this passage suggests antiphonal usage.

(b) Similar in nature is 2 Timothy 2:11–13, which likewise suggests hymnic use.

(c) Another possible hymn fragment is Ephesians 5:14.

(d) The great christological passage in Philippians 2:5–11 is clearly poetic in form and may reflect very early Christian hymnody.

(3) Third, Luke 1 and 2 contain eight poetical passages (1:14–17, 32, 33, 35, 46–48, 68–79; 2:14, 29–32, 34–35). These passages—of which Luke 1:46–55 (the Magnificat), 68–79 (the Benedictus); 2:14 (the Gloria in Excelsis), 29–32 (the Nunc Dimittis) are widely known for their liturgical use—are in the mold of Old Testament poetry. Moreover, many of the more than two hundred Old Testament quotations in the New Testament are poetical.

(4) Fourth, the Gospels and epistles contain other passages (e.g., John 1:1–18) that, because of their form or their intense or exalted expression, are poetical.

(a) Among these are many of Jesus’ sayings, for example, the Beatitudes (Matt 5:3–12), much else in the Sermon on the Mount (i.e., Matt 6:25–34; cf. also 11:28–30; 23:37–39), the lament over Jerusalem (cf. Luke 13:34–35; John 14:1–4, 27–31). Sometimes Jesus’ words reflect the parallelism of Hebrew poetry, and His Olivet Discourse is a vivid piece of apocalyptic expression.

(b) Aside from quotations mentioned under the first and second sections above, the epistles contain outstanding poetic passages. Portions of the Epistle of James resemble the Sermon on the Mount. The other epistles include passages of stirring poetical power (e.g., Rom 8:35–39; 11:33–36; 1 Cor 15:51–56; Heb 11:32–38 in particular; Jude 24–25). It must be admitted that the beauty and cadence of the King James Version may color the reader’s judgment about what is poetical, nevertheless the Greek text generally confirms the poetical nature of this kind of New Testament eloquence.

(5) Fifth, Revelation (along with Matt 24 and the parallel passages in Mark and Luke) is written in the Hebrew form of apocalyptic. Interspersed throughout its pages are some of the
most exalted songs and hymns in Scripture—for example, Revelation 4:8, 11; 5:9, 10, 12; 7:15–17; 11:17–19; 15:3–4 (the Song of Moses and the Lamb); 18:2, 8, 14–24 (the threnody on Babylon the Great); 19:6–8.

B. Characteristics of Biblical Poetry

1. Rhythm

   a) “Hebrew poetry possesses rhythm. The work of such scholars as J. Ley, K. Budde, B. Duhm and others was foundational for later studies in Hebrew metrical form. E. Siever especially undertook the task of ascertaining the nature of rhythm in Hebrew poetry and attempted to deduce the existence of regular meter from it. The conclusion was that Hebrew versification was not qualitative in the strict sense of the term in that it did not count syllables, but depended upon the number of accents” (Unger, The Nature of Hebrew Poetry,” BibSac 108:431 [1951]:284).

   b) This, however, is unseen for the English reader.

2. Structure

   a) Stich

      (1) A stich is a line

      (2) Usually two lines (distich) make up a verse, but may also be tristich (three lines), tetrastich (four lines), or even pentastich (five lines)

   b) Stanzas of strophes

      (1) Division within a poem based upon thought. This is called a stanza or a strophe.

      (2) “It may be repeated that there are two essential conditions for the recognition of strophic arrangement. The first is regularity, in length—probably even uniformity; and the second is a clear division of thought at the end of each strophe. Only where these are fulfilled, are we safe in describing the structure of a given poem as strophic” (Oesterley and Robinson, An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament, 149).
3. Parallelism

a) Introduction

(1) Unlike English and other Western forms of poetry, Hebrew poetry is not necessarily a balance of sound (phonetic rhythm).

(2) Rather it is based upon a balance of thought or logical rhythm.

(3) Parallelism is main feature of Hebrew poetry. In the stichs (di, tri, etc.) of the verse, there is a parallel of some sort.

b) Types of Parallelism

(1) In these examples from an English version I have marked off by a line (/) the single word units in Hebrew, and by double lines (//) the division of the parallelism in the verse. In between the double // is called a colon.

(2) Complete Parallelism (Here belong instances where every single term or thought unit in one line is parallel to an equivalent term or unit in the other line.)

(a) Synonymous Parallelism—

(i) Thought is repeated by the second

(ii) Who forgives / all / your iniquity // who heals / all / your diseases (Ps. 103:3)

(iii) Then Israel / came / to Egypt; // Jacob / sojourned / in the land of Ham (Ps. 105:23)

(iv) Will God pervert justice, // Or will Shaddai pervert righteousness? (Job 8:3)

(v) The order of the parallel terms need not be the same in both lines.

(b) Antithetic Parallelism

(i) Balances the parallel lines through the opposition or contrast of thought

(ii) In the morning / it flourishes / and is renewed; // in the evening / it fades / and withers (Ps. 90:6)

(iii) A gentle answer / turns away / rage // But a word that hurts / stirs up / anger (Pr. 15:1)
(iv) Though your beginning was small, // Yet your latter end will be very great. (Job 8:7).

(c) **Synthetic Parallelism**

(i) The meaning is continued but the balance of thought is lost; or in other words, the thought continues but the sense of balance is not there

(ii) And now / my head / is lifted up // Over / my enemies / round about me (Ps. 27:6a)

(d) **Emblematic Parallelism**

(i) One parallel unit with a simile or a metaphor, implied or actual, so that this emblem of one colon is compared to the thought of the other. Normally, one stich makes a statement figuratively while the other stich makes an assertion in a literal way.

(ii) As a hart / longs / for flowing streams // So my soul / longs/ for Thee, O God (Ps. 42:1)

(iii) As a father / pities / his children, // so the LORD / pities / those who fear Him. (Ps. 103:13)

(e) **Stairlike Parallelism**

(i) Part of the first is repeated while the second builds up to a climax

(ii) Ascribe / to the Lord / O sons of God / Ascribe / to the Lord/.../glory and strength //Ascribe / to the Lord / .../the glory of His name (Ps. 29:1-2a).

(f) **Introverted or Chiastic Parallelism**

(i) Strictly speaking a form of synonymous parallelism

(ii) The main difference is that the former involves the inversion of terms in the second part.

(iii) You really have to look at the Hebrew sentence to see this.

(iv) A clear example is found in Isaiah 11:13b: Ephraim / shall not be jealous of / Judah, // and Judah / shall not harass / Ephraim.
(v) On lion and snake you tread, // you crush
lion cub and serpent. (Ps. 91:13)

(vi)

(3) Incomplete Parallelism

(a) With Compensation

(i) Where only some of the terms are parallel,
but each colon has the same number of
accented units (usually clear in English, but
clearer in Hebrew).

(ii) You will destroy / their offspring / from the
earth, // and their children/from among the sons
of men. (Ps. 21:10 [MT 11])

(iii) As for man / his days / are as the green
grass // as the flower of the field / so / he blooms
(Ps. 103:15).

(b) Without Compensation

(i) Incomplete Parallelism without
Compensation is where one colon contains a
smaller number of accented units

(ii) Ps. 6:2 (MT 6:3): O LORD, / rebuke me / not
in your anger, // nor chasten me / in your wrath.
4. Imagery

a) Poetry uses figures of speech

b) “Hebrew verse especially is rich in choice of words and vividness of imagery, and abounds in numerous rhetorical devices. Simile, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, alliteration and personification frequently occur and are used to great effect. The language itself, even in the form of prose, has a singularly rhythmic and musical quality admirably adapted to noble poetry. In such a language we may well inquire what there can be to differentiate between prose and poetry. The answer is that in prose the rhythms are absolutely free, while those in poetry are evidently confined within certain limits. The extent and the precise definition of these limits is the task of the student of Hebrew poetical form, a study which despite substantial advance is still in its elementary stage” (Unger, Op. Cit., 285).

c) Thus, one should consult the notes on figures of speech.

5. Chiasmus

a) While a part of a poetry might be introverted, entire poems are introverted or have chiasmus.

b) Psalm 8

(1) 1 A Benediction.
(2) 2-3 B God’s rule.
(3) 4 C Man’s meanness.
(4) 5 C Man’s greatness.
(5) 6-8 B Man’s rule.
(6) 9 A Benediction.

c) Psalm 1

(1) 1 A1 The blessed man stands not with the wicked.
(2) 2 A2 The blessed man chooses God’s law.
(3) 3 B Green tree illustrates righteous man.
(4) 4 B Brown chaff illustrates wicked man.
(5) 5 A1 The wicked stands not with the righteous.

(6) 6 A2 God chooses the righteous man.

d) Other Psalms that are chiastic include Psalm 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 19, 21, 25, 27

C. Types of Biblical Poetry

1. Hymns or Praises
   a) As creator (Ps. 8, 19, 104, 148)
   b) As protector and benefactor (Ps. 66, 100, 11, 114, 149)
   c) As Lord of History (33, 103, 113, 117, 145-147)
   d) After Military triumphs (Ps. 68)
   e) Etc.

2. Thanksgiving Hymns
   a) Corporate (Ps. 65, 67, 75, 107, 124, 136)
   b) Individual (Ps. 18, 30, 32, 34, 40, 66, 116, 118, 138)

3. Wisdom and Didactic
   a) Proverbs
   b) Ps. 1, 36, 37, 49, 73, 119, 127, 128, 133)

4. Imprecatory Psalms (12, 35, 52, 57-59, 69, 70, 83, 109, 137, 140)

D. Interpretation of Biblical Poetry

1. Principles for Interpreting Biblical Poetry
   a) General
      (1) Note the lines of the poetry
      (2) Group the lines together, noting parallelism
      (3) Study the figures of speech
      (4) Investigate the historical background, if possible
(5) Study the context

b) Psalms

(1) Seek the historical situation

(2) Note the attitude and outlook by context

(3) In Messianic Psalms, note the typological elements

c) Proverbs

(1) Note figures of speech

(2) Do not stretch the general to hard rule

d) Job

(1) Note the characters and theme of book

(2) Not reoccurring themes

(3) Note the speaker

(4) Note the answers to the speech, if they are found and focus on them.

2. Practicum of Interpreting Biblical Poetry (identify the type of parallelism found in each of the following verses)

a) “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; // The Lord will have them in derision” (Ps 2:4).

(1) Synonymous Parallelism

(2) Antithetical Parallelism

(3) Synthetic Parallelism

(4) Emblematic Parallelism

b) “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; // But they that seek Jehovah shall not want in any good thing” (Ps 34:10).

(1) Synonymous Parallelism

(2) Antithetical Parallelism

(3) Synthetic Parallelism
(4) Emblematic Parallelism

c) “And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, / That bringeth forth fruit in its season, / Whose leaf also shall not whither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Ps 1:3).

(1) Synonymous Parallelism

(2) Antithetical Parallelism

(3) Synthetic Parallelism

(4) Emblematic Parallelism
XII. Interpreting Narratives

A. Introduction

1. Description of the Narrative Interpretation

   a) The interpretation of narrative seeks to answer "What happens in the biblical narrative?" and "What do these events mean in that narrative?"

   b) It is theology in artistic garb. Osborne rightly identifies narrative as containing both history and theology that are woven together via a story format (Osborne, Hermeneutical Spiral, 154).

2. Methods of Narrative Interpretation

   a) Narrative criticism focuses on biblical narrative, analyzing plot, sequence and timing of events, characterization, and the use of literary techniques such as irony, humor, and repetition as ways of developing the story and its significant themes.

   b) Rhetorical criticism uses classical rhetorical theory to analyze argumentative techniques within the biblical writings, giving attention to how the author uses style, language, emotion, and logic to persuade the reader.

   c) Structuralism reads the biblical writings in light of universal literary structures, interpreting biblical characters, themes and events in terms of their roles and functions within a certain structural grid or universal grammar.

   d) Reader Response criticism analyzes the biblical text in light of the experience of the reader, interpreting the text in light of the questions, expectations, surprises the reader experiences proceeding through the text, emphasizing the active role of the reader in determining the meaning of the text.

3. Necessity of Narrative Interpretation

   a) About 40% of the biblical material is narrative, story, and is the most common single type of writing in the Bible
b) “The best of Western seminaries and theological colleges reinforce the cultural bent toward the abstract and fill students' heads with the importance of grammatical, lexicographical exegesis. Such exegesis is, of course, of enormous importance. But in students who do not have a feel for literature, it can have the unwitting effect of so focusing on the tree...that the entire forest remains unseen, except perhaps as a vague and ominous challenge” (D. A. Carson, The Gospel according to John, 100-101).

4. Purpose of Narrative Interpretation

a) The Purpose of Narration is theological—not art for art's sake

(1) "The test is not whether literary analysis contributes to aesthetic appreciation (though that may be a significant by-product) but whether it advances understanding. Does it sharpen the ear and eye to the author's intentions?” (John H. Stek, "The Bee and the Mountain Goat: A Literary Reading of Judges 4,” in A Tribute to Gleason Archer, ed. Walter C. Kaiser Jr. and Ronald F. Youngblood, 54).

(2) "Narrative is not as direct as didactic material, but it does have a theological point and expects the reader to interact with that message" (Osborne, The Hermeneutical Spiral, 172).

(3) Long observes that the "artistic tendencies" of the narrators "were not given free rein, however, but were disciplined by the larger theological purposes which governed the writers' work” (Long, Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible, 67).

(4)
b) The Purpose of Narration is persuasion

(1) However, Old Testament narratives do more than make theological points. They attempt to persuade (Erich Auerbach, Mimesis, trans. Willard Trask), 12.

(2) Patrick and Scult argue that "the Bible's main form of exposition, the narrative, is most appropriately characterized as primary rhetoric, its primary objective being to persuade its audience" (Dale Patrick and Allen Scult, Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation, 29).

c) The Elements of Narration

(1) Scene

(a) Narratives are composed of a sequence of distinct but related events termed scenes. There may be as few as one scene, but often several. The scenes develop the story line, or plot of the narrative. Each scene adds important details that, taken together, illustrate the theological center of the entire narrative.

(b) Particular scenes are usually identified from the larger narrative in which they are found by reference to:

(i) Introduction of new characters (E.g.: Genesis 37:1—11 Joseph and his jealous brothers)

(ii) Introduction of new situations—geographical change, separation of time, a change in the
(2) Character

(a) Narratives revolve around characters. Authors use characters to convey their message in a number of ways:

(i) Characters can say the words or perform actions that unveil the point of the story. Note: God (or the voice of God) is often the central character in biblical narratives

(a) E.g.: Exodus 15:24—26 God’s provision is also a “test”

(b) E.g.: 1 Kings 17:24 The woman’s dramatic realization of who Elijah was

(ii) Characters show the reader what it looks like to live out faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God, thus becoming models to emulate (Hebrews 11)

(a) E.g.: Joshua and Caleb

(b) Num. 13:30; Josh. 24:14,15

(b) Implication for interpreters: summarize the role characters play in the unfolding of the narrative

(3) Plot

(a) According to Bar-Efrat a narrative's plot consists of "a meaningful chain of interconnected events" (Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art in the Bible, 93).

(b) Gunn and Fewell comment, "Plot is the organizing force or principle through which narrative meaning is communicated. There must be events for there to be story; not random events but events that are connected, events that have design, that form a pattern—events that are ‘plotted’" (David M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, Narrative in the Hebrew Bible, 100).

(c) Tracking the plot is important because "the plot serves to organize events in such a way as to arouse the reader's interest and emotional involvement, while at the same time imbuing the events with meaning" (Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art in the Bible, 93).

(d) These plots build on a conflict or a collision between two forces (Ibid. 94). "No ignorance, no conflict; and no
conflict, no plot” (Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, 173)

(e) Generally interpreters should look for the plot to unfold in this pattern:

(i) Background (exposition)

(ii) Crisis (complication)

(iii) Resolution

(iv) Conclusion (denouement) such as to inspire or inform.

**d) Devices of Narration**

(1) Dialogue

(a) Everything in the world of biblical narrative ultimately gravitates toward dialogue...quantitatively, a remarkably large part of narrative burden is carried by dialogue, the transactions between characters typically unfolding through the words that they exchange, with only the most minimal intervention of the narrator” (Robert Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative, 182).

(b) The first place where dialogue is first introduced will be an important moment in revealing the character of its speaker—perhaps more in the manner than in the substance of what is said” (Ibid. 74).

(c) Notice where the narrator has chosen to introduce dialogue instead of narration. The special rhythm of moving back and forth between dialogue and narrative, while centering on some sharp verbal exchange between characters, will help us to focus on their relationship to God and to one another” (Ibid. 75).

(2) Repetition

(a) Formulas

(i) "In those days Israel had no king” (Jud. 16, 18, 19, 21)

(ii) "fulfilling the word of the Lord" (1,2 Kings)

(iii) "evil/good in the sight of the Lord” (1,2 Kings)

(iv) "Is it because there is no God in Israel ... ?" (2 Kings 1:3,6,16)
(b) Events

(i) Joshua and Moses in Josh. 1—5

(ii) Elijah and Elisha in 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 4

(iii) Barrenness in Sarah, Hannah, Elizabeth ...

(iv) Words

(v) "God said", "it was so", "it was good" in creation narrative

(vi) "gave" in the Joshua narrative

B. Theology of Narrative Interpretation

1. Introduction to the Theology of a Book

   a) Individual narratives are not self-interpreting—they relate to the broader argument of the book. Each narrative sequence that makes up a book must be viewed in terms of the theological center of the book as a whole

   b) What is the theological purpose for the book in which the narrative appears? This provides a basis for understanding the author's intent for including the particular piece being studied

   c) Implication for interpreters: recognize the main point of a particular narrative. How does it relate to the argument of the book?

2. Obtaining the Theology of a Book

   a) A good book on Biblical Theology will prove helpful at this point.


3. Identifying the Theological Center of a Book

   a) The controlling theme or theological center is almost always a marker or link from a previous marker, indicating the progress of God’s plan. Sometimes it is a
summary statement on the condition of God’s plan through his covenant people.

(1) Example of controlling theme as *summary statement*: Judges 21:25

(2) The judges era was a dismal failure, illustrated by the "cycle of apostasy," pointing to the need for monarchy

b) **Example of controlling theme as theological *marker*: 2 Samuel 7/1 Chron. 17**

(1) The Davidic Covenant as a blessing to David, formation of a dynasty from him, and the promise of an eternal kingdom

(2) Example of controlling theme as theological *link (with a marker)*: 1 Kings 11:9—13 (see also Exodus 19:4—6)

(3) Failure of the kings in the Davidic line would result in judgment on the nation, but God will remain faithful to his promise to David
C. The Principles of Narrative Interpretation

1. Most of the Bible is not so much trying to duplicate external reality as it is sharing experience and calling us to participate in that experience. The function of narrative is not to describe but to call forth a response from its hearers.

2. The basic elements of narrative, (a) setting, (b) characters, and (c) plot, are important to consider in hearing the story, but are not themselves the purpose of the narrative or the point of its message. They are the vehicles by which to communicate a larger truth to be understood in the story.

3. The setting of a narrative, or historical context, involves physical (specific places, objects, or activities), cultural (customs, social values, belief systems, world view, attitudes), and temporal (political, national, and world events) dimensions. These must be considered in relation and interaction with the characters and plot.

4. It is important to keep in mind the plot of the story: the point of conflict or tension, the characters in relation to that conflict, the flow and arrangement of the story, and how the conflict is resolved (or not). This plot will be directly related to the point (message) of the story. This suggests that Biblical narratives do not tell us everything about an event; they are selective and focused on those elements that contribute to the plot, and cannot be made to address every question we might want to ask of the story.

5. In Scripture, narratives exist only in relation to a larger whole not as isolated stories. The location of a particular story within a larger collection of stories or book (literary context) provides an additional setting for hearing the story. While the story itself may be studied on its own for its own message, the surrounding stories, the flow of thought of the larger work, as well as its historical and cultural setting affect how the individual story is to be heard.

6. As part of our engagement with the story and part of our response to it, we need to ask how the narrative engages human
needs, wants, longings, sins, failures, ambitions, emotions, all of those things that are a part of human existence. How does it involve US in the story? The characters most often represent US in some way, nor directly, but as participants in human experience. Likewise, we need to ask how the story addresses those human dimensions from the perspective of relationship with God. In other words, we need to keep in mind in our response to the story that all biblical narratives are finally theology.

D. Steps of Narrative Interpretation

1. Overview
   
   a) Read the book summarizing the main theme(s)
   b) Summarize the historical situation of the book
   c) Summarize the canonical—theological context of the book

   (1) Where is the book in the context of preceding revelation

   (2) What new information is given about God's plan for redemption? (tied to #1)

2. Structure of narrative passages

   a) What is the controlling theme of the story?

   b) Identify controlling theme by theme statements:

   (1) Divine commands, covenants, revelations, visions…

   (2) Summary statements in the narrative or dialogue
3. Identify
   a) key people
   b) key actions
   c) key terms and theological/cultural concepts:

4. Analysis
   a) How does the narrative fit into the broader argument/themes of the book?
   b) Why is the narrative placed where it is?
   c) Identify important sub-plots

   (1) How does an individual exemplify faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God?

   (2) How does the individual's actions or character fit into the controlling theme?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Significant Actions/ Results</th>
<th>Theme Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme summary:
Sub-plot summary:

Application:
- What did it mean to the original audience?
- Why? It should tie into the controlling theme.

E. Practicum of Narrative Interpretation

1. What is the theological message of the entire book of 1 Kings?

2. What is the theological message of each of the following scenes?

3. How do they contribute to the overall theme of 1 Kings
   a) See Theological Center
   b) “The structure of Kings is somewhat similar to that of Judges in that it discusses the cyclical rise and fall of states and leader (from succession of Solomon to the
exile)” (Mark Chavalas, “Kings, First and Second, Theology of,” EDBT, s.v.)

c) It centers upon the necessity of the kings fidelity to the covenant. “Thus, the writer infers that the well being of the people was tied to the king’s behavior: Yahweh’s election and covenant with Israel was bound with David, although the continuation of the Davidic dynasty was conditioned upon the proper cultic observances and acceptance of the Mosaic covenant” (Ibid.)

d) “The theological thread running through Samuel and Kings is God’s choice of a leader to represent Him as He implements His Covenant with Israel” (Homer Heater, “A Theology of Samuel and Kings,” BTOT, 117).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>9. 1 King 17:1</td>
<td>10.</td>
<td>11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>13.1 King 17:2-7</td>
<td>14.</td>
<td>15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>17.1 King 17:8-16</td>
<td>18.</td>
<td>19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>21.1 King 17:1 7-24</td>
<td>22.</td>
<td>23.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F. Fallacious Methods of Narrative Interpretation

1. Source Criticism

a) Explanation of Source Criticism

(1) The author of Luke states that "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word." (Luke 1:1-2, NIV)

(a) This implies that in the early church period there were many different sources of material concerning the life of Christ. Luke also states that he "carefully investigated everything from the beginning" (v. 3), so it is reasonable to assume that Luke knew about these sources, read them and used them to compose his own account (v. 3).

(b) It is also reasonable to assume that the other gospel writers did the same (Marshall, p. 139).

(c) Also, internal evidence such as the similarity/dissimilarity of wording (for the same events), content and order suggests the gospel writers had common sources (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 139).

(2) To assume that the synoptic gospels were written completely independently is not a sensible option - there is just too much internal evidence indicating otherwise (Fee & Stuart 1993, p. 122).

(a) The search for sources is much easier and less speculative when there are several parallel accounts, like those found in the synoptic gospels. By examining parallel accounts and noting the agreements and disagreements in wording, ordering of material, omissions, style, ideas and theology and taking into account statements made by church fathers, it is possible to derive hypothetical sources of the synoptic gospels (Marshall 1985, p. 140-144).

(b) If a story is unique to a particular gospel then searching for breaks and dislocations in narrative sequence, stylistic inconsistency, theological inconsistency and historical inconsistency may also be helpful in determining possible sources (Marshall 1985, p. 144-145).
(3) It will not always be possible to identify the written or oral sources of a particular account.

(a) *This does not mean that the account should not be trusted* (Marshall 1985, p. 146).

(b) *In any case, several gospel writers (Matthew, John and perhaps Mark) were actual eye-witnesses.*

(4) The Two-Source or Oxford hypothesis is the one accepted by the vast majority of scholars (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 144).

(a) *This hypothesis states that Mark and a hypothetical document called Q, were the basis for Matthew and Luke.*

(b) *It is suggested that Q contains the verses common to Matthew and Luke but not found in Mark.*

(c) *Matthew and Luke were composed using a combination of Mark, Q and possibly other sources (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 143-144).*

**b) Evaluation of Source Criticism**

(1) If the sources of an account can be identified, it is possible to learn a great deal. The fact that Matthew and Luke usually agree with Mark on the actual words of Jesus indicates they both wanted to preserve Mark's tradition rather than just make up their own.

(2) Source criticism can reveal something about the author's method of writing and particular interests and ideas (Stein 1988, p. 144).

(a) *For example, Matthew seems to focus on the Jews but to be sure of this we need to know what his sources were.*

(b) *If his source was Mark, then this is a reasonable conclusion but if it was the traditions of the Jerusalem church, then this Jewish focus would be inherent in the source rather than Matthew's interest (Marshall 1985, p. 147).*
c) Hermeneutical insights may also be gained. If the earliest text form of an event can be recovered, then it will be possible to see how each gospel writer interpreted that event and how they modified it to emphasize that interpretation (Stein 1988, p. 151).

(1) Many critics have viewed source modifications as corruptions or errors but these changes were made under the inspiration of the Spirit and are still authoritative.

(2) It should also be noted that the canonical text form is inspired. A hypothetical reconstruction of the text is not. It is unwise to make hypothetical sources the basis for theology.

d) The Two-Source hypothesis makes some questionable affirmations in regard to Q material and material unique to Matthew or Luke.

(1) Q is a purely hypothetical document and it is highly unlikely that it was a single written source.

(2) It is far more probable that it was a collection of documents.

2. Tradition Criticism

a) Explanation of Tradition Criticism

(1) Tradition criticism is used to determine the development of traditions from Jesus through the early church to the gospel writer and forms the basis for form and redaction criticism.

(2) It is an attempt to trace the evolution of the form and/or meaning of concepts, words or sayings. For example, tradition criticism is interested in how a parable developed into 2 or 3 different versions (Marshall 1985, p. 165-166).

(3) The basic axioms behind tradition criticism force the critic to be highly sceptical about the authenticity or historicity of the traditions as they are recorded in the gospels. The burden of proof lies with those who wish to take the traditions as historical (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 204).

(4) The 3 basic axioms for determining authentic traditions, rather than those created and modified by the early church are listed in Black & Dockery (1991, p. 205) and are as follows:

(a) Dissimilarity: they are not parallels of Jewish traditions and not reflections of the faith and practices of the early church.
(b) Multiple attestation: whether or not a saying occurs in more than one gospel.

(c) Coherence: if the saying in question has the same form of another saying that has already been shown to be authentic (using the above criteria), then this saying should also be regarded as authentic.

(5) Tradition criticism may be applied to Peter's confession in Mark 8:29 and parallels. Luke adds the words "of God", Matthew adds "the Son of the Living God" and John has "the holy One of God". Therefore, since these 4 parallels each say something different, it is highly unlikely (or so it is claimed) that this saying is actually historical (Marshall 1985, p. 167).

(6) Using tradition criticism some critics have shown that Matthew 18:17 is not authentic, because it goes against the parable of Wheat and Tares and the Dragnet (Matthew 13:47f). It also presupposes a Jewish audience which excludes Gentiles and tax collectors. This is unlike the "historical Jesus" who embraced such people, therefore it must be a later development of the church (Marshall 1985, p. 168).

b) Evaluation of Tradition Criticism

(1) Tradition criticism has done much to undermine the integrity of the gospel accounts. It is far too skeptical and its conclusions are often devoid of supporting evidence.

(2) The axioms for determining authenticity leave much to be desired. The criteria of dissimilarity is far too narrow and therefore only identifies the unique Jesus.

(3) It is ridiculous to expect Jesus' teaching would not have overlapped with Jewish teaching, especially since both were rooted in the Old Testament.

(4) It is even more ridiculous to expect Jesus' teaching to have contributed nothing to the early church. Responding to the message of Jesus is the very essence of Christianity (Marshall 1985, p. 174).


(6) For Matthew 18:17, it seems that this verse has not been correctly understood. This verse is not a put-down of gentiles and tax collectors but simply stating that we should treat unrepentant Christians the same way we would treat non-

(7) There are 4 gospels that do not oppose one another. Therefore it is best to assume everything is authentic unless there is concrete evidence to the contrary. Although the gospels may not record Jesus’ actual words (he spoke in Aramaic and the New Testament was written in Greek) or forms, they do record His essential message for humanity.

(8) Any modification by the gospel authors were done under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

3. Form Criticism

a) Explanation of Form Criticism

(1) Form criticism seeks to get behind the written sources by studying and analyzing the "form" of individual gospel traditions. It describes the characteristics of the various forms and how they emerged in the period of oral transmission in the church (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 176).

(2) The basic axioms of form criticism are as follows:

(a) The gospels are "popular" or "folk" literature and are not the work of just one person but belong to a community. These communities shaped the stories they contain (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 178). Therefore the gospel authors were not authors in the true sense but collectors and editors (Marshall 1985, p. 153).

(b) Most of the material circulated orally and as individual units for at least 20 years (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 178).

(c) Units of tradition were used as the occasion required. Only useful traditions were retained. Only rarely are they recorded in chronological order (Marshall 1985, p. 154).

(d) As units were used they took on a particular form according to their function in the community. The form reflects the thoughts of the early church (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 176). Therefore it is possible to deduce a unit's "life-setting" (German: Sitz im Leben) from its form. (Marshall 1985, p. 154). Life-setting denotes an area of church life such as worship, teaching and evangelism and only rarely does it indicate the actual historical situation that gave rise to the tradition (Marshall 1985, p. 154).
(e) Form criticism assumes the results of source criticism and tradition criticism (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 179).

(3) Rudolf Bultman and Martin Dibelius have identified the following forms:

(a) Paradigms/Pronouncement Stories: These are brief stories which culminate in an authoritative saying of Jesus or a saying about the reaction of onlookers (Marshall 1985, p. 155).

(b) Legends/Stories about Jesus: These are stories told to exalt a great figure and present a person as an example to follow. The term legend does not necessarily mean they are unhistorical although this is often the assumption (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 184).

(c) Tales/Miracle Stories: These are self-contained highly descriptive stories that show pleasure in giving details (Marshall 1985, p. 156).

(d) Sayings/Exhortations: This is independent teaching material such as wisdom sayings, prophetic sayings, legal sayings and "I" sayings (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 184).

(e) Myths: These are narratives showing interactions between mythological characters and humans. The supernatural breaks into human domain (Marshall 1985, p. 157).

(f) Form criticism has exegetical implications in passages like Mark 2:18-20. Mark 2:18-19a is a pronouncement story but vv. 19b-20 do not fit this form. Therefore they must be an addition by the early church (Marshall 1985, p. 159).

b) Evaluation of Form Criticism

(1) One of the problems with form criticism is the form categories are often based on content rather than actual form. Although form and content do influence each other, some categories are simply stylistic descriptions. Also, many sayings and stories have no "common" form and many have "mixed" form. Some may even fall into multiple categories (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 187). If forms have no or little distinction then they couldn't have been created and shaped by the early church, as claimed by many form critics (Marshall 1985, p. 158-159).
(2) For Mark 2:18-20, it all depends on the definition of "pronouncement story". What if the definition is too rigid?

(3) Form critics talk about "law of tradition" as if they are well proven scientific laws of development of oral traditions. This is not the case. Except for Luke, the gospel writers were Jews and therefore it is reasonable to assume transmission of traditions would have occurred in a similar fashion to Rabbinic teachings. Rabbis were concerned with accurate transmission and so would the early church (Stein 1988, p. 187-192). The probability of eyewitnesses keeping checks on the integrity of the traditions is also disregarded by many form critics (Stein 1988, p. 193-203).

4. Redaction Criticism

a) Explanation of Redaction Criticism

(1) Redaction criticism builds on the results of source and tradition criticism. It treasures and examines the editorial work of gospel authors in order to see their emphases and purposes (Stein 1988, p. 238). It seeks to uncover the theology and setting of the author by studying the way they modified traditions, arranged them and stitched them together. It asks why the author included, excluded or modified a particular tradition and tries to identify distinctive patterns, interests and theological ideas (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 199-200).

(2) Redaction Criticism involves analyzing individual traditions comparing it with parallels, in order to identify common and unique phrases and words. It also involves analyzing the whole gospel in comparison with other gospels. The seams (introductions and conclusions) link traditions together, provide setting and often theological emphasis. Summaries and traditions structure give clues to major theological overtones. Unique elements indicate which way the story is going and repeated phrases show emphasis and special interests. As the gospel unfolds individual traditions interact to produce the intended message (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 208-211). Considering an author’s vocabulary and style is also helpful (Marshall 1985, p. 185).

b) Evaluation of Redaction Criticism

(1) Results of redaction criticism are highly subjective and should not be accepted uncritically. The huge variation in results shows this clearly (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 213).

(2) There is no doubt that gospel authors shaped and modified traditions to fit their gospel’s purpose but presuppositions about the nature of traditions, their transmission and modification are

(3) Many critics are highly skeptical and assume every redaction is a creation and therefore unhistorical. However, omission and addition are not criteria for historicity but for style, emphasis and purpose. Not every jot and tittle carries theological weight (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 213). It should also be noted that meaning is found in the overall pericope not the redactions (Black & Dockery 1991, p. 215).

(4) History and theology are not mutually exclusive. There is no reason why an author can not emphasize a theological concept using an historical event. Gospel authors were interpreters but there is no reason to assume they were misinterpreters.

XIII. Interpretation of Parables

A. Introduction to the Interpretation of Parables

1. Necessity

   a) During His earthly ministry, as Jesus went about preaching and teaching, He frequently used parables - cf. Mt 13:1-3, 13:34-3.

   b) It has been estimated that at least one-third of Jesus’ recorded teaching is found in the parables (Wiersbe, “Windows On The Parables”, p. 15)

   c) Certainly many of the most often remembered sayings of Jesus are His parables

2. Definition

   a) In the Greek, 'parabole' means 'to put something alongside something else'. A comparison, or analogy.

   b) But in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Jewish Bible), the word 'parabole’ is used to translate the Hebrew word masal, and this word is used of many different types of literature:

      (1) A proverbial saying (1 Sam 10:12; Ezek 12:22)

      (2) A byword, or proverb (Ps 41:14; 69:11)

      (3) A prophetic utterance (Numbers 23 vs 7 ff)

      (4) An allegorical utterance (Ezekiel 17 vs 1 ff)
(5) A teaching involving similitude (Ezekiel 24:3ff)

(6) A poem (Numbers 21:27-30)

(7) Proverbs, and wisdom sayings (Prov 10:1; 1 Sam 24:13;)

(8) Riddles (Judges 14:12)

(9) Allegorical parable (2 Sam 12)

(10) “While there are many interesting differences between these literary devices, there is a common thread that in various ways runs through them all: they all involve the language and literary device of comparison. Something known is compared to something unknown in order to give understanding of the latter” (Greg Herrick, The Interpretation of Parables: Exploring “Imaginary Gardens with Real Toads,” 1).

c) “In the parable we have figurative language, but we move beyond a single word or phrase which is to be understood figuratively to what might be perceived as a coherent sequence of metaphors or the expansion of a single metaphor” (Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation, 307).

d) “A parable may be an allegory even if [all] its constituent elements do not involve separate metaphors, so long as the overall point of the parable transcends its literal meaning (e.g., the story is about the kingdom of God rather than just, say, farming, fishing or banqueting)” (Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, 42-43).

3. The Purpose of Parables

a) Primary Purpose of Parables—conceal

(1) Jesus began speaking in parables because of the hardness of many people’s hearts- cf. Mt 13:10-17

(a) The disciples’ attitude was such that they were blessed to learn “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” - Mt 13:10-12, 16-17

(b) But because of the hard hearts of many in the multitude, Jesus began speaking to them in parables - Mt 13:13-15; cf. Mk 4:10-12

(c) He would then explain the parables in private to His disciples - Mk 4:33-34
(2) By resorting to parables, Jesus effectively separated the truth seekers from the curiosity seekers!

   (a) Those seeking the truth would say “Explain to us the parable…” - Mt 13:36

   (b) Whereas the simply curious could easily be sent away

(3) Indeed, Jesus used parables to carry out Divine judgment... - cf. Mt 13:12

   (a) “For whoever has (a good heart, listening ears), to him more will be given, and he will have abundance (by virtue of the parable being explained)”

   (b) “But whoever does not have (a good heart, listening ears), even what he has will be taken away from him (by virtue of being sent away with the multitude)”

b) Secondary Purpose of Parables-- “Reveal”

(1) Even though the primary purpose in telling parables was to conceal the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” from the multitude, the disciples did learn by His explanation. By inscripturating these explanations, they are available to us.

(2) Therefore, with the help of the Lord’s explanation of His parables we can learn more about “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” - cf. Mt 13:34-35
B. Meaning(s) in the Interpretation of Parables

1. Fanciful Meaning

   a) Throughout most of the church’s history it has allegorized the parables. The classic example of this, though we might produce many others, is Augustine’s (AD 350-430) treatment of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37):

   b) “…the wounded man stands for Adam; Jerusalem, the heavenly city from which he has fallen; the thieves, the devil who strips Adam of his immortality and leads him to sin; the priest and Levite, the Old Testament Law and ministry which was unable to cleanse and save anyone; the good Samaritan who binds the wounds, Christ who forgives sin; oil and wine; hope and stimulus to work, the animal, the incarnation; the inn, the church; and the innkeeper, the apostle Paul” (Homily 31).

   c) With this method, everything in the story stands for something else. The interpretation of the Good Samaritan by this method is a good example. As far as Augustine was concerned everything from the Priest, to the oil and wine to the saddle on the little donkey's back stood for something else!

2. Single Meaning

   a) Luther and Calvin rejected this allegorical method of interpreting parables.

   b) Adolf Julicher (1899) who also rejected the allegorical method of interpreting parables, insisting instead that the way to interpret the parables was to look for the key teaching point in each one. Thus, the Good Samaritan becomes an illustration of one's neighbor being anyone in need. This is all very well as far as it goes but clearly some of the extended narrative parables make more than one point—i.e., the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Prodigal Son.

3. Complementary Meaning

   a) "The frequent use of contrasting characters suggests that Jesus originally intended in many of his parables both a message for his enemies and one for his disciples" (Blomberg, 88).
b) "Each parable looks slightly different depending on which character a given member of its audience identifies with.... The parts of a particular parable most likely to be invested with allegorical import are the two or three main characters which regularly appear as images of God, his faithful followers and the rebellious in need of repentance" (Ibid., 148-149).

c) "Once we do not restrict a parable to making only one main point, we can see that the parable addresses both of these issues.... It seems unnecessary to choose between these. Each by itself seems somewhat truncated and together they yield good sense.... Several commentators... fail to admit that their encapsulation of the parable's one main point actually combines two independent thoughts" (Ibid., 232, 246, 265).

d) "Debates about which of these principles was the original point of the parable are futile once it is seen that all were intended from the outset. Jeremias, in fact, makes three very similar points in his exposition without acknowledging that they are distinct lessons" (Ibid., 243).

e) "Often the history of interpretation of a given parable discloses that three complementary themes have vied for acceptance as the main point of the story. In no instance has any reason emerged for jettisoning any of these themes, except for the arbitrary assertion that parables make only one point" (Ibid., 252).

f) However, while Blomberg provides an excellent corrective to a reductionism that often pervades modern scholasticism, he goes beyond exegeting the passage. “However, the interpretations he suggests are stated in the form of theological correlation and not exegetical interpretation in the historical or literary context. His statements are, however, invaluable for the bridge between interpretation and contemporary application” (Mark L. Bailey, Op. Cit.).

C. Principles for the Interpretation of Parables

1. Setting of Parable

   a) Historical Situation of Parables

   (1) Read the parables in their original historical situation first.
Therefore, nothing should be read out of them that is not consistent with the customs, etc. employed in them and certainly no later reading of theology or church experience should be read into them.

In other words, no global or particular interpretation should be given any “air time” that would not have been understandable to those to whom these parables were first addressed by Jesus or later communicated by the evangelists.

Stein rightly states the need to ground application in historical interpretation: “Only by attempting to understand the parables in their original *Sitz im Leben* shall we be able to free ourselves from the chains of modern-day fads or trends, whether they be liberalism's general moral truth or existentialism's language event. The greatest reverence we can give to the parables of Jesus is not to treat them as literary accounts that are ends in themselves, but rather to treat them as the parables of Jesus, i.e., as parables Jesus taught and which are filled with his meaning and insight! What he means today by his parables cannot be treated apart from the question of what he meant by them in the first *Sitz im Leben*” (Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables*, 69).

In this way we preserve the distinction between authorial intent (author’s intended meaning) and significance (meaning to me).

**b) Cultural Setting**

"By ‘cultural' is meant the total ways, methods, manners, tools, customs, buildings, institutions, and so forth, by means of which, and through which, a clan, a tribe, or a nation carry on their existence” (Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 152).

Ramm again states, "In the interpretation of every parable it is necessary to recover as much as possible the local color employed in it” (Ibid., 282).

“Augmenting the historical foundation with an awareness of first-century culture allows the parables to retain their true-to-life nature and unlocks the parabolic references to the religious and social cultures of the original settings of the parables” (Mark L. Bailey, “Guidelines for Interpreting Jesus’ Parables,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155/167 [1998]: 33).

Thus, the proper understanding of a parable's historical and cultural contexts is the beginning point for proper interpretation.
c) Literary Setting

(1) Note the literary setting of the parable in the gospel.

(2) This can provide clues to the overall interpretation of the parable, especially its mood and affective force.

(3) “It is not by accident that some [parables] appear in one Gospel and are omitted from others, for on closer examination it will generally be seen that their record is in keeping with the character of the Gospel in which they appear. . . . The Evangelists were instructed by the Holy Spirit not only what to record, but when to record it, and all attempts to "harmonize" produce discord if we forget this” (Ada R. Habershon, The Study of the Parables, 34-35).

2. Content of Parables

a) Note the wording, structure, general progression, plot progress, and suspense.

(1) Ramm speaks of the presence of "accessories." These details "are necessary for the drapery of the parable, but are not part of the meaning.” Various details often play important roles, but on the other hand they may be given simply to add backdrop to the story.

(2) “The background details of a parable help focus attention on the main point(s) in the foreground of the parable. A parable may be compared to a wheel, with the central point being the hub, and the details being the spokes. The central truth(s) in a parable may be supported by a cast of subordinate or coordinate truths (Zuck, Basic Bible Interpretation, 215-17).

(3) Remember these are stories and need to be read as such.

(4) In this connection it is helpful to note any changes in the same parable in another gospel.

(5) See appendix of the parables of Jesus

b) Characters of Parables

(1) Note the main characters/things in the parable and any parallels and or contrasts between them.

(2) The main characters are often clues as to the main points being asserted.
3. Audiences of Parables

a) Recognize that there are two audiences being addressed by the parables.

b) There is first the audience to whom Jesus originally spoke, e.g., the Scribes and Pharisees, and the audience of the early church to whom the evangelists addressed their writings.

c) A different audience signifies at slightly different functions for the parables and thus little different emphasis in interpretation.

4. Stress of Parables

a) Avoid over-allegorizing

b) Note carefully what occurs at the end of a parable as a (the) clue to the meaning of the parable. This is called the rule of "end stress."

(1) Dodd called this emphasis on the central truth "the most important principle of interpretation" (C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, 7).

(2) "Like the similitude, the parable is so arranged that the point of comparison comes out clearly. The narrative of a parable has a strong direct flow, which is determined by the point of comparison. Without halts and detours the narrative runs on to the point of comparison. All the individual features of the narrative join in this dramatic movement, and have a function in the development of the narrative. Only when the flow of the narrative has reached its goal is the listener released from suspense. The point of comparison forms the end of the parable" (Eta Linnemann, *Parables of Jesus: Introduction and Exposition*, 11).

(3) Trench writes, "It will much help us in the matter of determining what is essential and what is not, if, before we attempt to explain the parts we obtain a firm grasp of the central truth which the parable would set forth, and distinguish it in the mind as sharply and accurately as we can from all cognate truths which border upon it; for only seen from that middle point will the different parts appear in their true light" (Richard C. Trench, *Notes on the Parables of Our*, 35).
Stein suggests asking seven questions to help identify the main point of the parables (Robert H. Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*, 56):

1. What terms are repeated in the parable? Which are not?
2. Upon what does the parable dwell, i.e., to what or to whom does the parable devote the most space?
3. What is the main contrast found in the parable?
4. What comes at the end of the parable? [This has been called "the rule of end stress."
5. What is spoken in direct discourse in the parable? [Frequently what is most important in the parable appears in direct discourse.]
6. What characters appear in the parable? Which are the least important? Which are the two most important characters? [Usually a parable focuses on two characters to establish its main point.]
7. How would you have told the parable? If Jesus told it differently, does this reveal anything?

5. Analogy of Faith in Parables

a) Seek to place the teaching of the parable in the overall ministry of Jesus and his teaching as a whole.

b) In this way, it will be seen that most of his parables deal with the kingdom of God, either its inauguration or consummation, and discipleship within the present phase of the kingdom in expectation of the consummation.

1. Most expositors agree that the concept of the kingdom is the primary referent of Jesus' parables (i.e., Hunter, *Interpreting the Parables*, 39).
2. This is confirmed by the frequent usage of the introductory formula, "The kingdom of heaven is like. . . ."
3. The reason for the centrality of the kingdom in the parables is the priority it held in Jesus' entire ministry. It was the message of John (Matt. 3:2), Jesus (4:17), and the disciples (10:5–7).
4. As Hope observed, "all of [the parables] deal with one great subject, and one great subject only, namely, the kingdom of
God” Norman Hope, "The Interpretation of Christ's Parables," Interpretation 6 [July 1952]: 303).

(5) Ramm states, “Many of the parables directly state that they are about the kingdom, and others not specifically stated cannot be divorced from the kingdom. Adequate interpretation of the parables must now be based upon an understanding of the kingdom of God and the relationship of Jesus Christ and His gospel to that kingdom” (Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, 153).

6. Application of Parables

a) Through continued prayer, meditation, and seeking, discern the meaning of the parable for the original hearers and its significance for you.

b) State the major theme and variations in sentences. Prayerfully respond.

c) Proper application is based on the timeless principles contained in the message of the parables.

(1) Principles "summarize the essence of a Bible passage in terms that are applicable to a broad spectrum of readers and situations” (Roy B. Zuck, "Application: Biblical Hermeneutics and Exposition," in Walvoord: A Tribute, ed. Donald K. Campbell, 26.

(2) "To principalize is to discover in any narrative the basic spiritual, moral, or theological principles” (Ibid., 27).

(3) This principle of truth may then be applied to many situations in the reader's life.

D. Practicum of the Interpretation of Parables.


a) The life-story analyzed to find the main theme or point(s), 14:28-32.

(1) To whom was it written?

(a) Cultural Setting

(b) Historical Setting
(c) Literary Setting (Luke’s Gospel depicts Christ as the True and Perfect Son of Man)

(2) Why was it written?

(3) What was written?

   (a) Content Analysis

   (b) Character Analysis

   (c) Stress Analysis

b) The lesson applied to our lives, 14:25-27,32-35.

   (1) Principle being taught

   (2) Analogy of Faith

   (3) Application to me


   a) The life-story analyzed to find the main theme or point(s), 16:1-8.

      (1) To whom was it written?

         (a) Cultural Setting

         (b) Historical Setting

         (c) Literary Setting (Luke’s Gospel depicts Christ as the True and Perfect Son of Man)

      (2) Why was it written?

      (3) What was written?

         (a) Content Analysis

         (b) Character Analysis

         (c) Stress Analysis

   b) The lesson applied to our lives, 16:9-13.

      (1) Principle being taught

      (2) Analogy of Faith

      (3) Application to me
3. The parable of the workers in the vineyard, Matthew 20:1-16.

   a) The life-story analyzed to find the main theme or point(s), 20:1-16.

      (1) To whom was it written?

         (a) Cultural Setting

         (b) Historical Setting

         (c) Literary Setting (Matthew’s Gospel depicts Christ as the Messianic King)

      (2) Why was it written?

      (3) What was written?

         (a) Content Analysis

         (b) Character Analysis

         (c) Stress Analysis

   b) The lesson applied to our lives, 20:1-16.

      (1) Principle being taught

      (2) Analogy of Faith

      (3) Application to me

4. The parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great value, Matthew 13:44-46.

   a) The life-story analyzed to find the main theme, point(s), 13:44a, 45.

      (1) To whom was it written?

         (a) Cultural Setting

         (b) Historical Setting

         (c) Literary Setting (Matthew’s Gospel depicts Christ as the Messianic King)

      (2) Why was it written?

      (3) What was written?
(a) Content Analysis

(b) Character Analysis

(c) Stress Analysis

b) The lesson applied to our lives, 13:44b, 46.

(1) Principle being taught

(2) Analogy of Faith

(3) Application to me
### XIV. Appendix of Jesus’ Parables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markan Parables</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Luke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unshrunk Cloth</td>
<td>2:21</td>
<td>9:16</td>
<td>5:36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Wine</td>
<td>2:22</td>
<td>9:17</td>
<td>5:37-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding the Strong Man</td>
<td>3:20-29</td>
<td>12:22-32</td>
<td>11:14-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soils</td>
<td>4:1-20</td>
<td>13:1-23</td>
<td>8:4-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lamp</td>
<td>4:21-25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed Growing Secretly</td>
<td>4:26-29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budding Fig Tree</td>
<td>13:28-32</td>
<td>24:32-36</td>
<td>21:29-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doorkeeper’s Watch</td>
<td>13:34-36</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:35-38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matthean Parables</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good and Bad Fruit</td>
<td>7:15-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat and Tares</td>
<td>13:24-30, 36-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragnet</td>
<td>13:47-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Treasure</td>
<td>13:44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant and Fine Pearls</td>
<td>13:45-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicked Slave</td>
<td>18:21-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers in the Vineyard</td>
<td>20:1-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Two Sons</td>
<td>21:28-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wise and Foolish Maidens</td>
<td>25:1-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sheep and Goats</td>
<td>25:31-46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lukan Parables</th>
<th>Luke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Two Debtors</td>
<td>7:40-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Good Samaritan</td>
<td>10:25-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Friend at Midnight</td>
<td>11:5-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rich Fool</td>
<td>12:13-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barren Fig Tree</td>
<td>13:6-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tower Builder</td>
<td>14:28-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Warrior King</td>
<td>14:31-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lost Sheep</td>
<td>15:1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lost Coin</td>
<td>15:8-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prodigal Son (“two sons”)</td>
<td>15:11-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unjust Steward</td>
<td>16:1-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rich Man and Lazarus</td>
<td>16:19-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lowly Servant</td>
<td>17:7-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unjust Judge</td>
<td>18:1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pharisee and the Tax</td>
<td>18:9-14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Parallels in Matt/Luke

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallels in Matt/Luke</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Luke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wise and Foolish Builders</td>
<td>7:24-27</td>
<td>6:46-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Narrow Door/Gate</td>
<td>7:13-14</td>
<td>13:23-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaven</td>
<td>13:33</td>
<td>13:20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lost Sheep</td>
<td>18:12-14</td>
<td>15:1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wedding Banquet</td>
<td>22:1-14</td>
<td>14:15-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Thief in the Night</td>
<td>24:42-44</td>
<td>12:39-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faithful and Unfaithful</td>
<td>24:45-51</td>
<td>12:42-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Talents</td>
<td>25:14-30</td>
<td>19:12-27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Johannine Parables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Johannine Parables</th>
<th>John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The True Vine</td>
<td>15:1-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### XV. Appendix: Application Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exegetical</th>
<th>Theological</th>
<th>Homiletical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biblical Language</td>
<td>Timeless Language</td>
<td>Contemporary Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-bound to biblical author and audience</td>
<td>All time with no particular audience</td>
<td>Time-bound to contemporary preacher and audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Nontechical</td>
<td>Applicational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explication oriented</td>
<td>Deep Structure</td>
<td>Motivation Oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual Order of the Passage</td>
<td>Logical order of the argument</td>
<td>Communication order of the homiletical proposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides analytical detail</td>
<td>Provides integrated truth</td>
<td>Provides Interest and Relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete and Specific</td>
<td>Universal and General</td>
<td>Concrete and Specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicative and Declarative</td>
<td>Indicative and Declarative</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Text: 1 Corinthians 8–10*

- **Exegetical:** The purpose for which Paul commanded the Corinthian believers not to eat meat offered to idols was that they would not cause their weaker brother in Christ to eat against his conscience.
Theological: Love for a fellow believer limits expressions of Christian liberty.

Homiletical: (Since your social drinking causes your weaker brother to drink against his conscience), stop drinking alcohol.

Text: Matthew 8:1–17

Exegetical: Jesus’ healing the leper (a physical outcast), the Gentile slave (a moral outcast), and Peter’s mother-in-law (a social outcast) demonstrated to Matthew’s Jewish readers His messianic authority over disease and His compassion toward the needy.

Theological: Acceptance into God’s kingdom rests on Christ’s willingness and ability to accept the needy.

Homiletical: To unbelievers: Trust Jesus Christ to bring you into His kingdom. Or to believers: Tell others that they can be accepted by God through Jesus Christ.

Text: Psalm 2

Exegetical: The reason the psalmist exhorted the heathen nations to stop rebelling against the Lord’s Messiah and to start reverencing Him was that those who rebel will be punished, but those who reverence Him will be blessed.

Theological: Exchanging rebellion for reverence for Jesus Christ releases God’s blessing.

Homiletical: To unbelievers: (To reverence God’s Son Jesus) turn from your rebellion. Or to believers: (To enjoy God’s continued blessing) express your submission to Christ Jesus.

Text: Genesis 50:15–21

Exegetical: The basis of Joseph’s forgiveness of his brothers was his faith in God’s sovereign ability to avenge evil and His power to bring good out of evil.

Theological: Faith in God’s sovereign working motivates forgiveness.

Homiletical: (In order to forgive others) trust God’s sovereign ways.

Text: Numbers 21:4–9

Exegetical: Looking at the serpent erected by Moses on a pole in the wilderness according to the Lord’s instruction provided physical healing for the rebellious Israelites who had been bitten by the poisonous serpents.

Theological: Faith in God’s provision for sin in Christ results in salvation.

Homiletical: Trust Jesus as your Savior from sin.

Text: Hosea 1–3

Exegetical: Hosea’s faithful love for his faithless wife Gomer, which resulted in her restoration through discipline, represented God’s faithful love for faithless Israel.
Theological: No problem in life can separate God’s chosen ones from His blessing.

Homiletical: Respond with willing obedience to God’s desire to bless you.

XVI. Appendix: Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics

a) With commentary by Norman L. Geisler*

2. Preface

Summit I of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy took place in Chicago on October 26-28, 1978 for the purpose of affirming afresh the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture, making clear the understanding of it and warning against its denial. In the years that have passed since Summit I, God has blessed that effort in ways surpassing most anticipations. A gratifying flow of helpful literature on the doctrine of inerrancy as well as a growing commitment to its value give cause to pour forth praise to our great God.

The work of Summit I had hardly been completed when it became evident that there was yet another major task to be tackled. While we recognize that belief in the inerrancy of Scripture is basic to maintaining its authority, the values of that commitment are only as real as one’s understanding of the meaning of Scripture. Thus, the need for Summit II. For two years plans were laid and papers were written on themes relating to hermeneutical principles and practices. The culmination of this effort has been a meeting in Chicago on November 10-13, 1982 at which we, the undersigned, have participated.

In similar fashion to the Chicago Statement of 1978, we herewith present these affirmations and denials as an expression of the results of our labors to clarify hermeneutical issues and principles. We do not claim completeness or systematic treatment of the entire subject, but these affirmations and denials represent a consensus of the approximately one hundred participants and observers gathered at this conference. It has been a broadening experience to engage in dialogue, and it is our prayer that God will use the product of our diligent efforts to enable us and others to more correctly handle the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

---

3. Article I

**WE AFFIRM** that the normative authority of Holy Scripture is the authority of God Himself, and is attested by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church.

**WE DENY** the legitimacy of separating the authority of Christ from the authority of Scripture, or of opposing the one to the other.

This first article affirms that the authority of Scripture cannot be separated from the authority of God. Whatever the Bible affirms, God affirms. And what the Bible affirms (or denies), it affirms (or denies) with the very authority of God. Such authority is normative for all believers; it is the canon or rule of God.


The Denial points out that one cannot reject the divine authority of Scripture without thereby impugning the authority of Christ, who attested Scripture's divine authority. Thus it is wrong to claim one can accept the full authority of Christ without acknowledging the complete authority of Scripture.

4. Article II

**WE AFFIRM** that as Christ is God and Man in One Person, so Scripture is, indivisibly, God's Word in human language.

**WE DENY** that the humble, human form of Scripture entails errancy any more than the humanity of Christ, even in His humiliation, entails sin.

Here an analogy is drawn between Christ and Scripture. Both Christ and Scripture have dual aspects of divinity and humanity, indivisibly united in one expression. Both Christ and Scripture were conceived by an act of the Holy Spirit. Both involve the use of fallible human agents. But both produced a theanthropic result; one a sinless person and the other an errorless book. However, like all analogies, there is a difference. Christ is one person uniting two natures whereas Scripture is one written expression uniting two authors (God and man). This difference notwithstanding, the strength of the likeness in the analogy points to the inseparable unity between divine and human dimensions of Scripture so that one aspect cannot be in error while the other is not.

The Denial is directed at a contemporary tendency to separate the human aspects of Scripture from the divine and allow for error in the former. By contrast the framers of this article believe that the human form of Scripture can no more be found in error than Christ
could be found in sin. That is to say, the Word of God (i.e., the Bible) is as necessarily perfect in its human manifestation as was the Son of God in His human form.

5. Article III

**WE AFFIRM** that the Person and work of Jesus Christ are the central focus of the entire Bible.

**WE DENY** that any method of interpretation which rejects or obscures the Christ-centeredness of Scripture is correct.

This Affirmation follows the teaching of Christ that He is the central theme of Scripture (Matt. 5:17; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Heb. 10:7). This is to say that focus on the person and work of Christ runs throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. To be sure there are other and tangential topics, but the person and work of Jesus Christ are central.

In view of the focus of Scripture on Christ, the Denial stresses a hermeneutical obligation to make this Christocentric message clear in the expounding of Scripture. As other articles (cf. Article XV) emphasize the "literal" interpretation of Scripture, this article is no license for allegorization and unwarranted typology which see Christ portrayed in every detail of Old Testament proclamation. The article simply points to the centrality of Old Testament's mission in the unfolding of God's revelation to man.

Neither is there any thought in this article of making the role of Christ more ultimate than that of the Father. What is in view here is the focus of Scripture and not the ultimate source or object of the whole plan of redemption.

6. Article IV

**WE AFFIRM** that the Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture acts through it today to work faith in its message.

**WE DENY** that the Holy Spirit ever teaches to any one anything which is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

Here stress is laid on the fact that the Holy Spirit not only is the source of Scripture, but also works to produce faith in Scripture He has inspired. Without this ministry of the Holy Spirit, belief in the truth of Scripture would not occur.

The Denial is directed at those alleged "revelations" which some claim to have but which are contrary to Scripture. No matter how sincere or genuinely felt, no dream, vision, or supposed revelation which contradicts Scripture ever comes from the Holy Spirit. For the utterances of the Holy Spirit are all harmonious and noncontradictory (see Article XX).
7. Article V

**WE AFFIRM** that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives.

**WE DENY** that the natural man is able to discern spiritually the biblical message apart from the Holy Spirit.

The design of this article is to indicate that the ministry of the Holy Spirit extends beyond the inspiration of Scripture to its very application to the lives of the believer. Just as no one calls Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:3), so no one can appropriate the message of Scripture to his life apart from the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.

The Denial stresses the truth that the natural man does not receive the spiritual message of Scripture. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit there is no welcome for its truth in an unregenerate heart.

This does not imply that a non-Christian is unable to understand the meaning of any Scripture. It means that whatever he may perceive of the message of Scripture, that without the Holy Spirit's work he will not welcome the message in his heart.

8. Article VI

**WE AFFIRM** that the Bible expresses God's truth in propositional statements, and we declare that biblical truth is both objective and absolute. We further affirm that a statement is true if it represents matters as they actually are, but is an error if it misrepresents the facts.

**WE DENY** that, while Scripture is able to make us wise unto salvation, biblical truth should be defined in terms of this function. We further deny that error should be defined as that which willfully deceives.

Since hermeneutics is concerned with understanding the truth of Scripture, attention is directed here to the nature of truth. Several significant affirmations are made about the nature of truth.

First, in contrast to contemporary relativism it is declared that truth is absolute. Second, as opposed to subjectivism it is acknowledged that truth is objective. Finally, in opposition to existential and pragmatic views of truth, this article affirms that truth is what corresponds to reality. This same point was made in the "Chicago Statement on Inerrancy" (1978) in Article XIII and the commentary on it.

The Denial makes it evident that views which redefine an error to mean what "misleads," rather than what is a mistake, must be rejected. This redefinition of the word "error" is both contrary to Scripture and to common sense. In Scripture the word error is used of unintentional acts (Lev. 4:2) as well as intentional ones. Also, in
common parlance a statement is in error if it is a factual mistake, even if there was no intention to mislead anyone by it. So to suggest that the Bible contains mistakes, but that these are not errors so long as they do not mislead, is contrary to both Scripture and ordinary usage.

By this subtle redefinition of error to mean only what misleads but not what misrepresents, some have tried to maintain that the Bible is wholly true (in that it never misleads) and yet that it may have some mistakes in it. This position is emphatically rejected by the confessors of this document.

9. Article VII

**WE AFFIRM** that the meaning expressed in each biblical text is single, definite and fixed.

**WE DENY** that the recognition of this single meaning eliminates the variety of its application.

The Affirmation here is directed at those who claim a "double" or "deeper" meaning to Scripture than that expressed by the authors. It stresses the unity and fixity of meaning as opposed to those who find multiple and pliable meanings. What a passage means is fixed by the author and is not subject to change by readers. This does not imply that further revelation on the subject cannot help one come to a fuller understanding, but simply that the meaning given in a text is not changed because additional truth is revealed subsequently.

Meaning is also definite in that there are defined limits by virtue of the author's expressed meaning in the given linguistic form and cultural context. Meaning is determined by an author; it is discovered by the readers.

The Denial adds the clarification that simply because Scripture has one meaning does not imply that its messages cannot be applied to a variety of individuals or situations. While the interpretation is one, the applications can be many.

10. Article VIII

**WE AFFIRM** that the Bible contains teachings and mandates which apply to all cultural and situational contexts and other mandates which the Bible itself shows apply only to particular situations.

**WE DENY** that the distinctions between the universal and particular mandates of Scripture can be determined by cultural and situational factors. We further deny that universal mandates may ever be treated as culturally or situationally relative.

In view of the tendency of many to relativize the message of the Bible by accommodating it to changing cultural situations, this Affirmation proclaims the universality of biblical teachings. There are commands which transcend all cultural barriers and are binding on all men everywhere. To be sure, some biblical injunctions are
directed to specific situations, but even these are normative to the particular situation(s) to which they speak. However, there are commands in Scripture which speak universally to the human situation and are not bound to particular cultures or situations.

The Denial addresses the basis of the distinction between universal and particular situations. It denies that the grounds of this distinction are relative or purely cultural. It further denies the legitimacy of relativizing biblical absolutes by reducing them to purely cultural mandates.

The meaning of this article is that whatever the biblical text means is binding. And what is meant to be universally binding should not be relegated to particular situations any more than what is meant to apply only to particular circumstances should be promulgated as universally applicable.

There is an attempt here to strike a balance between command and culture by recognizing that a command transcends culture, even though it speaks to and is expressed in a particular culture. Thus while the situation (or circumstances) may help us to discover the right course of action, the situation never determines what is right. God's laws are not situationally determined.

11. Article IX

**WE AFFIRM** that the term hermeneutics, which historically signified the rules of exegesis, may properly be extended to cover all that is involved in the process of perceiving what the biblical revelation means and how it bears on our lives.

**WE DENY** that the message of Scripture derives from, or is dictated by, the interpreter's understanding. Thus we deny that the "horizons" of the biblical writer and the interpreter may rightly "fuse" in such a way that what the text communicates to the interpreter is not ultimately controlled by the expressed meaning of the Scripture.

The primary thrust of this Affirmation is definitional. It desires to clarify the meaning of the term hermeneutics by indicating that it includes not only perception of the declared meaning of a text but also an understanding of the implications that text has for one's life. Thus, hermeneutics is more than biblical exegesis. It is not only the science that leads forth the meaning of a passage but also that which enables one (by the Holy Spirit) to understand the spiritual implications the truth(s) of this passage has for Christian living.

The Denial notes that the meaning of a passage is not derived from or dictated by the interpreter. Rather, meaning comes from the author who wrote it. Thus the reader's understanding has no hermeneutically definitive role. Readers must listen to the meaning of a text and not attempt to legislate it. Of course, the meaning listened to should be applied to the reader's life. But the need or desire for specific application should not color the interpretation of a passage.
12. Article X

**WE AFFIRM** that Scripture communicates God's truth to us verbally through a wide variety of literary forms.

**WE DENY** that any of the limits of human language render Scripture inadequate to convey God's message.

This Affirmation is a logical literary extension of Article II which acknowledges the humanity of Scripture. The Bible is God's Word, but it is written in human words; thus, revelation is "verbal." Revelation is "propositional" (Article VI) because it expresses certain propositional truth. Some prefer to call it "sentential" because the truth is expressed in sentences. Whatever the term--verbal, propositional, or sentential--the Bible is a human book which uses normal literary forms. These include parables, satire, irony, hyperbole, metaphor, simile, poetry, and even allegory (e.g., Ezek. 16-17).

As an expression in finite, human language, the Bible has certain limitations in a similar way that Christ as a man had certain limitations. This means that God adapted Himself through human language so that His eternal truth could be understood by man in a temporal world.

Despite the obvious fact of the limitations of any finite linguistic expression, the Denial is quick to point out that these limits do not render Scripture an inadequate means of communicating God's truth. For while there is a divine adaptation (via language) to human finitude there is no accommodation to human error. Error is not essential to human nature. Christ was human and yet He did not err. Adam was human before he erred. So simply because the Bible is written in human language does not mean it must err. In fact, when God uses human language there is a supernatural guarantee that it will not be in error.

13. Article XI

**WE AFFIRM** that translations of the text of Scripture can communicate knowledge of God across all temporal and cultural boundaries.

**WE DENY** that the meaning of biblical texts is so tied to the culture out of which they came that understanding of the same meaning in other cultures is impossible.

Simply because the truth of Scripture was conveyed by God in the original writings does not mean that it cannot be translated into another language. This article affirms the translatability of God's truth into other cultures. It affirms that since truth is transcendent (see Article XX) it is not culture-bound. Hence the truth of God expressed in a first-century culture is not limited to that culture. For the nature of truth is not limited to any particular medium through which it is expressed.
The Denial notes that since meaning is not inextricably tied to a given culture it can be adequately expressed in another culture. Thus the message of Scripture need not be relativized by translation. What is expressed can be the same even though how it is expressed differs.

14. Article XII

**WE AFFIRM** that in the task of translating the Bible and teaching it in the context of each culture, only those functional equivalents which are faithful to the content of biblical teaching should be employed.

**WE DENY** the legitimacy of methods which either are insensitive to the demands of cross-cultural communication or distort biblical meaning in the process.

Whereas the previous article treated the matter of the translatability of divine truth, this article speaks to the adequacy of translations. Obviously not every expression in another language will appropriately convey the meaning of Scripture. In view of this, caution is urged that the translators remain faithful to the truth of the Scripture being translated by the proper choice of the words used to translate it.

This article treats the matter of "functional" equivalence. Often there is no actual or literal equivalence between expressions in one language and a word-for-word translation into another language. What is expressed (meaning) is the same but how it is expressed (the words) is different. Hence a different construction can be used to convey the same meaning.

The Denial urges sensitivity to cultural matters so that the same truth may be conveyed, even though different terms are being used. Without this awareness missionary activity can be severely hampered.

15. Article XIII

**WE AFFIRM** that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of biblical study.

**WE DENY** that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.

The awareness of what kind of literature one is interpreting is essential to a correct understanding of the text. A correct genre judgment should be made to ensure correct understanding. A parable, for example, should not be treated like a chronicle, nor should poetry be interpreted as though it were a straightforward narrative. Each passage has its own genre, and the interpreter should be cognizant of the specific kind of literature it is as he
attempts to interpret it. Without genre recognition an interpreter can be misled in his understanding of the passage. For example, when the prophet speaks of "trees clapping their hands" (Isa. 55:12) one could assume a kind of animism unless he recognized that this is poetry and not prose.

The Denial is directed at an illegitimate use of genre criticism by some who deny the truth of passages which are presented as factual. Some, for instance, take Adam to be a myth, whereas in Scripture he is presented as a real person. Others take Jonah to be an allegory when he is presented as a historical person and so referred to by Christ (Mat. 12:40-42). This Denial is an appropriate and timely warning not to use genre criticism as a cloak for rejecting the truth of Scripture.

16. Article XIV

**WE AFFIRM** that the biblical record of events, discourses and sayings, though presented in a variety of appropriate literary forms, corresponds to historical fact.

**WE DENY** that any event, discourse or saying reported in Scripture was invented by the biblical writers or by the traditions they incorporated.

This article combines the emphases of Articles VI and XIII. While acknowledging the legitimacy of literary forms, this article insists that any record of events presented in Scripture must correspond to historical fact. That is, no reported event, discourse, or saying should be considered imaginary.

The Denial is even more clear than the Affirmation. It stresses that any discourse, saying, or event reported in Scripture must actually have occurred. This means that any hermeneutic or form of biblical criticism which claims that something was invented by the author must be rejected. This does not mean that a parable must be understood to represent historical facts, since a parable does not (by its very genre) purport to report an event or saying but simply to illustrate a point.

17. Article XV

**WE AFFIRM** the necessity of interpreting the Bible according to its literal, or normal, sense. The literal sense is the grammatical-historical sense, that is, the meaning which the writer expressed. Interpretation according to the literal sense will take account of all figures of speech and literary forms found in the text.

**WE DENY** the legitimacy of any approach to Scripture that attributes to it meaning which the literal sense does not support.

The literal sense of Scripture is strongly affirmed here. To be sure the English word literal carries some problematic connotations with it. Hence the words normal and grammatical-historical are used to
explain what is meant. The literal sense is also designated by the more descriptive title grammatical-historical sense. This means the correct interpretation is the one which discovers the meaning of the text in its grammatical forms and in the historical, cultural context in which the text is expressed.

The Denial warns against attributing to Scripture any meaning not based in a literal understanding, such as mythological or allegorical interpretations. This should not be understood as eliminating typology or designated allegory or other literary forms which include figures of speech (see Articles X, XIII, and XIV).

18. Article XVI

**WE AFFIRM** that legitimate critical techniques should be used in determining the canonical text and its meaning.

**WE DENY** the legitimacy of allowing any method of biblical criticism to question the truth or integrity of the writer's expressed meaning, or of any other scriptural teaching.

Implied here is an approval of legitimate techniques of "lower criticism" or "textual criticism." It is proper to use critical techniques in order to discover the true text of Scripture, that is, the one which represents the original one given by the biblical authors.

Whereas critical methodology can be used to establish which of the texts are copies of the inspired original, it is illegitimate to use critical methods to call into question whether something in the original text is true. In other words, proper "lower criticism" is valid but negative "higher criticism" which rejects truths of Scripture is invalid.

19. Article XVII

**WE AFFIRM** the unity, harmony and consistency of Scripture and declare that it is its own best interpreter.

**WE DENY** that Scripture may be interpreted in such a way as to suggest that one passage corrects or militates against another. We deny that later writers of Scripture misinterpreted earlier passages of Scripture when quoting from or referring to them.

Two points are made in the Affirmation, the unity of Scripture and its self-interpreting ability. Since the former is treated elsewhere (Article XXI), we will comment on the latter here. Not only is the Bible always correct in interpreting itself (see Article XVIII), but it is the "best interpreter" of itself.

Another point made here is that comparing Scripture with Scripture is an excellent help to an interpreter. For one passage sheds light on another. Hence the first commentary the interpreter should consult on a passage is what the rest of Scripture may say on that text.
The Denial warns against the assumption that an understanding of one passage can lead the interpreter to reject the teaching of another passage. One passage may help him better comprehend another but it will never contradict another.

This last part of the Denial is particularly directed to those who believe the New Testament writers misinterpret the Old Testament, or that they attribute meaning to an Old Testament text not expressed by the author of that text. While it is acknowledged that there is sometimes a wide range of application for a text, this article affirms that the interpretation of a biblical text by another biblical writer is always within the confines of the meaning of the first text.

20. Article XVIII

**WE AFFIRM** that the Bible’s own interpretation of itself is always correct, never deviating from, but rather elucidating, the single meaning of the inspired text. The single meaning of a prophet’s words includes, but is not restricted to, the understanding of those words by the prophet and necessarily involves the intention of God evidenced in the fulfillment of those words.

**WE DENY** that the writers of Scripture always understood the full implications of their own words.

This Affirmation was perhaps the most difficult to word. The first part of the Affirmation builds on Article VII which declared that Scripture has only one meaning, and simply adds that whenever the Bible comments on another passage of Scripture it does so correctly. That is, the Bible never misinterprets itself. It always correctly understands the meaning of the passage it comments on (see Article XVII). For example, that Paul misinterprets Moses is to say that Paul erred. This view is emphatically rejected in favor of the inerrancy of all Scripture.

The problem in the second statement of the Affirmation revolves around whether God intended more by a passage of Scripture than the human author did. Put in this way, evangelical scholars are divided on the issue, even though there is unity on the question of "single meaning." Some believe that this single meaning may be fuller than the purview of the human author, since God had far more in view than did the prophet when he wrote it. The wording here is an attempt to include reference to the fulfillment of a prophecy (of which God was obviously aware when He inspired it) as part of the single meaning which God and the prophet shared. However, the prophet may not have been conscious of the full implications of this meaning when he wrote it.

The way around the difficulty was to note that there is only one meaning to a passage which both God and the prophet affirmed, but that this meaning may not always be fully "evidenced" until the prophecy is fulfilled. Furthermore, God, and not necessarily the prophets, was fully aware of the fuller implications that would be manifested in the fulfillment of this single meaning.
It is important to preserve single meaning without denying that God had more in mind than the prophet did. A distinction needs to be made, then, between what God was conscious of concerning an affirmation (which, in view of His foreknowledge and omniscience, was far more) and what He and the prophet actually expressed in the passage. The Denial makes this point clear by noting that biblical authors were not always fully aware of the implications of their own affirmations.

21. Article XIX

**WE AFFIRM** that any preunderstandings which the interpreter brings to Scripture should be in harmony with scriptural teaching and subject to correction by it.

**WE DENY** that Scripture should be required to fit alien preunderstandings, inconsistent with itself, such as naturalism, evolutionism, scientism, secular humanism, and relativism.

The question of preunderstanding is a crucial one in contemporary hermeneutics. The careful wording of the Affirmation does not discuss the issue of whether one should approach Scripture with a particular preunderstanding, but simply which kinds of preunderstanding one has are legitimate. This question is answered by affirming that only those preunderstandings which are compatible with the teaching of Scripture are legitimate. In fact, the statement goes further and demands that all preunderstanding be subject to "correction" by the teaching of Scripture.

The point of this article is to avoid interpreting Scripture through an alien grid or filter which obscures or negates its true message. For it acknowledges that one's preunderstanding will affect his understanding of a text. Hence to avoid misinterpreting Scripture one must be careful to examine his own presuppositions in the light of Scripture.

22. Article XX

**WE AFFIRM** that since God is the author of all truth, all truths, biblical and extrabiblical, are consistent and cohere, and that the Bible speaks truth when it touches on matters pertaining to nature, history, or anything else. We further affirm that in some cases extra-biblical data have value for clarifying what Scripture teaches, and for prompting correction of faulty interpretations.

**WE DENY** that extrabiblical views ever disprove the teaching of Scripture or hold priority over it.

What is in view here is not so much the nature of truth (which is treated in Article VI), but the consistency and coherence of truth.

This is directed at those views which consider truth paradoxical or contradictory. This article declares that a proper hermeneutics
avoids contradictions, since God never affirms as true two propositions, one of which is logically the opposite of the other.

Further, this Affirmation recognizes that not all truth is in the Bible (though all that is affirmed in the Bible is true). God has revealed Himself in nature and history as well as in Scripture. However, since God is the ultimate Author of all truth, there can be no contradiction between truths of Scripture and the true teachings of science and history.

Although only the Bible is the normative and infallible rule for doctrine and practice, nevertheless what one learns from sources outside Scripture can occasion a reexamination and reinterpretation of Scripture. For example, some have taught the world to be square because the Bible refers to “the four corners of the earth” (Isa. 11:12). But scientific knowledge of the spherical nature of the globe leads to a correction of this faulty interpretation. Other clarifications of our understanding of the biblical text are possible through the study of the social sciences.

However, whatever prompting and clarifying of Scripture that extrabiblical studies may provide, the final authority for what the Bible teaches rests in the text of Scripture itself and not in anything outside it (except in God Himself). The Denial makes clear this priority of the teaching of God’s scriptural revelation over anything outside it.

23. Article XXI

WE AFFIRM the harmony of special with general revelation and therefore of biblical teaching with the facts of nature.

WE DENY that any genuine scientific facts are inconsistent with the true meaning of any passage of Scripture.

This article continues the discussion of the previous article by noting the harmony of God’s general revelation (outside Scripture) and His special revelation in Scripture. It is acknowledged by all that certain interpretations of Scripture and some opinions of scientists will contradict each other. However, it is insisted here that the truth of Scripture and the facts of science never contradict each other.

"Genuine" science will always be in accord with Scripture. Science, however, based on naturalistic presuppositions will inevitably come in conflict with the supernatural truths of Scripture.

Far from denying a healthy interchange between scientific theory and biblical interpretation, the framers of this statement welcome such. Indeed, it is acknowledged (in article XX) that the exegete can learn from the scientist. What is denied is that we should accept scientific views that contradict Scripture or that they should be given an authority above Scripture.

24. Article XXII

WE AFFIRM that Genesis 1-11 is factual, as is the rest of the book.
**WE DENY** that the teachings of Genesis 1-11 are mythical and that scientific hypotheses about earth history or the origin of humanity may be invoked to overthrow what Scripture teaches about creation.

Since the historicity and the scientific accuracy of the early chapters of the Bible have come under severe attack it is important to apply the "literal" hermeneutic espoused (Article XV) to this question. The result was a recognition of the factual nature of the account of the creation of the universe, all living things, the special creation of man, the Fall, and the Flood. These accounts are all factual, that is, they are about space-time events which actually happened as reported in the book of Genesis (see Article XIV).

The article left open the question of the age of the earth on which there is no unanimity among evangelicals and which was beyond the purview of this conference. There was, however, complete agreement on denying that Genesis is mythological or unhistorical. Likewise, the use of the term "creation" was meant to exclude the belief in macro-evolution, whether of the atheistic or theistic varieties.

25. Article XXIII

**WE AFFIRM** the clarity of Scripture and specifically of its message about salvation from sin.

**WE DENY** that all passages of Scripture are equally clear or have equal bearing on the message of redemption.

Traditionally this teaching is called the "perspicuity" of Scripture. By this is meant that the central message of Scripture is clear, especially what the Bible says about salvation from sin.

The Denial disassociates this claim from the belief that everything in Scripture is clear or that all teachings are equally clear or equally relevant to the Bible’s central saving message. It is obvious to any honest interpreter that the meaning of some passages of Scripture is obscure. It is equally evident that the truth of some passages is not directly relevant to the overall plan of salvation.

26. Article XXIV

**WE AFFIRM** that a person is not dependent for understanding of Scripture on the expertise of biblical scholars.

**WE DENY** that a person should ignore the fruits of the technical study of Scripture by biblical scholars.

This article attempts to avoid two extremes. First, it affirms that one is not dependent on biblical "experts" for his understanding of the basic truths of Scripture. Were this not true, then a significant aspect of the priesthood of all believers would be destroyed. For if the understanding of the laity is contingent on the teaching of experts, then Protestant interpretive experts will have replaced the
teaching magisterium of Catholic priests with a kind of teaching magisterium of Protestant scholars.

On the other hand, biblical scholars do play a significant role in the lay understanding of Scripture. Even the very tools (Bible dictionaries, concordances, etc.) used by laypersons to interpret Scripture were produced by scholars. And when it comes to more technical and precise understanding of specific Scripture the work of experts is more than helpful. Hence the implied exhortation in the denial to avail oneself of the fruit of scholarship is well taken.

27. Article XXV

**WE AFFIRM** that the only type of preaching which sufficiently conveys the divine revelation and its proper application to life is that which faithfully expounds the text of Scripture as the Word of God.

**WE DENY** that the preacher has any message from God apart from the text of Scripture.

This final article declares that good preaching should be based in good hermeneutics. The exposition of Scripture is not to be treated in isolation from the proclamation of Scripture. In preaching the preacher should faithfully expound the Word of God. Anything short of a correct exposition of God's written Word is pronounced insufficient.

Indeed, the Denial declares that there is no message from God apart from Scripture. This was understood not to contradict the fact that there is a general revelation (affirmed in Article XXI) but simply to note that the only inspired and infallible writing from which the preacher can and must preach is the Bible.


**XVII. Appendix: Answers to Practicum**


2) D - A), B) & C) above. Hyperbole. Bruce, 131: “...when Jesus said he had come to bring ‘not peace but a sword’, he meant that this would be the effect...”
of his coming, not that it was the purpose of his coming. His words came true in the life of the early Church, and they have verified themselves subsequently in the history of Christian missions. Where one or two members of a family or other social group have accepted the Christian faith, this has frequently provoked opposition from other members.” It is also an antithesis because it contrasts “peace on earth” with “a sword”. "Sword" stands as a metonymy for "conflict".

3) C- Simile. The scattering of the kings was like snow falling on a mountain.

4) B - Metaphor. God is not a big chicken, but his protection is pictured here as being like that enjoyed by a nestling.

5) B - Irony. Irony here is in the form of biting sarcasm.

6) A - Synecdoche. The Lord’s hand stands for all of God’s activity.

XVIII. Appendix: Bibliography of Biblical Interpretation


Gordon D. Fee, New Testament exegesis: a handbook for students and pastors. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. A guide for New Testament historical-critical exegesis written for students who know Greek, but with much of the guide accessible to students without knowledge of Greek. The guide describes steps of exegesis with the goal of writing an exegesis paper and also gives a shorter series of steps for sermon preparation. The use of resources for the study of the NT is included in the description of the steps, with a final chapter giving a bibliography of resources organized according to the exegetical step in which the resource would be used. (Introduction)

Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993. 265 pages. A popular introduction to interpretation and application. Discusses pitfalls of interpretation, the need for use of "dynamic equivalence" versions (such as the NIV), and the manner of interpretation proper for various literary genres in the Bible. Some examples given of application and misapplication are rather tendentious, reflecting the Arminian and Pentecostal views of the authors.


"Typos, die typologische Deutung des Alten Testaments im Neuen" (Erlangen, 1939).


Elliott E. Johnson, *Expository Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. Johnson was for years a professor at Dallas Theological seminary, and his introduction is intended for seminary students. The orientation is conservative and dispensationalist.


William W. Klein, Craig Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993. A comprehensive and well-organized introduction, intended for evangelicals. Its "evangelical" character is however open to question, and it cannot be described as conservative. Redaction criticism is embraced (p. 330), liberation theology receives partial approval, and several illustrations and examples of application reveal a sympathy with liberal political causes. The authors often seem to be more interested in problems and possibilities of application than in interpretation proper.


ISBN: 0310208289. An intermediate level discussion of the impact that several fields (linguistics, literary studies, science, and theology) have had upon contemporary hermeneutics.

Tremper Longman, III. *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987. 164 pages. Surveys the literary nature of the Bible and introduces the reader to the research that is being carried out on the Bible by literary scholars. Emphasizes the need to make literary interpretation part of exegesis.


A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963. 425 pages. A comprehensive presentation of hermeneutics, widely used as a standard text in conservative schools. After his retirement from Bethel Seminary, Mickelsen co-authored with his wife Alvera an article which put forth an absurd feminist interpretation of the word Kephale ("head") in Ephesians 5 ("The 'Head' of the Epistles," *Christianity Today* February 20, 1981, pp 20-23), but there seems to be no evidence of such a desire to distort the meaning of the Scriptures in his 1963 book. Like Bernard Ramm (also at Bethel), he appears to have fallen into liberal views later.


and chapter four lists and discusses resources, primarily works published in English. (Preface)


