

Author Centered Hermeneutical Process

Historical-Cultural Analysis

- I. Modern Hermeneutics (1800-Mid-Twentieth Century)
 - A. “Higher Criticism”
 - B. Neoorthodoxy (twentieth-century)
 - C. The “New Hermeneutic” (Post World War II)
 - D. Deconstructionism (Present)
- II. Seven steps in author centered Biblical interpretation.
 - A. ***Historical-cultural analysis***—Considers the historical and cultural context in a specific biblical writing.
 - B. ***Written contextual analysis***—considers the relationship of any given passage to the additional passages surrounding it.
 - C. ***Lexical-syntactical analysis***—examines the definition of words and their relationship to one another in order to understand more accurately the author intended meaning of the passage.
 1. Lexicology—the meaning of words.
 2. Syntax—Words relationship with one another.
 - D. ***Literary analysis***—identifies the literary forms or genres used in any given passage, such as historical narrative, epistle, poetry, apocalyptic, etc.
 - E. ***Theological analysis***—studies the extent of theological revelation available at the time in salvation history when the biblical text emerged in order to ascertain the meaning of the text for its original recipients.
 - F. ***Comparison with other interpreters***—involves comparing the interpretation that used the above steps to develop with other interpreters to check for erroneous conclusions.
 - G. ***Application***—Also known as “contextualization” which involves moving from the meaning of a biblical text in its original intent, to the significance and implications for believers in our current day.
- III. Historical and cultural analysis.
 - A. The difference between historical and cultural:

1. **Historical** = the specific time in history the passage refers to.
2. **Cultural** = relating to the ideas, customs, and social behavior of a society at the time and place the passage refers to.

B. Basic questions to ask:

1. What is the general historical-cultural environment or setting in which the writer speaks?
2. What is the specific historical-cultural context?
 - a. What were the political, economic, and social situations?
 - b. What was the main source of livelihood?
 - c. What were the major threats or concerns of the day?
 - d. What are some specific customs of that day?
3. What customs or practices give clarity to the actions in a passage?
 - a. Their culture modifies, determines, guides, colors, or influences the manner in which they express themselves.
 - b. Cults often arise from the very fact that they have ignored the cultural context of a passage in Scripture.
 - If not cults, erroneous religious practices: the wearing of head-coverings, not eating shellfish, etc.
 - c. Two types of "Culture":
 1. Material culture—tools, objects, dwellings, weapons, garments, etc.
 2. Social culture—all customs, practices, rites, etc.
5. Biblical geography is a vital part of historical-cultural context.
6. Historical context—all Scripture occurs in the stream of history.
 - a. Initial steps
 1. Who was the writer? What is the writer's background and experience?
 2. To or for whom the text was written (believers, unbelievers, apostates, believers who were in danger of becoming apostates, those the author knew well, strangers, an individual, a group, those in the particular community or circumstances).

IV. Biblical Examples of the need for historical cultural context.

- A. *Why did Jonah not want to go to Nineveh?*
- B. *Why did Moses give the strange command, “Do not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk”? (Ex. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21)*
- C. *Why did God bring on Egypt the ten plagues? (Why those specific plagues and not others?)*
- D. *What was the point of meat being sacrificed to idols which Paul discussed in 1 Corinthians 8?*
- E. *In Job 22:6 why did Eliphaz accuse Job of “demanding security” from your brothers for no reason?”*
- F. *Why did Elimelech’s closest relative give his sandal to Boaz? (Ruth 4:8, 17)*
- G. *In 2 Kings 2:9 when Elisha said to Elijah, “Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” was he asking for twice as much spiritual power as Elijah had?*
- H. *Does “Firstborn over all creation” in Colossians 1:15 mean that Jesus Christ was created?*
- I. *Why does Psalm 1:4 compare the wicked to chaff?*
- J. *Why did the Lord say to Job in Job 39:1, “Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?”*
- H. *Why did Jesus denounce the fig tree for having no fruit when it was not even the season for figs? (Mark 11: 12-14)*

1 CORINTHIANS 8

Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.² If anyone thinks that he

has known anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know;³ but if anyone loves God, he has been known by Him.⁴ Therefore, concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but one.⁵ For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords,⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him.⁷ However, not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat *food* as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.⁸ But food will not commend us to God. We neither lack if we do not eat, nor abound if we do eat.⁹ But see *to it* that this authority of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.¹⁰ For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be built up to eat things sacrificed to idols?¹¹ For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.¹² And in that way, by sinning against the brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.¹³ Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again—ever, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

CORINTHIANS 11

HEAD COVERINGS

² Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.³ But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.⁴ Every man who has *something* on his head while praying or prophesying, shames his head.⁵ But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, shames her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved.⁶ For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut short. But if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut short or her head shaved, let her cover her head.⁷ For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man.⁸ For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man.⁹ For indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.¹⁰ Therefore the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on her head, because of the angels.¹¹ Nevertheless, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.¹² For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man *has his birth* through the woman, but all things originate from

God.¹³ Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God *with her head* uncovered?¹⁴ Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him,¹⁵ but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering.¹⁶ But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.