

HERMENEUTICS:
A Course for GCBC Bible Institute
Lesson 1

“The Word of God is deeper than a flannel graph. It demands the closest possible scrutiny. It calls for the most excellent scholarship. It makes the finest point of technical analysis worth the effort. The yield of such effort is truth.” - RC Sproul

The recognized need to study Hermeneutics comes from a high opinion of Scripture. If God in His infinite wisdom has truly breathed out His words into a written text, miraculously preserved this text for thousands of years, insured its inerrancy, and endued it with both life-giving and life-transforming power shouldn't we want to accurately understand it? So the question exists, “how do we accurately understand the message that God has provided for mankind?” This study in Hermeneutics seeks to answer that question.

Sproul's quote provides an excellent rationale for understanding how to properly interpret the Bible when he wrote, “. . .it demands the closest possible scrutiny.” Another writer stated the our study of God's Word ought to produce “holy sweat”. To come to an accurate interpretation of Scripture, the believer must be willing to put in the mental work. Unfortunately, many believers find the mental work of reading and studying God's Word to be drudgery. Often this is the result of not having a basic understanding of how to properly interpret Scripture. Hermeneutics is the study of how to properly and accurately interpret Scripture in order to understand God, His plans, and ultimately His revelation to man.

It is used in the OT (Hebrew word *pitron*) of dreams or written language - Gen. 40-41
Hebrew word *targem* (meaning to throw over or transfer) - Ezra 4:7

From the Greek word *hermeneuo* - to translate from one language to another

- I. Derived from Hermes, the Greek messenger of the gods - “He was responsible for communicating what was beyond understanding into a form human intelligence could grasp.” - Dr. Stephen Lewis
- II. The term is used in the interpreting of tongues - 1 Cor. 12:30, 14:5, 13, 27
- III. The term is used of interpreting names in Scripture - Jo. 1:42, 9:7; Mark 5:41; Acts 9:36
- IV. The term is used in interpreting the role one plays in God's plan - Heb. 7:2
- V. The term is used in the “unfolding” of the meaning of Scripture - Lu. 24:27

“This is the primary and basic need of hermeneutics: to ascertain what God has said in Sacred Scripture; to determine the meaning of the Word of God. There is no profit to us if God has spoken and we do not know what He has said. Therefore it is our responsibility to determine the meaning of what God has given to us in Sacred Scripture.

To determine what God has said is a high and holy task. With fear and trembling each should be ever so careful of that which he has adopted as his method of Biblical Interpretation. Upon the correct interpretation of the Bible rests our doctrine of salvation, of sanctification, of eschatology, and of Christian living. It is our solemn responsibility to know what God has said with reference to each of these. This can be done only if we have carefully, thoroughly, and

systematically formulated that system of Biblical Interpretation which will yield most readily the native meaning of the Bible.

Further, we need to know the correct method of Biblical Interpretation so that we do not confuse the voice of God with the voice of man. In every one of those places where our interpretation is at fault, we have made substitution of the voice of man for the voice of God. We need to know hermeneutics thoroughly if for no other reason than to preserve us from the folly and errors of faulty principles of understanding God's Word." - Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, p. 2

The Spiritual Foundation for an Accurate Interpretation of Scripture

- I. The importance of salvation to interpretation
 - A. The Bible is not for the unsaved man - 2 Ti. 3:16-17
 - B. The natural (soulish) man does not welcome spiritual things neither can he know them - 1 Co. 2:14
- II. The importance of living the Christian Life to interpretation
 - A. The carnal man will be limited in his understanding of Scripture - 1 Cor. 3:1-2; Heb. 5:12
 - B. The maturing believer is better prepared to understand Scripture - Heb. 5:14
- III. The importance of the illumination of the Holy Spirit in interpretation
 - A. Illumination is the supernatural act of the Holy Spirit where he sheds light on a section of Scripture resulting in the believer gaining an understanding of the text.
 - B. Illumination is necessary because of blindness
 1. Natural blindness - 1 Cor. 2:14
 2. Satanic blindness - 2 Cor. 4:3-4
 3. Judicial blindness (Jews) - 2 Cor. 3:14-15; Rom. 11:5-7
 4. Carnal blindness - Heb. 5:11-13
 - C. There are specific things the believer is illuminated to.
 1. The things God has prepared for those loving Him - 1 Cor. 2:7-10
 2. The hope of the believer's calling - Eph. 1:17-18
 3. The unsaved man is illuminated to the facts concerning the gospel only - Heb. 6:4, 10:32; 2 Cor. 4:4

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide understanding of basic principles necessary to make accurate interpretations of Scripture
2. Provide detailed explanation on the importance of context in regards to interpreting scripture - Progressive/Dispensational, Historical/Cultural, Grammatical, Thematic
3. Provide basic understanding of the uses of Figurative language in scripture
4. Provide basic understanding of relevant Greek grammar
5. Provide basic understanding of how to use resources for Bible study

The information and outlines for this class have been pulled from multiple sources:
Dr. Stephen R. Lewis, Chafer Theological Seminary - Bible 405: Hermeneutics
Steve Thomas, GCBC College/Career Class Outline - Hermeneutics
Pastor Kevin Jeffrey, Titusville Bible Church Bible Institute Outline - Hermeneutics
Pastor Tim Hoelscher, God's House Plans

