

LESSON 10

INTERPRETATION IN THE REFORMATION AND MODERN PERIODS

Background of the Reformation

The school of Antioch, which emphasized the literal meaning of Scripture based on its historical reality and an analysis of the grammar, was identified with the errors of the Nestorians and was discredited by orthodoxy. The way was opened for the allegorical method of interpretation to prevail during the Middle Ages.

The Early Church was threatened by heretical interpreters, such as Marcion, who used an extremely literal interpretation of the Old Testament to discredit the Patriarchs who had many wives and to cast reflection upon God. To prevent erroneous interpretation, Irenaeus had referred to "a rule of truth." He believed that an oral tradition, by which the Scriptures were interpreted correctly, had been handed down from the apostles to their successors. Those outside apostolic succession were not qualified to interpret Scripture. The Church became the guardian of interpretation of her books.

Tertullian (about 200) sought to prevent heretics from using the Church's books. During disputes concerning the meanings of Scripture, he argued that the Church had the interpretation and all true Christian tradition. Christ preached the truth of revelation and entrusted this truth to the apostles. The apostles transmitted it to their successors in the Church. Only the Church stood in succession; therefore, only the Church had the right interpretation of Scripture. Tertullian based his argument on the Roman law of the right of possession.

With the condemnation of the school of Antioch and with the need for a method of interpretation which avoided the errors of heretics who claimed a literal interpretation, the Church turned to the allegorical method in the Middle Ages. The Manicheans used the literal method of interpretation to discredit the Patriarchs of the Old Testament. They said that God had hair, nails, a corporeal (fleshly) form, and that men who had many wives and killed were considered righteous. In disputing the Manicheans, Augustine was forced to find a deeper spiritual meaning underlying the historical meaning. He held that interpretation must be according to the rule of faith. The interpreter must explain the mind of the writers of Scripture rather than support his own views; however, Augustine was guilty of using Scripture to support his theological system rather than permitting theology to grow out of exegesis.

Vincent, a priest of the monastery on the island of Lerinum, stated, "The line of the interpretation of the prophets and apostles must be directed according to the norm of the ecclesiastical and Catholic sense."¹ His thesis was that the correct interpretation of Scripture must be what was believed everywhere, always, and by everyone. Unity of interpretation must be controlled by the one Church.

¹ Vincent, *Commonitorium*, 2:2.

Two reasons the Church turned to the allegorical method of interpretation in the Middle Ages are:

- 1. The school of _____ literal interpretation was condemned.*
- 2. A method was needed which avoided the errors of _____ who claimed a _____ interpretation.*

(Antioch's, heretics, literal)

Vincent believed heretical interpretation could be avoided by the control of _____ by the one _____.

(exegesis, Church)

To avoid heretical conclusions, the exegete must follow the rules of the Catholic dogma. The correct interpretation of Scripture was to be determined by a universal council of the Church. The authoritative Church permanently fixed the meaning of Scripture. The conclusions of the Church became the "rule of faith" or the "rule of truth." The Church guarded her deposit of faith by controlling its interpretation. The allegorical method was exalted above the literal method by the Church during the Middle Ages.

Grant mentions the four normal meanings which were sought in every text in the Middle Ages:

The letter shows us what God and our fathers did;
 The allegory shows us where our faith is hid;
 The moral meaning gives us rules of daily life;
 The anagogy shows us where we end our strife.²

The interpretation of Jerusalem in Galatians 4:22-31 illustrates the four uses: (1) historically it means the city of the Jews; (2) allegorically it signifies the Church of Christ; (3) anagogically it refers to the heavenly city which is the mother of us all; and (4) morally it indicates the human soul. Some interpreters found as many as seven meanings in each passage. Others limited the meaning of Scripture to the literal and the spiritual.

The Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation

The "rule of faith or truth" which had been adopted in the Early Church and perpetuated by the Mediaeval Church caused the emphasis to be shifted from the Bible to the statements of the Fathers. The opinion of the Church Fathers constituted the authority for theological views and the interpretation of the Scripture. Theological formulations had to be approved by the Church in council and became dogmas of the Church. Exegetes who disagreed with the official interpretation of the Church were declared heretics and excommunicated. The emphasis on the allegorical method and the discrediting of the literal-historical method led to fantastic interpretations of the Scripture.

The authoritative papal system which disposed of those who opposed its interpretation had sunk into formalism and corruption. Reforms were hampered by the claims of the papal system to be the authoritative interpreter of the Bible; the corrupt system could not be challenged and exposed by appealing to an authoritative Scripture. An interpreter was careful to adhere to the methods of the Fathers and to keep his conclusions in harmony with their views. The approach in interpretation was to find out what the various Fathers had said about a passage.

Preparation for the Reformation

Thomas Aquinas (died 1274) was the great theologian and philosopher of the Church. He gave a rational foundation for the dogmas of the Church. He recognized that faith is based on the revelation made to the apostles and the prophets. Since the natural man learns truths of the physical realm through the senses, spiritual truths in the Bible are taught under the likeness of material things. Scripture, therefore, must have more than one meaning—the literal and the spiritual. Aquinas emphasized the

² A Short History, p. 119.

The four meanings sought in every text in the Middle Ages were:

1. The _____ shows us what God our father did.
2. The _____ shows where our faith is.
3. The _____ gives us rules of daily life.
4. The _____ shows us where we end our strife.

(letter, allegory, moral meaning, anagogy)

The approach to interpretation in the Middle Ages was to find out what the various _____ had said about a passage.

(Fathers)

Thomas Aquinas emphasized the _____ interpretation of Scripture, but he said the spiritual sense must be interpreted _____.

(literal, allegorically)

importance of the literal sense, but he also upheld the allegorical meaning. He explained that the spiritual sense must be interpreted allegorically.

Occam, another mediaeval philosopher, distinguished between revelation and human reason. He assigned the areas of philosophy and science to human reason, but he maintained that revelation received through faith was the territory of salvation and theology. Whatever we know of God, we know by divine revelation and not by human reason.

The renewed emphasis on the literal interpretation of Scripture and the definition of revelation as the source of theology led to a renewed study of Hebrew and Greek. Martin Luther studied Latin and theology in preparation for the Catholic priesthood; in addition, he studied Greek and Hebrew.

Luther opposed the control of the interpretation of the Bible by the Church. He believed that the Scripture should judge the Church and not the Church the Scripture. When he rebelled against the corruption of the Church, he turned to the Scripture for authoritative support of his position.

Luther's Principles of Interpretation

Luther had been unable to find forgiveness of sin and a personal relation to God through his study of church doctrine. While studying the Book of Romans, he discovered that salvation is by faith alone and is not mediated by the Church through sacraments. His salvation experience influenced his view of the Scripture as the only authority in matters of faith. His spiritual experience also influenced him to see that interpretation of Scripture involved more than scholarly knowledge of what the Fathers had said about a passage.

The principle of Scripture only.—Scripture alone is the supreme authority for faith, apart from traditions of the Fathers and the official interpretation of the Church. The Church is the creation of the Gospel and incomparably inferior to the Gospel. The task of the Church is to declare the teachings of the Bible instead of creating articles of faith.

The literal meaning of Scripture.—The literal meaning alone is to be used in interpreting Scripture. He rejected the fourfold meaning of Scripture used by the mediaeval interpreters. The literal meaning of the Scripture is based on a knowledge of the grammar; the historical background (times, circumstances, and conditions); the observance of the context of the Scripture; spiritual illumination; and the reference of all Scripture to Christ. Luther concluded that errors originated not from the simple words of Scripture but from neglecting the simple words. He set aside the fourfold sense as fiction. He stated that each passage has one clear, definite, and true sense of its own. All other meanings are uncertain opinions.

The principle of clarity (perspicuity).—This principle means that the Bible can be understood by the devout and competent Christian who does not need the official guidance of the Church. The Bible is sufficiently clear to yield its meaning to the believer. Luther overstated the simplicity of the Bible. Its teaching concerning salvation and many other subjects is clear; however, some Scripture verses have been variously interpreted. Luther believed that the Bible was sufficient within itself for the interpreter. Obscure passages were to be interpreted in the light of clear passages.

The principle of individual responsibility.—The right of private judgement was maintained by Luther. He did not believe that the priesthood had greater spiritual capacity to discern truth than the laity. He maintained that there is a difference of office

After reading *Luther's Principles of Interpretation* (Continued on p.125), list his principles of interpretation.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The literal meaning of Scripture includes a knowledge of:

1. _____, 2. _____
- _____, 3. _____,
4. _____, and
5. r _____ to C _____.

(grammar, historical background, context, spiritual illumination, and reference to Christ.)

but no difference in the spiritual rights. Every Christian is a priest or minister and is responsible for discerning the truth of the Word. The Holy Spirit is given to all Christians to guide them into truth. Since every Christian must stand in judgement, it is his privilege and responsibility to test his faith and conduct by Scripture.

The principle of the analogy of faith.—Luther was aware that the content of the Bible raised many questions which had caused previous interpreters to stumble and turn to the allegorical method of interpretation. When a contradiction occurred in Holy Scripture, he advocated not trying to solve it. His strong spiritual confidence enabled him to seize essentials without being troubled by minor details. Both his faith and the Scriptures originated from the Holy Spirit; therefore, he accepted the Bible as it was without becoming dismayed with the many passages which were too crude or too trivial for acceptance.

The Christocentric principle of interpretation.—Luther used this principle to make the entire Bible a Christian book. He believed the canonicity of a book was determined by whether it preached Christ or not. The purpose of the Bible was to bring man into confrontation with God and His demand for faith. A book which did not preach Christ could not accomplish that goal. Since Luther rejected the allegorical method of interpretation, he frequently employed typology to find Christ in the teachings of the Old Testament. Christ is the “hidden treasure” and the “pearl of great price” in the Old Testament.

The principle of spiritual enlightenment.—Since Scripture deals with the will of God and the heart of man, the spiritual insight of a saint may be of more value than the skill of a grammarian. The Holy Spirit brings illumination to the mind as God speaks to the heart of the reader through Scripture.

Calvin's Hermeneutical Principles

Fullerton observes that Calvin may be the first scientific interpreter in the history of the Christian Church.³ Calvin believed the Scripture serves three functions: it clarifies our view of God; it reveals elements about God which cannot be known through nature; and it tells of God as Redeemer. Scripture is the absolute authority for our knowledge of God. He believed that inspiration is an explanatory doctrine of an experience we have. It is uncertain whether he held to a mechanical view of inspiration or not. He rejected the allegorical interpretation of Scripture and emphasized the literal.

Calvin insisted that the illumination of the Spirit was necessary for the interpretation of God's Word. The truth of exegesis is confirmed by the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. He believed that the voice of the living Spirit of God spoke in the Scripture to the interpreter.

Calvin insisted that the first business of an interpreter is to let the author say what he intended to say instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say. It is the task of the interpreter to show the mind of the writer. He considered it a sacrilege to use the Scripture at one's own pleasure. He refused to read his theological views into his interpretation of Scripture.

Calvin cautioned the exegete concerning the interpretation of Messianic prophecy. He encouraged interpreters to investigate

List the three functions of Scripture, according to Calvin.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

*(It clarifies our view of God.
It reveals elements about God which cannot
be known through nature.
It tells of God as Redeemer.)*

³ Kemper Fullerton, *Prophecy and Authority* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), p.133.

the historical setting of all prophetic and Messianic Scriptures. He desired to avoid discovering Christ in Old Testament Scriptures through allegorical interpretation where Christ could not be found; yet, he believed that God never manifested Himself, even in the Old Testament, except by His Son.

Calvin's principles of interpretation included the literal meaning (the grammatical-historical principle), the Christocentric principle in which both Old and New Testaments point to Christ, the rejection of the allegorical method, and the inner witness of the Spirit. He produced commentaries of continuing value on the entire Bible.

Post-Reformation Hermeneutics

The successors of Luther and Calvin did not continue their emphasis on faith and the dependability of revelation. The Reformers had opened the way for criticism of the Catholic Church by challenging her doctrines and practices on the basis of an authoritative Bible. Later critics of the Church did not have the same regard for divine revelation as Luther and Calvin. Shortly after the Reformation, the trend towards magnifying reason above revelation developed. Thomas Aquinas had attempted to give a rational explanation for the doctrines of the Church. After the Reformation, reason turned against the Bible and the Church.

The rise of rationalism

John Colet rejected Aquinas as an arrogant fool who laid down the law so boldly on all things and contaminated Christianity with his preposterous philosophy. Matthew Hammond (1579) was charged with saying that the New Testament and the Gospel of Christ are but mere foolishness, stories of men, or rather mere fables. With the breaking of the control of the Church over the minds of men, a new intellectual freedom prevailed which exalted reason to an authoritative position. Philosophy arose as a science and separated from theology. Philosophy claimed the right to evaluate the meaning and interpretation of the Bible. Augustine's and Calvin's views of the depravity of man, which caused a distrust of the mind, were no longer emphasized. The new age of rationalism was characterized by the assertion that whatever is not in harmony with educated mentality is to be rejected.⁴ Reason was exalted as dependable and authoritative. The revelation of the Bible was evaluated by reason, and that which did not appear reasonable was rejected. The rationalistic emphasis led to a radical criticism of the Bible.

Spinoza (1670) concluded that the hatred of Christians might be ended by separating the spheres of theology and philosophy. He thought that reason might guide men's minds to truth and wisdom while theology continued to bring forth piety and obedience.⁵ Spinoza, as a Jew, resolved the debate among Christians concerning which sections of the Bible are true by emphasizing the Hebrew idiom that the Jew attributed to God everything that happened. Wherever a divine decree seemed irrational, he attributed it to the Hebrew idiom. He concluded that there is nothing taught in Scripture which does not agree with our understanding. He actually undermined the authority of Scripture by assigning to the Hebrew idiom that which seems irrational. His method of interpretation permitted him to exalt

⁴ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: W. A. Wilde Company, 1956), p. 63.

⁵ Grant, *A Short History* p. 147.

Calvin's principles of interpretation are:

1. the _____ meaning,
2. the _____ principle,
3. the rejection of the _____ method,
4. the inner witness of the _____.

(literal, Christocentric, allegorical, Spirit)

During the new age of rationalism, _____ was exalted to an authoritative position and _____ was evaluated by reason.

(reason, revelation)

Spinoza undermined the authority of the S _____ by assigning to the Hebrew i _____ that which seems irrational

(Scripture, idiom)

reason over revelation. His theory implied that the Bible appeals to man's religious emotions and moves him to obedience but not to truth. Religion could be used by the intellectuals to control the stupid masses.

Mackintosh suggests three stages through which reason became supreme in determining interpretation.⁶ (1) Reason was first used to defend the orthodox position of interpretation. (2) Reason was next used to make a distinction between orthodox faith for public pronouncements and private views cherished by the initiated few. (3) The second stage inevitably led to the third in which reason became seated on the throne of judgement and insisted that every doctrine must pass its test.

Exponents of rationalism

Rationalism elevates reason to the throne of judgement before which all Scripture is to be interpreted. The English deists (those advocating natural religion based on human reason rather than revelation), German intellectuals, and French philosophers questioned the idea of supernatural revelation and attacked the Bible. Rationalism as a movement existed for about a century (1740-1836).

H. S. Reimarus (1694-1768) declared that faith is irreconcilable with reason and charged the disciples with deliberately falsifying the character and intent of Jesus. He believed that the only true revelation of God was in nature. He suggested that the disciples stole the body of Jesus, and Jesus was a deluded visionary whose Messianic venture ended in disaster.

Johann Ernesti (1701-81) was the founder of the grammatical school of interpretation. He rejected the manifold sense of Scripture and retained only the literal which was determined by examining the meaning of words in their context. Factors which influenced the meaning of words are: the time under consideration, religious sect, education, the common life, and civil affairs. Although he denied the possibility of contradictions, he advocated interpreting the Bible as any other book.

Johann Semler (1725-91) was the founder of the historical school of biblical interpretation and the "father" of rationalism. He emphasized the human and historical origin and composition of the Bible. Since it was written for different people, much was included that was merely local and not intended to have normative value for all men at all times. He popularized the idea that the Scriptures are fallible human productions and must be judged by reason. He believed that only those biblical books which serve man's moral improvement can be considered authoritative. Reason determines which parts of the Bible are Scripture. Reason is basic in judging the matter of virtue and happiness.

The source-critical method

Rationalism and the literal method of interpretation based on grammatical and historical analyses prepared the way for literary source studies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Rationalism destroyed reverence for the Bible as divine revelation and caused it to be studied as just another book. D. F. Strauss suggested that Jesus was a wise man who was turned into a magician by His ignorant contemporaries. Scholars analyzed the Gospels to determine if they were actually historical or whether they were created by disciples who were expressing their beliefs. In addition to questioning the historical dependability of the

⁶ H. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), pp. 13-14.

Rationalism elevates _____ to the throne of judgement before which all Scripture is to be interpreted.

(reason)

Reimarus said that faith is irreconcilable with _____ and that the disciples falsified the character and intent of _____.

(reason, Jesus)

Ernesti held that the literal sense of Scripture is determined by examining the _____ of words in their _____.

(meaning, context)

Semler emphasized that Scriptures are _____ human productions and must be judged by _____.

(fallible, reason)

Rationalism destroyed reverence for the _____ and caused it to be studied as just another _____.

(Bible, book)

Gospels, the language was examined to determine if the life of Christ was compiled from various sources or was the work of an author.

Nineteenth century liberal interpretation

Scholars who have rejected the traditional view of authorship and who have used radical criticism are classified as liberals. Bernard Ramm discusses characteristics of the liberal approach to the Bible.⁷ The emphases are:

1. The scientific outlook and method are to be applied to the Bible. Science, which presumes the regularity of nature, excludes miracles. Men's actions are largely the results of their physical environments; therefore, their responsibility for sin is minimized and the doctrine of depravity is rejected.

2. Inspiration of the Bible is determined by its power to inspire religious experience. The Bible is basically a human book which contains human insight into religious truth rather than divine disclosure. The value of Scripture is determined by the moral and ethical level as revealed in Jesus. Bewer wrote, "To the Christian the only norm and standard is the spirit of God as revealed in Jesus. . . . all those parts of the Old Testament which are contrary to the spirit of Jesus, or which have no direct spiritual meaning to us, are for us without authority."⁸ Religious experience replaces the authority of the revealed Word.

3. The interpretation of the Bible is based on evolutionary presuppositions. The Bible does not contain special divine revelation but a record of Israel's evolving religious development. Genesis is the record of primitive and child-like religious beliefs which eventually developed into the advanced concepts contained in the gospel of Christ.

4. Theological concepts accommodate the people of the day. The death of Christ had to be described in terms of the bloody Jewish sacrifices or the rituals of mystery religions. Since the concept of "the shedding of blood" is no longer relevant, the interpreter needs other ways of expressing the meaning of Christ's life and death.

5. The emphasis on the historical interpretation of the Bible has been shifted to the development of the literature instead of the environmental background of the revelation. The social conditions which produced the experiences and truths are studied instead of the needs of the people which brought forth God's intervention in history.

6. Paul and the apostles, instead of Jesus, were the real founders of Christianity. The task of the interpreter is to get back behind the apostles to the simple life of Jesus.

Interpretation in the twentieth century

By the close of the nineteenth century, Wellhausen's source analysis of the Pentateuch and the liberal approach to New Testament studies were widely accepted. The liberal school presented Jesus as simply an ethical teacher. As Albert Schweitzer studied the Gospels, he became aware that the liberal picture of Jesus was in error. He discovered in the pages of the Gospel of Matthew a strong Messianic emphasis. He pointed out that Jesus believed that He was the one through whom the purposes of God were to be brought to fulfillment. Jesus' beliefs ended badly, for after He died in Jerusalem history did not come to an end. Schweitzer implied that Jesus was mistaken about Himself and the Kingdom of

Read *Nineteenth century liberal interpretation*; then list the six characteristics of the liberal interpreters.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

1. *The scientific outlook and method are to be applied to the Bible.*
2. *Inspiration of the Bible is determined by its power to inspire religious experience.*
3. *The interpretation of the Bible is based on evolutionary presuppositions.*
4. *Theological concepts are accommodated to the people of the day.*
5. *The emphasis on the historical interpretation of the Bible has been shifted to the development of the literature instead of the environmental background of the revelation.*
6. *Paul and the apostles, instead of Jesus, were the real founders of Christianity.*

Albert Schweitzer concluded that Jesus

_____ He was the _____,
but He was mistaken.

(*thought, Messiah*)

⁷ See *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 64ff.

⁸ Quoted by Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, p. 65.

God. He concluded that when Jesus chose to die in Jerusalem, He showed that He was great enough to face the realization of His mistake with unclouded consciousness. The pen of Schweitzer destroyed the liberal picture of Jesus as just an ethical man.

Karl Barth concluded that the liberal concept of Jesus did not meet human need. The Bible as only a human book could not give adequate answers to man's deep problems. Barth discovered that preaching the truths of the Bible as God's supernatural revelation met man's deepest needs; however, his liberal education made it impossible for him to accept the orthodox position regarding inspiration and revelation. His views have been discussed in a previous lesson.

Barth believed that the Bible as a record and witness of revelation must be read theologically. Although it contains human errors, God speaks through it to man when man reads its words. The neo-orthodox interpreter must look for the Word of God behind the words of Scripture. He must not confuse the errors of human records with the divine truth.

Barth also emphasized the Christological principle. Jesus Christ is God's Word to man. That part of the Bible which witnesses of Christ is binding. The teachings of the Bible can only be understood when they are related to Jesus Christ, the Word of God. Only that in the Old Testament which can be reconciled with the Incarnate Word is binding on Christian men.

Neo-orthodox scholars hold that Scriptures must not be treated as proof texts. Doctrines are based on consideration of the totality of the Bible and its teaching. Divine truths are not to be confused with mythological forms in which they appear. The Genesis account of the creation of man is not to be taken historically or literally, but it sets forth the truth that man is subject to God. Man's fall in the Garden of Eden was not a historical event, but the "myth" illustrates the doctrinal truths that sin is the result of disobedience and all men are affected by original sin. The story of a serpent approaching Adam and Eve is a "myth."

The purpose of biblical interpretation is to bring men into an existential encounter with God. As he reads the Bible, he eagerly expects God to speak to his soul. The Bible as a record of revelation that has occurred in history is a promise to man that revelation will occur again.

The problems of interpretation seem to be primarily two:

1. How can the revelation of God to past generations which recorded it in the pre-scientific language of their day be understood and applied today? Are all the words of the Bible God's revelation, or do they reflect the ideas of men who wrote a description of God's revelation?

2. What is the relation of reason to revelation? Does the Bible contain the divine revelation of ultimate truth, or does it contain a mixture of God's Word and man's words which must be distinguished by using reason? Did God endow man with intelligence to arrive at truth by logic, or is his mind undependable because of his sinful nature?

The salvation-history principle of interpretation

Von Hofmann tried to combine the orthodox position, the critical study of the Bible, and the emphasis on religious experience. He based his solution on the idea of salvation-history. He followed Schelling in seeing history as manifestation of the eternal God. History is not just unrelated events, but it is the plan of the Eternal being worked out and directed towards a goal. Jesus Christ is the centre of history. His redemptive act on the cross looked to the past, to the present, and to the future. Each

Barth believed the words of Scripture came from _____ and contained _____.

(man, errors)

Barth emphasized the C _____
P _____.

(Christological principle)

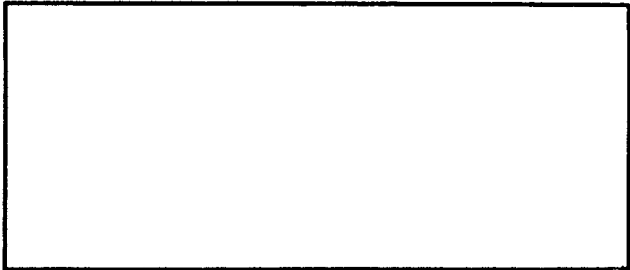
According to neo-orthodox scholars, what is the purpose of Biblical interpretation?

(to bring men into an existential encounter with God)

List the two primary problems of interpretation.

(How can the revelation of God to past generations be understood and applied today?
What is the relation of reason to revelation?)

salvation event is part of the eternal plan of God. Scripture is an inspired interpretation of God's acts in history. Scripture is not limited to the past because it speaks of God's present activities and predicts future salvation events. Scripture is not an irrelevant book of the past; it is an account of God's revelation in history. It is a product of historical events and must be historically interpreted, but the history of which it speaks is bound to present and future history. Contemporary man is a part of the salvation-history contained in the Bible.



Home Study Exercises

Basic assignment (for Levels 1, 2 and 3)

1. Give two reasons the allegorical method prevailed during the Middle Ages. _____

2. How did Vincent believe heretical interpretations could be avoided? _____

3. List the four meanings which were sought in every text during the Middle Ages. _____

4. What was the basic approach to interpretation in the Middle Ages? _____

5. What were the emphases of Thomas Aquinas in interpreting Scripture? _____

6. List five of Luther's principles of interpretation which you consider to be most important. _____

7. List four principles which Calvin followed in interpreting Scripture. _____

8. Compare the relation of reason and revelation during the new age of rationalism. _____

9. What did Semler, the "father of rationalism," emphasize concerning Scriptures? _____

10. Name four characteristics of the religious liberals' approach to the Bible. _____

11. What did the liberal interpreter Albert Schweitzer conclude about Jesus? _____

12. What caused Barth to distinguish between the Word of God and the words of Scripture? _____

13. What principle of interpretation did Barth emphasize? _____

14. According to neo-orthodox scholars, what is the purpose of biblical interpretation? _____

15. What are the two primary problems of interpretation? _____

Supplementary assignment (for Levels 2 and 3)

1. Explain why heretics forced the early Church to the allegorical instead of the literal (grammatical-historical) interpretation of Scripture.
2. How did the work of Aquinas and Occam prepare for the Reformation?
3. How did the work of the Jewish philosopher Spinoza undermine the authority of the Bible?

Advanced assignment (for Level 3)

Read pages 116-164 in Grant's *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible* and answer the following questions.

1. How did Luther's Christocentric principle affect his view of the Canon?
2. How did Calvin's principles of interpretation differ from Luther's?

Seminar Discussion

1. Which principles of interpretation used by Luther and Calvin are valid today?
2. Are any of the characteristics of the liberal scholars' approach to the Bible valid? Explain.
3. What is the relation of reason to revelation?