

Twelve Lessons

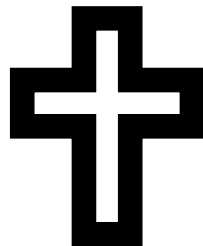
on

Hermeneutics I

Compiled and Written

by

Ronnie Simpson, Ph.D., Th.D., LL.D., D.D.



Macedonia Baptist College

9722 Hwy 601

Midland, NC 28107

(704) 784-4200

\$6.00

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLE OF HERMENEUTICS4

2. THE CONTEXTUAL PRINCIPLE7

3. THE COMPARATIVE PRINCIPLE9

4. THE WORD STUDY PRINCIPLE12

5. THE GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTION PRINCIPLE14

6. THE FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION PRINCIPLE17

7. THE TYPOLOGY PRINCIPLE18

8. THE PARABOLIC PRINCIPLE22

9. THE DISPENSATIONAL PRINCIPLE24

10. THE PROPHETIC PRINCIPLE26

11. THE DOCTRINAL WORD PRINCIPLE28

12. THE INTERPRETATION AND ORGANIZATION PRINCIPLE30

All rights reserved.
No part of this book may be reproduced in any
form without written permission from Macedonia Baptist College and Xaris, Inc.

The logo for Xaris, featuring the word "XARIS" in a stylized, lowercase font with a decorative flourish above the letters.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLE OF HERMENEUTICS – LESSON 1

Introduction: This lesson will introduce the student to the purpose and principles of Scriptural interpretation. The Bible must be correctly divided for clarity of meaning and application. Following specific principles of hermeneutics will produce sound understanding and teaching of God's Word.

Lesson Goals:

1. Inform the student of the purpose and productivity of Hermeneutics.
2. Establish conviction concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures and emphasize the importance of “rightly dividing the word of truth.”
3. Promote an understanding that expository preaching, teaching, and studying is a superior method of interpreting and conveying the truth of God’s word accurately.
4. Emphasize the fact that edification is the goal of all Scriptural interpretation.

Definitions of Important Terms or Phrases:

1. Hermeneutics – The term finds its origin with the Greek god, Hermes. Hermes was a messenger for the gods and was known for his ability to interpret. Webster defines hermeneutics as “the art of finding the meaning of an author's words and phrases, and of explaining it to others.”
2. Inspiration – Inspiration is the infusion of ideas into the mind by the Holy Spirit; the conveying into the minds of men, ideas, notices, or monitions by extraordinary or supernatural influence; or the communication of the divine will to the understanding by suggestions or impressions on the mind, which leave no room to doubt the reality of their supernatural origin.
3. Edification – Edification refers to a building up, in a moral and religious sense; instruction; improvement and progress of the mind, in knowledge, in morals, or in faith and holiness.
4. Exposition – Exposition is an explanation; interpretation; a laying open the sense or meaning of an author, or of any passage in a writing.
5. Discernment – The power or faculty of the mind, by which it distinguishes one thing from another, as truth from falsehood, virtue from vice; acuteness of judgment; power of perceiving differences of things or ideas and their relations and tendencies.

I. THE PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS – There are three essential elements to accurate Biblical interpretation.

A. One must accept the inspiration of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit’s involvement in producing the Word of God is paramount. We must fully accept the Bible as a product of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
2. Why is this acceptance so vital? Because...
 - a. The miracle of inspiration insures the validity of the Bible’s content.
 - b. The Spirit’s involvement in producing the Word demands His involvement in interpreting it, therefore creating an understanding in the student that he must have a partnership with the Spirit in his teaching and/or preaching if it is to be effective.
 - c. Acceptance of divine inspiration will produce faith in the student, thus allowing him to study the Bible with confidence. If the student accepts the inspiration of Scripture, he will not seek to correct the Bible. His confidence in the Spirit’s accuracy of God’s revelation will embolden him to interpret the Bible for understanding and not critique the Bible for error.
3. The fundamentalist accepts the plenary (entire; complete; full) inspiration of Scriptures, and therefore...
 - a. approaches the Bible with faith, trust, prayer, and piety.
 - b. approaches the Bible in defense of the Bible rather than to question or criticize it.
 - c. does not read ideas into the context of the Bible nor states opinions as doctrine. He presents the Bible by explaining its content without changing its message.
4. Important Note: It is the conviction of Macedonia Baptist College that the 1611 Authorized Version is the preserved Word of God for English speaking people.

B. One must acknowledge the principle of exposition when studying the Bible.

1. God grants gifts of teaching to certain believers to expound the truths found in Scripture.
 - a. Exclusion of Biblical exposition denies the basic principles of teaching.
 - b. If exposition is wrong, why does the Holy Spirit grant specific members of the church body with the gift of teaching? Surely, the nature of this gift demands clear exposition

2. Many Bible teachers oppose exposition of Scripture on the grounds that the process of exposition compromises the doctrine of inspiration. It is interesting to note however that many who denounce exposition of key Bible words do so that their erroneous teachings may not be exposed by sound Biblical interpretation.
3. Please understand that researching a biblical word through use of an English, Hebrew, or Greek dictionary does not deny or damage its inspiration. Exposition is merely an explanation and is often critical to understanding passages of Scripture.
4. Language is constructed through use of words. Words symbolize detailed information. Words would have no value if they could not be connected with detailed definitions. Exposition of Scripture is simply identifying and exposing the details of a word or passage.

C. One must have the ability to discern Biblical truth when studying a passage.

1. The preacher or teacher must be able to exercise spiritual discernment to correctly identify, interpret and apply doctrinal truth from the Word of God to the hearer. The teacher's or preacher's main purpose is the preparation and deliverance of a Biblical discourse.
2. Discernment is achieved by the exercise of one's spiritual senses.
 - a. In Hebrews 5, the writer harshly condemns those who were teaching incorrect doctrine concerning Christ. He refers to these teachers as babes who need milk and cannot handle meat. The term milk refers to basic doctrines, while the use of meat refers to more advanced understanding of the Scriptures.
 - b. Notice verse 13. It reads, "*For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*" The key word for our study is the term "unskillful". It means these teachers were inexperienced or ignorant and therefore ineffective.
 - c. So, how do we become experienced and effective in our teaching and preaching? Verse 14 clearly states, "*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*" Effective teachers are those who constantly train their minds to judge and distinguish truth and error.
3. Truth can only be discerned by comparing the Scripture to the Scripture. 1 Corinthians 2:7-14 sheds considerable light on this process. Paul here spoke of the hidden wisdom of God and acknowledged that this wisdom can only be acquired by the help of the Holy Spirit by "*comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*" Notice the connection Hebrews 5:14 has with I Corinthians 2:14. It states, "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*"

II. THE PURPOSE OF BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS – The study and application of the rules of hermeneutics is two accomplish two things.

A. One purpose of Hermeneutics is to discover the correct interpretation of a passage or doctrine.

1. One goal of hermeneutics is the clear and systematic presentation of Biblical truth.
2. The clearness of the Scripture comes by the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart or mind of the believer, illuminating his mind to see the truth of the Scripture as the truth of God.
3. The power of expository preaching is unparalleled. God's method of revealing truth is through the preaching of His Word. Paul's command to Timothy is clear. "Preach the Word!"
4. Notice the following biblical example of the power of expository preaching/teaching.
 - a. Acts 18:24-28 gives us information concerning Apollos. He was eloquent, mighty in Scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord, fervent in spirit, a diligent teacher, and he spoke boldly in the temple. Yet, he knew only the baptism of John.
 - b. When Aquila and Priscilla heard his preaching, "*they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*" The term expounded means they "exposed" him to more truth. The phrase "more perfectly" means the truth they showed him was "more exact" or clearer.
 - c. Notice the impact of this exposition of the Scripture in Apollos' life. When he left to pass in Achaia he "*helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.*" He mightily convinced the Jews by using various Scriptures to prove that Jesus was who He claimed to be.
 - d. Note the difference in verses 24 through 26 and verse 27 and 28. There is a powerful point to be made from these few verses.
 - 1) Vs. 24-26 – The focus of these verses is on the ability and attributes of Apollos the man.
 - 2) Vs. 27-28 – The focus of these verses is on those affected by his ministry of preaching.
 - e. What made this great shift? The exposition of Aquila and Priscilla. Apollos began to expound to others in the same manner that they had expounded the Scriptures to him.

B. Another purpose of Hermeneutics is the edification of the hearer.

1. All study, preaching, and teaching of the Word of God has one goal, to produce a spiritual effect in the life of the man who reads and hears it. It accomplishes the following.
 - a. It makes us wise unto salvation.
 - b. It benefits us in doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.
2. The study of the Bible is not an end but a means. We are not to become stagnant ponds which breed the diseases of spiritual pride. The purpose of the study of interpretation is that the student will become a Christian God can use to produce results.
3. The term “edify” means “to promote another by building up; to improve the mind in knowledge”. “Edified” means one has been “instructed; improved in knowledge of religious matters”.
 - a. Christ is interested in edifying
 - 1) He provides a promise – Matthew 16:18 – “... *and upon this rock I will build my church*”
 - 2) He provides a foundation – I Corinthians 3:11-12 – “... *foundation... which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation...*”
 - 3) He provides the power – Acts 20:32 – “... *the word of his grace, which is able to build*”
 - b. The Church should be interested in edifying
 - 1) I Thessalonians 5:11 – “*edify one another*”
 - 2) I Corinthians 14:26 – “*let all things be done unto edifying*”
 - 3) Ephesians 4:29 – “*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying*”
 - 4) I Corinthians 14:12 – “*seek that ye excel to the edifying of the church*”

Conclusion: The student must understand the supernatural involvement of the Holy Spirit in the revelation of God through his Word. This acknowledgement will cause him to rely upon this same source for enlightenment in his pursuit of rightly dividing the Scripture. Once a correct interpretation is discerned, the student as a teacher or preacher must clearly lay out the truth in an expository manner, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.