

BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

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What is Hermeneutics?

- ① Hermeneutics – refers generally to the overall process and principles of biblical interpretation. But also applies specifically to the subsequent act of interpreting for contemporary meaning within the larger two step process that begins with exegesis.

First Step – Exegesis

(discovering original meaning)

- ◎ Key is to read carefully to discern time, culture, and occasion in pursuit of understanding the original intent of the writing.

Typical Considerations: #1

- ⦿ Historical/cultural analysis -- consideration of the historical and cultural milieu of the writer and audience. For example:
- ⦿ understanding Jonah's anti-salvation motive toward the Ninevites and his deep disobedience to God because of the historical conflict between the Ninevites and the Jews.
- ⦿ discerning whether actions are classified as only descriptive (e.g., marching around Jericho) or as universally applicable / prescriptive (e.g., Peter being told to eat meats heretofore considered unclean)

Typical Considerations: #2

- Contextual analysis – consideration of the passage in relation to the whole body of the author’s writing. For example:
- discerning the likely connection between God having Adam name the animals (Gen 2:19) – for Adam’s comprehension that he had no mate – and the earlier statement by God that Adam needed a mate (v. 18). All of this suggesting that God wanted Adam, by the way of naming the animals, to experientially know he needed a mate.
- Understanding that there is no mention of outer space in the so-called dominion mandate (Gen 1:26-28) since it would not have made sense to the ancient peoples.
- Perceiving that the phrase “within you” in Luke 17:21, should not be taken literally to mean the Kingdom is within those spoken to (the Pharisees) since they were not believers.

Typical Considerations: #3a

- Lexical systematical analysis – consideration of word definitions (lexicology) and relationships to one another (syntax)
- Aspects of lexical-syntactical analysis
- Identify general literary form. E.g.,
 - (1) prose is where literal meaning of words prevail,
 - (2) poetry, as in Psalms where words are often used symbolically; and
 - (3) apocalyptic literature as in Daniel and Revelation where symbolism and visionary writings prevail.
- Identify the genre or type of the various Books of the Bible (e.g., wisdom books, historical) since they have different implications regarding interpretation and implementation. For instance, many of the statements in the wisdom books are not necessarily promises but rather are wise sayings about how life generally operates (e.g., Prov. 22:6). In fact, by definition, proverbs are not commands.

Typical Considerations: #3b

- Identify natural divisions of the text (which don't necessarily correspond to sentence numbering and chapter divisions).
- Identify how connecting words function to link ideas. What is the word "Therefore", there for? (Rom 12:1; Gal 6:10; Eph 6:13).
- Understand word meanings since any word will have multiple meanings and the same word used in multiple text places will not always have the same Greek or Hebrew root word. For instance, the word "saved" in Acts 16:30 (Strong's #4982) meant to deliver or protect. The word "saved" in 2 Peter 2:5 (Strong's #5442) means to watch or be on guard. Likewise, the word "child" (KJV) in 2 Tim 3:15 actually means infant or pre-born (Strong's #1025).

Typical Considerations: #4

- ① Theological analysis – consideration of the level of theological understanding at time of the revelation/writing. For example inferring that John the Baptist was challenging Jesus to break him out of jail; since Jesus was supposed to be THE conquering King (Matt 11:3).

Typical Considerations: #5

- ⦿ Literary analysis – consideration of literary form. For example, seeing the actions that Jesus endorsed to keep from sinning as exaggeration/ hyperbole on basis of not mutilating the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Typical Considerations: #6

- ⦿ Other interpreters – comparisons with other interpreters

Hermeneutics Exercises

- ① **Directions: For each item, write your explanation/answer in the explanation column on your worksheet.**

Explanation/Answer

Bible as oracle
Bible as roulette

Proof – texting
Gen – 3117 – day/now/period of time
Ex 20:8 – 3117 – Sabbath Day

Eisegesis
Became – 1961 – “to become”

Item

1. What interpretative method is employed to reach the conclusion embodied in the following three statements?
Matt 27:5 “Judas went away and hanged himself”
Luke 10:37 “Go and do likewise”
John 13:27 “What you are about to do, do quickly”

2. A reasonable understanding of the length of days in the creation time era (Gen 1:5, 8, etc.) is to interpret by the time definition of 2 Peter 3:8 (“A day is like 1000 years and vice versa”).

True or False
Explain!

3. Are the I Thes 5:23 (“sanctified in spirit, soul, & body”) and the Gen 2:7 (“body formed, breathed into, & became a soul”) verses basically in agreement regarding the teaching that there are three components in the humans of body (physical being), spirit (non-material being) and soul (a third part whatever it may exactly be)?

Yes or No
Explain!

Explanation/Answer

Interpret as Intended audience

Interpret by literature
Category (i.e., genre)

Use of hyperbole

Item

4. Is our country out of biblical order in exploring outer space since the Dominion Mandate of Gen 1:26 & 28 (“rule over...”) does not include outer space?

Yes

or
Explain!

No

5. What does the Prov 22:6 (“raise up a child...and he will not depart...”) verse mean to you if you are a parent of young children? Is it a command with a promise?

6. Do you have a general idea of approximately the degree of sin that would cause Matt 5:29-30 (“cut off the hand that sins”) to be put into effect? Explain please!

Explanation/Answer

Practic v. philosophy
(Deut 28)

<u>Pharisees</u>	<u>Jesus</u>	<u>John</u>
No drink	Drank	No rink
Fast	No fast	Fast

In larger context
(Acts 23:11 – go to Rome)

Logic & Grammar
(parallel or opposing)

Item

7. Some commentators say that use of behavioristic practices, as in using rewards and punishments, to change behavior is biblically unsound if not biblically antithetical. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
8. How do you explain Paul's uncharacteristic appeal to Caesar to save his life (Acts 25:11, 25) when Paul regularly taught that our lives are no longer our own (e.g., Gal 2:20; Phil 4:11-12) to defend?
9. What might the grammatical structure of Eph 6:4 ("Fathers do not frustrate but raise your child...") tell us about the kind of educational environment that aligns with the child's nature?

Explanation/Answer

(Concordance)

Word definition

Exegesis

Child-1025-babe/infant

Luke 18:15-infant-1025

Luke 18:16-children-3813

Known-1492-understood

Careful reading within context

a. for v.2 – first group

e. v. 15 own but merciful

Word study/context

Desire-8669-stretch out after, longing

Gen 4:7; SoS 7:10-context is key

Desc. vs. presc.

child...”) tell us about the kind of educational environment that aligns with the child’s nature?

Item

10. How might 2 Tim 3:15 (“from a child you have known the Scriptures”) supplement what we know about human nature from Eph 6:4?
11. The central theme of the Parable of the Vineyard Workers who received equal pay for unequal work (Matt 20:1-16) is:
 - a. always get a contract before working
 - b. there should be fair pay for work done
 - c. come in last so you can be first selected
 - d. all of the above
 - e. none of the above
12. What kind of desire (God said, “Your desire will be for your husband”) do you think Eve had for Adam in Gen 3:16? Why?
13. How can we use the Joshua 6:12-21 Jericho march to justify contemporary efforts such as marching around abortion clinics to cause them to collapse?

Explanation/Answer

Deriving principles
(1:8 and 5:20)

Prioritize conflicting perspectives
(Eph 6:1 vs. Heb 10:25)

Cultural practice vs. Biblical principle
A sign of submission via Christian culture

Eisegesis

Context and word definitions (cf. 1:28-3563)
Mind 3563-mind
Context-“therefore” thus moral understanding

Item

14. Is there a principle about both obedience and submission that can be derived from Acts 4:18-20 and Acts 5:29 (“Do what you will but we must obey God rather than men!”)
15. What advice about going to church would you give the recently saved teenager whose unsaved parents forbid her from attending church? Why?
16. Why should women in today’s culture wear a head covering as recommended by Paul in I Cor 11:3-16?
17. Describe two educational prescriptions (analogous to those written by medical doctors) that are drawn directly from the Bible.
18. What kind of justification does Rom 12:2 “renewing of the mind” give for academic pursuits?

Second Step – Hermeneutics

(discovery of contemporary relevance)

Gen 7:2, 3
7 pr. clean
1 pr. unclean
7 pr. Birds

Ruthless

They felt “put out.”

They raised a little Cain!

Bonus Questions

19. How many pairs of each kind of animal did Moses take on the Ark?
20. What kind of a man was Boaz before he married Ruth?
21. How did Adam and Eve feel when expelled from the Garden of Eden?
22. What was one of the first things Adam and Eve did after they were kicked out?