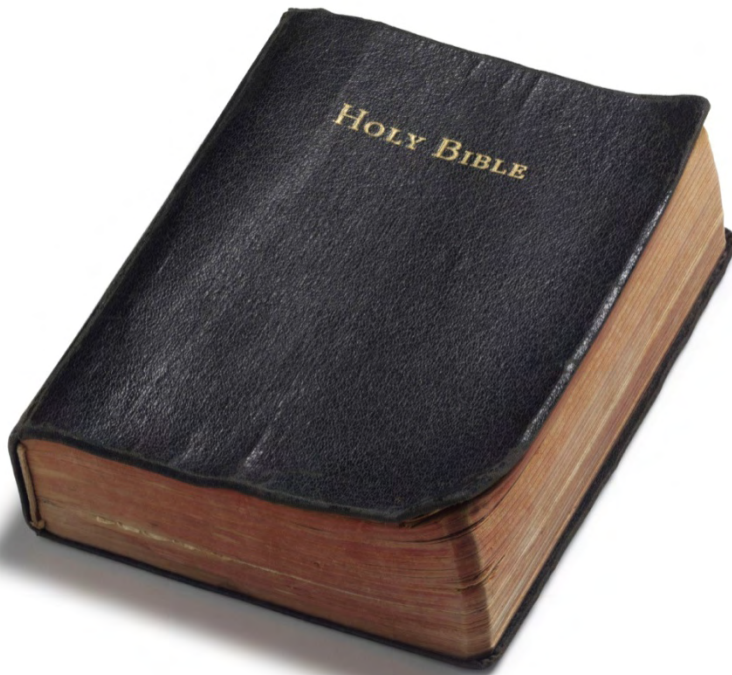


How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth



*An Outline of
Reformed Biblical
Hermeneutics*

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Introduction: Explanation of Key Terms

Introduction: Explanation of Key Terms

Hermeneutics

 Exegesis

 Eisegesis

 Homiletics

Hermeneutics

- The word ‘hermeneutics’ comes from a Greek word (*hermeneia*, ἑρμηνεία) meaning ‘interpretation’ or ‘explanation’



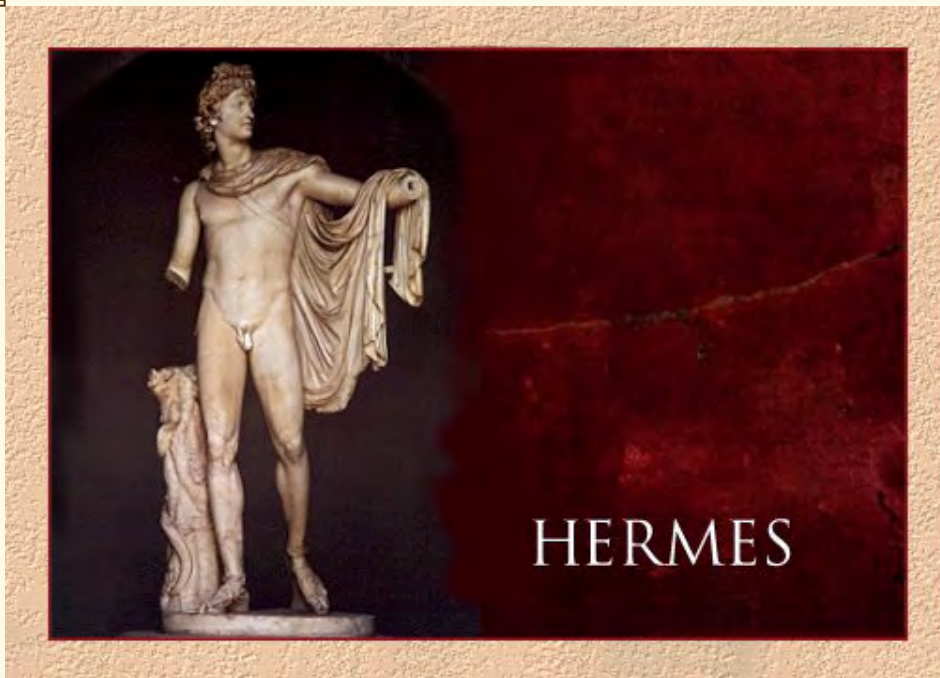
Hermeneutics

- ❑ 11 occurrences of the word in Scripture: Acts 9:36; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 30; 14:5, 13, 26 [2x], 27, 28; 14:27; Hebrews 7:2
- ❑ Luke 24:27 “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he [Jesus] explained (διερμήνευσεν, *diermêneusen*) to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself”



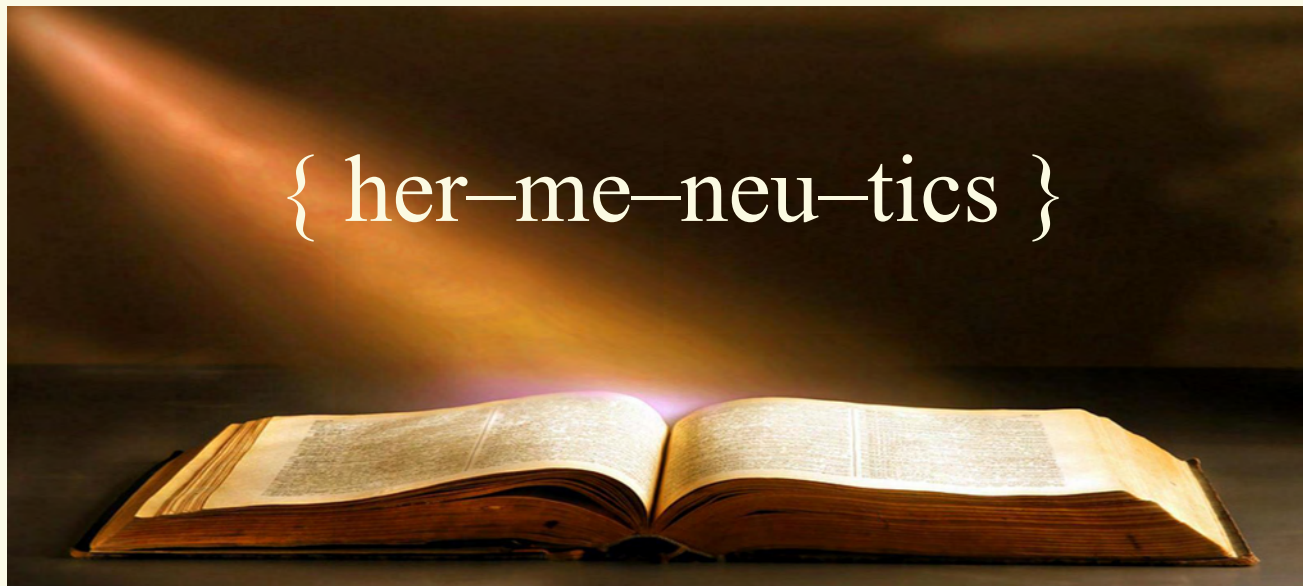
Hermeneutics

- Acts 14:12 “Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker” (after healing lame man in Lystra)

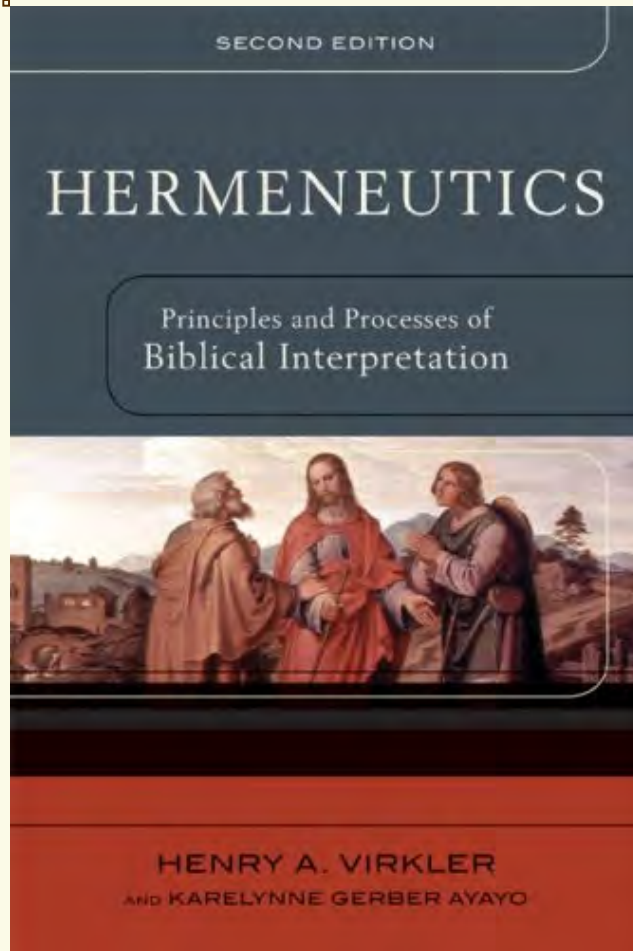


Hermeneutics

- Although the word “hermeneutics” comes from a Greek word that literally means “interpretation” or “explanation,” this term is used in a broader sense to refer to a *set of rules or guidelines for interpreting the Bible*.



Hermeneutics

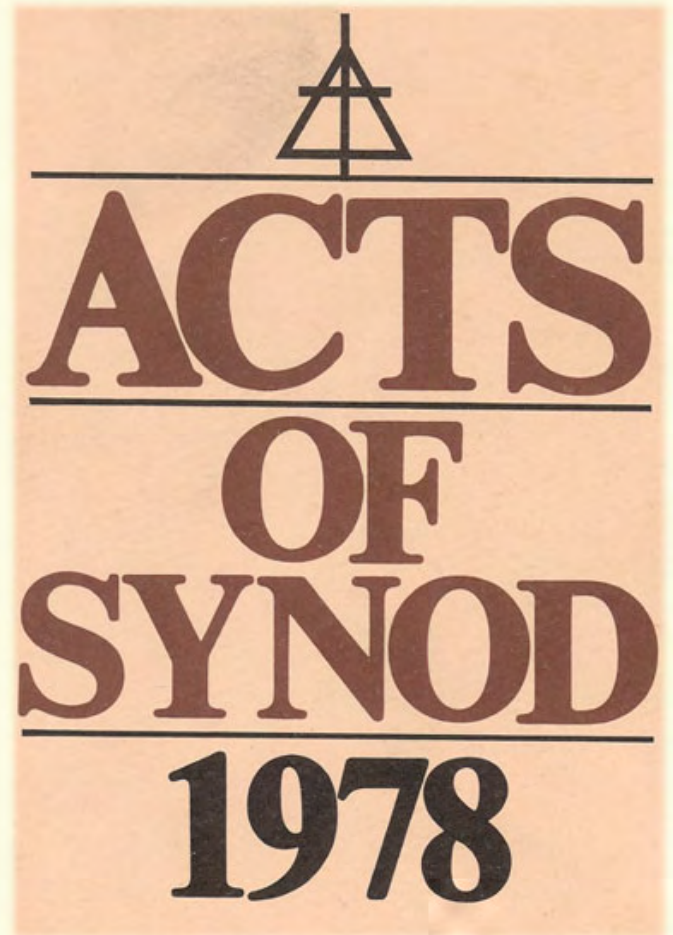


“Hermeneutics is often defined as the science and art of biblical interpretation. It is considered a *science* because it has rules and these rules can be classified into an orderly system. It is considered an *art* because communication is flexible, and therefore a mechanical and rigid application of rules will sometimes distort the true meaning of a communication. To be a good interpreter of scripture one must learn the rules of hermeneutics as well as the art of applying those rules.”

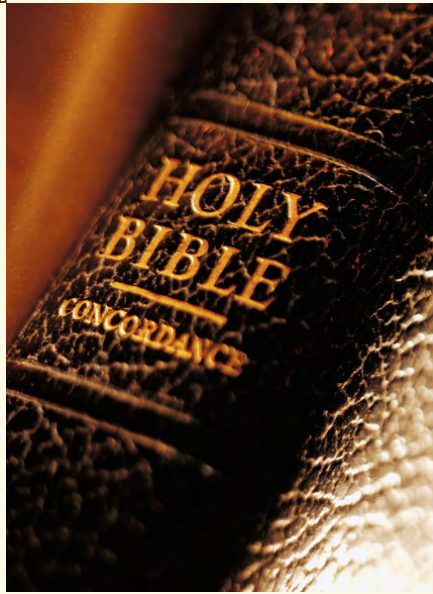
Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics, Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981; 2nd edition 2007) 16.

“Hermeneutical Principles
Concerning Women in
Ecclesiastical Office”:

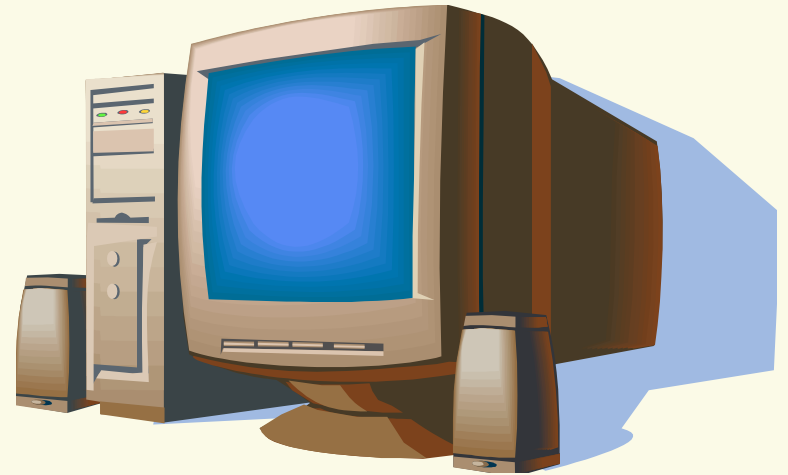
“Drawing up a soundly biblical hermeneutics is one thing; applying such a hermeneutic to a given passage is another. There is nothing mechanical about the process of understanding. Understanding literature and, in this case, understanding the Bible is an art. As art, it is not the mechanical application of a set of rules which would automatically yield uniform results” (page 491).



Hermeneutics as an “Art”



+



= Reformed Sermon!?

Introduction: Explanation of Key Terms

 Hermeneutics

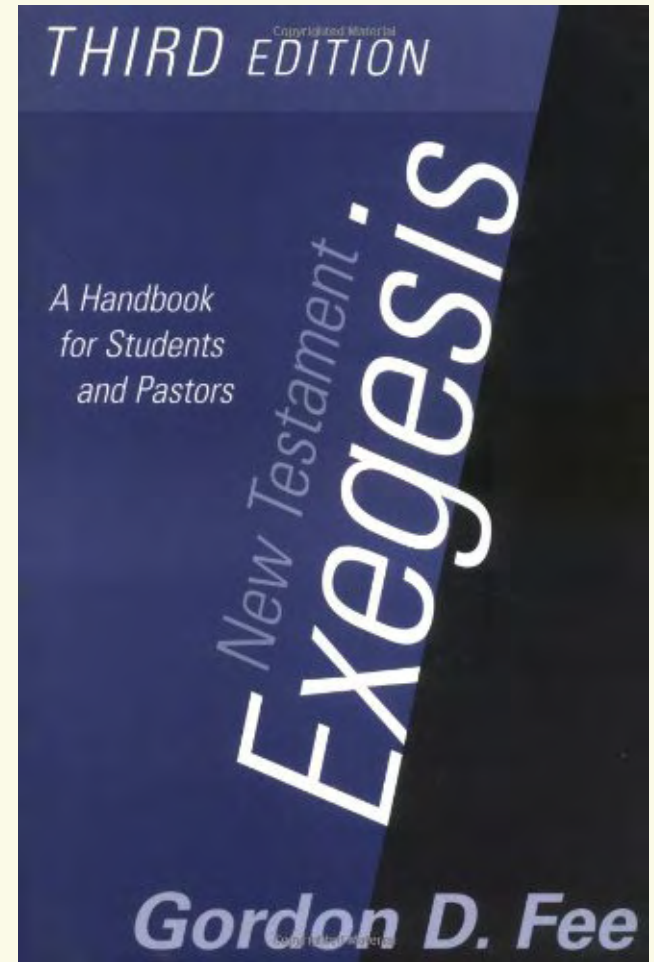
 *Exegesis*

 Eisegesis

 Homiletics

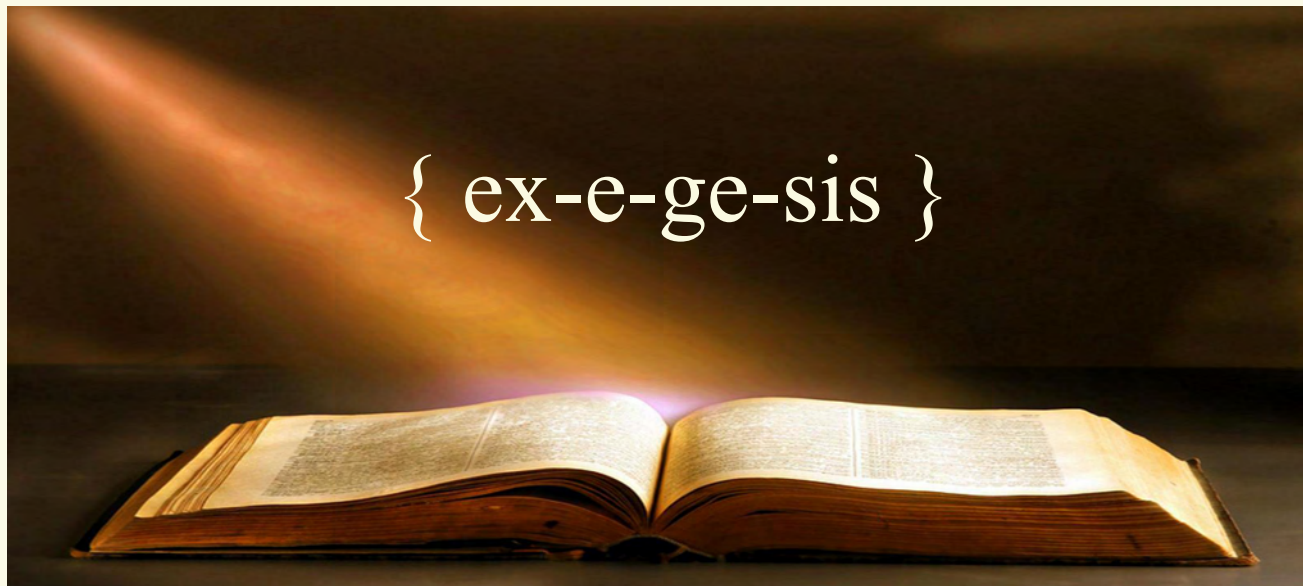
Exegesis

- ❑ The word “exegesis” comes from a Greek word (ἐξήγησις, *exêgêsis*, from the verb ἐξηγέομαι, *exêgeomai*) that literally means “to lead out.”
- ❑ Thus the word refers to the act of leading or drawing out the intended meaning of a biblical passage.

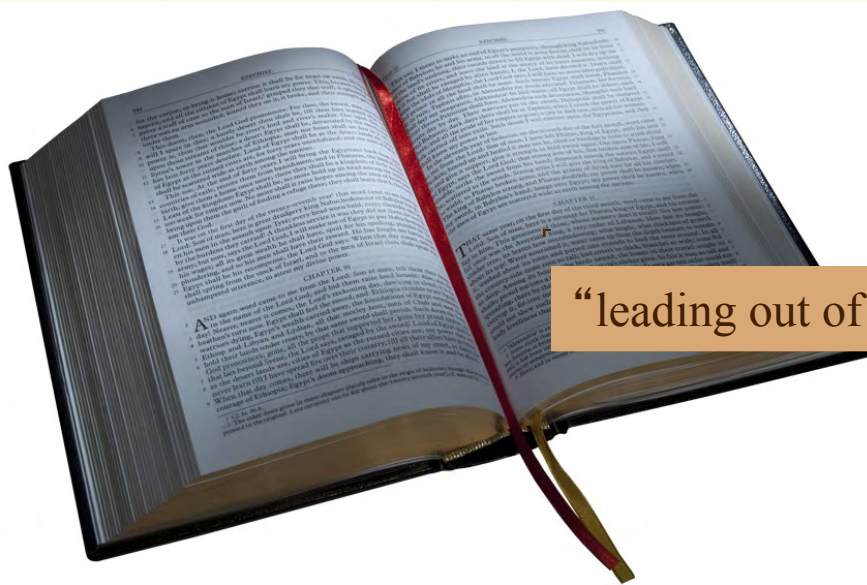


Exegesis

- The term “exegesis,” then, is used in a narrow sense to refer to *application of the principles of hermeneutics in the interpretation of a specific passage.*



Exegesis



“leading out of the Bible”



Introduction: Explanation of Key Terms

 Hermeneutics

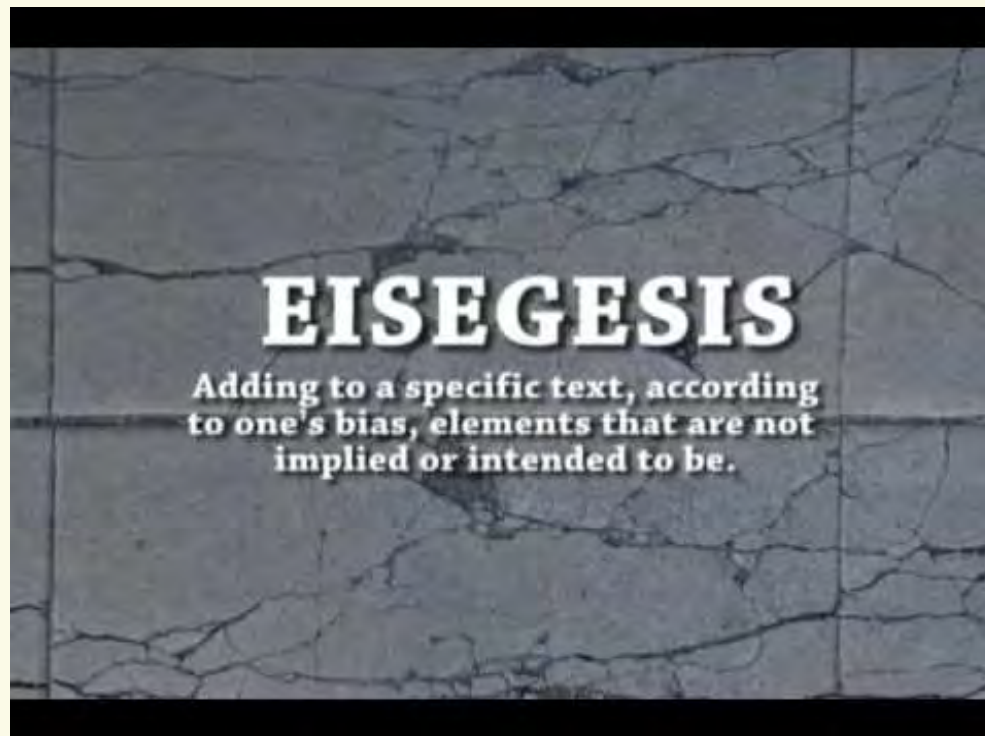
 Exegesis

 *Eisegesis*

 Homiletics

Eisegesis

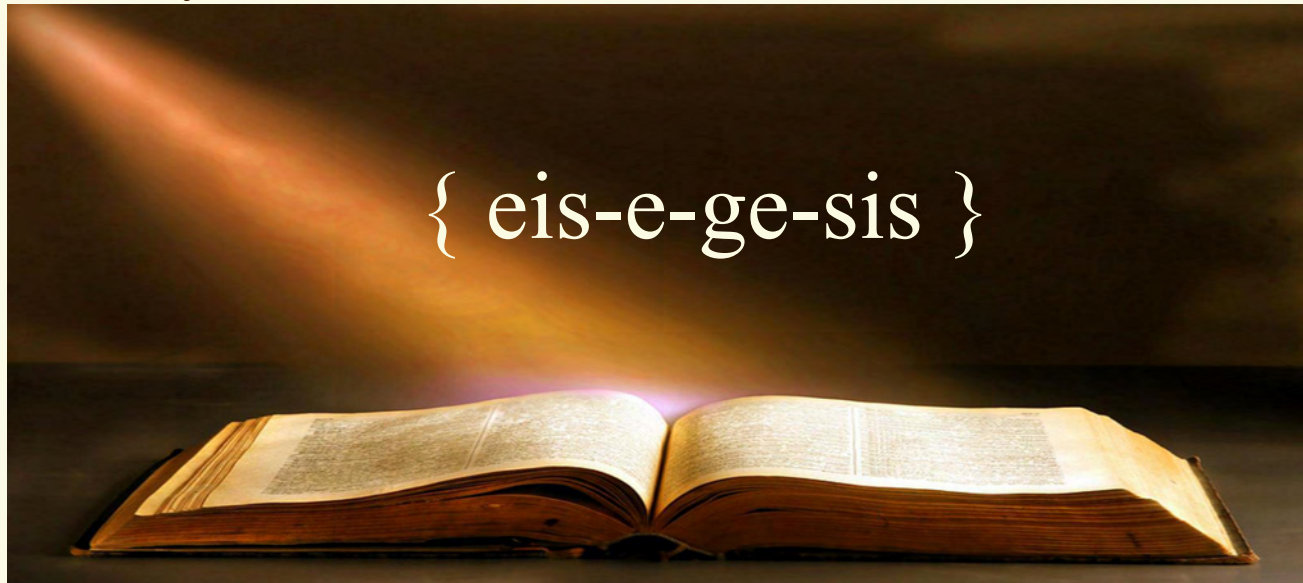
- The word “eisegesis” comes from a Greek word (εἰσῆγησις, *eisegêsis*) that literally means “to lead into.”



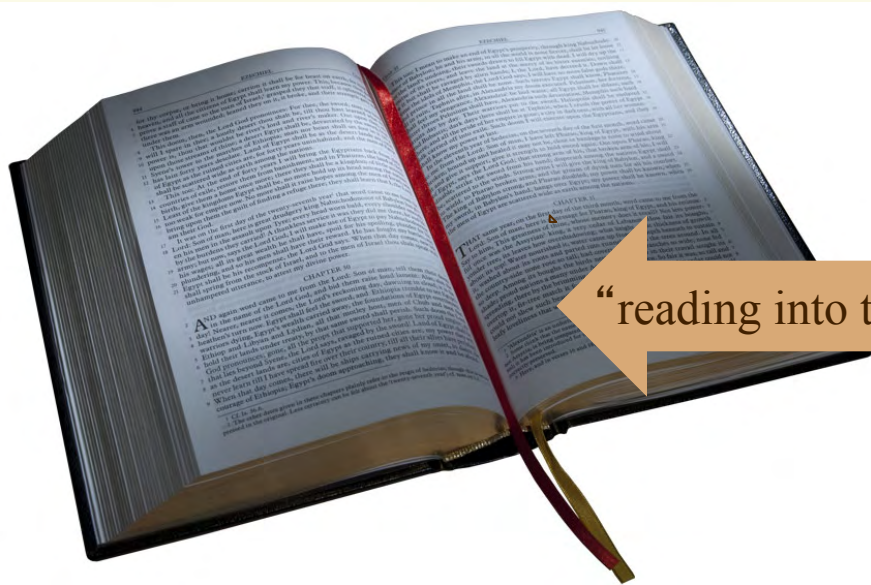
Eisegesis

- Thus the word refers to the act of a modern reader of the Bible who has a preconceived view of what he or she wants scripture to say and then proceeds to take this view and “read it into” the biblical text, even though it was not intended by the biblical author.

{ eis-e-ge-sis }



Eisegesis



“reading into the Bible”



Introduction: Explanation of Key Terms

 Hermeneutics

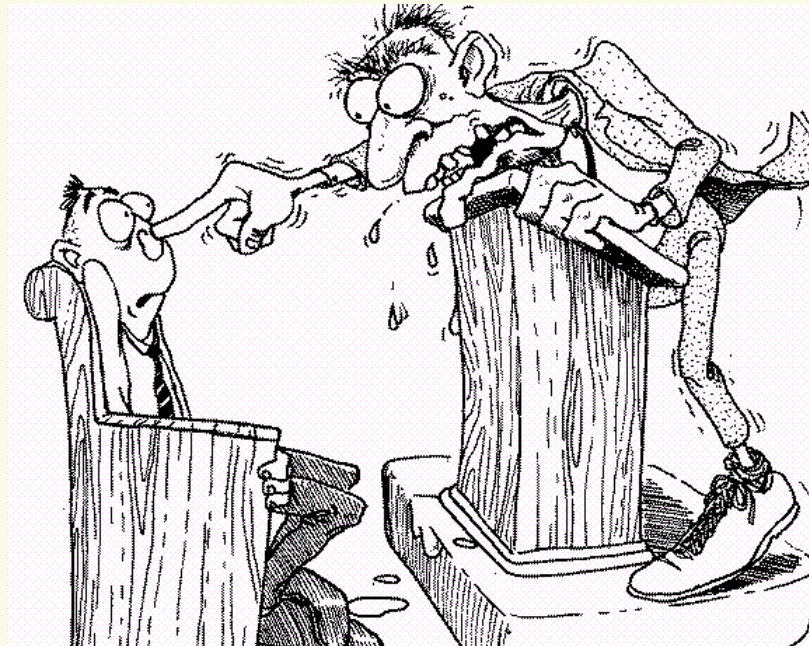
 Exegesis

 Eisegesis

 *Homiletics*

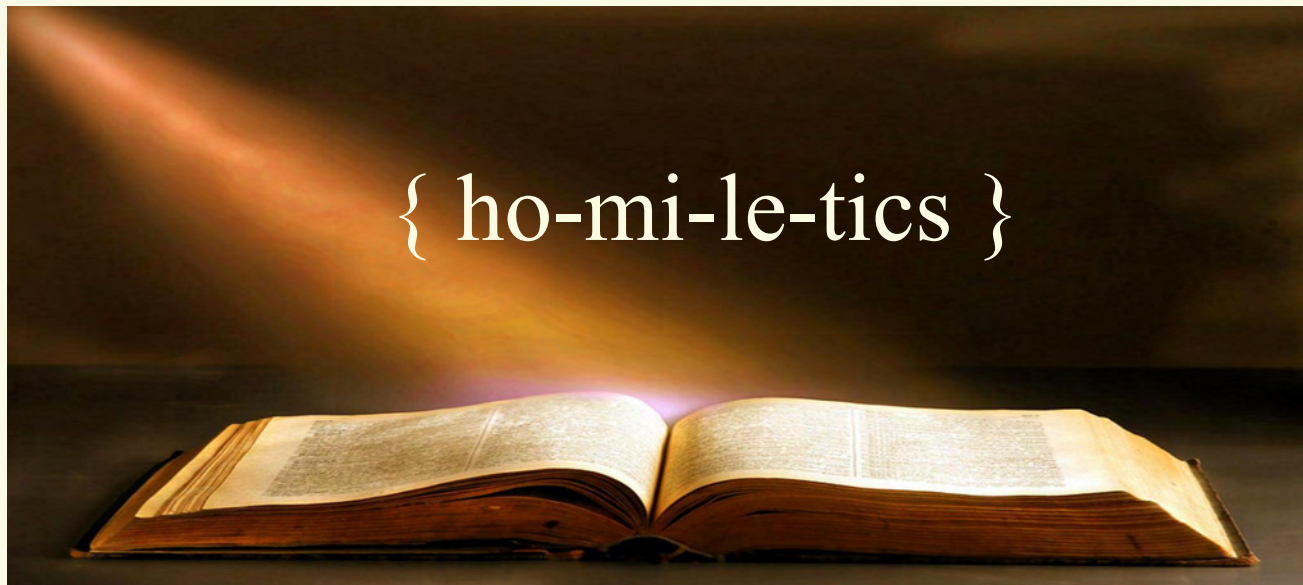
Homiletics

- The word “homiletics” comes from a Greek word ὁμιλία (*homilia*) that literally means “conversation” or “speech” and is used today to refer to the art of preaching.



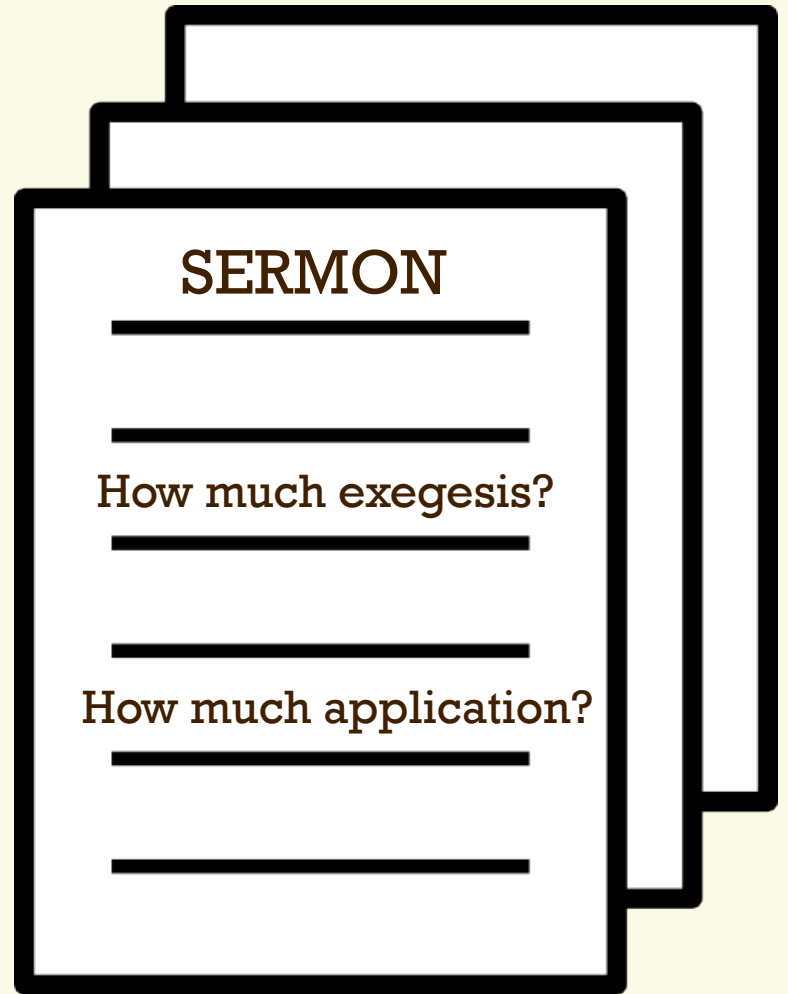
Homiletics

- ❑ Whereas exegesis deals with what the text *meant*, homiletics or preaching deals with what the text *means*.
- ❑ Whereas exegesis concentrates on God's message to his people *then and there*, while preaching concentrates on God's message to his people *here and now*."



Homiletics

- ❑ Proper relationship between exegesis & homiletics in a sermon:
- ❑ A good sermon has enough exegesis so that people hear the authoritative voice of God and enough application so that people see the relevance of God's word for their lives





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The Necessity of Biblical Hermeneutics

The Necessity of Biblical Hermeneutics

Objection:

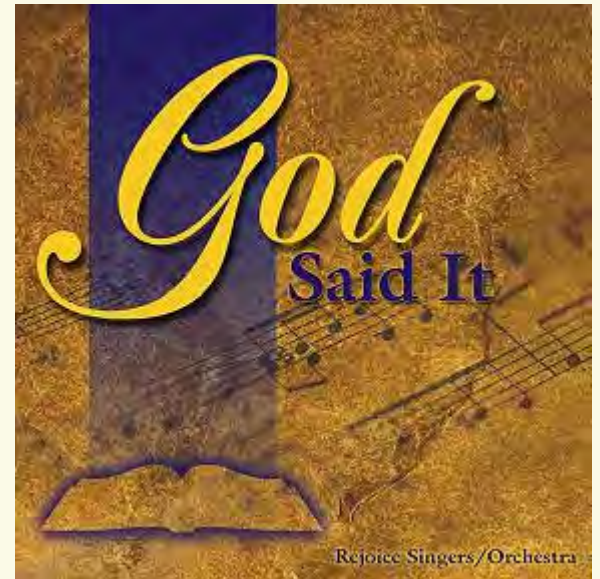
“We don’t need rules (hermeneutics) to understand the Bible. All you have to do is simply read it and do what it says!”



The Necessity of Biblical Hermeneutics

Song:

“God said it,
I believe it,
And that settles it for me!”



The Necessity of Biblical Hermeneutics

Response #1:

- Affirm the Perspicuity of Scripture



Affirm the *Perspicuity* of Scripture

- Historical understanding of the term “perspicuity”
- Although the Reformers affirmed that Scripture was perspicuous or clear, they did not mean that everything in the whole Bible was simple or easy to understand

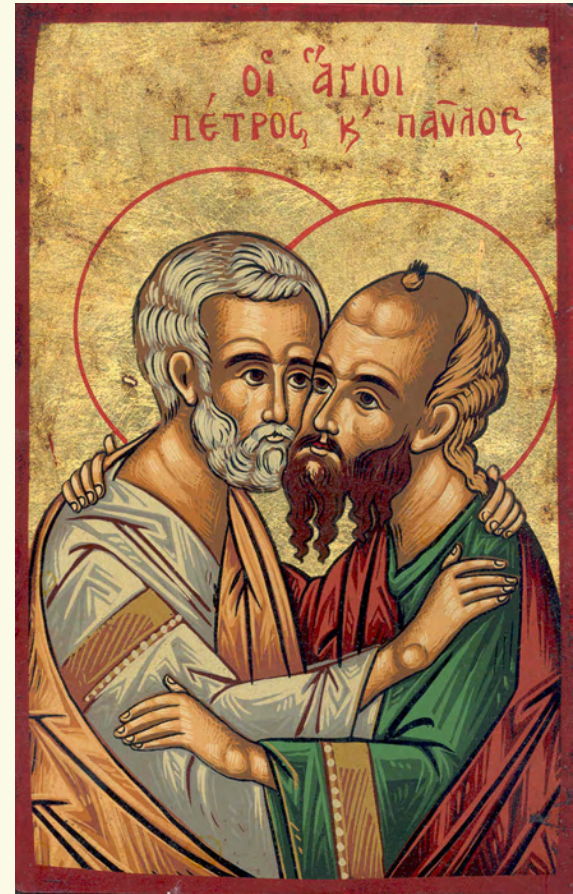


Protestant Reformers:
Zwingli, Wycliffe, Hus,
Luther, Calvin

Affirm the *Perspicuity* of Scripture

➤ 2 Peter 3:16

“There are some things in
them [i.e. the letters of Paul]
hard to understand...”



Peter & Paul

Affirm the *Perspicuity* of Scripture

➤ Acts 8:26-40

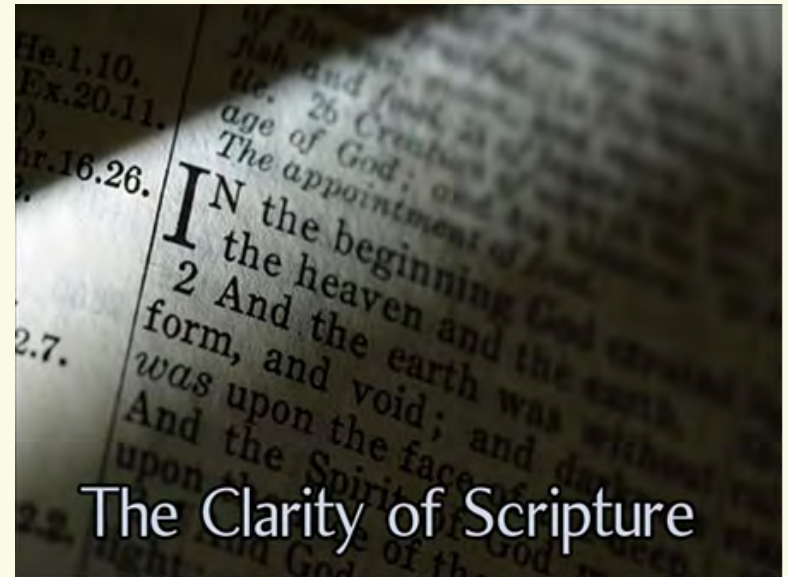
“Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ Philip asked. He answered, ‘How can I unless someone explains it to me?’” (verse 30-31)



Philip & the
Ethiopian Eunuch

Affirm the *Perspicuity* of Scripture

- A “restricted” or “narrow” sense of the term perspicuity
- Term “perspicuity” not applied to everything in the Bible but limited to those things that must be known for salvation



Affirm the *Perspicuity* of Scripture



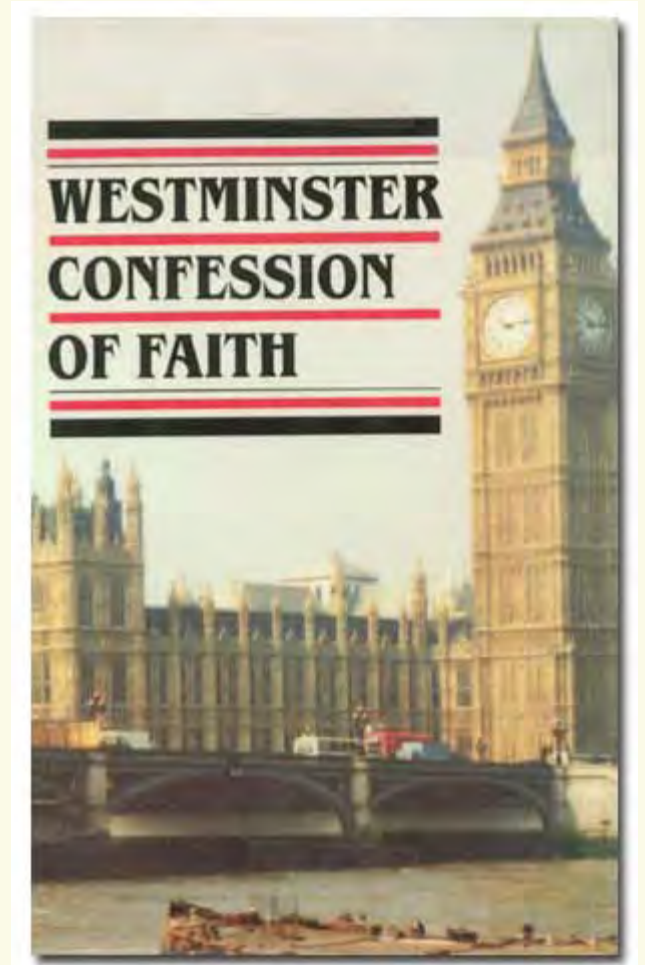
Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*:

“I admit, of course that there are many texts in the Scriptures that are obscure and abstruse, not because of the majesty of their subject matter, but because of our ignorance of their vocabulary and grammar; but these texts in no way hinder a knowledge of all the subject matter of Scripture” (response to Erasmus)

Affirm the *Perspicuity* of Scripture

Westminster Confession (1643-1648)

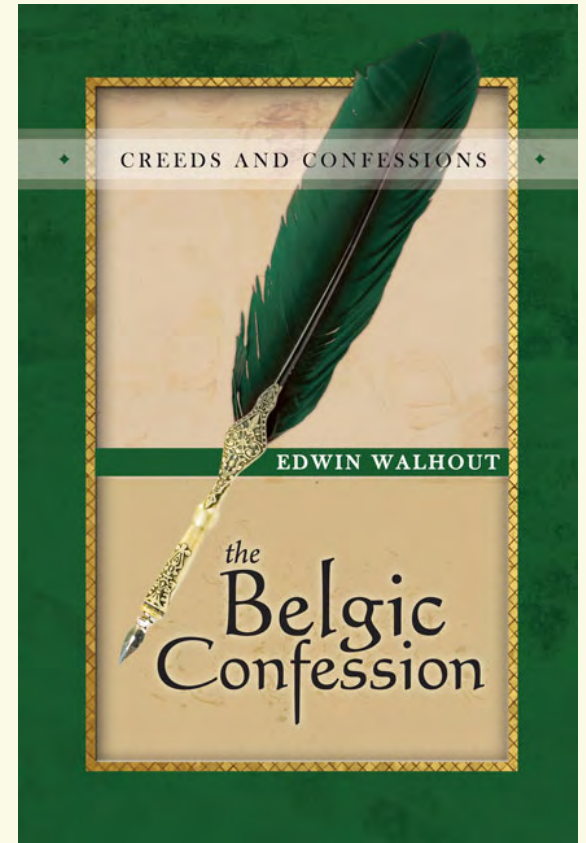
“All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; *yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation*, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.” (Chapter 1, Article 7)



Affirm the *Perspicuity* of Scripture

Belgic Confession (1561)

“Second, he makes himself known to us more openly by his holy and divine Word, *as much as we need* in this life, for his glory and for the salvation of his own” (Article 2)

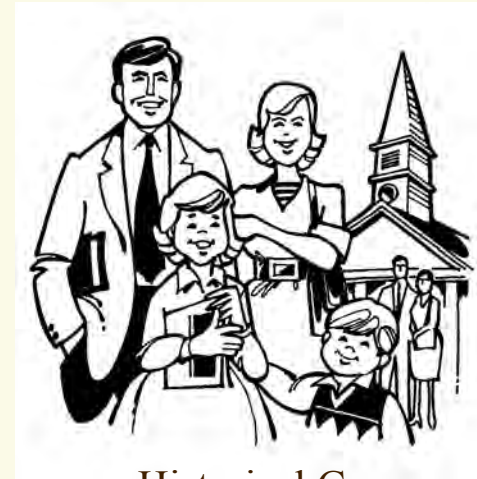


Guido de Bres,
Belgian Pastor

Affirm the *Necessity* of Biblical Hermeneutics

Response #2:

➤ An easy understanding of the Bible is hindered by several “gaps” that exist between the Bible and us, thereby requiring the use of hermeneutics

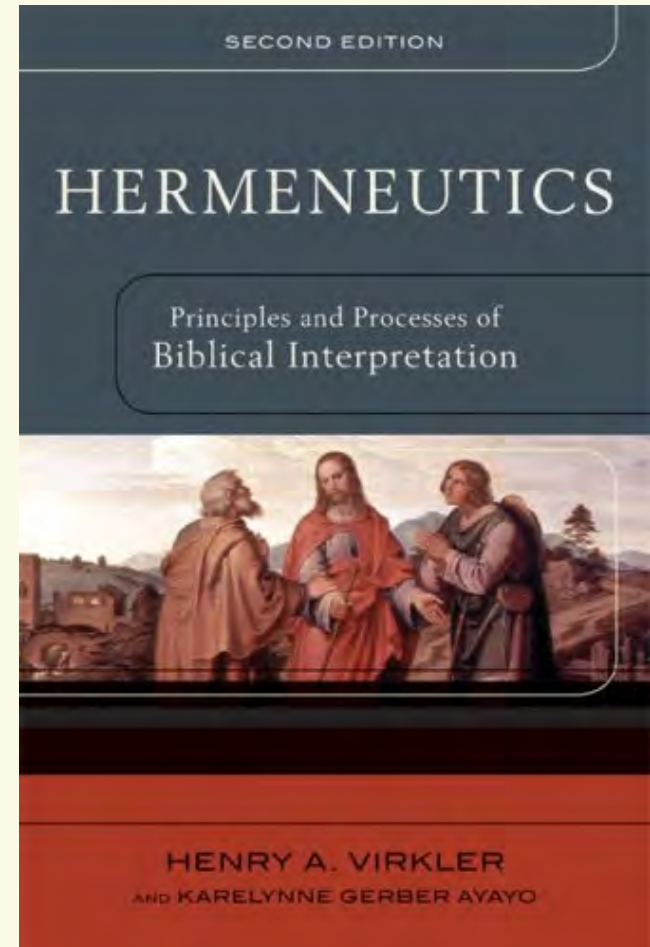


Historical Gap
Cultural Gap
Philosophical Gap
Linguistic Gap



Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics. Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981; 2nd edition 2007.

“Hermeneutics is needed, then, because of the historical, cultural, philosophical, and linguistic gaps that block a spontaneous, accurate understanding of God’s word” (page 20)



Affirm the *Necessity* of Biblical Hermeneutics

Response #3:

- All people already have a hermeneutic!
- Key issue: What kind of hermeneutic do they have?



“Church Lady”



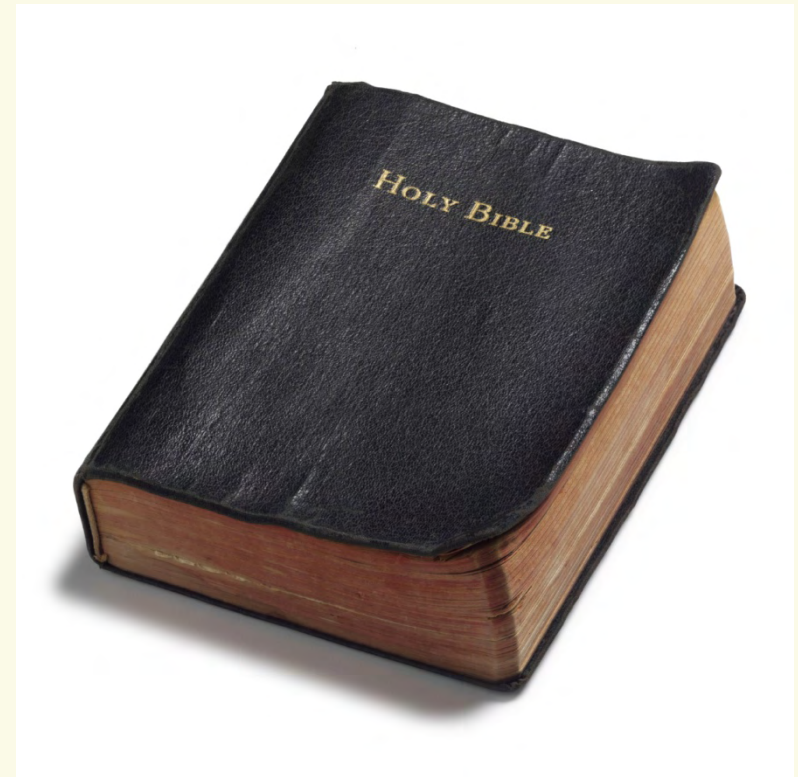
Major Elements of a Reformed Hermeneutic

Major Elements of a Reformed Hermeneutic

1. *The Holy Spirit Element*
2. The Grammatical Element
3. The Literary Element
4. The Historical Element
5. The Theological Element

The Holy Spirit Element

- The same Holy Spirit who inspired the biblical writers *to record* God's revelation needs to work in our heart and mind *to understand and accept* that revelation



The Holy Spirit Element



John 14:26

“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 16:13-15

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth ...he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

The Holy Spirit Element



1 Corinthians 2:10-11

“God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one *knows* (ἔγνωκεν) the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”

The Holy Spirit Element



1 Corinthians 2:14

“The person without the Spirit does not *accept* (δέχεται) the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot *understand* (οὐ δύναται γνῶναι) them because they are discerned only through the Spirit”

The Holy Spirit Element



Issue:

Does the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit cause believers to **KNOW/UNDERSTAND** or to **ACCEPT** the will of God as revealed in the Bible?



Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*

“... no man perceives one iota of what is in the Scriptures unless he has the Spirit of God. All men have a darkened heart, so that even if they can recite every-thing in Scripture, and know how to quote it, yet they apprehend and truly understand nothing of it... For the Spirit is required for the understanding of Scripture, both as a whole and in any part of it.”

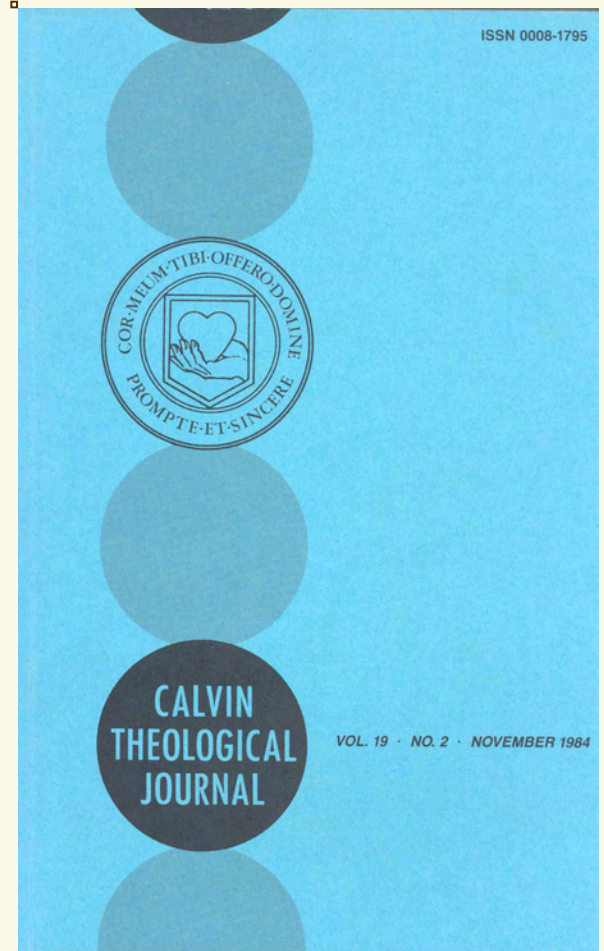
John Calvin (in a sermon on 1 Timothy 3:8-10):



“When we come to hear the sermon or to take up the Bible, we must not have the foolish arrogance of thinking that we shall easily understand everything we hear or read. But we must come with reverence, we must wait entirely upon God, *knowing that we need to be taught by his Holy Spirit, and that without Him we cannot understand anything that is shown to us in his Word.*”

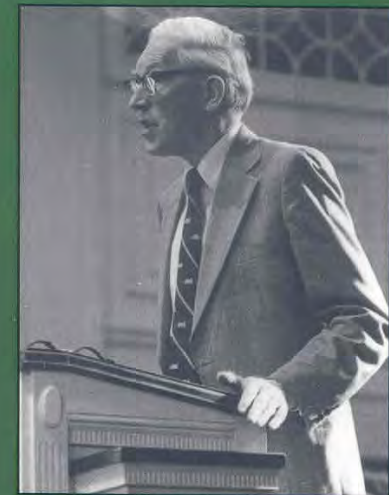
Klaas Runia, "The Hermeneutics of the Reformers," *Calvin Theological Journal* 19.2 (1984): 121-152.

“Finally, if we want to come to a truly biblical hermeneutics, we must realize with the Reformers that the Word of God cannot be understood without the illumination of the Spirit of God ... The final key to the hermeneutics of the Reformers is the confession ‘*Spiritus Sanctus est Verus Interpres Scripturae*’ (the Holy Spirit is the true interpreter of Scripture). Therefore the beginning and end of all biblical hermeneutics is the humble prayer ‘*Veni Creator Spiritus*’ (Come, Creator Spirit)” (pp 151-152).



J. I. Packer, “Understanding the Bible: Evangelical Hermeneutics,”
Honoring the Written Word of God (Paternoster, 1999) 3.147-160.

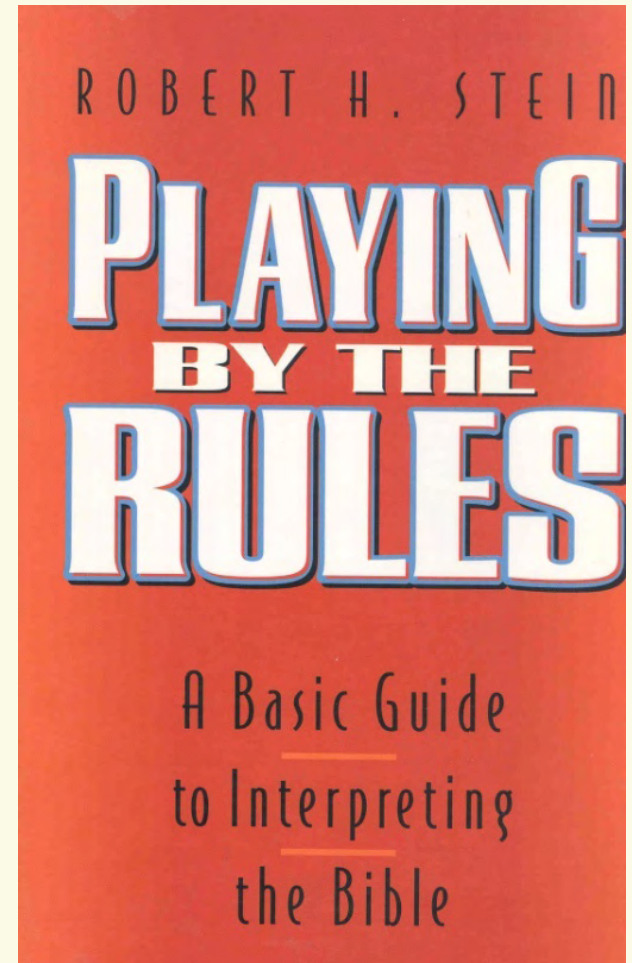
“The characteristic procedures and techniques of evangelical hermeneutics are now before us, and it remains only to add that the evangelical way of practicing them involves radical dependence on the Holy Spirit, a dependence that is expressed by prayer for wisdom and insight before, during, and after the hermeneutical exercise itself. Evangelicals do not forget that sin, as an inbred anti-God perversity of the soul, disables minds from understanding God no less than it disables wills from obeying him, so that divine help is needed at every stage of the process of receiving the divine message” (page 158)



J.I. Packer is Board of Governors' Professor of Theology at Regent College, Vancouver. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential thinkers and apologists for Christianity in the twentieth century. He is the author of numerous books including *Knowing God*, *Rediscovering Holiness* and *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*.

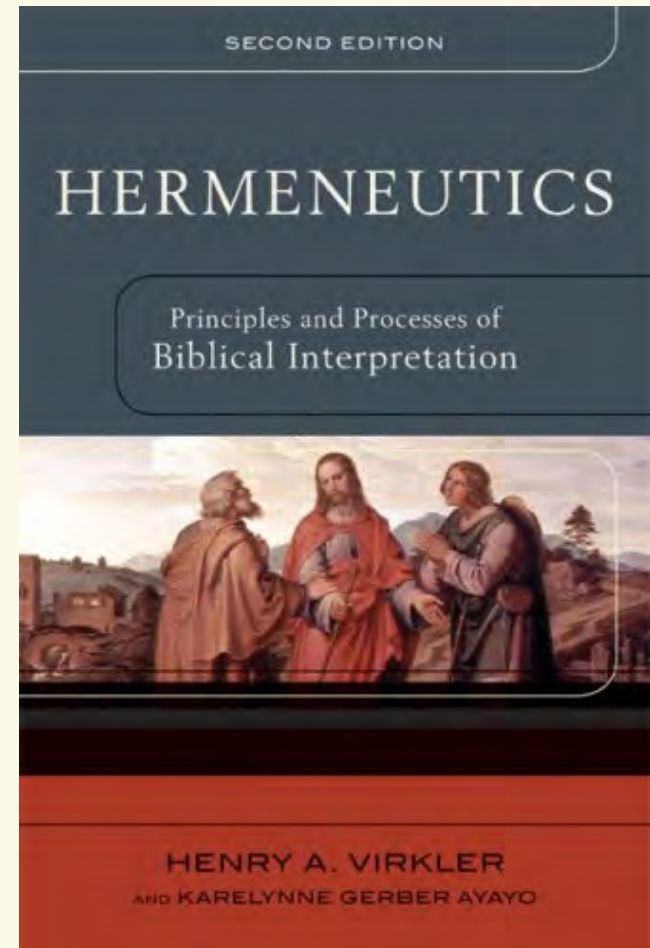
Robert H. Stein, *Playing by the Rules. A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

“... it would appear that what the Reformers called ‘illumination’ refers to understanding the meaning of the text, ‘conviction’ to the attribution of a positive significance to the text. In other words, the Spirit helps the reader understand the pattern of meaning that the author willed and convinces the reader as to the truth of that teaching” (page 64)



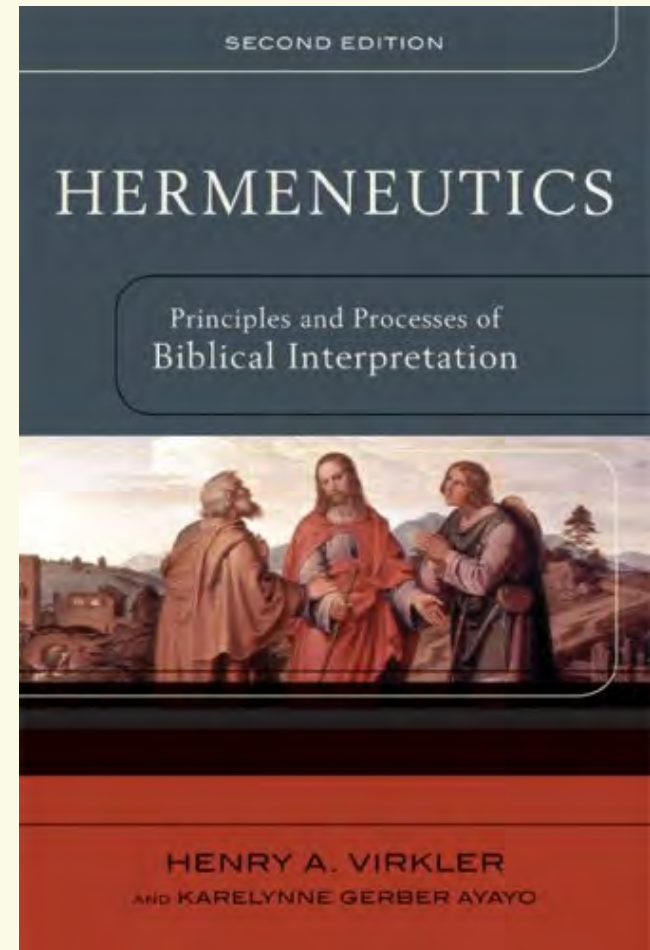
Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics. Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981; 2nd edition 2007.

“One attempt to resolve this dilemma [on the Spirit’s role in interpretation] is based on a definition of the term *know*. According to Scripture, persons do not truly possess knowledge unless they are living in the light of that knowledge. True faith is not only knowledge about God (which even the demons possess [James 2:19]) but knowledge acted on. ...



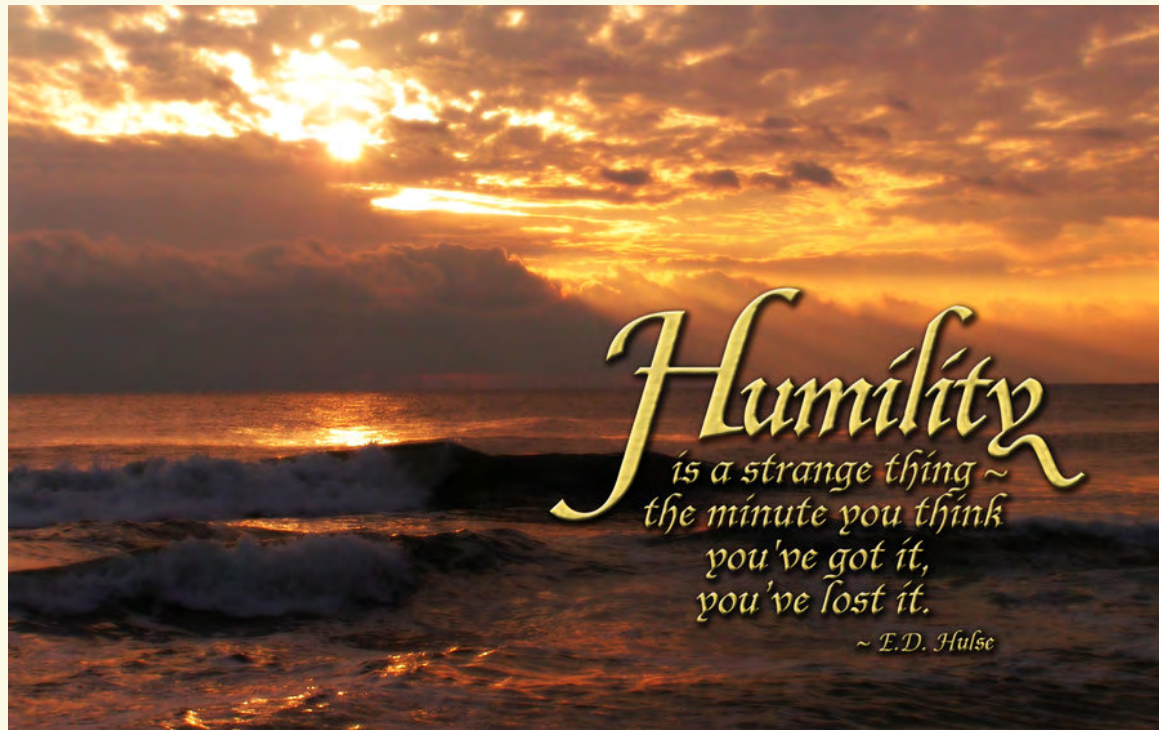
Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics. Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981; 2nd edition 2007.

“... The unbeliever can *know* (intellectually comprehend) many truths of Scripture using the same means of interpretation he would use with non-biblical texts, but he cannot truly *know* (act on and appropriate) these truths as long as he remains in rebellion against God” (page 28)



Consequences of the Holy Spirit Element:

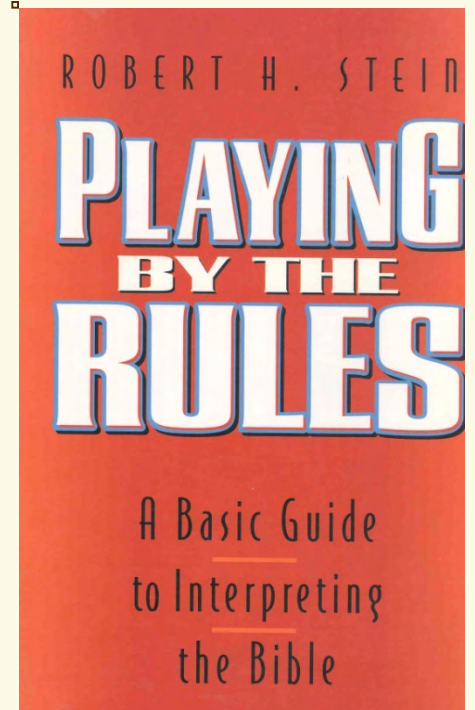
1. The need for humility before scripture



Consequences of the Holy Spirit Element:

2. The need for careful study of scripture

“The role of the Spirit in interpretation is not an excuse for laziness ... To pray that the Spirit would help us understand the meaning of a text because we do not want to spend time studying or using the tools that have been made available to us (such as commentaries, concordances, dictionaries, etc.) may border on blasphemy, for it seeks to ‘use’ the Spirit for our own ends. The Holy Spirit brings to the believer a blessed assurance of the truthfulness of the biblical teachings, but he cannot be manipulated to cover for laziness in the study of the Word of God” (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994: 71)



Consequences of the Holy Spirit Element:

3. The need to keep the Holy Spirit and scripture connected together:

“If we live by the word alone, we dry up.”

“If we live by the Spirit alone, we blow up.”

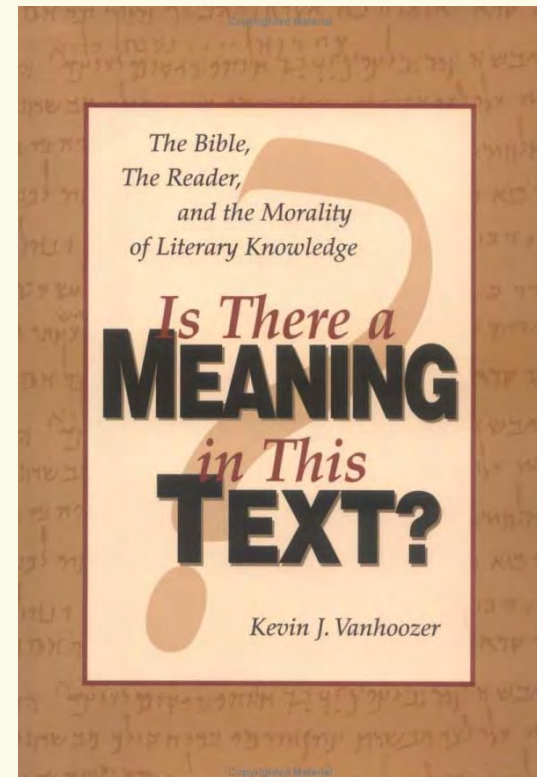
“But if we live by the word and the Spirit, we grow up!”

Consequences of the Holy Spirit Element:

3. The need to keep the Holy Spirit and scripture connected together:

“The Spirit may blow where,
but not *what*, He wills”

Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a
Meaning in This Text?* (Grand
Rapids: Zondervan, 1998) 429.





Major Elements of a Reformed Hermeneutic

1. The Holy Spirit Element
2. *The Grammatical Element*
3. The Literary Element
4. The Historical Element
5. The Theological Element

The Grammatical Element

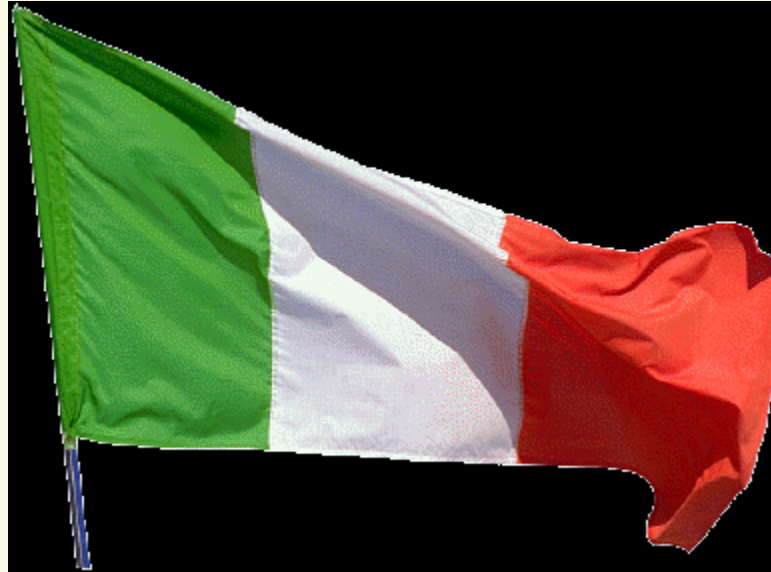


Thesis: *“Every translation involves interpretation”*

Or

“Every translation is a commentary in disguise”

The Grammatical Element



Italian Proverb: “Traduttore traditore”

(“The translator is a traitor”)

The Grammatical Element



Swedish Bible Translation Committee:

“The art of translation is the art of compromise”

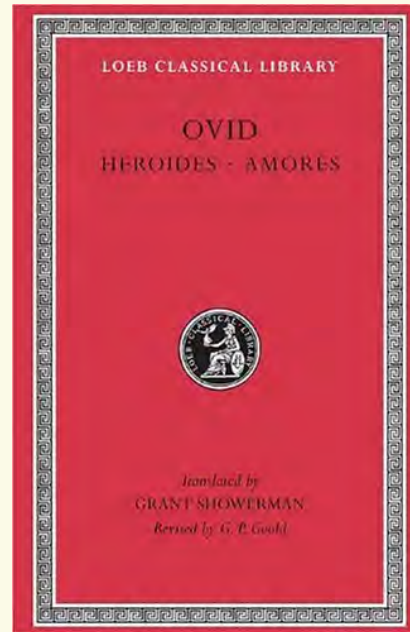
The Grammatical Element



Haim Nachman Bialik (1873-1934: Jewish poet):

“Reading the bible in translation is like kissing your bride through a veil”

The Grammatical Element



Grant Showerman (1870-1935; Prof. of Classics, Univ. Wisconsin; translator of classical works): “Translation is sin”

Example 1: Luke 11:5-8 “Parable of the Friend at Midnight”

11:5 Then he [Jesus] said to them,
“Suppose one of you has a friend,
and he goes to him at midnight
and says, ‘Friend, lend me three
loaves of bread, ⁶because a friend
of mine on a journey has come to
me, and I have nothing to set
before him.’ ⁷“Then the one
inside answers, ‘Don’ t bother me.
The door is already locked, and
my children are with me in bed. I
can’ t get up and give you ...



Example 1: Luke 11:5-8 “Parable of the Friend at Midnight”

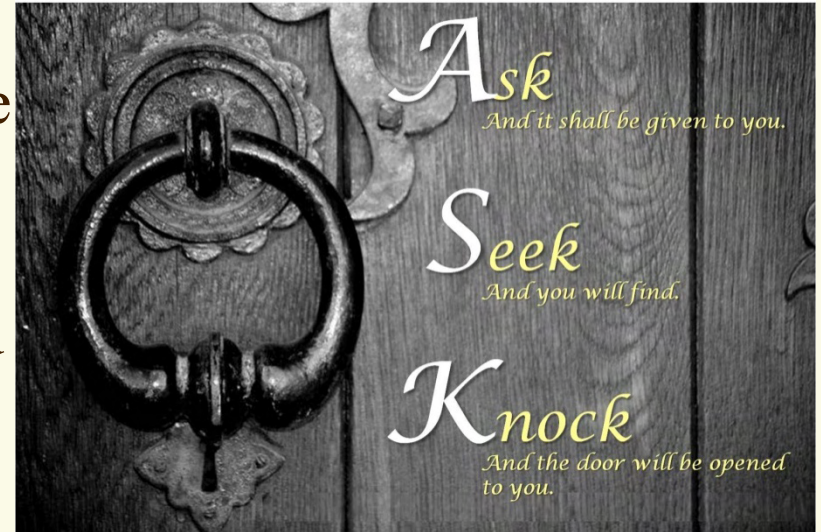
... anything.’⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s *boldness* [marginal reading: *persistence*] he will get up and give him as much as he needs.” (NIV 1984; NIV 2011 *shameless audacity*)



ἀναίδειαν (*anaideian*) = “boldness”
ἀναίδειαν (*anaideian*) = “persistence”

Example 2: Luke 11:9

“So I say to you: ‘Ask (αἰτεῖτε/*aiteite*) and it will be given to you; seek (ζητεῖτε/*zêteite*) and you will find; knock (κρούετε/*krouete*) and the door will be opened to you” (NIV)



Present Imperatives = ongoing, continuous action

Example 3: Colossians 2:18

“Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels (θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων, *thrêskeia tôn angellôn*) disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions”



1. Objective Genitive: “worship of angels”
2. Subjective Genitive: “angels’ worship”

Example 4: 1 Timothy 2:12

¹² “I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority (*αὐθεντεῖν/authentein*) over a man” (NIV 2011)

Traditional Interpretation:

A straight-forward, literal understanding of this verse forbids any woman to hold a position of authority over men in church and perhaps in other spheres of life (family, society)



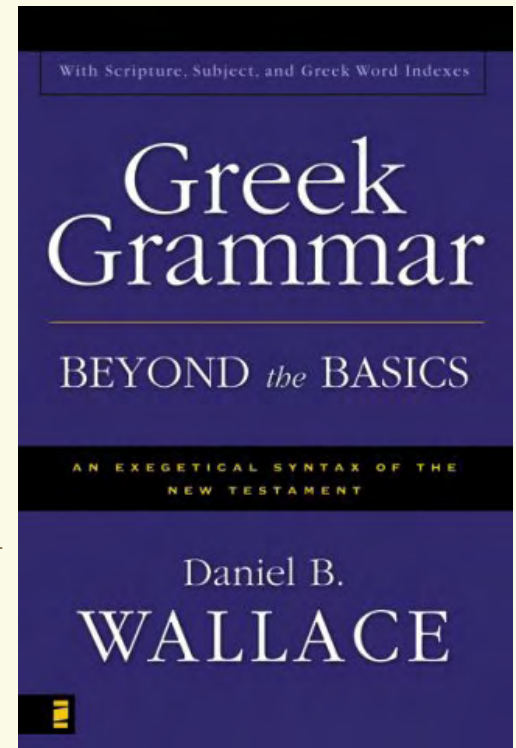
NO GIRLS
ALLOWED

Example 4: 1 Timothy 2:12

¹² “I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority (αὐθεντεῖν/*authentein*) over a man” (NIV 2011)

Challenging Interpretation:

Takes the two infinitives (“to teach or to assume authority”) as working together in which the second infinitive clarifies the first (hendiadys): no woman may teach in such a way that she has authority over men; this means that she can still teach under certain conditions

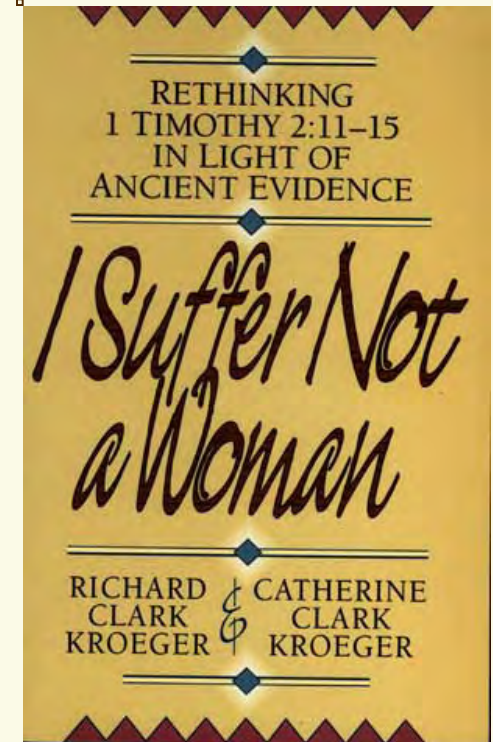


Example 4: 1 Timothy 2:12

¹² “I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority (αὐθεντεῖν/*authentein*) over a man” (NIV 2011)

Challenging Interpretation:

First, they challenge the meaning of the verb *authentein* which occurs only here in the NT; thus they examine non-biblical texts for use of this verb where it has other meanings



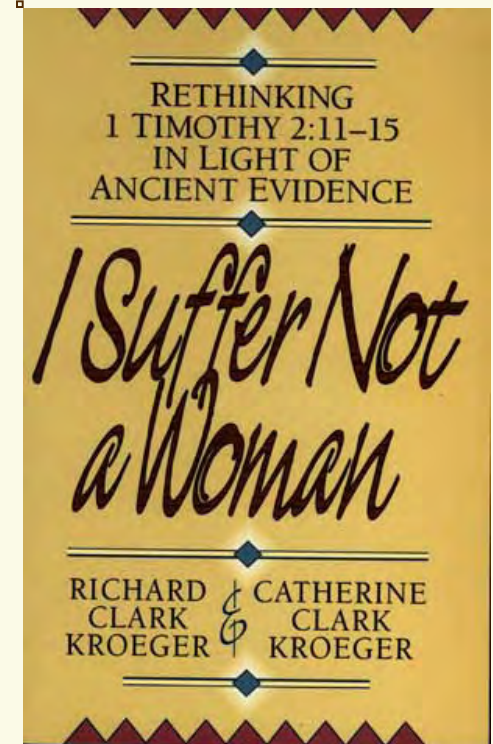
Grand Rapids:
Baker, 1998

Example 4: 1 Timothy 2:12

¹² “I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority (αὐθεντεῖν/*authentein*) over a man” (NIV 2011)

Challenging Interpretation:

Second, on the basis of their reconstruction of the historical context (women in church with gnostic ideas about the creation story), they translate the verse: “... *to teach in a way that she represents herself as the originator of a man*”



Grand Rapids:
Baker, 1998



Major Elements of a Reformed Hermeneutic

1. The Holy Spirit Element
2. The Grammatical Element
3. *The Literary Element*
4. The Historical Element
5. The Theological Element

The Literary Element

□ **Genre:** A technical term for different types of writings or categories of literature



The Literary Element

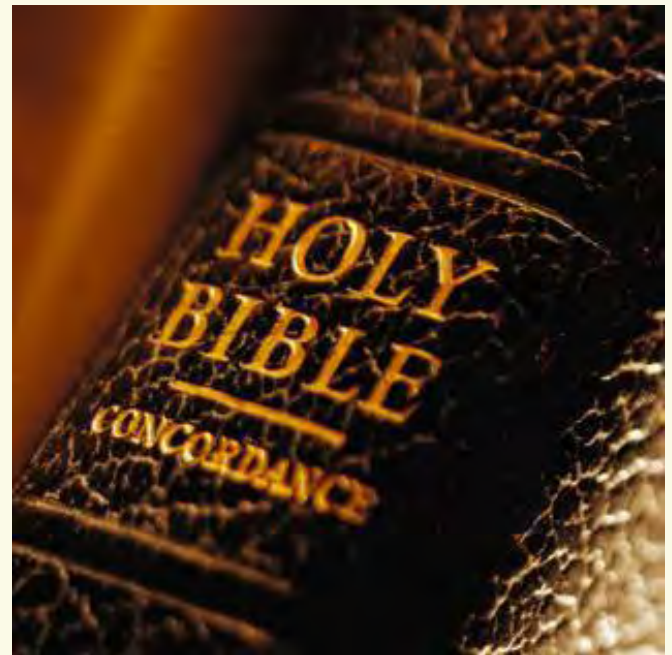
Types of Genres in Scripture:

➤ History:

Genesis, Joshua, Judges,
1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2
Chronicles, Acts

➤ Letters:

Paul (13), John (3), Peter
(2), James, Hebrews, Jude,
Revelation 2-3



The Literary Element

➤ Poetry:

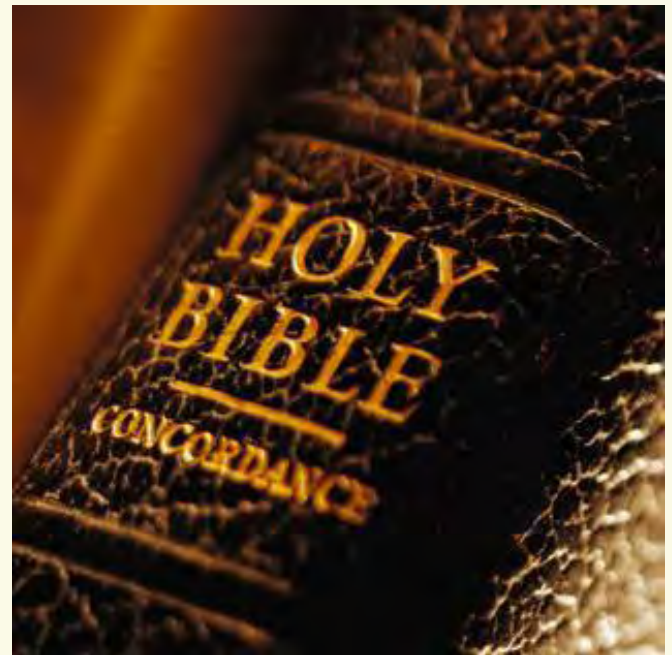
Psalms, Song of Songs,
much of prophetic material

➤ Wisdom:

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job,
some Psalms, James

➤ Apocalyptic:

Revelation, Daniel 7-12,
Zechariah, parts of Ezekiel,
Mark 13



The Literary Element

➤ Legal:

parts of Exodus, Leviticus,
Numbers, Deuteronomy

➤ Gospels:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

➤ Parables:

Four Gospels, parable of
Nathan to David (2 Samuel
12:1-4)



The Literary Element

□ Psalm 92:1-2 (Poetry: “Merismus”)

“It is good to praise the Lord
and make music to your name, O Most High,
to proclaim your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night.”



The Literary Element

□ Matthew 5:29 (Hyperbole)

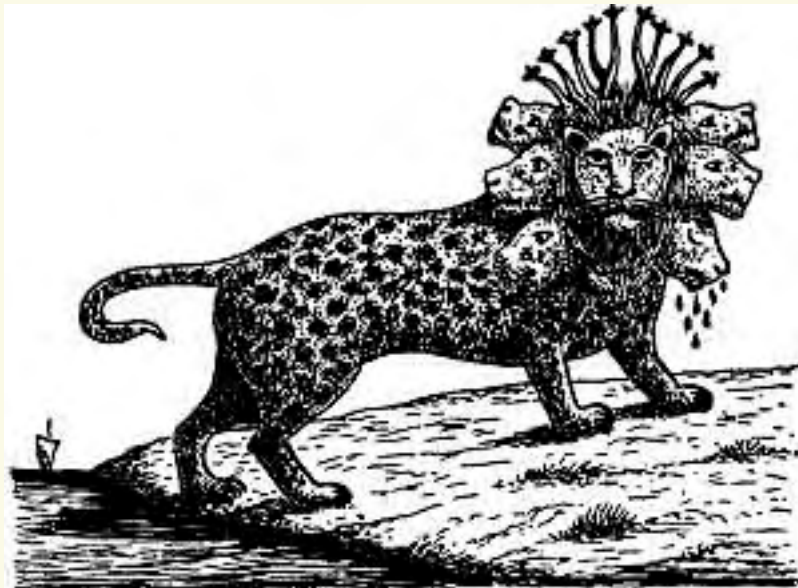
“If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away.”



The Literary Element

□ Revelation 13:1 (Apocalyptic)

“And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads.”



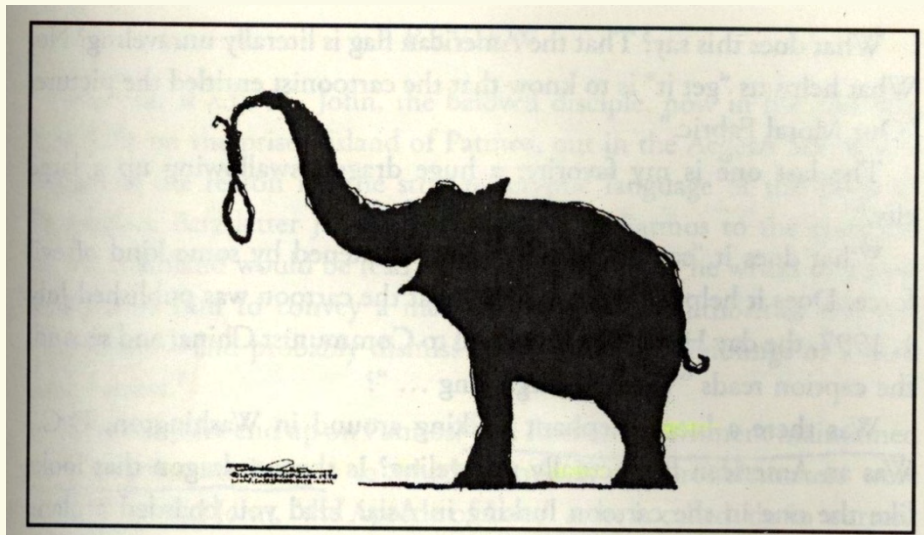
The Literary Element

□ Revelation 13:1 (Apocalyptic)

“And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads.”

Elephant = ?

Noose = ?



1998

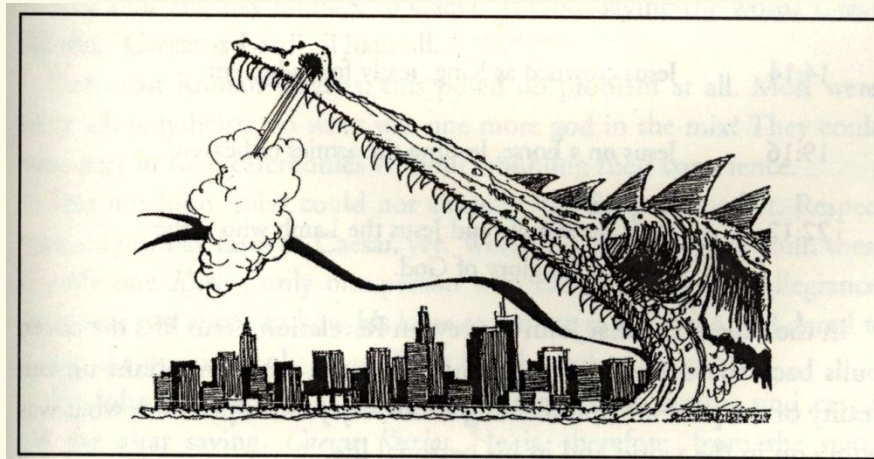
The Literary Element

□ Revelation 13:1 (Apocalyptic)

“And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads.”

City = ?

Dragon = ?



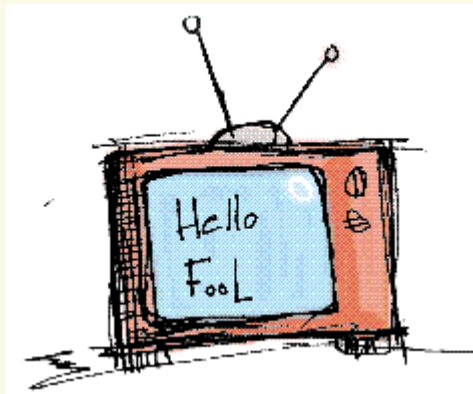
“Today, Hong Kong ...?
(July 1, 1997)”

The Literary Element

□ Proverbs 26:4-5 (Wisdom)

“Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
or you will be like him yourself.

Answer a fool according to his folly,
or he will be wise in his own eyes.”



The Literary Element

☐ Luke 16:19-31 (Parable: Rich Man & Lazarus)

¹⁹ “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side.”



Frans the younger Francken
(1581-1642)

The Literary Element

☐ Luke 16:19-31 (Parable: Rich Man & Lazarus)

²³The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’



Frans the younger Francken
(1581-1642)

The Literary Element

☐ Luke 16:19-31 (Parable: Rich Man & Lazarus)

²⁵ “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’ ²⁷ “He answered,



Frans the younger Francken
(1581-1642)

The Literary Element

☐ Luke 16:19-31 (Parable: Rich Man & Lazarus)

‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house,²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’²⁹

“Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’³⁰ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’³¹ “He said



Frans the younger Francken
(1581-1642)

The Literary Element

☐ Luke 16:19-31 (Parable: Rich Man & Lazarus)

to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”



Frans the younger Francken
(1581-1642)

The Literary Element

□ Luke 16:19-31 (Parable: Rich Man & Lazarus)

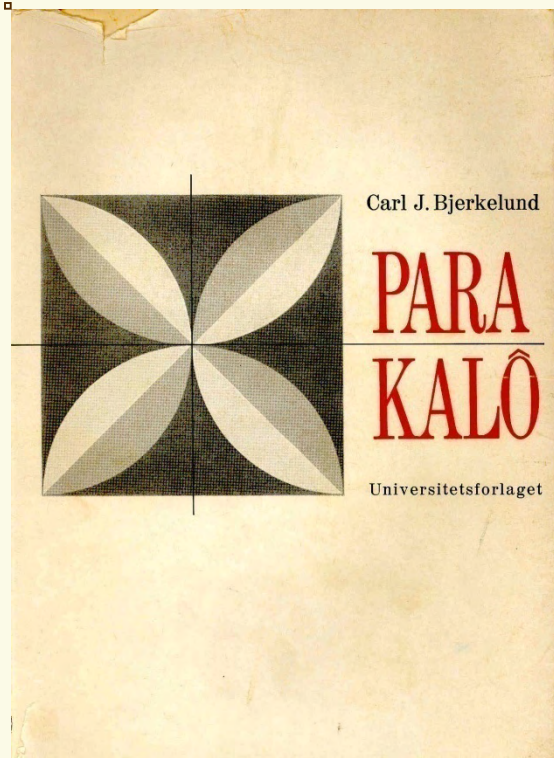
Meaning: Wrong to make certain conclusions based on literal details of the parable



The Literary Element

1. Literary Devices in **Letters**:

Example: The “Appeal” Formula



Carl J. Bjerkelund, *Parakalô: Form, Funktion und Sinn der parakalô-Sätze in den paulinischen Briefen* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1967).

The Literary Element

Example: The “Appeal” Formula

A. **Form:** 4 main parts

1. Verb “I appeal” (παρακαλῶ) or its synonym “I ask” (ἔρωτῶ) in the first person
2. The recipients of the appeal
3. Prepositional phrase indicating source of sender’s authority to appeal (this element typically occurs only in official correspondence and not in private letters)
4. Content of the appeal: introduced by a “that” (ὅτι or ἵνα) clause

The Literary Element

Paul's letters: Four basic elements

Example: *Romans 12:1*

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship”

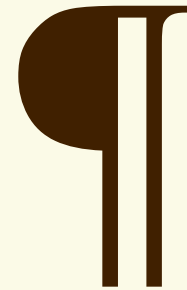
1. The verb: “I appeal”
2. The recipients: “to you, brothers”
3. Prepositional phrase: “by the mercies of God”
4. The content of the appeal: “that you present ...”

Other examples: Rom 15:30; 16:17; 1 Cor 1:10; 4:16; 16:15-16; 2 Cor 2:8; 10:1-2; Phil 4:2; 1 Thess 4:1, 10b-12; 5:14; 2 Thess 3:14; Eph 4:1

The Literary Element

B. Function

- Primary function:
- to indicate a major transition in the text
- formula marks transition either from the end of the thanksgiving to the beginning of letter body (1 Cor 1:10; Phlm 8-9) or, as more typically happens, a transition within the body of letter (Rom 12:1; 15:30; 16:7; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Cor 10:1; Phil 4:2; 1 Thess 4:1; Eph 4:1)

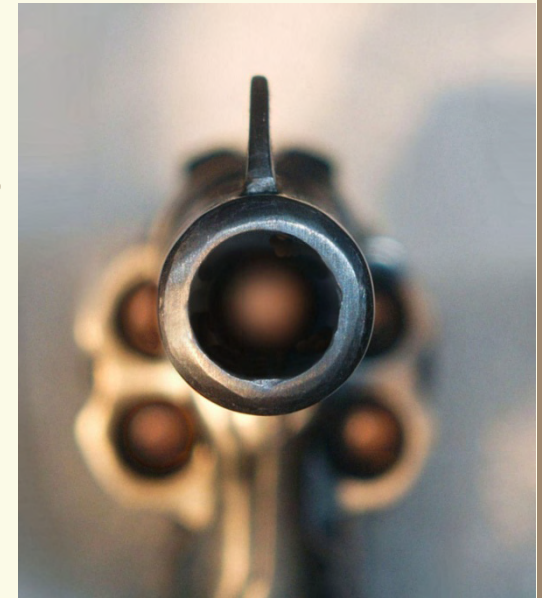


**New
Paragraph
Sign**

The Literary Element

B. Function (cont)

- Secondary function:
- appeal formula used in official correspondence when writer had a good relationship with recipients and confidently expected them to do contents of letter
- Appeal formula thus expresses a *more friendly, less heavy-handed tone*
- Paul uses the appeal formula in this nuanced manner, where his authority is not in question and he can make a request rather than a command in the confidence that his appeal will be obeyed

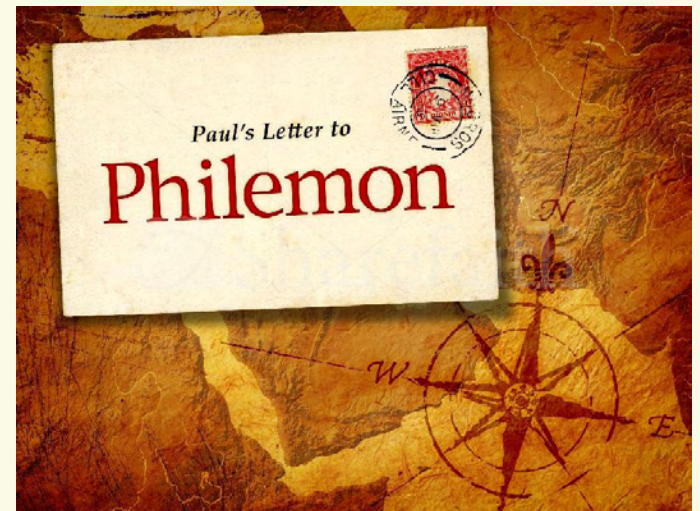


DO IT OR ELSE!

The Literary Element

C. Appeal Formula in Philemon

“Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and command you to do what you ought to do, more because of love I *appeal*—I, Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—I *appeal* to you concerning my child, to whom I gave birth in prison, Onesimus...” (vv 8-10)



The Literary Element

2. Literary Devices in Hebrew Poetry: Example: Inclusio

- *inclusio* (sometimes referred to as “bracketing” or “envelope structure”): the repetition of a key word, phrase or sentence at the beginning and ending of a literary unit, thereby functioning as bookends and marking the boundaries of that unit



The Literary Element

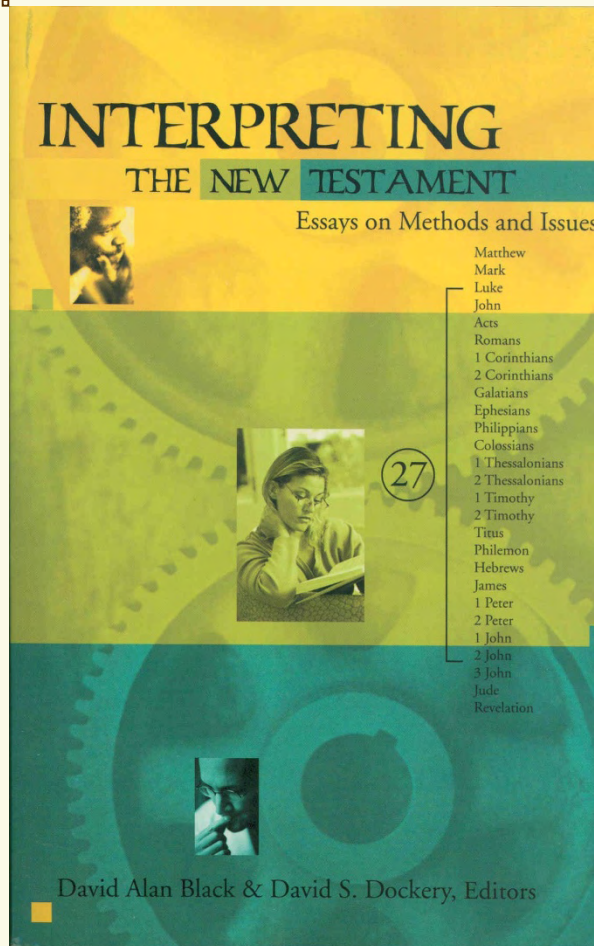
2. Literary Devices in Hebrew Poetry: Example: Inclusio

Psalm 118:1-29

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever” (verse 1)

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever” (verse 29)

The Literary Element



Jeffrey A. D. Weima,
“Literary Criticism,” in
*Interpreting the New
Testament. Essays on
Methods and Issues* (eds.
David Alan Black and
David S. Dockery;
Nashville: Broadman and
Holman, 2001) 148-167.

The Literary Element

Common Convictions of Literary Criticism #1:

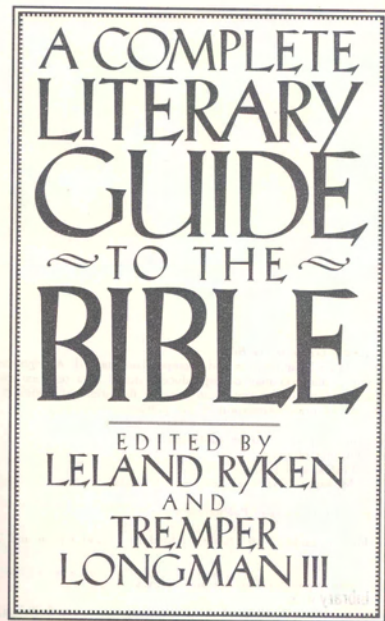
- ❖ an appreciation for the sophisticated artistry and aesthetic quality of the text
- ❖ recognizes that the Bible is the result of conscious composition, careful patterning, and the strategic use of literary conventions prevalent in its day
- ❖ thus literary approach to scripture is necessary

The Literary Element

Common Convictions of Literary Criticism #2:

- ❖ a preoccupation with the form of the text
- ❖ concern not just on content of the text (*what* is said) but also on form of the text (*how* it is said)
- ❖ concern w/genre & how it impacts interpretation
- ❖ concern with identifying the various literary conventions used by a biblical author and understanding what function these conventions have

The Literary Element



“We cannot fully comprehend the ‘what’ of New Testament writers (their religious content) without first paying attention to the ‘how’ (the literary modes in which the content is embodied).”

Leland Ryken, “The Literature of the New Testament,” *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* (eds. L. Ryken and T. Longman; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993) 367

The Literary Element

Weima's slogan:

“Form *supplements* but does not
supplant content.”



The Literary Element

Common Convictions of Literary Criticism #3:

- ❖ concern with treating texts as finished wholes
- ❖ *contra* liberal scholars who are preoccupied with various sources lying behind biblical text and how author redacted these sources
- ❖ *contra* conservative scholars who are preoccupied with each individual part of text (e.g. verse-by-verse commentary) and thus “miss the forest for the trees”

The Literary Element

Common Convictions of Literary Criticism #4:

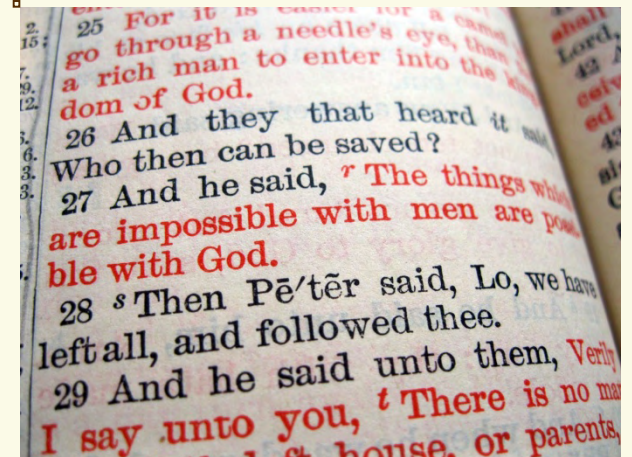
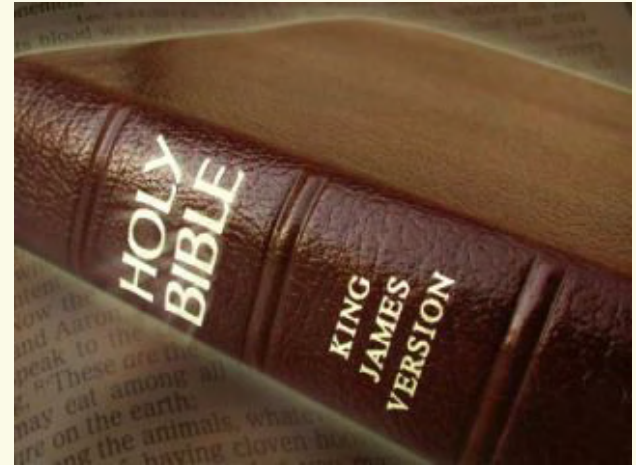
- ❖ exhibits an ahistorical orientation
- ❖ the historical uncertainties surrounding the author, sources, social context and readers of biblical text cause some modern interpreters to ignore historical questions and instead concentrate on literary features of the text
- ❖ example: treatment of individual Psalms

Major Elements of a Reformed Hermeneutic

1. The Holy Spirit Element
2. The Grammatical Element
3. The Literary Element
4. *The Historical Element*
5. The Theological Element

The Historical Element

- The Bible did not fall from heaven in the King James Version, with red letters, and a concordance along with maps in the back!
- Instead every passage in the Bible has a historical context—a specific historical situation which caused the text to come into existence
- Knowing the historical context is crucial to interpreting any biblical text properly



The Historical Element

- Page 1: The Trouble in the Text
- Page 2: The Trouble in the World
- Page 3: The Grace in the Text
- Page 4: The Grace in the World

THE FOUR PAGES OF THE SERMON



A Guide to Biblical Preaching
PAUL SCOTT WILSON

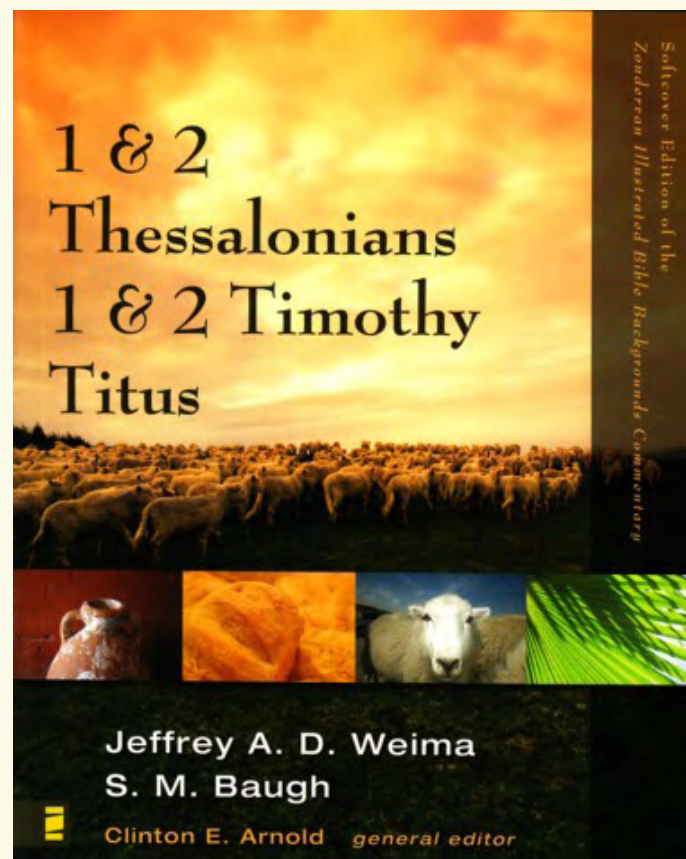
The Historical Element

- German phrase “Sitz im Leben”
- Literally means “Situation in Life”
- Phrase commonly used in German biblical scholarship to refer to the historical context or social setting or cultural background of any given text



The Historical Element

- Series is entitled: “Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary”
- Term “Backgrounds” reflects emphasis in this commentary series to show how the ancient world of the 1st century sheds light on the proper interpretation of the NT



The Historical Element

- Example: Luke 10:25-37
 - Parable of the Good Samaritan



The Good Samaritan, Rembrandt

Parable of the Good Samaritan



Samaritans = Descendants of 10 Lost Tribes of Israel

Parable of the Good Samaritan



Parable of the Good Samaritan



*Jesus speaks with the Samaritan woman
at a Well. Catacomb Mural, 4th/5th AD.*

John 4:9 “The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’”

Parable of the Good Samaritan

- Modern title of the parable

ox·y·mo·ron

(*ŏk'sē-mŏr'ŏn*)

NOUN: A phrase in which incongruous or contradictory terms are combined



Parable of the Good Samaritan

- The answer of the “expert in the law”:
- ³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” ³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “*The one who had mercy on him.*”
- Circumlocution: a roundabout or indirect way of speaking



Parable of the Good Samaritan

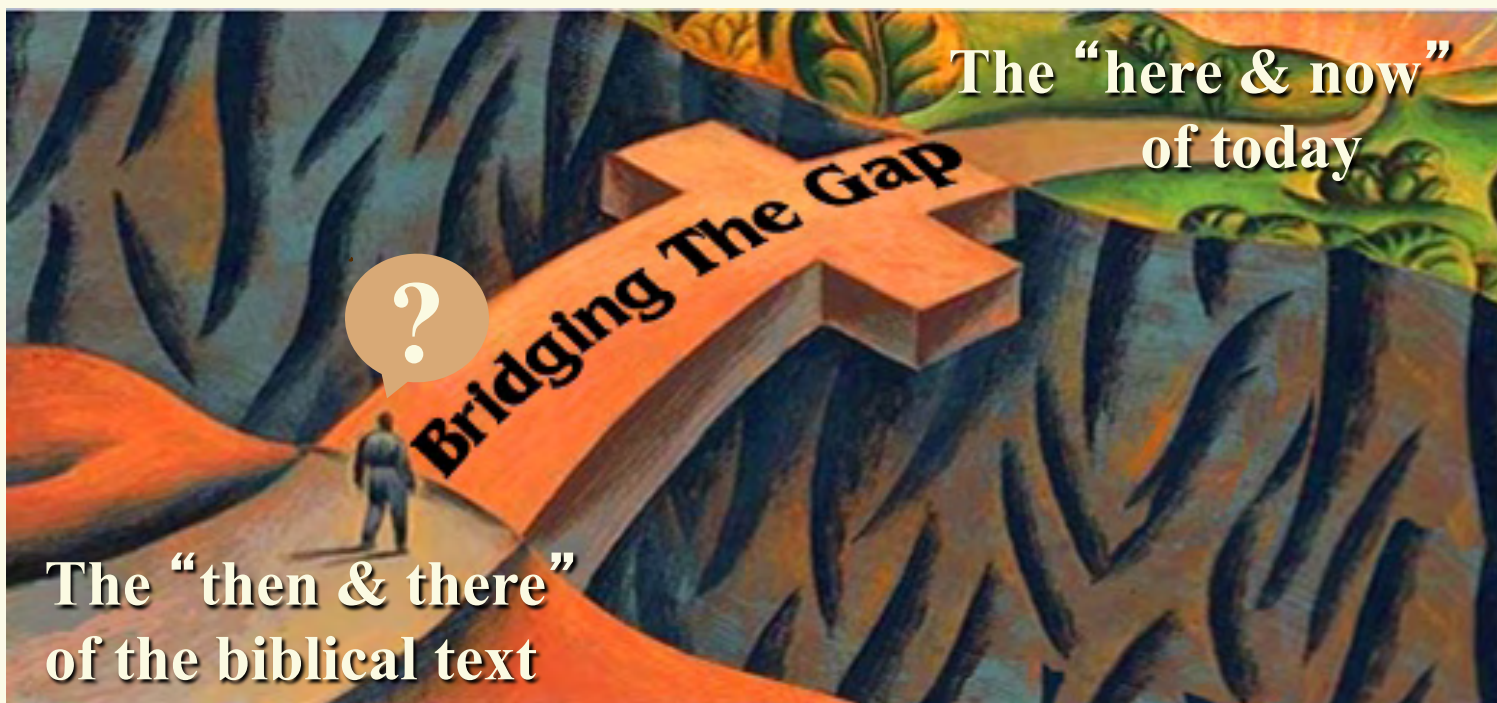
- The application of Parable:
- Priest & Levite: historical reasons why they may have had logical excuses *not* to stop and help out person in need
- Parallel with believers today



Priest & Levite = Who Today?

The Historical Element

✓ Problem of the “Historical Gap”



The Historical Element

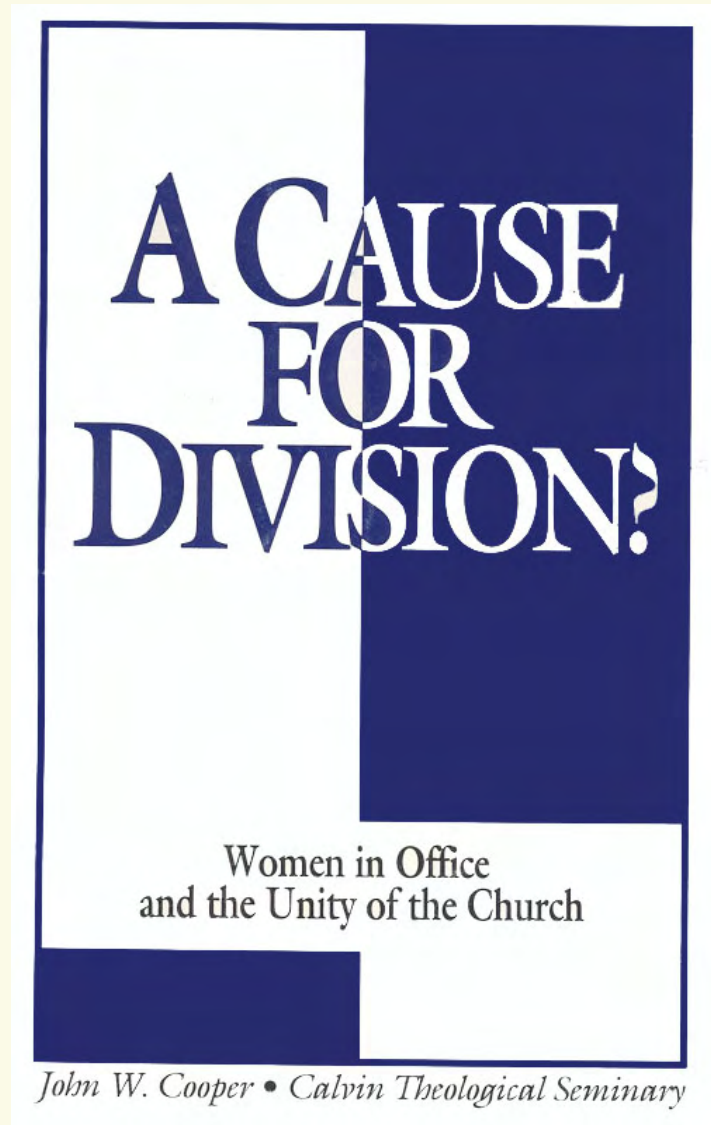
- Distinction between viewing the Bible as “culturally conditioned” or “culturally bound”
- Culturally conditioned: Bible is conditioned/impacted by its ancient culture but still relevant for church today
- Culturally bound: Bible is bound to its original ancient culture and thus not relevant for church today



Relationship between the Bible and Ancient World & Its Culture

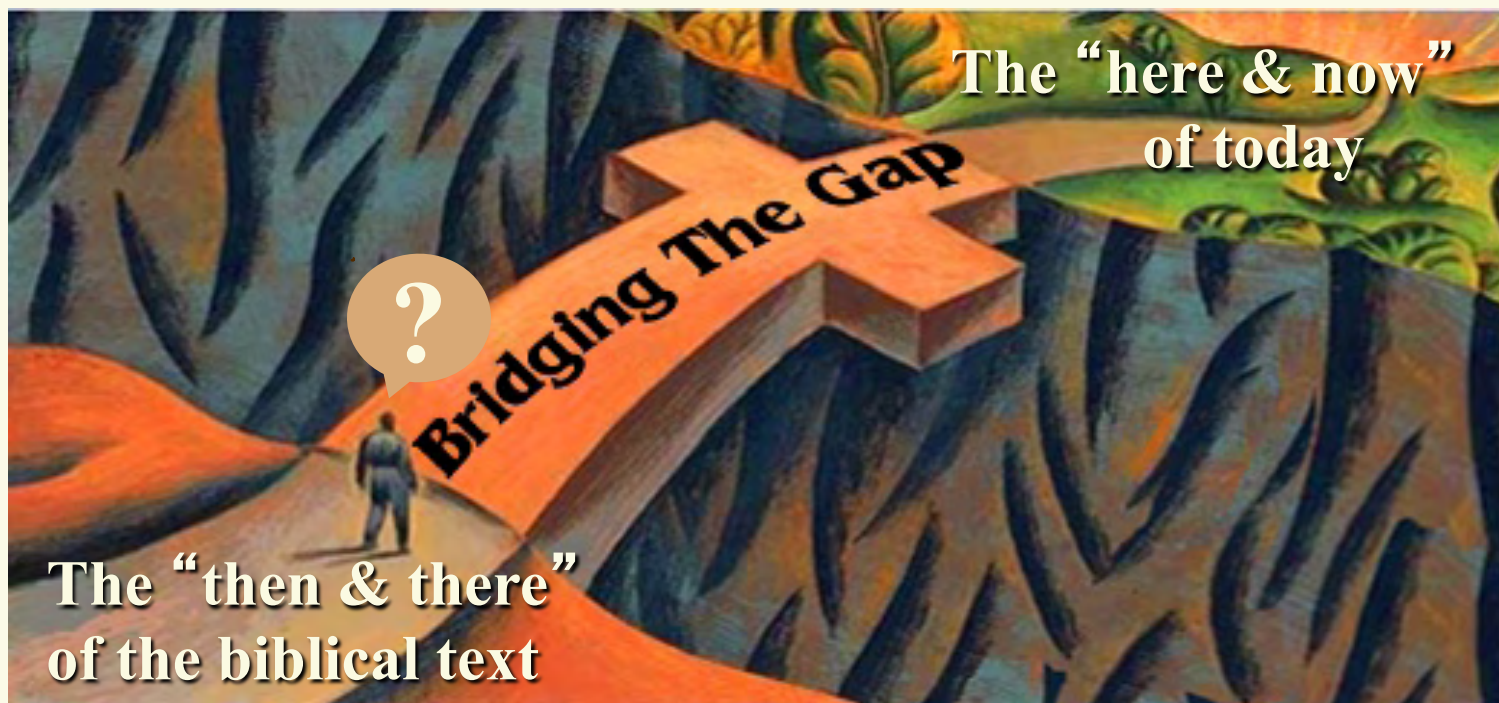
John Cooper (1991):

“But first it is crucial to reiterate that all of the Bible is authoritative and normative for today. The issue is not *whether* the Bible is normative or *which parts* are normative, but *how* it is normative for today.” (p. 26)



The Historical Element

Q: How can one bridge the “Historical Gap”?



The Historical Element

Step #1: Discover the abiding principle or underlying moral truth claim (exegetis)



The Historical Element

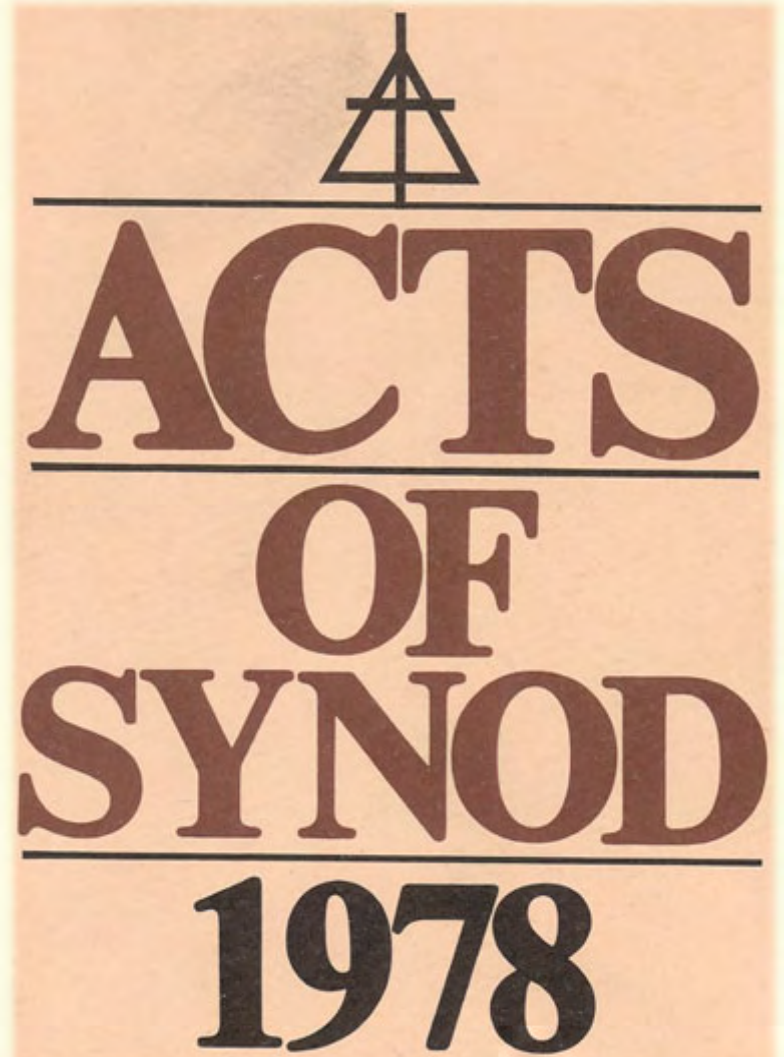
Step #2: Apply that abiding principle to today's new and contemporary situation (homiletics)



Acts of Synod, 1978

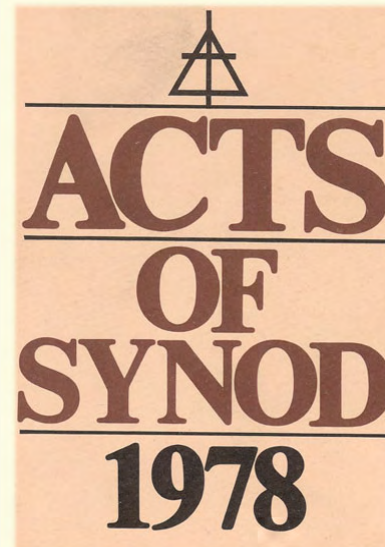
“Hermeneutical Principles
Concerning Women in
Ecclesiastical Office”:

“A distinction must be
made between a *moral
principle* and the
*application of that
principle*. The former is
normative for the Christian
life today, the latter is not
necessarily so.” (p. 500;
emphasis added)



Acts of Synod, 1978

“Hermeneutical Principles Concerning Women in Ecclesiastical Office”:



“The biblical text often contains concrete applications made in specific historical situations. Care should be taken not to transfer such applications directly to the different situations obtaining today. One must first seek to discover the abiding principle... Only after discovering the underlying principle, can one seek to apply it in a different situation today” (p 500)

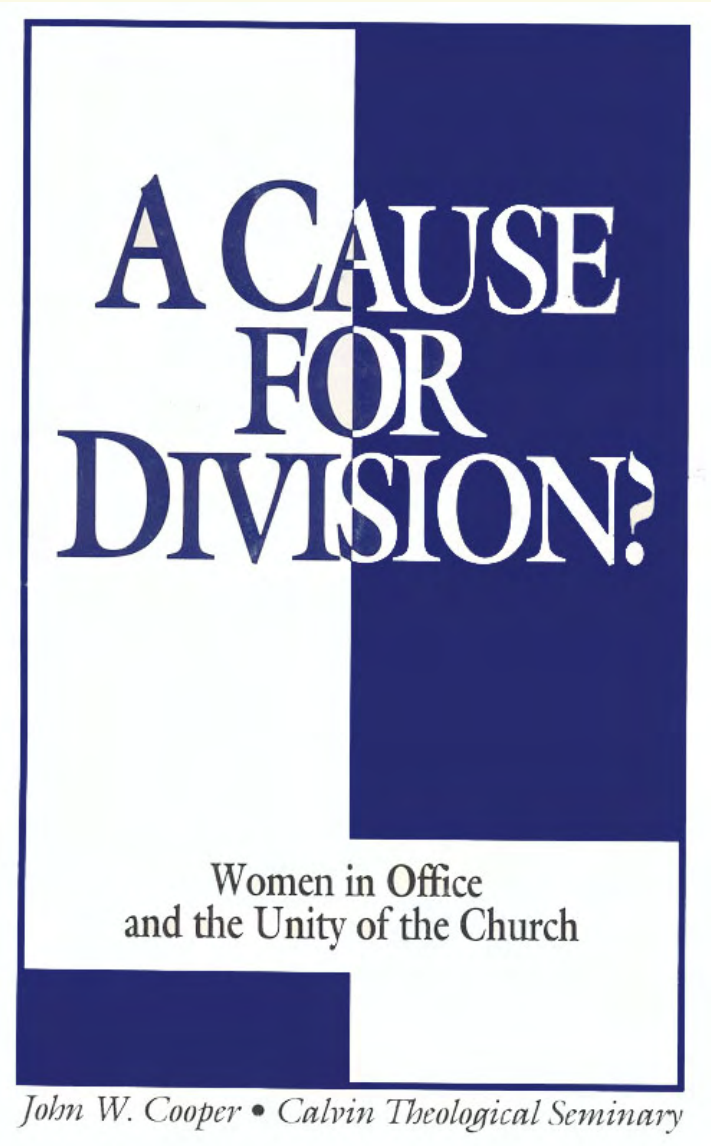


Louis Berkhof, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1932; 2nd revised edition, 1941): 174-175

“Sometimes we may have to come to the conclusion that, while certain laws no more apply in the form in which they were cast, yet their underlying principle is just as binding today as it ever was.”

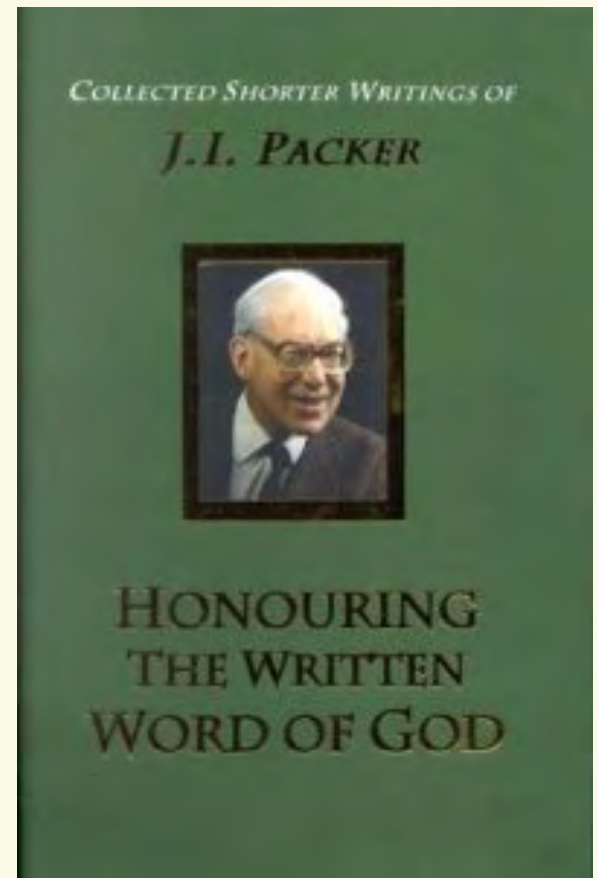
John Cooper (1991):

“Reformed hermeneutics recognizes the difference between a principle and the application of that principle. A principle states God’s abiding will for our lives, but how that principle is applied may vary according to time and place.” (p 29)



James I. Packer:

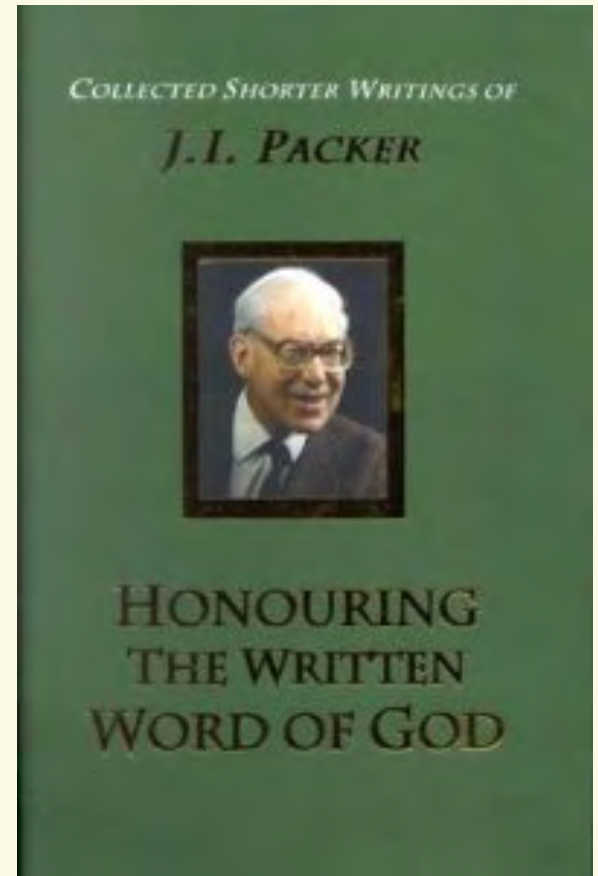
“So, just as it is possible to identify in all the books of Scripture universal and abiding truths about the will, work and ways of God, it is equally possible to find in every one of them *universal and abiding principles* of loyalty and devotion to the holy, gracious Creator; and then to detach these from the particular situations to which, and the cultural frames within which, the books apply them, and to ...



James I. Packer:

... reapply them to ourselves in the places, circumstances, and conditions of our own lives today” (page 157)

Quote from “Understanding the Bible: Evangelical Hermeneutics,” *Honouring the Written Word of God* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999) 3.157 (originally published in *Restoring the Vision: Anglican Evangelical Speak Out* [1990]: 39-58).



Differing Degrees of Cultural Influence in Scripture

Minimal Cultural Influence: Col 3:1-3

“Since (literally ‘if’), then, you have been raised with Christ, set your minds on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God”

Step 1: Discover the abiding principle or underlying moral truth claim (exegesis)

Step 2: Apply that abiding principle to today’s new and contemporary situation (homiletics)

Differing Degrees of Cultural Influence in Scripture

Some Cultural Influence: Eph 2:11-22

Division between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians over the issue of circumcision.

Step 1: Discover the abiding principle or underlying moral truth claim (exegesis)

Step 2: Apply that abiding principle to today's new and contemporary situation (homiletics)

Differing Degrees of Cultural Influence in Scripture

Great Cultural Influence: 1 Cor. 16:20b

“Greet one another with a holy kiss”

Step 1: Discover the abiding principle or underlying moral truth claim (exegesis)

Step 2: Apply that abiding principle to today’s new and contemporary situation (homiletics)

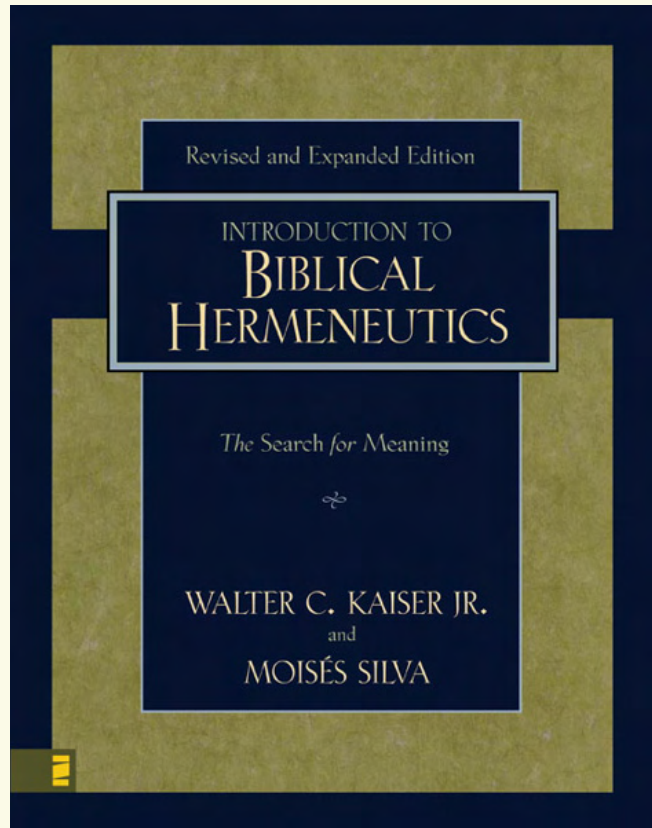
Holy Kiss



Major Elements of a Reformed Hermeneutic

1. The Holy Spirit Element
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5. *The Theological Element*

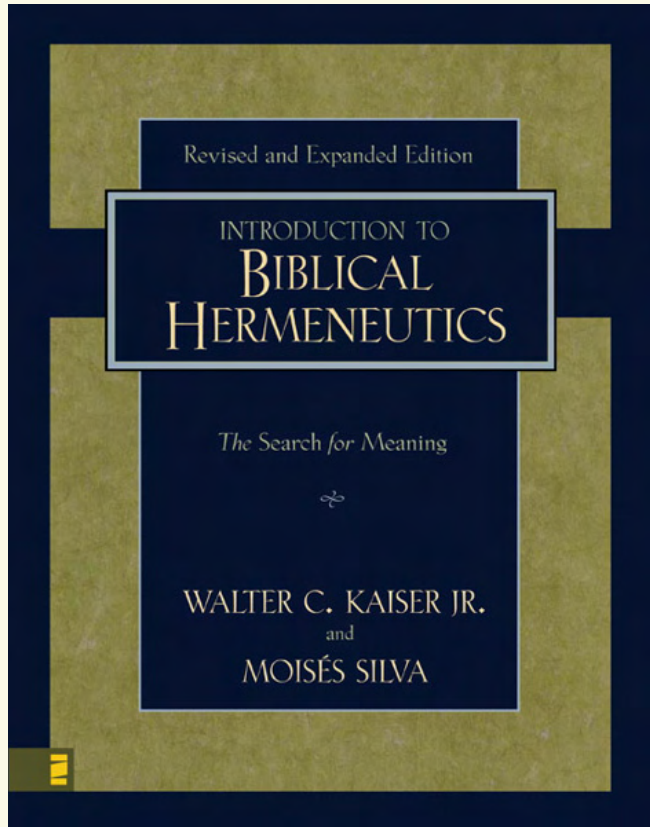
The Theological Element



Grand Rapids: Zondervan,
1994, 2007

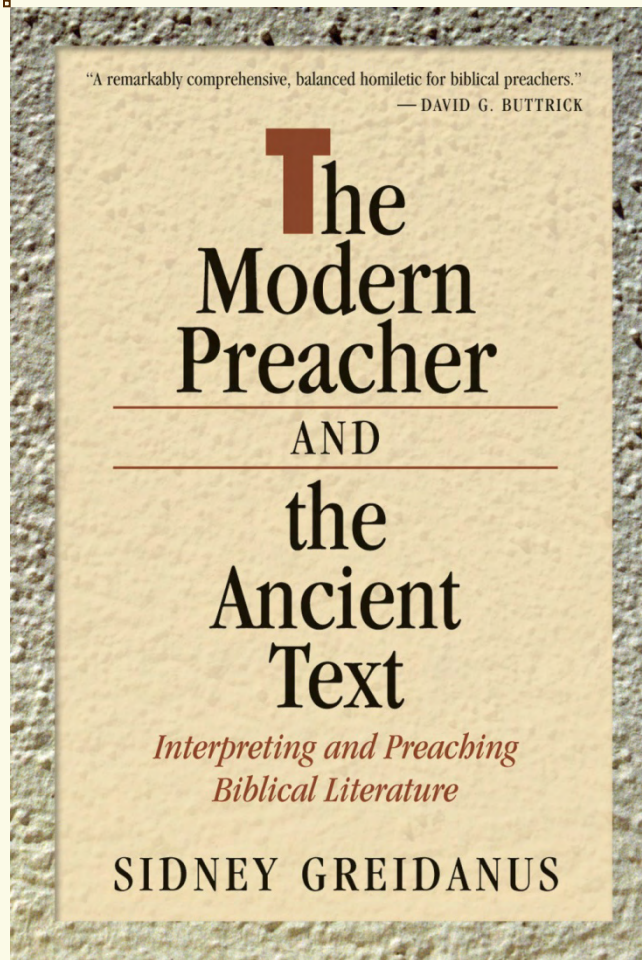
“Hermeneutical practice involves both an exegetical and a *theological* component if it is to be carried out to its completion. The exegetical part of the interpretive process examines the grammatical, historical, and literary aspects of the individual text of the Bible. But once these tasks have been concluded, they need to be related, by way ...

The Theological Element



Grand Rapids: Zondervan,
1994, 2007

“... of summary or conclusions, to the overall thought of the individual book being studied and to the whole canon of Scripture. It is at this juncture that the *theological* component of the interpretive enterprise comes to the forefront ...”
(page 241)



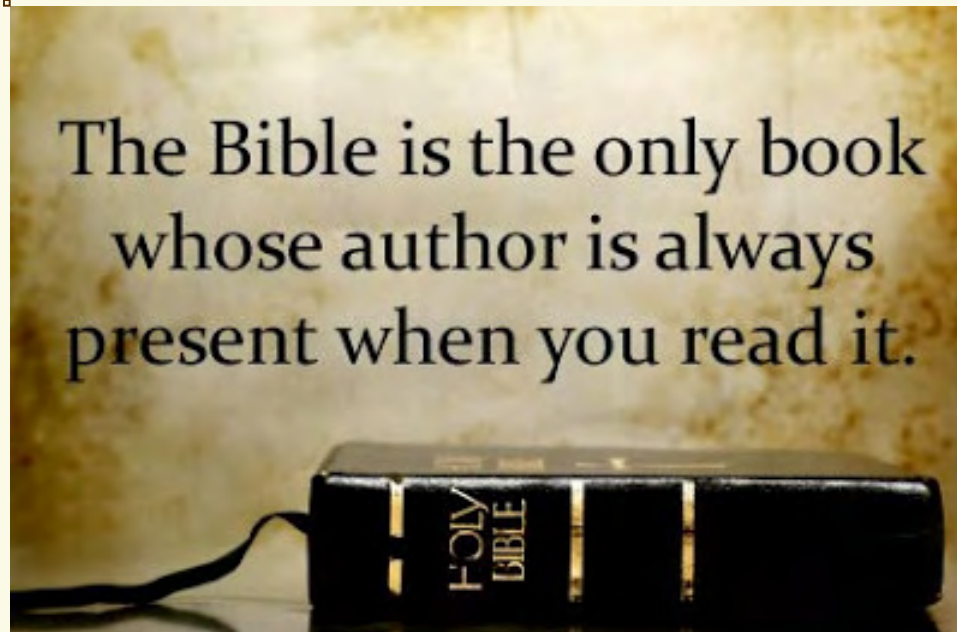
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,
1988

“‘Theological’ refers not to theory or the discipline of theology but to *God*, specifically, the revelation *of* God and the revelation *about* God. Theological interpretation seeks to hear *God’s* voice in the Scriptures; it seeks to probe beyond mere historical reconstruction and verbal meanings to a discernment of the message of God in the Scriptures” (page 103)

The Theological Element

✓ Meaning of the Term

- God is the primary author of the Bible

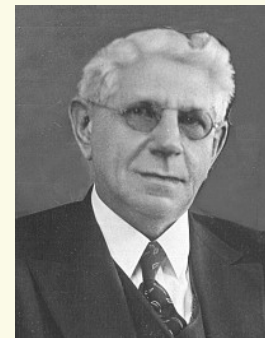


Louis
Berkhof

Principles
of Biblical
Inter-
pretation

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950

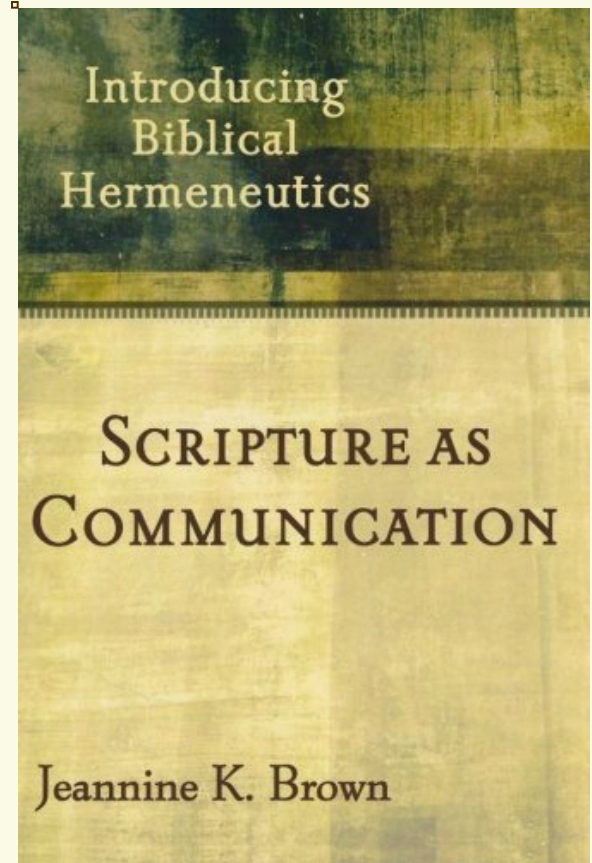
“Scripture contains a great deal that does not find its explanation in history, nor in the secondary authors, but only in God as the *Auctor Primarius* ... In view of all this, it is not only perfectly warranted, but absolutely necessary, to complement the usual grammatical and historical interpretation with a third. The name “Theological Interpretation” deserves the preference, as expressive of the fact that its necessity follows from the divine authorship of the Bible”
(pages 133-134)



The Theological Element

Jeannine K. Brown:

“The Bible’s unity is both a presupposition that follows from recognizing its divine origin and a conclusion that comes from reading Scripture. It is my conviction that the Bible demonstrates its unity and coherence, particularly as its overarching story emerges in a canonical reading” (page 256)



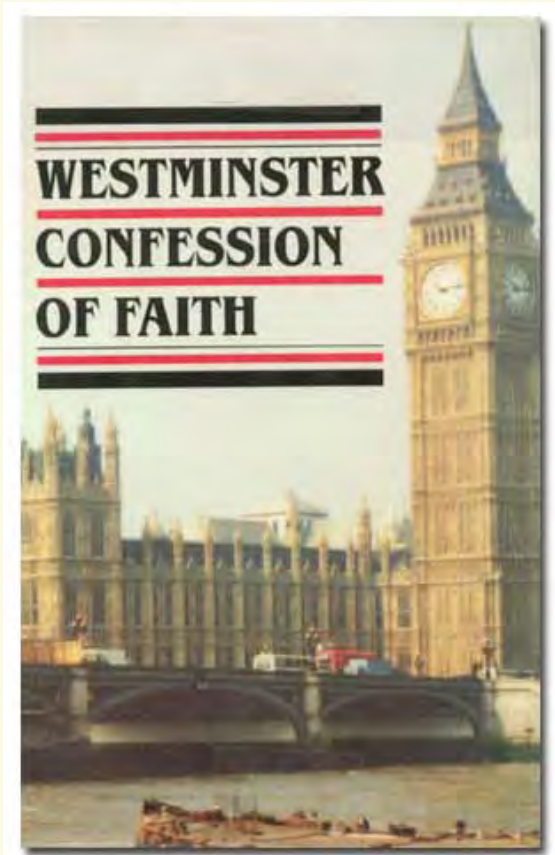
Grand Rapids: Baker,
2007

The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

Westminster Confession (1643-1648)

“The infallible rule of interpretation of scripture is the scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture, it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly” (I.9)

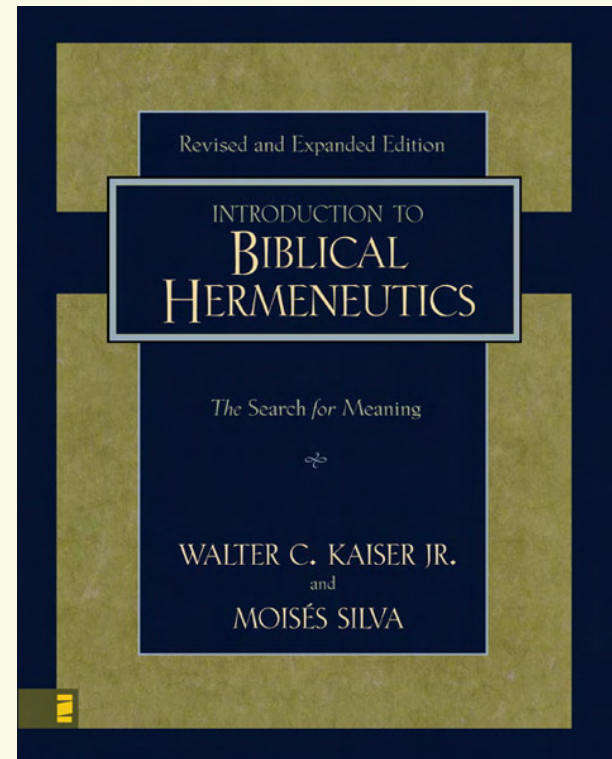


The Theological Element

□ The “Analogy of Faith”

Kaiser & Silva:

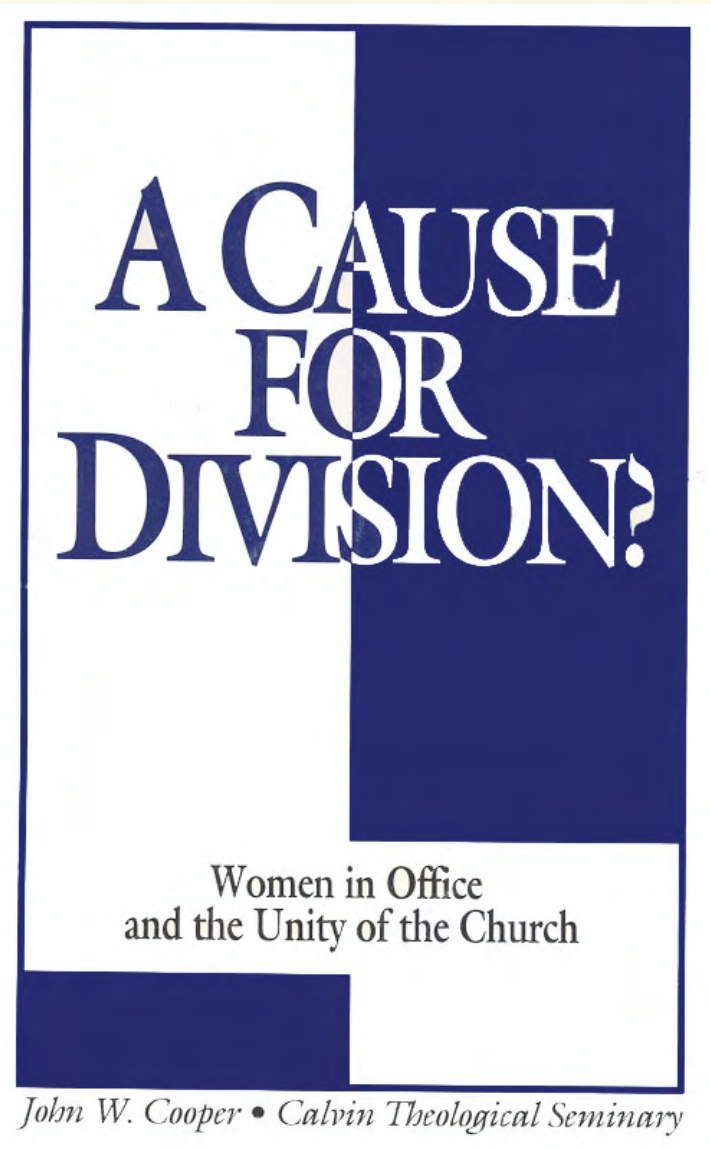
“The *analogy of faith* ... requires us to interpret all Scripture so that it is in agreement with the entire teaching of the Bible. It presupposes the coherence of Scripture” (page 240)



Grand Rapids: Zondervan,
1994, 2007

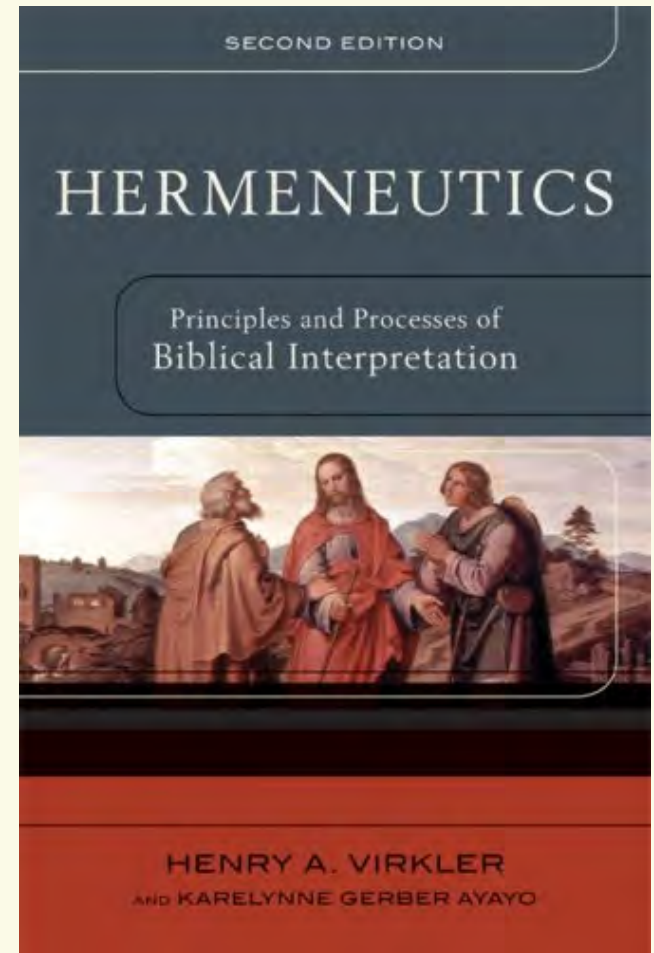
John Cooper (1991):

“The Bible is analogical-- different texts speak to the same issues, thus modifying and reinforcing each other as they present a unified message ... What God means to teach us in a specific passage cannot be understood apart from everything else he teaches us” (p 21)



Henry Virkler:

“If we believe that each individual writing found in the Bible has a common divine author, then our exegetical exploration expands beyond the relationship between a text and the single biblical writing in which it is found to include questions about its relationship to the entire biblical canon. We are compelled to explore how each part is in continuity with, is consistent with, and must be interpreted by the whole of biblical teaching” (p 122)



Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981;
2nd edition 2007

The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

- **Example #1:** Luke 14:26 “If anyone comes to me and does not *hate his father and mother* ...he cannot be my disciple.”

= Hate parents?!



The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

- Jesus' words in Luke 10:27 “Love your neighbor as yourself”—thus Jesus wants us to love, not hate, others



The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

- Jesus' words in Luke 18:20 "You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, *honor your father and mother.*'"



The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

- “hate” = Jewish or OT way of saying “love less”
- Gen 29:30-31: Jacob “loved Rachel more than Leah ... and Leah was hated”; “loved more” in the first verse is restated as “hated” in the second verse



Jacob Loved Rachel More Than Leah (Gen 29)

The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

- Mal 1:2-3: God says, “I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated”; God did not actually “hate” Esau but rather “loved him less” than Jacob



- See also Deut 21:15-17; Judg 14:16; Prov. 13:24; Isa. 60:15; Luke 16:13; Rom 9:13

The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

- **Example #2:** Church Discipline
- *1 Cor 5:1-2* “... should you not have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?” (i.e., excommunication)



The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

- *Matthew 18:15-17*

- 1st step: “If a brother or sister sins, go and point out the fault, just between the two of you. If he or she listens to you, you have won them over”

Practice of Church
Discipline



The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

- *Matthew 18:15-17*

- 2nd step: “But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses”

Practice of Church
Discipline



The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

• *Matthew 18:15-17*

- 3rd step: “If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church”
- 4th step: “and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or tax collector”

Practice of Church Discipline



The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

- *Galatians 6:1*

- “Brothers, if a person is overtaken in any sin, you who are spiritual should restore that person in a spirit of gentleness”

Practice of Church
Discipline



The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

- *2 Thessalonians 3:15*
 - “... and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. And do not look on him as an enemy but warn him as a brother”

Practice of Church
Discipline



The Theological Element

□ Interpreting Scripture with Scripture

- *1 Corinthians 5:6b-8*
 - Analogy of yeast (leaven)
 - “Don’ t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast ...!”

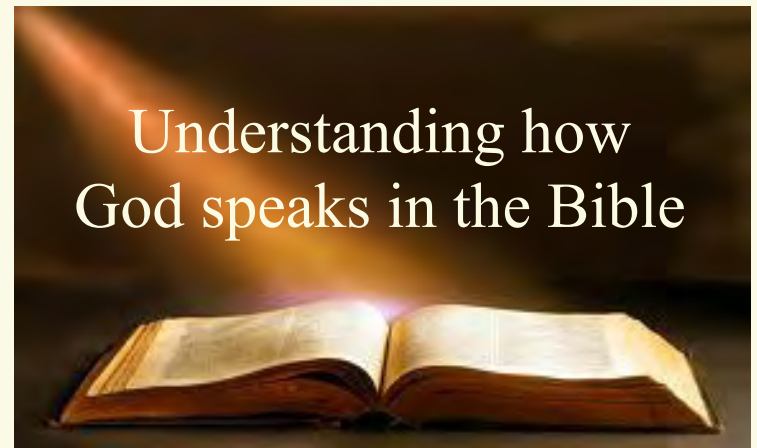
Practice of Church
Discipline



The Theological Element

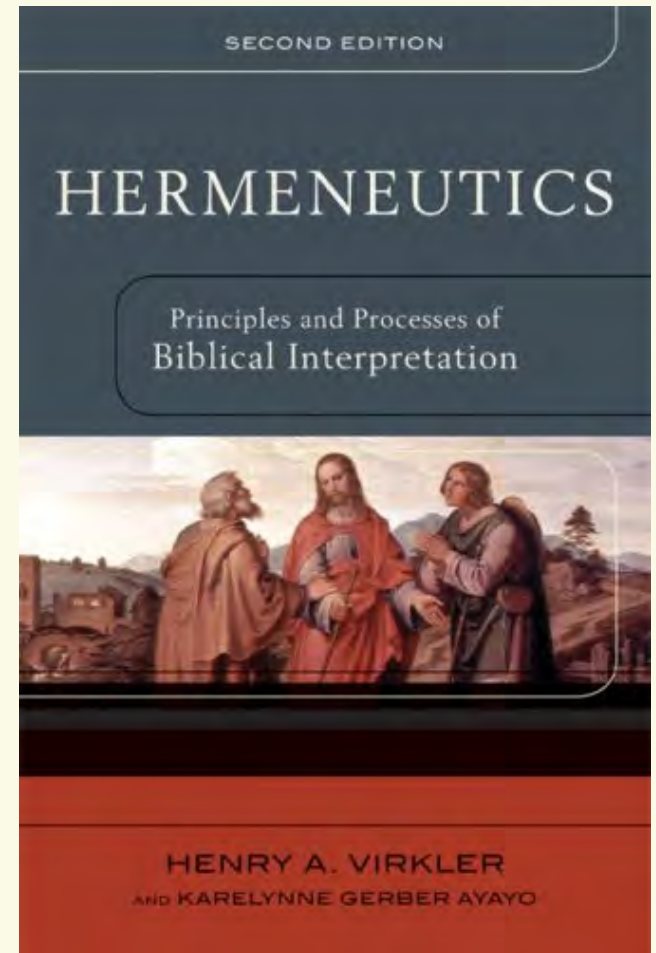
□ Progressive Revelation

- God did not reveal his whole plan of salvation in one single moment of history but did so progressively over time so that we get a clearer picture from the end of redemptive history (that which is recorded in the NT) what God had all along intended to do



Henry Virkler:

“Progressive revelation is the concept that God’s revelation gradually increased in definiteness, clarity, and fullness as it was revealed over time, even as a tree increases its girth and root and branch structures over time. As the trunk and branches of a tree may grow in several directions concurrently, so also have the concepts of God, Christ, salvation, the nation of Israel, and the church grown simultaneously as God’s revelation progressed” (p 135)

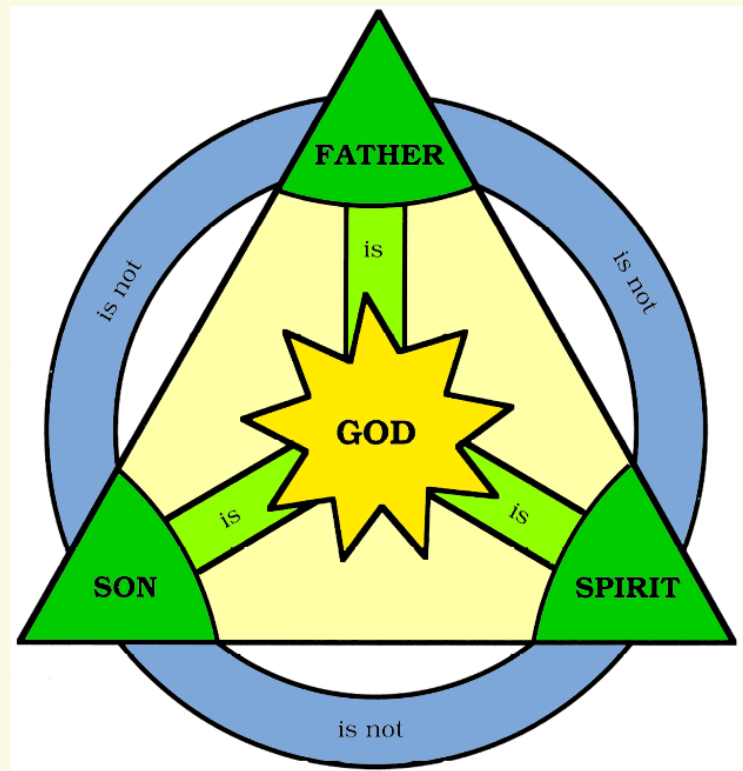


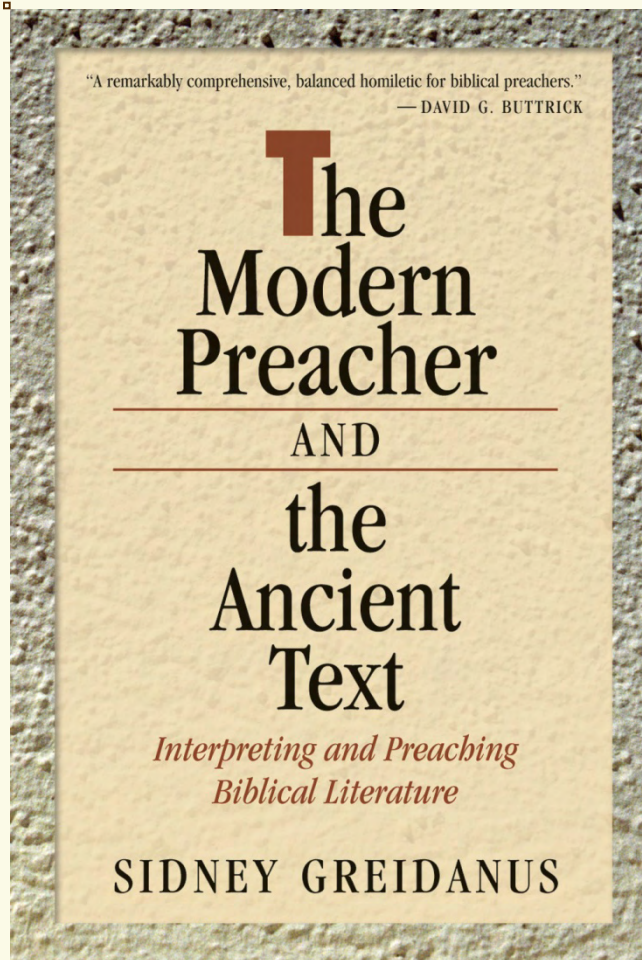
Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981;
2nd edition 2007

The Theological Element

□ Progressive Revelation

- Example: God as Three Persons
- OT: distinct persons of God—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—only revealed vaguely
- NT: distinct persons of God are revealed more clearly as is their role in redemption history

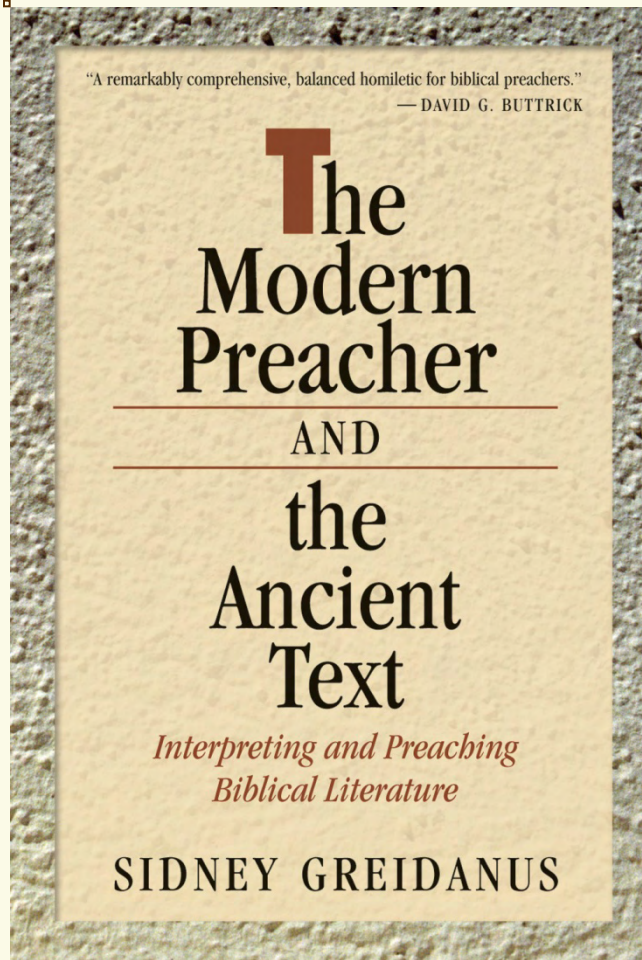




Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,
1988

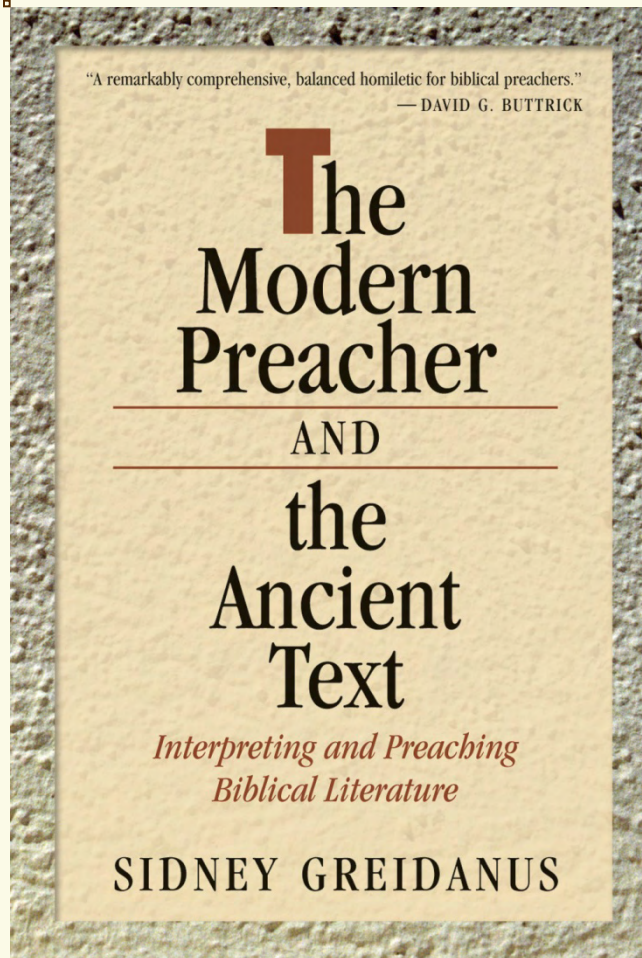
Sidney Greidanus:

“This idea [of progressive revelation] entails that God’s revelation was not give all at once but over the course of many centuries as redemptive history unfolded. During that course of history, revelation progressed from the beginnings of the Old Testament to the fullness of the New Testament ... It [progressive revelation] does mean that on the one hand the earlier (Old ...



Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,
1988

“...Testament) revelation must be compared with later revelation for its *fuller sense* and possibly its divergence from later (New Testament) revelation. On the other hand, New Testament revelation can be properly understood only against the background of Old Testament revelation. Consequently, the idea of progressive revelation affirms the indispensability of both Old and New Testament revelation while at the same time it ...

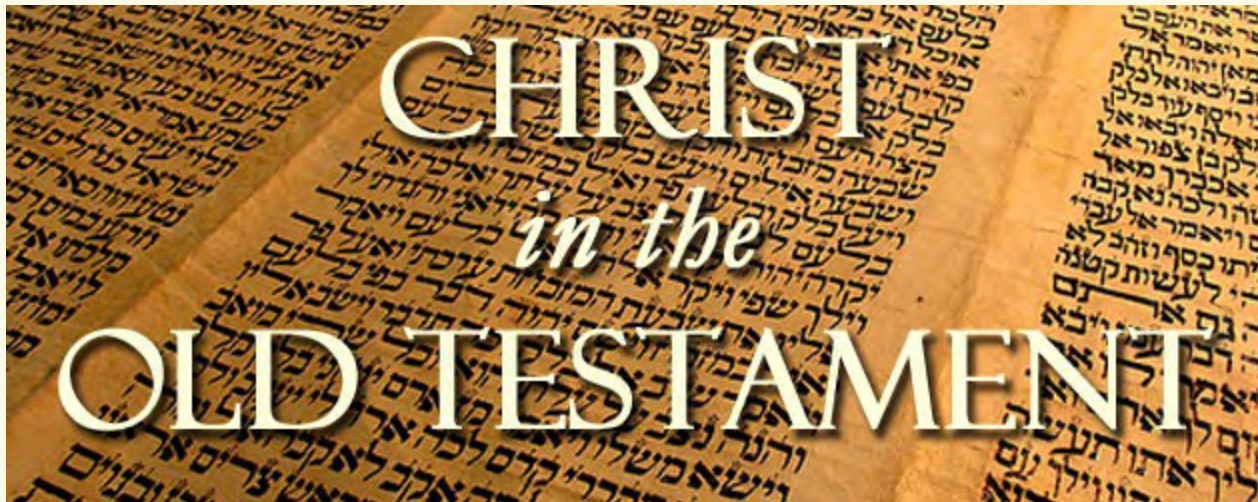


Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,
1988

“... underscores *the necessity to interpret Old Testament revelation in the light of New Testament revelation*. This broader context for understanding a biblical text inevitably broadens the scope of interpretation from the immediate purpose of human authors to the ultimate purpose of God” (pages 112-113; emphasis added)

The Theological Element

- ❑ Interpreting the OT in light of the NT
- ❑ Christological Interpretation of the OT



The Theological Element

□ “Sensus Plenior”

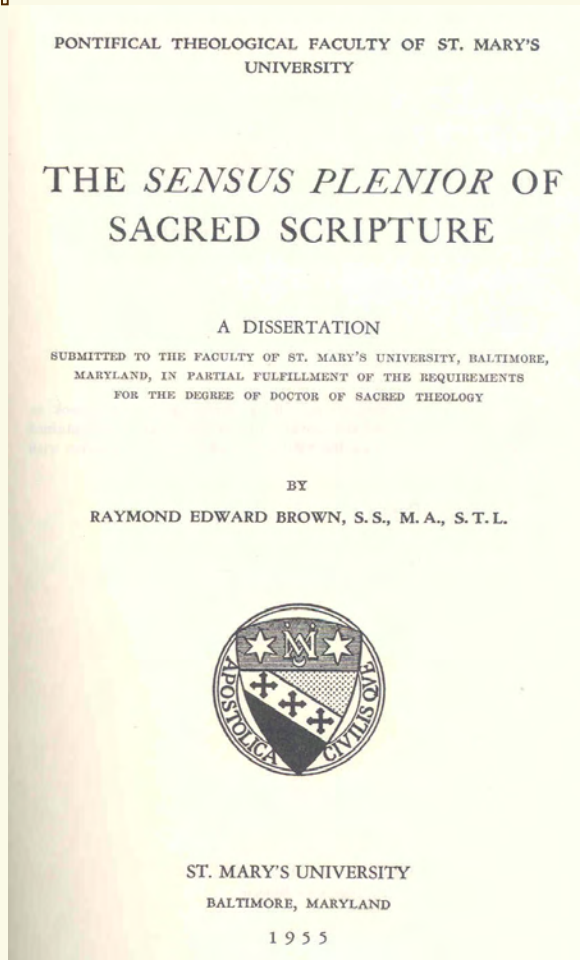
- Intended meaning of divine author may exceed that of the human author
- Scripture may thus have a “fuller sense” (*sensus plenior*) or deeper meaning than that intended by the human author

LATIN

sensus =
“sense, meaning”

plenior =
“more, fuller”

The Theological Element



Raymond E. Brown:

“The *sensus plenior* is that additional, deeper meaning, intended by God but not clearly intended by the human author, which is seen to exist in the words of a Biblical text (or group of texts, or even a whole book) when they are studied in the light of further revelation or development in the understanding of revelation” (page 92)

The Theological Element

INTERPRETING THE WORD OF GOD

Festschrift in honor of
STEVEN BARABAS

Edited by
SAMUEL J. SCHULTZ
and
MORRIS A. INCH

MOODY PRESS
CHICAGO

“The OT in the
NT” (1976) 78-104

Donald A. Hagner:

“To be aware of *sensus plenior* is to realize that there is the possibility of more significance to an OT passage than was consciously apparent to the original author, and more than can be gained by strict grammatico-historical exegesis. Such is the nature of divine inspiration that the authors of Scripture were themselves often not conscious of the fullest significance and final application of what they wrote. This fuller sense of the OT can be seen only in retrospect and in the light of the NT fulfillment” (page 92).

The Theological Element

Example 1: Gen 3:15

“So the Lord God said to the serpent, “...And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”



The Theological Element

Example 2: Hosea

- The Historical Context
- The Message
 - No acknowledgement of God
 - No gratitude to God
 - No proper worship of God
 - Yet ... God's mercy is greater than Israel's sin!



Example 3: “Day of the Lord” Theme

Old Testament

This Present Age | The Age to Come

Day of the Lord

New Testament

This Present Age | The Age to Come (realized in principle) | The Age to Come (realized fully)

D-Day:
Resurrection
of Christ

VE-Day:
Return
of Christ