

I. **INTRODUCTION AND THEME VERSE.**

- A. Hermeneutics is the science and art of interpretation. Science because it follows certain rules. Art because it is a skill that one develops with practice (from Tony Merida).
- B. Hermeneutics is from the Greek meaning to explain, interpret or to translate. It was personified in the god Hermes. It is both science and art in three elements of author, text, and audience.
- C. In the field of Biblical hermeneutics, various interpretations and approaches exist. The goal of this study, however, requires that all seek one interpretation: the one intended by the original authors. In order to achieve this goal, those who study the Scriptures must evaluate them according to their historical, cultural, and literary context (Robert Sungenis).
- D. The hermeneutical process in three steps:
1. Observation -- what do I see?
  2. Interpretation -- what does it mean?
  3. Application -- how does it apply?
- (from *The Word - The Science of Biblical Interpretation*)
- E. Hermeneutics in brief:
1. Scripture interprets Scripture.  
Often Scripture interprets itself. In some instances, another Biblical writer interprets another Biblical passage.
  2. Context interprets Scripture.  
The surrounding verses, chapter, and Book of Bible provide immediate context to any Bible verse, as does the historical, cultural, linguistic context of a verse.
  3. Intent interprets Scripture.  
All Scripture has an intended meaning. It is therefore true that a Scripture has one correct interpretation while it many have many correct applications.
  4. The Clear interprets the Obscure.  
No verse of Scripture should be interpreted to contradict the overall message of Scripture. When we are faced with an obscure verse, we find a clear verse to help interpret it.
- F. A guiding principle of hermeneutics:  
God said it.  
I interpret it  
(to the best of my ability, keeping in mind the limitations and filters imposed by my worldview.)  
That doesn't entirely settle it.  
(But it does provide a trustworthy -- if incomplete -- platform on which to base my values and decisions.)
- G. See Nehemiah 8:8.  
*They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.*

II. **BEGINNING FACTS.**

- A. God has spoken (Heb. 1:1,2).  
*God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.*
- B. The Bible is a revelation of God's will (1Cor. 14:37).  
*If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.*

- C. The Bible is accurately translated.
- D. The Bible is infallible (Psa. 19:7).  
The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;  
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
- E. The Bible is complete and final (2Tim. 3:15-17).  
and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; **17** so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
- F. The Bible is intelligible (Rom. 15:4).  
For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
- G. The Bible can be understood (Rom. 10:17).  
So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
- H. The Bible is authoritative (2Tim. 2:15).  
Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.
- I. The Bible demands submission (Rom. 2:6-9).  
who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: **7** to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; **8** but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. **9** *There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,

### III. THE TOOLS YOU WILL NEED.

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|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A. A Bible.                 | F. Commentaries and reference books. |
| B. A Bible concordance.     | G. Time for study.                   |
| C. A Bible dictionary.      | H. A place to study.                 |
| D. Maps and Atlases.        | I. A plan of study.                  |
| E. A modern language Bible. | J. Pencil and Paper.                 |

### IV. THE PROPER MENTAL APPROACH.

- A. Good study habits:
  1. Read the passage correctly.
  2. Mark in your Bible.
  3. Make notes and outlines.
- B. An alert mind.
  1. The words give divine revelation (1Th. 2:13).  
For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.
  2. The words read will save the soul (Jas. 1:21).  
Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.
  3. The words instruct the mind (Ac. 17:11).  
Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so.
  4. The words strengthen the soul (Mt. 11:28).  
“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.
  5. The words reveal spiritual truth (Col. 3:16).  
Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

6. The words are profitable (Heb. 4:12).  
For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
7. The words will last (Mt. 24:35).  
Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

#### V. USE COMMON SENSE.

- A. Prejudice means bias and partiality.
- B. Pre-conceived opinions: is a mind made up without the facts.
- C. Wishful thinking makes things true which are not.
- D. Generalizations draw sweeping conclusions from particular instances.
- E. Appeals to human authorities only defend "a position" not the truth.
- F. Appeals to the popular views determine influence but not the truth.
- G. A passage cannot mean what it never meant.

#### VI. EXEGESIS AND EISEGESIS.

- A. Exegesis is the careful, systematic study of the Scripture to discover the original, intended meaning. The key to good exegesis and therefore to a more intelligent reading of the Bible, is to learn to read the text carefully and to ask the right questions of the text.
- B. The historical context, which will differ from book to book, has to do with several things:
  1. The time and culture of the author and his readers, that is, the geographical, topographical, and political factors that are relevant to the author's setting.
  2. The occasion of the book, letter, psalm, prophetic oracle, or other genre.
- C. Essentially, literary context means that words only have meanings in sentences, and for the most part biblical sentences only have meaning in relation to preceding and succeeding sentences. "Content" has to do with the meanings of words, the grammatical relationships in sentences, and the choice of the original text where the manuscripts have variant readings.
- D. The reason one must not begin with the here and now is that the only proper control for hermeneutics is to be found in the original intent of the biblical text.
- E. A text cannot mean what it never meant.
- F. Eisegesis is the interpretation of a Bible text by reading into it one's own ideas.
  1. Eisegesis, which is the interpretation of a passage based on a subjective, non-analytical reading. The word eisegesis literally means "to lead into," which means the interpreter injects his own ideas into the text, making it mean whatever he wants.
  2. Only exegesis does justice to the text. Eisegesis is a mishandling of the text and often leads to a misinterpretation. Exegesis is concerned with discovering the true meaning of the text, respecting its grammar, syntax, and setting. Eisegesis is concerned only with making a point, even at the expense of the meaning of words.