

SESSION 2

BIBLIOLOGY

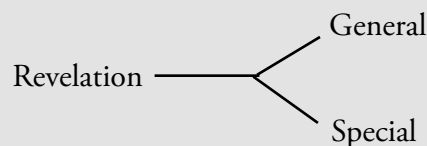
{ > DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE < }



Definitions of "Revelation"

- "Revelation is the act of God whereby He discloses Himself or communicates truth to the mind, whereby He makes manifest to his creatures that which could not be known in any other way."
(Thiessen, Lectures, 7)
- "It (revelation) is a knowledge that comes to us from outside ourselves and beyond our own ability to discover."
(Morris, I Believe in Revelation, 10)

Types of Revelation



General Revelation

- "It (general revelation) is communicated through the media of natural phenomena occurring in nature or the course of history; it is addressed to all intelligent creatures generally and is accessible to all; it has for its object the supplying of the natural need of the man and the persuasion of the soul to seek after the true God."
(Thiessen, Lectures, 7)
- It (general revelation) is "the knowledge of God's existence, character and moral law, which comes through creation to all humanity."
(Grudem, ST, 57)

II. BIBLIOLOGY (Doctrine of the Bible)

A. Revelation

1. Definition of revelation :

- a. "The making known of that which is unknown; the unveiling of that which is veiled."
(Erickson, Dictionary, 143)
- b. "A disclosure; especially God's communicating His message to man."
(Ryrie Study Bible, 1933)

2. General revelation :

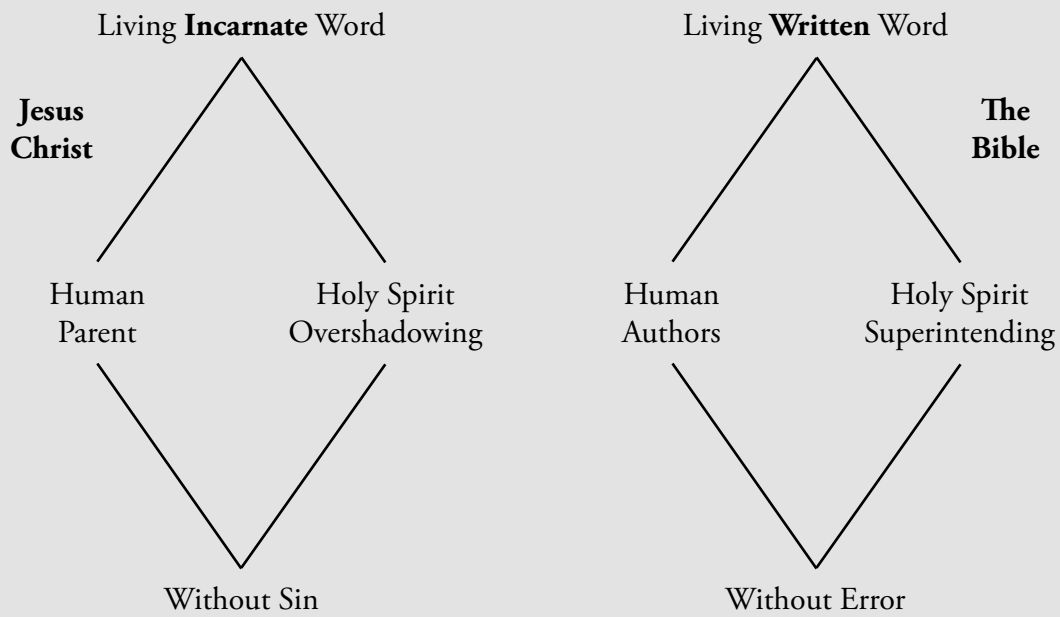
"That divine disclosure to all persons at all times and places by which one comes to know that God is, and what He is like."
(B.A. Demarest, 944)

a. In creation

- Psalm 19:1-4a (NASB)
"The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands ² Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world."
- Others (Ro. 1:18-21; Ps. 8:1-3; Acts 14:14-17)

The Word of God: Two Living Revelations

(Special Revelation)



(Enns, Moody Handbook of Theology, 168)

b. In history

Acts 17:24-27

*"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.
²⁵ And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.
²⁶ From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷ God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us."*

c. In conscience

Romans 2:14-16

"(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares."

"It is the presence in man of this sense of right and wrong, of this discriminative and impulsive something, that constitutes the revelation of God."

(Thiessen, Lectures, 10)

d. Its limitation

General revelation can reveal the existence of God; suggest some of His attributes (power, majesty, glory, goodness) but it cannot save. This requires further "special revelation."

Means of "Special Revelation"

(How God Communicated to Man)

1. Theophanies (i.e. appearances of God)
(e.g. "angel of the Lord" [OT]; Heb. 1:1-4; Col. 1:15; 2:9)
2. Direct communications
(Gen. 2:16; 1 Sam. 3)
3. Urim and Thummim
(Num. 27:21)
4. Dreams
(Num. 12:6; Gen. 37)
5. Visions
(Isa. 1:1; 6:1-13; Dan. 7)
6. Miracles
(Ex. 4:2-5; Jn. 2:11; 20:30-31)
7. Special disclosures to individuals
(Jn. 16:13; 2 Pet. 1:21; also Deut. 18:21-22; Jer. 23:13-22)

"We have in Christ a three-fold revelation of God : a revelation of His existence, His nature, and His will."

(Thiessen, Lectures, 15)

3. Special revelation :

That disclosure of God whereby He makes Himself specifically known at special times, to specific people.

a. Through Jesus Christ : LIVING WORD

(1) Hebrews 1:1-2 (NASB)

"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."

(cf. Col. 1:15; Jn. 1:18)

(2) John 14:8-9 (NASB)

"Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' ⁹ Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?...'"

b. Through the Scriptures : WRITTEN WORD

(1) Psalm 19:7-14

"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward. ¹² Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. ¹³ Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. ¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."

- (Note : Ps. 19:1-6 speaks of "general" revelation; 19:7-14 speaks of "special" revelation)

(continued, p 35)

Theories of Inspiration

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION	STATEMENT OF THE VIEWPOINT	OBJECTIONS TO THE VIEWPOINT
MECHANICAL OR DICTATION	<p>The biblical author is a passive instrument in the transmission of the revelation of God.</p> <p>The personality of the author is set aside to preserve the text from fallible human aspects.</p>	<p>If God had dictated the scripture, then the style, vocabulary, and writing would be uniform.</p> <p>But the Bible indicates diverse personalities and manners of expression in its writers.</p>
PARTIAL	<p>Inspiration concerns only the doctrines of Scripture that were unknowable to the human authors.</p> <p>God provided the general ideas and trends of revelation but gave the human author freedom in expressing it.</p>	<p>It is not possible to inspire general ideas infallibly and yet not to inspire the words of scripture.</p> <p>The manner of giving words of revelation to the prophets and the degree of conformity to the very words of Scripture by Jesus and the apostolic writers indicate inspiration of all the biblical text, even the words.</p>
DEGREES OF INSPIRATION	<p>Certain portions of the Bible are more inspired or differently inspired than other portions.</p> <p>This view allows for errors of various sorts in the scripture.</p>	<p>No suggestion of degrees of inspiration is found in the text. (2 Tim. 3:16)</p> <p>The entire scripture is incorruptible and cannot err. (John 10:35; 1 Peter 1:23)</p>
INTUITION OR NATURAL	<p>Gifted individuals with exceptional insight were chosen by God to write the Bible.</p> <p>Inspiration is like an artistic ability or a natural endowment.</p>	<p>This view makes the Bible really no different from other inspirational religious or philosophical literature.</p> <p>The biblical text represents the Scripture coming from God through men. (2 Peter 1:20-21)</p>
ILLUMINATION OR MYSTICAL	<p>The human authors were enabled by God to write the scriptures.</p> <p>The Holy Spirit heightened their normal powers.</p>	<p>The biblical teaching indicates it came through special divine communication, not through heightened capacities of men.</p> <p>The human authors express the very words of God, not merely their own words.</p>
VERBAL, PLENARY	<p>Both divine and human elements are present in the production of scripture.</p> <p>The entire text of scripture, including the very words, are a product of the mind of God expressed in human terms.</p>	<p>If every word of Scripture were a word of God, then there would not be the human element in the Bible that is observed.</p>

(Charts of Christian Theology, 23)

(2) "Since all we know of the living Word is contained within the written Word, special revelation is objective, factual, final and complete as far as God's intention for us is concerned."

(Cook, STOF, 33)

Insight :

For the relationship between the Living Word and Written Word, see Diagram, page 30.

B. Inspiration

1. Definition of inspiration :

"God's superintendence of human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs."

(Ryrie Study Bible, 1956)

2. Major Views of inspiration :

a. Note the chart on preceding page (6 views).

b. Note that the "Verbal, Plenary" View is the one embraced in this study.

(1) "Verbal" : the inspiration extends to the very words of the originals (cf. Jn. 17:8; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:10-13).

(2) "Plenary" : the inspiration extends equally to all parts of the Scriptures (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16).

"Inspiration : 2 Timothy 3:16"

2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness..."

Insights :

a. theopneustos

This is the word that is translated "inspired." It is the only word so translated and this is the only occurrence of it in Scripture. The meaning and use of this term would then seem to be crucial to any biblical idea of inspiration.

The word means "God-breathed", "God-spirated", or we could say, "breathed out by God". It does not seem to have any notion of instilling a quality into an existing thing, but rather the production or bringing into existence of a thing. In particular it seems to say that the Scripture has come out from God as words come out a man by the exhalation of breath out of that man (through, presumably, the vocal chords).

This is another way of saying that God has spoken, the Scripture is from God as His word, or again, simply, Scripture is the Word of God. It is also possible that theopneustos has some reference to the fact that Scripture is from God due to the action of the Divine pneuma, understood as the pneuma hagios or Holy Spirit. This presumption gains some credibility in light of the fact that other passages which speak of production of revelation through human mediators do speak of the primary role of the Holy Spirit in that process.

b. pasa graphe

Usually, graphe, as a singular form refers to some portion of Scripture, some prophecy which may be adduced and claimed to be fulfilled, etc. (Mk. 15.28; Lk. 4.21; Rom. 9.17; 10.11; etc.). When it is used to cover the whole of canonical writing, the form of the word is usually plural (graphai or graphas as in Lk. 24.27; Matt. 22.29; Rom. 1.2; 15.4; 16.26; 2 Pet. 3.16). pasa may be translated "all" or "every." Thus pasa graphe can be understood as 'every Scripture,' that is, each and every passage of Scripture. The entirety of Scripture would be in view but the emphasis would be on the individual passages that make it up. However, most translators prefer to render it 'all Scripture' emphasizing the whole or the entirety of it (which of course would necessarily include the parts) because 1) pas with an anarthrous noun (one without the article) in N.T. usage favors the idea of 'the whole of' (C. F. D. Moule, Idiom Book of New Testament Greek, p. 95; N. Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, 3:199-200), and 2) pasa graphe is used in apposition to the phrase hiera grammata, 'sacred writings', in verse 15, which clearly refers to Scripture as a whole.

c. Conclusion

Theopneustos is predicated of pasa graphe in 2 Tim. 3.16. This means that Paul is asserting that all of Scripture, considered as a whole (the canon of sacred writings) including its parts within, is from God, produced by Him as His Word.

(C. Blaising, Class Notes)

3. Primary Biblical texts (on inspiration)

a. 2 Timothy 3:16

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness..."

b. 2 Peter 1:21

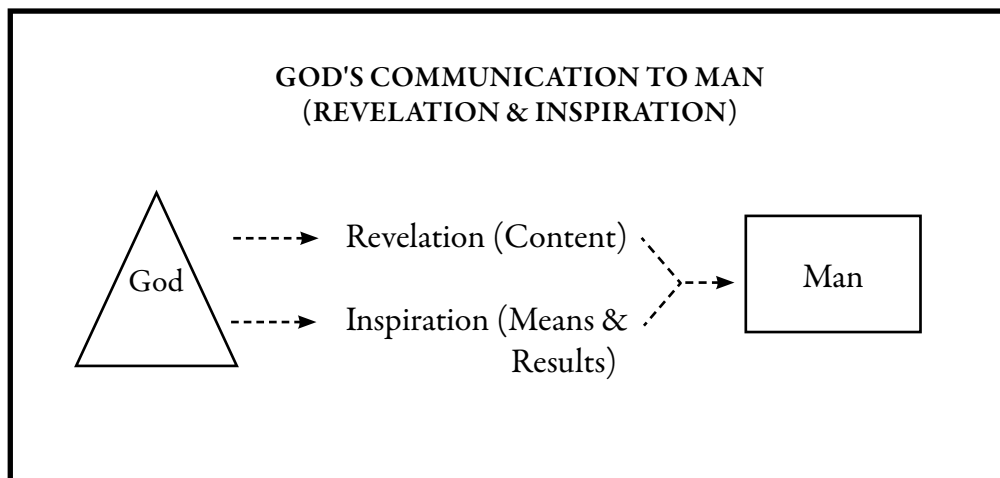
"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

"Divine inspiration is the activity of the Holy Spirit whereby He enabled certain people to receive God's special revelation and to speak it or to write it without error or omission in their language and style as the very words of God (2 Pet. 1:21)".

(Barackman, *Practical Christian Theology*, 25)

c. 1 Corinthians 2:13

"This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words."



Four Reasons to Believe in Inerrancy

(Boice, Does Inerrancy Matter?, 14-20)

1. The Bible : It teaches inerrancy

- a. 2 Timothy 3:16

"All scripture is God-breathed."

Meaning of God-breathed is "breathed out" by God. Thus, scripture is God-spirited; i.e. it is the product of an inerrant God (Not unusually inspired men).

- b. 1 Thessalonians 2:13

"And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe."

Scripture is God's word (not man's).

- c. 2 Peter 1:21

"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

"The Bible does not contain men's words about God, but God's words about man and to man." (Boice, 16).

2. Jesus : He affirmed inerrancy

- a. Jesus appealed to the Scriptures as His infallible authority (Matt. 4:1-11).

- b. Jesus corrected faulty theology by appealing to an infallible authority (Matt. 22:23-33).

- c. Matthew 5:17-18

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

3. The Church : It believed in inerrancy

- a. Irenaeus : "Most properly assured that the scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the word of God and His Spirit."

- b. Others : Cyril of Jerusalem, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Schaeffer, Packer, et al.

4. God : His character demands inerrancy

- a. John 17:17

"Your word is truth."

- b. Psalm 119:60

"All your words are true."

- c. Proverbs 30:5

"Every word of God is flawless."

- d. Titus 1:2

4. Issue : Inerrancy

a. Defined :

Simply, inerrancy means wholly true. Inerrant scriptures are not false or mistaken; rather, they are free from error (incapable of error).

b. Delimited :

Inerrancy extends only to the "autographs" (the original writings when first recorded); however, to the degree that subsequent translations reflect the autographs, the translations are functionally inerrant.

"Inerrancy means that when all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they teach, whether that teaching has to do with doctrine, history, science, geography, geology, or other disciplines or knowledge."

(Feinberg quoted by Boice, Does Inerrancy Matter?, 13)

"Ten Tests of Canonicity"

(Barackman, *Practical Christian Theology*, 33-35)

"Observe that the application of these tests do not impart canonicity, for the canonicity of any sacred literature is inherent, being determined by God."

(Barackman, *PCT*, 33)

1. The Test of Divine Inspiration
Does the book claim inspiration from God? Is there evidence for inspiration?
2. The Test of Human Authorship
Is the book authored, edited or endorsed by an accredited agent of God (prophet, apostle, Jesus Christ)?
3. The Test of Genuineness
Does the book trace back to its purported writer (not a pious fraud, i.e. pseudepigrapha)?
Historical authenticity?
4. The Test of Authenticity
Is the book factually true?
5. The Test of Testimony
Did the book have widespread recognition? Does it have internal, Holy Spirit witness?
6. The Test of Authority
Does the book demand faith and authority ("thus saith the Lord" or similar expressions)?
7. The Test of Agreement
Does the book have consistency and harmony with existing scripture? Doctrinal agreement?
8. The Test of Fulfillment
Is there evidence of fulfilled prophecy within the book?
9. The Test of Endurance
Does the book speak to all generations in a real, vital way (cf. 1Pet.1:23-25)?
10. The Test of Spirituality
Does the book agree with scriptural affirmations on the dignity and majesty of God?

C. Canonicity

1. Definition of canon :

- a. "Canonicity concerns the right of any literature to be accepted as the word of God. 'Canon' refers, one, to the 'standard' that a literary work must meet before it is recognized by God's people as scripture and, two, to the 'collection of books' that meet this standard."

(Barackman, PCT, 32)

- b. "Canon is the collection of books deemed authoritative by the church."

(Erickson, Dictionary, 27)

2. Two fundamental considerations :

- a. The Bible is self-authenticating and church councils have only recognized the authority inherent in the writings themselves.
- b. God guided the councils so that the canon was recognized.

3. Guiding principles of canonicity :

- a. Applied to the Old Testament

(1) Closed OT canon (ca. 400 BC)

(2) Written in the prophetic period?

(Moses to Artaxerxes)

(3) Man directed by God?

(4) Christ attestation?

(cf. Lk. 24:44; Matt. 23:34-35)

(5) Recognized as inspired, authoritative scripture?

The Canon

Criteria	The Old Testament	The New Testament
Authority (Authority of the Author)	Prophetic Authority (A Lawgiver, Prophet, or Leader in Israel)	Apostolic Authority (An Apostle or authorized by an Apostle)
Authenticity (The Internal Evidence)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Claim to be the Word of God 2. The Testimony of the Holy Spirit 3. Its Harmony with Progressive Revelation 4. Its Dynamic Character 5. Its Truthfulness 	
Accomplishment (The Close of the Canon)	The Disappearance of the Prophetic Office with Malachi (Fifth Century BC)	The Disappearance of the Apostolic Office with John (First Century AD)
Acceptance (Verdict of People of God)	<p>By the Old Testament</p> <p>By Christ</p> <p>By the New Testament</p> <p>By the Faithful</p>	<p>By the New Testament</p> <p>By the Church</p>
Additions		<p>The Apocrypha</p> <p>The Pseudepigrapha</p>

The Tests

(C. Blaising, Class notes)

b. Applied to the New Testament

- (1) Apostolic authority?
(either an apostle or close associate)
- (2) Agreement with Old Testament?
- (3) Recognized as inspired, authoritative scripture?

D. Illumination

1. Definition of illumination :

- a. "The work of the Holy Spirit giving understanding when the Scripture is heard or read."
(Erickson, Dictionary, 80).
- b. "The act of being enlightened with the truths of God's word. This act is related to the work of the Holy Spirit, who takes the truths of the Bible and causes believers to have an understanding of their meaning and application."
(Swindoll, SDMDT, 11)

2. Biblical texts

a. Need : for unbelievers

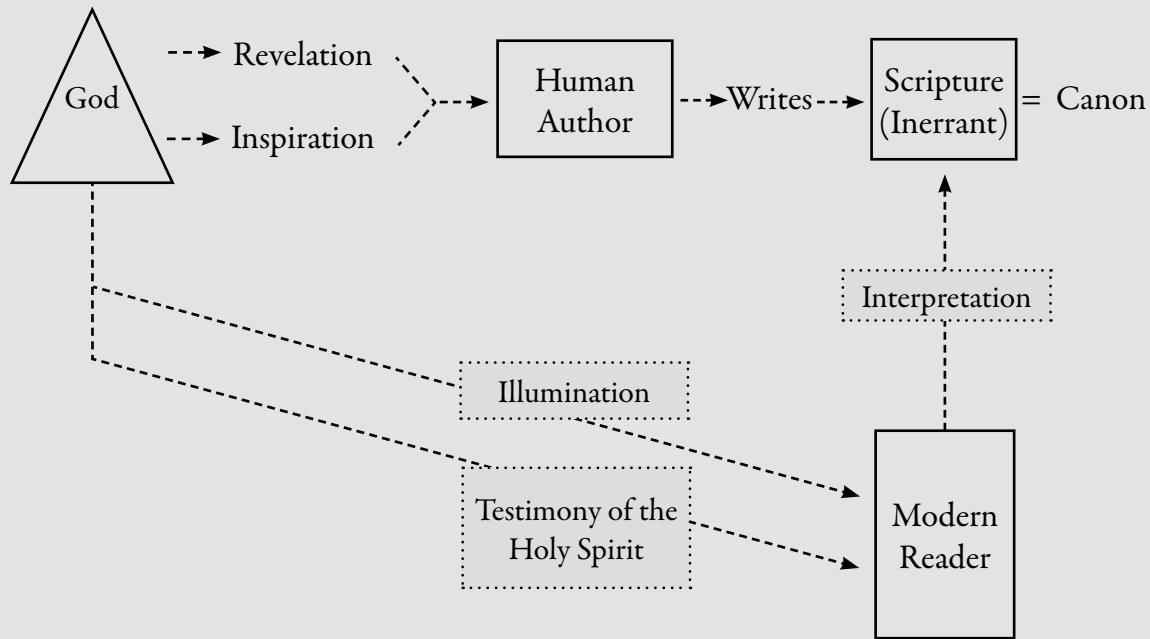
1 Corinthians 2:14

"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

God's Communication Process



Illumination

- An inerrant, infallible scripture is of no value without understanding; illumination is a part of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- "Metaphorically put, the morocco leather of the Bible must be translated into the shoe leather of experience" (Geisler, ST, 1:382). This requires illumination and application.
- Objective revelation requires subjective illumination to effect practical appropriation for life transformation.

b. Conviction : for the world

John 16:8-11

"When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰ in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."

c. Need : for believers

1 Corinthians 2:10-12

"...but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us."

d. Ministry : to believers

John 16:13-15

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."

The Acceptable (Literal) Approach to Interpretation

("Literal-Grammatical-Historical Method")

The proper approach to hermeneutics is that which emphasizes the literal interpretation of Scripture. R.C. Sproul has summarized the essence of literal interpretation as such:

The term "literal" comes from the Latin "litera", meaning letter. To interpret something literally is to pay attention to the litera, or to the letters and words which are being used. To interpret the Bible literally is to interpret it as "literature." That is, the natural meaning of a passage is to be interpreted according to the normal rules of grammar, speech, syntax, and context.

(Sproul, Knowing Scripture, 48-49)

1. In literal interpretation, the quest of the interpreter is to ascertain what the speaker is trying to say (or mean) by what he is saying (or meaning); in other words, what does he mean by what he says? In the Bible, what is said is clearly evident, etched on the pages of Scripture. But what (and here is the rub) does it mean by what it says?
2. Literal interpretation simply means the original sense of a passage. It is often referred to as the Gramatico-Historical Method. It takes careful scrutiny of the normal, customary usages of the Bible language considering the rules and practices of grammar, syntax, and the like.
3. The literal interpretation of the Scriptures seeks to understand the "one sense" or normal meaning (as opposed to multiple meanings) of the passage. It supposes that the Bible was given to man to clearly instruct him, not confuse or mislead. Literal interpretation sees Scripture as divinely revealed treasure, not supernatural riddle.
4. True literal interpretation distinguishes between plain-literal statements and figurative-literal expressions such as figures of speech. Even with the use of a figure of speech, there is clear-cut literal meaning, i.e., a specific intention being conveyed by the author. The interpreter must still seek to discover the original intent and meaning of the writer.

E. Interpretation

1. Definitions :

a. Interpretation :

"A way of understanding or explaining a passage of writing or a concept."

(Erickson, Dictionary, 86)

b. Hermeneutics :

The art and science of interpretation

"Hermeneutics also concerns itself with understanding the unique roles and relationships between the author, the text and the original or subsequent readers."

(Grenz, Pocket Dictionary, 59)

2. Acceptable approach to interpretation :

See discussion, previous page 46.

3. Inadequate approaches to interpretation :

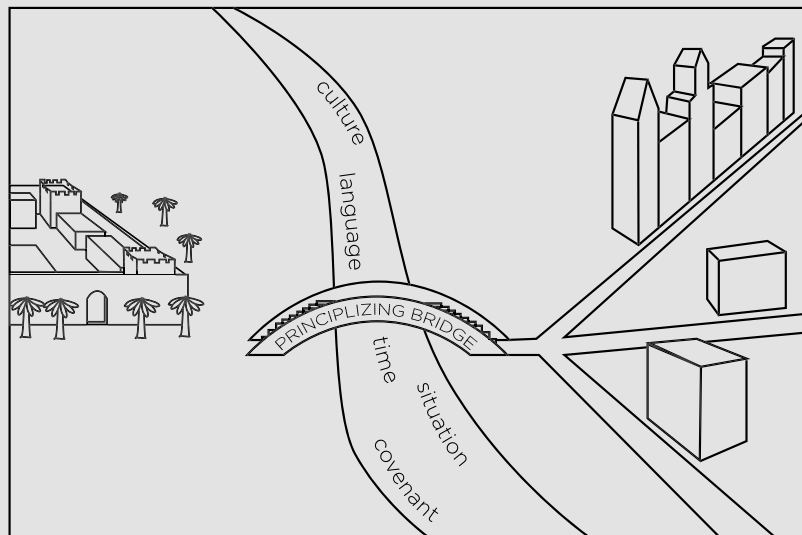
a. Liberal method :

That method which approaches the Scriptures solely on a rational basis rather than authoritative-revelational basis; whatever is not educated, empirical, rational thought is rejected.

Examples : Spinoza, I. Kant, 19th century
German theologians (Schleiermacher, et al.)

(continued, p. 49)

Bridging from the Biblical Context



(Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 24)

PASSAGE (Historical) ——— PRINCIPLE (Timeless) ——— PRACTICE (Timely)

b. Neo-orthodox method :

That method which sees the written word only as a means to look beyond the written text to find the true word in the existential (empirical) person of Christ.

Examples : K. Barth (founder), E. Brunner, R. Niebuhr

c. Demythological method :

That method which uses the scientific method and certain other critical approaches to the Biblical text; in this method the interpreter must strip away all religious "myths" to discover the true, essential meaning of the text.

Examples : R. Bultmann (founder)

d. Devotional method :

That method that places emphasis on the edifying aspects of the scripture; seeks to interpret for personal use (can neglect the plain, normal or straight-forward meaning of the text).

Examples : Medieval mystics (Bernard of Clairvaux), Pietists like Spener, Francke, Bengel, Quakers, Puritans (to a degree), some modern evangelicals.

e. Allegorical method:

That method that seeks a deeper meaning in the text than the plain meaning; some literal interpreters use it for interpreting prophecy (meaning beyond the literal, i.e. one symbolic or spiritualized).

Examples : Philo, Origen, Jerome, Augustine; some modern interpreters of prophecy (Covenant theologians, e.g.).

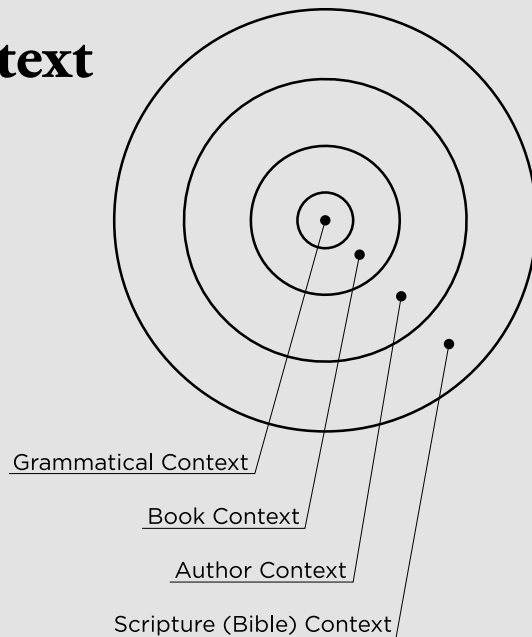
Broad Interpretive Context

Interpretive Context

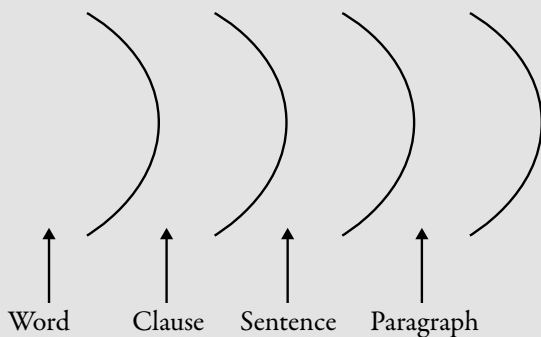
To interpret (therefore, understand); first, look at the type of literature... (historical? prophetic? poetic?)

Next, note the grammatical structure of the passage. Understand that it is part of a wholistic look at the passage in its much greater scripture-wide context.

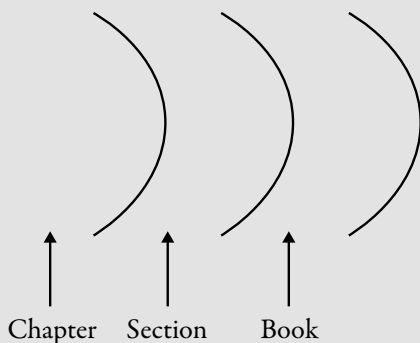
Note the diagram (right).



Grammatical Context:



Book Context:



Interpretive Clues:

- Look for structure
- Look for central idea
- Look before and after (near context)

Interpretive Clues:

- Look for themes
- Look for breadth or development of main ideas
- Look for "broad" structure (far context)

F. Literal (normal) Interpretation

The process of literal interpretation is best seen by way of overview in the diagram on the preceding page. As can be seen, the process moves from morphology (individual words) to syntax to the settings of the Bible. Such a careful approach moves from the smallest unit (the word) to the largest unit (the historical setting). What follows is a descriptive listing of these principles.

1. Morphology (Word Studies) :

Since the author used words and words in particular, the meaning and usage of the word can give precise clues to the overall intent of the author's mind.

2. Syntax (Clauses and Sentences) :

Syntax engages the interpreter in the meaning and interrelationship of words and clauses to form sentences. Of special note are conjunctions (connectives or signposts), phrase constructions and verbs (especially verbs!).

3. Immediate Context :

The principle of "immediate context" emphasizes that verses (sentences) do not occur in the Bible in isolation but in reference to and vital relation to other verses and sentences. A text without context is a pretext.

4. Context of the Book :

A collection of sentences form a paragraph or unit of thought. These units of thought form the theme or purpose of a book. A careful interpreter keeps the context and theme of the book before him at all times.

(continued, p. 53)

Guide to Interpretation of Biblical Texts

	DESCRIPTIVE What does it mean?	RATIONAL Why was this said here?	IMPLICATIONAL What is the significance?
TERMS	<p>What is meant by the term?</p> <p>How does it function?</p> <p>What key words need word study?</p>	<p>Why is this term used? (generally)</p> <p>Why is this term used? (specifically)</p> <p>Why is this a key term in the passage?</p>	<p>What are the dominant truths taught in the passage?</p> <p>What do these truths imply about how God acts or wants believers to act?</p>
STRUCTURE	<p>What kind of sentence is it?</p> <p>What laws of structure are used?</p> <p><i>contrast</i> <i>cause/effect</i></p> <p><i>comparison</i> <i>summation/explanation</i></p> <p><i>repetition</i> <i>question/answer</i></p> <p><i>proportion</i> <i>general/specific</i></p> <p><i>climax</i> <i>interchange/inversion</i></p> <p>What are the major connector words?</p>	<p>Why was this style of sentence used?</p> <p>What are the causes, effects, or purposes reflected in the clauses?</p> <p>Why is this the order of words, phrases, or clauses used?</p> <p>Why are the stated relationships as they are?</p>	<p>What are the abiding truths taught in the main statements?</p> <p>What major motivations or promises do the subordinate clauses reveal?</p> <p>What major ideas are emphasized by the order of the words or phrases?</p> <p>What limitations are found?</p>
LITERARY FORM	<p>What literary form is used?</p> <p>What are its characteristics?</p> <p>How does this literary form convey the meaning of the author?</p> <p>Is the language literal or figurative?</p>	<p>Why is this literary form employed?</p> <p>Why are the figures used as they are?</p>	<p>What is the significance of this form of literature as related to the truth conveyed?</p> <p>What light is shed on the truth by the figures of speech used?</p>
ATMOSPHERE	<p>What aspects of the passage reveal the atmosphere?</p> <p>What emotional words are used?</p> <p>How is the author's attitude developed in the text? the readers?</p>	<p>Why does this kind of atmosphere dominate this particular passage?</p> <p>Why is this atmosphere essential to the effective presentation of this passage?</p>	<p>What is the significance of atmosphere to the argument of the passage?</p> <p>Is encouragement or rebuke the major tenor of the passage?</p>

1987 Mark Bailey (Adapted and used by permission in Charts of Christian Theology, 14)

5. Context of the Dispensation :

The broad principle of context further includes the dispensational element. The student must recognize the dispensational context to properly interpret the Scripture. Romans is interpreted in a different light than Leviticus.

6. The Setting :

The general principle of setting includes the social, geographical, and temporal elements of the Biblical text. To attempt to interpret, apart from the cultural element, reads Western bias and philosophy into an Oriental book of ages past. Setting must be considered.

5 LAWS OF BIBLE STUDY

Law 1 : OBSERVATION : "What Do I See?"

Law 2 : INTERPRETATION : "What Does It Mean?"

Law 3 : APPLICATION : "How Does It Work?"

Law 4 : CORRELATION : "Where Does It Fit?"

Law 5 : COMMUNICATION : "How Do I Share?"

For an introduction and overview to these five laws, consult Personal Bible Study (First Hand Joy), a "Baseline" class offered by the BiLD Training Center at Fellowship Bible Church of Northwest Arkansas. (website : BiLD.fellowshipnwa.org)

