

The Necessity of Proper Biblical Interpretation

I. Different Modes of Biblical Interpretation

Dispensationalism - Dispensationalism is a theological system that teaches biblical history is best understood in light of a number of successive administrations of God's dealings with mankind, which it calls "dispensations." It maintains fundamental distinctions between God's plans for national Israel and for the New Testament Church, and emphasizes prophecy of the end-times and a pre-tribulation rapture of the church prior to Christ's Second Coming. Its beginnings are usually associated with the Plymouth Brethren movement in the UK and the teachings of John Nelson Darby.

Why not dispensationalism?:

1. It does not account for the _____ nature of the Bible.
2. Its overly literal approach negates the Old Testament as witness to _____.
3. It doesn't provide a helpful approach to the use of _____ and the Bible's use thereof.
4. It leads to several unacceptable conclusions regarding the _____. For instance, consider the conclusions of several Dispensationalists concerning the work of Christ in the establishment of His Kingdom:

"Throughout His earthly ministry Jesus' Davidic kingship was proffered to Israel, but He was rejected....Because the King was rejected, the messianic, Davidic kingdom was (from a human viewpoint) postponed." Charles Ryrie

"By stone and by storm, satan carried on his relentless warfare in order to prevent Christ from coming to His appointed throne in the kingdom He had come to establish... Jesus was officially presenting Himself as the covenanted Davidic king and was offering the covenanted kingdom of the covenanted people." J. Dwight Pentecost

Roman Catholic Biblical Interpretation - The Magisterium of the Church

In the Roman Catholic system, the method of Biblical interpretation is defined by the Catechism of the Catholic church:

"Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God . . ." [and], "Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 97 and 82).

Why not the magisterial approach?:

Luther brought out that these often disagree. Consider the Roman Catholic doctrines of purgatory and the use of indulgences. Though these are central to the practice of Roman Catholicism, neither has any Biblical warrant whatsoever, but they do find a root in church tradition.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Proper Biblical Interpretation -

Biblical Theology - “The study of the unity of the message of the whole Bible.” (20)

The New Testament _____ a knowledge of the Old Testament. Everything that is a concern to the New Testament writers is _____ redemptive history to which the Old Testament witnesses.

“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 (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.” The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 1, Paragraph 9.

a.) Biblical theology is a means of looking at one particular even in relation to the total picture.

Consider the following illustration:

An illustration of Redemptive History

(Eternity Past - Cov't of Redemption) Genesis 1:1 Jesus Incarnation - Resurrection (YOU) Return of Christ (Eternity Future - Redemption)



b.) Biblical theology enables us to see ourselves in relation to the far off events in the Bible narratives.

Case Study - Galatians 3:19-25

How does the OT biblical narrative contribute to Galatians 3:19-25?

c.) Biblical theology shows the relationship of all parts of the OT to the person and work of Jesus Christ and, therefore to the Christian.

d.) Biblical theology provides the basis for the interpretation of any part of the Bible as God's word to us.