

# Intro to Hermeneutics

## Lesson 1

**Intro:** In this lesson we will be looking to the purpose and principles of Scriptural interpretation. The Bible must be correctly divided for clarity of meaning and application. My goal is to teach us the specific principles of hermeneutics. These principles will produce sound understanding and teaching of God's Holy Word.

### Definitions of Important Terms or Phrases:

**Hermeneutics defined:** The term finds its origin with the Greek god, Hermes. Hermes was a messenger for the gods and was known for his ability to interpret. Webster's 1828 dictionary defines hermeneutics as "the art of finding the meaning of an author's words and phrases, and of explaining it to others."

**Inspiration defined:** Inspiration is the infusion of ideas into the mind by the Holy Spirit; the conveying into the minds of men, ideas, notices, or monitions by extraordinary or supernatural influence; or the communication of the divine will to the understanding by suggestions or impressions on the mind, which leave no room to doubt the reality of their supernatural origin.

**Edification defined:** Edification refers to a building up, in a moral and religious sense; instruction; improvement and progress of the mind, in knowledge, in morals, or in faith and holiness.

**Exposition defined:** Exposition is an explanation; interpretation; a laying open the sense of meaning of an author, or of any passage in writing.

**Discernment defined:** The power or faculty of the mind, by which it distinguishes one thing from another, as truth from falsehood, virtue from vice; acuteness of judgment; power of perceiving differences of things or ideas and their relations and tendencies.

2 Timothy 2:15 "Study to show thyself \_\_\_\_\_ unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, \_\_\_\_\_ the word of truth."

**I. The Principles of Biblical Hermeneutics:** There are three essential elements to accurate Biblical interpretation.

### **A. One must accept the inspiration of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit.**

1. The Holy Spirit's involvement in the production of the Word of God is paramount. We must fully accept the Bible as a product of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

2. Why is this acceptance so vital? Because.....

- a. The miracle of inspiration ensures the validity of the Bible's content.
- b. The Spirit's involvement in producing the Word demands His involvement in interpreting it, therefore creating an understanding in the Bible student that we must have a partnership with the Spirit in our studying, teaching and/ or preaching if it is to be effective.
- c. Acceptance of divine inspiration will produce faith in the student, thus allowing him to study the Bible with confidence. (Hebrews 11:6 "But without \_\_\_\_\_ it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.") If we accept the inspiration of Scripture, we will not seek to correct the Bible. Our confidence in the Spirit's accuracy of God's revelation will embolden us to interpret the Bible for understanding and not critique the Bible for error.

3. As Bible believing Baptists we accept the plenary ( \_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_ ) inspiration of Scriptures, and therefore...

- a. Approach the Bible with faith, trust, prayer, and reverence.
- b. Approach the Bible in defense of the Bible rather than to questions or criticize it.
- c. Does not read ideas into the context of the Bible nor states opinions as doctrine. We present the Bible by explaining its content without changing its message.

4. It is the conviction of Cornerstone Bible Baptist Church that the Authorized King James Version is the preserved Word of God for the English speaking people.

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### **B. One must acknowledge the principles of exposition when studying the Bible.**

1. God grants gifts of teaching to certain believers to expound the truths found in the Scriptures.

2. Language is constructed through use of words. Words symbolize detailed information. Words would have no value if they could not be connected with detailed definitions. Exposition of Scripture is simply identifying and exposing the details of a word or passage.

### **C. One must have the ability to discern Biblical truth when studying a passage.**

1. We must be able to exercise spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ to correctly identify, interpret and apply doctrinal truth from the Word of God.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ can only be discerned by comparing the Scripture to the Scripture. 1 Corinthians 2:7-14 sheds considerable light on this process. Paul here spoke of the hidden wisdom of God and acknowledged that this wisdom can only be acquired by the help of the Holy Spirit by "*comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*"

**II. The Purpose of Biblical Hermeneutics:** The study and application of the rules of hermeneutics is to accomplish two things.

### **A. One purpose of Hermeneutics is to discover the correct interpretation of a passage or doctrine.**

1. One goal of hermeneutics is the clear and systematic presentation of Biblical truth.

2. The clarity of the Scripture comes by the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and mind of the believer, illuminating his mind to see the truth of

the Scripture as the truth of God.

3. The power of expository preaching is unparalleled. God's method of revealing truth is through the preaching of His Word. Paul's command to Timothy is clear. "*Preach the Word!*"

4. Notice the following biblical example of the power of expository preaching/teaching. a. Acts 18:24-28 gives us information concerning Apollos. He was \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ in Scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord, fervent in spirit, a diligent teacher, and he spoke boldly in the temple. b. When Aquila and Priscilla heard his preaching, "*...they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*" The term expounded means they exposed" him to more truth. The phrase "more perfectly" means the truth thy showed him was "more exact" or clearer. c. Notice the impact of this exposition of the Scripture in Apollos' life. When he left to pass in Achaia he "*...helped them much which had believed through grace:*" For "*he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.*" He mightily convinced the Jews by using various Scriptures to prove that Jesus was who He claimed to be. d. Note the difference in verses 24 through 26 and verses 27 through 28. There are powerful points to be made from these few verses.

1) Vs. 24-26- The focus of these verses is on the ability and attributes of Apollos the man.

2) Vs. 27-28- The focus of these verses is on those affected by his ministry of preaching.

e. What made this great shift? The exposition of Aquila and Priscilla. Apollos began to expound to others in the same manner that they had expounded to Scriptures to him.

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### **B. Another purpose of Hermeneutics is the edification of the hearer.**

1. All study, preaching, and teaching of the Word of God has one goal, to produce a spiritual effect in the lives of those who read and hear it. It accomplishes the following.

- a. It makes us wise unto salvation.
- b. It benefits us in doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

2. The study of the Bible is not an end but a means. We are not to become stagnant ponds which breed the diseases of spiritual pride. The purpose of the study of interpretation is that the Bible student will become a Christian God can use to produce results.

3. The term “edify” means “to promote another by building up; to improve the mind in knowledge”. “Edified” means one has been “instructed; improved in knowledge of religious matters”.

**Closing:** The Bible student must understand the supernatural involvement of the Holy Spirit in the revelation of God through His Word. This acknowledgement will cause him to rely upon this same source for enlightenment in his pursuit of rightly dividing the Scripture. Once a correct interpretation is discerned, the Bible student must clearly lay out the truth in an expository manner, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

It is my prayer that through these studies we will become better students of the Word of God.