

WHY DO WE NEED HERMENEUTICS?

Incidentally, Hermeneutics is a fancy word for "interpretation of Scripture."



If you're interested in understanding the Bible on a deeper level, you might want to try **hermeneutics**?

The primary and basic need for Hermeneutics is to make certain (be assured) what God has said to His creation in His Sacred Scripture (to establish, after consideration, study and proper evaluation, the meaning of the Word of God). The very center and heart of our faith is that we can know that God has spoken in His Holy Scripture. The other alternative is to depend on human knowledge; of which, there is no validity or trust. We know that man changes and God does not. Those that know the sweet peace of God's salvation also know that God has truly spoken...through man in most cases, but it is God himself that has revealed His Word. Now all we need to know is what He has said.

All that He has said is truth. We know that. It is just imperative that we know what He is telling us as His children and fellow workers of the King's Kingdom. For what does it profit us if we gain the whole world and fail to hear and know what God has said? It has been written down to help inform and be a witness of truth to the past, present and future generations. **Therefore, it is our responsibility to thoroughly examine, study, and determine the meaning of what God as given to us in Sacred Scripture.**

There is no doubt, to study, examine and conclude what God has said is a holy task (to say the least). With great reverence each should carefully adopt the method of Biblical interpretation he or she is practicing. **It is a major responsibility to whom we will be teaching and giving witness to, as well as ourselves, in ensuring the correct interpretation of the**

Bible. Through the interpretation of God's Holy Word rest our fundamental Christian doctrines.

Further, we need to know the correct method of Biblical interpretation so that we do not confuse God's voice with that which man has to say. We need to know hermeneutics thoroughly if for no other reason than to deliver and preserve us from erroneous principles of understanding God's Word.

If there is a secondary need for Hermeneutics, it would be that there is a need to bridge the gap between our thoughts and what the thoughts were in the Biblical writers' minds.

People of the same culture, same age, same geographical location, and who normally speak the same language understand each other with facility (ease in moving, acting or doing). However, when the interpreter is separated culturally, historically, geographically, and language commonality with the writer he seeks to interpret, the task of interpretation is no longer accomplished with ease.

Language is the most obvious stumbling block between the interpreter and the writer. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. To formulate the rules to bridge this gap is one of the most important tasks of Biblical hermeneutics.

There is also a culture-gap between our times and Biblical times which the translator and interpreter must try to fit the pieces. Until we can adequately understand the cultural patterns of the various Biblical periods we will be at a disadvantage in our understanding of the fuller meaning of Scripture. A knowledge of marriage customs, economic practices, military systems, legal systems, agricultural methods, etc. is all very helpful in the interpretation of Scripture.

To properly understand the Sacred Word of God we should be alert to the geographic characteristics of the Bible lands. The references to places, rivers, mountains, etc. are very relevant in understanding the Bible as it is recorded. Where the action takes place is relevant to the text in which the story is told. The understanding of many passages of Scripture is dependent on some understanding of history. If geography is the scenery of Scripture, history is the plot of Scripture. Each incident is dependent on a larger historical context for its better understanding.

As one begins to interpret Scripture, there are some basic assumptions the interpreter must make. Although it is not an assumption, the interpreter must first believe in divine inspiration of the Word of God. Although we can say that this is not an assumption, we also cannot say that we can prove the divine inspiration by the Word of God. Believing in the divine inspiration of the Word of God has to come by faith. Just as faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the requirement for salvation of our soul, we must have "faith" in believing the Word of God comes to us by divine inspiration (the Word of God is God breathed).

It is very important for the interpreter to determine the boundary of Scripture in order to interpret scripture.

The first assumption = the interpreter must presume that the Protestant canon gives demonstration to be the true content of Sacred Scripture.

The second assumption is to determine the Sacred Scriptures' most valid text. The interpreter must collect all the manuscripts and other materials which would help to determine the true text, work out basic theory concerning how the true text is to be determined, and then determine how the basic theory determines the text of any given verse of Scripture.

The third assumption is that historical criticism must be discussed and properly weighed. Historical criticism concerns itself with the literary as well as the documentary character of the books of the Bible. This would include, but not limited to, the authorship of the book, date of its composition, historical circumstances, the authenticity of its contents, and its literary unity. Historical criticism is necessary in our interpretation of the Bible if we wish a faith that is neither deceiving to ourselves and to others nor vague in its content. This is important in that we must understand that there are those that have written much on historical criticism that disregard traditional views as well as the divine inspiration of Scripture.

I think there are at least four (4) qualifications for an interpreter of Scripture:

1. The interpreter must be born again.

He must know the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and he must have yielded to that conviction placing his faith and trust in the

risen Lord Jesus Christ. It is when the spirit yields to Spirit and, in our heart and mind, give in to the only one that can approve our entry into the kingdom of God.

2. **The interpreter must have a passion to know God's Word.**
He must have a deep-seeded desire to pursue God's trusted and Sacred writings and the enthusiasm that initiates both a reverence for understanding and an appetite for the truth of God's Holy Word.
3. **The interpreter must have a deep reverence for God.**
Some of the virtues the interpreter is to have are meekness, a humble spirit, and a patient, caring heart for understanding the Sacred Scriptures.
4. **The interpreter must completely depend on the Holy Spirit to guide and direct him in his pursuit of understanding.**
This starts with prayer and ends with prayer. Although the Holy Spirit influences our attitudes and spiritual perception on interpreting Scripture, it is important to understand that it is not the conveyance of truth; for that is the function of inspiration. According to Angus and Green, the Holy Spirit "makes men wise up to what is written (In Scripture) not beyond it." It should be understood, however, that there are intellectual requirements for good interpretation of God's Word. There must be an open-mindedness to all sources of knowledge and all rules for interpretation must be applied with skill (this requires intellectual ability).

Remember, the key to hermeneutics (interpreting the Scripture) is a reverence for God's Holy Word and a living presence of the Holy Spirit within. You ask for more of the Holy Spirit...and be sincere in what and how you ask...God will give you a double portion of Himself as He gives you the desires of your heart.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18, KJV)