

## **THE RELATION OF HERMENEUTICS TO TRUTH AND DOCTRINE**

### **I. What Are Hermeneutics?**

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#### **B. Recent developments**

### **II. What Is Truth?**

#### **A. Various definitions of truth**

##### **1. Dictionary definition**

##### **2. Postmodern definition**

##### **3. Emerging church definition**

#### **B. Various hermeneutics to accommodate these views of truth**

##### **1. Deliteralized hermeneutics**

##### **2. Postmodern hermeneutics**

##### **3. Kingdom hermeneutics**

##### **4. Redemptive hermeneutics**

##### **5. Complementary hermeneutics**

### **III. The Relation of hermeneutics to various doctrines**

#### **A. Eschatology**

#### **B. The church**

#### **C. The kingdom**

#### **D. The Scriptures**

**Conclusion: truth, certainty, assurance.**

Charles Ryrie

Midwest 1947 - Cults, Geog. Mech, Herm.

4 classes x 2 days = \$20 x 2 = \$5/class

*Stenographic*

*Purpose of God - given language.*

*1. God to man 2. man to God 3. to each other.*

*How do we do 2 & 3? No need, please. So do it. Right in Bible plainly. 7 prophets was - lit out of laws.*

*So of man or a semi lit. OT/NT. All agree on 1st lit. but M was - lit.*

*Figures of speech have plain meaning. <sup>lit</sup> *Philo 10:16 NT**

*That's like dist. Pa 80:8-11. <sup>lit</sup> *Obap - Pa 98:8. II 3:3. 12**

*Don't like dist. <sup>lit</sup> *Gen 10:1-6 Rom 9: 7-10**

*Quickies - grammatically, contextually, with Scripture*

*Programmer of laws*

*God knows. Eng dist. no hidden meanings, conceal*

*himself over Bible - teaching ch.*

*Chand New + 7 A. MTTB*

*Suppose God were <sup>visibly</sup> silent. *Nature* *Gen 1:1**

*Common Mt. 11:57 + Jn 14:22 *but not desirable**

A.W. Pink, The Divine Covenants, Baker, 1973, pp. 117-120

The subject of Isa. 11 is the ministry of the Lord Jesus. "Its details are to be understood in accord with its main drift, so that its metaphors and similes are to be taken in their proper and figurative sense." 247. Sinners "are here likened to the beasts of the field." It is "unmistakably clear that the language used by Isaiah is to be understood spiritually and not literally, as the dispensationalists vainly dream" (bec of Acts 10 unclean animals). "How wondrous is the grace which brings the wolfish rebel into the mildness and meekness of the lamb!" p. 249 on v. 6. On v. 7 "The lion passes from the carnivorous to the graminivorous: take that literally and it amounts to little, understand it spiritually and it signifies a great deal - when born again we can no longer find satisfaction in creature things, but long for heavenly food." 249.

*grass*

Disp impose on men "their crudities and vagaries, and make their poor dupes believe a wonderful discovery had been made in the "rightly dividing of the word of truth." p. 10.

"The promises of God to Abraham and his seed were never made to his natural discendants, but belonged to those who had a like faith with him." 120.

"If the inheritance of Abraham was an earthly one, namely, the land of Canaan, then most certainly the Christians' inheritance is an earthly one too, for we are all joint heirs with Abraham." p. 121.

"The special design of prolonging these chapters is to seek to help those who have been deceived by "dispensationalists," and others who have been misled by unwarrantable conclusions drawn from OT premises." 167.

Using the law lawfully (1 Tim. 1:8) means "causing its spirituality and holiness to cast them (those who lived under the law) back on the grace and promises of the Abr cov." 170.

WHAT IS TRUTH? Jn 18:38. (Pilate possibly irated that X didn't give definite answer).

Dictionary: actuality, factual. Ps 119:60 some of your hand is truth - Jn 17:17 - Jn 14:6; 16:13

Specific standard  
1 Jn 1:6,8 2 Jn 4

Postmodernism (deconstruct objectivity of scientific age and dogmatic theol, 1789-1989). Truth is experience-oriented. No absolutes. Truth is our minds trying to understand personal reality. Thus nothing valid for all people /groups. Empases on emotions not reason, truth to truths, objectivity to subjectivity, individual to community, hard sciences to human sciences, theology to sociology, author to reader, absolutes to relativism.

Cliché ism. All truth is God's truth. Includes psychology, soc, phil. Medicine-- Lots of rest after surgery; now get up often same day. Leeches to none.

Emerging church's def. 3 groups. On right: doctrinally sound but radical changes in worship—seeker friendly. In middle, downplay doctrine, earety, collegiality (Miller, Bell). On left dialog, community, experience (McLaren, McKnight). Stanley Grenz (Baylor) and John Franke (Biblical). Beyond Fundamentalism. Dialog in Starbucks setting. McLaren: Need yr moratorium on making doctrinal pronouncements. In meantime dialog, discuss try for provisional agreement listening to all areas of knowledge. If no agreement then 5 more yrs. Kristen Bell: Now I have no idea what most of the Bible means, formerly saw it in black and white (when thot I know what it means), now color. Sure, but color comes from human ignorance.

What kind of hermeneutics to accommodate these views of truth.

(1) Deliteralized is the umbrella. Isa 11. Ploughshares and Pruning Hooks, Brent Sandy Grace College. Prophecy generally true but no specifics. "If intent of prophecy is prosecution, persuasion, prediction (in descending order) prophecy not intended to be predictive and can only see after fulfillment. Pastribulationism

Isa 11

(2) Kingdom theol/hermen. Says God will save Buddists, Hindus, etc bec God's kgdom is all inclusive. But sal is not, Land pro is type of Xn life. Christified. NTWright: heaven is temporary place to be merged forever into new earth. Practical ramification—social emphasis. Henry, McLearn.P

CFHM had theol. basis

(3) Redemptive-movement herm. William Webb, NT Heritage, Canada. Redeem homos, women, etc.

(4) Complementary herm. NT can elaborate an OT promise as long as it doesn't annul. Davidic in OT earthly, in NT heavenly but earthly in future. Ch is new Israel.

(5) Post modern herm. = deconstructionism. No absolute truth. No lit. No rational treatment of Bible. Herm. is how I feel about truth. No uniform truth to be obeyed by all.

## RELATION OF HERMENEUTICS TO VARIOUS DOCTRINES

### 1. Most obvious one is teachings in eschatology

Only prem has consistent normal herm.

e.g. meaning of land promise of Gen 15. Remember Deut 11:28 and Josh 1:5 500 yrs later.

e.g. Bret Sandy. Apol. Literatue is only predictive and then nonspecific.

e.g., eternal punishment. Annihilationism, conditionalism.

### 2. Doctrine of church

e.g. distinction bet Is and ch. Chart. Complementary herm. Allegorical for no dist.

John 14:13. Buswell I 115, *tiopa - shall be ev' among* *ev'us within Lk 17. In n OT but now all v permanent*

3. Doct of kqdom. Many in Old and N.T. Melch, Og, Is, Universal, Darkness, dear Son, X;s Mt 25, Rev 2. Kqdom now to emphasise social resp Bryan McLearn. McArthur.

### 4. Doctrine of Scriptures

e.g., postmodernity. Modeern emphasized objective truth but arrived at by scientific method, higher crit. But recognized there is truth (of some sort!).

Postmodern moves to subjective and thus no or little certainty of objective truth.

e.g., Can have assurance without certainty. Theol on lower level than Bible.

5. *Eternal punishment*

Concl

We have truth and we know Him who is truth. Main thing. Forms of worship, programs, pressure of numbers must not divert or dilute our main purpose as pastors, teachers students. Requires conviction, study, patience.

*Certainty - Are you hearing me? Are you certain?  
Does God make certain terms of sal, hell. Bible is true - That's certain  
Whether I am assured of it or not.  
Eternal security also*

## ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

### I. Biblical Terms

1. Sheol. Grave in Numb. 16:30, 33. Place of departed spirits redeemed (Gen. 35:37) and unredeemed (Prov. 9:18).
2. Hades. Usually the temporary place for the wicked dead, Luke 16:23. It will be cast into the lake of fire at the end of the millennium, Rev. 20:13-14.
3. Gehenna. Mark 9:48.
4. Tartars. 2 Pet. 2:4. Prison for fallen angels.
5. Black darkness. Jude 13, Matt. 22:13; 25:30.
6. Separation. 2 Thess. 1:9 and Rev. 14:10.

### II. Is Hell Eternal or Just Age-Long?

Word "eternal" is used of God (Rom. 16:26), of life (John 3:26) of punishment and life (Matt. 25:46), of fire (Jude 7). The phrase "unto the ages of ages" occurs in Rev. 14:10-11; 19:3; 20:10/

### III. Christ's Teaching in Luke 16: 19-31

1. There is conscious existence after death.
2. Hades and torment are real
3. One's destiny is fixed at death. No second chance.
4. Dead cannot communicate with the living.
5. The Bible gives sufficient revelation for faith to save.
6. There will be recall of life's experiences.

### IV. Some False Views of the Afterlife

1. Universalism.
2. Annihilationism.
3. Second chance after death.
4. Anyone who wants mercy will be saved without hearing the gospel.

## APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

### I. Some recent developments in Hermeneutics.

1. Studies in linguistics have helped understand meanings of words and thus interpretation of the text.

2. More attention is being given to role of preunderstanding in one's approach to interpretation. We bring (1) our hermeneutics, (2) our theological presuppositions, and our (3) personal and cultural predispositions. Engaging these three matters is called the hermeneutical spiral--we spiral from predispositions and our hermeneutics to exegesis and develop our theology and then cycle back through again.

3. More emphasis on literary approach to Script or focusing on different genres found in Scripture. Genre= "category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form or content." Study of genres has negatives and positives ramifications. Positive in that this may help in historical-grammatical exegesis because focuses on background and method of interpretation (e.g., visions, prophecies). Negative if "each genre represents truth in its own way and makes unique demands for how it should be read". Meaning becomes dependent on the genre. Risky because we would get new set of hermeneutics with each genre. My object lessons still have plain meaning though they are a different genre from my books on theology. Jeremiah and Ezekiel used object lessons. My brief commentaries are also plain even the one on Revelation. F.F. Bruce: "Some genres found in the Bible have peculiar features not readily paralleled elsewhere and call for special rules of interpretation, e.g., prophecy and apocalyptic." [Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, p. 565.] Apocalyptic and prophetic genres mostly focused on as requiring special hermeneutics. Narrative isn't so difficult except when try to find principles that are not in the text.

### II. Definitions of apocalyptic literature.

A. General, fuzzy definition. Anything visionary, symbolic, futuristic. Then symbols are interpreted by interpreter.

B. Non-biblical or non-canonical apocalyptic literature. OT apocrypha bet 200 and 100 B.C. which purported to bring revelation from God explaining the reason for evil and promising the coming of kingdom. Arose because of persecution and fact that God wasn't speaking any more through living prophets. Characteristics: (1) revelatory through alleged dreams, visions, and heavenly journeys. (2) imitative, nor real visions. (3) Pseudonymous. Rev placed in mouths of an OT saint. (4) Employs symbolism. (5) Pseudo-predictive. (6) Not so much emphasis on judgment as prophetic literature though apocalyptic is particular kind of eschatology though distinction not always sharp.

C. Biblical apocalyptic literature. (1) Not pseudonymous. Ezekiel, John. (2) Uses symbols. Valley of dry bones. "Like, as" in Rev. (3) Accurately prophetic. (4) Sometimes has a divine interpretation (Rev. 1:20). In Rev. what must happen meta tauta covers rest of Rev. 1:19 cf. 4:1. Ezekiel 37:11-14. Dan 2,7. But always need to have plain interpretation as basis and goal.

### D. Some practical considerations

A. Symbols convey plain (often more plain) meanings. Isa. 24:7 "new wine mourns." Dan 4--tree. Ezekiel 40-48. Not Church, better to equate it with Rev 21-22 than the church but many details different so this is not valid. Don't spiritualize. Rev. 1:11--what you see, not what principles you get from the vision. Some particulars interpreted like 1:20. Dragon in 12:9.

B. Be careful that principles that may be legitimate and even biblical do not obscure or, worse, replace the plain meaning. Ezekiel's temple shows God is always with His people, 48:35, Yahweh shamma. True but . . . Rev shows triumph of good over evil, but in what specific ways?

C. Presume that all genres should be understood on the basis of an historical-grammatical hermeneutic.

D. Always keep asking self What is text saying? Don't run to find a preaching point then a text.

E. Don't avoid apocalyptic because it seems difficult or irrelevant. All Scripture is profitable. And especially a knowledge of the future is used in the Bible to affect our present living.

## THE RELATION OF HERMENEUTICS TO TRUTH AND DOCTRINES

Courses in St. Louis. Def: principles of interpretation. Usually think about after interpretation tho have unconscious herm. Order: herm, interp, system of theol.

### Recent developments

(1) Linguistics aids understanding of words.

(2) Genre "category of artistic, musical, literary composition character by particular, style, form or conten." Plus: reminds us of historical and cultural background of Bible. Negative: each genre needs its own herm. Apocalyptic genre.

(3) Personal and cultural preunderstanding, cultural baggage.