

Hermeneutics

Lesson 1

Introduction

1. Our subject defined--Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation. Sacred hermeneutics is the science of interpreting the Scriptures.
 2. Exegesis (from ex, out, and egeisthas, to guide or lead), means to lead out. It is the application of the principles of hermeneutics in bringing out the meaning of any writing which might otherwise be difficult to understand.
 3. An exegete is one skilled in exegesis.
 4. Exegetics is the science of exegesis.
 5. Eisegesis is a bringing in; an improper method of exposition by which the expounder introduces his own ideas into the interpretation of a text: opposed to exegesis.
 6. God has given his divine revelation (Heb. 1:1-2) and he expects us to use his book in order to know his will. (Jn. 8:32) (Eph. 5:17)
 7. We are to have Biblical authority for all we do.
 - a. Col. 3:17
 - b. Acts 4:7-12
 - c. 2 Cor. 5:7
 - d. Rom. 10:17
 - e. Heb. 11:6
 - f. Remember that I Cor. 4:6 (ASV) says "...that ye might learn not to go beyond the things that are written...."
 - g. Gal. 1:6-9 forbids our believing or practicing a perverted gospel.
 - h. In Rev. 22:18-19 the Lord warns against adding to or taking from his word.
 8. There are several factors that have arisen that make it necessary to study this subject.
 - a. We need to know personally what the Bible teaches in order to obey God.
 - b. There are problems that have arisen which make it important for us to know God's will.
 9. Following are the problems I call to your attention in this study.
- I. THERE IS THE PROBLEM OF "MODERNISM" or "LIBERALISM."
- A. Classic liberalism is rooted in naturalism--that is, in the denial of any entrance of the creative power of God. The Bible and the workings of God are to be explained in the light of science. Evolution is said to have "proved itself the most acceptable way of accounting for the aggregate of physical facts at the disposal of scientists, and in the world of skilled workers in this great branch of natural phenomena it is the unchallenged (emphasis mine d.r.d.) method of procedure." Progress, p. 13
 - B. Much emphasis is placed on modern textual criticism, historical and literary criticism and comparative religion. It is said that in the course of looking at the Bible in such a manner that "many superficial and untrustworthy Jewish and patristic traditions have been discarded. Fantastic opinions regarding the nature of inspiration, the character of biblical prophecy, the importance of symbolism and typology have vanished into the limbo of useless things. (emphasis mine, d.r.d.)" Progress, p.14

- C. "Another of the sciences which has taken form in the period under review, and has come to notable expression during the past twenty years, is psychology..." Progress, p. 15
- D. Liberalism would have us look to Jesus rather than to the Scriptures and to the church.
1. The 1989 General Assembly of the Disciples of Christ reaffirmed the church's faith in Jesus Christ and its tolerance for different theological viewpoints.
 2. This assembly rejected Resolution #8944 which affirmed that "Holy Scripture" was their highest authority in determining the mind and will of Jesus Christ our Lord.
 3. One of the participants said "I prefer not to place the Bible before Jesus Christ."
 4. "The Rev. Amanda Burr, pastor of the First Christian Church, Reseda, CA, said the phrase 'highest authority' troubled her because portions of Scripture have been 'used to beat people into submission.'"
 5. Vaughn L. Wright, former Disciple minister at Neosho, MO, wrote in the bulletin of the First Christian Church, Princeton, MO, "The debate generated by this resolution centered upon the belief by many that God's self revelation (emphasis mine, d.r.d.) and Jesus Christ's self revelation (emphasis mine, d.r.d.) were higher in authority than Scripture. Now, who in their right mind is going to say that Scripture is over Jesus Christ himself?"
 6. But this Jesus is not the Christ of Scripture.
 7. Wright also wrote "The church of Jesus Christ on earth today must begin to get past ideas of uniformity and strive to attain spiritual unity which is completely different".
 8. So it was announced at the same assembly, "In a history-making ecumenical step, the recent General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) elected a Roman Catholic priest, Monsignor Philip Manis of South Orange, N.J., as a member of the 1.1 million-member denomination's governing board." Neosho Daily News, Sept. 1, 1989.
- E. In liberalism "teaching" is said to be unimportant. By this is meant that doctrine is unimportant. It is said that "Christianity is a life, not a doctrine" Christianity and Liberalism, p.19
1. What they fail to see is that Christianity is a way of life founded upon a message.
 2. "It is based not on mere feeling, not upon a program of work, but upon an account of facts. In other words it was based upon doctrine." Christianity and Liberalism, p.21
 3. Please note the importance of doctrine in Gal. 1:8-9.
 4. Modernism asks, "Should not our trust be in a person rather than in a message, in Jesus, rather than in what Jesus did; in Jesus' church rather than in Jesus' death?"
 5. They believe in the person without believing in the message.
- F. The modern liberal holds to his Jesus instead of the Bible.
1. To him the Book is not the "infallible rule of faith and practice."
 2. To him the Book is not verbally inspired.
 3. To him the Bible does not "thoroughly furnish unto every good work."
 4. "The modern liberal rejects not only the doctrine of plenary inspiration, but even such respect for the Bible as would be proper over against any ordinarily trustworthy book." Christianity and Liberalism, p. 77
 5. "As a matter of fact, however, the modern liberal does not hold fast even the authority of Jesus. Certainly he does not accept the words of Jesus as they are recorded in the Gospel." Christianity and Liberalism, p. 77

6. In opposition to the Liberal, the Christian finds the Bible to be the very Word of God!
7. Liberalism is totally different from Christianity because the foundation is different. We base our life and teaching upon the Bible, but the liberal bases his life upon the shifting emotion of sinful men.
- G. Liberalism finds salvation (if it can be called salvation) in man; not in God.
 1. They reject the notion of sinful man being saved by the death of Christ upon the cross, taught in the New Testament.
 2. They often use the same language as we but redefine what is meant by the words used. They are less than honest in this.
 3. The New Testament scheme of redemption is criticized because:
 - a. it is dependent upon history.
 - b. it is narrow.
 - c. it degrades one's view of God. They do not like the notion of alienation, an angry god, etc.
 - d. it is contrary to the love of God.
 - e. a cardinal doctrine of modern liberalism is that the world's evil may be overcome by the world's good; no help is thought to be needed from outside the world.
- H. Liberalism teaches that all men everywhere, no matter what their race or creed are brothers.
 1. True brotherhood is the brotherhood of the redeemed.
 2. They believe that man's needs can be met by the institutions and organizations of this earth.
 3. The church is not seen as that unique, one body, of Jesus, for which he died, and in which men must be saved.
 4. "The Unitarian Church is frankly and honestly just the kind of church that the liberal preacher deserves--namely, a church without an authoritative Bible, without doctrinal requirements, and without a creed." Christianity and Liberalism, p. 165

II. THERE IS THE PROBLEM IN THE CHURCH OF THE INFLUENCE OF "MODERNISM" AND LIBERALISM."

- A. Some of our men have studied under those who believe what we have briefly studied.
 1. There are those who accept much, if not all that they have been taught.
 - a. It is believed that evolution is fact not a hypothesis.
 - b. It is believed that the Bible as a result of critical studies is not less divine but more human." Progress, p. 14
 - c. "It is seen to be less a supernaturally perfect record of history and science than a faithful and inspiring account of the most impressive movement of the divine activity in her world, written by men who were moved by the Spirit of God." Progress, p. 14
 - d. It is believed that psychology, philosophy, and other works of men are to be accepted on the same level, or even above, the Bible.
 - e. It is believed that the greatest examples for men to follow are those involved in social, economic, teaching, and racial activities even though they are not Christians.
 - f. It is believed that the church is the mystical bride of Christ that somehow includes all men.
 - g. It is believed that Jesus never gave any system of commands or set forth any code.

- h. It is believed that the church makes a mistake if it tries to enchain itself by the precedents of the past.
- 2. Some accept the teachings of modernism in modified form(s).
 - a. "There is no secret code. The Bible is a love letter as opposed to a blueprint." Max Lucado, Tulsa World, Mar. 12, 1989.
 - b. "Lucado also feels strongly about ecumenicity. 'there are fresh winds blowing in the church of Christ...' he said."
 - c. "He said, 'I have a gut feeling that we (the Church of Christ) have approached the Bible as engineers, looking for a certain design or architectural code. And I think we find that everyone finds a different code. As a result we split into 27-28 splinters or factions'."
 - d. "And we need to realize that if somebody from another 'stripe' believes in Jesus Christ, we immediately have much more in common than we have in opposition"
 - e. "We are a movement (notice he didn't call us the New Testament Church) and the health of a movement depends on its flexibility and honesty," Max Lucado, The Christian Reminder, In Reflections On Tulsa World article., Hershel Dyer.
 - f. There are those who claim to be "Biblicists" as opposed to the modern Liberalist who rejects the Bible. Yet they believe that the only way the Bible teaches is by command.
 - 1) The silence of the Scriptures cannot be bound on others-Randy Fenter-OCC Lectures, 1989
 - 2) He argues that we cannot use necessary inference to arrive at what the Bible says. He said "I believe that this is a dangerous doctrine."
 - 3) He argues that we cannot use examples to arrive at what the Bible says.
 - 4) He says there are others who are "Biblicists" who have different views than ours.
 - 5) He asks, "Is the Bible a constitution or is the Bible a collection of letters?" Fenter has what he calls an "Epistolary" view of Scripture-a collection of epistles or letters.
 - 6) He decries a legalistic approach to Scripture.
 - 7) He argued that the New Testament Church didn't even have the Bible, so they couldn't have been guided by it.
 - g. There are those who now argue for a broader base of fellowship. That the only unity possible is unity in diversity. They are ecumenical. This is a moderated form of modern liberalism.
 - h. We have those who argue for the person of Jesus rather than the Scriptures and the church.
 - i. It is argued that to contend for "rightness" divides. This is a form of modernism which rejects doctrine or teaching.
 - j. By using a "new" hermeneutic there are those who contend for women taking leading roles in the church, who argue for the mechanical instrument of music in worship to God, who say we cannot condemn premillennialism, that we cannot really agree on what constitutes fornication, that we cannot be too hard on our denominational friends, that worship is a party or celebration, etc.
- B. Remember that this is not a new problem.

1. "Truth is not something fossilized and crystallized." "It never takes final root."
2. "Now, Jesus never undertook to give the world a fixed system, a body of truth, signed, sealed and delivered, never to be developed, expanded or changed. Neither did he give any systems of commands, set forth any code."
3. "The church fails right here--does it not?--when it tries to restore the dead and buried past, instead of giving to worship and the statement of truth in our times and our own country, the atmosphere and color that belong to us."
4. "The church makes a mistake if it tries to enchain itself by the precedents of the past. Jesus never made any organization. Jesus never built any form for a church to be moulded in; neither did his apostles. The church is a man-made, man-moulded, man-built affair, erected on the plan of the Greek popular assembly of the time... We attempt in vain from the epistles to construct any coherent, any clear-cut definition of just how the church should be organized....The truth is, there is no definite 'thus saith the Lord' concerning organization... They are purposely left out, no doubt, so that our actions might be untrammelled with the past."
5. "...and whenever we hark back to the dead and buried past, we cripple and trammel ourselves in the extension of the old kingdom of the truth. So what is the difference whether we use an organ in our service, or an orchestra? There is no 'thus saith the Lord'. Whether we have missionary societies or not. There is no 'Thus saith the Lord.' Whether we have a board of deacons or whether we have elderships or not. There is no 'thus saith the Lord'. Whether sufficiently strong to buckle an eldership round the neck of any modern church if it does not choose to put it there... The old question of church organization is a futile question."
6. "Nothing on earth can stop man...Progress is here whether we try to entrench and stop it or whether we get out and move and go along with it...one thing is true, you and I must either be on it or under (emphasis mine, d.r.d.) it--which is it to be?"

Burris A. Jenkins
Progress
Anniversary Volume, 1917
The Campbrell Institute
upon the completion of 20
years of their history.

The "New" Hermeneutic? Some Things Just Do Not Change

By W. Joe Hacker, Jr., D.R.E.

The scripture abounds with examples of persons who disregarded the changeless, eternal nature of God and revealed truth. Adam had his problems with it and was driven from the garden. Paul reasoned with the philosophers of Greece and was dismissed as being foolish. The classic definition of wisdom coming from God was offered to the Corinthians. This was a wisdom based upon the changeless spiritual nature of God rather than upon the self-autonomous investigations of man.

Leadership in the denominational world has cried for a change in methods of interpretation of the scripture for almost a century now. The "new hermeneutic," as it is called, has itself changed in those circles over the years of this century. New methods of interpretation usually spring from a new theology. Denominational theology has changed from a rationalistic naturalism (old liberalism) to neo-orthodoxy (new liberalism) to a neo-orthodox existentialism (contemporary liberalism). As these basic views of God, man, and the scripture have changed so has the art and science of hermeneutics.

Denominational literature is full of "new hermeneutics." It has been a long time since many denominational leaders have taken the Bible or their sixteenth century creeds seriously. The result is a rift among them between evangelical and liberal groups. There always has to be an underlying theological reason for a new hermeneutic. Wait long enough, press hard enough, and it will emerge.

For example, until the Protestant Reformation there was little change in the history of biblical interpretation because there was little change in theology. The Protestant Reformation resulted in a more literal interpretation with each Christian his own interpreter. Luther saw the scripture through his doctrine of justification by faith. Calvin began with his view of predestination. With the coming of modern scientific thought, human reason and the scientific method became dominant. The scripture began to be viewed as literature. The debate and the method of interpretation rested upon whether one viewed scripture as sacred or secular literature.

Today the "new hermeneutic" refers to the new existential theology. It reflects the neo-orthodox understanding of the Bible and the nature of God and man. The classic description of fallen humanity given in the Roman letter is no longer accepted by the hermeneutics of denominational leaders today. Male and female homosexuals are not only accepted into Christian fellowship, but are allowed positions of leadership in the name of accommodation of Christianity to social change. In the wake of the sixties revolution, women have moved up from the position of pastor to that of bishop. This liberal social hermeneutic is the natural outgrowth of the theological ideas long expressed by both naturalistic and existential theologians. The latter suggests the Bible can be historically wrong and religiously right. Therefore, one must seek the truth hidden behind the mask of the first century

interpretation. A change in theology leads to a change in methods of interpretation.

When one accepts an evolutionary view of a constantly changing universe or of a constantly changing social order he looks at the scripture differently. From that point of view, the Old and New Testaments have no historical value. He considers Genesis a Hebrew myth which grew from association with other cultures. Moses refined the idea of monotheism which he may have gotten from some Egyptians. A new method of interpretation follows.

When the view of creation is changed by evolution a new interpretation of 2 Corinthians five must be developed, if one is to continue in the Christian stream of history. Thus a new hermeneutic broad enough to accommodate an evolving changing culture is necessary. Place neo-orthodoxy on top of this and the scripture must be interpreted as a subjective "language event" where faith is produced according to the subjective interpretation of the reader rather than through an objective analysis through rational processes. A new hermeneutic based upon subjective feeling is the result.

A person who determines the way to truth is through a return to the original ground of the apostles will look to the world view of the apostles as the basis for interpretation. The Apostles viewed God as the creator of the world in which we live. Paul tied the creative act of a changeless God in Eden with the recreation of every person born again into Christ. From that faith fact he lead the Corinthians to understand how one propositional faith fact relates to another propositional faith fact. Paul never tried to change his message to accommodate the science and philosophy of his age. On the contrary, his goal was to preach the truth through his weak, though intellectually astute, earthen vessel.

Paul applied secular literature to his Greek audience as an effective aid. The God of the Old Testament was presented in a manner that the philosopher of his day would understand and accept a changeless creator. For Paul, God established the limits of the entire universe including the mental universe of humanity. He tied the authority of his message to the changeless eternal promise of God authenticated by the resurrection of Christ and confirmed with miracles and signs. Thank God for that.

Evolutionary or existential, the result is the same. For the evolutionist the scripture must fit into his model of a changing world evolving ever upward with man at the top of the stack. His view of scripture is through glasses colored with a false view of the universe. God is defined in terms of the progress of religious thought through the prehistoric periods up to this modern insightful age of the physical and social sciences. The existentialist is looking for feeling, meaning, autonomous relationships, meaningful levels of communication which seem always be born of crisis. For him the Bible is not the word of God but contains the Word of God.

In both cases, the basis of interpretation rests upon a philo-

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sophical presupposition which redefines the nature of God, the universe, and man. With these new definitions in hand there follows a new hermeneutic. The Bible is interpreted to accommodate the evolutionary or existentialist society with man in the foreground and the Bible in the background. It is often presented as though truth is the exclusive discovery of this generation of mankind.

Social reform movements since the second world war have produced an increasing cadre of psychologists and sociologists who inhabit every level of society today. The behavioral sciences have a place in the ordering of the earth by man, just as the natural sciences do. The problem occurs however when those trained in communications, business, sociology and psychology dress their secular view of man in Christian robes. Show me a man's her-

meneutic and I will tell you his theology.

The changing of the church to a generation acclimated more to higher levels of education, to more sophisticated levels of society, and to higher echelons of business often leads to a demand for a new hermeneutic and more stylish homiletic in the name of church growth, sophistication and relevance. The question of change can easily become an obsession, often at the expense of the changeless aspects of the gospel.

Thank God! The scripture is infallible and does not change. Thank God! The faith once delivered to the saints does not change. Thank God! We changing humans can repent and turn to the changeless truth of a changeless God who loves us and will redeem us through the blood of His Son. Thank God for that. Some things just don't change.

CHRISTIAN COURIER

The Church In A State Of Crisis

An Era Of Uncertainty

Many Christians, who have observed the body of Christ through several decades, are convinced that the church of the Lord is currently in a state of crisis. Never, in relatively recent times, has there been such a period of confusion. Strange doctrines and twisted attitudes are circulating in the kingdom of God at an alarming pace. There is an explosive atmosphere that stalks the church and suggests a potential fragmentation that could be unparalleled in modern times. The 1980's have been characterized by dangerous extremes in a variety of directions.

Theological Liberalism

First, a growing number of people have lost confidence in the reliability of the Bible. They have drunk deeply from the stagnant pools of infidelity and, though they retain some vestige of religiosity, they do not remotely identify with biblical truth. These are they, for example, who believe that evolution is a satisfactory explanation for Jehovah's creative activity. The Bible has been reinterpreted to accommodate Darwinian assumptions and evolutionary chronology, and the Genesis account of origins is viewed as legendary. Do you remember the evolution scandal at one of our major universities? A biology professor characterized Genesis 1 as a "myth," and yet he was staunchly defended by the administration. One preacher, in preparing a lecture for a major brotherhood program, wrote to several of our schools inquiring as to how they were addressing the theory of evolution in their science classes. Almost half of them ignored his inquiry! Compromise among educators is commonplace.

The Scriptures are constantly being overhauled to fit the latest theories of theological liberalism. The Documentary Hypothesis (e.g., Moses did not write the Pentateuch) and various shades of Form Criticism (e.g., the idea that Matthew and Luke's gospel accounts were derived from Mark and another alleged source which is known by the letter Q) are common elements in the writings of some of our professors.

The New Denominationalism

There is a growing segment of the church that openly repudiates the New Testament as the doctrinal norm for religious activity. To these folks, the Bible is not a standard for measuring church organization, worship, congregational work, etc. They see the New Testament as a series of "love letters," and not as a "constitution." Some suggest that we are not under any law today. This philosophy, of course, allows each congregation to implement a program of "will-worship" (cf. Colossians 2:23) which facilitates the whims of the carnal-minded.

There is a strong constituency advocating the so-called "new hermeneutic," which assuredly is neither new, nor does it represent responsible hermeneutics (the science of Bible interpretation). We are told that our insistence that men respect the "silence of the Scriptures" is mere human tradition. Nadab and Abihu, who offered unauthorized worship to God (cf. Leviticus 10:1 N.I.V.), would not agree!

A new breed of young zealots (and some not so young) openly (on major lecture programs, in journals, etc.) repudiate the interpretative principle of acknowledging "approved apostolic examples," and they joke about "necessary inference," as though drawing a logical deduction were some sort of manipulative device invented by the restoration leaders. These apostles of innovation suggest that we must rid ourselves of those cultural elements in which much of the New Testament lies entombed (e.g., those limitations of woman's public teaching role), and that we must forge for ourselves a modern religion more in tune with the 20th century.

Coming "out of the closet," these re-born "intellectuals" ridicule time-tested arguments against the use of mechanical instruments of music in Christian worship and assert that this controversy is but a meaningless tempest in a tea-pot. Not a few of these champions of the new "left" argue that there are Christians in all the sects, and they do not hesitate to receive into fellowship anyone who has been immersed with a generic view to obeying God (and some are not so sure about the immersion aspect). Needless to say, joint participation with denomina-

tional groups has become common policy. This element of our brotherhood has vowed to radically change the church. Its influence will be significant.

The Silent Majority

There is still a sizable segment of the family of God that intellectually knows what sound doctrine is. In their conversations such brethren are still sympathetic to the truth, but they are altogether passive. They have no concept of a sane approach to addressing apostasy. Many are so repelled by a few fanatical self-appointed vigilantes, that they mistakenly think that it is the better part of valor to remain altogether mute. And while they sit silently, the church drifts farther and farther from the pattern of sound words. Others are ensnared in the web of brotherhood politics. A defense of their favorite school or journal is more important than Bible doctrine. There are some within the body of Christ who apparently are oblivious to the existence of such a thing as sound doctrine. To them, the essence of Christianity is not in adhering to the totality of truth as given by Jesus Christ; rather, they are caught up in the fragrance of religious socialism. They are more interested in implementing community programs (e.g., arts and crafts, aerobics, voter registration, etc.) than they are in seeing that souls are saved from sin.

In many churches of this ilk, there is no distinct sound from the pulpit. Solid Bible preaching is a relic of the past. Preachers have become cheerleaders whose chief function on the Lord's day is to launch the congregation into a new weekly orbit wherein they "feel good about themselves." Elders have frequently become nothing more than corporate board members who make dollar decisions while spiritual matters go begging. Bible classes no longer deal with the text of the Word of God; they have become around-the-table "sharing" sessions where personal experiences are substituted for gospel instruction. Some congregations have not had a gospel meeting in years, they no longer own a tract rack, and their mission program is in shambles (if it exists at all). For the most part, we have lost our cutting edge, and sectarian churches are happy about it.

Brotherhood Bullies

As a consequence of the doctrinal aberrations of liberalism, together with the diplomatic quiescence of certain dignitaries (college leaders, journalists, TV personalities, etc.), there has been spawned a breed of macho gun-slingers who are attempting to make an entire career out of exposing heretics. This

posse of self-deputized bounty-hunters sees a liberal behind every tree. It is not that they are totally mistaken in calling attention to some of the hurtful errors that plague us, it is the fact that they are obsessed with this one facet of contending for the faith. Men who yell "wolf" at every shadow will not be highly respected or long remembered.

The radical "right" has no balance. These brothers live, move, and have their being in bringing some false teacher (alleged or real — they shoot first and ask questions later) to justice. If you do not acquiesce with every facet of their police work, you are quickly on the "hit" list. Their idea of error and compromise covers everything from the valid opposition of false doctrine to the use of any translation other than the King James Version. And the ironic thing is, some of them can tolerate all sorts of ungodliness in their heroes, so long as the champion is belching his anathemas against the far-out left.

The sad fact of the matter is, this fringe element is turning more new converts and young people towards liberalism than the liberals themselves could ever convert. Many brethren are sick of the yellow-journalism mentality.

In this connection, however, we must point out that it is a favorite tactic of liberalism to lump everyone who opposes apostasy into the "witch-hunting" category. The design of this ploy is to embarrass the faithful proclaimer of truth thus leaving the liberals free to play havoc with the faith of the unsuspecting. Gospel preachers who are discriminating will not be intimidated by such maneuvers.

The Conclusion

More and more brethren are seeing the need for sensible balance within the church of Christ. We must stand firm for the truth, and yes, when necessary, oppose error and error's advocates — and that publicly. But we must do so in a scripturally reasonable fashion. When dealing with error, we must get our facts straight. We must be as patient as we can, particularly in dealing with those who are tender in the faith. We must be kind as possible, even when we are having to deal forcefully with some rank heresy. We must strive for the prominence of truth rather than for personal victory. We must be fair in dealing with the opposition. We must be accurate in our use of biblical evidence. Some of the arguments that preachers employ to "defend the faith" leak like a sieve.

Yes, these are stressful times. But there are yet thousands of sensible Christians who have not bowed the knee to either liberalism or to radicalism. The church will survive yet another crisis. *WJ*

Is Unity-In-Diversity The Only Game In Town?

On October 17, 1989 San Francisco, California was jolted by a powerful earthquake. Two days later, on the campus of Lubbock Christian University, Randy Mayeux, who preaches for the Preston Road church in Dallas, delivered a radical, almost earthquake-like speech, the shocking effects of which are reverberating across our brotherhood months later.

The theme of Mayeux's presentation, which was really a veneered tirade against the "traditional" church of Christ, was "unity in diversity." He brazenly threw down the gauntlet to faithful gospel preachers everywhere.

In a series of sweeping charges, Mayeux alleged that although the churches of Christ claim that they have no creed but the Bible, they in fact do have one. He referred to a well-known tract, *Can We All Understand the Bible Alike?*, as an "ignorant" viewpoint, and charged that the Scriptures cannot be uniformly understood, which, of course, makes the apostolic charge that we "all speak the same thing" (1 Corinthians 1:10) rather meaningless. Brother Mayeux equated the use of mechanical instruments of music in Christian worship with such expedients as the Sunday school and multiple communion cups. He suggested that the division which came about between the Christian Church and the churches of Christ in the late 1800's was principally economic, i.e., some churches could afford the instrument and others could not, hence, a spirit of rivalry developed. Our brother is as uninformed in history as he is in biblical matters.

Our misguided friend is also quite confused as to what it takes to constitute a Christian. He affirms that he *teaches* that baptism is for remission of sins, but he confesses that his *heart inclines otherwise*. (I believe there is an appropriate word for one who believes one thing and teaches another.) He contends that there are many respectable men among us who do not believe that our view of baptism is correct. He argues that if persecution should come, we would meet for worship with believers of all sorts, and whether one had been sprinkled or immersed would hardly be significant. He says, in fact, his belief actually is that God will accept a person at the point of his or her understanding. Would that mean that the Lord would accept the Jew as he is, even though he does not "understand" that Jesus is the Messiah? Mayeux mentioned "Mother" Teresa, the Roman Catholic nun, whom he acknowledged has never been immersed for the forgiveness of her sins, and he wondered if a poll were taken, how many

might feel that she is saved anyhow. There is an implication as to what his vote would be.

Brother Mayeux praises the writings and preaching of Charles Swindoll, a staunch Calvinist, and concedes that he has personal inclinations toward Calvinism. He avers that hundreds of our women in the church across the country are attending the organized "Bible Study Fellowship" programs which, he says, are "unabashed, unashamed Calvinist Bible studies." And he exclaims, "It is wonderful!" He predicts that a growing number of our people are going to think like Calvinists because they are reading men like Swindoll, and because they are not getting good Bible instruction in the church. Those sitting under *him* certainly aren't getting much!

Mayeux tells of a *Herald of Truth* family conference recently conducted in Texas during which a woman "preached" to 900 people, and, he exclaims, she "was dynamite!" He asks: Is there no place in the church for women who want to preach publicly to both men and women? He declares that the church of the Lord will not survive in the 1990's unless we allow women to exercise their ministerial gifts. On and on he railed as the audience laughed at his glib sarcasm. Randy Mayeux concluded his infamous diatribe by asserting that in the 1990's, *diversity will be the only game in town!*

Meanwhile, in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex area, Larry James of the Richardson East congregation, has boldly blasted churches of Christ for their opposition to the use of instruments of music in worship. In a sermon delivered on February 26th of last year, James caustically attacked our position on worship innovations. He made no attempt, of course, to answer the major arguments employed to sustain our stand; rather, he chose simply to ridicule those who contend for the primitive pattern of worship.

The sermons of Mayeux and James reflect a typical revolutionary spirit that is becoming increasingly common in the church. I am convinced that many sincere Christians are not aware of the extent to which the restoration movement is drifting (actually, *rushing*) into digression. It is quite a shocking experience to hear these men so arrogantly proclaiming their unorthodox views, and to note their mounting popularity.

We have prepared a cassette tape containing the Mayeux/James lectures. You need to hear these presentations firsthand. Send \$3.50.

Editor's Note: We truly regret that this edition of the *Christian Courier* has been dominated by brotherhood controversy. This is not our normal policy. However, sometimes the issues are so crucial and the danger so imminent that this sort of discussion is justified. WJ

American Standard Version Teacher's Bible

We have long believed that the ASV of the Bible is the most accurate translation in the English language. It appears, however, that it will soon be gone. For the past several years, the only publisher of the *American Standard Teacher's Edition* has been Star Publishing Co. in Fort Worth, Texas. We are informed by that company that the leather-bound editions are practically gone (they have only thirty or so left that they are retailing). There is a *hard-back* edition available, but even these are in limited supply. We will stock them as long as we have access to them. Price \$24.95 (add \$1 postage).

Book Review

Fidelity To God And His Word

The 1990 Fort Worth Lectures

The 1990 edition of the Fort Worth Lectureship book has just come from the press. This very fine volume of 360 pages would be a valuable edition to any Christian's library. There are thirty-four chapters covering a variety of themes — the Boston Movement, the Authority of the Scriptures, Church Government, the Doctrine of Original Sin, etc. are just a few of the topics discussed. We will make this available for \$15.00 (postpaid). This volume would make an excellent gift.

Please check your mailing label to see if your subscription to the Christian Courier is due.

Recommend this paper to others.

Two Commentaries by Wayne Jackson

The Book of Job

Analyzed And Applied

\$5.50

The Book of Philippians

A Grammatical and Practical Study

\$4.95

Notes From The Margin Of My Bible

On the evening of the Last Supper, there arose a dispute among the apostles of Christ as to which of them would be accounted as the greatest. The Lord sought to remedy that misconception by informing these ambitious disciples that they would not be granted the right of "lordship" over one another; rather, genuine greatness would result from serving others (Luke 22:24ff). Subsequently, Jesus addressed Peter and said: "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you [plural], that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you [singular], that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren" (NKJV).

Roman Catholic theologians attempt to argue for the "primacy" of Peter upon the basis of this passage. Many do not realize the force of the argument that Catholics make based upon the plural and singular pronouns, as indicated above. The fact is, Christ did pray especially for Peter. But it was not to indicate the apostle's *primacy*; rather, it acknowledged his *weakness*, and prophetically hinted at his denial later that evening.

But it is said that Simon was to "strengthen" (KJV) or "establish" (ASV) his brethren. Does this not surely suggest a special role for Peter, who would be the "security of the Church" (Conway, *The Question Box*, p. 147)? It does not. The Greek word rendered "strengthen" (from *sterizo*) is used: (a) of Timothy's influence at Thessalonica (1 Thes. 3:2); (b) of Paul's projected work on behalf of the saints in Rome (Rom. 1:11), which was, incidentally, *the very city over which Peter is alleged to have held papal control*; (c) of the strength that comes through the truth (i.e., the word of God) (2 Pet. 1:12).

Thus, underline "strengthen" or "establish" in Luke 22:32, and in your Bible margin write: *Not Peter's exclusive role. See Rom. 1:11; 1 Thes. 3:2; 2 Pet. 1:12.* This notation will give you a valuable point to use in teaching your Catholic friends. WJ

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HERMENEUTICS

Lesson II

INTRODUCTION

1. In this section of our study, as we get down to actually studying the science of interpreting the Scriptures, I had intended to use material which I had prepared. (You will recall that in lesson one of this series we have looked behind the scenes to see why it is necessary to study this subject.) However, because of some statements made at the OCC lectures in 1989, Stafford North of OCC delivered a lecture entitled "What Hermeneutic Does The Bible Teach For Itself?" at the 1990 OCC lectures.
2. Therefore, we will in this lesson study the outline of his material.
3. We will study this material because it is designed to refute some of the material which we presented to you in lesson one.
4. We will study this material because I like its approach, "What Hermeneutic Does the Bible Teach For ITSELF?"
 - a. To those who claim to follow the Bible as "the" guide in religious matters it is important not to add to it the teachings of mere men. If one follows a man-made hermeneutic he will, in all probability, end up following man-made teaching.
 - b. Does the New Testament present its own hermeneutic?
 - c. It will be the purpose of this lesson to answer this question.
5. Oh, by the way, it will take us more than one class period to study this one lesson.
6. Stafford North's material now follows.

WHAT HERMENEUTIC DOES THE BIBLE TEACH FOR ITSELF?

OCC Lectureship, 1990

by Stafford North

Many theories have been developed over the years about how to interpret the scriptures. As with any other communication, one needs some guidelines to determine the meaning which Bible authors intended their readers to get. While many of the principles of interpretation developed by different writers have much valuable information in them, there is also considerable conflict between various systems of hermeneutics.

Since the Bible is the book being interpreted, however, it is interesting to ask, "Does the Bible itself reveal anything about how it is to be interpreted?" Many writers in the Bible use quotations from other Bible writers and explain what these passages mean. One inspired writer looks at a passage written by another inspired writer. What would we learn about hermeneutics, then, if we searched the scriptures to discover what these Bible writers reveal about how to interpret the Bible? This study seeks to provide some of the answers to that question.

1. The scriptures ask us to approach them as a revelation God gave man containing His promise of salvation and what He asks in response.
 - A. In Exodus 20:1-21, as God reveals the law to the people of Israel, He speaks with a powerful voice from the midst of lightening, smoke, and thunder to demonstrate to them that the source of this message is divine not human.
 - B. Frequently throughout the books of the prophets, such as in Jeremiah 51:1, a prophecy begins, "Thus saith Jehovah." The prophets are making clear that the source of their message is not man but God.
 - C. In II Timothy 3:16-17, Paul writes that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."
 - D. In II Peter 1:20-21, Peter tells us that prophecies of scripture are not of human origin, "for no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit."
 - E. Paul, in Galatians 1:11-12 states emphatically that he did not receive his message from man but from God.
 - F. Paul told the elders from Ephesus, "And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified (Acts 20:32).
 - G. In I Corinthians 15:1-2, Paul declares, "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you."
 - H. I Corinthians 2:10-13 makes it clear that the scriptures are a revelation of the mind of God by the Holy Spirit and that its human authors write "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words." Thus, the very words themselves are precisely what God wanted them to be to reveal His mind.
 - I. Other passages which bear on this point may be found in II Peter 1:3-4; I Peter 4:17; I Peter 2:2; Romans 15:4; Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:3-6; I Thessalonians 2:13, and II Thessalonians 3:14.
 - J. Conclusion: we are to approach the Bible like no other book. It claims to be a divine message, not a human one. It emphasizes frequently that it is written by men inspired by God, and tells us that, since its message is the only source for learning how to be saved in heaven, it is to be

approached with the greatest of care and seriousness. We are not dealing with merely a piece of literature whose ultimate value is our artistic enjoyment or cultural development. The Bible states that its message is crucial to our eternal salvation and asks us to approach it with full recognition that it is the word of God.

2. The scriptures ask us to consider them "as a whole," presenting a coordinated message called "the gospel," "the truth," "the apostles' doctrine," "the faith," "the word," and "the law of liberty."
 - A. The New Testament contains the "the gospel," the good news which can save our souls. II Thes. 1:8-9; II Thes. 2:14-15 and 3:6, I Tim. 1:11; Rom. 1:1-3, 16; Rom. 16:25; Gal. 1:6-9, 12.
 - B. The New Testament contains "the truth" revealed by the Holy Spirit. John 16:13; Eph. 4:15.
 - C. The New Testament contains the "apostle's doctrine" which was revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:42; Jude 17.
 - D. The New Testament contains that body of teaching to be believed and thus is described as "the faith." Jude 3; Acts 6:7.
 - E. The New Testament is "the word" which brings the message from God. James 1:21; Eph. 1:13.
 - F. The New Testament is a law, but not like the law of Moses; rather it is "the law of liberty." James 1:25; 2:12.
 - G. Conclusion: we are not to view the different books of the Bible as isolated writings but to consider them as having one fundamental theme—a message of man's creation, sin, separation from God, and opportunity to return to Him. Any passage, then, must be viewed in relationship to the whole message of the scriptures.
3. The scriptures caution us not to get the wrong message from the Bible, thus becoming a false teacher or a follower of one, and so to be lost.
 - A. Jesus warns about false teachers, tells us to test teachers by their fruit, and concludes that "not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:15-23).
 - B. Jesus also said to the Sadducees, "Ye do err, not knowing [understanding] the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29).
 - C. Paul strongly condemns "false apostles" in II Corinthians 11:13-15, saying that their "end shall be according to their works."
 - D. In Hebrews 2:1-3 the writer urges us not to drift away from what was preached because, if those under the law of Moses were punished for their transgressions, how much more will those be punished who neglect "so great a salvation."
 - E. The whole chapter of II Peter 2 is a strong condemnation of false prophets who teach "destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction."
 - F. II John 9 says that those who go onward and "abide not in the teaching of Christ," have not God.
 - G. In Acts 20:30, I Timothy 4:1, and II Timothy 4:1-4, Paul actually predicts that there will be a departure from the truth.
 - H. Many other passages teach both the possibility of missing the message and the dire consequences when we do: Romans 16:17-18; II Corinthians 11:13-15; Colossians 2:8; II Thessalonians 2:9-12; I Timothy 1:6; 6:3-5; II Timothy 1:13-14; Titus 1:16; I Peter 4:11; II Peter 3:16; I John 2:18; 4:1; Jude 4; and the letters to the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 2-3.
 - I. Conclusion: it is possible to miss the message God intended us to get from the scriptures and be lost, and it is predicted in the scriptures that many will do this. Thus, the scriptures lay upon us the importance of properly understanding the message of scripture.

4. The scriptures teach that when approaching a passage, we should explore what it meant to those who first received it and then seek its application to us.
 - A. In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus quotes from Genesis 2:24 and says that passage means the same for his followers that it did for Adam and Eve even though the Law of Moses had allowed some variation.
 - B. In Acts 3:22-23, Peter reminds his audience of Deuteronomy 18:15 which says a prophet like Moses will come and, when he does, the people are to listen. To those who first heard this statement, this was a prediction of someone yet to come. Peter, however, applies the statement to Christ who has already come. Thus the passage has different value to those who first heard it and those of a later time.
 - C. In Colossians 4:16, Paul asks the Colossians and the Laodiceans to exchange the letters he has written to both. The letter written to the Colossians deals directly with circumstances which certainly would not be the exact circumstances of the Laodiceans. Yet, Paul wanted these churches to exchange letters for there were things each could learn from the letter written to the other.
 - D. In Isaiah 7:14, Ahaz was given a sign for his day about a childless woman who would conceive a son. Matthew, however, explains that same passage as having a different meaning in connection with the birth of Christ in his time (Matthew 1:23). So the passage had one use for its first application and a different one at a later time.
 - E. Hebrews 9:9 says the holy place is a figure "for the time present." Thus, what was a physical reality for Jews became a figure for Christians.
 - F. Hebrews 10:1 speaks of the law as a "shadow" of things to come. So to those first receiving it, the law was regarded as the real thing while to those of a more enlightened time, it was only a shadow.
 - G. In Matthew 5:33-37, Christ says you have heard (Numbers 30:2) that you should make oaths unto the Lord and then keep them. Jesus, however, commands His people not to make oaths at all. What was part of God's law for one time was reversed in another.
 - H. Jeremiah 25:11 was to Daniel a prophecy to pray about but, after its fulfillment, a sign that Bible writers were led to predict supernaturally.
 - I. Conclusion: the scriptures show us that we begin our study of a passage by asking what did it mean to those who first received it, those to whom it was first directed. Then we are to take that passage and apply it to our time and situation. Its meaning may be the same to us or it may have a modified meaning because our circumstances may be different. The measuring stick to be used is the extent to which the same conditions are present for those who first heard it and those who hear it later.
5. The scriptures teach us that often a passage will have an obvious meaning which most would grasp readily.
 - A. In Luke 4:16-21, Jesus, in the synagogue at Nazareth, reads a passage from Isaiah and then comments, "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." He expected them to grasp the meaning and, so far as we know, gave no further explanation.
 - B. When the wise men asked Herod where the Christ would be born, the chief priests and scribes correctly read from Micah 5:2 that it would be in Bethlehem.
 - C. In Matthew 15:4-6, Jesus condemns the religious leaders of his day for missing the obvious meaning of one of the ten commandments, "Honor thy father and thy mother." He implies that the meaning of this is so clear that they should easily recognize that their teaching of "corban" is a violation of it.
 - D. Again Jesus condemns the religious leaders of his time for knowing the scriptures well but missing the obvious fact that He was the one they predict. "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me that ye may have life" (John 5:39-40).

- E. In Acts 2, when Peter preaches a sermon, three thousand grasp the meaning readily and respond for baptism.
 - F. In Acts 8, the Ethiopian, after one sermon starting with Isaiah 53, grasps the meaning well enough to request baptism.
 - G. In II Corinthians, Paul commends the Corinthians for properly understanding and following what he wrote in I Corinthians (II Corinthians 2:5-11)
 - H. Many passages that deal with moral principles are quite specific and their meaning is obvious: Ephesians 4:28, "Let him that stole, steal no more," or Galatians 5:19 that those who practice fornication "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - I. Conclusion: the scriptures tell us that the meaning of a passage is often obvious and we should first look for a clear truth that does not require detailed analysis.
6. The scriptures suggest that, when the meaning of a passage is not readily apparent, more detailed study may be done through a variety of ways.
- A. Sometimes, the scriptures indicate, we should look at specific word meanings.
 - 1. The scriptures state that the very words of a passage are what God wanted them to be, thus making word studies appropriate. I Corinthians 2:10-13 says the Holy Spirit inspired those who wrote the word in such a way that they "combined spiritual things with spiritual words." This does not mean that the Spirit dictated each word. He was, rather, able to use a writer's language, knowledge, background, and personality, but the outcome was in words which the Spirit taught. If this were not the nature of the revelation, then detailed studies of words, tenses, cases, and sentences would have no point since these would be of human rather than divine origin.
 - 2. In Mark 12:35-37, Jesus does a word study of Psalms 110:1. Here David said, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet." Jesus asked, in paraphrase, "If the Christ is the son of David, then how could he call him Lord?" Jesus knew, of course, that the Christ would be the "son of David" through natural birth in the lineage of David but that his true identity would be divine, and thus David's "Lord." So Jesus makes a point on two different meanings of the word "Lord."
 - 3. In Galatians 3:16, Paul makes a point out of the singular or plural meaning of the word "seed" in the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:7; 13:15; and 17:7. There is a sense in which Abraham had many seeds or offspring and all Christians are among these (Galatians 3:29), but there is another sense in which the promise came true through only one of his seed, Christ. The point for our study here is that Paul illustrates the kind of detailed word study one may do when studying a passage intensively.
 - 4. In Matthew 22:29-31, Jesus' interpretation of a passage rests on the tense of a verb and He accuses those who had raised a question of not knowing the scriptures because they missed this. He quotes Exodus 3:6 where God says to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." If, long after these men are dead God can still refer to them in the "present tense," then, Jesus says, in some sense they must still be alive and, therefore, there is life after death.
 - 5. In John 10:34, Jesus refers to Psalm 82:6 and makes a point on the meaning of the word "gods" in that passage where "gods" refers to human beings.
 - 6. Conclusion: the scriptures demonstrate that we should, when necessary, discover precise word meanings, even to the tense of a verb or the number of a noun, when that will help us understand a passage.
 - B. The scriptures also occasionally tell what something means in another language, suggesting that there is value in looking at a passage in a second language.
 - 1. Acts 1:19, for example, gives the name of the field where Judas was buried in the Syro-Chaldaic language since the language in which the field was named.
 - 2. In Mark 7:11, Jesus uses the word "corban" because that is a technical word in this passage, but then He gives the translation as "given to God."

3. In Hebrews 7:2, the writer translates the meaning of the name of Melchizedek because that will help the reader to understand who he was.
 4. In Matthew 1:23, the writer translates the word "Immanuel" for the reader because that will help to make clear the role of the child who is to be born.
- C. The scriptures also teach us to look at the context around a passage to help understand it. In Hebrews 4:1-11, for example, the writer quotes Psalm 95:11 and then explains that verse by looking back to verse 7 of that same psalm to explain more fully about "God's rest."
- D. The scriptures also suggest analyzing sentences when we seek to clarify a meaning. In Hebrews 10:5-10, for example, the writer quotes Psalm 11:6-8 and then explains it. The first part of the sentence, he says, applies to the sacrifices of the old law, but when he says, "I am come to do thy will," he is speaking of something different—the second law. So the Hebrew writer analyzes the sentence into two portions, one part speaking of the old law and one of the new.
- E. The scriptures teach us not to look at a passage in isolation but to look at related passages to help explain the first, the second sometimes even taking precedent over the first.
1. In Matthew 4:5-7, Satan quotes to Jesus a passage from Psalms 91:11-12 suggesting that, since God will "bear him up lest he dash his foot against a stone," he should jump from the pinnacle of the temple. Jesus, however, says, that the passage in Psalms cannot be used without considering also a passage in Deuteronomy 6:16 which teaches that one should not "make trial" of God and that to place himself in jeopardy deliberately would be to make trial of God.
 2. In Matthew 12:1-8, Jesus says that even the commandment to "remember the Sabbath," must be understood in the light of other passages such as Hosea 6:6 where God sets compassion for others as having a very high priority.
 3. When Paul interprets Genesis 15:6 about Abraham's faith being reckoned unto him for righteousness, he refers to Psalm 32:1 as helping to explain it.
 4. Acts 5:29 tells of Peter and John saying that they must "obey God rather than men". Obeying their rulers was normally the right thing to do, but a higher law of obeying God would take precedent.
 5. Mark 12:33 states that to love God and love one's neighbor is more important than "all the whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices."
 6. Conclusion: the scriptures teach that, while every passage is important, in a detailed study God expects us to ask what other passages teach on the same point and, in some cases, one passage may teach a principle that takes precedence over the principle in another.
- F. The scriptures clearly suggest the use of inference or "drawing conclusions from a premise" in interpreting themselves. This is done in three different ways: (1) in some cases the writer or speaker uses inference in interpreting another passage in the Bible, (2) the writer or speaker uses logic or inference in his discussion and expects us to follow it, and (3) the writer expects readers to draw a conclusion from inference. Here are instances of each.
1. Bible writers use inference in interpreting another passage in the Bible.
 - a. Jesus, in Matthew 22:29-31, uses inference to interpret Exodus 3:6: "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Jesus infers from the fact that the verb is in the present tense that God is currently the God of these men long after their deaths. His inference is like this: If God speaks of currently being someone's God after they have died, then they must, in some sense, still be alive. God does so speak of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must, in some sense, still be alive.
 - b. Paul, in Romans 10:13-14, refers back to a statement from Joel 2:32: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Paul says we infer that before one would "call," he would first believe; and before such belief we infer that one must have "heard," and from one's having heard, we infer that there must have been "preaching," and from the fact that one has preached, we infer that there must have been "sending." In other words, Paul uses inference in dealing with the

- passage from Joel. From this example we learn that whatever is implicit in a passage, we may correctly infer from it.
- c. In I Corinthians 15:27, Paul quotes Psalm 8:6, "He put all things in subjection under his feet." He comments, however, that "it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him." The word "evident" indicates an inference. So, he says we infer that the one doing the subjecting of all things (God) is excluded from being under the one to whom He is subjecting all things (Christ). So he interprets Psalm 8:6 by using this inference: One who subjects things to another is not included in what is being subjected; God is subjecting things to another; therefore God is not included in what is being subjected.
 - d. In Ephesians 4:8-10, Paul interprets Psalm 68:18. That psalm says, "He ascended." But, Paul says, one may infer that if one has ascended, he must first have been lower. There was first, then, he says, a descending. His reasoning is like this: All who ascend are included in those who have first been lower; Christ ascended; therefore Christ must first have been lower.
 - e. Hebrews 4:1-11 gives us another sample of the Bible's use of inference in interpreting other passages. Here the writer quotes David in Psalm 95:11 as speaking God's words: "They shall not enter my rest." From this he makes several inferences: (1) that since God says He has a rest for His people and these of an earlier time did not enter, then there will be others later who will; (2) that since David lived long after Joshua and yet says in his time that the people of Joshua's day did not enter the rest, then there still remains a rest to be entered by God's people; (3) that since those to whom the rest was once offered lost it by lack of faith and obedience, then we too could lose it in the same way; (4) that since we want to enter the rest, we should give diligence to obey. None of these things is directly stated in the psalms passage but the writer says they are all inferences from that passage when one understands the time relationships involved.
2. Bible writers often use inference in their discussion and expect us to follow it.
- a. Matthew 7:11 shows Jesus using the reasoning called "from lesser to greater." This pattern suggests that if something of lesser significance is true, then that which is greater than it certainly will be true. So he says, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"
 - b. Jesus uses that same type of reasoning again in Luke 13:15 and 14:6 where he says, in paraphrase, "If it is proper to care for animals (the lesser) who need assistance on the Sabbath day, then surely it is proper to care for human beings (the greater) who need assistance on the Sabbath day." They knew it was proper to take an animal from the ditch on the Sabbath day. So his conclusion was warranted that it was proper to help a human being in need on the Sabbath.
 - c. Jesus again uses a hypothetical syllogism in Matthew 6:30: "If God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you?" Mentally we are to add, "God does so clothe the grass of the field and so He will clothe us."
 - d. Jesus also uses inference in interpreting Exodus 3:6: "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." His unstated syllogism is, "If God speaks of these men as yet being alive, then there must be life after death."
 - e. Luke 4:22-26 is a very interesting passage about the use of inference. First the scribes and Pharisees hear Jesus say that the paralytic's sins are forgiven. Then they reason among themselves with two hypothetical syllogisms: If Jesus claims to forgive sins, then he is making himself equal with God. Based on their conclusion that he is making himself equal with God, then they reason: If one makes himself equal with God, then he is guilty of blasphemy. Their first syllogism is correct, Jesus was making himself equal with God. The second, however, is false, because one is guilty of blasphemy by making himself equal

with God only if he is not equal with God. The passage then says that, Jesus knew their "reasonings" and answers with a hypothetical syllogism of his own: "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on the earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up and went." In more formal clothing, Jesus answered them in this way: If I have the divine power to give a palsied man immediate power to walk, then I also have the divine power to forgive sins. He then showed one kind of divine power, thus proving that he had the other.

- f. Jesus, actually, was a master logician, using not only hypothetical syllogisms, as shown above, but devising a perfect dilemma through a disjunctive syllogism. In Mark 11:31-32, He asks the Jewish leaders whether John's preaching was from heaven or from men. His syllogism was: Either John's preaching was from heaven or from men, but not both. The Jews correctly perceived that if they took the "from heaven" alternative, Jesus would say, "Why then did ye not believe him?" And if they took the "from men" alternative, they would be in trouble with the people who believed John was from heaven. So they answered, "We don't know."
 - g. Paul uses the hypothetical syllogism several times in a row in I Corinthians 15. A sample is verse 17: If [and only if] Christ be not raised, then your faith is vain. He expects the reader to add, "My faith is not vain, and therefore, Christ is raised."
 - h. In Hebrews 7:7, the Hebrew writer uses inference. He says, "But without any dispute the less is blessed of the better." His implication is, therefore, that Melchizedek is greater than Abraham. In verse 12, he adds another: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." More formally stated, "If a priesthood is changed, the law with which it is associated must also be changed. The priesthood has been changed [because Christ cannot be a Levitical priest], and therefore, the law has been changed."
 - i. Hebrews 10:1 provides another case of inference in interpreting other Bible passages. It says that animal sacrifices cannot make the offerers perfect, else they would not have to keep on offering them. His point is that sacrifices were offered each year, not only for the sins of that year but for those before as well. His reasoning is this: If sins were actually taken away by the animal sacrifices, then the animal sacrifices would not have to be repeated for those sins; animal sacrifices were repeated; therefore the animal sacrifices did not take away those sins.
 - j. In James 5:17-18, the writer says that since Elijah was a man like we are and his prayers were answered, then we should expect our prayers to be answered also. So he infers that if we are like Elijah and his prayers were answered, so should ours be answered also.
3. Bible writers expect their readers to use inference to draw conclusions.
- a. In John 20:30-31, the writer says, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ."
 1. It is apparent that John is asking us to make an inference from the signs of Jesus which he records, and that inference is that He is the Christ. This is, in fact, the same inference that is frequently intended from the use of miracles. Nicodemus comes to Jesus saying, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him (John 3:2). The former blind man makes a similar statement in John 9:33, "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."
 2. God clearly expects us, then, to reason like this: If a man can do that which cannot be explained by human capacity, then that man must have supernatural power. Jesus (and others) did that which could not be explained by human capacity. Therefore, these must have power from God.

3. God's use of miracles as His stamp of approval for His messengers, then, is based on His expectation that we will use the native reasoning power which He gave to the human mind. Aristotle did not invent such reasoning nor was it the product of reformation theologians nor of John Locke. These may have sharpened our use of it, but God put the capacity for reasoning within human thought just as he put within us certain powers of communication. Knowing how we can reason, then, God called on such powers by presenting miracles before us knowing that we would infer from them that those who performed them "were from God." If inference is not to be used, the whole point of the miracles is lost.
- b. In I Corinthians 5:9-11, Paul says he wrote "not to have company with fornicators." But, he says, you should have understood that I didn't mean this to include those outside of the church. He expected them to have interpreted his writing on this point using the following inference: If a command is being interpreted to ask the impossible or in a way that conflicts with other teaching, then it is being wrongly understood; to interpret "not keeping company with fornicators" to mean those outside the church would place Christians in an impossible situation; therefore you were understanding this teaching wrongly.
4. Conclusion:
 - a. The use of inference, drawing conclusions from an accepted premise, abounds in the scriptures. Sometimes Bible writers use inference in interpreting another passage. Sometimes they use inference in making their own point. Sometimes they use it by expecting us to draw a conclusion on our own from evidence they present us. Bible writers, then, clearly intend for us to come to the scriptures with the use of the logical thought patterns God gave us. Where the scriptures present premises from which conclusions may be inferred, we are justified in doing so. Another way of stating this point is that where the scriptures imply, we may infer.
 - b. But how do we know when an inference is warranted. Drawing conclusions through inference is something we do daily in regular life. Usually we think of it as "common sense" when it is not in the "clothing" of formal logic. Based on our previous experience, for example, we think, "If the temperature is below 40 degrees, I should wear my overcoat. The paper says today's high will be 38, so I should wear my overcoat. Drawing proper conclusions from inference depends on the premises being based on sufficient evidence and on our having put together the logical statements properly. Most of us have developed, through experience, the ability to do this properly and to spot fallacies when something is wrong. If, for example, someone says, "This person is an Arab; he must be a terrorist." We will reply, "Wait a minute. Not all Arabs are terrorists." We have spotted a problem with the premise and do not accept the conclusion."
 - c. So when we come to the scriptures, we should draw inferences. What inferences we may draw must be based on the same "good sense" or logical correctness we would find acceptable in business, law, philosophy, or education.
5. A few examples of how we may apply use of inference to draw conclusions from an accepted premise are these.
 - a. There is no direct statement that the Sabbath Day requirement of the Law of Moses has been abolished. Colossians 2:14, however, says that the "bond written in ordinances" has been "blotted out." So the major premise given by the scripture is: All that is part of the "bond written in ordinances" has been blotted out. We recognize the Sabbath day requirement as a bond written in ordinances, and conclude that the Sabbath day requirement has been blotted out. We also reason from Romans 7:6-7 that if even Jews have been "discharged" from the law which included "thou shallows not covet," then the nine other parallel commandments, including the Sabbath observance, are also no longer binding.

- b. Another inference is that if Christians have been commanded to meet but no instructions are given as to the place, then we are free to arrange for a suitable place so long as we do not violate any other teaching. Here we apply a common sense major premise: In all things the scriptures tell us to do but do not tell us how to do, we are at liberty to use appropriate methods of our own choice. The scriptures have commanded us to assemble but have not told us where. We are at liberty, therefore, to choose our own place.
 - c. The Bible states that the elder is to be "the husband of one wife (I Timothy 3:2). From this we reason as follows: Only husbands can be elders. No woman is a husband. Therefore no woman can be an elder.
 - d. The question of whether to baptize infants may also be approached by inference. According to Mark 16:16, faith is to precede baptism and according to Acts 2:38, repentance is also to precede it. Now the inference: "If actions must precede scriptural baptism which require what an infant cannot do, then an infant cannot be scripturally baptized. Scriptural baptism does require such to precede it. So an infant cannot be scripturally baptized."
- G. The scriptures suggest that we interpret a passage by recognizing the dispensation of God's will the passage falls under.
1. Romans 5:12-21 speaks of sin entering the world through Adam; with Moses came the law; then Christ came. This passage speaks of sin as being treated differently in each of these three time periods. (1) "Until the law" there was sin but it was not "imputed." (2) When, however, "the law came in," then sin was imputed and "trespasses abounded." (3) When Christ came, however, then we have still a third situation with sin: grace and justification. Since man's relationship to sin is a pervasive element in the scriptures and since it is treated differently in the three dispensations mentioned here, we are to consider these dispensations as we look at various passages.
 2. Although Christ lived and died personally subject to the Law of Moses, His teachings were given for the age to follow. In Matthew 28:18-20, Christ commanded His apostles to make disciples and to teach them what He had commanded while he was with them. Hebrews 9:16-17 makes that particularly clear in saying that although a will or testament is made while one lives, it does not go into force until the death of the one who made it. So the scriptures teach that Christ's teachings went into effect upon His death, thus indicating a different dispensation before Christ's death and after.
 3. Romans 7:1-7 states that since a woman cannot appropriately have two husbands at once, neither can a person be subject to two laws at once. Those, then, that were under the law that said, "Thou shalt not covet," have been discharged from that law, having died to it, so they might be joined to another law, Christ's. Again, a change in law or dispensation.
 4. Colossians 2:14 states that the "bond written in ordinances," that is the ten commandment law, has been "blotted out," thus freeing those under it to accept a new covenant.
 5. In Acts 19:1-7, Paul found twelve men in Ephesus who had, in fact, been baptized, but with the baptism of John after the time for that baptism had passed. After teaching them about Christian baptism, Paul baptizes these men with the baptism of the new dispensation.
 6. The scriptures indicate that there are some principles and truths, however, that appear first in the Old Testament age but which continue to be true and useful in the Christian era.
 - a. Hebrews 12:5 repeats Proverbs 3:11-12 about the chastening of the Lord and says that this truth continues to be applicable in the Christian age.
 - b. Hebrews 13:5-6 repeats Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 1:5, and Psalms 118:6 about God's not forsaking his people and being a constant help to them and applies that to God's people of the Christian age.

- c. In I Peter 3:8-12, Peter quotes Psalm 34:12-16 indicating that it contains truths about telling the truth and turning from evil so that the Lord's will hear one's prayers.
7. Conclusion: the scriptures clearly suggest that God has made different periods of His relationship to mankind and has dealt differently with people during these times. One must recognize, then, the time period with which he is dealing in order to interpret a passage. While the laws and commandments of one age are not applicable to another, there are, however, abiding truths and principles that are eternally true.
- H. The scriptures suggest that we consider the historical setting of a passage when studying it. In Romans 4:10, for example, Paul asks the question, "Was Abraham given this promise before or after he was circumcised"? His answer is that the promise was given before. On this historical information, then, he makes the point that, since the promise came to Abraham while he was uncircumcised, he can be the father of both those who are and who are not circumcised. By asking the history of Genesis 15:6, the passage he quotes in verse 3, Paul shows us how such information can help in detailed study.
- I. The scriptures often interpret figurative language used in another passage, thus indicating both that figures are common in the scriptures and that we are to look for the meaning behind such figures.
 1. In Matthew 11:14, Jesus states that "Elijah" is a figurative expression about John the Baptist to indicate something of the nature of his work but not his personal identity.
 2. In Matthew 13:18 and elsewhere, Jesus demonstrates how to interpret a parable to show his disciples how this type of figurative language is to be interpreted.
 3. In Matthew 13:13-16, Jesus explains that He uses figurative language to make a point clear to those who are on the inside but obscure to those on the outside.
 4. In John 6:63, Jesus interprets the figurative language he used earlier in verse 54 where he said that one must "eat his flesh and drink his blood" to have eternal life. He actually meant, he says in verse 63, that "the words I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." So one "eats and drinks" Jesus by taking in His word.
 5. In Matthew 21:42-43, Jesus interprets a figurative passage from Psalms 108:22-23 where it is predicted that a stone which some builders will reject will, by other builders, be made the head of the corner. Jesus interprets this for them by saying that although they are rejecting Him, others will accept Him as the cornerstone of their faith.
 6. Conclusion: figures are common in the scriptures and they give us many samples of how such figures are to be interpreted.
- J. The scriptures speak of several different types of literary styles being included in the Bible along with the implication that each should be approached somewhat differently.
 1. David chose to write psalms to give a devotional and inspirational element that is different than in prose writing.
 2. Solomon says in Proverbs 1:1-6 that he choose to speak in proverbs to make available wisdom and understanding.
 3. Jesus speaks in parables and shows how to interpret them. Matthew 13:18.
 4. In Daniel 9:2, Daniel quotes a prophecy in Jeremiah 25:11 and prays to God that it will be fulfilled.
 5. In Matthew 24:15, Jesus quotes Daniel 9:27, and interprets it as a prophecy given in symbolic terms. (See also Luke 21:20.)
 6. The Book of Revelation begins by calling itself an "apocalypse" (Revelation 1:1), thus indicating that it is to be interpreted according to the pattern normally used for that type of writing.
 7. Colossians 4:16 mentions "epistles" and II Thessalonians 2:14-15 and 3:14 warn that the words of an epistle are to be "held fast" and "obeyed."
 8. Luke 1:1-4 indicates that the book of Luke is going to be a narrative.
 9. Jesus, in His closing words to His apostles, mentions that "all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me."

10. Conclusion: the scriptures themselves mention that different types of literature are included within the Bible. Various writers of the scriptures deal differently with a parable than with a prophecy. In addition, it may be assumed that if a writer (with the aid of the Holy Spirit) selected a particular type of literature as the best way to reveal the message he was giving, then we should use a proper approach to that particular type of literature in our interpretation.
7. The scriptures suggest that to apply God's word to our own circumstances, we should ask the following questions:
 - A. Is there a command to individuals or groups of the Christian era?
 1. John the Baptist applies a command of that era to Herod in Matthew 14:4.
 2. Jesus applied a command of His era to the scribes and Pharisees—"You do transgress the commandment" regarding "Honor thy father and thy mother"—Matthew 15:4.
 3. In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus extends the command of God for Adam and Eve to those who would live under His law.
 4. Jesus and the apostles tell us to keep the commandments of Jesus—John 15:10; I John 2:2.
 5. Paul tells Timothy to keep the commandments without spot or reproach—I Timothy 6:14.
 6. In I Thessalonians 4:1-2, Paul says that they are to walk as he taught and according to the charge he gave to avoid immorality.
 7. Paul is careful to distinguish between commands and inspired advice in I Corinthians 7:6, 10-12, 25, thus indicating that we are allowed to respond differently to commands of an inspired writer and compared to his advice.
 8. Conclusion: the commands of Jesus, the apostles, and prophets of the Christian era are binding on us today. The apostles were told to teach "all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20). Commands given for those in the Christian dispensation, then, are to be obeyed by all who would seek Jesus as their savior.
 9. The scriptures give us some principles to follow to help us interpret a commandment.
 - a. Does another command or principle limit or clarify the one under consideration?
 1. Romans 13:1-7 says we should obey the rulers of our land, but Acts 4:19 and 5:29 say that this is to be secondary to obeying God.
 2. Ephesians 6:1 commands children to obey their parents, but only in the Lord.
 3. Jesus said the Sabbath command was tempered by Hosea 6:6.
 4. Jesus said the command about showbread could have exceptions in an extreme situation such as men who were very hungry and this was the only food available (Matthew 12:3-4).
 - b. Does the command present a specific action which excludes using parallel specific actions?
 1. In Leviticus 10:1, Nadab and Abihu offer fire on the altar of incense that God "had not commanded." It is not said that God had told them not to do this, only that God had commanded how to get the fire and they used a method God "had not commanded." The NIV calls this "unauthorized fire." So when God told where to get the fire, all other possible sources were excluded.
 2. I Chronicles 15:13-14 reports that David moved the ark of the covenant again after the time when Uzza died as it was carried on a cart. Of this first time, David said, "we sought him not according to the ordinance." This second time, the Levites carried the ark "as Moses commanded according to the word of Jehovah." So when God told how to move the ark, all other means were excluded.
 3. In Hebrews 7:13-14 and 8:14, the writer makes the point that Jesus could not have been a priest under the law of Moses because he was of the tribe of Judah. Of this tribe, says the writer, "Moses spake nothing concerning priests." When

the tribe of Levi was named as the source of priests, the writer explains, all other tribes, including Judah, were excluded. The principle to be learned from this is that when the scriptures name one out of a group as having been selected, then those parallel ones in the group not named are eliminated.

4. In I Corinthians 11:20-34, Paul condemns the Corinthian church for observing the Lord's Supper improperly. The manner in which they were observing it had been excluded by the fact that they had been told the proper way to take it. Paul says, "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." The fact that they had been told how to worship acceptably in the Lord's Supper excluded other ways to observe that act.
 5. Conclusion: the scriptures tell us that when God commands an action which has parallel actions that are not named, those parallel actions are excluded.
- B. Is there an example of an approved practice that has application to our circumstances?
1. Jesus used Old Testament approved cases as a precedent for His interpretation of the law of Moses.
 - a. In Matthew 12:1-8, Jesus cites the case of David and the showbread to establish that an exception to some commands may be allowed when a higher need is present. Thus, when Jesus was determining what was acceptable, he used an approved case from a previous time within that dispensation. Through this means he found what was acceptable for His time.
 - b. Jesus said that priests "profaned the Sabbath and are guiltless" (Matthew 12:5) and that God worked on the Sabbath (John 5:17). Thus, again He cites cases from practice as a basis for understanding a doctrine.
 2. In Philippians 4:9, Paul says "the things ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do."
 3. In I Corinthians 10:6 and 11, Paul states clearly that we are to learn from the examples of the Old Testament. He points out that what happened to the Israelites in the wilderness "happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come."
 4. The practice of one congregation was to help other congregations to know what to do because the churches were to have a common practice.
 - a. I Corinthians 4:17 tells that Timothy was sent to tell the Corinthians what Paul taught "in every church."
 - b. Paul appointed elders "in every church" he established on the first missionary journey and sent Timothy and Titus to appoint elders in other churches so they would be similarly organized (Titus 1:5-9; I Timothy 3:1-7).
 - c. Again Paul sought to have a common practice on essential matters as indicated by I Corinthians 14:33b where he says "as in all the churches, let the women keep silent." Note, this was the practice of other churches and that was a basis for telling the Corinthian church to practice it.
 - d. In I Corinthians 11:2-16, Paul also uses this principle of common practice in speaking of women wearing a veil under certain circumstances. He concludes his discussion on this point by speaking of the practice of some women in discarding the veil: "we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."
 5. Some cases will demonstrate how the use of an approved practice can answer questions we have today.
 - a. I Corinthians 16:1—Paul says to the church in Corinth, "as I gave command to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye." He has told many churches, then, how to take a collection when they need funds to carry out a work they are authorized to do. When we, therefore, ask, "How shall the church raise money for its work?" we should follow this authorized precedent.
 - b. We are commanded to take the Lord's Supper and the command includes the elements. But we have no command about how often or when to take the supper. We do, however, have an authorized precedent in Acts 20:7 where Paul waits

seven days so he can be with the brethren on the first day of the week to break bread (take the Lord's Supper). When there is such an authorized precedent, surely it should have priority over any other possibility because we can know for certain it is acceptable. Since we know from John 4:21-24 that the place of worship is not important, we do not conclude from their meeting in an upper room that such is of any consequence.

- c. Since in every case of elders in a New Testament congregation the number is spoken of in the plural, the authorized precedent is clearly to have more than one elder.
 - d. Since in Acts 6, where church business is being conducted, the principles of openness and clear communication are exercised, that should be our practice.
 - e. Conclusion: we take as a principle that the early church was guided by the Holy Spirit in its practice as well as its writings. Since this is true, we seek to be as much like that first century church as possible in the things that are of spiritual consequence (see point VIII). We ought, therefore, to follow cases as well as commands when they can be helpful in seeking to answer questions about what God would want us to do.
6. Practices based on local customs only are to be used by applying the underlying principle but the specific custom is not binding.
- a. When Paul spoke of the relationship between men and women, he gave the reasons as non-cultural so it would be clear that he was not using a local custom as a basis' for declaring a difference in position between men and women. In I Corinthians 11:8-9, for example, he bases this teaching on the creation of woman as "of the man" and "for the man." And in I Timothy 2:12-13, he bases this teaching about women on the facts that Adam was formed first and that the man was not beguiled. Thus, Paul clearly sets forth his teaching that men are to do certain things that women are not on principles of a permanent nature and not on local customs.
 - b. In the same passage in I Corinthians 11:2-16, however, Paul does base a different part of his instruction on local custom: "if it is a shame for a woman to be shorn," and "does not even nature itself teach you that, if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him." So the principle of men having a different position than women is permanent, not based on local custom. Paul's application of that principle, to his time, however, being based on local customs, is not meant to bind the local custom in other societies. A woman, for example, living in any society should follow the principle of subjection to men in certain matters. Her wearing a veil or not wearing one, however, could not have the same meaning in a society where there is no custom or understanding about women wearing a veil. In the absence of such a custom, then, a woman cannot follow Paul's teaching to use the veil as a means of demonstrating her subjection. She can follow his teaching, however, by doing whatever it is in her society that will convey her acceptance of the underlying principle. In Genesis 38:15, for example, a covering on a woman's face was taken as a sign of a prostitute. In such a case, Paul clearly would not recommend that Christian women wear a veil. He would, however, recommend that they do what will demonstrate their proper relationship to men.
 - c. In John 13:3-16, then, when Jesus washes the apostles' feet, he is not binding the local custom of washing feet, but is binding the principles of service and humility. He commands them, "For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done unto you." We can follow Jesus' example and wash feet, if such is true service; but if such washing is only a ceremony and not a real service, then we are not following Jesus' example since he was performing a needed service not a religious ceremony. If, on the other hand, we do some other act of humble service to others, then we are following Jesus' example even though we are not washing feet.

- d. When Paul said to "greet one another with a holy kiss," he was not binding that middle eastern greeting custom but was urging that Christians use their typical social custom in a way which showed the special relationship between Christians. Again, if our social custom is not to greet with a kiss, then we are starting from a different point than Paul's readers were. He was not legislating a new ceremony, but was telling them how to use what their society already practiced. He is not binding their local custom on the church of all time, but rather is saying that their local practice can serve a good purpose if done suitably. In other societies, a different custom may more nearly meet his commandment than will making a special ceremony out of a custom that is unfamiliar to the people.
7. Conclusion: the scriptures clearly use approved examples for "precedent" or "cases" from which to draw conclusions about spiritual practice. The use of "precedent" from the past is an established practice in law, business, government, medicine, and many other areas of activity. Along with reasoning from premise (inference), reasoning from example is one of the most common types of reasoning. It has been used from ancient times as a standard form of drawing conclusions and the Bible confirms that it was common when the scriptures were being written. As with any other form of reasoning, reasoning from example must be done according to certain accepted standards such as (1) the circumstances must be parallel, and (2) the precedent itself must have some authority behind it and not be merely incidental.
8. The scriptures declare what will "save" and what will "condemn" to identify what is an essential of the faith and thus an issue on which we must seek common understanding.

Even if we have used scriptural means to draw the right conclusion about what a passage means, we should consider how important the scriptures themselves make that issue before we give that issue the status of "an essential of the faith." Matters that do not receive such priority from the scriptures themselves may be worth our study, but should not become divisive issues between brethren in the Lord.

- A. One must accept and follow Jesus.
 1. Matt. 1:21—he shall save his people from their sins.
 2. Matt. 7:24-27—those who do not do my words are foolish, their fall will be great.
 3. Matt. 10:15—those who do not accept Jesus are worse than Sodom (Matt. 11:23)
 4. Matt. 28:18-20—all authority given unto me
 5. John 1:29—Jesus is the lamb of God that takes away sins of the world
 6. John 3:36—he that believeth in me has eternal life
 7. John 6:40-41—he that believeth, I shall raise him up in the last day
 8. John 8:24—except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins
 9. John 14:6—I am the way, truth, life—no one cometh to the father but by me.
 10. Eph. 2:10—grace is through Jesus Christ
 11. Acts 4:12—no other name given among men whereby we can be saved
 12. John 6:67—to whom shall we go; thou hast the words of eternal life
- B. The gospel, the words of Jesus, the truth bring the only message of salvation:
 1. John 8:36—the truth shall make you free
 2. Acts 11:14—speak unto thee words whereby thou shalt be saved
 3. Rom. 1:16—the gospel is the power of God unto salvation
 4. I Pet. 1:22—purify your souls by obedience to the truth
 5. I John 1:6-8—walk in the light and be cleansed from sin
 6. James 1:21—those who are doers of the word will save their souls
 7. Matt. 16:27—we will be judged according to our deeds
- C. Obedience to the gospel, the truth, is required.
 1. John 3:36—if obey not the son, you will not see life

2. John 12:47-50—whoever hears my sayings and does not keep them, will be judged by my words.
 3. II Thes. 1:7-8—He will come in flaming fire, judgment on those who know not God and obey not the gospel of Christ
 4. I Pet. 4:17-18—judgment will come on those who obey not the gospel of God
 5. Also we must obey the government (Rom. 13:5), our parents (Eph 6:1), and elders (Heb. 13:17) as duly appointed agents of God.
- D. One must believe in Jesus.
1. Mark 16:16—he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved
 2. John 3:16—whosoever believeth in him might have eternal life.
 3. Acts 10:43—believe in him for forgiveness of sins
 4. Rom. 5:1—we are justified by faith
 5. Gal. 3:24—we are justified by faith
- E. One must confess Jesus—Matt. 10:32—I will confess him before God.
- F. One must repent
1. Acts 2:38—repent and be baptized for remission of sins
 2. Acts 11:18—repentance that leads to life
 3. Acts 17:30-31—repent or He will judge
 4. Rom. 2:5—the unrepentant have wrath on them
- G. One must be baptized
1. Mark 16:16—he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved
 2. Acts 2:28—repent and be baptized for remission of sins
 3. Acts 22:16—be baptized and wash away your sins
 4. Rom. 6:4—be baptized and you will be raised to walk in newness of life
 5. Gal. 3:27—those baptized into Christ become heirs of the promise
 6. I Pet. 3:21—baptism doth now save us
- H. You must be born again—John 3:3,5—or you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven
- I. You must enter the narrow gate that leads to life—Matt. 7:13-14
- J. One must persevere in doing good things, in living righteously
1. Matt. 5:3-12—have these qualities in order to have the kingdom of heaven, and obtain mercy, etc.
 2. Matt. 10:42—one who gives a cup of cold water will not lose his reward
 3. Matt. 25:10-11—like the wise virgins, remain ready
 4. Matt. 25:30—be a good steward of talents or be cast out
 5. Matt. 25:31-46—treat people well for this is the basis of final judgment
 6. John 5:28-29—those who have done good will be raised to the resurrection of life
 7. Matt. 16:27—render to each according to deeds
 8. Rom. 8:6—those with their minds set on the spirit have life
 9. Rom. 13:13—walk becomingly for salvation is at hand
 10. II Pet. 1:5-11—develop the Christian graces, enter eternal life
 11. I John 2:29—whosoever doeth righteousness is begotten of him
 12. I Cor. 9:25-27—exercise self-control or be disqualified
 13. I Cor. 10:1-12—do not fall like the Israelites did
 14. Gal. 5:4—return to the law and fall from grace
 15. Heb. 6:1-10—do not fall away
 16. James 2:21—you are justified by works
- K. Avoid immorality of all kinds.
1. Matt. 5:27-30—those in lust and adultery have the whole body cast into hell
 2. John 5:28-29—those who have done evil will rise to the resurrection of judgment
 3. Rom. 1:32—the immoral are worthy of death
 4. Rom. 2:8—those who obey unrighteousness have wrath awaiting them
 5. Rom. 6:16—those who are slaves of sin will have death
 6. Rom. 8:6—those with their minds set on flesh will have death

7. Rom. 13:12—cast off works of darkness—revellings, drunkenness, chambering, wantonness, strife, jealousy
8. James 3:6—the tongue defiles whole body
9. James 4:5—a friend of world is an enemy of God
10. I Pet. 2:11-12—fleshly lusts war against the soul
11. I Pet. 4:3-6—we will be judged for immorality
12. I John 2:15—love not the world, for then the love of father is not in you
13. I Cor. 5:5—immoral man delivered to Satan
14. I Cor. 6:9-11—those who practice such things shall not enter the kingdom of God
15. Gal. 5:21—the immoral shall not inherit the kingdom of God
16. Eph. 2:1-3—the immoral are dead in trespasses
17. Eph. 5:3-15—the immoral shall not inherit the kingdom of God
18. Heb. 13:4—fornicators God will judge
19. Rev. 21:8—the fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars will be sent to the lake of fire.
- L. Those who divorce and remarry commit adultery—Matt. 19:5-9; Matt. 5:32; Mark 10:11-12
- M. Do not be factious or unkind or mistreat your brother
 1. Rom. 2:8—factious have wrath
 2. I John 2:9—hates brother is in darkness
 3. I Cor. 6:9—do not go to law with brother—unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God
 4. Matt. 5:21-26—do not kill, be angry, or speak evil of your brother—judgment, hell fire
 5. Matt. 18:15—if brother sins against you, go to him; if he does not repent, treat him as a publican
- N. Do not be judgmental of your brother—Matt. 7:1-2—or you will be judged
- O. Do not act from wrong motives—Matt. 6:1—or you will have no reward in heaven
- P. Forgive others—Matt. 18:35—or God will not forgive you
- Q. Do not speak idle words for the words one speaks will be judged—Matt. 22:26
- R. Do not be materialistic but generous
 1. Matt. 6:20—do not lay up treasures on earth but in heaven for where you treasure is, so will your heart be
 2. Matt. 6:33—seek first the kingdom and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you
 3. Matt. 19:20—Rich Young Ruler would not give all he had and failed to become a follower of Christ
 4. Acts 8:20-21—Simon sought to buy the gift of God with money and was told he would perish
- S. You must bear fruit for Christ—John 15:6-7—or be cast out
- T. You must worship properly
 1. Matt. 15:9—vain worship results from doctrines of men
 2. I Cor. 11:29—those who took the Lord's Supper improperly were eating and drinking damnation to their souls.
- U. You must not follow false teachers or false doctrines
 1. II Pet. 2:1—Those who bring in destructive heresies bring on swift destruction
 2. I John 2:21—he that abides not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God.
 3. Gal. 5:4—leave Christ for the law and fall from grace.
 4. Col. 2:18-19—do not let any one rob you of your prize by false teaching.
 5. Matt. 7:21—not all religious teachers shall be accepted
 6. Matt. 15:9—in vain do they worship me teaching for their commandments the doctrines of men
- V. Conclusion: we should give particular emphasis to these points to which the scriptures make the basis of eternal approval or condemnation. The message of the scriptures is that these are the things to which God is giving the highest priority. Of course we must not take this to mean that we can deal carelessly with any other part of the scriptures. We are not to "go

beyond the things that are written" in making new teachings or doctrines (I Corinthians 4:6). Several times in the scriptures we are admonished not to "add to" or "take from" the word that has been delivered (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Revelation 22:18). This means that it is as wrong to add requirements to the Word of God as it is to take them away. The scriptures, however, do give us strong clues as to those things which are vital and essential by saying they will "save" or "condemn" us. To make an issue not given this "stamp of importance" a basis of breaking fellowship is not justified.

Conclusion:

- A. In I Corinthians 9:6-14, Paul gives us a very interesting example of drawing a conclusion from scripture. He is dealing with the question of whether preachers may be supported. Rather than just use his apostolic authority to settle the matter, he draws from a number of sources and then comes to a conclusion.
1. First, he cites precedent from everyday life—soldiers do not pay their own way, farmers eat the fruit of their labors, and shepherds drink milk of their flock (verse 7).
 2. Then he quotes an Old Testament verse which states the principle, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (verse 9).
 3. Next, Paul interprets this Old Testament verse by saying that it was not really for the animals God had primary concern, but for people (verses 9-12). In coming to this conclusion, he uses the inference of from lesser to greater: if God had such concern for animals, he would have even more concern for man.
 4. Next Paul takes an approved example from the Old Testament. Those who minister at the temple are allowed to eat of its sacrifices (verse 13).
 5. Finally, Paul cites a commandment from Christ which applies to the case: "they that proclaim the gospel shall live of the gospel" (verse 14).
 6. In this sample, then, we have precedent from life, an Old Testament principle applied to the situation from which an inference is drawn, an approved example from Old Testament practice, and finally a commandment from Christ. This is a good case for us on how we should draw conclusions about spiritual questions by drawing together on a question what answers the Bible has for us.
- B. This study does not seek to answer every question brought up about hermeneutics or to solve every brotherhood issue which might arise from interpretation of the scriptures. Rather, it urges that we study what the Bible teaches us about how to understand the Bible. This paper is offered as a start in that direction. Hopefully this information will be of help to those who are studying in this field and who are seeking to make specific application of scripture to particular circumstances.

